

# FROM INFANT TO INFINITE POSSIBILITIES

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ANNUAL REPORT / 2020

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**ZERO to THREE**





# 1

## COMMITMENT TO CARE

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COVID RESPONSE

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**Paul G. Spicer, PhD**  
Board President



**Brenda Jones Harden, PhD**  
Board Vice President



**Matthew Melmed, JD**  
Executive Director

## THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT YOU DO.

In 2020, we rose and accomplished so much together. We faced the twin pandemics of COVID-19 and systemic racism and remained steadfast in the pursuit of our shared mission: to ensure every baby has a strong start in life.

ZERO TO THREE's unparalleled expertise and long history of advocating on behalf of all babies, with a special emphasis on Overburdened and Under-Resourced ("OUR") babies, makes us an invaluable resource to ensure that families not only survive these crises but thrive. The impact of the work we do lasts a lifetime. And we have a clear imperative for our work ahead. **Our Babies Can't Wait.**

We are deepening our work to address the structural racism that creates huge economic and social disparities in our country, beginning prenatally and at birth. Together, we will make a better world for our babies — a world in which every baby is valued and loved.

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## COMMITMENT TO CARE

In March 2020, just as the pandemic began to surge, we sprang into action to provide support to parents, caregivers and early childhood development professionals across our network and beyond. ZERO TO THREE quickly became a go-to source for those seeking help in coping with the emotional distress triggered by the sudden jolt into a “new normal.” Additionally, our in-house experts were frequent media contributors and were featured in national outlets, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *USA Today*, among others.

### FOR FAMILIES

We developed an **Online Resource Hub** on our website, featuring a curated collection of parenting tips (including age-appropriate responses to questions about coronavirus), at-home activities and a guide to self-care.



“The impact that the COVID-19 pandemic will have on our infants and toddlers will be felt for years to come. But by providing for their needs today, and by empowering all those who seek to make a better world for them tomorrow, we can help them emerge from this crisis with a strong foundation for the future.”

BRENDA JONES HARDEN

#### FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS

We introduced a critical **Webinar series, *Addressing Abuse and Neglect during COVID-19***, which provided actionable trauma-informed practices and prevention strategies. For the first time, we hosted a **virtual Annual Conference**. More than 3,200 early childhood development professionals from across the globe joined us, making it our highest-attended conference to date. Each session included a focus on advancing social and economic justice, particularly for Black and Brown babies and their families.

#### FOR EVERYONE

We launched a weekly **Mindfulness series** streamed live on Facebook and led by Maria Gehl, our internationally recognized leader in mindfulness in early childhood.



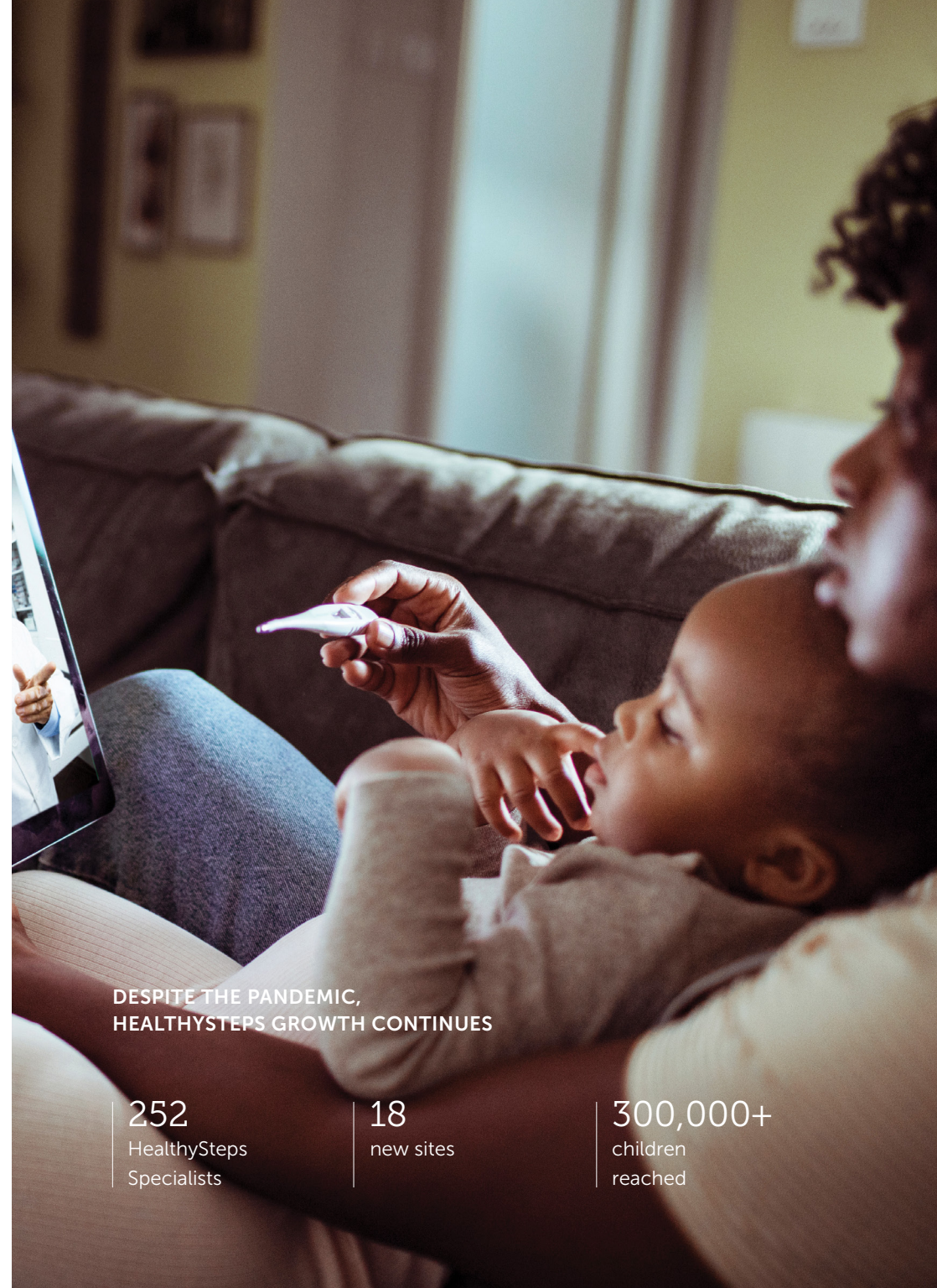


## MEETING EVERY NEED

As children and families face both intensified and new hardships, health care providers are on the front lines. **HealthySteps**, ZERO TO THREE's evidence-based program that transforms the promise of pediatric primary care, continued its accelerated growth. The program now reaches more than 300,000 children in more than 170 sites nationwide. While the pandemic led to the closing of some pediatric practices and layoffs in outpatient care, HealthySteps teams mobilized to introduce telehealth into their practices. Their innovative and nimble approach ensured no opportunity was missed to help address families' new or ongoing needs, like sudden job loss and food insecurity.

National media including *NPR*, *PBS Newshour* and *Fox News* featured HealthySteps and sought out our program's national director, Dr. Rahil Briggs, for her expertise on parenting, trauma and the impact of COVID-19 on young children.

In a story about how the pandemic is affecting rural Arizonian families, Candace Sharp, a single parent raising three children under 4 — including Xavier, her 3-year-old who has chronic lung disease, sleep apnea and asthma — told *NPR*, "It's amazing what [my HS Specialist] does. If I didn't have her in my corner, then I definitely don't think that I would be where I am today with these kids."



DESPITE THE PANDEMIC,  
HEALTHYSTEPS GROWTH CONTINUES

252  
HealthySteps  
Specialists

18  
new sites

300,000+  
children  
reached

Alongside these activities, we worked day in and day out to fight for babies and toddlers to be a priority in the federal stabilization packages, including the **Families First Act** and **CARES Act**. To inform and empower our network of over 59,000+ advocates to push for policy action, we hosted a live web broadcast with House Appropriations Committee Chair **Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)** and 30 Think Babies™ partners. The virtual event drew 7,300 registrants.

#### HIGH DEMAND FOR CORONAVIRUS RESOURCES

228,000

Unique visitors to Coronavirus Resource Hub

5,031

Attendees joined Abuse and Neglect webinar series

4,591

Participants joined online Mindfulness series

295

News articles featured ZERO TO THREE's expertise on COVID-19







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## MARKITA MAYS

“When you get to a point in your professional career and you feel clear about your assignment, you feel clear about your purpose, you don’t abandon it — it feels good to be in that place now.”

A socially just society demands every baby is valued and loved, regardless of their background. As inequities persist in systems that support young children, progress hinges on leaders who are willing to face and persevere against resistance to necessary change. Markita Mays is that leader.

With a clear vision and unwavering commitment to babies and families, Markita is a transformational leader in the field of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH).

Ten years ago, Markita joined the Child Trauma Research Program (CTRP) at the University of California-San Francisco and made an early connection with ZERO TO THREE. She worked alongside world-renowned IECMH leaders, who mentored and helped shape the professional she is today. During ZERO TO THREE’s 2020 Annual Conference, Markita was honored with the organization’s inaugural **IECMH Emerging Leadership Award** for Excellence in Practice. Upon accepting her award, Markita shared, “This award means that we’ve finally gotten to a place of rewarding Good Trouble.”

Markita is the clinical supervisor for CTRP, located at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center. She is a co-director of EMBRACE, a perinatal clinical care program that serves Black mothers and Black pregnant people with deliberate attention to the social and economic factors that affect their health. She co-founded the Alameda County Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership, and developed an anti-racist curriculum used at the hospital’s Department of Psychiatry Infant, Child and Adolescent Training program for emerging clinicians. Additionally, she created a curriculum for early and mid-career clinicians in community-based organizations to provide case-based reflective consultation that emphasizes knowledge about racism and structural and systemic inequities affecting young children.

There’s no doubt the future for babies is bright with Markita on their side. We celebrate her accomplishments and eagerly anticipate her continued professional journey in 2021 and beyond.





# INNOVATING TO SAVE LIVES

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PROGRAM GROWTH & IMPACT

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## INNOVATING TO SAVE LIVES

Every six minutes, an infant or toddler in the United States is removed from their parents' care due to abuse or neglect, all during the most critical period of growth that shapes every year that follows. Before the onslaught of COVID-19, more than 400,000 children in our country were in foster care. We know many children are still in crisis.

There are ways to break this cycle. Our **Safe Babies Court Team™** (SBCT) approach to transforming the child welfare system builds community capacity to provide the supports that children and families need to thrive and prevent child abuse and neglect.

As separated families began to quarantine during the pandemic, our SBCT teams worked tirelessly to find creative and safe ways to connect children with their birth parents while also helping caseworkers, social service providers and judges rise to the task of bringing their work online. We also published new guidelines for connecting with young children via video conference, home visiting with PPE and navigating crises that may arise in families due to pandemic-related stress.

Expansion to **99** sites in **30** states



“American families are facing an unprecedented confluence of challenges – a health crisis, a financial crisis, and a racial equity reckoning. There could be no more compelling time than this moment for transformational change in child welfare.”

HON. BOBBE J. BRIDGE  
RETIRED, ASSOCIATE JUSTICE, WASHINGTON SUPREME COURT



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## LEADING AROUND THE WORLD

The **ZERO TO THREE Fellowship**, recognized as the premier leadership development program in the early childhood field, proudly welcomed its 2020-22 Class. The new cohort is comprised of 16 vibrant and diverse early and mid-career early childhood development leaders. The Fellows hail from three countries, 11 states, and Washington, D.C. Selected from a highly competitive process, the Fellows will engage in an intensive 18-month fellowship experience to strengthen and expand their leadership capacity to transform systems, policies and programs in service to equitable access and outcomes for infants, toddlers, and their families.





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## ADVANCING EQUITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

ZERO TO THREE was selected by the Office of Head Start (OHS) to continue leading the **National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning (DTL)** over the next five years. We will partner with the University of Washington’s Cultivate Learning and I-LABS, Vanderbilt University, Child Trends, and the Children’s Equity Project. Since 1995, we have been proud to support OHS through the provision of developing resources and technology solutions to enhance training and technical assistance for more than 1,500 **Head Start and Early Head Start** grantees and Regional Specialists. DTL’s services reach nearly 1 million families in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories, and American Indian and Alaska Native and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start communities. Additionally, we welcomed Lisa Wilson as DTL’s first **Director of Equity and Outreach**. In this role, Wilson will work to ensure equitable practices are being implemented into every area of the National Center’s work.





## DR. ALICIA LIEBERMAN

Young children will not fall behind, and the country will be stronger if we offer parents and caregivers a safety net... Justice for children and families is the communal face of love."



Alicia Lieberman represents a lifetime dedicated to babies. When she first began to develop Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP), an evidence-based treatment for traumatized children from birth to 5 years old, it marked a shift in the mental health treatment of young children exposed to domestic violence. The therapy would prove revolutionary, and today, CPP is recognized as the gold standard for establishing treatment effectiveness. For all her contributions and accomplishments, Dr. Lieberman was honored with the **2020 ZERO TO THREE Lifetime Achievement Award**.

Alicia is the Irving B. Harris Endowed Chair in Infant Mental Health at the University of California-San Francisco (UCSF) and the Director of the Child Trauma Research Program at San Francisco General Hospital. Her major contributions to the field advanced understanding of foundational concepts in early childhood, including attachment and toddler development, as well as cross-cultural perspectives on early development.

Alicia served as a ZERO TO THREE board member for 30 years and as president of the board for one term. She has also published two popular books under our press, *Losing a Parent to Death in the Early Years* and *Don't Hit My Mommy*. She shared, "ZERO TO THREE has been my beloved professional home for my entire career."

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**ALICIA'S WORK CONTINUES TO INSPIRE AND  
INFORM ZERO TO THREE'S EFFORTS TODAY,  
AS WELL AS THOSE OF PROFESSIONALS  
THROUGHOUT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD FIELD.**

Matthew Melmed, Executive Director, ZERO TO THREE

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DEDICATION  
TO SUPPORT

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POLICY & ADVOCACY

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## DEDICATION TO SUPPORT

In June, we released the ***State of Babies Yearbook: 2020***, the second edition of a comprehensive report on the health and well-being of babies in America. The report confirms what many have long known — Black and Brown babies start at a major disadvantage, no matter where in the U.S. they are born. The data makes it clear that major inequities begin before birth, especially for Black children.

More than 8,000 people nationwide have viewed the virtual launch event, which featured a dynamic discussion with our Chief Policy Officer Dr. Myra Jones-Taylor and former CEO of Robin Hood and bestselling author Wes Moore on the importance of embracing equity as we seek to rebuild from the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, more than 3,700 copies of the report have been downloaded to date from the official website for the initiative – [stateofbabies.org](https://stateofbabies.org). Across the country, state agency leaders and advocates have used the *Yearbook* data to inform policy priorities and advance their work.



“I would like to live in a society that understands the struggles of working mothers and the high costs of child care.”

FERNANDA P.

FAMILY ADVOCATE - STROLLING THUNDER RHODE ISLAND

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## PUSHING FOR CHANGE

Throughout the year, ZERO TO THREE and its **Think Babies™** partners engaged advocates to push for policies and legislation to ensure that babies, regardless of zip code, race, ethnicity or family income, get off to the right start in life. For the first time, our annual **Strolling Thunder™** event went virtual. Families from across the country met with members of Congress and their staff via video chat and shared what their babies need to thrive. At a time when babies needed us the most, we stood on the front lines as a steadfast voice, growing our network of advocates to more than 59,000+ individuals and 70 national and state organizations.

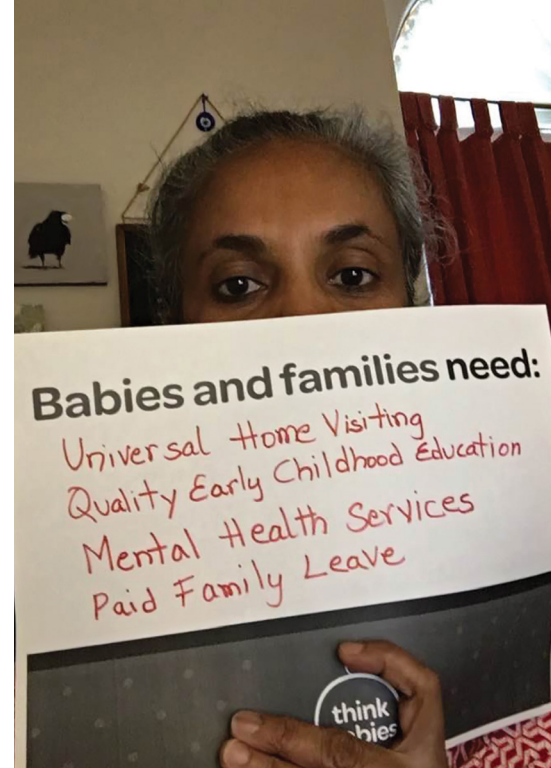
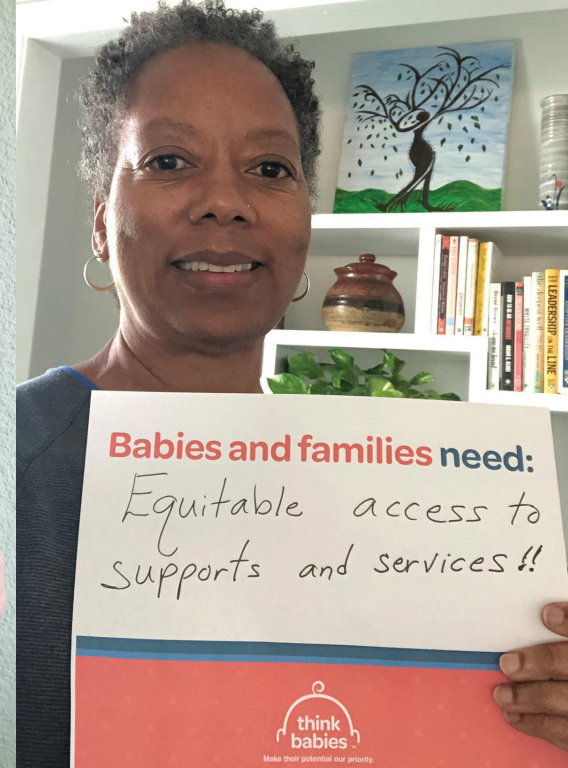
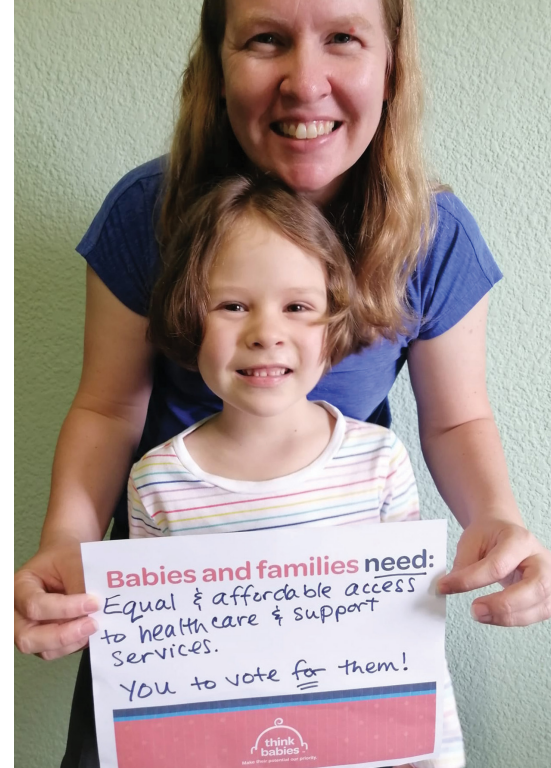
**TO ENSURE THAT BABIES, REGARDLESS OF ZIP CODE, RACE, ETHNICITY OR FAMILY INCOME, GET OFF TO THE RIGHT START IN LIFE.**





## BUILDING BACK BETTER FOR BABIES

As the Biden-Harris administration prepared to take office, they faced choices that would profoundly affect the trajectory of the youngest among us. We presented President-elect Biden with a set of transition recommendations with strong connections to his own policy proposals – in short, **the “baby agenda.”** From COVID-19 relief to policies to build for the future, this agenda provides a blueprint for the Biden administration to respond to the immediate needs created by the pandemic and build a better foundation for babies into the American bedrock. We have also continued to provide state leaders with technical assistance to improve policies, systems and funding mechanisms to better support babies.





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## KATHLEEN MCENERNEY

“Kathleen was one of the most decent, thoughtful, and caring human beings I have ever known, and she touched the lives of so many of us in so many beautiful ways. May her memory be a blessing to us all,”

Matthew Melmed, Executive Director, ZERO TO THREE.

Kathleen served as ZERO TO THREE’s **Chief Development Officer** for the past 10 years, having returned to the organization after a time at the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. She had previously worked as a grant writer for the organization and returned to guide remarkable growth with her strategic sensibility, calming presence, diplomatic discretion and wise counsel. Everyone who had the opportunity to work with Kathleen was taken with her smarts and sensitivity. She battled cancer since her diagnosis in February 2020, a battle she fought with strength and courage until the end on September 26 of last year.

The loves of Kathleen’s life were her adopted and foster children, Andy McEnerney and Karen Maldonado, who brought her great pride every day of their lives. In her memory, her family created a fund to carry on her selfless works.

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**WE REMEMBER KATHLEEN AS A PASSIONATE AND COMMITTED LEADER AND TRUE BABY CHAMPION. HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR WORK AND MISSION LIVE ON.**

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## 2020 BY THE NUMBERS



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Number of Media Articles Reflecting Preferred Issue Framing

667

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Number of Professionals Trained

99,441

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Number of Policy Network Members

59,000+ advocates

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Number of Video Views

495,180

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## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

### 2020 REVENUE



\$44,815,387

■ 47.3%  
Federal and State Government  
Grants and Contracts

■ 40.8%  
Private Grants, Contributions,  
and Contracts

■ 10.5%  
Program Service Revenue

■ 1.4%  
Investment Income

### 2020 EXPENSES



■ 84.6%  
Program Services

■ 14.3%  
General and Administration

■ 1.1%  
Fundraising and Development



## BABY CHAMPIONS

Your continued support allows us to extend our work to advance the proven power of nurturing relationships and creating connections.

We worked hard to recognize all of those who supported our work in the 2020 Fiscal Year through their financial generosity. If you were inadvertently omitted, please let us know.



### INDIVIDUALS

- Anonymous
- Anonymous in memory and honor of Ellen and John Tuchler
- Carol Airone
- Madeline Korbel Albright
- Joanna Hawthorne Amick, PhD
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**Executive Director**

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**Michelle Meyercord**  
Director, Stephen A Schwarzman Foundation

**Catherine Monk, PhD**  
Professor of Medical Psychology, Departments of Psychiatry and Obstetrics & Gynecology (Ob/Gyn), and Founding Director, Women's Mental Health @Ob/Gyn, Columbia University; Research Scientist VI, New York State Psychiatric Institute

**Michael R. Olenick, PhD**  
President and CEO, Child Care Resource Center (CCRC)

**Joy Osofsky, PhD**  
Paul J. Ramsay Endowed Chair of Psychiatry and Barbara Lemann Professor of Child Welfare, Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in New Orleans; Director, Harris Center for Infant Mental Health Center

**Lauren A. Smith, MD, MPH**  
Chief Health Equity and Strategy Officer, CDC Foundation

**Eugene P. Stein**  
President and CEO, Tikun Olam Foundation

**Barbara A. Thompson**  
Former Director, Office of Military Family Readiness Policy, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense

**H. Marcel Wright, MBA**  
Vice President of Behavioral Health Services, Adventist Healthcare (AHC)



1255 23RD STREET, NW  
SUITE 350  
WASHINGTON, DC 20037

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