

From the press release below: *Legislation authorizing the new institute passed in October 1962. "We will look to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development for a concentrated attack on the unsolved health problems of children and of mother-infant relationships," President Kennedy said when he signed the bill into law. "This legislation will encourage imaginative research into the complex processes of human development from conception to old age."*

**Child abuse and neglect and developmental origins of violence  
are part of the  
"unsolved health problems of children and of mother-infant relationships"  
(jwp)**



[National Institute of Child Health  
and Human Development \(NICHD\)](#)

For Immediate Release  
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## **NICHD Renamed for Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Advocate for Institute's Founding**

*Event To Commemorate Her Founding Role*

Congress has renamed the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development at the National Institutes of Health in honor of Eunice Kennedy Shriver for her essential contribution to the institute's founding.

Established in 1963, the institute is now called the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

On March 3 at 10:30 a.m. Eastern Time, in the Natcher Conference Center of the NIH campus, Mrs. Shriver's brother Senator Edward Kennedy, members of Congress, federal officials, as well as family and friends of Mrs. Shriver, will attend a 45th anniversary event to commemorate her role in founding the institute. At the event, Mrs. Shriver will be inducted into the NICHD Hall of Honor. Housed in the institute's Bethesda, Maryland headquarters, the Hall of Honor features commemorative plaques which recognize individuals who have made exceptional contributions to advancing knowledge of human development and improving maternal and child health.

In the early 1960s, Mrs. Shriver urged her brother, President John F. Kennedy, to establish an institute that would conduct research on children's health and human development. She later worked with House and Senate leaders to help ensure passage of the legislation that would make the institute a reality.

"Forty-five years ago, Eunice Kennedy Shriver sought to create a research endeavor that would seek to understand human development throughout the life process, focusing on developmental disorders, including intellectual disabilities, and illuminating important events that occur during pregnancy and childhood," said Elias A. Zerhouni, M.D. director of the NIH. "This year, as we commemorate the forty-fifth anniversary of the Institute, we gratefully acknowledge the contribution of Mrs. Shriver, without whom the Institute would never have been founded."

The NICHD also has renamed its Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers Program in honor of Mrs. Shriver. The 14 university-based facilities in the program seek to advance the diagnosis, prevention, treatment, and amelioration of intellectual and developmental disabilities. Mrs. Shriver was a member of the Institute's first advisory council, and it was under her guidance that the centers were established. The name change acknowledges the contribution of Mrs. Shriver and replaces the outmoded term "mental retardation," with "intellectual disabilities." The program is now known as the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers Program.

"The centers have yielded numerous advances that have improved the lives and health of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities," said Duane Alexander, M.D., director of the NICHD. "It is only fitting that the program she brought about should honor her dedication to improving the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities."

Born in Brookline Mass., Mrs. Shriver is the fifth of nine children of Joseph P. and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy. She is the executive vice president of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation and founder and honorary chairperson of Special Olympics.

At an event she hosted 5 years ago in commemoration of NICHD's 40th anniversary celebration, Mrs. Shriver recounted her role in the institute's early beginnings. She recalled that her brother Jack initially was not enthusiastic about the idea. She won his support, however, when she explained that overcoming such serious health problems as premature birth would come about only through a committed research effort. She added that improvements in Americans' health resulting from research advances eventually would far exceed the initial costs required to bring them about.

Before the establishment of the NICHD, NIH institutes focused only on a particular organ system or disease category. President Kennedy proposed legislation that would provide for an NIH institute organized around children's health and the phases of the life cycle.

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In 1974, the NICHD research program on aging was transferred to the National Institute on Aging, created by Congress to focus on the health and well-being of older people.

The NICHD sponsors research on development, before and after birth; maternal, child, and family health; reproductive biology and population issues; and medical rehabilitation. For more information, visit the Institute's Web site at <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/>.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) — *The Nation's Medical Research Agency* — includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical and translational medical research, and it investigates the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov).



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