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For the Connections Matter community
initiative www.connectionsmatter.org

WHAT IS CONNECTIONS MATTER?

We are a community-based initiative that educates the public on trauma, brain development, and resilience in adults and children. Through workshops and trainings developed by scientist Dr. Linda Chamberlain, we demonstrate how trauma adversely affects the brain and how relationships can help prevent negative health outcomes.



community

brain

relationships

BENEFITS OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM

After attending the training, you'll be able to:

- ✓ Understand childhood trauma and its impact
- ✓ Support children who have had Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- ✓ Create environments that build healthy brains
- ✓ Develop longer, more positive relationships with children
- ✓ Interact with children in ways that support their emotional, social, and intellectual development
- ✓ Reduce problem behaviors in children you work with
- ✓ Help parents respond to their children with attention and empathy
- ✓ Cultivate resilience in yourself and the children you care for
- ✓ Care for your own mental health

CAREGIVERS ARE BRAIN BUILDERS

The childhood brain is the foundation of the adult brain. Early childhood is the most important time for growth and development, when experiences shape the brain, affect lifelong health, and build a base for learning. At this stage, children's brains are the most malleable, allowing caregivers to reduce the impact of trauma and encourage healthy behaviors.



ONE MILLION

new brain connections are formed every second during early childhood

CONNECTIONS MATTER FOR KIDS

Warm, caring, safe, relationships are a key ingredient for healthy brain development. A positive relationship with an alternative caregiver can offset the impact of trauma at home and even compensate for parents who lack the time, resources, or knowledge to build secure attachments with their children.

A warm, responsive, and consistent relationship with **AT LEAST ONE CAREGIVER** builds more brain connections and improves well-being in infants and young children.

CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur between the ages of 0 and 17. Science shows that ACEs affect brain development, as well as physical and mental health, well into adulthood.

Trauma can be any experience that is overwhelming or feels threatening. Trauma is personal, and the experience and aftereffects are different for everyone. Examples include: child abuse or neglect, violence or substance abuse in the home, or an incarcerated family member.



1 IN 4 children experience trauma before preschool.



1 IN 6 lowans report at least one ACE.

GOOD NEWS!

Science shows that healthy relationships help us get through tough times and can prevent the negative effects of trauma.

IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON YOUNG CHILDREN



- Developmental delays
- Language difficulties
- Behavior issues
- Fear of separation from familiar places and people
- Avoiding contact with others



Impact of trauma later in life

- Anxiety, depression, or PTSD
- Substance abuse
- Cancer, heart disease, or diabetes
- Suicide



BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Some children may not have the opportunity to build secure attachments at home. However, research shows that secure attachments can emerge from quality child care. Over time, a relationship with a stable, consistent caregiver:



SUPPORTS
WELL-BEING AND
DEVELOPMENT



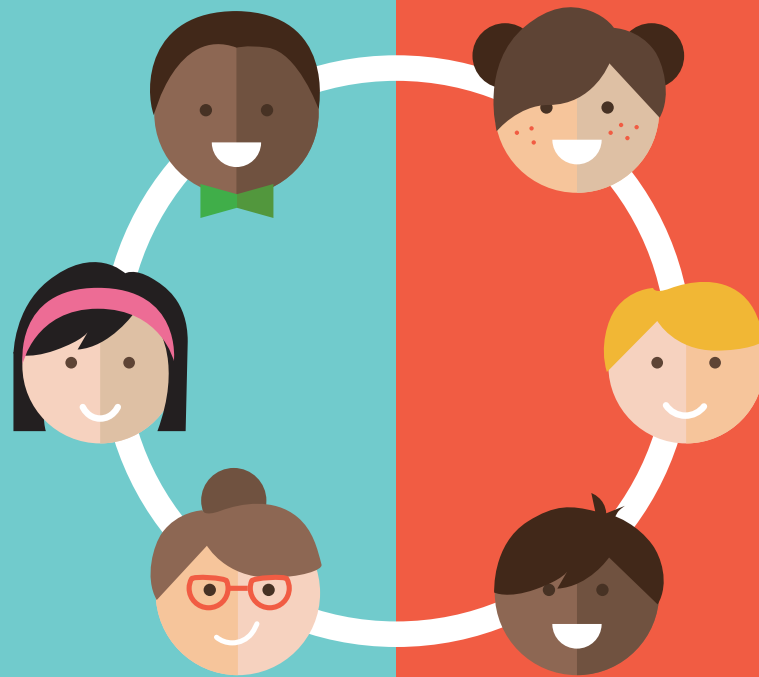
BUILDS SOCIAL
SKILLS



DECREASES
ANXIETY



CREATES A BASE
FOR THE CHILD TO
EXPLORE THE WORLD



THE HEALING POWER OF RELATIONSHIPS

A secure attachment is an emotional connection between a caregiver and young child that promotes feelings of safety, trust, empathy, and self-awareness. To promote a secure attachment, try these strategies:



SINGING
SONGS



LOTS OF HUGS
AND AFFECTION



HELPING THE
CHILD AT MEAL
AND BEDTIME



PLAYING
IMAGINARY
GAMES

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Developing longer, more consistent relationships promotes healthy development and well-being in children. It also creates a better experience for caregivers, who build deeper bonds, come to understand children better, and see a decrease in negative behaviors.

Research shows that the longer a child interacts with the same caregiver, the more secure of an attachment they form. Recommendation: Children should spend as much time as possible with the same caregiver.

BEST PRACTICE: INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF TIME CAREGIVERS AND CHILDREN SPEND TOGETHER.

CHILDREN WHO STAY WITH THEIR CAREGIVERS LONGER HAVE FEWER PROBLEM BEHAVIORS AND HIGHER LEVELS OF INTERACTION.



SIMPLE WAYS TO BUILD LONGER, STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS:

- 1** Create a **consistent** and **predictable** routine for children
- 2** Use a **floating caregiver that stays with children** even as other caregivers change
- 3** **Keep kids together** in the same groups over multiple years
- 4** **Explain** absences and caregiver changes

HOST CONNECTIONS MATTER AT YOUR WORKPLACE

Schedule a workshop or get
more information by emailing

WHATSYOURCONNECTION@GMAIL.COM

Connections Matter promotes caring connections
as the foundation for developing healthy brains,
supportive relationships, and strong communities.

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