



IMPACT REPORT

JULY 2024 - JUNE 2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 03 Letter from Executive Director**
- 04 Clinical Services**
- 05 Evidence-Informed Approaches**
- 06 Transformative Research**
- 07 Advocacy**
- 08 Organizational Impact & Development**
- 09 Workforce Education & Innovation**
- 10 Connecting with Communities**
- 11 Future Outlook: What's Next?**

This report represents a subset of Kempe's activities.
For further information, scan the QR code.



LETTER FROM KATHI WELLS, MD



“

We believe that true transformation is built on evidence, education, and effective advocacy.

-Dr. Kathryn Wells

”

A Commitment to a World Without Maltreatment

To our dedicated partners, visionary supporters, and tireless colleagues:

We stand at a critical juncture in the history of child welfare. For over five decades, The Kempe Center has been a steadfast champion, honoring the legacy of Dr. C. Henry Kempe by bridging the gap between scientific understanding and compassionate, effective care. This annual Impact Report is not merely a summary of activities; it is a testament to the transformative power of **collective resolve** in pursuing our shared vision: a world where every child is safe, supported, and allowed to thrive... a world without abuse.

The past year demanded that we lean even further into our commitment. The challenges facing families—from economic instability to complex behavioral health needs—underscore the urgency of our multidisciplinary approach. Despite these obstacles, 2024-25 was defined by remarkable growth and profound impact across our core pillars.

- Our direct service and clinical programs saw 8% more children and provided 24% more clinical consultations, delivering trauma-responsive care that is critical to healing and recovery.
- Our research team collaborated with researchers internationally to explore decision-making in child welfare, which provides a critical foundation for improvements in child-welfare interventions and outcomes.
- Through our learner-centered education and coaching programs, we delivered over 1230 trainings and 2460 coaching hours to child welfare, healthcare, educators, and other child and family-serving professionals, ensuring evidence-informed practice is deployed across the country.

We believe that true transformation is built on **evidence, education, and effective advocacy**. Our ability to generate rigorous research, translate those findings into actionable services, and educate the next generation of healthcare providers, social workers, and policy leaders is what makes The Kempe Center unique.

Looking ahead, we are focused on scaling these successes, ensuring that our innovative models are not confined to Colorado but become national benchmarks for quality and care. None of this progress would have been possible without your belief in our mission. We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who invested their time, expertise, and resources, proving that when we collaborate, we can truly move the needle toward protecting children and strengthening families.

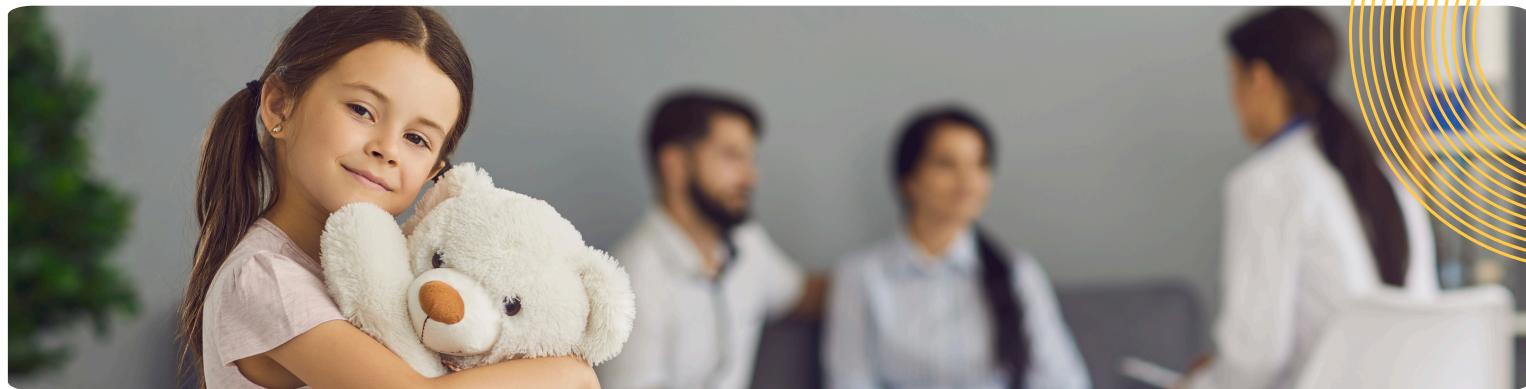
Thank you for being part of this essential work.

Kathryn (Kathi) Wells, MD, FAAP

Executive Director

Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect

CLINICAL SERVICES



In the past year, Kempe's Child Protection Team (CPT) maintained its vital role as Colorado's sole hospital-based multidisciplinary child abuse program. The team maintains an accredited fellowship in child abuse pediatrics and trains the next generation of clinicians (medical students, residents, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners). CPT provided critical care for children and adolescents, including in- and outpatient consultations, telephone consults, and statewide child welfare case review. The team integrates a behavioral health assessment into every outpatient visit.

The following table reflects the number of patients served by location (ANS=Anschutz Campus; COS=Colorado Springs Campus) and service type (NABICC=Non-Accidental Brain Injury Care Clinic):

	ER and Inpatient Consults	Outpatient Visits	Acute Sexual Assault	Telephone Calls	Child Welfare Case Reviews
Location	ANS COS	ANS NABICC COS	Combined	ANS COS	Combined
2024	92 50	138 226 34	108	550 162	28

In addition to Kempe-based clinical care, the Kempe Center is also affiliated with the **KICS clinic** (Kids in Care Settings) at Children's Hospital Colorado. KICS provides comprehensive physical and behavioral healthcare for children in out-of-home placement. This clinic recently completed its second year of operation on April 30, 2025, expanding to three sessions per week. KICS demonstrates remarkable patient engagement with a low 17% no-show rate and an 80% retention rate, and ensures timely medical assessments and developmental support for children in foster care. Additionally, KICS was the first ambulatory clinic to implement a Naloxone Distribution program.

To ensure our efforts are truly impactful, CPT's commitment to clinical excellence is inextricably linked with our focus on research. This coming year marks the pivotal launch of the Kempe Center Impact Lab. This dedicated lab will be instrumental in supporting research and evaluation to allow more precise articulation of the meaningful impact of CPT's work, directly connecting interventions to positive child and family outcomes. CPT aims not only to grow, but to grow with demonstrable effectiveness. Learn more about the range of Clinical Services provided by the Kempe Center on our website [here](#).

EVIDENCE-INFORMED APPROACHES

SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT PROGRAM (SMHSP)

The School Mental Health Support Program (SMHSP) aims to train public school educators to provide mental health support to students, with a special focus on rural schools and schools with limited access to care. SMHSP will use lessons learned from Colorado pilot districts to guide the program's design, implementation, and expansion across secondary schools. Launched in January 2025, it will be scaled up to 400 schools by June 2028. SMHSP is funded by Colorado's Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) and led by Kempe Center faculty in partnership with the University of Denver's Butler Institute for Families and the Colorado BHA.

Building on Evidence and Practice

Rooted in implementation science and informed by direct feedback from educators, administrators, and mental health professionals, SMHSP centers its work on culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and scalable interventions. Initial priority areas were identified through Listening Sessions and stakeholder surveys. These priorities include:



91%: prioritized Self-Regulation & Resiliency



87%: prioritized Mental Health & Well-Being



78%: prioritized Trauma-Informed Practices



74%: prioritized Educator Wellness

The following quotes offer important insights into current challenges and opportunities within school systems related to staff well-being, partnership coordination, and relational support.

“My staff is hungry for time... They're taking significant amounts of time off, showing we need more systematic, built-in well-being opportunities.”
—District Leader

“We have so many partners—it can be too much to navigate. We *need help building better systems and structures.*”
—School Administrator

“The flexibility to access brief, high-quality training while still connecting in person feels doable and impactful.”
—Potential Partner

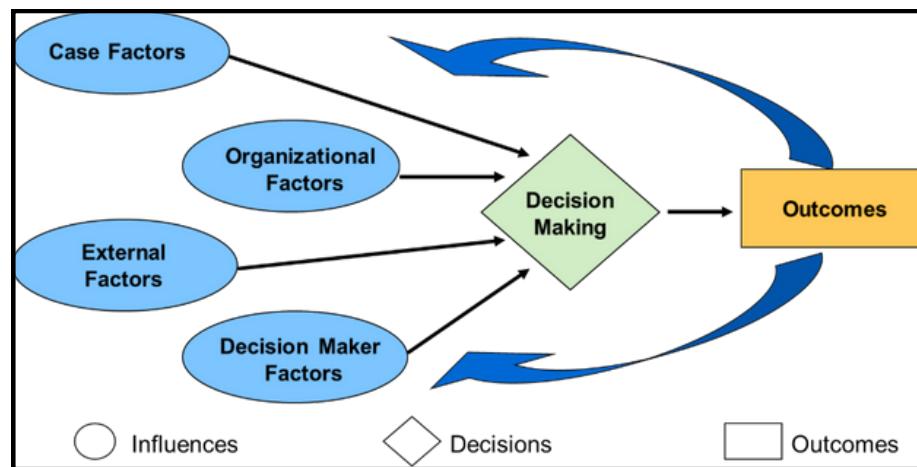
The School Mental Health Support Program (SMHSP) will co-design training content that is short, scenario-based, and grounded in real school experiences. Through the provision of high-quality training, the enhancement of existing systems, resources, and supports, SMHSP will ensure sustainable, system-wide improvements in mental health supports that prioritize the well-being of both students and staff throughout Colorado.

In addition to training, SMHSP offers consultation, communities of practice, learning collaboratives, recommendations for interventions, and community partnerships to schools throughout Colorado.

To learn more about SMHSP and how this program adds value to schools and communities, visit our website [here](#).

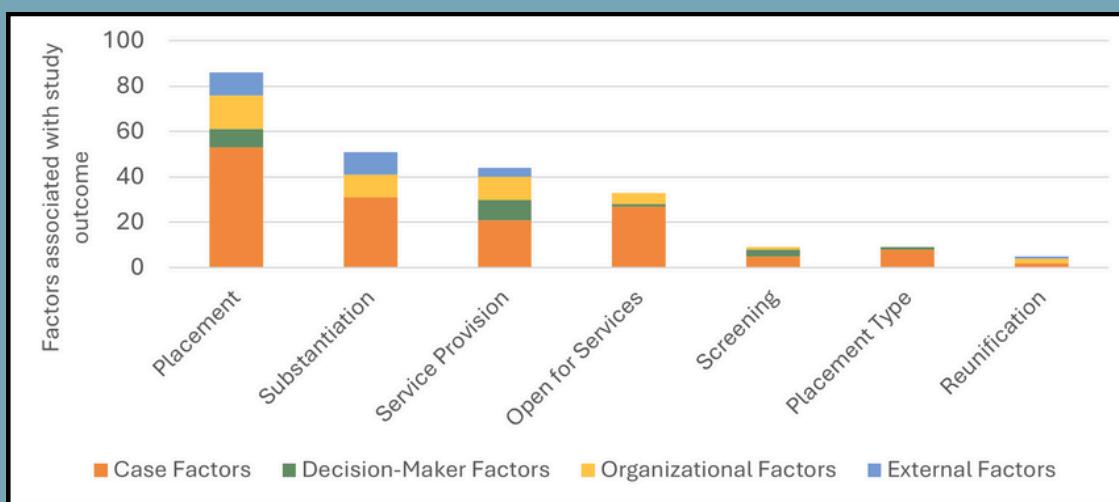
TRANSFORMATIVE RESEARCH

- Decisions about a child welfare case – such as placing a child in out-of-home care – are complex.
- The Decision-Making Ecology (DME) framework (see graphic below) illustrates that many factors influence these decisions—not only the facts of the case.
- Factors like agency culture (organizational), community context (external), and the personal views of a decision-maker also play a role in decision-making.
- If we don't understand what influences case decisions, it is difficult to change racial and other disparities in child welfare. The DME framework helps explain why these different decisions happen.
- Kempe Center faculty have been developing the DME framework for over a decade. Recently, they worked with partners from Canada, Ireland, and the Netherlands to review research articles that used the DME framework.
- The goal of the review was to understand how the DME framework has been used to study ways that case details, organizations, community influences and decision-makers affect child welfare decisions.



- The author team looked at 56 studies and found 759 different factors that affect child welfare decisions.
- These factors were grouped into four types: case details, agency (organizational) characteristics, community (external) influences, and decision-maker traits.
- Most studies focused on case details, which are usually expected to guide decisions.

- Many studies also looked at how organizations and decision-makers affect outcomes.
- Almost 90% of the studies examined more than one type of factor, which is a very positive finding.
- All these factors are important and should be considered in child welfare research. Omitting some can lead to missed chances to improve how decisions are made.
- The review supports using the DME framework for studying and improving child welfare decision-making and reducing disparate or inequitable outcomes.
- Citation: Allan, H., Hollinshead, D., Rockwell, K., Ender, K., Antwi-Boasiako, K., O'Leary, D., Middel, F., & Fluke, J. (2025). Illuminating the complexity of decision-making in child welfare using the decision-making ecology: A scoping review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 169, Article 108121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chillyouth.2025.108121>



ADVOCACY

This past year was exciting and impactful in the Kempe Center's Advocacy work! The Kempe Center hosted a Congressional Briefing on 21st Century Child Abuse at the U.S. Capitol in partnership with the Eugene S. Farley, Jr. Health Policy Center and the University of Colorado's Government Relations Office. The briefing was sponsored by the Kempe Foundation. The panel of experts included Dr. Kathi Wells, Dr. Antonia Chiesa, Dr. Carmelle Wallace, Professor Warren Binford, and Dr. Shale Wong, as well as two anonymous survivors. The delegation met with Congressional staffers and lawmakers during their two days on the Hill, including U.S. Representative Brittany Petterson.



The Kempe Center's expertise was also engaged at the Colorado State Capitol to support the advancement of research-informed and evidence-based legislation at the state level in partnership with the Kempe Foundation. In the 2025 legislative session, our impact included various supports of House Bills that you may find [here](#).

In Colorado, the Kempe Center also partnered with the Farley Center and the Kempe Foundation to create a policy brief highlighting the role of age verification to help prevent harm to children online. Read the Farley-Kempe Policy Brief on Child Safety Online [here](#).

Kempe experts were also active at the international level, hosting the Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, Ann Skelton, for a series of events at CU Anschutz, CHCO, and CU Law in October 2024. Dr. Antonia Chiesa, Dr. Denise Abduo, and Professor Warren Binford worked with three CU Law students in preparing a report for the U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding U.S. non-compliance with its treaty obligations. The report is based on a national survey and interviews with frontline providers working with victims of child trafficking and child sex abuse material.



Kempe Center faculty and staff produced 16+ episodes for the podcast, [Radio Kempe](#). The episodes covered various topics, including 21st Century Child Abuse, building meaningful and impactful relationships, leadership and organizational culture, supporting clinicians in working with high-stress families, creating a culture of resilience and wellness, evidence-based parenting interventions, and intimate partner violence. Listen to the podcasts that feature renowned guests from around the world, here: <https://radiokempe.buzzsprout.com/>.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT & DEVELOPMENT

TRANSFORMING LEADERSHIP. CULTIVATING EQUITY. BRIDGING TO RELATIONSHIP.

What We Did This Year

The Kempe Center seeks to strengthen organizational culture and leadership practices so that child welfare research, education, advocacy, and practice are carried out in ways that embody equity, compassion, effectiveness, and Service Excellence. We highlight the Bridging to Relationship Coaching Program as one way we are impacting the field. In 2024, this coaching program delivered transformational coaching to two more powerful cohorts from the Colorado Court Improvement Program and Boulder County Human Services.

This work supported judges, lawyers, supervisors, case workers, and policy leaders in deepening their race equity lens, improving team dynamics, and showing up more courageously in their leadership.

Through individual and team coaching, participants explored how race, power, identity, and relationships intersect—empowering them to lead from a place of clarity, humility, and purpose.

What Participants Are Saying

“My coach helped illuminate things I was avoiding. It was the perfect mix of accountability and support.”

“It gave me the tools I needed to impact the system. I had been holding myself back—now I’m becoming the leader I want to be.”

“I cannot be silent anymore. I’ve learned to use my voice with thoughtfulness and courage. It helped me show up better—for my team, for families, for myself.”

Our Impact: By the Numbers

 **2** cross-sector cohorts completed

 **50+** participants coached individually and in teams to date

 **Countless** internal culture shifts sparked by courageous conversations

What's Next: A New Name for a Growing Vision

As the work has evolved, so has our mission. While Bridging to Relationship Coaching (formerly RQ - Race Intelligence Coaching Program) remains a foundational concept, this coaching model was never just about race. It's about how we show up in relationships—with ourselves, each other, and the systems we seek to transform, given the social constructs within which we exist.

That's why, beginning in Fiscal Year 2025-26, the program will now be known as: Bridging to Relationship Coaching. This name reflects our growth—from a race-specific lens to a broader, relational model that supports justice, healing, and real relationship building across identities, roles, and institutions.

Together, we're building cultures where everyone is seen, heard, and valued—one relationship at a time.

Ready to grow, connect, and lead with purpose? Join Us! [Contact us](#) today to explore 1:1, cohort, or team coaching tailored to your unique context and goals.

WORKFORCE EDUCATION & INNOVATION



The CARE Network, established in 2019 through Colorado House Bill 19-1133, was designed to provide a statewide healthcare response to suspected child maltreatment. In collaboration with the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment, the network supports and trains medical and behavioral health clinicians who assess children for suspected physical or sexual abuse or neglect. The program also provides reimbursement to clinicians. In (SFY) 2025, we had 56 providers serving 30 counties, and they completed 215 medical evaluations and 78 behavioral health evaluations.

Community Outreach: Our work supports systems of care coordination. This past year, we conducted nine community presentations – including La Plata, Montezuma, and Garfield counties – aimed at increasing awareness, building referral relationships, and recruiting new providers.

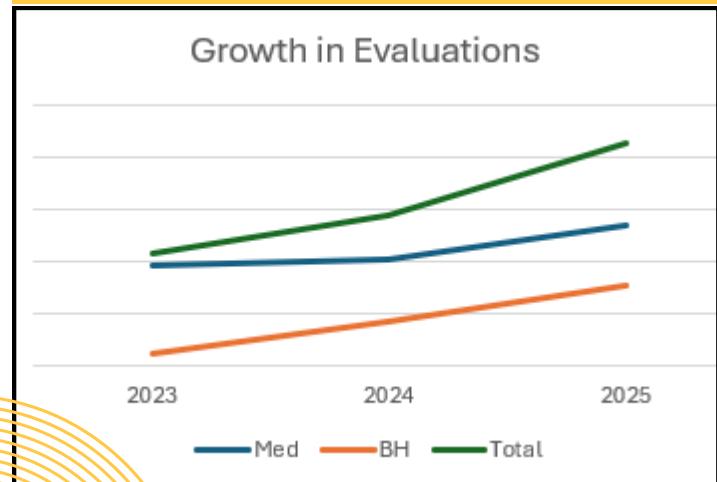
Training and Ongoing Education: The network held its 5th Annual Conference on May 5–6 at the Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora. Forty current and 15 prospective providers attended, benefiting from the participation of campus-based experts. The conference received overwhelmingly positive feedback:

- 88% of new attendees were “very satisfied,” and 87% passed the training knowledge assessment.
- In addition, 15 virtual ECHO training sessions were held, with almost 100% of participants rating them as “good” to “excellent.”
- These sessions effectively increased awareness of social risk and protective factors in child maltreatment.

Program Evaluation:

- ✓ Data revealed that in 52% of medical cases, providers reported a high level of concern or identified definite evidence of abuse. Behavioral health issues were flagged in nearly half of all medical evaluations.
- ✓ Medical clinicians also identified other medical issues in 30% of cases and developmental concerns in 20% of cases.
- ✓ Network referrals were commonly made for behavioral health support, parenting programs, domestic violence services, and additional assessments like ADHD or autism screenings.

“By having the additional knowledge, evidence-based information, and support of the Care Network, I can apply more holistic care, including behavioral health screenings.” - CARE Network Provider



Mentorship and quality assurance also play a vital role in The CARE Network:

- Approximately 80% of medical and 90% of behavioral health evaluations followed best practice standards.
- Provider satisfaction with mentor feedback was high, with 75% reporting they were “very satisfied.”
- Furthermore, 70% of providers indicated that the network improved community access to medical evaluations, and 85% noted better coordination with child and family services.
- The CARE Network continues to expand its reach and impact, strengthening child protection systems across Colorado.

CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITIES



JOIN US INTERNATIONAL VIRTUAL CONFERENCE
October 7-10, 2024
A CALL TO ACTION
to CHANGE CHILD WELFARE

Plan ahead: October 6-9, 2025 www.ctaconference.org

BE THE CHANGE

EQUALITY, JUSTICE, FAIRNESS, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, VOICE, ADVOCACY

Photo of diverse children smiling.

The 2024 International Conference: A Call to Action to Change Child Welfare brought together almost 2,000 individuals, including child welfare professionals, advocates, policymakers, researchers, and those who have been impacted by their involvement with various government systems. The goal was to identify, learn, and socialize new and transformative solutions to improve the lives of children, families, and communities. A highlight of the conference was the powerful performances by poets Slam Anderson and Dennis Amadeus, whose work inspired a call for action and change.



Slam Anderson and Dennis Amadeus, nationally recognized spoken word poets and advocates, shook the virtual stage. They brought raw, unflinching truth to a field too often constrained by policy language and procedural distance.

Slam Anderson, a foster care alumna and longtime advocate, opened with a line that set the tone:

"I can't speak at conferences anymore. I got work to do. Mountains I need to shake. Trails I need to make."

With 200 attendees who joined Slam's session, her poetry traced the exhaustion and clarity that comes from years of hearing the same conversations about "reform"—and watching the same cycles persist. In Battle Call, she voiced what many in the audience had felt but rarely named: the ache of systems unchanged, and the necessity of collective courage.



In the same spirit of truth-telling and transformation, Dennis Amadeus delivered a poem that wove personal history and systemic indictment into a single narrative thread. In Background Check, he reflected on how past mistakes—and society's response to them—almost locked him out of purpose:

"I was able to define my life even after mistakes... Poetry gave me the power to take my words and change my mindset and who I thought I was."

As 100 attendees joined Dennis' session, he shared the story of being escorted out of a school by law enforcement—despite being there to teach. "I want to be able to proudly carry the label teacher," he said. "I want to be a positive educational force... [but] I have to keep on proving myself until the world will finally listen in."

Building on the impact of the 2024 conference, the 2025 international virtual conference, "A Call to Action to Change Child Welfare," expanded its artistic programming. With a new theme of "Inner Restorative and Resilient Practices," the conference featured poetry and other artistic expressions not just as entertainment, but as a crucial tool for justice, advocacy, and a means to provide tangible skills for emotional resilience, inner restoration, and self-awareness. Learn more about the conference at www.ctaconference.org.

FUTURE OUTLOOK: WHAT'S NEXT?



Looking ahead, the Kempe Center is focused on transforming the landscape of child welfare and continuing its commitment to a world without child maltreatment. We will continue to do this through evidence-informed services, transformative research, learner-centered education, and effective advocacy.

The Kempe Center's current initiatives and programs are designed to address child maltreatment through a multi-disciplinary approach, combining expertise from various fields such as medicine, clinical services, law, and social work.

What's Next?

The future of the Kempe Center is centered on creating transformative change. Key priorities and upcoming events include:

- **Service Excellence:** The center is committed to integrating service excellence when supporting children, families, and communities by creating a person-centered, respectful, and effective system of care. This goes beyond simply providing services; it's about building strong, trusting relationships and empowering the people we serve.
- **Transformative Research:** We are excited to launch an Impact Lab this year - in addition to continuing to conduct community-based research and program evaluation, we will dedicate time and resources to document the impact of the Kempe Center programs and Services.
- **Global Conferences:** The Kempe Center hosts significant international events, including its annual "Call to Action to Change Child Welfare" conference, which brings together professionals, advocates, and individuals with lived experience from around the globe.
- **Addressing New Challenges:** The center is actively tackling emerging issues, such as tech-facilitated child abuse, with plans for a Global Scientific Conference on the topic in 2026.
- **Enhancing the Workforce:** The center is focused on supporting and training child and family serving professionals, recognizing the need to address high turnover and system challenges.