

# Trauma-Sensitive Pyramid Model

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***Pennsylvania Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation  
Program***

# Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC)

IECMHC is a program of the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), administered by The Pennsylvania Key.

IECMHC is a free resource that supports children's social-emotional development from ages 0-5 within early learning programs participating in Keystone STARS.



This training has information about trauma and its impact...

Many people in this session may have shared some of these experiences.

If at any time you are uncomfortable and feel that you need a break, please take care of yourself!

And please, let someone know if you need any assistance.



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**1-855-284-2494 (TTY: 724-631-5600)**

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# PADS: Predictions, Acknowledgments & Disclaimers

Our experience is that different professionals will have individual reactions to either specific pieces or to the presentation as whole.

Each of us have had our own levels of training and experiences with regard to trauma and its impact.

*--PADS Concept from Lakeside Global Institute*

# Session Objectives:

- Define various types of trauma.
- Understand the impact trauma has on early childhood development.
- Identify what it means to provide trauma-informed care.
- Cross-walk trauma-informed care with the pyramid model framework.
- Identify strategies to embed trauma-informed care practices into support for staff and children at the various levels of the pyramid.



# Important Terms



- **Trauma**
  - An individual's response to an event that threatens safety or security
- **Toxic Stress**
  - Re-occurring negative experiences that threaten safety or security
- **Traumatic Stress**
  - The event, the experience, and the effect combined

# Important Terms Continued:

## Trauma-Informed Care:

A framework of thinking and interventions that focus on an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma

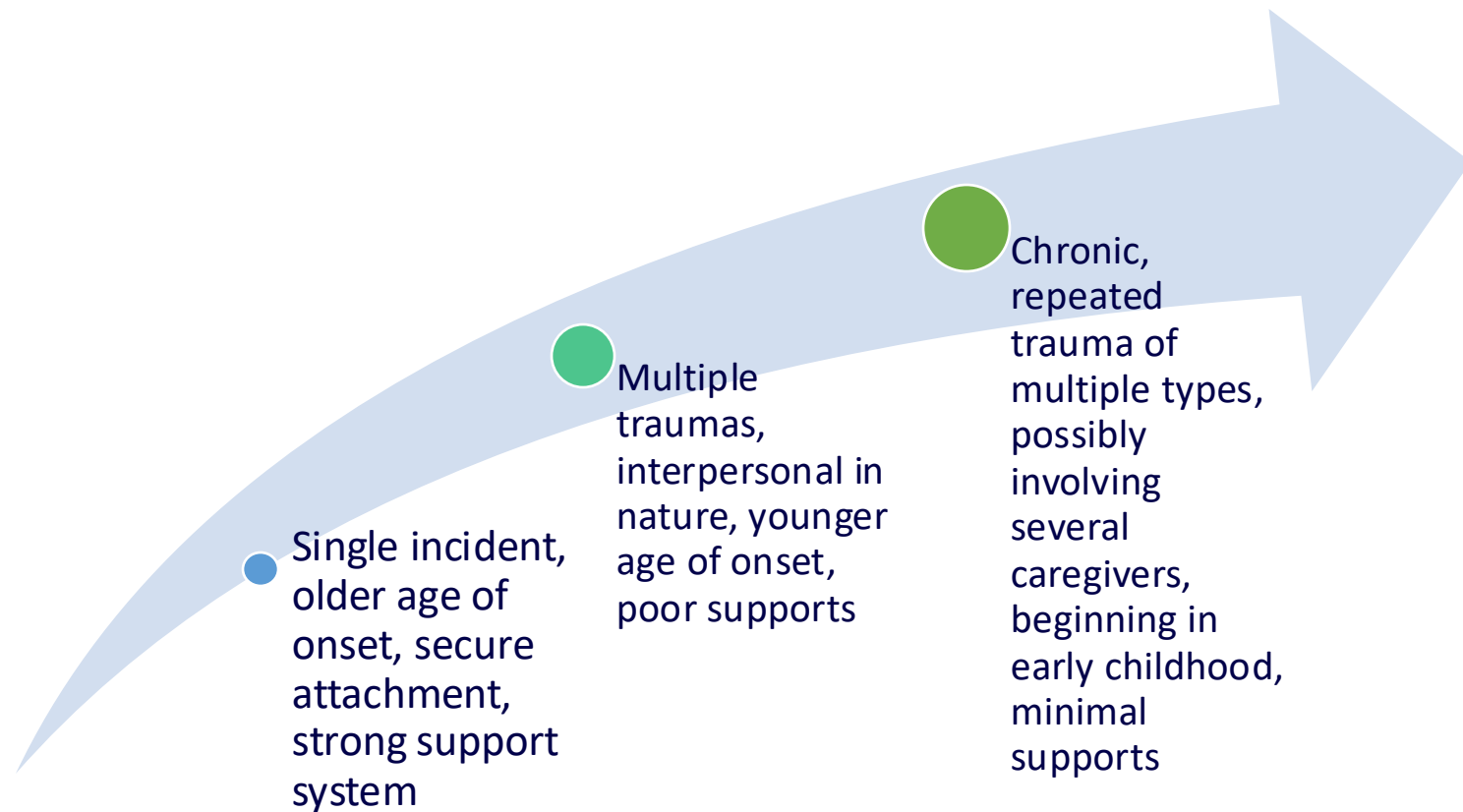
## Triggers (Trauma Reminders):

Signals that act as signs that may create behaviors connected to survival responses that cause difficulty for children, adults and the community

## Trauma Responses: Fight, Flight, Freeze



# Trauma Spectrum

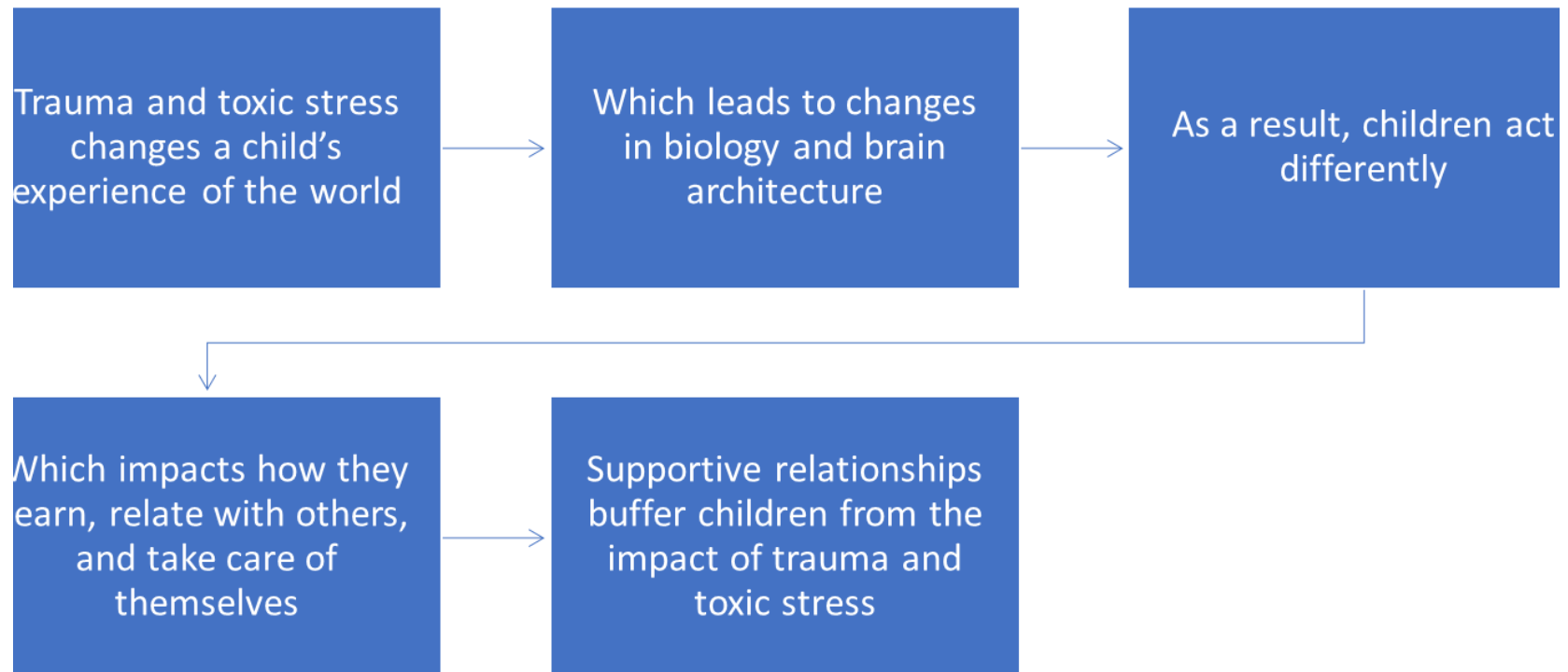




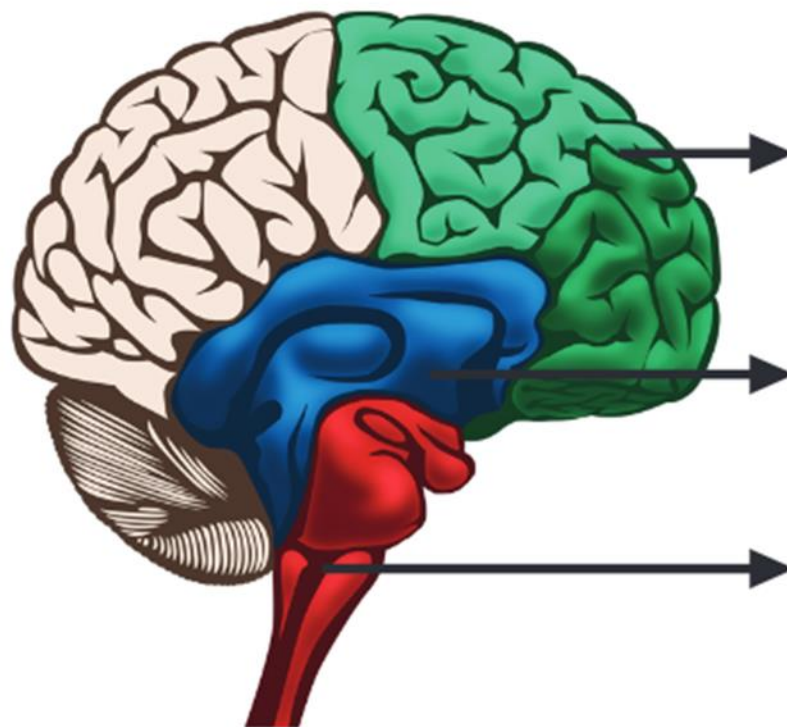
# Why is this important?

**TRAUMA CAN CHANGE THE COURSE OF A  
CHILD'S LIFE AND THEIR FUTURE!**

# What do we need to know about trauma?



# Conscious Discipline® Brain State Model



## Executive State

**Need:** Problem solving opportunities

**Looks like:** Wisdom, unlimited skills

**Message:** What can I learn?

## Emotional State

**Need:** Connection

**Looks like:** Back talk, sass, yelling, verbal reactions

**Message:** Am I loved/connected?

## Survival State

**Need:** Safety

**Looks like:** Hiding, fighting, surrender, physical reactions

**Message:** Am I safe?

# Trauma Impacts Development

Brain  
Development

Cognition

Physical &  
Mental Health

Emotional

Behavioral

Relationships

# Parallel Impact Trauma:



# Impact on Classroom Behavior- Using the Lens of Early Childhood

## More prone to reactivity and impulsivity

Trying to protect  
self against feeling  
of constant danger

May effect  
relationships with  
others

## Withdrawal

Rarely attracts  
teacher attention

Avoids interactions  
with others

## Aggression

Limited verbal  
abilities

Learned that  
violence is a way to  
solve problems

Distorted perception  
of intentions

## Defiance

Could be freeze  
response

Attempt to feel in  
control

May prefer to be  
viewed as  
noncompliant rather  
than unable to  
master a task

## Perfectionism

Afraid to disappoint  
caregivers

Only pursues  
activities that equal  
success

Anxious



# Behavior has Meaning!

## Remember:

Their normal is not our  
normal

Their behaviors are  
normal considering their  
internal state of distress

## Behavior= Communication

What a young child is  
feeling

What it is like to be in  
that child's body

What it is like to be in  
that child's world

# Behavior is Communicating...

"I'm scared."

"I'm sad."

"I'm confused!"

"I'm lonely."

"I don't want people near me!"

"I feel like I can't protect myself!"

"I need extra connection with people in order to feel safe!"



# Trauma Shapes Beliefs and Expectations

## About Themselves

I am not worthy of  
love and care

I am helpless

I must be on constant  
alert and in control to  
be safe

## About the adults who care for them

Adults cannot be  
trusted to protect me

Adults hurt me

## About the world in general

The world is a  
dangerous place

I cannot let my guard  
down

# Shift in Thinking...

## Traditional View:

The child is oppositional, defiant, and manipulative

The behaviors are the child's way of controlling everyone around them

## New View:

The child is in a highly anxious, stressed state of fear

The behaviors are the child's attempt to reduce the fear and stress in order to feel calmer

Adapted from Daniel & Zarling (2012)

# Shift in Thinking...

## Traditional View:

Anger Management Issues

Might have MH diagnosis

Child chooses to act this way  
(disrespect)

Uncontrollable, destructive

## New View:

Maladaptive responses

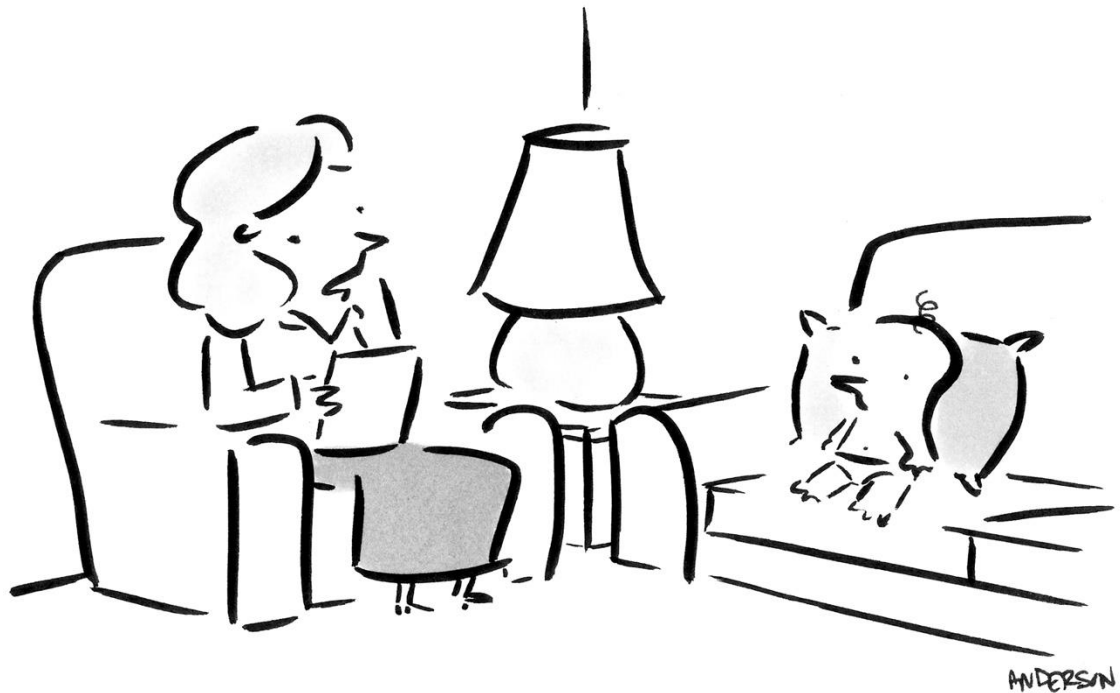
Difficulty regulating emotions

Negative view of the world  
(cannot trust adults)

Trauma response was triggered

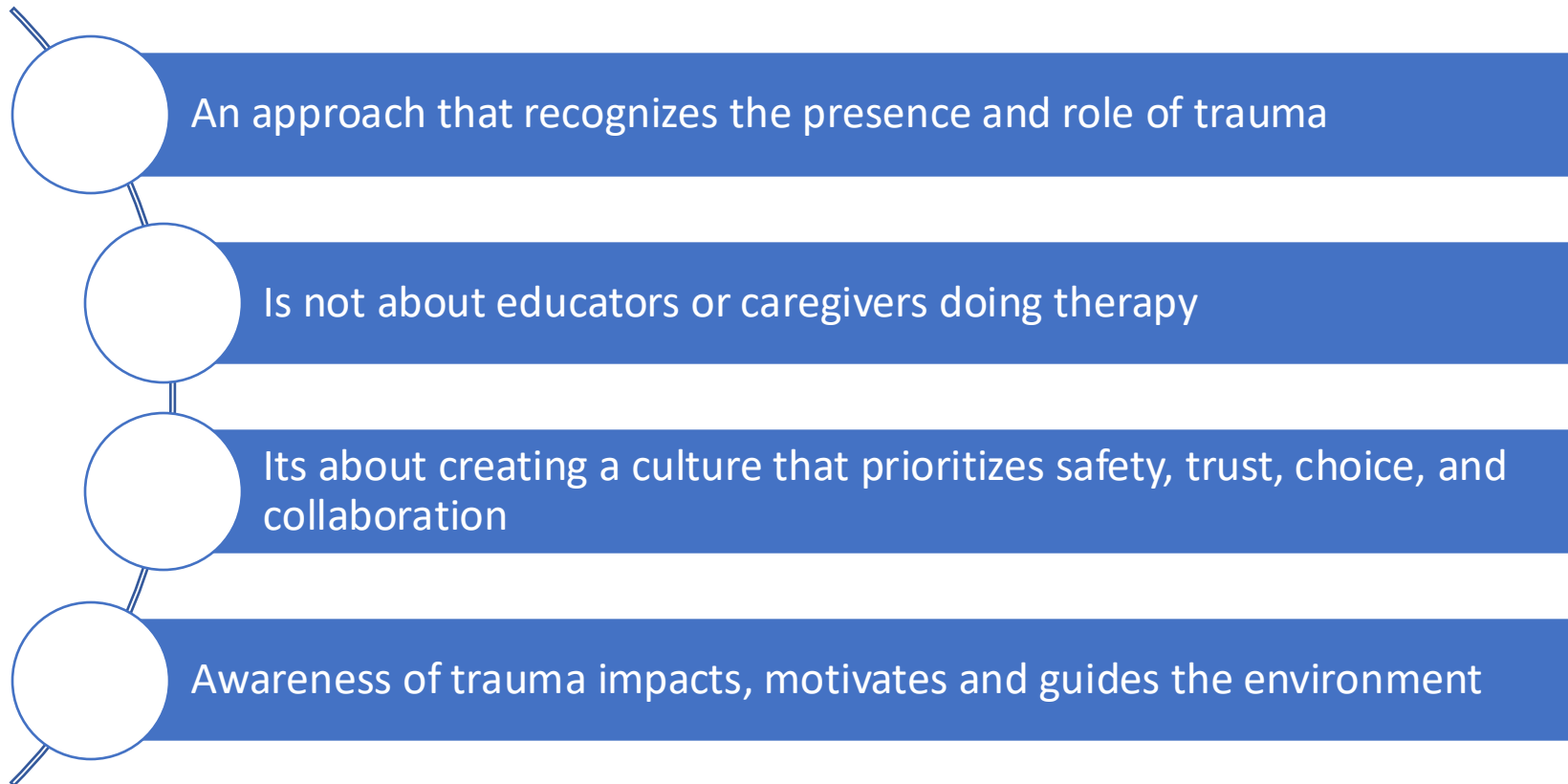
# So what did we just do?

TIC is not therapy.....

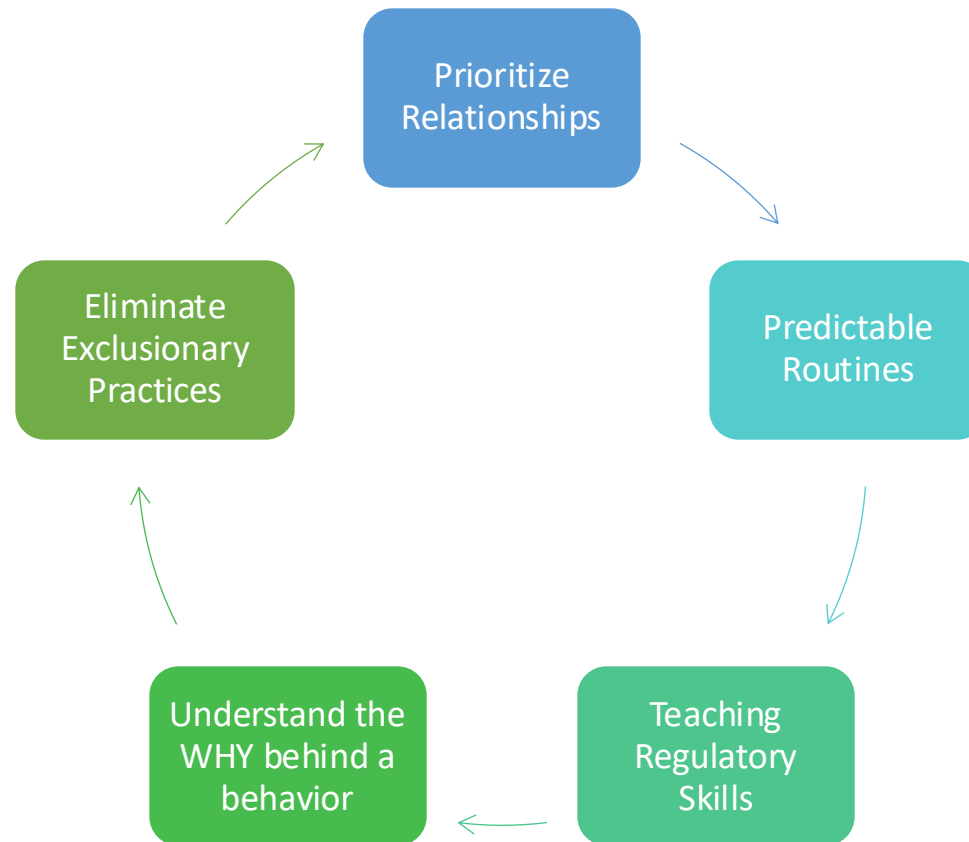


"Normally I begin by asking about a patient's childhood..."

# What is Trauma Informed Care?



# Best Practices in Trauma Informed Care:



# Ways to Support Children, Adults, and Everyone

Nurture  
relationships

Consistent  
routines

Identify and label  
emotions

Reassure and  
validate

Create safe places

Positive language,  
positive  
reinforcement

Reinforce coping  
skills

Collaborate with  
others

Check-in with  
yourself

Developmentally,  
culturally  
appropriate practice

Take care of basic  
needs – food,  
exercise, rest

Take a break

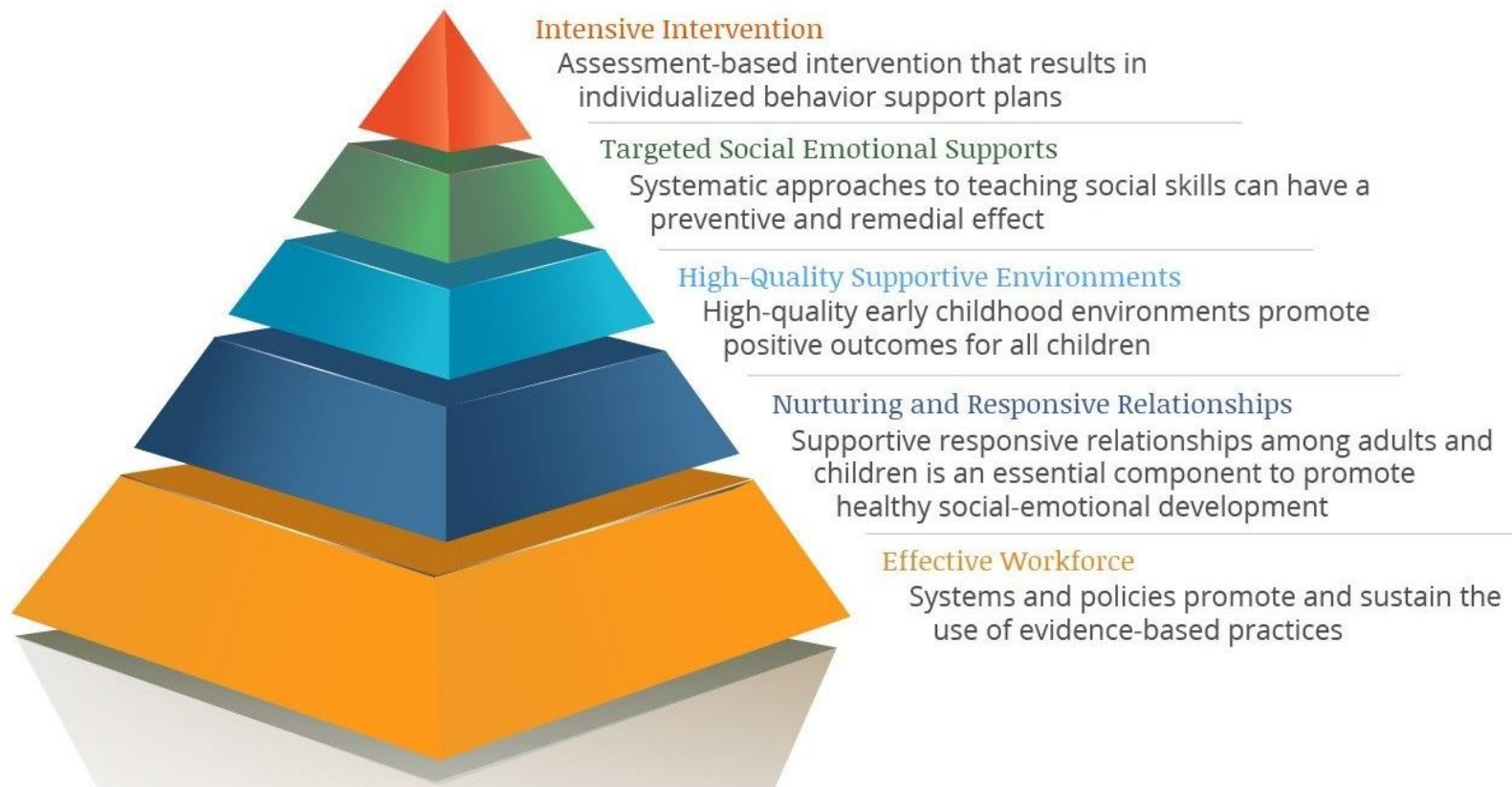
Talk to  
others/social  
supports

Recognize if  
MORE is needed

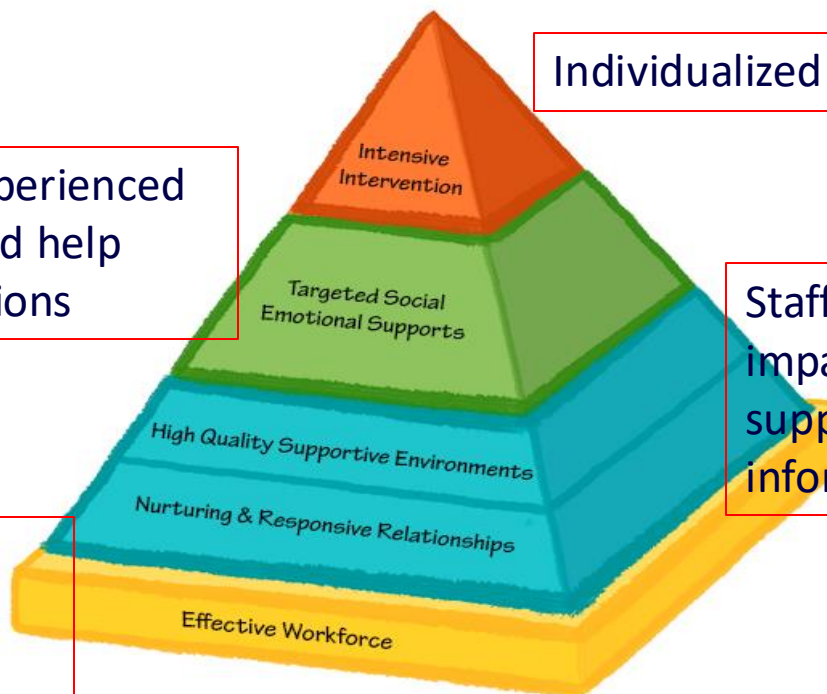
# The Pyramid Model: A Tiered Framework to Support Children (& Adults)



# National Pyramid Model



# Integrating Trauma in the Pyramid



Individualized interventions

Children that experienced trauma may need help regulating emotions

Staff need training on the impact of trauma and supports a trauma-informed approach

Close and secure relationships along with safe and predictable routines



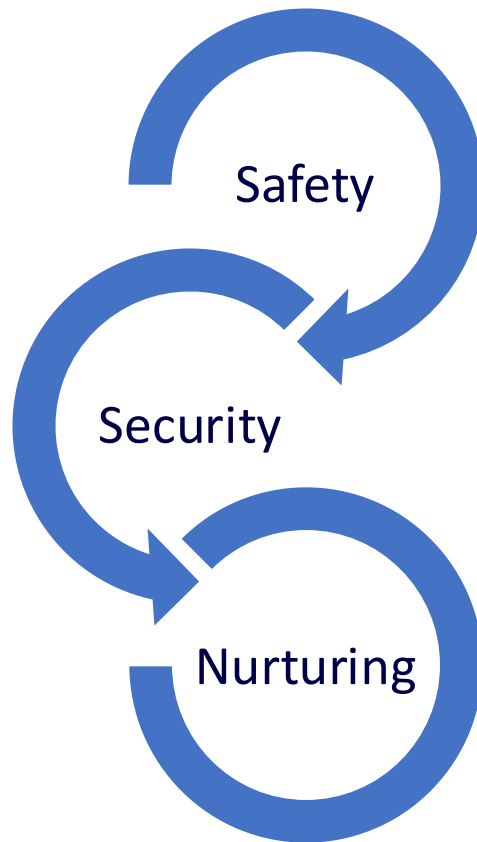
# Relationships are the *INTERVENTION*

*"Healing comes through repeated interactions with a compassionate regulated other"*

-Bruce Perry, MD, PhD

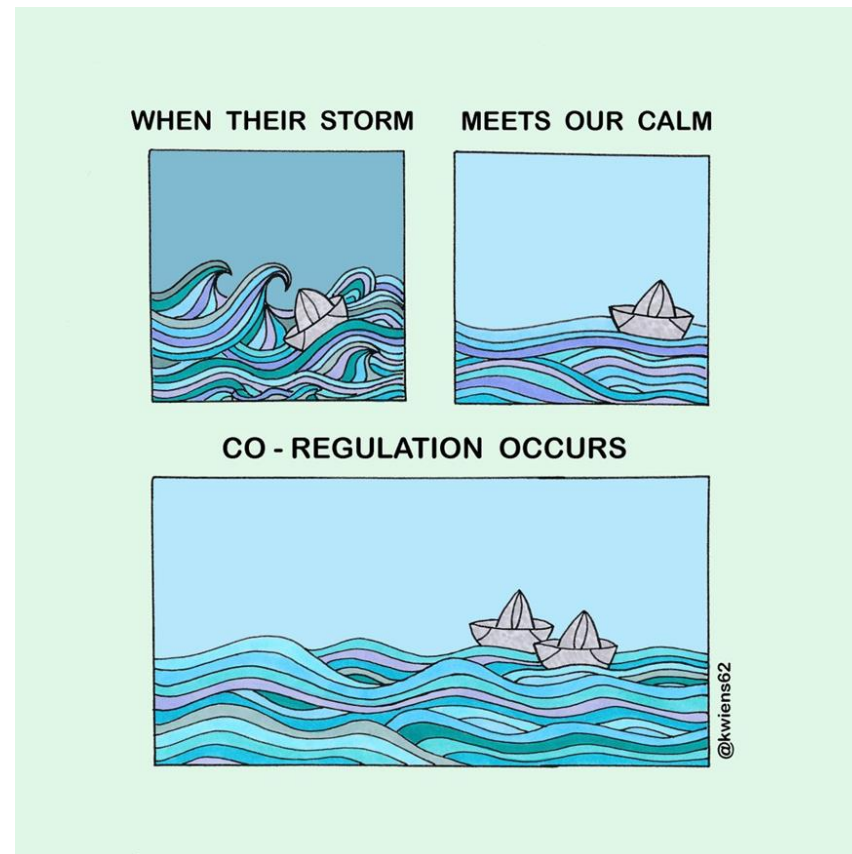


# What Young Children Need



- Children and adults must feel and be safe
- Children must feel safe in the space they are in
- Relationships ARE the intervention

# Co-Regulation:







# High Quality, Supportive Environments

- Visual supports
- Safe spaces in the classroom
- Classroom expectations
- Offering choices
- The classroom needs to be organized

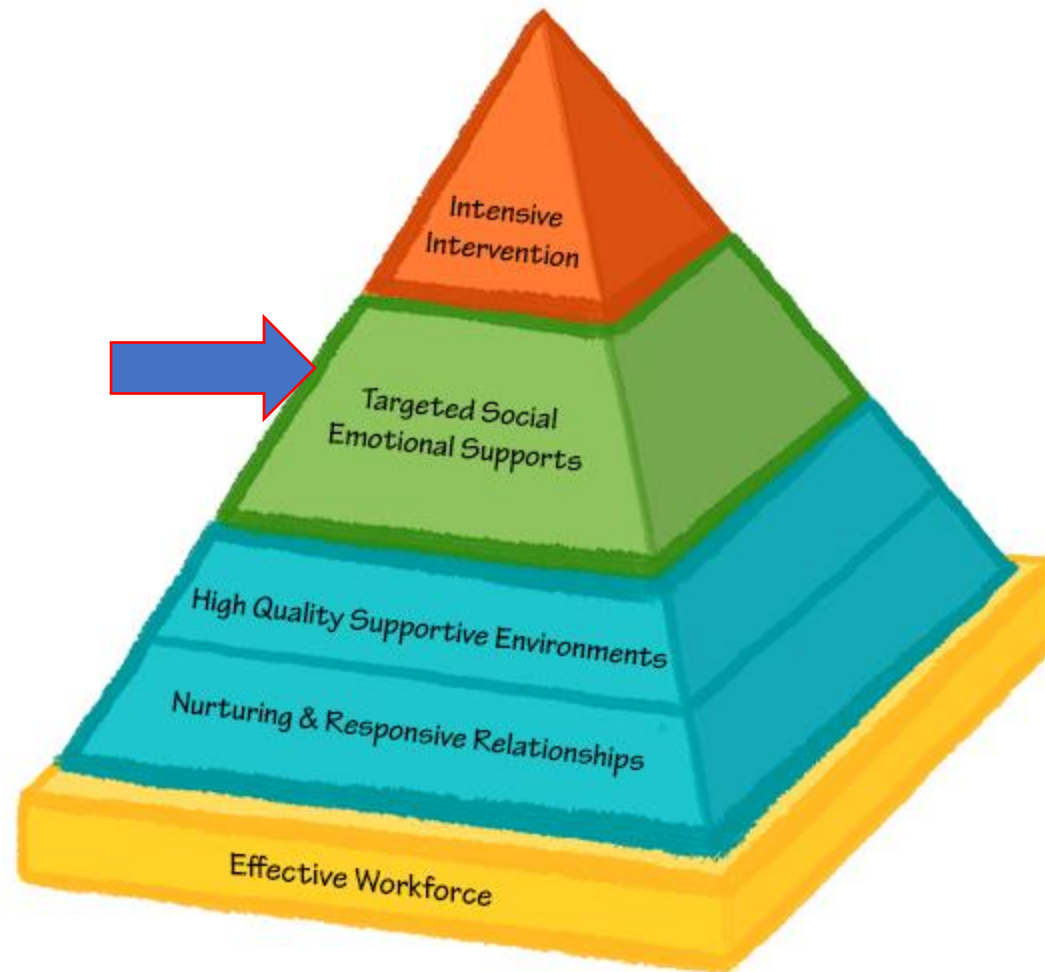




# Routines are Consistent and Predictable



- Visual Schedules that are interactive and visual supports
- Active and simple transitions
- Transition warnings: more than one warning needs to be given.



# Targeted SE Support for Trauma-Informed:



- Individualize routines whenever possible
- Adapt routines and directions to give additional help to children who need more support
- Label feelings and teach emotion literacy

# Supports continued.....

- Teaching and modeling how to regulate emotions
- Teach coping skills for big emotions
- Teach and practice Friendship Skills



# Implementing Principles of Trauma-Informed Care:

- Maintain routines
- Give children choices
- Increase the level of support and encouragement
- Set clear and firm limits
- Earn their trust
- Give warnings
- Give extra support for difficult times
- Be aware of all children's reactions to traumatized child, and what they are sharing.
- Re-enacting trauma in play and interactions with others is a coping mechanism



# When to Refer:

Behavioral observations

Intensity, frequency, and duration of behavior

Data based decision making

# Where to Refer:

ECMH Consultation

Early Intervention

Behavioral Health

Home Visiting or EC Family Support

Child Welfare (for mandated reporting where applicable)

Adapted from Daniel & Zarling (2012)

# Pyramid Model & Trauma-Informed Care:

- Focus on teaching new skills and **NOT** on the behavior
- Focus on long-term, academic, social, and emotional outcomes **NOT** the quick fix
- Strategies that target the behavior and **NOT** general strategies for all challenging behaviors
- Treat every child and adult as though they may have been impacted by trauma



# Adult Self-Care



# Secondary Traumatic Stress

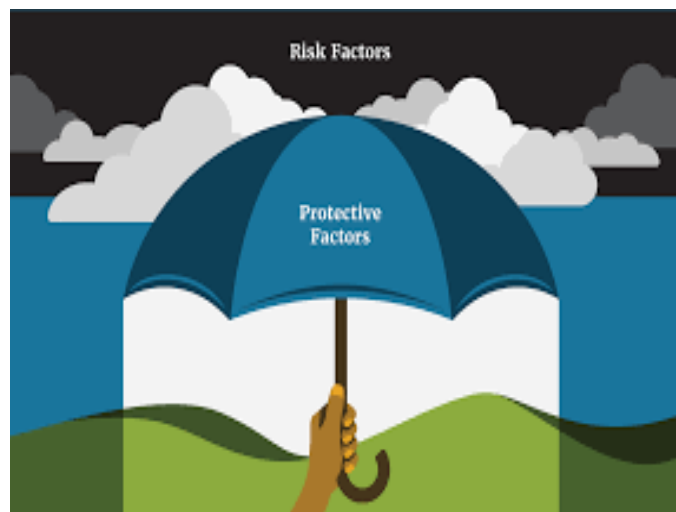
- Any educator who works directly with traumatized children is vulnerable to the effects of trauma
- Also known as Compassion Fatigue
- Refers to being physically, mentally, or emotionally worn out or overwhelmed by students' traumas and/or behaviors.

# Tips on Compassion Fatigue

- Be aware of the signs
- Don't go it alone
- Recognize Compassion Fatigue as an occupational hazard
- Seek help for your traumas
- If you see signs in yourself, talk to a professional
- Attend to self-care

Secondary Traumatic Stress: A Fact Sheet for Child-Serving Professionals; The National Child Traumatic Stress Network  
([www.NCTSN.org](http://www.NCTSN.org))

# Community Care: Building the Umbrella for Resilience



## The Path of Resilience



### The "Cups"

Children need support from all of the adults in their lives in order to build resilience and to develop, both socially and emotionally. Children are the "cups" waiting to be filled each day, in order for them to become resilient adults.



### The "Pitcher"

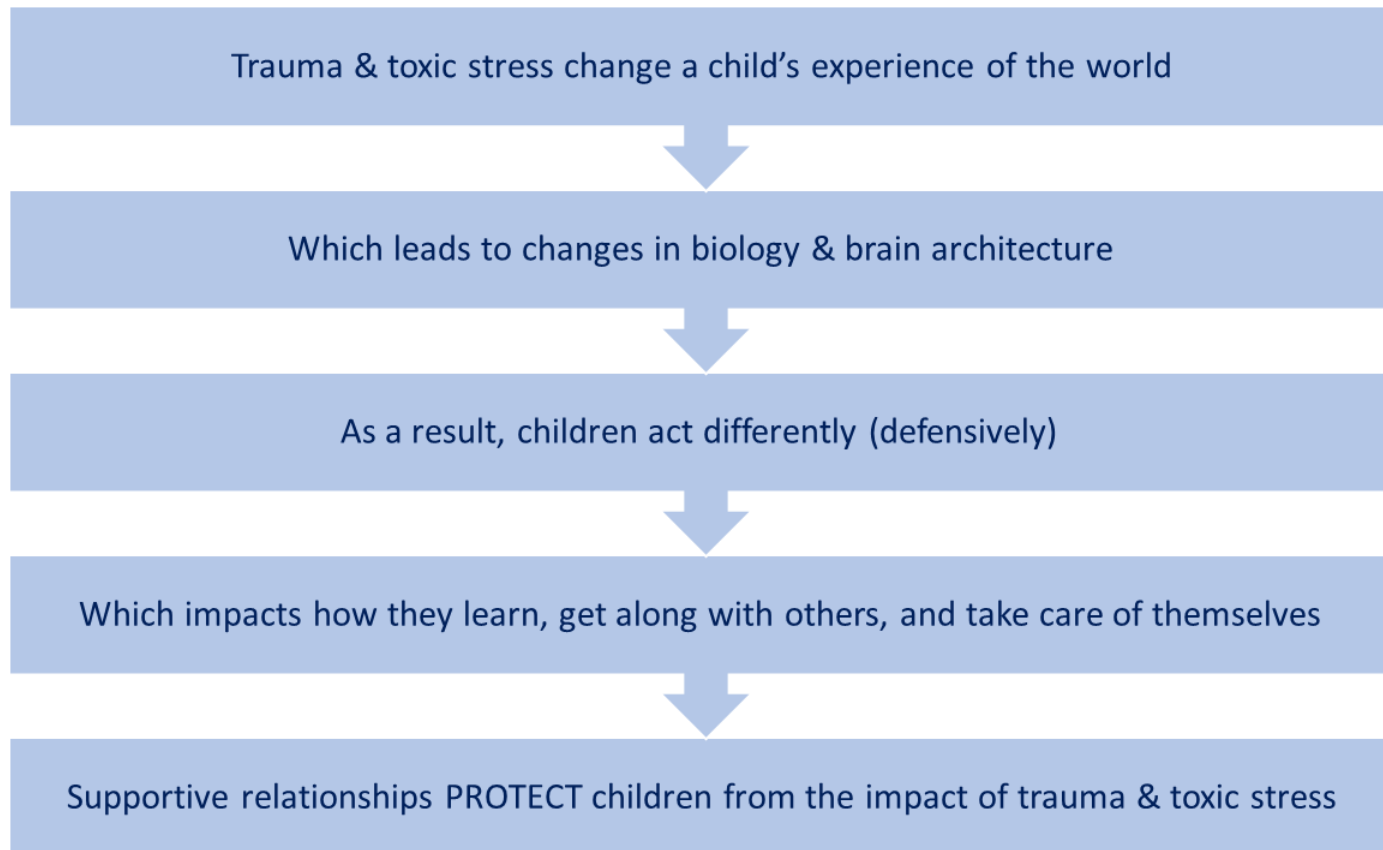
Resilient children need resilient adults. Adults working with and caring for young children can think of themselves as "pitchers." Every day, adults pour and pour into the "cups" – the children. But as the famous saying goes, "you cannot give what you do not have." So, it's important for adults to focus on their own resilience and social-emotional health, in order to keep those pitchers full.



### The "Well"

Adults working with and caring for young children need support and guidance, too. Those occupations of leadership in the early care and education field who provide that support can think of themselves as the "well." With the "pitchers" pouring and emptying out on a daily basis, there must be some way for them to be refilled. Serving as the "well" means that you focus on not only your own resilience, but that of your fellow caregivers.

# Summary



# In Closing...

- *How children are treated changes who they are and how they will develop.*
- *We learn how to become gentle, loving, caring humans in relationships with adults and caregivers who are gentle, loving, and unconditionally caring.*



# Resources



## The Pyramid Model and Trauma-Informed Care: A Guide for Early Childhood Professionals to Support Young Children's Resilience

Developed by:  
Chelsea T. Morris,  
Amy Hunter,  
Lise Fox, and  
Mary Louise Hemmeter



ChallengingBehavior.org

Published: 06/03/2021



## Trauma-Informed Care and the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children

Early educators are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of understanding the impact of trauma on young children and their families and offering trauma-informed care. Children's responses to trauma can include a child's difficulty in relationships and social interactions with peers and adults, challenges in emotional regulation and social skill development, and challenging behavior. Practices that are recommended for providing a trauma informed educational program (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2017) consist of:

- ▶ Implementing a multi-tiered approach that acknowledges the importance of providing a safe and nurturing environment for all children and more intensive and focused prevention and intervention for children who have social, emotional, or behavioral support needs;
- ▶ Prioritizing the establishment of nurturing and responsive relationships with all children and their families;
- ▶ Offering children predictable routines;
- ▶ Teaching children social, emotional, and behavior regulation skills;
- ▶ Responding to challenging behavior by seeking to understand the behavior and use prevention and instructional strategies to address behavior; and
- ▶ Eliminating the use of exclusionary or punishment responses to challenging behavior (i.e., time-out, suspension).

**The Pyramid Model for Promoting Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children** (Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph, & Strain, 2003; Hemmeter, Ostrosky, & Fox, 2006) provides a multi-tiered approach that has been designed for implementation within early care and education programs. In programs implementing the Pyramid Model, practitioners are guided in how to: 1) establish nurturing and responsive relationships with children and families; 2) provide predictable and supportive environments; 3) promote the development of social, emotional, and behavioral skills; and 4) address challenging behavior through understanding the behavior and designing interventions that are positive and focused on teaching new skills.



National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations | [ChallengingBehavior.org](http://ChallengingBehavior.org)

This is a product of the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations and was made possible by Cooperative Agreement H150487003, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. You must acknowledge the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

Pub#: 01/23/20



### Resources for Implementing Trauma-Informed Care

- ▶ Checklist of Early Childhood Practices that Support Social Emotional Development and Trauma-Informed Care
- ▶ All Hands on Deck: Partnering with Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants to Implement the Pyramid Model
- ▶ Understanding Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation and the Pyramid Model

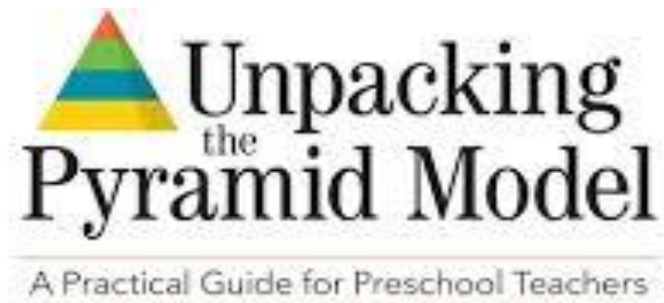
### References

- Fox, L., Dunlap, G., Hemmeter, M. L., Joseph, G. E., & Strain, P. S. (2003). The Teaching Pyramid: A model for supporting social competence and preventing challenging behavior in young children. *Young Children*, 58(4), 48-52.
- Hemmeter, M. L., Ostrosky, M., & Fox, L. (2006). Social and emotional foundations for early learning: A conceptual model for intervention. *School Psychology Review*, 35, 583-601.
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network, Schools Committee. (2017). Creating, supporting, and sustaining trauma-informed schools: A system framework. [https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/creating\\_supporting\\_sustaining\\_trauma\\_informed\\_schools\\_a\\_system\\_framework.pdf](https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/creating_supporting_sustaining_trauma_informed_schools_a_system_framework.pdf)





# Resources



Mary Louise Hemmeter, Michaelene M. Ostrosky, & Lise Fox  
FOREWORD BY ROSEMARIE ALLEN

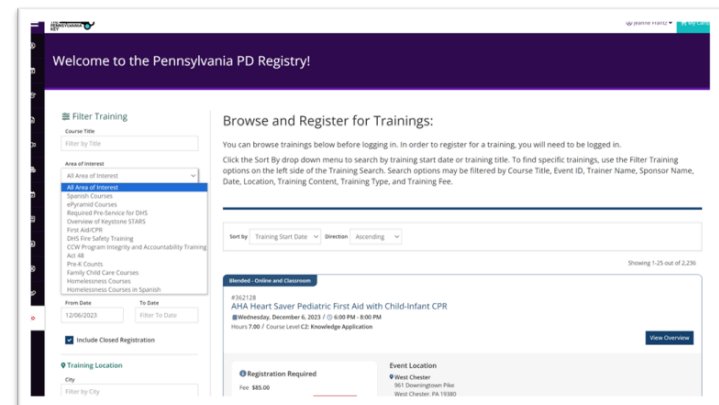




# E-Pyramid Model Trainings

- Free
- Self-Guided
- Full Year access
- Trauma-Informed Care
- Staff Wellness: Taking Care of Yourself
- Search for *ePyramid Courses*

<https://www.papdregistry.org/v7/trainings/search>



# IECMH Newsletter

- Free
- Learn about Pyramid Model practices to support all children's social-emotional wellness
- New topics each month
- QR code to subscribe
  - Scroll down to click the yellow "Subscribe" button



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**Get information on infant/early childhood mental health.**



**Discover the importance of relationship-based approaches.**



**Access supports to help infants & young children feel safe, supported & valued by the adults around them.**



**more info:** [www.pakeys.org/iecmh](http://www.pakeys.org/iecmh)

**bright** start. kids. future. 

The newsletter, and the Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) program, is made possible by a partnership between the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) and the Pennsylvania Key.

# Resources to Provide Support Around Traumatic Experiences

In response to traumas within communities, the PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) offers the following resources for early learning programs, schools, community partners, and families.

[www.pakeys.org/resources-to-provide-support-around-traumatic-experiences/](http://www.pakeys.org/resources-to-provide-support-around-traumatic-experiences/)



# Adult Support Resources For Compassion Fatigue

- Mindfulness Apps
- OCDEL Supported Healthy Minds App—FREE Access
- [www.pakeys.org/healthy-minds-program/](http://www.pakeys.org/healthy-minds-program/)
- See QR Code to download the app
- Mood Trackers



# Adult Support Resources for Trauma-Informed Care

## IECMHC Office Hours

To request an appointment:  
[forms.office.com/r/dT9A9QQEQL](https://forms.office.com/r/dT9A9QQEQL)

Access through QR Code

Professional Services such  
as Trauma Informed  
Cognitive Behavioral  
Therapy

Infant/Early Childhood Mental  
Health (IECMH) Virtual "Office  
Hours"



### The Pennsylvania Key IECMHC Virtual Office Hours

The Pennsylvania Key Infant-Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) Program is offering a new service: **IECMHC Virtual Office Hours**

Are you looking for support with:  
Helping a child who is struggling with behavior, attachment, peer relationships or emotion regulation?  
Helping teachers and families with self-care, stress, and coping, but not sure what to do next?

IECMHC Virtual Office Hours is now accepting appointments for office hours throughout Pennsylvania!

IECMHC Consultants are available by appointment to provide IECMH Virtual Office Hours consultation via telephone or video conference. IECMH Virtual Office Hours is a short-term, collaborative, problem-solving conversation to help you find next steps for:

- Child Social-Emotional Concerns | Child Behavioral or Developmental Concerns
- Emotional Well-being of Teachers and Caregivers | Partnering with Families

#### Who can request IECMH Virtual Office Hours?

Services are available at no cost to families, child care professionals and specialists supporting Keystone STARS child care programs. We invite:

- Teachers, directors, and staff in center, family, and group-based child care programs
- Families with children attending child care programs
- Early Intervention (Birth-3 & 3-5) professionals
- Keystone STARS Quality Coaches
- Mental Health/Behavioral Health agencies
- Home Visiting and Family Support Programs

#### How can IECMH Virtual Office Hours help your program?

IECMHC Consultation helps adults strengthen their relationships with young children and build capacity to respond to children's social-emotional needs. IECMH can help reduce caregiver stress, as well as increase caregivers' reflective practice skills.

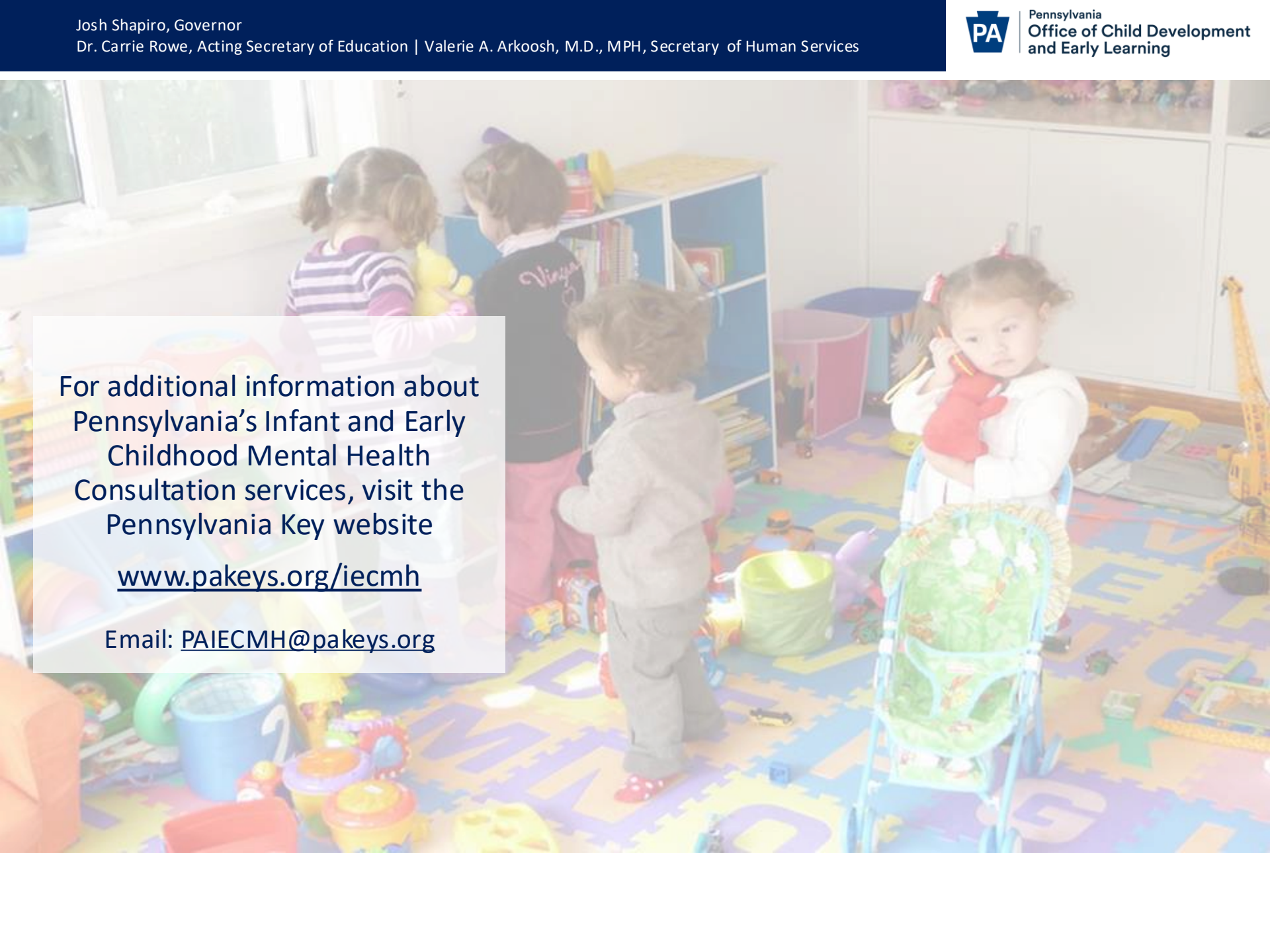
- Figure out what's really going on when a child exhibits challenging behaviors
- Reflect and respond to problem behaviors with the power and impact of nurturing relationships
- Build partnerships with families
- Share community resources
- Consider your next steps and where to go from here

#### How can you request an IECMH Virtual Office Hours appointment?

Appointments are held on the first and third Fridays of the month, or other days/times by request. To schedule an appointment, [register here](#).

Pennsylvania's Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Consultation is a free resource that supports children's social-emotional development from birth through age five within early learning programs participating in Keystone STARS. [Learn more about Pennsylvania's Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program.](#)





For additional information about  
Pennsylvania's Infant and Early  
Childhood Mental Health  
Consultation services, visit the  
Pennsylvania Key website

[www.pakeys.org/iecmh](http://www.pakeys.org/iecmh)

Email: [PAIECMH@pakeys.org](mailto:PAIECMH@pakeys.org)