

Concept Paper for Global Grant Application: Child and Adolescent Mental Health: Awareness, Identification and Treatment of Children with Adverse Childhood Experiences

Areas of Focus:

Maternal and Child Health
Disease Prevention and Treatment

Purpose of Project:

The purpose of this project is to increase the awareness, identification and treatment of children with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in Onslow County, North Carolina. (District 7730). Mental health needs must also be elevated everywhere children receive care not just when they have been victimized. Emerging science tells us that protective factors must exist in order for children to succeed in every room they sit including the classroom, playground, and home. When children have been exposed to adverse childhood trauma (ACEs), the positive health and mental health outcomes are significantly improved with access to trauma informed treatment. To read more about ACEs: <https://www.cdc.gov/aces/about/index.html>

Club, District, Leader Information:

Club The project was initiated in May 2024 by the Rotary Club of Sneads Ferry, North Carolina, inspired by a similar effort mounted by the Rotary Club of Highland Ranch, Colorado, and featured in the May issue of Rotary Magazine. The Rotary Club of Sneads Ferry was founded in 1992 and for over 30 years has run a King Mackerel Fishing Tournament as a fundraiser, allowing the club to put tens of thousands of dollars back into the local community each year.

The Sneads Ferry Rotary Club has committed \$50,000 to create the needed mental health clinicians to serve our children with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). The total goal of the Club is \$1 million, which will permit the licensure and continuing education of two additional clinicians per year in perpetuity. The Sneads Ferry Club is in process of connection to area Rotary Clubs to present the need and offer connections to participate. Additionally, the Rotary Club of Ending Child Abuse will support the awareness and the training for identification of children. Other Rotary Clubs will be identified in the coming months.

Rotarians from three District 7730 Clubs (Sneads Ferry, Jacksonville (NC) and Ending Child Abuse) currently staff the committee seeking to raise the funds and involve other clubs throughout the district and County. Rotarians in the Empowering Our Girls Club are actively involved in training and education for this project. Professions comprising

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the Committee include Business, Finance, Veteran, Government Advocacy, Social Work, Philanthropy and Education.

The Committee used the following statistics and questions as program development guideposts:

- On June 17, 2024, the US Surgeon General called Pediatric Mental Health “the defining public health crisis of our time” and urged warning labels on social media.
- 18% of deaths of the population between the ages of 10 and 17 in North Carolina in 2021 (last year stats were available), were due to suicide.
- 50% of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14.
- It takes an average of 8 to 10 years between first presentation of symptoms and actual intervention – critical development years in the life of a child.
- Large workforce turnover, exacerbated by proximity to the largest Marine Corps base on the East Coast, whose transient families are a large part of our community, and coupled with serious provider shortages, result in inadequate mental health support and access to care to prevent children from escalating to crisis levels.
- There is a shortage of mental health providers nationally and locally. There is an even greater shortage of mental health providers to serve children that are court involved as abused children are because of actions someone took to harm them.
- Our community has additional challenges with the transient military population as licensure reciprocity does not typically happen easily for medical and mental health providers, therefore we cannot be assured that those that can serve children on the military base have the license to serve off the military base.
- How did we get to where we are as a nation and in North Carolina in particular, in terms of pediatric mental health?
- How are we addressing the shortfalls in the pediatric mental health system in North Carolina?
- What can Rotarians do to help address care and provider shortages in our area?
- What opportunities can be developed for Rotary to spearhead an effort to partner and improve pediatric mental standards of care?

District 7730 The Rotary Club of Sneads Ferry is part of District 7730, comprising 50 clubs in southeastern North Carolina. The District has been a leader in Diversity Equity and Inclusion since 2020 with partnership to enhance understanding of professionals serving children as part of the group’s efforts. The District has also served as a leader in Mental Health with establishing a Mental Health Taskforce in 2023.

We would welcome additional Rotary District, Rotary Club and other partnerships.

Rotarian Project Leader. The Project Leader is Sneads Ferry Rotarian Phil Work, a veteran of 20 years in the US Navy, a retired commercial pilot with FedEx, and small

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business owner. Phil has been a Rotarian since 2016, all with the Sneads Ferry Club. He served as President in 2020-21, coincident with the District Governor term of Dawn Rochelle, and also chaired the club King Mackerel Tournament fundraiser in years 2021-2023. Phil was driven by the aforementioned May article in Rotary magazine to consult with PDG Dawn regarding the needs of children served by One Place and the project was born. Phil is leading the connection with other Clubs and Rotarians to connect them to the solution that this project offers.

District Project Leader: The District Leader of this project is Past District Governor (2020-21) Dawn Rochelle, who has been integral in the establishment of DEI and Mental Health work in the District. PDG Dawn also led the chartering of the Rotary Club of Ending Child Abuse and is a current member of this Club. PDG Dawn credits Rotary for the inclusion of government, business, philanthropy and advocacy to create a suicide taskforce in 2015 and a child abuse taskforce in 2019 with the City of Jacksonville and Onslow County. PDG Dawn is a trauma informed and practicing Licensed Clinical Social Worker who is the Chief Executive Officer of One Place, where she has served since 1999.

Project Description and Rotarian Involvement

In a highly transient population due to the community being the home to the US Marine Corps with two bases, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune and Marine Corps Air Station New River, there are residents not familiar with the area or resources. The average length of duty station for a military family is 3 years. The average age of Onslow County is 26, making us one of the youngest in the United States. The military and other local government is the economic engine in the community. As a coastal community, it is also disaster prone with heightened The nonprofit that was focus on prevention efforts has recently lost funding. One Place is a nationally accredited Child Advocacy Center and recognized as a Military Center of Excellence. One Place is the partner of choice for Rotary with its expertise. This project is aimed to build and support the capacity to increase awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and support the capacity building of child mental health clinicians in our community. To learn more about the research for this approach: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6917911/>

Awareness: This project will increase the knowledge of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) with the goal of becoming a trauma informed community. Child abuse is underreported in Onslow County and there is not a coordinated awareness campaign in the community with prevention services having been eroded of over the

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years due to funding constraints and the inherent turnover of community members in our military community. A coordinated awareness campaign targeted at (1) area businesses partnering with the area Chambers of Commerce, (2) area schools and (3) early childhood education centers, and (4) area churches utilizing a train the trainer approach with civic organizations, like Rotary and Kiwanis.

The ACEs study tells us that children with three or more ACEs are 5x more likely to have attendance issues, 6x times more likely to have behavior problems, and 3x times more likely to experience academic failure. (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9517426/>) We also know that preventing ACEs can help children and adults thrive and potentially lower risk for conditions like depression, asthma, cancer, and diabetes in adulthood, reduce risky behaviors like smoking and heavy drinking, reduce human trafficking and improve education and employment potential. (<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/aces/index.html>)

This initiative involves providing training, which includes awareness of human trafficking, to community stakeholders. Ninety percent of adult human trafficking victims are victims of child sexual abuse. Despite increased awareness of human trafficking in our community, there remains a significant knowledge gap concerning its prevalence, warning signs, risk factors, and protocol for responding when human trafficking is suspected. Engaging with the Rotary Action Group to End Human Slavery to expand support and connection to a wider group focused in this area will be key to bringing additional ideas and direction.

Training has been developed by One Place in a lunch and learn format to introduce groups to ACEs. Requirements are 10 audience volunteers and a facilitator leading the audience and the participants through a guided understanding of the weight that each ACE lends to a life. When compounded, the impact exponentially grows unless intervention occurs. Training will be supported by clinical staff to ensure that attendees are supported in their recognition of their ACEs. This training has been highlighted at the District 7730 Conference in April 2024 and at Rotary Club meetings in the District. It has been well received and we believe can be further utilized to introduce groups to the complex concepts.

By focusing on training personnel who interact with children and youth impacted by trafficking, we can ensure those youth receive vital safety planning, case management, and referrals to appropriate community resources including services provided by the

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CAC, and other resources individualized to their needs. Our goal is to enhance the knowledge and skills of community stakeholders.

To meet this goal, our objectives are, identify specific knowledge gaps and training needs, organize, and facilitate training sessions for community stakeholders, and monitor the implementation of training outcomes and provide ongoing support and guidance as needed. To expand community awareness of ACEs and human trafficking, our objective is to empower community action.

At a minimum, 1200 community members will be trained annually in awareness and identification.

Identification: In North Carolina, every adult is a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse. With the number of residents in Onslow County transplanted from another community, state or country due to the US Marine Corps being the primary economic engine, most adults do not know that when they see something, they need to say something for the safety of children. The young demographic with a median age of 26 places Onslow County as one of the youngest in the United States. Positive Childhood Alliance of NC offers a free, two-hour online course called "Recognizing and Responding to Suspicions of Child Maltreatment". This course is designed for professionals, volunteers, and citizens who are concerned about child well-being. However, it has been proven to be most effective to have in person facilitated conversations in a group setting where questions can be answered so that adults feel prepared to make the call when needed.

Training will be accomplished in a coordinated schedule that ensures repetition with organizations and businesses given the inherent turnover of a Marine Corps community. Having trained staff present to ensure that natural hesitations in reporting can be facilitated and answered so there is increased confidence in the system. Rotarians will be recruited to assist in the coordination and outreach needed to complete the training. Train the Training sessions will be held with interested Rotarians and community members.

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Treatment: Mental Health services to children is a complex funding structure that is a loss sharing financial model from the onset. Trauma informed care requires a complexity of training and ongoing support and continuing education. While grants exist

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and while billing for services is possible, there are always gaps in this emerging field of service delivery. Recognizing that philanthropic giving is necessary to fill gaps to create a sustainable pipeline of services for children who are seen by the One Place Child Advocacy Center, the following is proposed for allowable funding to One Place to support and leverage all resources they can access to increase the availability of clinicians:

- Funding to One Place to support the clinical supervision needed to become a LCSW (100 hours of supervision at the rate of \$200 per hour or \$20,000 per clinician in training)
- Funding to One Place to support the Continuing Education Units (CEU) need for licensure and continued licensure for LCSWs (40 CEUS for initial licensure and for renewal every 2 years at the rate of \$40 per CEU hour or \$1600 for initial licensure or \$800 per year for currently licensed providers)
- Funding to support the training in trauma informed practice required by the National Children's Alliance to support remediation of trauma to create resiliency.
- Funding to support peer support and peer review to ensure alignment with ethics and accountability to standards required to serve children and advocate for resources on their behalf in the community and through the courts.
- One Place will have an agreement with those supported through the licensure process that 2 years of employment past the support for licensure is expected. Repayment of the investment may be required upon termination of employment.

This project seeks to obtain funding for the licensing and continuing education of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Care providers at One Place, a premier child advocacy center in southeast North Carolina, and an incubator for methods of properly providing early childhood education, and care for victims of childhood trauma, abuse, and other Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). This funding would not only have a generational impact on local kids and families, but also enhance the "One Place Way" as an incubator for a nationwide, and perhaps even international, standard of treatment.

The specific goal is to raise \$1 million to fund this care provider training and education in perpetuity through an endowment. An endowment to manage acquired funds has been established and is being overseen by the North Carolina Community Foundation. Once fully funded at \$1,000,000, the endowment's investment income will be used to support the training and credentialing needed for child mental health providers at One Place. Every year, additional providers will gain licensure and renewal of licensure to bolster our region's mental health workforce, treating children in Onslow County.

This endowment will be one that, when managed effectively, will exist in perpetuity, an investment in healthy futures for East Carolina youth.

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Organizational Partner: One Place

One Place is an ideal fit for this project as One Place works to ensure that a zip code does not define an outcome for children. Having child mental health services available with no barriers to care changes the lives of children as it changes the outcome of their lives. Other reasons include:

- **Established Reputation:** As a 501(3) non-profit, One Place has a proven track record of creating hope for families by connecting them with resources and programs to end child abuse and improve the health of children, both physically and mentally.
- **Local Impact:** One Place is a fiscally sound organization charged as a Nationally Accredited Child Advocacy Center to ensure that child mental health needs are created in Onslow County for abused children. Being the de facto “go-to” facility in Onslow County for emergent and urgent pediatric mental health cases, One Place has a deep understanding of the local community’s needs and challenges.
- **Military Community:** One Place serves our military families. One Place ensures training and resources are done with an education and training acknowledging the inherent needs of the military family.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** One Place’s existing multidisciplinary and community partnerships can be leveraged to make a lasting positive impact for children and families living with mental illness.
- **Capacity Building:** This endowment will enhance One Place’s ability to recruit and train pediatric mental health providers, thereby increasing the number of children receiving treatments and decreasing provider shortages.
- **Sustainability:** Once fully funded, the endowment’s investment income will bolster the region’s mental health workforce. This Endowment, properly managed, will exist in perpetuity, representing a sustainable investment in healthy futures for our youth.

In conclusion, One Place’s mission, community impact, and strategic partnerships align well with the goals of the Rotary Clubs of District 7730 Endowment for Pediatric Mental Health, making it an excellent fit for this initiative.

Community Needs Assessment/Updated Highlights: (See attached full community assessment)

Onslow County encompasses a wide geographical area that includes rural, urban, and suburban communities, covering an expansive 767 square miles. Onslow County is home to prominent military installations, including Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune and Marine Corps Air Station New River. The current population of Onslow County is 206,160, with the average age being 26.5 years. The North Carolina Department of Commerce ranks Onslow County as a tier 1 county. Onslow County has an

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unemployment rate of 4.05%, which ranks the county at 27 out of 100. Onslow County is currently the 38th most distressed county in North Carolina. There are needs for safe housing, advocacy, and mental health services. Accessibility remains a concern in Onslow County, especially for those living outside Jacksonville city limits, where public transportation options are limited. Additionally, the issue of affordable housing persists, exacerbated by the housing market's orientation toward active-duty military members, and especially with the recent merging of the West Coast Marine Special Operations Command with their East Coast counterpart here in Onslow County.

Onslow County is home to 41 schools, 22 elementary schools, 8 middle schools, 7 high schools, one early college, one early childhood development center, an alternative learning program and the Eastern North Carolina Regional Skills Center. Onslow County has two hospitals, one hospital, Onslow Memorial Hospital, is in Jacksonville, and the other, Naval Medical Center Camp Lejeune, is located aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, a level III trauma center.

In the past 10 years, the number of children in Onslow County ages 0-17 has increased 36% from 46,369 in 2010, to 63,022 projected in 2020. Onslow County is home to more than 42,000 active duty military personnel which adds 20,985 military dependents (ages 0-17) and comprises 33% of the population. Fifty percent of our children live in poor or low-income homes. The median age of 26.2, coupled with the highest birth rate per capita in North Carolina means many new families have low to no support systems. Onslow County has consistently ranked high in North Carolina for abuse and neglect, with over 1,934 children assessed and 295 found to be abused/neglected or in need of services each year.

Given the population data, we know this is a highly underrepresented number. Opioid addiction, suicide rates, teen pregnancy, and domestic violence rates are high. This creates stressors for our families that sets them up for a lifetime of challenges within an infrastructure already struggling to respond. We know that the need will only continue to rise with Onslow County projected to continue its growth through 2035.

Onslow County Rotarians and partners can make a lasting positive impact for children and families living with adverse experiences and trauma created by others, and in so doing will address our needed access to care and increase provider numbers. Through this partnership, we can enhance One Place's ability to develop, recruit, and train child mental health providers. This will allow One Place to expand accessibility to trauma informed clinicians who will expand a child's resilience and reduce the lifelong impact that abuse can have if it goes untreated. It is a needed focus area for our community, which One Place is meeting.

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Local data provided by One Place to support the needs, include:

- Accreditation standards, set forth by the National Children’s Alliance, outline the evidence-based treatment modalities approved for children who receive services in a Child Advocacy Center. In Onslow County, there are 15 mental health providers rostered to provide one of the approved modalities. Of those fifteen, only six mental health providers are accessible to all children in Onslow County. The remaining nine have accessibility criteria, including insurance type, and military affiliation.
- One Place Child Advocacy Center serves approximately 300 a year with a projection to serve the most children served to date in the current calendar year at 400 children. With the increased space capacity in 2025, the Child Advocacy Center will be able to double the children served each year to 600.
- In 2022 and 2023, ADHD, Anxiety, and Depression were the three highest self-reported mental health diagnosis for children served in the One Place Child Advocacy Center.
 - ADHD: 13% in 2022, 11% in 2023
 - Anxiety: 16% in 2022, 18% in 2023
 - Depression: 12% in 2022, 14% in 2023
- ☑ In 2022, 5% of children served in the One Place Child Advocacy Center reported previous suicidal ideation.
- In 2023, 6% of children served in the One Place Child Advocacy Center reported previous suicidal ideation.
- In 2022, 5% of Onslow County children, ages 5-18 receiving Medicaid, were diagnosed with depression.
- In 2022, 15% of Onslow County children, ages 5-18 receiving Medicaid, were diagnosed with ADHD. Trauma and ADHD have overlapping symptoms, including agitation, poor self-esteem, problems with concentrating, difficulties at school, and impulsivity. Mental health providers may diagnose a child with ADHD if they have not received trauma informed training.
- In 2023, the One Place Child Advocacy Center contracted with one local mental health provider with the ability to serve seven children at a time. She served 10 children in total in 2023. With the addition of on-site mental health, One Place has served an additional 13 children on-site since December 2023.

One Place launched the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) in 2005 in collaboration with local community agencies to unify support services for children who have been abused, surrounding them with the care they need while reducing the time that a child tells their story of abuse to one time. A critical component of any CAC is the availability of trauma-informed child mental health services to intervene at the most critical time to ensure the best chance of resilience and health behaviors. Our community has lost coordinated child mental health services with trauma trained practitioners, meaning that

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not only did many of our children not receive a medical exam, but they also left the CAC without the mental health support trauma and abuse require. With the divestiture of mental health in North Carolina, these services are not coming back.

Ways of Financial Participation

The club envisions a two-pronged approach to financial participation:

- 1) Awareness and Identification: A global grant would serve to fund the awareness and training for the identification of children suffering from ACES, a need that is currently not fully served in southeastern NC
- 2) Treatment: Direct donations to the already-established Endowment with the North Carolina Community Foundation will fund the licensure and training of urgently needed child and adolescent mental health care providers in perpetuity and will have a generational impact on children and their families.

Budget

Awareness and Identification: \$500,000 for two years of staffing and training. This budget supports the equivalent of 2 FTEs to provide the training and support needed for program development. \$180,000 has been received to support the human trafficking components specifically.

Treatment: via the Endowment. The \$1 million dollar endowment, when fully funded, can be accessed as needed to support the funding gaps within other sources given allowable parameters of disbursement. This ensures that all funding is leveraged appropriately. Maximum annual withdrawals from the endowment to One Place would initially be capped at \$50,000, or 5% of the endowment to provide licensure and continuing education for two mental health care providers per year.

Sustainability:

The sustainability plan for this project focuses on long-term impact, funding, stakeholder engagement, and capacity building to ensure that the project remains effective over time.

1. Establish a Strong Foundation of Partnerships

- Build and maintain partnerships with key stakeholders, including local Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, law enforcement, area hospitals, mental health providers, schools, businesses, and government agencies.
- Actions:

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- Continue developing partnerships with Rotary Clubs in District 7730 and beyond.
- Formalize relationships with key partners such as One Place and the Positive Childhood Alliance of NC.
- Engage the business community through the Chambers of Commerce to support ACEs awareness initiatives.
- Sustainability: Partnerships will provide continuous support and resources, ensuring a collaborative community approach.

2. Secure Long-Term Funding

- Goal: Ensure financial sustainability through a mix of funding sources, including endowments, donations, and grants. One Place has a 25 + years successful track record of excellence in stewardship in fiscal management and securing funGoal: ding.
- Actions:
 - Finalize the \$1 million endowment overseen by the North Carolina Community Foundation to support clinician licensure and training in perpetuity.
 - Develop a multi-year fundraising strategy, targeting local businesses, individuals, and philanthropic organizations.
 - Identify and apply for relevant federal, state, and local grants for mental health initiatives.
- Sustainability: The endowment provides a steady stream of income, while diversified funding reduces reliance on a single source.

3. Develop a Workforce Pipeline

- Goal: Increase the number of trauma-informed mental health providers serving children in Onslow County.
- Actions:
 - Fund the training and licensure of mental health clinicians through the endowment.
 - Partner with universities and professional organizations to create internships, fellowships, or residency programs for clinicians.
 - Establish agreements with providers trained through the program to ensure a commitment to serve the community for a minimum of two years.
- Sustainability: A consistent pipeline of trained clinicians will ensure continuous access to mental health services for children in need.

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4. Raise Community Awareness

- Goal: Increase awareness of ACEs, child abuse, and available mental health services across the community.
- Actions:
 - Launch a coordinated awareness campaign targeting schools, businesses, early childhood education centers, and churches.
 - Utilize civic organizations, such as Rotary and Kiwanis, to implement a “train the trainer” model for ACEs and human trafficking awareness.
 - Conduct regular workshops, webinars, and information sessions with a focus on recognizing and addressing ACEs.
- Sustainability: Ongoing education and awareness initiatives will lead to a more trauma-informed community and increased reporting of child abuse.

5. Monitor and Evaluate Impact

- Goal: Continuously assess the effectiveness of the program and adjust strategies based on data.
- Actions:
 - Set up measurable outcomes such as the number of children receiving treatment, the number of adults trained in ACEs, and the number of mental health providers trained.
 - Collect and analyze data from One Place, schools, and partner organizations to measure progress.
 - Conduct an annual review of the endowment's financial performance and program impact to ensure goals are being met.
- Sustainability: Regular monitoring allows for early identification of issues and opportunities for improvement, ensuring long-term success.

6. Advocate for Policy Changes

- Goal: Advocate for systemic changes that improve child mental health services and ACEs awareness.
- Actions:
 - Work with local and state government officials to advocate for policies that support mental health services for children, including reciprocity for mental health provider licensure in military communities.
 - Promote legislative initiatives that fund trauma-informed care programs and ensure adequate staffing for mental health services.

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- Collaborate with Rotary Clubs and community leaders to raise the visibility of pediatric mental health needs in Onslow County and North Carolina.
- Sustainability: Policy advocacy will create a supportive environment for long-term improvements in mental health care for children exposed to trauma.

This 6-step sustainability plan ensures that the project not only meets its immediate goals but also thrives in the long term, positively impacting children with ACEs in Onslow County for generations.

How will the project help the community after the project ends?

Upon completion, the project will leave a lasting, sustainable impact on the community by ensuring continuous access to trained, trauma-informed mental health professionals who can address the needs of children exposed to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The endowment fund, once fully established, will provide ongoing financial support for the licensure, continuing education, and recruitment of child mental health providers in perpetuity. This will significantly increase the availability of high-quality care for children in Onslow County, reducing the current mental health provider shortage and offering timely intervention for children in need.

Moreover, the increased awareness of ACEs and the implementation of trauma-informed practices within schools, businesses, and community organizations will foster a more supportive and resilient environment for all children. By building local capacity and empowering community stakeholders through education and training, the project will create a foundation for ongoing advocacy, better identification of at-risk children, and stronger collaborative efforts to prevent childhood trauma. The long-term benefits include improved mental health outcomes, enhanced protective factors, and a healthier, more resilient future for generations of children in the region.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6917911/>