

Exploring Global Strategies to Support Families with Young Children

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2024



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



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U.S. DIGITAL SERVICE



Chamber
of Mothers

The U.S. Government is committed to advancing women's empowerment and economic security through a robust and equitable care economy. This includes investments in gender-responsive public and private quality care services; advocacy for law and policy reforms for the care economy; recognizing, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care work; rewarding paid care work; enabling and increasing access to care, including child care; and guaranteeing care workers' labor rights, protections, and increased representation.

During this year's [United Nation Commission on the Status of Women](#) Conference, we are convening stakeholders from other nations, philanthropic and community-based organizations, corporations, and academia to explore how we can all continue to work together to empower mothers and their families.

Becoming a new parent is one of the biggest transitions that many Americans will make over the course of their lives; but today, this experience is a significant struggle for too many families. Unlike our peer nations, the United States still lacks a national paid family leave program, and the cost of child care remains out of reach for many families.

The Biden-Harris Administration believes that only through a whole-of-government approach—one that considers the entirety of a person's health and experiences over the course of their full life—we'll finally be able to make real progress in tackling the long-standing challenge of maternal mortality in the U.S.

The [U.S. Maternal Health Blueprint](#), our national strategy for addressing the maternal health crisis, specifically prioritizes economic and social support for parents and families to target social determinants of health. It will take collaboration with many different stakeholders, working together toward a future where all families have an equal opportunity to thrive.

Today, we will hear about innovative ways the U.S. and other governments, NGOs, and private sector partners are designing supportive programs for mothers and families as they experience childbirth and navigate early childhood; and we will all work together to co-create new ideas for how we can scale and sustain this work in 2024 and beyond.

Event Partners

U.S. FEDERAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE BIRTH OF A CHILD TEAM

In 2021, President Biden signed an [Executive Order focused on improving customer experience and building trust in government](#). In that Executive Order, the Administration committed to improving five “life experiences” – moments in the lives of Americans where support from the government is crucial. One of these priority life experiences is having a new baby, a major life transition that comes with much joy, but also significant financial and emotional stress for many families.



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To begin, we asked ourselves: How might we improve the experience of families in connecting to federally funded benefits and supportive services, especially new mothers in vulnerable communities, as they begin the journey of having a new baby?

Since the publication of the Executive Order in 2021, we’ve launched [three pilot projects designed to improve mothers’ experiences](#), with 16 partners in urban, rural, and tribal areas around the country. These pilots will give us the insights we need to responsibly scale each intervention and continue co-designing with communities, with the goal of building sustainable and meaningful programs in the future.

Learn more:

- [Performance.gov/baby](#)
- [HHS.gov/newbaby](#)
- [Newborn Supply Kit Shows Promising Results](#)
- [Why We’re Designing Government to Work Better and Smarter for Families](#)
- [Solutions by Families, for Families](#)



The Commonwealth Fund

The Commonwealth Fund is a nonprofit foundation dedicated to affordable, equitable, quality health care for everyone. The Fund's work promotes a high-performing, equitable health care system that achieves better access, improved quality, and greater efficiency, particularly for society's most vulnerable, including people of color, people with low income, and those who are uninsured.

The Fund carries out this mandate by supporting independent research on health care issues and making grants to improve health care practice and policy. An international program in health policy, Commonwealth Fund is designed to stimulate innovative policies and practices in the United States and other industrialized countries.

Learn more:

- [CMWF International Health Policy](#)
- [CMWF Maternal health](#)
- [Uncared For Podcast](#)



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[Instagram @advancinghealthequity](#)



Founded in the fall of 2021, on the evening that paid leave was left on the cutting room floor of Congress during the Build Back Better negotiations, the Chamber of Mothers is now a nonpartisan, national 501(c)(3) that reaches 4 million mothers monthly through local chapter advocacy, federal public policy work, and creative campaigns that shift the cultural narrative: We unite mothers as advocates to create a better America – one we wish to bestow to our children and live in now. Mobilizing a broad diversity of moms at a local, state, and federal level, we help push as a collective for three goals: paid family and medical leave, affordable, accessible child care, and vastly improved maternal health outcomes.

Check out our advocacy guides:

- [Chamber of Mothers 2024 Policy and Advocacy Agenda](#)
- 2024 Chamber of Mothers FAMILY Act [paid leave RFI](#)
- [Quick Guide to The PUMP Act](#)

Learn more about our work through coverage on:

- [NPR](#)
- [Mo News Podcast](#)
- [Bloomberg News](#)
- [New York Magazine](#)



[LinkedIn](#)



[Instagram @chamberofmothers](#)



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Our Speakers

PHIL ALCOCK

Phil is the Head of the Promoting Children and Families Wellbeing Unit within the Scottish Government's Children and Families Directorate. The team has a broad range of responsibilities to support babies, children, young people and parents including Scotland's Baby Box programme, Parenting and Play policy, Funding for third sector organizations, a National Hub to Review and Learn from the deaths of children and young people and a milk and healthy snack scheme in day-care (nursery) settings as well as involvement in a wider cross-portfolio transformational change programme to support early child development. Phil has been in the Scottish Government for 29 years covering posts in Education, Justice, Health, Environment, Marine Offshore Renewables and the 2014 Commonwealth Games delivery team.



Learn more:

[Children and families - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/children-and-families)

FATU M. FORNA, M.D. M.P.H

Dr. Fatu Forna is Co-Founder and Executive Director of The Mama-Pikin Foundation, a non-profit organization that aims to improve the health of women and children in Sierra Leone, West Africa. She is an obstetrician-gynecologist, epidemiologist and international Maternal and Child Health expert. She received her medical degree from Duke University School of Medicine and her master's degree in public health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Forna completed her obstetrics and gynecology residency at Emory University School of Medicine and an Epidemic Intelligence Service fellowship at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She is a Fellow of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.



Dr. Forna has led and managed multiple clinical and technical teams and developed innovative programs to improve the health of women, children, and families. She has served as Lead for Reproductive and Maternal Health for the World Health Organization in Sierra Leone, as a Medical Epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and as Chief of Women's Services and Physician Program Director for Perinatal Safety and Quality for Kaiser Permanente in Georgia (KPGA). She has worked in many countries around the world to improve reproductive health, reduce maternal morbidity and mortality, and improve the quality of care provided to women. She has helped develop and served on numerous Maternal Mortality Review Committees in the United States and Sierra Leone and currently serves as an advisor to the World Health Organization on maternal and reproductive health issues.

Together with her colleagues in KPGA, Dr. Forna developed the Cocoon Pregnancy Care Model to decrease maternal morbidity and mortality. The model places pregnant women in the center of a protective layer of a care team and services to optimize their health, enhance their care experience, and improve perinatal outcomes.

Dr. Forna is a passionate advocate for the reproductive health of young women, and the author of the book "From your doctor to you. What every teenage girl should know about her body, sex, STDs and contraception", and the creator of the "From your doctor to you: Puberty Party and Manhood/Womanhood Party" curriculum and courses. She is also the author of the bestselling Puppy Princess Sheba children's book series.

Dr. Forna has been featured on CNN International for her work improving the health of women and children around the world.

Learn more:

- DrFatuForna.com
- MamaPikinFoundation.org

KELLY NARES

*Federal Secretariat on Early Learning and Child Care
Employment and Social Development Canada
Government of Canada*

Kelly Nares is the Director of Policy Development within the Federal Secretariat on Early Learning and Child Care and leads the International Policy team. Kelly has been with the Secretariat since March 2021 where she has supported various files, including the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care bilateral agreements between the Government of Canada and provinces and territories, as well as federal Early Learning and Child Care legislation. Prior to joining the Secretariat Kelly held various roles in the Government of Canada including at the Privy Council Office and Finance Canada.



Learn more:

- [Federal Secretariat on Early Learning and Child Care - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/federal-secretariat-on-early-learning-and-child-care/)
- [Early Learning and Child Care Information Hub \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www.statcan.gc.ca/early-learning-and-child-care/)
- [Canada child benefit \(CCB\) - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/social-development/child-benefit/)

ELINA PEKKARINEN

Elina Pekkarinen acts as the Ombudsman for Children since May 2019. Pekkarinen studied social work at the University of Helsinki and worked as a social worker at Itäkeskus Social Service Office and as a caregiver at Naulakallio Care and Foster Home before completing a doctorate with a thesis examining the history of juvenile delinquency and child protection. Pekkarinen worked at the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare and the Finnish Youth Research Network before contributing to a postdoctoral research project on marginalized youth and children. She served as Professor in Social Work at the University of Turku before being appointed Ombudsman for Children.



Pekkarinen has held numerous positions of trust, including the positions of Chairman of the Finnish Society for Childhood Studies and Expert Member in Child Welfare Cases at the Administrative Court of Helsinki. She swore the oath of Judge in 2009. The University of Helsinki awarded Pekkarinen the title of Docent in 2018. She has published numerous scientific articles and publications intended for a larger audience, as well as edited various scientific publications.

Learn more:

- lapsiasia.fi/en/ombudsman-for-children
- lapsiasia.fi/en/annual-reports-and-summaries

KATHERINE SEMRAU, PHD, MPH

Dr. Katherine Semrau is an epidemiologist, Director of the BetterBirth Program, and Deputy Director at Ariadne Labs, a joint health innovation center at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health. Through the effective implementation of evidence-based, scalable solutions at the frontline of care, Dr. Semrau's program aims to improve the quality of care, minimize complications, and end the preventable deaths of women and infants. Dr. Semrau is an Associate Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School and an Associate Epidemiologist at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in the Division of Global Health Equity.



Learn more:

AriadneLabs.org/profile/katherine-semrau

RICHA SINGH

Richa Singh is a Co-founder and CEO of YourDOST - one of India's largest emotional wellness platforms. She is also a new mother, finding a way to strike a delicate balance between running an organization and providing care for her young one.

She is an IIT alumna with a specialization in User Experience Design. She has also worked with D.E. Shaw & Co and o9 Solution in Interaction Designer and Product Management roles.



Richa has been honored with several rewards and recognitions - Forbes 30 Under 30 India & Asia, Top 15 People of 2015 by Economic Times, Women of Worth by NDTV, Digital Women Award - 2016, BW Wellbeing 40 under 40 Award - 2021 and an INK Fellow. She has been awarded the Prestigious Women Transforming India Award organized by Niti Ayog, the premier think tank of the Government of India in 2022. She has also presented policy recommendations on Mental Health to the Honorable PM of India. Additionally, in 2024, she was invited for a meeting with the Honorable President of India.

Holistic wellness and support to mothers, their partners along with creating a nurturing community is one of the topics close to Richa's heart. Being a new mother herself, juggling the care of a child, her shared experiences equip her with a sound understanding of the importance of a robust parenthood program and the involvement of policy-makers to bring the change. Richa is a thinker as well as a story-lover. Painting, drawing, dancing, and traveling are few of her hobbies.

Richa is on a mission to help individuals, communities and organizations unlock and expand their full potential - for a better world.

Learn more:
YourDOST.com