



# Building Connections Across Early Relational Health

Community Action for Healthy Babies

January 24, 2024



**Safe Babies**

A Program of ZERO TO THREE

# The Intent of Today's Session

- a) Increasing capacity to identify drivers that influence equity related to quality and access of service delivery – particularly how that impacts families experiencing heightened adversities.
- b) Exploring the foundations of early relational health and resources that promote maternal health and child well-being.
- c) Engaging in strategies to enhance collective responsiveness to risk and supporting family resiliency.



# Questions Along The Way?

Go to  
[www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com)  
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# The Importance of a Well-Coordinated Early Childhood System

# 19

A childhood shaped by trauma is associated with 8 of the 10 leading causes of death in the US, and has been estimated to shorten one's life by as much as 19 years.

# 20.7%

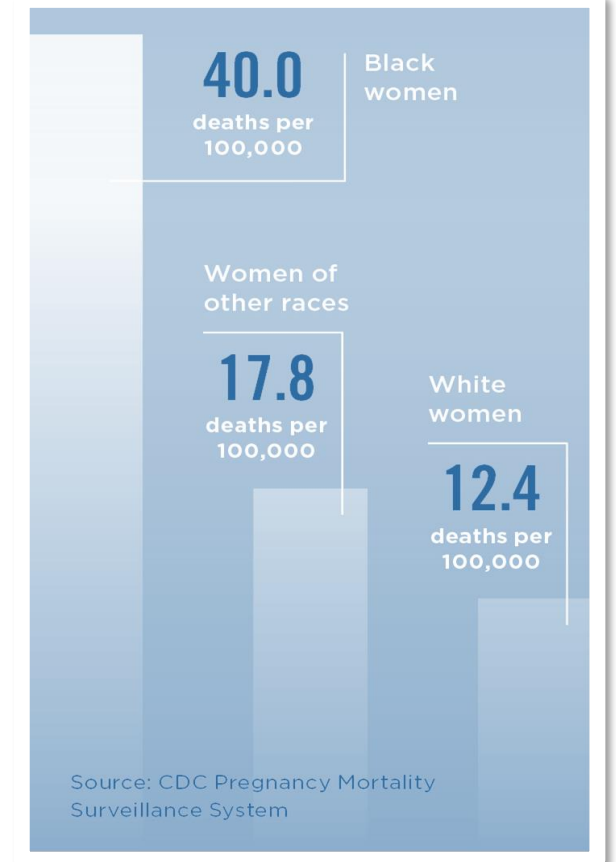
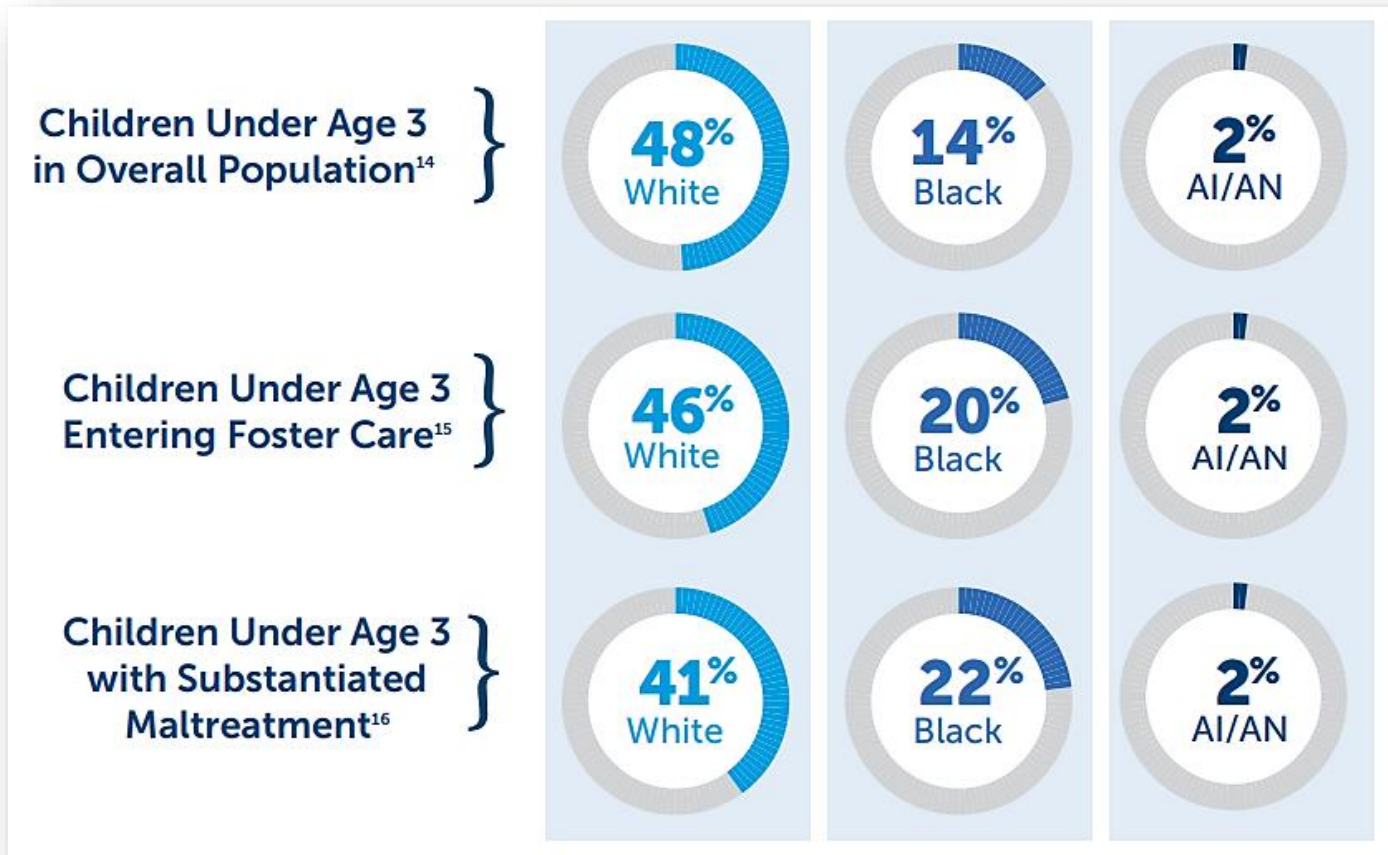
A single adverse childhood experience can rewire a baby's brain negatively. Sadly, 20.7 percent of infants and toddlers will have one significant adverse experience.

One of the most traumatic experiences a baby can have is separation from a primary caregiver.



U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2023). *Child Maltreatment 2021*. Available from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/data-research/child-maltreatment>.

# The Intersection of Race, Perinatal Health and Disproportionality in Child Welfare



ZERO TO THREE and Center for the Study of Social Policy. (2022). Grounding Family and Child Well-Being Policies and Systems in Anti-Racist Principles and Strategies

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (October 2021). The AFCARS Report FY2020

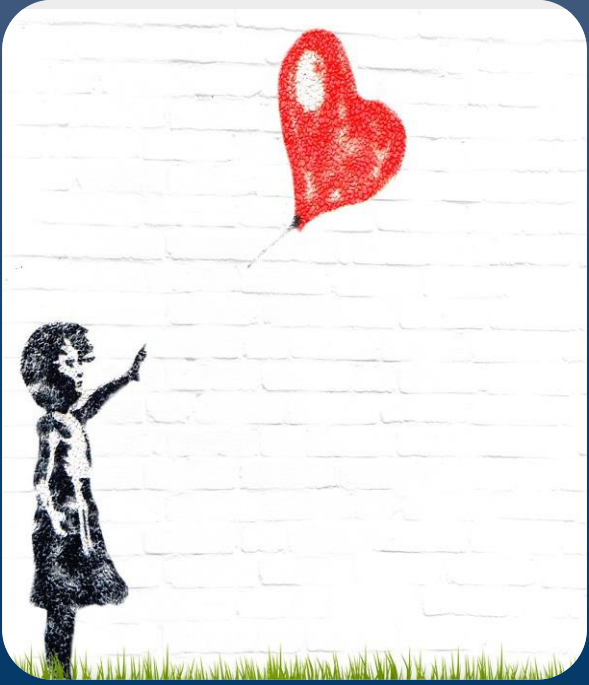


# Reflections on Responsiveness to Risk...

Investing our Energy and Resources



Social Determinants of Health  
Copyright-free  
Healthy People 2030



Minimizing the Need for...



# Taking On Health Disparities and Equity In Practice

Drivers that influence heightened risk for perinatal physical and mental health difficulties:

- Stigma
- Gaps in medical insurance
- Financial barriers, including lack of paid time off from work or transportation
- Acknowledging the need for help creates feelings of vulnerability
- Competing stressors (food insecurities, housing instability, SUDs)
- Isolation and insufficient formal supports or healthy relationships
- Fear and lack of trust in professionals
- Inability to navigate the system



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# Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships are Essential for Early Relational Health





Up to **1 in 5**

women will suffer from a maternal mental health disorder like postpartum depression<sup>1</sup>



less than **15%**

of women receive treatment<sup>2</sup>



**1 in 7**

will experience depression during pregnancy<sup>3</sup>



Up to **50%**

of women living in poverty will suffer from a maternal mental health disorder<sup>4,5</sup>



## Perinatal MH Impacts on Infants and Toddlers:

- **Depression:** cognitive and behavioral problems, increased risk for ADHD and Autism
- **Anxiety:** emotional problems (slight increase) mothers report difficulty bonding that are not necessarily observed by a neutral party during parent/child interactions.
- **Personality Disorders:** greater dysregulation for babies, less sensitive parenting that IS observable by a neutral party, but not likely to be perceived by mother.

**NOT JUST MOMS**

Maternal mental health disorders impact the whole family, not just women<sup>6</sup>



More Than **600,000**

women will suffer from a maternal mental health disorder in the United States every year<sup>7</sup>



Anxiety and depression have risen

**37%** in teen girls

This will increase the number of women suffering postpartum depression in the future<sup>5</sup>



**1 in 10**

Dads will experience a perinatal mental health disorder following the birth of their child.<sup>6</sup>



“Fostering resilience in children means investing in the adults who support them.”

- Dr. Sufna John



# The Power of Partnering with Home Visiting



# Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

## The foundation of all future development

*Everyone who touches the life of a child can promote social and emotional well-being*

Social and emotional development, or **infant and early childhood mental health**, is the developing capacity of a child from birth to 5 years old to...



Form close and secure **adult and peer relationships...**



Experience, manage and express a **full range of emotions...**



**Explore the environment** and learn...

...all in the context of family, community, and culture.

# Building Connections to Address Community Needs That Support Early Relational Work



# Taking Action to Support Early Relational Health



# Our Collective Responsiveness To Risk



What The Pandemic  
Taught Us...



# Women's Rights: What we knew about the perinatal period and mental health... now elevated post pandemic

1-2 of every 1,000 women will require a psychiatric admission in the first few months after birth

Women are 22x more likely to have a psychiatric admission in the month following birth than in the pre-pregnancy period.

This generation of mothers report higher depression than mothers 25 years ago: depression 51% more likely than 25 years ago.

Black mothers are at increased risk (ex: postpartum rates of 40%, more than double the general population)



“Perinatal” refers to woman’s health during pregnancy and the post partum period (6 weeks to 1 year after birth, depending on the utilized definition)

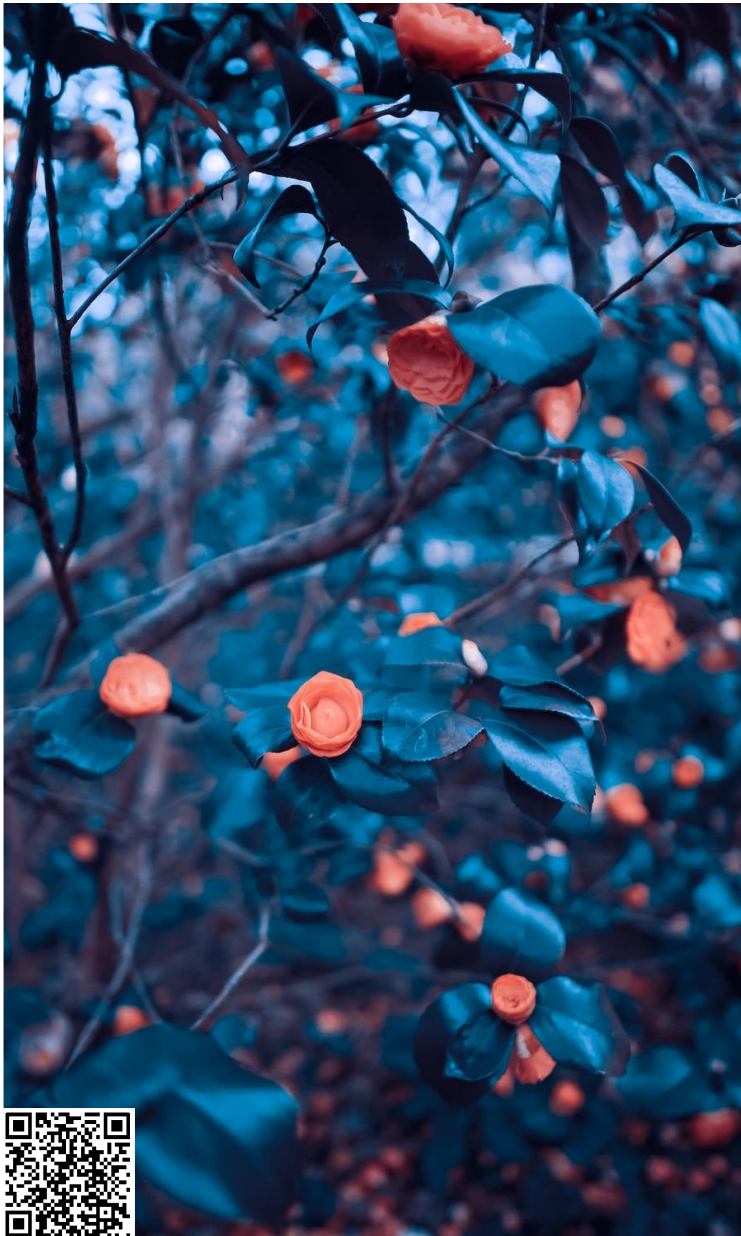
# Being Ready When Families Reach Out...

- ✓ Resource Availability
- ✓ Resource Accessibility
- ✓ Provider Familiarity and/or Knowledge





# Collective Responsiveness To Risk



# Leading From The Top

🌿 North Carolina's Care Coordination for Children (CC4C)

🌿 North Carolina's Pregnancy Medical Home Program

🌿 **Get Ready Guilford** in partnership with Family Connects, Healthy Steps, and Nurse Family Partnership



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# FINAL REFLECTIONS



Adults were once children too.



This work is hard and can evoke powerful emotions.



An important part of our jobs is to be in relationships with others.



We are all doing the best we can.

# References and Resources

- Kinsella, M. T., & Monk, C. (2009). Impact of maternal stress, depression and anxiety on fetal neurobehavioral development. *Clinical obstetrics and gynecology*, 52(3), 425–440. <https://doi.org/10.1097/GRF.0b013e3181b52df1>
- “Child welfare is not exempt from structural racism and implicit bias” <https://imprintnews.org/opinion/child-welfare-is-not-exempt-from-structural-racism-and-implicit-bias/33315>
- Center for the Study of Social Policy -Information on Strengthening Families and Protective Factors – [www.cssp.org](http://www.cssp.org)
- National Center for Trauma-Informed Care – [www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/nctic](http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/nctic)
- National Scientific Council on the Developing Child at Harvard University - [www.developingchild.net](http://www.developingchild.net)
- “Legacy of Trauma: Context of the African American Existence” <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/equity/projects/infantmortality/session2.2.pdf>
- Pregnant Women and Substance Use White Paper - [https://publichealth.gwu.edu/sites/default/files/downloads/JIWH/Pregnant Women and Substance Use updated.pdf](https://publichealth.gwu.edu/sites/default/files/downloads/JIWH/Pregnant%20Women%20and%20Substance%20Use%20updated.pdf)
- Racism in Family Planning Care: <https://providers.bedsider.org/articles/racism-in-family-planning-care>
- Accelerating Child Health Transformation - [Child Health Transformation Resource Center](#)
- Understanding the History of Race in Health and Other Systems: Center for the Study of Social Policy/ ITCP - [Health Equity Learning Series- Center for the Study of Social Policy ITCP](#)
- Maternal and Child Health Journal (December 2023) - [Maternal and Child Health Journal | Volume 27, Issue 1 supplement \(springer.com\)](#)
- The Infant Toddler Court Program Policy Framework -