

Gov. Walker: First Lady Tonette Walker travels to Washington D.C. to promote trauma-informed care and the Fostering Futures Initiative

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MADISON - First Lady Tonette Walker is traveling to Washington D.C. this week, where she'll meet with federal agency leaders and various lawmakers about her initiative, Fostering Futures, which works to transform systems by using trauma-informed care and raise awareness about the importance of better recognizing, understanding, and addressing the effects of trauma and toxic stress on the lives of children and families throughout Wisconsin and the nation.

"We want Wisconsin to be a national leader when it comes to promoting and implementing trauma-informed care," First Lady Tonette Walker said. "Toxic stress, a proxy for what's known as Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs, can have a lasting impact, even years after childhood events. Trauma-informed care applies the science of toxic stress to create a shift in perspective that gives us more effective ways to support and serve kids, families, and communities. By training people to recognize ACEs, they're more likely to understand and approach situations in a new way, which has the power to change outcomes."

First Lady Tonette Walker launched the Fostering Futures initiative in 2011 to raise awareness about how childhood toxic stress can dramatically shape a person's life. Developments in neuroscience and public health show that toxic stress caused by ACEs affects the development of the brain. Understanding what is causing

challenging behaviors can help people avoid triggers and lead to more positive outcomes.

Toxic stress can lead to difficulties in forming relationships, regulating and controlling emotions, and managing impulse control. Data also shows child adversity is correlated with risk behaviors and negative health outcomes in adulthood. Creating trauma-informed spaces and services, promoting resilience, and raising awareness about the impact of trauma are all best practices in addressing and preventing traumatic experiences.