



1.2.3 CARE

A TRAUMA-SENSITIVE TOOLKIT FOR CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN



AGE	TRIGGERING EVENT	DEVELOPMENTALLY-APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR	FLIGHT	FIGHT	FREEZE	SUGGESTED TRAUMA-SENSITIVE CARE
0-1 yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexpected changes in routines or caregivers • Loud, unexpected noises • Strong emotions (often anger) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Startle, but is able to self-soothe (clasp hands, suck) • Cry, but is able to be comforted by caregivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive sleeping with difficulty arousing • Avoid eye contact • Crawl or more away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cry inconsolably, caregiver may be unable to soothe • Cling to adults • Fuss • Arch back • Pull & push away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dull-looking face and eyes • Look away (disengage) • Sleep a lot • Show little emotion • Go from "awake" to "sleep state" quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consistent routines • Provide consistent caregivers • Allow comfort items (thumb, blanket) • Show sensitivity to children's cues • Be physically and emotionally available through challenging feelings / behaviors • Verbalize sympathy
1-3 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexpected changes in routines • Transitions • Strangers • Crowds, disorder and chaotic environments • Anger (real or perceived) from others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are excited about with their world • Eager to engage, but can be shy • Easily frustrated, which can lead to tantrums or aggression • Fear of strangers • Engage in parallel play rather than group play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty paying attention • Fearfulness • Isolate self from others • Refuse to participate through withdrawal • Run or walk away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressive behavior (biting, hitting, pushing) • Cling to adults • Have a tantrum • Refuse to participate through disruptive behavior • Throws toys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Check out" • Unresponsive, does not appear to hear or understand • Difficulty with learning activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help identify & label feelings • Minimize power / control and focus on collaboration with the child • Encourage movement and exercise • Teach deep, slow breathing games like: blowing candles out, breathing in the smell of roses • Allow extra time for children to prepare for transitions • Allow children to take breaks from activities as needed • Give children verbal warnings 5-10 minutes prior to transitions • Allow comfort items (blankets, stuffed animals) • Show sensitivity to children's cues
3-5 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexpected changes in routines • Transitions • Perceived aggressive behavior • Disorder and chaotic environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily excited and talk a lot • Eager to engage • Easily frustrated, which may lead to aggression • Curious about strangers • Watchful when they perceive adult anger • Need comfort items • Seek comfort from familiar caregivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run away • Hide • Cry inconsolably • Seek comfort items • Move away from others • Complain frequently of aches, pains & illnesses • Regressive behavior (bathroom accidents, sucking thumb) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get in caregiver's face when angry • Throw things • Have a need to tell their side of the story • Rapidly escalating aggressive behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Check out" • Difficulty with learning activities • Difficulty paying attention or following directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask children, "How can I help you feel safe?" • Allow children the time they need to regulate their emotions • See all of the recommendations listed in sections above

What is the Need Behind the Behavior?

TRIGGER: an event or situation that results in negative and/or disturbing feelings – feelings of being threatened or unsafe.



Triggering Event something that triggers a person or makes them feel threatened using the mind to move away from the person thought to be a threat (standing still while "checking out")

Fight moving toward the person thought to be a threat (fighting and returning the negative energy)

Flight moving away from the person thought to be a threat (fleeing)

Namka, L. (2002). Help your child deal with feelings of threat: The options: Fight, Flight, Freeze or Deal with the Problem. Visit: angriesout.com/parent9.htm