For those of you who have an interest in learning more about this field, we list here a series of articles that address different questions in the field. Typically these are review articles that summarise particular areas of research. Note that these are not typically written with a lay audience in mind! All of the articles are available by clicking the associated link.

Annual research review: childhood maltreatment, latent vulnerability and the shift to preventative psychiatry – the contribution of functional brain imaging.
This is a comprehensive review of functional brain imaging studies (i.e. brain scanning studies) in children who have experienced abuse, neglect or institutionalisation. The review covers threat and reward processing, emotion regulation and executive functioning. There is also a more detailed description of the theory of latent vulnerability and why it is so important in moving toward a preventative model of help. That is, it makes the argument that neuroscience evidence supports a compelling case to help children before mental health problems emerge.

Childhood Adversity and Neural Development: A Systematic Review.
This paper presents an extensive review of the literature on childhood adversity and neurodevelopment. In addition, two conceptual models of adversity and neurodevelopment not covered in depth in this animation guide are explored — the dimensional model of adversity and stress acceleration model. These models consider the differential impact of abuse and neglect on the brain (the dimensional model), as well as the evidence for accelerated development in threat circuits in children exposed to adversity (the stress acceleration model).

Mechanisms linking childhood adversity with psychopathology: Learning as an intervention target.
This article makes a compelling case for more translation of what we are learning from the science of early adversity so that research findings can inform intervention and prevention approaches. Three domains are highlighted: (i) threat-related social information processing; (ii) emotional reactivity and emotion regulation; (iii) reward processing. The importance of learning mechanisms across these domains is highlighted, particularly for behavioural interventions. A case is also made for the prevention of the onset of mental health problems in children who have experienced adversity.

The Brain’s Emotional Development.
An excellent short introduction to the brain and emotional development. It covers a range of key topics, including the roles of the amygdala and prefrontal cortex, emotion regulation, and what is meant by sensitive periods. It helpfully includes reference to the role and influence of parenting, drawing on human and animal research.

Neurocognitive adaptation and mental health vulnerability following maltreatment: the role of social functioning.
This is also a review paper. The focus here is on key findings from the psychological, epidemiological and neuroscience literatures. It is suggested that these findings support the view that early maltreatment experience compromises social functioning in children exposed to abuse and neglect in ways that increase mental health vulnerability. The model of latent vulnerability is described as are the concepts of stress susceptibility and stress generation.

Child maltreatment and developmental psychopathology: A multilevel perspective.
This is a comprehensive chapter providing a valuable overview of many key concepts related to the field of childhood trauma — including developmental theory, emotion processing attachment, peer relationships, gene-environment interaction, brain imaging, resilience, intervention and social policy to name but few. The chapter isn’t available as a direct download but it can be requested from the author.

Assessment of the harmful psychiatric and behavioral effects of different forms of child maltreatment.
This seminal paper provides compelling evidence that different types of child abuse have equivalent, broad, and universal effects. That is, in terms of mental health outcomes, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect have similar outcomes for children. As such, effective treatments for maltreatment of any sort are likely to have comprehensive psychological benefits. The authors argue for population-level prevention and intervention strategies particularly in relation to emotional abuse, which occurs with high frequency but tends to be less punishable than other types of child maltreatment.