



Rebuilding the Foundation for Children with Insecure Attachments or Trauma

Adapted from "Building Resiliency: Working with Students Exposed to Trauma," by Jody McVittie, M.D.

Causal Thinking

- "What" and "how" questions
- Limited Choices
- Focusing on solutions (Consequences don't make sense without causal thinking)

Basic Trust

- Routines (including family meetings)
- Consistency and reliability in the relationship
- Relationships based on dignity and respect (firm and kind)
- Listening to their story

Conscience Development

- "What" and "how" questions
- Family meetings
- Gradual building of empathy (being listened to, feeling felt)
- Respecting differences

Ability to Delay Gratification

- Routines
- Consistency
- Relationships built on dignity and respect (firm and kind)
- Family meetings
- Mistakes are opportunities to learn



Ability to Handle Stress and Concentration

- De-escalation tools (modeled, taught, expected)
- Teaching children about their own brain (brain in the palm of the hand)
- Using "I" statements
- Learning language for emotions
- Space for "chilling out" (Positive time out or "chill down time")
- Family meeting to be heard and validated, and to recognize that others have similar feelings
- Mistakes are opportunities to learn

Relationship Skills and Socialization

- Adult relationships based on dignity and respect (firm and kind)
- Family meetings
- Problem solving
- Opportunities for play and practice making mistakes
- Mistakes are opportunities to learn

Identity Formation and Intellectual Potential

- Household jobs and responsibility
- Being able to contribute in meaningful ways
- Using "I" statements and learning language for emotions
- Opportunities to practice during play
- Learning how to make amends and fix mistakes instead of "paying for them"
- "It seems like you feel _____ because _____."