



BRIGHT SPACES
A Program of the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children®

Trauma-Informed Design

Design Considerations for
Trauma-Impacted Children

Meet the Presenter

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Overview of Today's Workshop

- Understand Toxic Stress and the impact of trauma on children's brain development
- Understand the role of Executive Function in development and the implications of trauma
- Consider Sensory Integration Deficits
- Review the ACE's Study
- Discuss principles of Trauma-Informed Care as they relate to space and design
- Share ideas for supportive materials and equipment

Stress, Children, and Families

Normal Stress

- Natural part of life
- Builds resilience and skills

Tolerable Stress

- Trauma with support

Toxic Stress

- Strong, frequent, or prolonged
- Chronic or severe neglect
- Potential long term harm
- Lack of support



Please click the link below to view a video on Toxic Stress

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVwFkcOZHJw>

Or go to:

Center for the Developing Child, Harvard University

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress/>

ACE's and their Impact

Adverse Childhood Experiences

50% - 75 % of school aged children have experienced one or more ACE's

Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (2012)
2011 Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare

Executive Function

Ability to focus, hold, and work with information, filter distractions, and switch gears

- Inhibitory Control
- Working Memory
- Mental Flexibility



Trauma and the Sensory System

- Body and brain interaction in sensory processing
- Hyper-alert states associated with PTSD
- Senses: Touch, sight, hearing, taste, smell, body position (proprioceptive), and balance (vestibular)

Create a Space to Build Relationships

- Healthy Development Starts with strong adult child relationships.
- Consider a parent as an individual who will have had their own life experiences
- Consider a child as part of a family
- Consider a family as part of a community



Building Relationships through 'Serve and Return'



Trauma-Informed Care

- Understand trauma's impact & paths for recovery
- Know the signs and symptoms of impaired Executive Function and Self-Regulation
- Integrate this knowledge into policies, procedures, practices, and design
- Resist re-traumatization (triggers)

Creating Spaces Where Trauma-Informed Care Meets Design



Working with Trauma-Impacted Kids

- Transfer power to children and families
- Recognize the strengths of families
- Allow children to express, relate and find validation
- Orient them to their surroundings
- Help them anticipate what's next
- Have a comfortable and welcoming physical environment

Safety is a Prerequisite

Physical Safety

Children are free from potential harm and have some control over their environment.



Emotional Safety

Children experience consistency, predictability, and respect.

Resilience:

The ability of an individual, system or organization to meet challenges, survive, and do well despite adversity."

(Kirmayer, 2009)

- Enhance Protective Factors
- Autonomy
- Design for clear expectations with furniture and design
- Provide opportunities to make decisions



Culture Influences How People Respond

- Respect diversity through sensitivity to cultural norms and rituals
- Parenting styles may differ widely and need to be understood in the context of coping with trauma
- Language barriers can increase family stress and attention in design can support families



Add Culture to Room Design





Gradually Increase Complexity



Share Power and Decision Making



Small Motor and Sensory Ideas

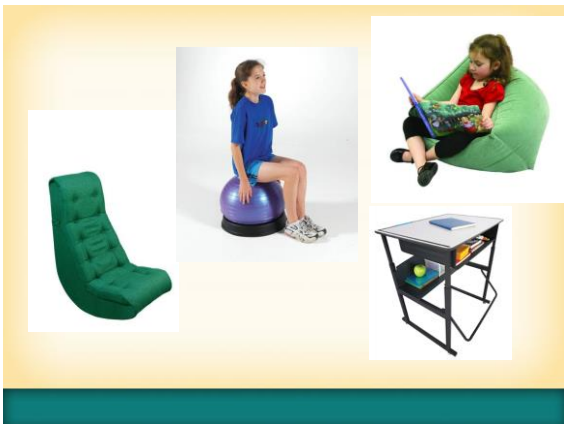


Giving Choices in Styles of Movement

- Seats that move, bounce, can be adjusted
- Allow for standing, walking, changing activities
- Provide open snacking and bathroom breaks
- Give 'heavy work' as needed- pushing, pulling, design with 'loose parts' for moving furniture
- Allow for the 'sloucher' – lying, leaning, hanging

Physical Exercise and Controlled Gross Motor Development





Using Montessori Style Ideas









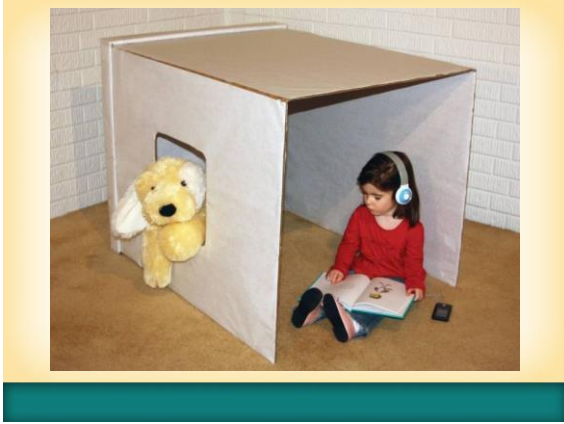


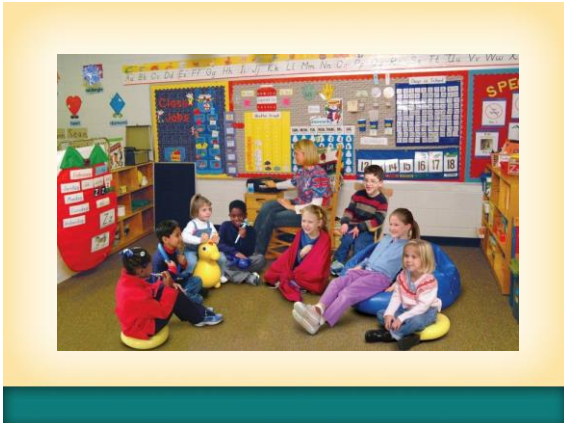














Potential Environmental Triggers

- Auditory: Loud, harsh, repetitive or surprising noises
- Vision: Overstimulating rooms, walls or chaotic spaces, bright or flashing lights
- Tactile: Too much physical contact or messy hands
- Smell and Taste: Strong smells like perfumes or some fruits
- Proprioceptive (Body Position): Sitting too long
- Vestibular (Balance): Lack of movement

Design Principles for Schools

- Start where children are for success
- Welcome without overstimulating
- Create spaces for relationships to happen
- Always empower, never disempower
- Provide unconditional positive regard
- Maintain high expectations
- Check assumptions, observe, and question

Resources and Contact Info

- Source Documents
- Resources of Interest
- Self-Assessment Tool for Early Childhood Programs Serving Families Experiencing Homelessness, Summer 2017
- *What Happened To My World*, Jim Greenman

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