

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Strong Minds Strong Kids, Psychology Canada, joins forces with GreenShield to improve parents' mental health and bond with their infants within their first years of life

The 'Make the Connection' program is based on seven pillars of attachment for parents and caregivers to acquire strategies and engage in activities to help form a secure bond with their baby. It's designed to increase knowledge of how attachment-based parenting will improve outcomes for their infant.

TORONTO, February 14, 2024 – Approximately 15% of babies born in Canada are anticipated to develop a disorganized attachment to their caregiver. The parent-infant relationship is crucial for optimal development into childhood and adolescent. For many parents, isolation, social support, or existing mental health challenges prevent them from fostering a bond within the first year of their infant's life. In partnership with GreenShield, a not-for-profit health and benefits company, Strong Minds Strong Kids, Psychology Canada, is providing parents with access to their 'Make the Connection' program. Full Press Release

'Make the Connection' acknowledges the critical need for parents to prioritize their infant's mental well-being. Equipping all new parents and caregivers with enhanced skills will improve the child's physical, psychological, behavioural, and developmental well-being.

"A parent's bond with their baby is crucial," says Anne Lovegrove, President and Executive Director of Strong Minds Strong Kids, Psychology Canada. "When a parent feels supported and knowledgeable in their nurturing, it has positive effects on them and their infant's mental health. "Make the Connection (MTC)' is a proven program designed to help parents form a secure attachment with their infant."

MTC helps parents interact with their babies in ways that promote secure attachment, communication, and brain development. Through hands-on activities, reflection and discussion, parents learn strategies to nurture their relationship with their child. The program is offered to parents and caregivers in need and is easily accessible online.

"Investing in parents' mental health, requires supporting their parenting role," says Dr. Nicole Racine, trustee of SMSKPC, Clinical Psychologist and Assistant Professor, University of Ottawa. "Equipping parents with enhanced skills has the potential to support the well-being and their child's physical, psychological, behavioural, and developmental well-being too."

GreenShield reinvests its earnings and redeploys its health services to support underserved and equity-seeking communities. GreenShield Cares exists to advance the organization's social mission to improve health outcomes for all Canadians. Since 2018, GreenShield Cares has invested over \$18.5M in mental health initiatives, providing complimentary mental health support to nearly 200,000 people from equity-seeking groups.

"As a not-for-profit health and benefits company, we're committed to building meaningful partnerships that align to our mission of better health for all. Our partnership with Strong Minds Strong Kids allows us to broaden our social impact to equity-seeking groups," says Mandy Mail, Executive Vice President, Head of Marketing, Communications & GreenShield Cares. "Their transformative 'Make the Connection' program will help fill a critical gap for caregivers in need of mental health support. We are

proud of our role in increasing access to various evidence-based, flexible, and patient-centric mental health services so that parents across Canada can get the help they need – on their own terms.”

Improving access to care is rooted in GreenShield’s DNA. In 2024, GreenShield is deepening their impact through partnerships and expanding access to innovative programs like Make the Connection.

To learn more, visit www.makingtheconnectionmatters.com, access code MTCGS

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About Strong Minds Strong Kids, Psychology Canada: Strong Minds Strong Kids, Psychology Canada is national a registered charity celebrating 50 years of using psychological science to benefit Canadians. Their mission is to nurture resilience in children by providing infants, children, and youth with the psychological well-being to thrive emotionally. A small, national staff, along with support from many volunteers, make it possible to develop and deliver several psychology-based proven programs and resources to local communities across Canada. The organization is led by a volunteer board of prominent psychologists, and business and community leaders.

About GreenShield:

GreenShield is an integrated health and benefits organization and the first organization in Canada to operate as a payer-provider — offering insurance, administering benefits, and paying claims as a ‘payer’ while offering health services such as mental health, pharmacy, and medical services as a ‘provider.’ Integrating both sides of the payer-provider equation enables GreenShield to simplify access to care, remove administrative barriers, and improve health outcomes for its customers.

GreenShield is uniquely structured as a not-for-profit social enterprise that reinvests its earnings and redeploys its services to support equity-seeking Canadian communities via its social impact brand, GreenShield Cares. The company’s overarching goal is to generate \$75 million of social impact investments to improve the lives of at least 1 million Canadians by 2025, with a focus on mental health, oral health, and essential medicines. As the industry’s noble challenger GreenShield continues to innovate, evolving its offerings and services to deepen its purpose of championing better health for all.

GreenShield means, collectively, Green Shield Canada (GSC), Green Shield Association, and Green Shield Holdings Inc., which is the primary company that houses health services and benefits administration businesses, including Inkblot Therapy, Tranquility, BCH Consultants, NKS Health Canada, The Health Depot Pharmacy, Benecaid, and Computer Workware Inc. Green Shield Holdings Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of the not-for-profit Green Shield Association.

www.strongmindstrongkids.org

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