

2023 Ray E. Helfer, MD, Award

Elizabeth N. Dawson, MD, FAAP

Dr. Dawson is a rural primary care pediatrician at Troy Pediatric Clinic & Collegiate Health in Troy, Alabama, and founder of the Troy Resilience Project (TRP). Her work is driven by her study of the pathophysiology of adversity and belief in the healing power of resilience.



Since 2019, the Troy Resilience Project has served families, engaged community members and motivated leaders to support the continuous process of building a resilient community. TRP's services reach nearly 1,000 people annually and include trauma-informed mental health coordination in local schools, parent training, workforce development and community education.

2011 Ray E. Helfer Award recipient Marsha Raulerson, MD, FAAP, a long-time pediatrician in Brewton, Alabama, introduced Dr. Dawson to Children's Trust Fund (CTF) Alabama Executive Director Sallye Longshore in 2019. Sallye and Elizabeth wasted no time joining forces for advocacy in Alabama. In 2019, they co-facilitated a screening of the film *Resilience* and an ACEs panel discussion at the Alabama Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics' (AL-AAP) Annual Meeting. Their relationship led to growing partnerships between CTF Alabama, AL-AAP, Children of Alabama, and pediatric practices across Alabama. Dr. Dawson and Linda Lee, Executive Director of AL-AAP, partnered with Sallye to secure one of only three national AAP-PCAA (Prevent Child Abuse America) collaborative grants. Dr. Dawson and Sallye presented their collaborative work at the 2023 PCAA national conference.

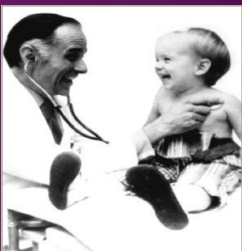
Since 2021, CTF's generous support has enabled the Troy Resilience Project to provide new services to children and families: trauma-informed education services in nine Head Start centers, a Healthy Families America home-visiting program covering seven counties and an affordable, high-quality early learning center in an underserved rural community.

Dr. Dawson became the leader in trauma-informed pediatrics in Alabama by utilizing expertise gained through the AAP Trauma-Informed Pediatric Care and Resilience Project ECHO and certification in the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics. Dr. Dawson uses these principles in her practice and in assisting in practice transformation statewide.

Dr. Dawson is the content expert for the 2024 AL-AAP/Alabama Child Health Improvement Alliance's Trauma Informed Care and Resiliency QI collaborative (TICR). The goal of TICR is to build capacity for trauma-informed, strengths-based pediatrics. This project will lay the groundwork for resilience-building throughout Alabama as CTF and AL-AAP continue to partner for prevention.

Dr. Dawson was born and raised in Montgomery, Alabama and earned a BS in biology from the University of the South. She earned her medical degree from the University of Alabama School of Medicine. Dr. Dawson completed pediatrics residency at Loyola, Chicago in 2008 and then joined Charles Henderson Child Health Center in Troy, Alabama, where she served as medical director from 2017-2022. Dr. Dawson joined Dothan Pediatric Health Care Network in 2023 and practices primary care pediatrics at Troy Pediatric Clinic & Collegiate Health. She currently serves as Secretary/Treasurer and QI chair of AL-AAP.

Dr. Dawson is a member of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, plays in the local tennis league, and loves reading with her book club. She is a proud band, BETA, theatre, wrestling and soccer mom. Her husband Caleb, children Josephine (14) and David (12), and parents Dan and Penelope's commitment to family and advocacy make Dr. Dawson's work joyful and possible.



The Ray E. Helfer, MD, Award is presented each year by the Children's Trust Fund Alliance and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) to highlight the contributions of a pediatrician in local and national efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect. Dr. Helfer, a pediatrician, educator and pioneer in the prevention of child abuse, conceived the idea that "Children's Trust Funds" should be created in each state to ensure that our nation's children grow up nurtured, safe and free from harm. Every year, state children's trust and prevention funds provide more than \$300 million in direct funding, technical assistance and other supports to statewide and community-based child abuse prevention strategies.