



Promoting Lifelong Well-being: A Texas Health Center Transforms Care Through Early Relational Health

At the People's Community Clinic in Austin, TX, staff prioritize family engagement and early relational health in pediatric care to foster lifelong health and well-being.



In our latest piece, Dr. Louis Appel, director of pediatrics at People's Community Clinic, and Dr. Christina Bethell, director of the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative, spotlight the clinic's experiences in integrating early relationships, overcoming screening challenges and building relationships with families. They share practical tools that health care providers, community health center staff and early childhood professionals can use to create stronger connections with families, and they highlight how everyday interactions drive broader systems change.

"For infants and young children, the pediatric well-child visit is among our greatest opportunities to promote children's healthy development and flourishing and prevent future chronic physical and mental health problems."

Explore Their Approach

New Guide for Pediatric Practices to Create a Developmental Screening Process

Routine screening in pediatric practice is essential for identifying risks to a young child's development early, linking families to follow-up services and improving outcomes.

Our new resource, the [Getting Started Guide: Implementing a Screening Process](#), is designed to help pediatric practice teams build and execute a screening workflow. The guide is a fillable worksheet with step-by-step planning considerations, guidance and resource links.

- Step 1:** Identify Current Screening Tools
- Step 2:** Identify Your Practice Champion
- Step 3:** Identify the Practice Team Members Who Will Be Part of the Process
- Step 4:** Select the Screening Tool(s) and Educational Materials That Will Be Used
- Step 5:** Plan Key Parts of the Workflow for Each Screening Category
- Step 6:** Identify Screening Program Support
- Step 7:** Engage Staff in the Concepts, Principles and Process

We recommend that the full practice team — including clinicians, nurses, office staff, family leaders and others — complete the guide together to ensure the screening process is tailored to the practice's needs and the families they serve.

Download the Resource

Research Spotlight: Building Trust in Systems

Strong systems help ensure that young children have access to a full range of care that supports healthy development. To better understand what makes a strong system, our team conducted research with health care providers to explore facilitators and challenges.

Key Components of Trust in Early Childhood Developmental Health Systems

Reliable Referral Partners

Attuning to Families

Early Relational Health

Warm Hand-Offs

We learned that family trust in the provider and services received is paramount, but unfortunately, there are challenges to implementing programs and practices, such as resource allocation and workforce issues. Read a summary of findings, and suggested opportunities for strengthening systems, [here](#).

Caroline Wator from the American Academy of Pediatrics recently shared the results from this research through a poster at the Pediatric Academic Societies meeting.

Survey to Support the Community Health Center Workforce

The Association of Clinicians for the Underserved recently released a [survey](#) exploring strategies and challenges related to early childhood developmental care at health centers. The findings will be used to identify opportunities for supporting and sustaining a thriving workforce at federally qualified health centers. The survey should take 5 minutes to complete and is open to health center staff who support early childhood developmental screening, referrals and follow-up.

Complete by June 30

Upcoming Events

- July 17

- The [Help Me Grow National Forum](#) is taking place July 14-16 in Hartford, CT. This event brings together Help Me Grow affiliates, partners and early childhood innovators — physicians, social workers, researchers and more — to share best practices, engage in collaborative learning and shape the future of early childhood systems.
 - [ZERO TO THREE's LEARN Conference](#) will be in Baltimore, MD, from October 8-9. Join educators, healthcare providers, mental health professionals and others for the latest innovations, research and opportunities in supporting babies and their families.

Featured Resources

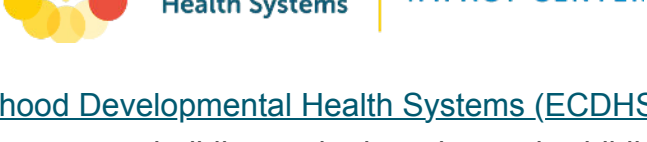
- ### National Maternal Mental Health Hotline

The Health Resources and Services Administration's [National Maternal Mental Health Hotline \(1-833-TLC-MAMA\)](#) is free, confidential and available 24/7 in English and Spanish. Professional counselors, including licensed health care professionals, certified educators or specialists, answer hotline calls and texts.
- ### Baby Brain Map

ZERO TO THREE's new [Baby Brain Map](#) unlocks the science of how a baby's brain develops during the first 3 years of life and shows how everyday moments and strong relationships shape a child's future. The map makes complex brain science easy to understand and offers practical tips to support healthy development from day one.
- ### Safe Babies Benefit-Cost Report

A [new benefit-cost analysis](#) from Chapin Halls shows that implementing Safe Babies can save states up to \$18.9 million over 5 years. The Safe Babies approach aims to improve the well-being of children under 3 in the child welfare system by reducing their time in foster care.
- ### Developmental Surveillance Online Course

This [free course](#) from the American Academy of Pediatrics provides pediatricians and health care providers with an overview of developmental surveillance and addresses gaps in knowledge and performance that exist among pediatric clinicians.



The [Early Childhood Developmental Health Systems \(ECDHS\): Evidence to Impact Center](#) focuses on building and advancing early childhood systems to improve and strengthen the health and well-being of babies and toddlers' most crucial years of development. ZERO TO THREE leads the ECDHS: Evidence to Impact Center in partnership with the American Academy of Pediatrics, Help Me Grow National Center, Family Voices, James Bell Associates, and Thrive Center for Children, Families, and Communities at Georgetown University.

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