

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Build a supportive, responsive, stable, consistent, and nurturing relationship with a child :

KNOW

- Know the normal developmental spectrum for children at each age
- Know the child's medical and background history and the things that may upset the child
- Pay special attention to the child's cues
- Keep usual, steady routines

BE AWARE

- Be aware of your own reactions to the stress of caregiving or the child's behavior
- Be honest and clear
- Be present, attentive, attuned, and responsive
- Be aware of environmental triggers

BUILD

- Build on strengths and positive experiences
- Teach older children how to express emotions appropriately
- Explain what will happen ahead of time to give them a sense of control
- Provide names of referrals to well-respected mental health providers

QUESTIONS ?

Resources For More Information on Toxic Stress

Center on the Developing Child  HARVARD UNIVERSITY
<http://developingchild.harvard.edu/>



<http://www.childtrauma.org/>



<http://www.cdc.gov/ace/>

TOXIC STRESS GUIDE

Foster Parents Foster Care Workers



RELATIONSHIPS **MATTER**
RELATIONSHIPS are **PROTECTIVE**
RELATIONSHIPS **HEAL**

This publication was made possible by Grant Number H25MC00240 from Health Resources & Services Administration. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



<http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/MCAH/Pages/TogetherForKids.aspx>

Published 2014

YOU MATTER!

Children who have been placed in foster care have experienced trauma. You play a unique role to provide safety and stability; making a difference in a child's life today.

**STRONG
FREQUENT
PROLONGED**

exposure to an adverse experience



NO ADULT SUPPORT



TOXIC STRESS

**10 Adverse Childhood Experiences
That Can Change A Child's
Brain Development**

HOUSEHOLD TRAUMA/DYSFUNCTION

- Drug addicted or alcoholic family member
- Incarceration of a family member
- Loss of a parent due to death, divorce, or abandonment
- Witnessing domestic violence
- Mentally ill, depressed, or suicidal family member

ABUSE

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual

NEGLECT

- Physical
- Emotional



SIGNS OF TOXIC STRESS

YOUNG CHILDREN

(5 and younger)

Disruption in sleeping and eating patterns	Bed wetting	Change in level or activity	Become over-compliant
Withdrawal or lack of responsiveness	Fear of the dark	New/intense anxieties, fears, and/or worries	Easily irritable or fussy or have difficulty calming down
Abnormal, intense or pronounced separation anxiety	Easily startled	Cling to caregivers	Repeat events over and over in play or conversation
Regression in skills	Frequent tantrums	Become passive and lose interest in play	
	Increase in aggressive or impulsive behavior		

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

(6 - 12 years)

You may see signs you would see in young children listed above in addition to the following:

Difficulty paying attention	Fight with peers or adults	Get into trouble at home or school	Be tearful and sad and talk about scary feelings and ideas
Eat more/less than usual	Change in school performance	Truancy	Become quiet, upset, and withdrawn
		Want to be left alone	

TEENAGERS

(12 - 18 years)

Antisocial behavior	Truancy	School failure	Depression with irritability
Don't follow rules	Physical fighting	Substance abuse	
Promiscuity	Aggression	Withdrawal	Anxiety