



inspires

Investing in Our Future

The first few years of a child's life can dramatically shape their future for years to come. When a child is raised with emotionally healthy caregiving, they develop the ability to trust in the people and relationships in their lives.

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) professionals refer to this as the capability to experience, self-regulate, and express a wide range of emotions and to use those skills to help in interpersonal relationships and strong learning readiness. This impacts their future relationships and increases their ability to learn across all domains.

In 2019, MSPCC and Massachusetts Association for Infant Mental Health (MassAIMH) started our partnership to establish, strengthen, and diversify the IECMH workforce to ensure all of the Commonwealth's children have access to comprehensive services supporting emotional wellness as well as combating trauma in young children.

During this time, we have worked together to develop a statewide early childhood workforce initiative through the Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused, Practice Promoting Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health®

in Massachusetts. Endorsement is one of the country's first and most comprehensive efforts to define best practices and guide professional growth at multiple levels and across disciplines in the field of infant and early childhood mental health. Endorsement is supported nationally by the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health.

Through hard work and dedication, our work has reached a significant milestone that will positively impact Massachusetts children and families for generations: **MSPCC and MassAIMH have endorsed more than 100 early childhood professionals.** These professionals represent the children and families we serve every day and are diverse in their ethnicity, race, gender, geography, and linguistic capabilities. Thanks to these caring professionals, more families will have access to services to help them promote emotional wellness in their children.

We are proud of our progress and are committed to continuing this work on behalf of the Commonwealth's families. Thank you to the leaders, partners, communities, organizations, and individuals who have made this possible and to Boston Children's Hospital Birth to Five Child Health and Development Initiative for funding this vital work. Learn more here:

mspcc.org/massaimh-endorsement/



**Massachusetts Society
for the Prevention
of Cruelty to Children**



From the Desk of
Mary McGeown

Dear Friends,

Consistent with media reports, MSPCC has noticed the startling trend of rising anxiety among our children. Of course, this has a great impact on families as they try to help their children deal with complicated issues.

According to a recent national study by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the number of kids suffering from depression and anxiety rose by 26% from 2016 to 2020 throughout the country.

It's a worrisome statistic to see about our children. With the COVID-19 pandemic, rising gun violence, and a tumultuous political scene, it is no surprise we are seeing anxiety and depression come to the surface in our youth. An even more troubling statistic is that here in the Commonwealth, that percent increase we saw nationally nearly doubled in the same time frame.

While that number is concerning, it also points to efforts here in Massachusetts to identify children and youth in need of support. Massachusetts has the second highest number of kids in special education in the country. When a child is being screened for special education services, they're also being assessed for social and emotional learning and behavioral issues. We also lead the country in the number of children covered by health insurance. Under insurance, kids are more likely to be going to well visits every year, which also include mental health screenings.

This past year, Governor Baker signed into law the *Mental Health ABC Act*, a legislative priority for which MSPCC heavily advocated. This new bill includes comprehensive legislation with reforms to the mental healthcare system to remove barriers for many people, including children, to get the care they need. The new law will make a difference for future generations of Massachusetts residents at an integral time - and provides an opening to focus on prevention, parity and access, and directly address the implications of the pandemic.

In addition to our advocacy work, MSPCC staff use evidence-based behavioral training to meet the needs of the children and families we work with every day. Our clinicians, therapeutic mentors, and home visitors witness firsthand the struggles children and families are going through and are there with a tender and informed hand to help them in their journey.

For 144 years, MSPCC has been shaping and defining child welfare policy to make sure we are meeting the needs of the families we serve. **No matter what, we will always be there for children.**

Sincerely,

Mary A. McGeown
Executive Director

MSPCC Expands Services to New Bedford, MA

In August 2022, MSPCC expanded our Healthy Families services to New Bedford and its surrounding communities.

The New Bedford office is currently supporting 72 families to help young, first-time parents create stable and nurturing environments for their children.

New Bedford Healthy Families Home Visitors and Supervisors reflect the diversity of the area and are prepared to meet the language and cultural needs of the community. Staff are currently able to provide services in six languages and three staff members are former Healthy Families participants that now share their lived experience to help other young families thrive.

The office has hosted a variety of events for participants to give them the opportunity to connect with other new parents and community resources.



We are excited for the opportunity to work with the New Bedford community to support young families in the area.

Learn more about Healthy Families here: mspcc.org/healthyfamilies

Healthy Families Massachusetts is a program of the Children's Trust, and is implemented locally by MSPCC.



SAVE THE DATE

TURNING POINTS: *An Evening to Benefit MSPCC*

THURSDAY
MARCH 30, 2023
6:00 PM

FAIRMONT
COPLEY PLAZA

*For more information about
the event, please reach
out to Julie Sheflin at:
jsheflin@mspcc.org*

mspcc.org/turningpoints



Thanks to your support, last year...



2,254

2,254 families learned new skills to support their children's needs through our mental health services, including through therapeutic mentors, family supports training, and many more clinical programs.

5,081 foster, kinship, and adoptive parents participated in trainings, support groups, and/or coaching to better understand and respond to the needs of children in their care, victimized by abuse or neglect.



5,081



596

596 young, first-time parents learned to create stable, nurturing environments for their children through Healthy Families, a program of the Children's Trust.

MSPCC's Young Professional Board Social Event

MSPCC's Young Professional Board hosted its first in-person event in nearly three years! In the fall, 30 Boston-area young professionals committed to the mission of MSPCC gathered at Harpoon Brewery to network and learn more about MSPCC's mission of protecting children and strengthening families.

MSPCC's Young Professional Board is an association of individuals in the early stages of their careers with a strong dedication to the work of MSPCC. These young professionals bring an array of expertise to the group, including business, government, philanthropy, community leadership, and activism. Young Professional Board members work alongside MSPCC's Development team to fundraise, friendraise, and enhance MSPCC's mission in the community. Learn more about the Young Professional Board here: mspcc.org/ypb



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Holidays at MSPCC

The holidays can be an especially difficult time for families facing financial insecurity, housing instability, loss, or mental health challenges. Each holiday season MSPCC staff works tirelessly to fulfill holiday wish lists for hundreds of deserving children to ensure that every child can have a joyful holiday season regardless of their circumstances. **Thanks to the generosity of many individual and corporate supporters, we were able to fulfill the holiday wishes of more than 500 children this year.**





Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

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Locations

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413.532.9446

Lawrence

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Building E, Suite 115
Lawrence, MA 01840
978.682.9222

Lowell

151 Warren Street
Lowell, MA 01852
978.937.3087

New Bedford

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New Bedford, MA 02745
508.767.3000

Worcester

108 Belmont Street
Worcester, MA 01602
508.753.2967

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BECOME OUR BFF!

Since 1878, MSPCC has been protecting and promoting the rights and well-being of children in Massachusetts through the help of our supporters. By giving monthly, you give to the **Brighter Futures Fund** and ensure that our work can continue for centuries to come. Want to give to the Brighter Futures Fund? Sign up for monthly gifts here: mspcc.org/monthlygiving


SUPPORT MSPCC!


By giving to MSPCC, you provide resources to teach young parents the skills they need to create safe, nurturing relationships with their babies, support high-quality services for children in foster care, counsel families in times of crisis, mobilize policymakers to protect children, and so much more. Visit mspcc.org/donate or scan the QR code below to make a difference for kids and families.




Create a lasting impact for kids in Massachusetts

Just as MSPCC fights for laws that protect children, we want to protect you, too. No matter where you are on your life journey, you can create your estate plan to secure the future for the important people in your life, designate a guardian for your children, and create a legacy with the causes close to your heart. Visit FreeWill.com/MSPCC to care for all you love.

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