



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cobb Collaborative Presents Second Annual Resilient Cobb Summit

Community advocates from across metro Atlanta convened on Tuesday, February 7, for the second annual Resilient Cobb Summit which was presented by the Cobb Collaborative and sponsored by Resilient Georgia. This half-day event was held at the Cobb Chamber of Commerce and hosted by Cobb Community Foundation.

Recognizing a need to promote mental health beginning with the youngest members of our community, this year's Resilient Cobb Summit focused on fostering resilience in children ages birth through five years old. With 80% of a child's brain developed by the age of 3, it is critical that all child and adult-facing individuals understand the importance of building connections. Dr. Douglas Bell, Professor of Early Childhood Education at Kennesaw State University, engaged the audience with his keynote presentation which reiterated the integral importance of connection to support healthy development and resilience for all children. Bell also spoke on the "4 Components of a Connection" being eye contact, touch, presence and playful situations – all essential to building and maintaining healthy connections with children beginning at birth.

A panel discussion featured Dr. Bell as well as Bridgette Washington-Collier (DECAL), Dr. Allison Garefino (KSU), Christine Ramirez (Marietta City Schools), and Kaleigh Raulerson (Cobb Collaborative). Moderated by Cobb Collaborative Executive Director Irene Barton, the panel discussion centered around how to initiate and maintain connections with children in order to protect their mental health and promote resilience. Christine Ramirez, founding director of the Emily Lembeck Early Learning Center, reminded participants that it is never too late to establish these connections and noted that resilience building can begin at any time.

Cobb Collaborative Program Director, Kaleigh Raulerson, said of the event, "It always fills me with so much hope and inspiration to see a room full of people who care so deeply for children and families in Cobb. While the first three years of life are developmentally important, it's also vital to know that it is never too late to establish a connection which supports resilience and changes the trajectory of someone's life for the better. I believe people left the Summit feeling empowered to do just that."

Providing better futures for children and brighter prospects for our community is one driving force of the Cobb Collaborative's Mind Your Mind Mental Health initiative. Cobb Collaborative's theory of change is that through a collective effort the cycle of trauma can be disrupted, resilience can be promoted, and future trauma can be prevented. For more information, please visit cobbcollaborative.org/resilient-cobb.

The Cobb Collaborative is a membership of non-profit organizations, local government, businesses, faith-based organizations, educational institutions, professional organizations, associations, and citizens who share ideas, expertise, and resources to improve outcomes for children and families in Cobb.