3 REASONS WE CARE ABOUT CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH

[Diagram with icons and text]

**BRAIN ARCHITECTURE**
Children are born ready to learn. Early experiences shape the brain. As families and caregivers, we have a shared stake to make sure babies and toddlers develop a strong foundation that supports healthy emotional development and the ability to bounce back in the face of hardship.

**BODY & HEALTH**
Infants and toddlers thrive when their world feels loving, safe and predictable. Nurturing relationships and communities help support a young child’s well-being. Without supportive environments, unrelenting stresses – known as “toxic stress” – can take a toll and have a negative effect on a child’s developing brain. Responsive caregiving and a supportive community tip the scale toward resilience and healing from traumatic experiences.

**BEHAVIOR & RELATIONSHIPS**
A caregiver who is attentive to a baby’s needs is the basis for secure attachment. Attachment is built through a process of observing and tuning into a child’s cues, thinking about what the behavior might mean, and responding in a developmentally appropriate, nurturing way. When young children have experienced relationships with responsive caregivers, they develop the ability to self-regulate, get along with others, solve problems, and ultimately be successful and productive – the basis for social and economic prosperity.

**INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH**
is the foundation of all future development.
Everyone who touches the life of a child can promote social and emotional well-being. This happens in the context of the family, community and culture.

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