



June 15, 2026

HRSA-26-104

Transforming Pediatrics for Early Childhood (TPEC) Program

[Nurture Connection](#) offers the following compiled resources to support state and tribal entities in the development of their applications in response to the HRSA's NOFO for [HRSA-26-104](#). Specifically, we are offering resources that support the team-based care teams to advance early relational health and flourishing:

- Team-based care team resources
- Community Health Center ECD evidence and resources
- Family partnership and co-development resources
- Advancing early relational health resources
- Advancing child and family flourishing resources
- Policy levers for sustainability of TPEC programs

HRSA-26-104 Summary: Transforming high-quality pediatric primary care for young children and their families by placing early childhood development experts directly in local pediatric practices.

The Transforming Pediatrics for Early Childhood Program (TPEC) will advance the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) priorities by preventing chronic disease early in life and promoting healthy development in early childhood. TPEC recipients' organizations with statewide or tribal reach - will place early childhood development (ECD) experts in local pediatric practices to deliver team-based care to young children and their families. Recipients will improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of pediatric care by delivering a comprehensive, team-based approach that focuses on factors critical to child development. Through this approach, pediatric primary care staff are expected to:

- Screen children and their families for their needs related to mental health, housing, nutrition, and child development.
- Build safe, stable, and nurturing relationships between parents/caregivers and their children.
- Educate parents/caregivers on developmental milestones and how to watch for them.
- Make sure that families get referrals and access to additional or specialized support.

TPEC recipients are expected to:

- Place ECD experts in pediatric practices that serve a high percentage of families covered by Medicaid/Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and deliver high-quality ECD services using a team-based approach.
- Build the skills of pediatric primary care staff statewide to deliver high-quality ECD services using a team-based approach.
- Improve statewide administrative policies and financing strategies to expand and sustain team-based pediatric primary care, improving the standard of care for all young children.

- TPEC is expected to result in measurable improvements in service delivery rates and early childhood development outcomes.

RESOURCES:

Team-based care team resources

- [HealthySteps](#) is an evidence-based, team-based pediatric primary care program. HealthySteps integrates a child development and behavioral health prevention and promotion expert into the health care team. All children ages 0-3 and their families receive a tiered model of services, from universal screening to risk-stratified supports, including care coordination and onsite intervention, as needed. Sites may also extend services through age 5.
 - Howland, R. E., Terlizzi, K., Frenette, E., Franz, S., Bushar, J., Briggs, R., Tracey, J., & Neighbors, C. (in press). HealthySteps Comprehensive Services and Preventive Care: A Medicaid Claims Analysis. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. [doi.10.1016/j.amepre.2026.108482](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2026.108482).
 - Valado, T., Tracey, J., Goldfinger, J., & Briggs, R. (2019). HealthySteps: Transforming the promise of pediatric care. *The Future of Children*, 29(1), 99-122. Available: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1220075.pdf>
- [Early Childhood Developmental Health Systems \(ECDHS\): Evidence to Impact Center](#), Zero To Three.
- [Engagement in Action \(EnAct!\) Framework](#) features tools, policies, data and partnerships to scale evidence-based strategies to co-create with families and develop a coordinated system that promotes flourishing.
- [AAP Early relational health](#).
- [DULCE: Developmental Understanding and Legal Collaboration for Everyone](#)
 - Monahan, E., McCrae, J., & Arbour, M., 2024. Participation in Pediatric Primary Care Innovation, DULCE, Increases Caregiver Agency and Resilience and Decreases Impact of Stress, *Prev Sci*, May;25(4): 685-698. [doi: 10.1007/s11121-023-01608-z](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-023-01608-z)
- **Community health workers in primary care**
 - Coker T., Gregory, E., McCord, M., Cholera, R., Bakken H., Czchapman, S., Anwar, E., Lee, J., Henry, S., & Chamberlain, L. 2024. *Integrating community health workers in early childhood well-child care: a statement from the Pediatric Academic Societies Maternal Child Health: First 1000 days Special Interest Group*. BMC Primary Care, 2024, Issue 1. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1186/s12875-024-02582-3>
 - [Relational Team-based Care that Centers Parent Voice in Pediatric Clinics](#), Nurture Connection, 2023.

Community Health Center ECD evidence and resources

- Evidence for transformation of basic primary care into high performing medical homes for young children
 - Johnson, K., & Willis, DW, [Guide to Transforming Care of Young Children in Community Health Centers](#), Nurture Connection, Sept 2024.

- [Change Package for Community Health Centers: Part 1-4: Early Childhood Developmental Health System \(ECDHS\): Zero To Three, 2026.](#)
- [Nurturing Connections for Community Health Centers \(NC4CHC\) Change Package](#); Nurture Connection, 2024
- [Key Driver Diagram \(Relational Approaches, Reflection and Listening to Families\)](#); Nurture Connection, 2025

Family partnership and co-development resources

- Nurture Connection’s Family Network Collaborative (FNC)
 - [Nurture Connection Family Network Collaborative Fact Sheet](#)
 - [A conversation with the Family Network Collaborative](#); Nurture Connection, 2023
 - [“We wouldn’t be here without the voices of families”: Celebrating Parent Leadership and Joy at Nurture Connection](#); Nurture Connection, 2026
 - [Reflections from the 2025 Nurture Connection Parent Survey](#); Nurture Connection, 2025
 - [Family Partnership: Positive Connections Help Families Thrive](#), Nurture Connection
- American Academy of Pediatrics
 - [2021 Policy Statement: Preventing Childhood Toxic Stress: Partnering with Families and Communities to Promote Relational Health](#)
- Center for the Study of Social Policy
 - [Two Guides, One Goal: Partnering with Families to Transform Early Childhood Systems, 2025](#)
 - [Manifesto for Race Equity & Parent Leadership in Early Childhood Systems](#) (Oct. 2024)
 - [CSSP’s Parent Manifesto 2.0](#) (Mar. 2025)

Advancing early relational health resources

- **NASEM Consensus Study: [Early Relational Health: Building Foundations for Child, Family and Community Wellbeing, 2025](#)**
- **Nurture Connection’s “three-legged stool” community framework**
 - **Nurture Connection’s Strategic Plan 2026-2028** is focused on community-powered transformation in partnership with families and communities. At our first national Summit we introduced a model for advancing Early Relational health within local communities by integrating child health systems, early childhood/education systems, and family/parent partnership — the Three-Legged Stool. ([Nurture Connection: 2026 Prospectus](#))
 - **Nurture Connection Early Relational Health Community Teams Network:** These place-based community teams have formed a [network collaborative](#) to share learnings for advancing the “three-legged stool” and child, family and community flourishing. Contact: Patsy Hampton, pah86@georgetown.edu
 - Nurture Connection’s [Early Relational Health Principles](#), June 2026.
 - Nurture Connection’s [Early Relational Health Principles in Practice](#), June 2026.

Advancing child and family flourishing resources

- [Child Flourishing: A Critical Indicator for Early Relational Health](#), Nurture Connection, 2024
- [Early Relational Health in 2026: Building a Future of Collective Flourishing](#), Nurture Connection, 2026
- **References:**
 - National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. *Early Relational Health: Building Foundations for Child, Family, and Community Well-Being*. National Academies Press; 2025. [doi:10.17226/29234](https://doi.org/10.17226/29234)
 - Garner AS, Saul RA. [Thinking Developmentally: Nurturing Wellness in Childhood to Promote Lifelong Health](#). American Academy of Pediatrics; 2025.
 - Bethell C, Jones J, Gombojav N, Linkenbach J, Sege R. Positive childhood experiences and adult mental and relational health in a statewide sample. *JAMA Pediatr*. 2019;173(11):e193007. [doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.3007](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.3007)

Policy levers for sustainability of TPEC programs

- *Chapter 5: Opportunities for Policies and Investments to Advance Early Relational Health*, in NASEM's Committee on the Early Relational Health Determinants of Future Health and Well-Being; Backes EP, Willis D, editors. *Early Relational Health: Building Foundations for Child, Family, and Community Well-Being*. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2025 Dec 30. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK620259/>
- [A Decade Later, CMS Updates the Medicaid EPSDT Playbook for States: Here's What You Need To Know](#), Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy, Center for Children and Families, June 2026
- Mondestin, T. & Kaneb, N., [Meeting Families Where They Are: How Medicaid Can Strengthen Children's Health through Community Health Workers](#), Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy, Center for Children and Families, May 2026.
- [The Early Childhood Ecosystem: How Systems Shape Family Experience and Child Outcomes: NYS Council on Children and Families: David Willis, Nurture Connection and Cynthia Osbourn](#), Pn3 Policy Impact Center, May 2026.
- Burak, E., & Dwyer, A., [States Should Use Rural Transformational Fund to Focus on Children and Families](#), Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy, Center for Children and Families, Sept 2025.
- [State Leadership and Policy Action to Advance Early Relational Health](#), Nurture Connection, Oct. 2023
- [Policy Change to Promote Early Relational Health](#), Center for the Study of Social Policy, July 2022
- Johnson K, Willis D, Doyle S. [Guide to Leveraging Title V and Medicaid to Support Social Emotional Development](#). Center for the Study of Social Policy and Johnson Group Consulting. 2020.
- Johnson K, Bruner C. [A Sourcebook on Medicaid's Role in Early Childhood: Advancing high performing medical homes and improving lifelong health](#). Child and Family Policy Center. 2018.

Evidence-based models that advance the continuum of Early Childhood Developmental Health Systems and team-based care

- **Evidence-based Models**

- **Reach Out and Read**

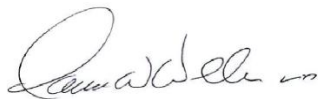
- Huiping Wu, Bi Ying Hu, Yu-Ju Chou, Jennifer LoCasale-Crouch & Chien-Ju Chang. (2026) [Contributions of nursery rhymes and parent-child reading to young children's language development: Variation across family socioeconomic status](#). *Child Development*. 2026, aacag106, <https://doi.org/10.1093/chidev/aacag106>
- Needlman RD, Dreyer BP, Klass P, Mendelsohn AL. [Attendance at Well-Child Visits After Reach Out and Read](#). *Clinical Pediatrics*. 2019;58(3):282-287. doi:[10.1177/0009922818822975](https://doi.org/10.1177/0009922818822975)

- **PlayRead VIP**

- Roby, E., O'Connell, L.K., Griffin, M.G., Guevara, V.A., Aviles, A.I., Larkins, B.C., Guyon-Harris, K.L., Hunter, L.J., Mcloughlin, M., Ndee, C., Vaca-Condado, L., Canfield, C.F., Miller, E.B., Mendelsohn, A.L., Morris-Perez, P.A., Shaw, D.S., Gross, R.S., 2026. [Promoting early relational health and resilience in pediatric primary care: a qualitative study](#). *Pediatric Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41390-026-04842-7>
- Chen, Y., Canfield, C., Roby, E., Wesleder, A., Farinelli, M., Cates, C., & Mendelsohn, A., 2026. Parenting Intervention in Pediatric Primary Care Promotes Child Mental Health: Evidence from a Randomized Controlled Trial of PlayReadVIP. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, 293: 115028. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2026.115038>.

- **Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation**

- [Center of Excellence for Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation \(IECMHC\), Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development](#)
- [Leadership Certificate in Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation](#)



David W. Willis, MD, FAAP
Founder and Director, Nurture Connection
Georgetown University
Thrive Center for Children, Families,
and Communities
dww53@georgetown.edu



Patsy Hampton
Deputy Director, Nurture Connection
Georgetown University
Thrive Center for Children, Families,
and Communities
pah86@georgetown.edu