Launched in 2012, Penn State University’s Child Maltreatment Solutions Network (the Network) is the university’s academic response to solving the complex problems of child maltreatment. The Network includes a Provost co-funded, 12-faculty cluster hire across 5 Colleges who will work in conjunction to combat child maltreatment and its consequences through transdisciplinary research. The Network’s infrastructure supports: (1) administrative and communications operations, (2) child maltreatment pilot funds to support junior faculty and encourage new cross-disciplinary innovation, (3) the administration of an intercollege undergraduate minor in Child Maltreatment and Advocacy Studies (CMAS), (4) an annual conference and book series to disseminate research advancements, and (5) an evidenced-based mental health treatment directed by Network faculty at PSU’s College of Medicine.

This transdisciplinary group will study child maltreatment through many different and collaborative lenses to accelerate novel discoveries across for broad areas of impact: (1) **Basic Science**: shedding light on the precise mechanisms that are triggered in the face of early and chronic stress; discovering processes of biological embedding by which stress “gets under the skin” to impair optimal functioning; how prevent, modulate, and treat a compromised biologic system to mitigate maldevelopment and health consequences. (2) **Prevention and Detection**: *primary prevention* focusing on perpetrator behaviors, raising community awareness, facilitating mandated reporting, and injecting child abuse prevention strategies into already-prolific at-risk parent training and universal home-visiting; *secondary preventive strategies* embedded within child welfare to target health and psychosocial sequelae for victims; *enhanced detection* of physical abuse and abusive head trauma in primary care settings. (3) **Treatment**: optimizing implementation; promoting person-centered tailoring; enhancing response rates; reducing costs; overcoming barriers to delivery; reducing access disparities of evidence-based trauma treatments; trials research of novel treatment approaches that go beyond traditional trauma foci to mitigate deleterious outcomes. (4) **Translation**: translating scientific discoveries to change practice; using predictive analytics and health economics to craft fiscal messages that orient providers and policy makers toward recognizing the prevention and treatment of child maltreatment as worthy of significant public investment.
The Network enjoys a continued fiscal commitment from University administration, an impressive research and outreach infrastructure, and access to students at all levels to inspire and prepare a future workforce dedicated to careers in science and serving vulnerable children. The Network’s Director, Jennie Noll, PhD has nurtured a synergistic working relationship with state and local legislators who view the Network as a resource for research and expertise, and as a vital part of a “Research-to-Policy Bridge” that will accelerate the uptake of knowledge and evidence-based approaches. This synergy is evidenced through a firm commitment from county leaders, the PA Department of Human Services, and the PA General Assembly’s House Children and Youth Committee to provide access to state-wide child welfare data, direct access to families for large-scale research projects, and participation in coalition-driven projects aimed at engaging policy in research and dissemination that can energize new legislation.

True to its mission, the Network aims to emerge as THE premier center in the US and across the world where a cadre of transdisciplinary scientists work in conjunction with advocates, practitioners, and policy makers to resource, conduct, and disseminate impactful new science that can change health and developmental trajectories for victims, mobilize public investment in child maltreatment prevention and treatment, accelerate science to practice, spark dynamic system-wide solutions, and support and inspire future generations to do the same.