Background

Over the past decade, society has dramatically enhanced its understanding of child development and the impact that children’s health and well-being has on the strength of families, communities, and nations. Thanks to the generosity of private philanthropy, there has been remarkable progress in the ways in which children are cared for—from groundbreaking treatments for chronic diseases and technologies that save babies born prematurely, to improved school nutrition and mental health policies.

However, children are still facing daunting challenges. For example, childhood obesity rates have tripled over the last three decades; 60 percent of U.S. children start kindergarten without the language, math, and social-emotional skills needed to thrive; and approximately 4,600 U.S. youth between the ages of 10 and 24 commit suicide each year, while 157,000 receive medical care for self-inflicted injuries. But despite these growing needs and shocking statistics, investments in children’s health and well-being are severely lacking. Society is failing its children, and as a result, the well-being of all generations is suffering.

Now more than ever, there is a profound opportunity and responsibility to come together to make child health and well-being a priority, articulating and advancing a “children-first” agenda.

The 2017 Aspen Children’s Forum will convene approximately 200 philanthropists who have demonstrated a strong commitment to advancing the health and well-being of children through their giving, their volunteerism, and their voice. They will be joined by scientists, policymakers, educators, and health care practitioners to devise and advance an agenda of research, innovation, and policy priorities that put children first. They will examine forks in the road, moments when societal decisions will be made, and ask what choice best reflects the interests of children.
Throughout the three days, a series of overarching questions will be used to help map out a strategy for advancing the overall well-being of infants, children, and youth:

**Societal Choice**
How can we change societal attitudes about the need to invest in children and children’s health? Are there opportunities ahead for advancing the norm that a children-first agenda is imperative?

**Public Policy**
What are the key gaps in public policies affecting the health and well-being of children in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere, and how can we effectively advocate on the community, state, federal, and global levels on behalf of children?

**Delivery of Care**
How can we optimize our health care delivery system—including hospital, home, and community-based approaches—in a way that puts children first?

**Research and Discovery**
How can we advance the health and well-being of all children by triggering new innovations and building upon existing research?
Wednesday, July 12

5:00-6:00pm  Welcome Reception
Barksdale Lobby, Doerr-Hosier Center

6:00-8:00pm  Welcome Dinner
McNulty Room, Doerr-Hosier Center

Where We Stand, Where We Have Come From, and Where We Need to Go

Over the past decade, we have witnessed remarkable progress in the ways in which we care for children, and we have radically improved our understanding of the socioeconomic and environmental factors affecting their health and well-being. But challenges remain. This session takes stock of those advances and explores the demographic and policy environment in which societal choices are made. It will pose two questions to be revisited throughout our time together:

How can we build and broaden a consensus among individuals of all political stripes on the importance and practicalities of putting the health and well-being of children first?

How can we use our voices, volunteerism, and philanthropy to foster a movement of those committed to advancing a children-first agenda?

Dowell Myers, PhD, Professor, Sol Price School of Public Policy, University of Southern California

Kathleen Taylor, Chair of the Board, Royal Bank of Canada; Chair of the Board, SickKids Foundation

Mark Wietecha, President and CEO, Children’s Hospital Association
Thursday, July 13

7:00-8:30am  Breakfast
Barksdale Lobby, Doerr-Hosier Center

8:30-9:30am  Opportunities Ahead: Harnessing the Power of Scientific Discovery and Technology Innovation
McNulty Room, Doerr-Hosier Center

Scientific discovery, technological innovation, and the use of big data have led to major advances in children’s health and well-being, such as preventing diseases with life-saving immunizations, reducing sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) with the NICHD’s “Safe to Sleep” (formerly “Back to Sleep”) campaign, and dramatically increasing the survival rate of children with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). But there is still much work to be done. How can we better leverage scientific advancements to improve our care of children, thereby strengthening the health and well-being of all generations?

Daniel Kraft, MD, Faculty Chair, Medicine and Neuroscience, Singularity University; Founder and Chair, Exponential Medicine
Margaret Laws, President and CEO, HopeLab
Shoo K. Lee, MBBS, PhD, FRCPC, Scientific Director, Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health, Canadian Institutes of Health Research
MODERATOR Alan Guttmacher, MD, Former Director, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD); Senior Advisor, Permanent Fund for Vermont’s Children

9:30-10:00am  Break

10:00-11:30am  Working Groups
The Science of Early Childhood Development
Booz Allen Hamilton, Koch Seminar Building

Research on the development of the brain has drastically improved our understanding of the impact of the first years of life on the overall well-being of individuals, families, and communities. How can we best leverage advancements in pediatric neuroscience and behavior research to inform investments in early childhood? What would a children-first agenda in this area look like, and how can we best advance it?

Patricia Kuhl, PhD, Professor and Co-Director, Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences, University of Washington
Jin Lee, PhD, Co-Founder and CEO, BabyNoggin
Jessie Rasmussen, President, Buffett Early Childhood Fund
MODERATOR Sujatha Sebastian, Director of Advisory Services & Membership, Conveners.org
Improving Birth Outcomes
Kaufman Room, Doerr-Hosier Center

For every 1,000 babies born in North America, nearly six in the United States and nearly five in Canada will die before their first birthday due to birth defects, preterm birth and low birth weight, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), and injuries, among other causes. While this working group will acknowledge the socioeconomic factors associated with these statistics, it will focus on the successes to date and future opportunities to improve birth outcomes through investments in scientific knowledge and medical technology. What would a children-first agenda in this area look like, and how can we best advance it?

Alan W. Flake, MD, FACS, FAAP, Ruth and Tristram C. Colket, Jr. Chair in Pediatric Surgery and Director of the Center for Fetal Research, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia; Professor of Surgery, University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine

David K. Stevenson, MD, Harold K. Faber Professor of Pediatrics, Senior Associate Dean for Maternal and Child Health, and Co-Director of the Child Health Research Institute, Stanford University School of Medicine

FACILITATOR Dan Tuttle, Co-Founder, Build Advisory

Advancing Children’s Health through Translational Research
Lauder Seminar Room, Koch Seminar Building

This working group will explore strategies for harnessing biomedical research and discoveries to advance the health and well-being of children. How can we encourage more interdisciplinary research and educational and funding opportunities that prioritize the translation of basic science findings to the treatment of pediatric diseases? What would a children-first agenda in this area look like, and how can we best advance it?

Mark Batshaw, MD, Executive Vice President, Physician-in-Chief, Chief Academic Officer, and Director of the Children’s Research Institute, Children’s National Health System

Michael C. Jensen, MD, Director, Ben Towne Center for Childhood Cancer Research, Seattle Children’s Research Institute

Michael Salter, MD, PhD, FRSC, Chief of Research, The Hospital for Sick Children; Professor of Physiology, University of Toronto

FACILITATOR Jeanine Becker, CEO and Founder, Collaborative Leadership Consulting
Leveraging New Science to Eradicate Diseases of Childhood

Stranahan Seminar Room, Koch Seminar Building

Advances in new science, such as genomics and immunotherapy, have led to significant progress in biomedical discovery and revolutionized the diagnosis and treatment of disease. We are on the cusp of being able to manage and potentially cure a wide range of pediatric conditions that have lifelong impact. But despite this progress and the potential impact on adult health of pediatric cures, there are still significant challenges and opportunities ahead. What would a children-first agenda in this area look like, and how can we best advance it?

Stephen F. Kingsmore, MD, DSc, President and CEO, Rady Children's Institute for Genomic Medicine, Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego

Kenneth Mandl, MD, MPH, Professor of Biomedical Informatics and Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School; Director, Computational Health Informatics Program, Boston Children’s Hospital

FACILITATOR Alan Guttmacher, MD, Former Director, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; Senior Advisor, Permanent Fund for Vermont’s Children

11:30am-12:00pm  Break

12:00-1:00pm  Lunch
McNulty Room, Doerr-Hosier Center

1:00-2:15pm  The Social Determinants of Health
McNulty Room, Doerr-Hosier Center

Over the past two decades, we have significantly increased our knowledge of the impact that social factors can have on the physical and mental health of children and adults. The conditions under which we are born, grow, work, and live can have a profound influence on our overall health. How can we ensure that the health and well-being of all children is prioritized when considering key social determinants of health—from access to nutritious foods to social-emotional skill development and early childhood education?

Karen J. Pittman, President and CEO, The Forum for Youth Investment

Bill Shore, Founder and CEO, Share Our Strength

Mark K. Shriver, President, Save the Children Action Network

MODERATOR Jane Wales, Vice President, The Aspen Institute

2:15-3:00pm  Break
3:00-4:30pm  Working Groups

**Mitigating Toxic Stress**
Booz Allen Hamilton, Koch Seminar Building

During this working group, participants will discuss the lifelong consequences of adverse childhood experiences—from neglect to abuse to household dysfunction. And they will brainstorm strategies for preventing and reversing the damaging effects of toxic stress, such as educating parents and caregivers on ways to support their children’s social and emotional development and enhance coping skills. How can we best support families with vulnerabilities, so their children can be given the best chance to succeed? What would a children-first agenda in this area look like, and how can we best advance it?

Christina Bethell, PhD, MBA, MPH, Professor, Department of Population, Family, and Reproductive Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health; Director, The Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative

Victor G. Carrion, MD, Professor and Vice Chair of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Stanford University; Director, Stanford Early Life Stress and Pediatric Anxiety Program, Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital

Denise Dowd, MD, MPH, PEM, Professor of Pediatrics, University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine; Staff Physician, Division of Emergency Medicine, Children’s Mercy Hospital

**FACILITATOR Jeanine Becker**, CEO and Founder, Collaborative Leadership Consulting

**Improving Adolescent Mental Health**
Kaufman Room, Doerr Hosier Center

Adolescence is a time of dramatic physical, emotional, intellectual, and social changes, and with that comes increased vulnerability and stress. This working group will discuss strategies for lowering adolescent anxiety, reducing stigma, and improving access to mental health care—from school-based services and teacher training to integration with primary care to telehealth and other technology tools. Participants will also consider current and potential programs and policies for preventing and treating teenage addiction, including alcohol and drug abuse and internet dependency. What would a children-first agenda in this area look like, and how can we best advance it?

Harold S. Koplewicz, MD, President, Child Mind Institute

Delaney Ruston, MD, Physician and Social Change Filmmaker

Peter Szatmari, MD, MSc, FRCPS, Professor and Head of the Division of Child and Youth Mental Health, University of Toronto; Chief of Child and Youth Mental Health Collaborative, The Hospital for Sick Children and Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

**FACILITATOR Sujatha Sebastian**, Director of Advisory Services & Membership, Conveners.org
Encouraging Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

Stranahan Seminar Room, Koch Seminar Building

Nutritious foods and active lifestyles are key ingredients for maintaining a healthy weight throughout childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. How can we partner across sectors to create public policies and school and community programs that encourage healthy eating and physical activity? What would a children-first agenda in this area look like, and how can we best advance it?

Ann Cooper, Founder and President of the Board, Chef Ann Foundation

Bill Shore, Founder and CEO, Share Our Strength

Shale Wong, MD, MSPH, Director, Child Health Policy and Education, Eugene S. Farley, Jr. Health Policy Center, Children’s Hospital Colorado

FACILITATOR Robin Schepper, Senior Advisor, Nutrition and Physical Activity Initiative, Bipartisan Policy Center; Former Executive Director, Let’s Move!, Office of the First Lady of the United States

Achieving Equal Access to Quality Pediatric Care

Lauder Seminar Room, Koch Seminar Building

There are significant disparities in access to quality care in our current health care system. Geography, financial status, language, race, and ethnicity are among the factors that can determine the level and type of care received by children. How can we create and implement a health care delivery system that guarantees that all children receive the same access to high-quality care? What would a children-first agenda in this area look like, and how can we best advance it?

Katherine A. Beckmann, PhD, MPH, Program Officer, Children, Families, and Communities, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Ryan Padrez, MD, FAAP, Medical Director, The Primary School; Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, University of California, San Francisco

FACILITATOR Dan Tuttle, Co-Founder, Build Advisory

4:30pm  Break for the Day

7:00pm  Hospital-Hosted Dinners
Friday, July 14

What does a children-first agenda look like, and how do we get there? What is the role of philanthropy and philanthropists in ensuring that all children have the chance to thrive? And how can we collaborate in achieving that common goal?

7:00-8:30am  Breakfast

Barksdale Lobby, Doerr-Hosier Center

8:30-9:30am  Aligning Our Vision for Change: Case Studies of Putting Principles into Practice

McNulty Room, Doerr-Hosier Center

Through our philanthropy, volunteerism, and voice, each participant in the Aspen Children’s Forum is committed to advancing children’s health and well-being. And each is making a powerful difference. How can we redouble our efforts and our impact, working within our communities and in our interactions with decision makers on a national or international level? Speakers will provide case studies of philanthropists effecting change, and participants will take part in table conversations on the role they play as philanthropists and citizens in advancing children’s health and well-being.

Lightning Talk 1
Steve Allen, MD, CEO, Nationwide Children’s Hospital
Robert Kahn, MD, MPH, Professor and Associate Chair of Community Health, Department of Pediatrics, University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center

Lightning Talk 2
J. Gregory Barrett, President and Chief Development Officer, Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh Foundation
Clifford R. Rowe, Jr., CEO, PJ Dick / Trumbull / Lindy Paving; Chair of the Board of Trustees, Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh Foundation

Lightning Talk 3
Ted Garrard, CEO, SickKids Foundation
Shoo K. Lee, MBBS, PhD, FRCPC, Scientific Director, Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health, Canadian Institutes of Health Research

9:30-10:00am  Table Talks

McNulty Room, Doerr-Hosier Center

10:00-10:30am  Break
10:30am-12:00pm  Creating a Social Change Movement: Next Steps and a Call to Action

McNulty Room, Doerr-Hosier Center

In this concluding session, we will consider not only our individual opportunity for impact but whether we might leverage our collective capacity as part of a social change movement guided by one shared promise: to put children first.

Next Steps

David Alexander, MD, President and CEO, Lucile Packard Foundation for Children’s Health

Ted Garrard, CEO, SickKids Foundation

Closing Remarks

Kathleen Taylor, Chair of the Board, Royal Bank of Canada; Chair of the Board, SickKids Foundation

12:00pm  Conference Adjourns and Buffet Lunch