Do Now

*Trauma-Informed Teaching in ECE: Part 1*



**Read the Fred Rogers quote above and reflect on the following:**

* What are some of the things our children may have gone through in the past few months?
* What do they need from us, as early childhood educators, right now?

How Trauma Affects Health

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**As you watch the video clip, record the things that stand out to you below:**

Common Definitions

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**Trauma/Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs):** Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years).

For example:

* experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect
* witnessing violence in the home or community
* having a family member attempt or die by suicide

Also included are aspects of the child’s environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding such as growing up in a household with:

* substance misuse
* mental health problems
* instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail or prison

**What experiences might be traumatic?**

* Physical, sexual, or psychological abuse and neglect (including trafficking)
* Physical and/or emotional neglect
* Natural and technological disasters, catastrophes, or terrorism
* Family or community violence
* Sudden or violent loss of a loved one
* Substance use disorder (personal or familial)
* Refugee and war experiences (including torture)
* Serious accidents or life-threatening illnesses
* Military family-related stressors (e.g., deployment, parental loss or injury)

Toxic Stress

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**Toxic stress explains how ACEs “get under the skin” and trigger biological reactions that lead to those outcomes.**



**Take 3 minutes to independently reflect:**

* How does understanding the brain science of trauma in early childhood make you a better teacher? How can it make you better equipped to support their children?

Expressions of Trauma in Early Childhood Classrooms

*Trauma-Informed Teaching in ECE: Part 1*

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**Social Emotional Regulation**

A child who has experienced trauma may:

* Be **overwhelmed by feelings of fear and stress** (brains remain in a state of hyperarousal)
* Have a difficult time **regulating their emotions** and **controlling impulses**
* **Behave aggressively** towards themselves or others
* **Misunderstand or be unable to identify** the facial and body expressions of others

**Language and Communication**

A child who has experienced trauma may:

* **Struggle to communicate** thoughts, feelings, and empathy
* Use and understand primarily **“instrumental language”** to direct and command behavior (“sit down”, “come here”, “be quiet”, etc.)
* Appear **demanding and inflexible**
* Communicate using **physical responses** (hitting, biting, etc.) and/or tantrums

**Building Relationships**

A child who has experienced trauma may:

* **Struggle to interact** successfully with peers and teachers
* Not know how to **identify and express their feelings** with appropriate words
* **Keep others at a distance** as a way to emotionally, and even physically, protect themselves

**Play**

A child who has experienced trauma may:

* **Struggle to engage** in imaginative and creative play
* Become **overwhelmed by feelings** that emerge during imaginative play
* **Avoid initiating play** and **struggle to resolve conflicts** that arise during play

How Do We Move Forward?

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**ACEs are preventable. Creating and sustaining safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for all children and families can prevent ACEs and help all children reach their full potential.**





Creating Trauma-Sensitive Classrooms: Emotional Safety

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**Safety is a PREREQUISITE.**

**Emotional Safety:** Children experience consistency, safety, and respect.

* Create a space to build relationships
* Transfer power to children and families
* View parents as individuals who have had their own experiences, a child as part of a family, and a family as part of a community.
* Respect diversity through sensitivity to cultural norms, rituals, and parenting styles

**Serve and Return Interactions:**

As you watch the video, take notes on the five steps of Serve and Return interactions in the table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Step** | **Description** | **Notes** |
| **1** | **Notice** the serve and **share** the child’s focus of attention |  |
| **2** | Return the serve by **supporting and encouraging** |  |
| **3** | Give it a **name**! |  |
| **4** | **Take turns**…and wait. Keep the interactions going **back and forth** |  |
| **5** | Practice **endings** and **beginnings** |  |

Connecting Trauma-Informed Teaching to SEL

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In what ways does social-emotional learning interact and overlap with trauma-informed teaching? How can serve-and-return interactions support both?

Exit Ticket

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**Reflect on the following questions and turn them into the facilitator.**

* What new learnings about trauma-informed teaching are you taking away from today’s training?
* Was anything surprising to you? What questions do you still have?
* How will you use serve and return interactions and other strategies to build nurturing, responsive relationships with all your children?