

Trauma Informed Care Series Parenting Children of Trauma

Trauma in childhood occurs in many forms. Trauma may include physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, loss of a parent, exposure to violence, sudden separation from a caregiver, dysfunctional families, community violence, and institutional racism. Trauma can be a single event, chronic (multiple traumatic events), or complex (trauma resulting from caregiver not protecting or caring for a child). Children who have endured chronic or complex trauma from caregivers during their early years often struggle with emotional and behavioral regulation. They also tend to have difficulties forming connections with others. Parenting these children can be especially challenging. Some effects of a child’s exposure to trauma may include severe behavior problems.

Common trauma symptoms may include:

Aggression/fighting	Frequently getting in trouble	Tantrums
Refusal to follow rules	Substance use/abuse	Running away from home
Defiance	Need to control	Withdraw
Acting too friendly with strangers	Difficulty concentrating	Unexplained crying spells
Hyperarousal (constantly on guard, looking for danger)	Strong emotions that are hard to regulate	Impulsivity
Anxiety	Fear	Depression
Trust issues, even distrusting parents/caregivers	Difficulty forming attachments or relationships	Low self-esteem




Parents and caregivers need a special approach when dealing with traumatized children. In knowing how a child expresses their trauma, parents/caregivers can meet their child where they are. While children respond to trauma differently, every incident of childhood trauma can cause lasting damage.

Trauma-Informed Parenting¹

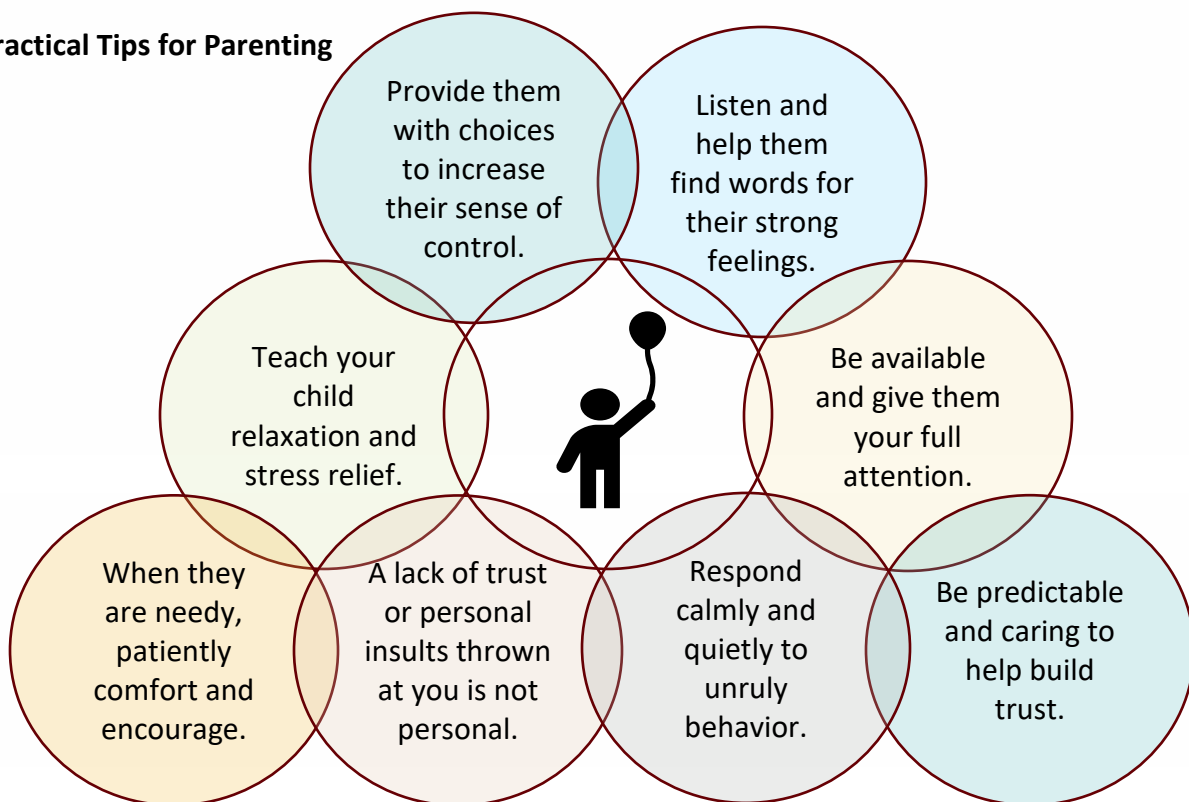
Trauma-informed parenting is an approach to raising children that acknowledges and addresses the potential effects of past traumatic experiences on a child’s development, behavior, and emotional well-being. Trauma-informed parenting is especially relevant for resource (foster and adoptive) parents. Supportive parents and caregivers who adopt a trauma-informed-approach recognize the impacts of trauma and take care to prevent retraumatizing the child.

¹ [Trauma-Informed Parenting 101: Parenting a Child with PTSD](#). *HealthyPlace*

Key Areas to Consider²

Trauma Informed Parents and Caregivers:	
Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that basic needs —such as proper nutrition, sleep, and access to medical care—are met. • Recognize and diminishing external triggers. • Provide purposeful and consistent routines, structure, praise, and consequences.
Relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the importance of bonding and connection in overcoming trauma. • Strive to continuously strengthen the relationship they have with their child, and they provide opportunities to build relationships with other trusted individuals. • Recognize the importance of offering validation, and acceptance. • Ensure that their child feels seen and heard.
Emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that emotional safety is important for a child’s healthy processing of trauma. • Help children identify and manage their emotions, without expectation or judgment. • Model healthy emotional expression, as well as intentional coping strategies along with when to use them.

Practical Tips for Parenting



² McGrady K., [How to Support Your Child Through Trauma; Lessons from trauma-informed parenting](#). Psychology Today, May 10, 2022

RESOURCES

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Ohioans who are experiencing a mental health or addiction crisis and their family members can call, chat or text 988 to reach a trained counselor who can offer help and support.

Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services

- Crisis Text Line – Text 4Hope to 741 741 for free, confidential conversation
[Crisis Text Line | Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services \(ohio.gov\)](#)
- Ohio Careline (1-800-720-9616) for a free, confidential connection to a licensed provider
[Ohio CareLine | Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services](#)
- OhioMHAS Get Help for a variety of resources to support prevention, treatment, and recovery
[Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services | Ohio.gov](#)
- Resources
[Resources | Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services \(ohio.gov\)](#)

Ohio Department of Children and Youth

[The Ohio Department of Children and Youth's](#) mission is to promote positive, lifelong outcomes for Ohio youth through early intervention, quality education, and family support. Caregivers are essential to a child's healthy growth and development. Whether you are looking for childcare options, parenting tips, or resources for a healthy pregnancy, this page offers families of all shapes and sizes resources to meet their needs.

Ohio Benefits

Here to help! [Access benefits for you and your children.](#) Explore food, cash, medical and child-care assistance.

Triple P

[The Triple P - Positive Parenting Program](#) is simply an approach to parenting that gives parents tools and strategies to raise their child in an environment that is safe, loving, and predictable. Triple P Online allows parents to decide what is important to them. It does not tell parents *how* to raise their children but gives them the confidence and skills to build good relationships with their child or teenager, set boundaries and rules, and follow up with consequences that are not harmful.

Parenting for Brain

[Parenting for Brain](#) is committed to providing reliable and evidence-based information and advice on parenting, ensuring that parents have access to the best information possible to raise healthy children. Their mission is to provide reliable information that helps parents/ caregivers make informed decisions based on their unique circumstances.

The Wellness Project

[The Wellness Project](#) is a collection of resources to support and enhance your wellness and resilience. The purpose of this website is to discover a variety of ways for supporting helping professionals, so they can show up as the “best version of themselves.” It includes a holistic system of wellness activities such as reading, listening, watching, cooking, connecting, moving, breathing, and resting.

Goals are to give our workforce tools to practice self-care, build resilience, enhance caregiving and, ultimately improve the services and supports we provide.