



123 CARE

A TRAUMA-SENSITIVE TOOLKIT FOR CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN



AGE	TRIGGERING EVENT	DEVELOPMENTALLY-APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR	FLIGHT	FIGHT	FREEZE	SUGGESTED TRAUMA-SENSITIVE CARE
0-1 yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Unexpected changes in routines or caregivers •Loud, unexpected noises •Strong emotions (often anger) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Startle, but is able to self-soothe (clasp hands, suck) •Cry, but is able to be comforted by caregivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Excessive sleeping with difficulty arousing •Avoid eye contact •Crawl or more away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cry inconsolably, caregiver may be unable to soothe •Cling to adults •Fuss •Arch back •Pull & push away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Dull-looking face and eyes •Look away (disengage) •Sleep a lot •Show little emotion •Go from "awake" to "sleep state" quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Provide consistent routines •Provide consistent caregivers •Allow comfort items (thumb, blanket) •Show sensitivity to children's cues •Be physically and emotionally available through challenging feelings / behaviors •Verbalize sympathy
1-3 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Unexpected changes in routines •Transitions •Strangers •Crowds, disorder and chaotic environments •Anger (real or perceived) from others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are excited about with their world •Eager to engage, but can be shy •Easily frustrated, which can lead to tantrums or aggression •Fear of strangers •Engage in parallel play rather than group play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Difficulty paying attention •Fearfulness •Isolate self from others •Refuse to participate through withdrawal •Run or walk away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Aggressive behavior (biting, hitting, pushing) •Cling to adults •Have a tantrum •Refuse to participate through disruptive behavior •Throws toys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •"Check out" •Unresponsive, does not appear to hear or understand •Difficulty with learning activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Help identify & label feelings •Minimize power / control and focus on collaboration with the child •Encourage movement and exercise •Teach deep, slow breathing games like: blowing candles out, breathing in the smell of roses •Allow extra time for children to prepare for transitions •Allow children to take breaks from activities as needed •Give children verbal warnings 5-10 minutes prior to transitions •Allow comfort items (blankets, stuffed animals) •Show sensitivity to children's cues
3-5 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Unexpected changes in routines •Transitions •Perceived aggressive behavior •Disorder and chaotic environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Easily excited and talk a lot •Eager to engage •Easily frustrated, which may lead to aggression •Curious about strangers •Watchful when they perceive adult anger •Need comfort items •Seek comfort from familiar caregivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Run away •Hide •Cry inconsolably •Seek comfort items •Move away from others •Complain frequently of aches, pains & illnesses •Regressive behavior (bathroom accidents, sucking thumb) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Get in caregiver's face when angry •Throw things •Have a need to tell their side of the story •Rapidly escalating aggressive behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •"Check out" •Difficulty with learning activities •Difficulty paying attention or following directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ask children, "How can I help you feel safe?" •Allow children the time they need to regulate their emotions •See all of the recommendations listed in sections above

What is the Need Behind the Behavior?

TRIGGER: an event or situation that results in negative and/or disturbing feelings – feelings of being threatened or unsafe.



Triggering Event something that triggers a person or makes them feel threatened using the mind to move away from the person thought to be a threat (standing still while "checking out")

Freeze

Fight moving toward the person thought to be a threat (fighting and returning the negative energy)

Flight moving away from the person thought to be a threat (fleeing)

Namka, L. (2002). Help your child deal with feelings of threat: The options: Fight, Flight, Freeze or Deal with the Problem. Visit: angriesout.com/parent9.htm