

Early Childhood Comprehensive System



YOUNG CHILDREN,
TRAUMA & TOXIC
STRESS

Building Health Through Integration: Great Start Trauma Informed System



Goal - Integrate a trauma informed approach
into our Great Start system

Education regarding trauma & toxic stress

Expand **screening**

Improve **access** to intervention services



Today's Objectives



- Review key ideas about early brain development
- Understand the effect of trauma & toxic stress on young children
- Discuss ideas for preventing & lessening the effect of toxic stress & trauma

Why Is This Important?



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



Important Terms



- Trauma – an intense event that threatens safety or security of an individual
- Toxic Stress – re-occurring negative experiences that threaten safety or security
- Traumatic Stress- event, the experience and the effect

Objective #1

Early Brain Development: Key Concepts

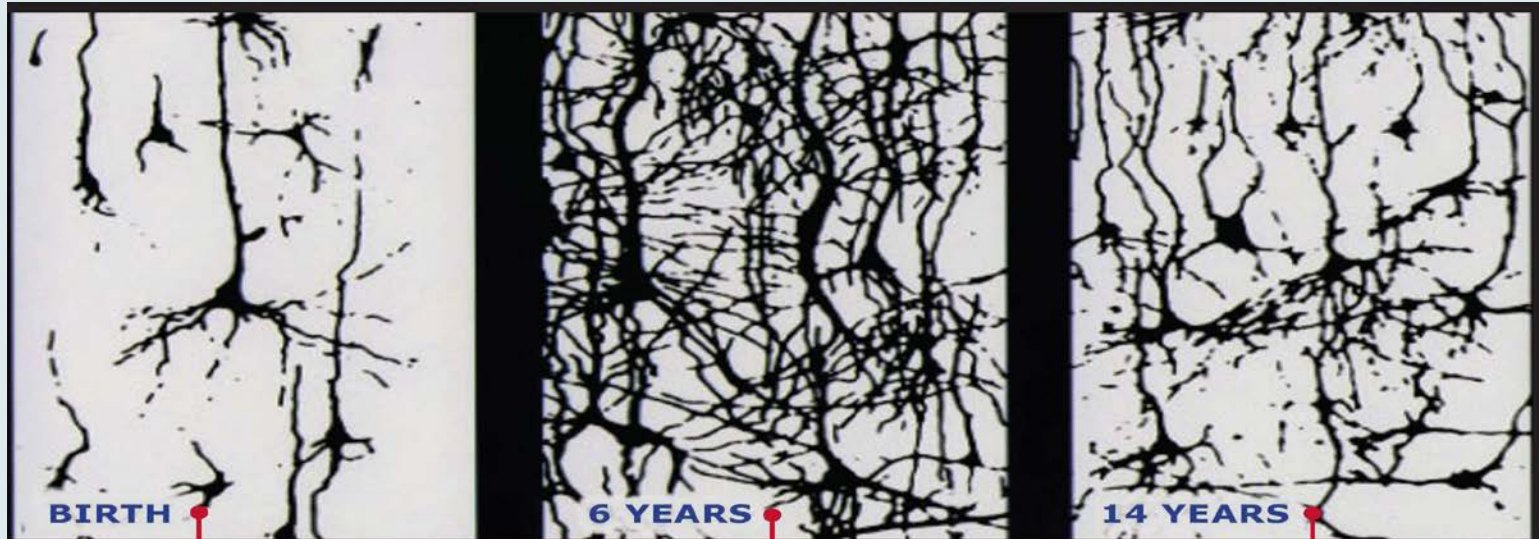


Early Brain Development: Key Concepts



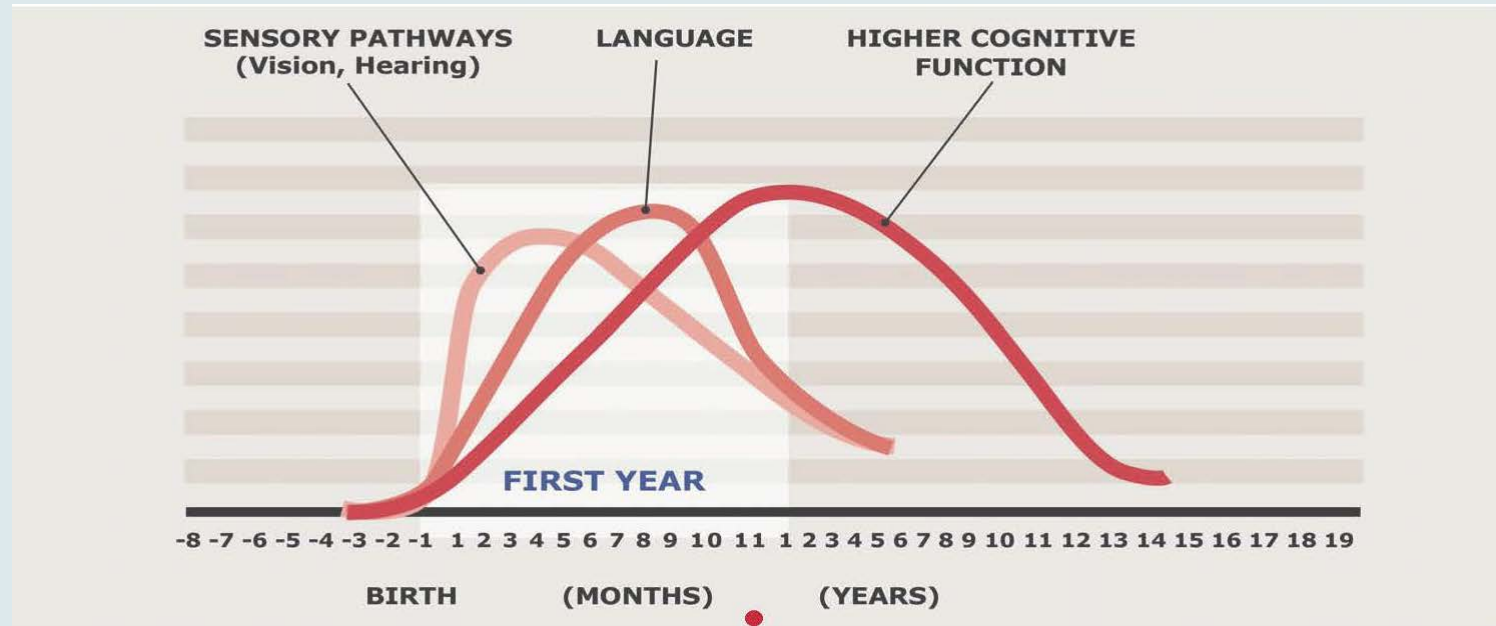
1. Experience shapes brain architecture
2. Brains are built from the bottom up
3. Serve and return
4. Cognitive, emotional & social development are connected
5. Experience alters how are genes are expressed

Experience Shapes Brain Architecture



Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University

Brains Are Built From The Bottom Up



Center for Developing Child, Harvard University

Serve & Return Interactions



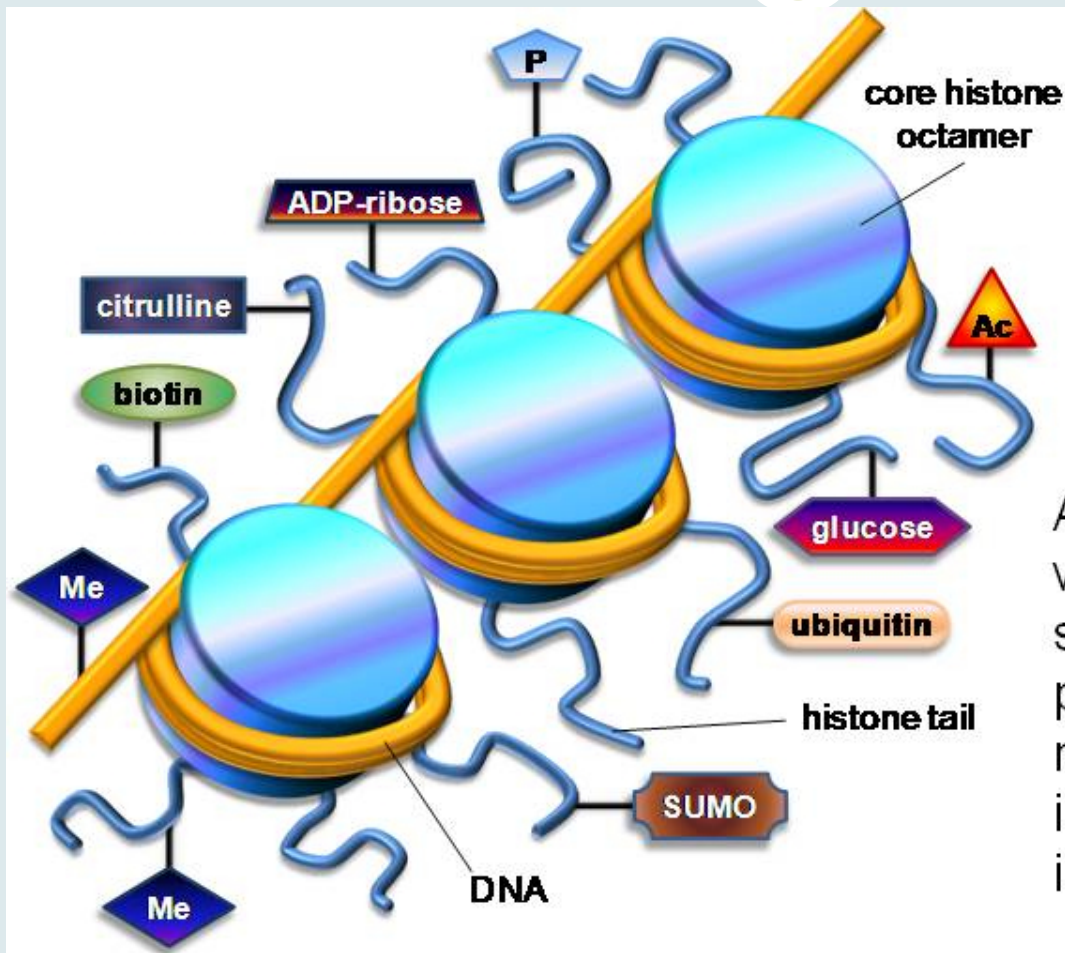
Center for Developing Child, Harvard University

Cognitive, Emotional & Social Development are Connected



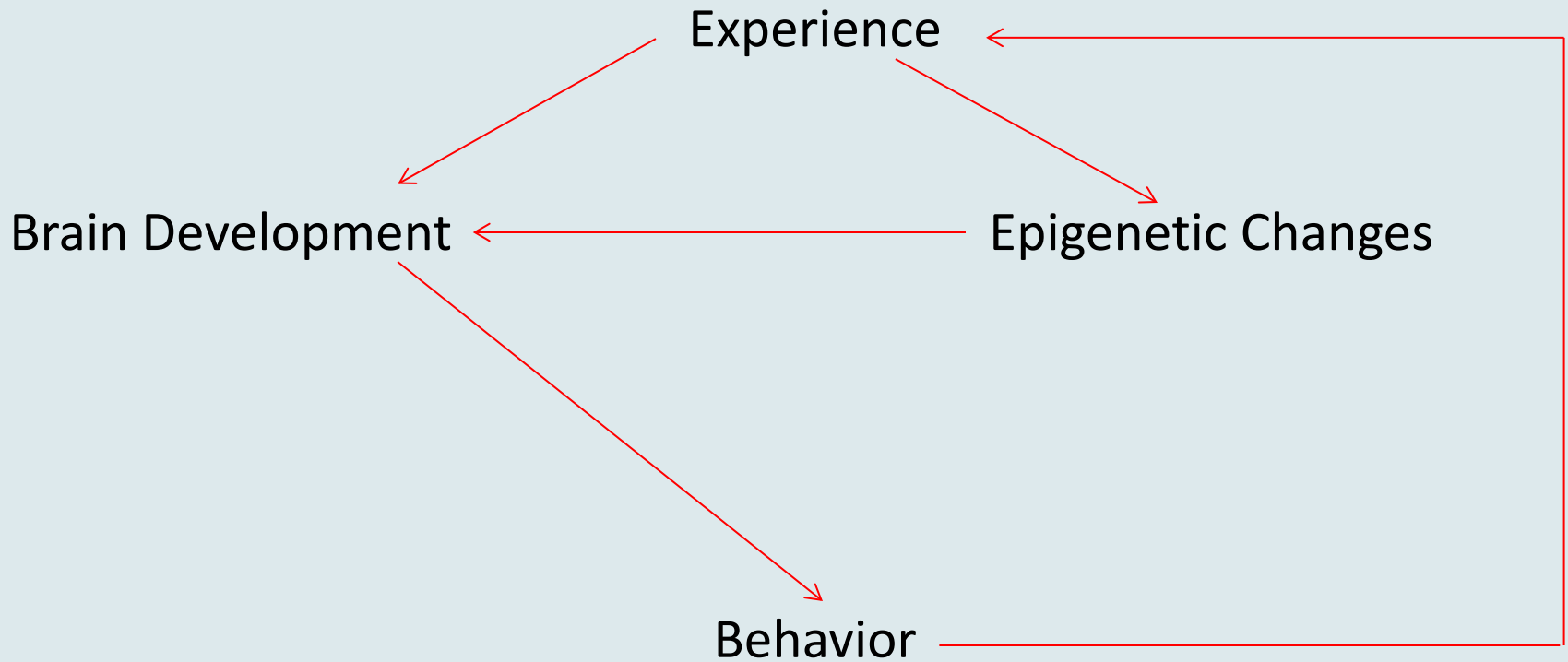
Center for Developing Child, Harvard University

Experience Alters Genetic Expression



Association of DNA with histones showing some common posttranslational modifications that influence this interaction

The Dance Between Nurture and Nature



Experience Build Brain Architecture



- http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/multimedia/videos/three_core_concepts/brain_architecture/

Summary: Early Brain Development



- Brain development is most intense before age 5
- Brains develop in response to experience (environment)
- Brain development impacts cognitive, social and emotional skills and lead to adult behaviors & competencies

Objective #2

Stress, Trauma & Toxic Stress



How Does Stress Work?



- Stress is a normal & necessary part of life
- Stress disrupts our sense of well being
- Stress causes physiological reactions
- Stress causes behavioral reactions

Three Types of Stress



Positive

Brief increases in heart rate,
mild elevations in stress hormone levels.

Tolerable

Serious, temporary stress responses,
buffered by supportive relationships.

Toxic

Prolonged activation of stress response systems
in the absence of protective relationships.

What Are Trauma & Toxic Stress?



- Trauma – an intense event that threatens safety or security of an individual
- Toxic Stress – re-occurring negative experiences that threaten safety or security
- Traumatic Stress-event, the experience, and the effect

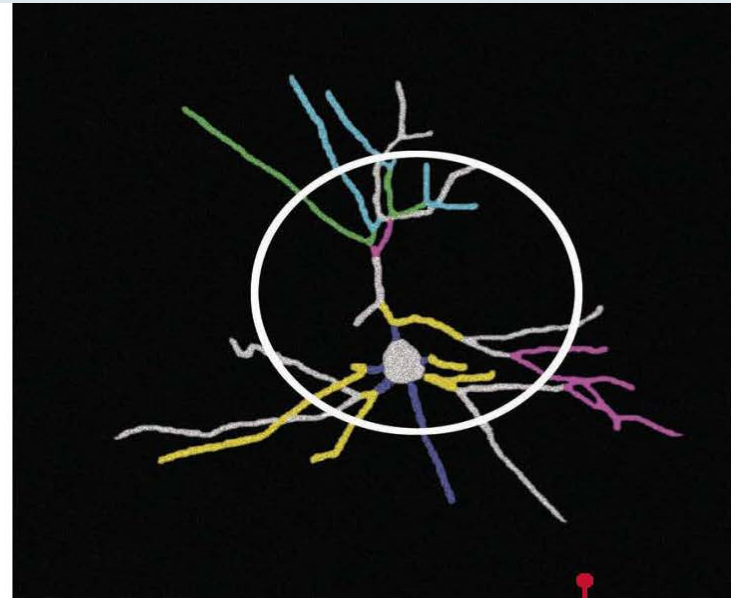
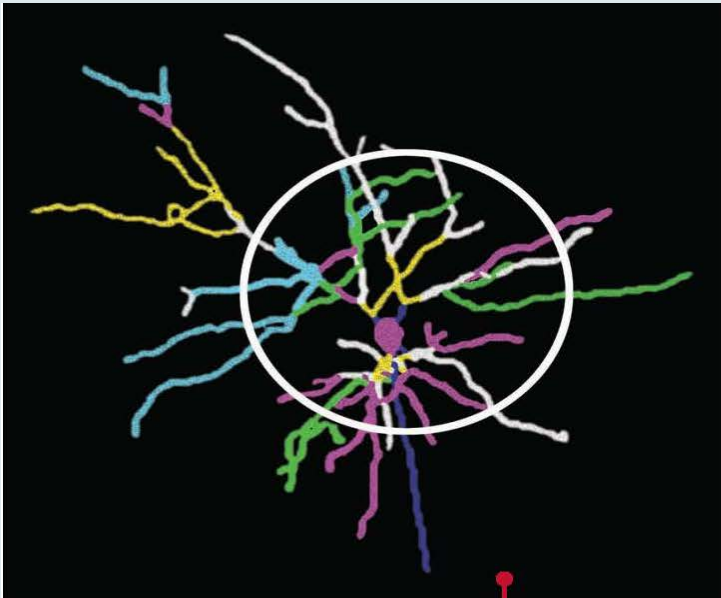
How Does Trauma Affect Young Children?



- Young children experience trauma differently than older children or adults
- Primarily a sensory experience
- Not as able to anticipate danger and protect self
- Limited ability to express thoughts & feelings
- Different understanding of causation - the power of thoughts, wishes, fears

Source: National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Impact of Toxic Stress on the Brain



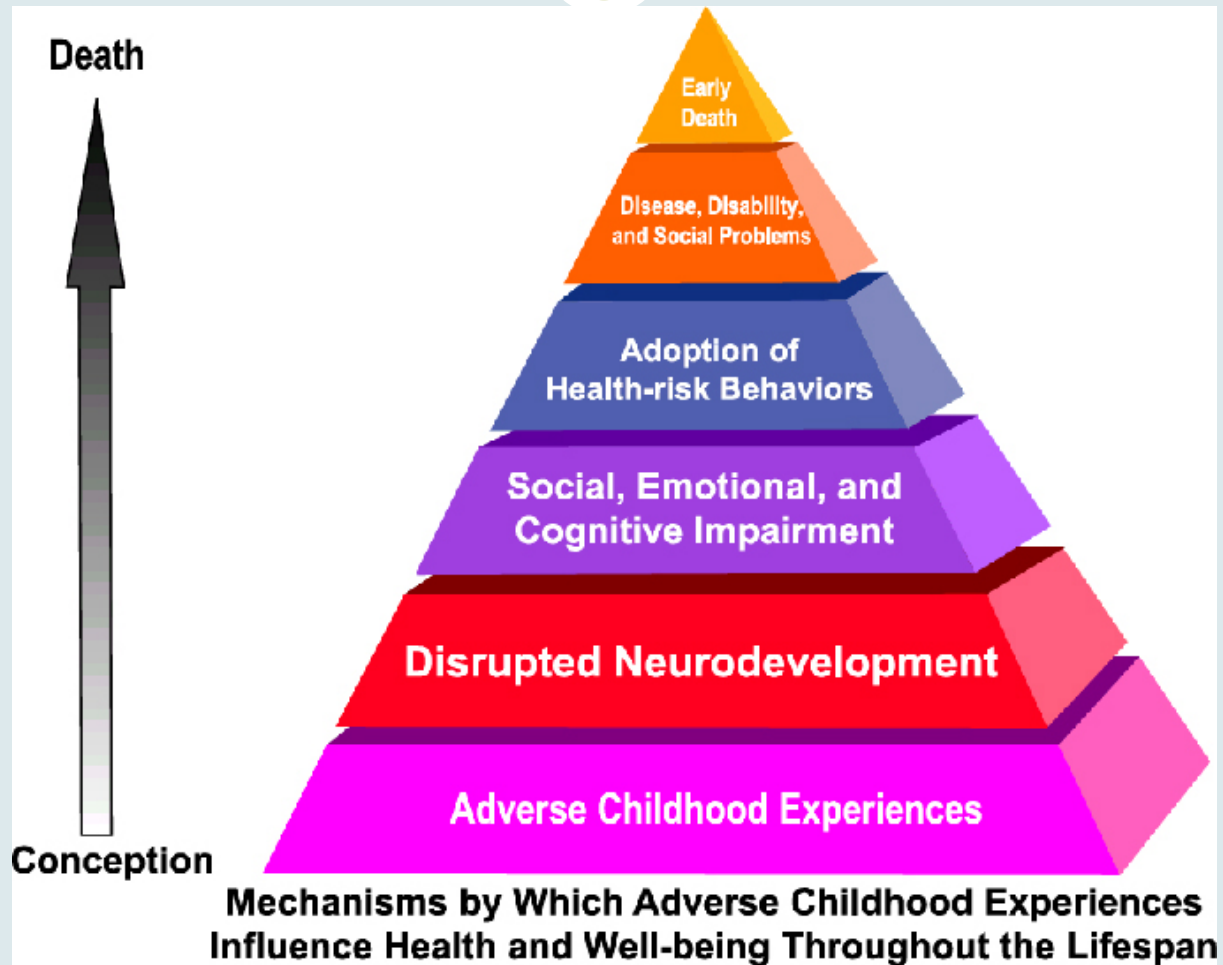
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What Are the Long Term Consequences?



- Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACES)
 - When ACE score increases so does:
 - ✦ High risk behaviors – smoking, substance abuse
 - ✦ Behavioral health problems – depression, suicide attempts, intimate partner violence
 - ✦ Physical health problems – STDs, COPD, liver disease, ischemic heart disease
 - ✦ Early death

How Does This Happen: ACE Pyramid



Summary: The Impact of Trauma & Toxic Stress



- Changes in physiology
- Changes in brain architecture
- Changes in skills, abilities and behavior
- Changes in health and mental health

The Impact of Early Adversity on Children's Development



- http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/resources/multimedia/videos/inbrief_series/inbrief_impact_of_adversity/

Objective #3

What's the Good News?





Supportive relationships
buffer/protect young
children from the effects of
trauma/toxic stress

Components of Trauma Informed Care and Prevention



- **Understand** impact of trauma for adults & children
- **Screen** for trauma exposure/toxic stress
- **Teach** strategies for preventing & mitigating stress/trauma
- **Refer** for treatment/services as appropriate

Trauma Screening



- Ask what happened rather than what's wrong
- Unresolved trauma in parents may lead to toxic stress for children
- An opportunity to support & educate parents/caregivers
- Data base of trauma screening tools www.nctsn.org

Strategies for Preventing/Mitigating Trauma/Toxic Stress



- Emphasize What Young Children Need
- Teach Coping Skills
- Enhance Protective Factors

What Young Children Need

Safety

Security

Nurturing

Strategies for Preventing/Mitigating Trauma/Toxic Stress



- Encourage development of social emotional skills
 - Form relationships
 - Communicate needs
 - Regulate emotions
 - Explore their world
- Enable child's own abilities

Strategies for Preventing/Mitigating Trauma/Toxic Stress



- Support Caregivers & Teach Coping Skills
 - Self care
 - ✦ Nutrition, sleep, exercise
 - Stress management
 - ✦ Support, stress relievers
 - Problem solving
 - ✦ Address stressors (safety, income, health access)

Strategies for Preventing/Mitigating Trauma/Toxic Stress



- **Enhance Protective Factors**
 - Family Functioning/ Resiliency
 - Social Support
 - Concrete Support
 - Child Development/Knowledge of Parenting
 - Nurturing and Attachment

Strategies for Preventing/Mitigating Trauma/Toxic Stress



- **Refer for Services**

- School completion & job training
- Mental health treatment (adult or child)
- Substance abuse treatment
- Intimate partner violence services

In Summary



- Trauma & toxic stress change a child's experience of the world
- Which leads to changes in biology & brain architecture
- As a result, children act differently (defensively)
- Which impacts how they learn, get along with others, and take care of themselves
- Supportive relationships protect children from the impact of trauma & toxic stress

How Can I Learn More?



- Website: www.michigan.gov/traumatoxicstress
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QUESTIONS ?

