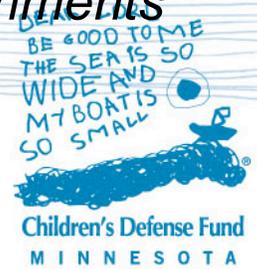


10-10-10 March for Children and Youth Because *All Children and Youth Need Nurturing Environments*

The future of Minnesota depends on the opportunities we provide our children today. Child development is economic development.



The basic architecture of the human brain is constructed through an ongoing process that begins at birth and continues into adulthood. Like the process of serve and return in games such as tennis, young children naturally reach out for interaction. When adults respond by mirroring back those interactions in a consistent way, the child's learning process is complete.

Toxic stress from child abuse and neglect disrupts healthy brain development. Adverse experiences in childhood have lifelong impacts for individuals and society.

Adverse childhood experiences are strongly linked to:

- depression and suicide
- impaired worker performance
- adult onset of chronic illness
- alcohol and tobacco and other drug use

**Families want the best for their children.
We know how to support adults to nurture healthy children.**

Programs and policies that bolster these research-informed protective factors prevent abuse and neglect before they happen:

- Social Connections
- Parental/Caregiver Resilience
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Concrete Supports in Times of Need
- Children's Social and Emotional Development

Because one third of children reported as abused or neglected are children under four years of age and most are in the child protection system for the first time, we need to focus our efforts on innovative programs that intervene early on and emphasize the protective factors.

**We need strong policy to insure all children get the nurturing they need.
Key policy issues include:**

- When living with parents is not possible, it is imperative that children find a permanent loving family to nurture them into adulthood.
- Examining policies that impact poverty, neglect and racial disparities in the child welfare system.
- Initiatives are needed to support and strengthen the role of fathers in families.

Prevention of Child Maltreatment Before it Happens is Possible

Building strong brain architecture in children requires the commitment of every adult. Every parent/caregiver needs access to child development information and parent support resources. Crisis nurseries and home visiting programs have served families and children to prevent abuse and neglect. Caring community members lending a helping hand, community parks and resource centers make a big difference. Knowing the signs of neglect and abuse can lead to early intervention.

Questions for Candidates:

If elected, what will you do to stop child abuse and neglect before it happens?