

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

Family Development

A CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN EARLY LEARNING • FOUNDED IN 1985

Making Moments Matter: The Earliest Years



Our Mission

Highest Quality Early Childhood Development through Honoring Relationships Rooted in Equity and Social Justice

At the heart of the Family Development Program's work is an image of a child who is powerful, curious and infinitely competent as an active, dynamic learner. We do everything in our power to keep this remarkable spark of learning alive.

Since our earliest beginnings, the Family Development Program has promoted a philosophy of child-centered learning, where teachers and parents are collaborators in supporting children's natural joy, passion for creative discovery, and a wonder of learning.

We believe that quality education for every child defines one of our greatest challenges as a society and as a citizenry. We believe that equity is every child's inalienable right. Our approach to our work is rooted in a deep, enduring respect for the cultural and family heritage that our youngest children know and love dearly.

We believe that our children need to be surrounded by *circles of support* that actively engage their families as full partners with early learning programs and schools. We need strong and trusted relationships with families to tackle the complex and very tough job of education. It's a huge responsibility to instill a lifelong love of learning – learning that nourishes and builds our citizenship, our communities, and quality of life that is shared by all.

The heartfelt understanding and nurturance of children with their families is what defines the Family Development Program.

*by Lois Vermilya,
Family Development Program Director*

The Family Development Program wants to celebrate all the ways that the first years of life create a lasting foundation for our children's lifetime of growing and learning. We honor the power that quality relationships have in nurturing our children during these earliest years, knowing that healthy child development takes place in everyday moments when parents and other caring adults make time to simply be with our babies and little ones.

It is fundamental: learning takes place in relationships. Babies and toddlers become enthralled when we talk, smile, snuggle, sing, play, and read to them. These wonderful moments together build the foundation for early learning and literacy. We also know that these everyday interactions support parent-child bonding and healthy attachment which are shown to prevent child abuse and neglect.

We are eager to recognize *Making Moments Matter* as the title for our Family Development Program's Spring 2018 Journal. It captures a central theme in all of the articles while also announces a campaign we are part of through the Early Childhood Accountability Partnership (ECAP) here in our home community of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County. You can learn more about the *Making Moments Matter* campaign at ECAP's website: <https://missiongraduatenm.org/making-moments-matter> Our Spanish/English Parent and Educator Insert at the center of this journal tells you more. Stay tuned – some statewide opportunities through *Making Moments Matter* will be coming later this year!

Our Spring 2018 *Making Moments Matter* Journal captures stories and lessons we have learned about the critical first years of life, starting when a baby is in the womb, into the magic of infancy, then the fun years of being two and three. Here are a few highlights of what you get to discover:

***Songs from the Womb* by Janelle Garcia Cole:** In our opening article, one of our Training & Development Consultants remembers how her relationship began with her first born Keon. She tells a story about the joy -- and uncertainty too -- of one of her earliest days which helped her realize that little Keon heard her singing in utero as well. As new parents to be, we can begin developing a relationship with our baby during pregnancy which science tells us sets the stage for quality bonding in years to come.

The Delight of Being Two by Paula Steele: This article takes us into a few days and some fun moments being with two year olds. Making opportunities to carefully observe and interact with toddlers continually teaches us how these little tuskers think and master doing things in their own unique ways. As educators or parents, just spending time with toddlers can become a teachable moment for us as adults!

It's Never Too Early - STEM from Birth to Three Years Old by Ybeth Iglesias, MPA: Here's some great information about STEM learning for babies, toddlers and preschoolers. The article offers you suggestions for how to engage everyday moments and children's curiosity as a strong foundation for early science, engineering and math.

The Power of Reflection by Sam Rodriguez: This article explores powerful ways we can learn when we make time to reflect on our experiences. A story is told from the point of view of a parent who is also remembering being a daughter. Insights about seeing our own child with new eyes that have learned from past messages we received as a child can be very potent and a teachable moment when sensitively shared with others.

Childhood is a Journey, Not a Race by Lucia Sanchez-Ramirez, Parent Educator, UNM CDD Parents as Teachers: The Family Development Program is pleased to include a guest article about the experience of home visiting from our colleague Lucia Sanchez-Ramirez's personal point of view as a dedicated home visitor. It allows all of us to step into the shoes of home visiting as an important investment in our state that offers rewarding educational supports directly to and with families.

Healthy Relationships Build Resiliency by Judy Baca de Arones, NM Department of Health Promotion Specialist: Our closing article, written by a second guest colleague, helps us think about the vital role we all have to play in assuring the prevention of child maltreatment. Statewide opportunities to deepen our understanding of the impact Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) have on young children and what we can do to strengthen resiliency is a responsibility we all can carry together.

Taken as a whole, our 2018 *Making Moments Matter* Journal shines a light on our youngest citizens here in New Mexico – our babies, our toddlers, our three year-olds, and even our children who are yet to be. We ask

The Family Development Program publishes the *Family Development Journal* for those working with, working for, and raising children in New Mexico.

Editors: Dorothy L. Kerwin, Teresa Sierra, Paula Steele, Lois Vermilya

Contributing writers: Judy Baca de Arones, Janelle Garcia Cole, Ybeth Iglesias, Dorothy Kerwin, Samuel Rodriguez, Lucia Sanchez-Ramirez, Paula Steele, Lois Vermilya

Designer: Jana Fothergill

The Family Development Program encourages you to reproduce this publication in whole or part. For information, contact 277-5800. Back issues available at: <http://fdp.unm.edu>

you to take a few moments to really see the mom who is pregnant, or the new baby in papa's arms, or to ponder just what is going on for that group of two year olds playing together, or to ask yourself: How can I be an ally for all children and families growing up strong and with a sense of wellbeing?

Together we are called to action. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that every child in New Mexico grows up with a genuine sense of belonging, and is given every possibility to succeed and thrive.



Making Moments Matter is a systems level campaign collectively organized by the Bernalillo County Early Childhood Accountability Partnership (ECAP) to support foundations for healthy development and early learning.

Family Development Program, in partnership with ECAP, is pleased to promote the campaign as the theme and title for our Spring 2018 Family Development Journal.

Songs from the Womb

by Janelle Garcia Cole

Eleven years ago, I was beaming as I learned I was pregnant with my first child. My goal was to do everything I could to have a healthy, safe, and smooth pregnancy. I did not consume any caffeine, left the brussel sprouts out of my salads, and I stayed away from sushi. At the time, I was working as a full-time preschool teacher, which is rewarding but exhausting work. Each day I read to my students. We sang songs and nursery rhymes, and we danced and played. I also took a nap every day after I arrived home. Taking care of my bundle of joy was my priority.



In March of 2006, my first son, Keon, was born. He was the most precious human being I had ever laid eyes on. The love I had for him was immeasurable. When Keon was about one month old, I decided to drive to my parents' house, which was about thirty minutes away, to visit my family. My baby boy began to cry uncontrollably. I was driving, and he was in his infant carrier. I started to panic but was afraid to pull over due to being on a busy freeway. I turned the radio on, but that didn't soothe him. I took some deep breaths and began singing, "La araña pequeñita...". Much to my relief, Keon immediately slowed his crying and began to self-soothe. I stopped singing for a few seconds, but he whimpered as if he wanted more singing. So I sang to him for twenty miles of driving. We arrived safely, and I had no voice left, but my baby boy was happy and calm.



I then had an “aha” moment. I realized that all the singing I did when I was teaching my students really **did** have an effect on my son in my womb. I realized that he had heard this song before; it was familiar to him. As I read more research while pregnant with my second son, studies proved babies can hear and pick up rhythmic sounds in the womb. This is super exciting! My two boys came into the world and they already knew my voice and recognized the songs that I sang with my students while they were in my womb. Our preschool activities were the foundation for the boys’ love of reading and song. They understood the rhythmic patterns of reading before they were born.



of herself. You can talk and sing and read to her belly as well! Just think, you are already making a positive impression on this precious life. ♥

Start reading to your babies in your womb. Books with clear rhythm and rhyme patterns are fun to read and your baby will enjoy them.

My favorite books

Brown Bear, Brown Bear by Bill Martin
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin
Guess How Much I Love You by Sam Mc Bratney
Llama Llama by Ann Dewdney
Any books by Dr. Suess, or Eric Carle

Some songs your babies will love

*You are my sunshine, my only sunshine;
you make me happy, when skies are gray.
You'll never know dear, how much I love you.
Please don't take my sunshine away.*

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star
How I wonder what you are
Up above the world so high
Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle little star
How I wonder what you are.*

*Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life is but a dream.*

Of course, not all sounds are the same. Perhaps the most significant sound a baby hears in utero is his mother’s voice. Around the seventh and eighth month, a fetus’s heart rate slows down slightly whenever his mother is speaking. This is an indicator that mom’s voice has a calming effect. This is so beautiful and amazing at the same time. Let’s talk and sing to our babies in the womb. Parents to be, read to your bellies, and don’t be afraid of others looking at you strangely. Mommies, start singing in the shower! Daddies, sing to your baby! Sing your favorite nursery rhymes. My boys never cared their mommy couldn’t carry a tune to save her life, and so you don’t need to worry if you are similarly challenged!

Further reading helped me to understand that in addition to hearing what happens outside the womb, babies are also affected by their mother’s emotional states. We should aspire to remain calm in all situations. With life stressors and such, take time to take deep breaths and put your feet up. Realizing that our babies are hearing and feeling what is going on in the outside world is important for all of us. If you have a family member or friend who is pregnant, make her dinner, help her with errands, or encourage her to relax and take care

The Delight of Being Two

by Paula Steele

Spending time with the two year old bunnies at Christina Kent Early Childhood Center has been an enlightening experience. There is so much to learn from them! Herein I will describe what I have observed and my reflections on the wonder that they embody, and engender, in me.

Two year olds are so young really. Imagine, only two years and maybe a few months more than that on the planet. Yet, by now they are walking, running, feeding themselves and cleaning up afterwards. Some of them are quite loquacious, while the younger ones have yet to string words together into a sentence. I find it fascinating to observe their abilities and where they are in their developmental strides. All two year olds are not on equal footing. There is quite a difference between a 24 month old (newly two) and 30 month old (a whole extra six months). That's why we often use months, rather than years, when talking about our youngest beings.

In addition, there are differences simply based upon a child's individual path of growth and development. For instance, as I watched Heidi, Lucy, Quincy, and Devin outside climbing the curved ladder to the slide platform, there was clearly a difference in comfort and ability. Lucy (30 months) and Quincy (35 months) maneuver by alternating feet as they climbed. Heidi (30 months) is still stepping by resting two feet on each rung as she ascends. So we see that even children the same age are progressing at their individual pace.

Meanwhile, Devin, just three months younger, clearly wanted to climb; he approached the ladder, and then



backed away, looking to me for support. I left my perch to be near him. I asked if he wanted help. While not offering a verbal response, his physical action was my answer. He began climbing without any assistance. He did look back to me, seemingly to ensure that I was there if needed. Devin succeeded in climbing all the way!

One day I wore five silver Indian bangle bracelets to the Bunnies room. One child was captivated. He slid them one by one, up and down my arm. He turned them on my wrist. This gave me the idea to wear more. I have a large collection of red, green, and gold bangles which I wore on another occasion. This time Victor and Lucy expressed interest. Victor first approached and by pointing let it be known that he wanted one. I gave it to him and he put it on his arm. Another went on his other arm. He was content with just the two. Lucy, observing this, came over and said, "Me, too." They both enjoyed moving the bracelets up and down my arm, one at a time, very gently. Then Lucy named the dominant color: green or red. As she spent more time looking at the bangles she seemed to be pointing to another color. "Gold," I say. She repeats, "Gold." We play back and forth a bit naming the bangle colors, red and gold; green and gold; or simply identifying gold on the various bangles.

Now Victor wants more bracelets. He comes over and pulls on them, trying to slide them off. I help. He's not being rough, but he doesn't have the ability yet to see what's needed. Lucy wants to get in on the action. She however, recognizes that it takes both of her hands to maneuver them off my arm. Just three months between them, yet a clear difference. Nevertheless, how similar they are in their serious study of the bangles.



Za'hayla decides that rather than climb **up** the ladder, she will climb **down**. Along the way she elects to take a break and have a seat. I say, "Down!" She responds by standing up. We go through "Up and Down" a number of times on the ladder. She seems to be enjoying the use of big muscles in her arms and legs to make this happen. I wonder what other activities could be introduced to provide her with the opportunity to use her full body in play.



It is a deep pleasure to interact with these brain building beings. Everything they do speaks of learning and of how they are trying to figure out the world. Sometimes there are challenges, for them as well as for us, as we all try to understand one another and our ways of doing and being in the environment. Whenever I manage to make time for visits to this place of growth, I am gratified to learn something new about children and their development. I believe that through our observations, interactions, and reflections a profound appreciation for children's abilities grows. In working through what I think I understand about them, I begin to also understand more about how my responses support them in their sense of self, as well as in their own response to the world around them.

I highly recommend finding a way to interact with the terrific two year olds in your world! ♥

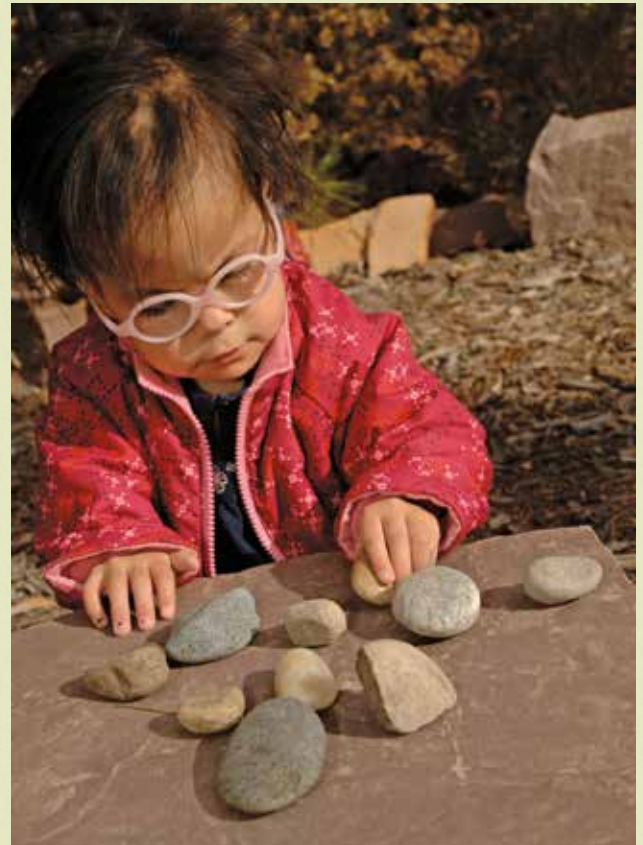
It's Never Too Early —

by Ybeth Iglesias, MPA

In recent years, there has been an explosion of research exploring how young children learn. Hopefully, we can all agree on a couple of basic ideas. First is the idea that children are born ready and hardwired to learn. During the first three years of life, if the human brain is both nurtured and stimulated, it will triple in size and create over 1,000 trillion synapses. Second is the idea that learning occurs best in the child's natural environment through everyday routines and playful experiences. Human beings from the very beginning learn through experiencing concepts in contextual settings and making connections between different ideas as they experience them.



We envision *Science, Technology, Engineering and Math* (STEM) learning as a holistic, multidisciplinary approach and philosophy where a child learns through being the center of an experience and in a variety of different settings. This is a shift from “traditional learning” where subjects are taught in a linear fashion, in isolation from each other, and in closed environmental settings. For example, in addition to a young child learning numbers (math) in a counting book or with flash cards, we can take the child outside to practice counting real objects such as leaves or acorns and helping her compare and sort items into categories. This combines both math and biology through a fun, experiential and interactive activity. We also observe these concepts in everyday moments when a baby signs for “more” even before language begins or when a toddler fills up a bucket with items only to dump them out again. STEM lends itself to a child's natural curiosity with unlimited opportunities that creates a solid foundation for future learning.



Science - The *Scientific Method* (Observation/Forming Questions/Forming Hypotheses/Conducting Experiments/Analyzing Data/Drawing Conclusions) aligns beautifully with children's natural curiosity about how the world works. Children are constantly **observing** their surroundings; wondering and **forming questions** by asking the whys; **formulating ideas** of how things work; trying things out by **conducting their own experiments**; comparing and **analyzing** if it worked; making it better; and then wanting to share what they learned with the world. Science has many fields of study including



STEM from Birth to Three Years Old

chemistry, physics, and biology. Chemistry concepts of properties, composition, and reactions of matter can be learned while making mud pies and working on achieving just the right combination and balance between dirt and water to create the best consistency. Reactions can be addressed by mixing water color paints or play dough to create new colors. Have you ever witnessed a toddler repeatedly dropping a cup from a high chair? Physics concepts of matter and energy such as gravity



can be explored as children drop objects from different heights onto varying surfaces. Force can be discussed when children bang and crash cars or structures they have created. Biology, the study of living organisms, is experienced every day when children interact with pets, plants, bugs and their own human bodies.

Technology - Focuses on putting science into practical use to solve problems. It is used to develop new tools or devices to make our environment easier to navigate. When a two year old uses a spoon to reach a toy or as a three year old is balancing on top of a shoe box to reach an item set too high, they are using technology. Informational Technology (IT) and early coding concepts of sequence and series are learned through board games when a child gets a number and then applies it to an existing number moving tokens forward.

Engineering - Is the area of science and technology focusing on the design, building, and use of engines, machines, and structures. Children love to build; it is



This little piggy went to market . . .

intuitive regardless of gender. By their first birthday children usually have the foundational skills to build a two-block tower. Children might build beds (measurement) for their babies out of boxes and fill them with tissues (structural engineering). They might build ramps (incline planes) for their cars to race (velocity) and to jump off (gravity). And during bath time adults can ask a child to think about which object floats or sinks.

Math - Is the science of numbers, quantities, and shapes, and the relations between them. Children enjoy counting and in the first year recognize the difference between large and small quantities. Without being able to count, a young child will stare longer at a larger quantity of dots than at a lesser quantity. Children understand that smaller cars will fit into a larger truck, demonstrating an understanding of volume. When we count our child's fingers and toes out loud during bath time and point out what makes a finger a finger and what makes a toe a toe, we are incorporating both math and biology into everyday routines.

A parent's role as the child's first teacher begins on day one. Even before an infant has gained expressive verbal language, caregivers can encourage and support the thought processes of STEM by giving words to her ideas. When a child's language development catches up, she will know the words to express her thoughts and ideas. With the right questions, we can help stimulate investigations as a child identifies objects, makes comparisons, creates predictions, tests ideas, and shares discoveries. Children are born explorers and scientists. All we need is to provide them with the space and the supportive environment in which to grow. ♥

The Power of Reflection

by Samuel T. Rodriguez

A defining condition of being human is that we have to understand the meaning of our experience.

—Jack Mezirow

I love the learning that comes from taking a moment to step back and think about our reactions, feelings, attitudes, biases and preconceived ideas and where they come from. I love the learning that comes from understanding how those feelings manifest in our daily lives with our children and those close to us. Simply, I love the mindfulness that comes with reflection and how it enhances relationships with understanding about our experience in the great big world.

A dear friend of mine, Daniela posted a video of her son Copal, age 28 months, dancing in complete joy and discovery. Watching the video allowed me to tap into the energy of the moment shared between Copal and his mother: the sense of pride, delight, discovery and enjoyment Copal experienced. I can imagine that Daniela reciprocated similar feelings as she captured her son's experience. Throughout the video it seems that Copal would briefly break from his dance experience to glance at his mother. It seems that he would electrify when he saw his mother beaming at him and his dance would become more adventurous.

Daniela shared the video on her La Loba Health Empowerment company page via Facebook. Daniela is a Public Health Consultant, Full Spectrum Doula and Sex Educator. She introduced the video with this excerpted statement:

I'm posting this because I feel it's such a beautiful example of a kiddo feeling empowered in his body... As



parents we have the opportunity to slowly weave age appropriate lessons into their lives since birth.

I grew up with a very different experience from that which we are trying to give our children. In a very small, traditional, Catholic, Latino town, and a very patriarchal household, I was repeatedly taught that my body shouldn't be seen and my voice shouldn't be heard. When I was five years old we had our annual spring festival at school. The kindergarteners were always assigned to dance La Marcha (a traditional wedding march). I remember having so much fun learning and practicing that dance!! Performance day came and I was so proud to dance for my familia in front of the community. But when I ran to my mom after it was over, her face was filled with disapproval. Apparently I shook my hips too ostentatiously and I was un sinvergüenza. (Loosely this translates to a girl without shame but in my kind of household those words carried a lot more weight and I felt the accusation of shame being brought to the whole family through my actions.) There are many more examples like this throughout my childhood that slowly dimmed my light and my sense of self and I've had to continuously work to take it back. Today I have reclaimed that word "sinvergüenza" and I have vowed to empower my babies to love their bodies and their voices!



It brings me great joy to see that Copal has been supported by parents who are attuned to how he is experiencing the world. Daniela and Andre are reflective about how their childhood experiences have shaped them making them mindful about what they want to share with Copal to enhance his life. The attunement, modeling of reflection and the safety and security that Copal experiences in his relationship with his parents promotes the development of his own reflective capacity and skills.

The details in Daniela's post assert her desire to empower her children with a positive sense of self marking a clear decision to break away from bringing shame to an activity that should be safe for a child to explore. Daniela and Andre are realistic about their parenting journey. They recognize they will have hiccups along the way, but are confident that the relationship they have with their children will grow stronger. They know that rupture and repair are natural and healthy, and that keeping a dialogue to support understanding is key

It is my wish that every child experience a relationship with an adult who thinks deeply about their child's experience in the world. ♥



Childhood is a Journey, Not a Race

by Lucia Sanchez-Ramirez, Parent Educator
UNM CDD Parents as Teachers

New Mexico has made great strides in improving outcomes for families and children by offering free home visiting services throughout our state. There are more than 30 Home Visiting Programs in more than 30 counties statewide. Family Development Program is highlighting one Parent Educator's experience in this Journal but wants to acknowledge that there are many extraordinary professionals providing high-quality services to our New Mexico families. Enjoy this glimpse into Home Visiting.

"There's nothing more challenging and joyful than being a parent!" This is the most frequent response I received from parents when I welcome a new family into our Home Visiting Program. Parenting is a journey that begins even before a baby is born! Parenting never stops. It can sometimes be tough and at other times can be smooth and exciting. As a Home Visitor for UNM Center for Development and Disability's *Parents as Teachers Home Visiting Program*, I work with families in Bernalillo and Valencia Counties. When we all work together to create a strong foundation during the first five years of a child's life, outcomes will be great for children and their families. When parents open their doors to receive a home visitor



a new journey begins; a new partnership starts building as we collaborate together to meet the needs of their child. Letting parents know that they are the first and most influential teacher in their child's life is a core value to our program. Home visiting goes beyond just making sure baby and mom are doing well. There is a whole team of professionals and resources available and ready to help when a new challenge is encountered.

Children achieve new milestones every day. Time flies from when newborns start turning their heads toward the sound of their mom, dad or a sibling's voice, to the time when they are learning about numbers, letters and their favorite character or movie. And when a family has more than one child, each of them is going to perceive the world and achieve these milestones in his or her own way. Children's first and most important learning starts at home. Babies come into this world ready to learn from their caregivers and their environment. Before children enter kindergarten or preschool, they come with a bagful of experiences that they have gained from the interactions in their first environment—their home. This journey is not an easy one; not for parents, not for children. Home visitations can play an important part in helping families understand this rewarding and sometimes challenging journey.



Preparing our children for school and for life in the first five years is the best investment any parent can make. I feel blessed to have gotten to know and been able to support all the families in our program. Congratulations to the ones who have completed this journey with us and graduated to Kindergarten! Thanks for all the laughs, the good and not so good times, for the home visits out of the home and for the group connections. As a Parent Educator I want to acknowledge that I have learned so much from you and the generous sharing of your lives with your children with me. Keep up all the good work!

Recently, we celebrated one more graduation of children that joined our program and finished with our services by the time they started kindergarten. ♥

Healthy Relationships Build Resiliency

*by Judy Baca de Arones
NM Department of Health Promotion Specialist*

The quality of adult relationships in a child's life creates the groundwork for healthy development beginning during pregnancy, at birth, and throughout infancy. Positive relationships with caregivers give children the strongest start in life. As early childhood champions, we understand the importance of promoting the wellbeing of children and supporting parents and caregivers to develop their capacity to promote healthy families. When our children do well, our community will do well. We all benefit when our youngest children can grow up emotionally, socially and physically healthy; prepared to succeed in school and to build a foundation for life long success.

Based on the research of early brain development and child maltreatment, we know that when children are provided protective, nurturing and supportive environments they will achieve healthy development and improved learning outcomes. Unfortunately, there can be barriers to these outcomes when children are exposed to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). In a 1998 Kaiser Permanente HMO study, researchers found a strong connection between ACEs and adult risk of health issues and emotional wellbeing. The study made clear that when children are exposed to ACEs such as physical, psychological, sexual abuse and neglect, there is a high probability the impact can last into adulthood and have damaging effects on health, social and emotional outcomes. A higher number of adverse experiences increased the risk of poor mental health, substance abuse and multiple health risk factors.

Since the Kaiser Permanente study was completed, more research has shown that ACEs interfere with healthy brain development, which occurs most rapidly during the first three years of life. A child exposed to long term adversity can experience toxic stress, a heavy burden for a child's developing brain. The impact is cumulative and persists into adulthood. Positive or negative experiences will influence brain development. To prevent the negative effects of ACEs and to promote positive experiences for children during this optimal time, we want to support parents and caregivers by educating them about healthy child development and improving opportunities for healthy brains. The goal is to prevent child maltreatment and the long-term impact of adverse childhood experiences.

Although the impact of adverse childhood experiences on the brain is a heavy burden for children, there is good news. Parents, caretakers and other service providers

can help a child who is exposed to adverse childhood experiences by providing them with the positive attention, love, and care that they need. This looks like basic, everyday interactions that many of us take for granted: eye contact, smiling, singing, snuggling, and being silly. These are all ways that any adult in a child's life can boost brain architecture by creating the neural pathways that help a baby or toddler know that they are loved, and can trust the adults in their lives. These interactions also help to build resiliency, the ability to overcome or recover from difficulty.



Unfortunately, many parents may be struggling with the lasting impact of their own ACEs and are challenged with how to promote stability, protection and learning opportunities for their children. There is good news here, too. Parents can also develop resiliency with support from professionals and others who understand the effects of trauma and who can help adults learn how to manage it. Families can learn about child development and what their babies need from them so that their relationship can grow in a strong and supportive way.

In Bernalillo County there is a prevention program identifying parents with ACEs, who are provided follow up services and coordination to increase child well-being outcomes for their children. The County has distributed funds from a gross receipt tax to improve behavioral health services and outcomes in our community. Part of the funding was set aside to address ACEs. One of the grantees, UNM Office for Community Health-Community Health Worker Initiative, implemented a prevention effort in the Pediatric Emergency Department in the summer of 2017. Community Health Workers (CHWs) meet with parents who voluntarily agree to complete two screenings, one about the social determinants

of health and the other is the ACEs questionnaire. Depending on the score, a parent will then be referred for follow up services and additional assessment which are coordinated by the CHW. The goal is to prevent and lessen the impact of ACEs to improve child well-being outcomes, support healthy child development, and increase parent and caregiver capacity within families.

The evidence base for promoting safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments, and preventing child maltreatment is not static; it is constantly evolving. Therefore, we must act on the best evidence available to us today. We should focus our efforts to prevent ACEs by supporting parents and caregivers in providing safe, loving environments; in understanding the importance of everyday moments; and cultivating opportunities for children to learn and flourish in their development.

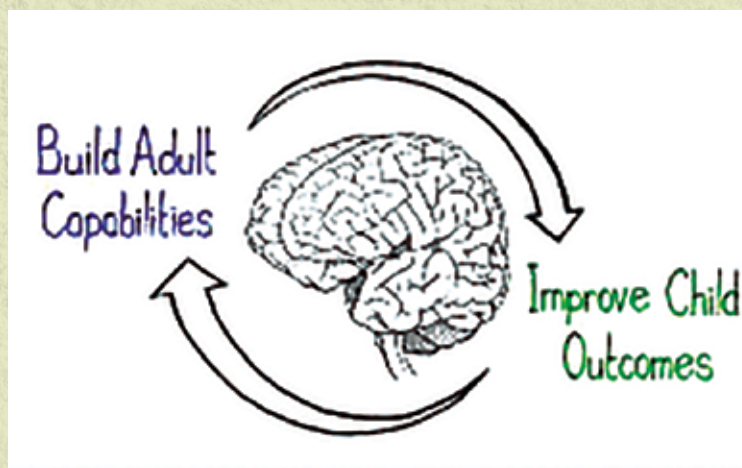
Resources and References

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* May 1998 Volume 14, Issue 4, p245-382

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2016). *From Best Practices to Breakthrough Impacts: A Science-Based Approach to Building a More Promising Future for Young Children and Families*. <http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu>

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/resilience/>

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/building-adult-capabilities-to-improve-child-outcomes-a-theory-of-change/> ♥



This video describes opportunities to improve our adult capabilities and help cultivate healthy child well-being. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/building-adult-capabilities-to-improve-child-outcomes-a-theory-of-change/> (Screen capture comes from this video)



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW MEXICO

UNM Family Development Program
1 University of New Mexico
MSC06 3630
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131-0001
<http://fdp.unm.edu>