

The background is a composite image. The top left shows a line of yellow school buses with 'SCHOOL BUS' written on the front. The bottom left shows a classroom with blue walls, colorful balloons, and several small tables with chairs.

Trauma-Informed Approaches and the Pyramid Model

Stephanie Ernst, Education Academic Consultant
Kentucky Department of Education - Early Learning Unit

Laura Miller-Welsh Regional Training Center Consultant and Pyramid Coach
Simpson Regional Training Center

Early Childhood Institute, April 19th and 20th, 2023



Session norms

- Participate Respectfully
- Ask and Welcome Questions for Clarification
- Honor our Time Together

Session goals

Participants will:

1. Learn how the Pyramid Model Framework can promote social and emotional competence in young children, specifically those who have experienced trauma.
2. Define what trauma looks like in the early childhood classroom.
3. Understand the impact of the trauma on young children.

Key social emotional skills

- Confidence
- Capacity to develop good relationships with peers and adults
- Concentration and persistence on challenging tasks
- Ability to effectively communicate emotions
- Ability to listen to instructions and be attentive
- Ability to solve social problems

What do children do when they don't have each of these skills?



Kentucky Department of

E D U C A T I O N

Let's Define Trauma and Pyramid Model

What is trauma?

Trauma occurs when frightening or harmful events overwhelm a child's ability to cope or deal with the event or events.

Pyramid Model Trauma Informed Care Guide

The three E's of trauma

Event

Experiences

Effect



How trauma impacts young children

Trauma-induced changes to the brain can result in varying degrees of cognitive impairment and emotional dysregulation that can lead to a host of problems, including difficulty with attention and focus, learning disabilities, low self-esteem, impaired social skills, and sleep disturbances (Nemeroff, 2016).

For more information, please visit [4 Ways Childhood Trauma Changes a Child's Brain and Body - Salud America \(salud-america.org\)](https://www.salud-america.org/4-ways-childhood-trauma-changes-a-childs-brain-and-body)

Data says...

33.3% of children were exposed to at least one adverse childhood experience. (ACE)

The National Survey of Children's Health ([NSCH]; 2017-2018)

Adverse Childhood Experience

ACEs include abuse, household challenges, neglect, substance use disorders or mental illness in the house, parental separation or divorce, incarcerated household members, and witnessing domestic violence (Felitti et al., 1998).

Possible Signs and Symptoms of Trauma in Young Children

Infants & Toddlers:

Difficulty eating and sleeping

Separation anxiety

Difficult to soothe

Developmental regression

Fearfulness

Easily startled

Difficulty engaging in social interactions

Language delays

Aggression

Possible Signs and Symptoms of Trauma in Young Children

Preschoolers:

Avoidant, anxious and clingy

Fearfulness

Restless

Impulsive

Inattention and irritability

Aggression and or sexualized behavior

Sadness

Loss of developmental milestones

Poor peer relationships

What is the Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model is a multi-tiered framework with a continuum of evidence-based practices to support the social and emotional development of young children. (Fox et al., 2003)

[Pyramid Model Trauma Informed Care Guide](#)

The Pyramid Model

- Develop meaningful relationships
- Establish schedules and routines
- Provide clear directions and expectations
- Promote emotional regulation
- Teach problem-solving skills
- Provide intensive individualized support when children have persistent challenging behaviors



Trauma and behavior

Trauma can impact young children's social-emotional development and behavior.

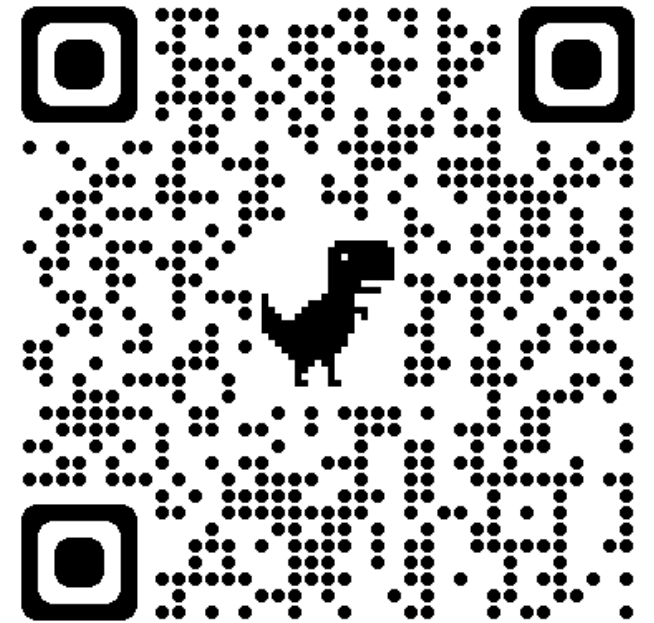
Children's behavior relies heavily on their ability to cope with stress and challenging situations. Children who have experienced trauma often have difficulty regulating their responses to stressful situations.

How does the Pyramid Model support children who are impacted by trauma?



QR code checklist of practices

**Checklist of Early Childhood Practices that Support
Social Emotional Development and Trauma-Informed Care**



[Layout 1 \(challengingbehavior.org\)](https://challengingbehavior.org)

Contact information

Stephanie Ernst, stephanie.ernst@education.ky.gov

502-564-4970 ext.4520

Laura Miller-Welsh, laura.miller@simpson.kyschools.us

270-586-2008