**Between Families Newsletters**

**Parenting Trauma Affected Children**

**March 2021**

We can all agree that parenting children exposed to trauma may be challenging. Trauma can come in many forms; physical and sexual abuse clearly cause trauma, but more and more evidence is emerging on the long-term trauma caused by neglect. Emotional abuse also leaves deep scars. And for many children, the trauma begins before birth through prenatal exposure to alcohol and drugs. Regardless of the source trauma impacts kids and the parents who love them.

Trauma changes the very structure of a child’s brain in fact, children’s brains are more susceptible to damage because they are developing rapidly when exposed to trauma, and a child’s brain affects their behavior.

Children exposed to trauma can be a challenge for parents, and the unfortunate corollary is that parenting difficult kids can often bring out the worst in a parent’s behavior as well. Studies have shown that common characteristics of parents who have been worn down by challenging kids include the following:

1. They tend to be inconsistent in their reactions to their child’s behavior; enforcing their rules one day and give up on the rules the next day.
2. They often drift towards extreme discipline with the child often because nothing else has worked and they have reached the end of their rope.
3. They tend to be emotional and not infrequently suffering from depression themselves.

Do these sound familiar? These strategies tend to not be successful. The fact is that kids do want to do well, and if they are struggling it is likely because they are lacking a specific skill needed to succeed.

A place to start changing the climate of parenting these kids from hard places is to build connections. Building connections helps children to feel safe. Ways to connect with a child include: meeting their needs, saying yes, making eye contact, touching your child affectionately.

Start introducing the use of giving choices, compromises, re-dos in your language when you are correcting your child. Introduce and model the skills of using your words, speaking with respect, using gentleness and kindness as they interact with you and others.

These skills are an introductory to Trauma Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) that is designed to meet the complex needs of the vulnerable children we work with.

Resources for more information on TBRI:

literature: The Connected Child, The Connected Parent

Training: TBRI Training can be found through childally.org, child.tcu.edu/karyn

Sources: Creating a Family, Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development TCU

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**Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONAIRRE FOR ½ HOUR CREDIT AND SUBMIT TO YOUR ASSIGNED FOSTER CARE WORKER**

**Questions:**

1. Trauma begins before\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ exposure to alcohol and drugs.
2. Trauma changes the structure of a child’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. A Child’s brain affects their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. Kids want to do \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
5. A place to start changing the climate of parenting these kids from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is to build \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
6. Building connections can be done through.
7. Saying yes
8. Making eye contact
9. Touching affectionately
10. All of the above.
11. What can you introduce when correcting a child?
12. Re-dos
13. Compromises
14. Giving choices
15. All the above
16. What skills can be introduced regarding interaction with others?
17. Speaking with respect
18. Using your words
19. Gentleness and kindness
20. All the above
21. A and B only
22. These skills are an introductory to TBRI. TBRI stands for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
23. Children exposed to trauma can be a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for parents.