Small Hands, Heavy Loads
Lightening the Burden Caused by Stress and Anxiety
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PI CIG Goals

- Expand the capacity of state and local MEPs to serve migrant PK children.
- Ensure that more services are provided to migrant 3 to 5-year-old children.
- Disseminate information on evidence-based and promising practices.
Session Goals

• Identify the effects of stress and anxiety on children’s brain development

• Introduce/Explore an optional activity: Brain Architecture Game

• Review ACEs = Adverse Childhood Experiences

• Learn how positive influences and resiliency can counteract stress and trauma
Three Categories of Stress

Positive  Tolerable  Toxic

https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress/
Effects of Toxic Stress on the Brain

• Impedes the brain’s ability to build circuits & develop properly.

• Inhibits the brain’s ability to process information.

• Can affect the development of socio-emotional skills; language development & executive function skills (behavior control, impulse control, self-regulation).

Resource: The Brain Architecture Game
The Brain Architecture Game

A game about the powerful role of relationships on early brain development.

The Brain Architecture Game is a tabletop game experience that builds understanding of the powerful role of experiences on early brain development – what promotes it, what derails it, with what consequences for society.

Since 2009, thousands of people in groups around the world have played the Brain Architecture Game, gaining a memorable, compelling perspective on the lifelong impact of early childhood experiences.

Cost associated for Brain Architecture Game. For more information, visit: https://dev.thebrainarchitecturegame.com/
Questions/Comments?
What are ACEs?

• ACEs = Adverse Childhood Experiences

• These are traumatic or stress-inducing experiences that happen before adulthood and affect brain chemistry, especially with prolonged exposure.

• Having a score of four or more ACEs has been linked to developing alcoholism, drug abuse, depression and chronic illness in adulthood.

• Let’s take a look at the types of ACEs

https://centerforyouthwellness.org/ace-toxic-stress/
ACEs Test

- This is the ACEs questionnaire
- Think about yourself or someone you love
- No need to share the results
- Did someone make a difference in improving outcomes?
ACEs Types in Summary

**HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION**
- Incarcerated Relative
- Substance Abuse
- Mental Illness
- Mother treated violently
- Divorce

**NEGLECT**
- Physical
- Emotional

**ABUSE**
- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
ACEs on the Surface and Beneath

US Children with ACEs

ACEs and Negative Outcomes

**Behavior**
- Lack of physical activity
- Smoking
- Alcoholism
- Drug use
- Missed work

**Physical & Mental Health**
- Severe obesity
- Diabetes
- Depression
- Suicide attempts
- STDs

- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Stroke
- COPD
- Broken bones
ACEs and Migrant Children

These may contribute to ACEs in the migrant young child:

- Leaving homeland or home-base
- Frequent moves
- Immigration status (fear of parents being deported, being left behind)
- Reasons for migrating (fleeing trauma)
- Living situation (poverty, homelessness)
Positive Influences
There’s Hope!

• A support system can make all the difference: That means you!

• Team Up – Who planted a seed in your past?
Three Categories of Positive Influences

According to the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, the following are **positive influences** which make a difference in a child’s life...

Positive experiences

Nurturing, responsive environment/caregivers

Language-rich environment
According to the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2007 report),

“When parents, informal community programs, and professionally staffed early childhood services pay attention to young children’s emotional and social needs, as well as to their mastery of literacy and cognitive skills, they have maximum impact on the development of sturdy brain architecture and preparation for success in school.”
Protective Factors

"Protective factors are conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that mitigate risk and promote healthy development and well-being.” Examples include:

- Social emotional competence of children
- Concrete support in times of need
- Supportive social connections
- Knowledge of parenting and child development

ACEs Can Be Prevented

- **Strengthen economic supports to families**
  - Strengthening household financial security
  - Family-friendly work policies

- **Change social norms to support parents and positive parenting**
  - Public engagement and enhancement campaigns
  - Legislative approaches to reduce corporal punishment

- **Provide quality care and education early in life**
  - Preschool enrichment with family engagement
  - Improved quality of child care through licensing and accreditation

- **Enhance parenting skills to promote healthy child development**
  - Early childhood home visitation
  - Parenting skill and family relationship approaches

- **Intervene to lessen harms and prevent future risk**
  - Enhanced primary care
  - Behavioral parent training programs
  - Treatment to lessen harms of abuse and neglect exposure
  - Treatment to prevent problem behavior and later involvement in violence
Questions/Comments?
Key Strategies for Building Resiliency

- Create safe, predictable spaces
- Build relationships and secure attachment
- Understand big feelings and challenging behaviors
- Provide opportunities for mastery and success
Science to Policy and Practice

Three Principles to Improve Outcomes for Children and Families

These principles, grounded in science, can guide policymakers and program developers as they design and adapt policies and programs to improve outcomes for children and families.
Final Questions/Comments?
Additional Resources

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
Colorin Colorado Trauma Guide
Greater Good Science Center at Berkeley
OSY Consortium ACEs Presentations/Resources
Powerful Resources for Teaching Through Trauma and Tragedy
National Child Traumatic Stress Network
Mitigating the Effects of Trauma among Young Children of Immigrants and Refugees-The Role of Early Childhood Programs
National Center for Children in Poverty
Helping Immigrant Children Heal
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Adverse Childhood Experiences
Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
Center for the Developing Child – Harvard University
Child Welfare Information Gateway
Professional Development Connections

ACES Connections

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning

Mindful Schools

Trauma Sensitive Schools

WestEd

Trauma Sensitive Schools Training Package

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