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The mission of the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) is to ensure that every person is born healthy and wanted, that women suffer no harmful effects from reproductive processes, and that all children have the chance to achieve their full potential for healthy and productive lives, free from disease or disability, and to ensure the health, productivity, independence, and well-being of all people through optimal rehabilitation. Since its inception, the NICHD has been at the vanguard of scientific endeavors to improve the lives of vulnerable children. From our early work in understanding developmental disabilities to illuminating important events that occur during pregnancy, the NICHD has made significant strides in our pursuit to enhance the lives of children and families around the world.

That is why the first-ever United States Government Action Plan on Children in Adversity is so central to our mission. Our current investments in research, training, and capacity building are in line with the Plan's overarching objective to protect vulnerable children – especially those outside of family care. The Plan offers a foundation from which we can extend our efforts to provide a strong scientific evidence base upon which effective policies and programs can be implemented. We are delighted to have this unique opportunity to coalesce our ideas and interests with other government agencies around a common goal – to build strong beginnings for children, ensuring that they not only survive challenging adverse experiences, but that they thrive and achieve their full potential.