

# First Coast Behavior Solutions

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# Trauma Based Behavior

# Early Brain Development

- 50-70% of brain development happens after a child is born.
- You are a neurosculptor!
- “Every interaction a child has throughout the course of a day influences the adult that child will become.” –  
Joann Deak, PhD
- The developing brain is use dependent. Use it or lose it.
- A healthy brain requires safety and security.

# Internal Working Model

## Set by Age 3!

### SECURE

- I am lovable, worthy, capable and good.
- Others are good, helpful, and caring.
- The world is a safe, good, predictable place
- Everyone loves me

### INSECURE

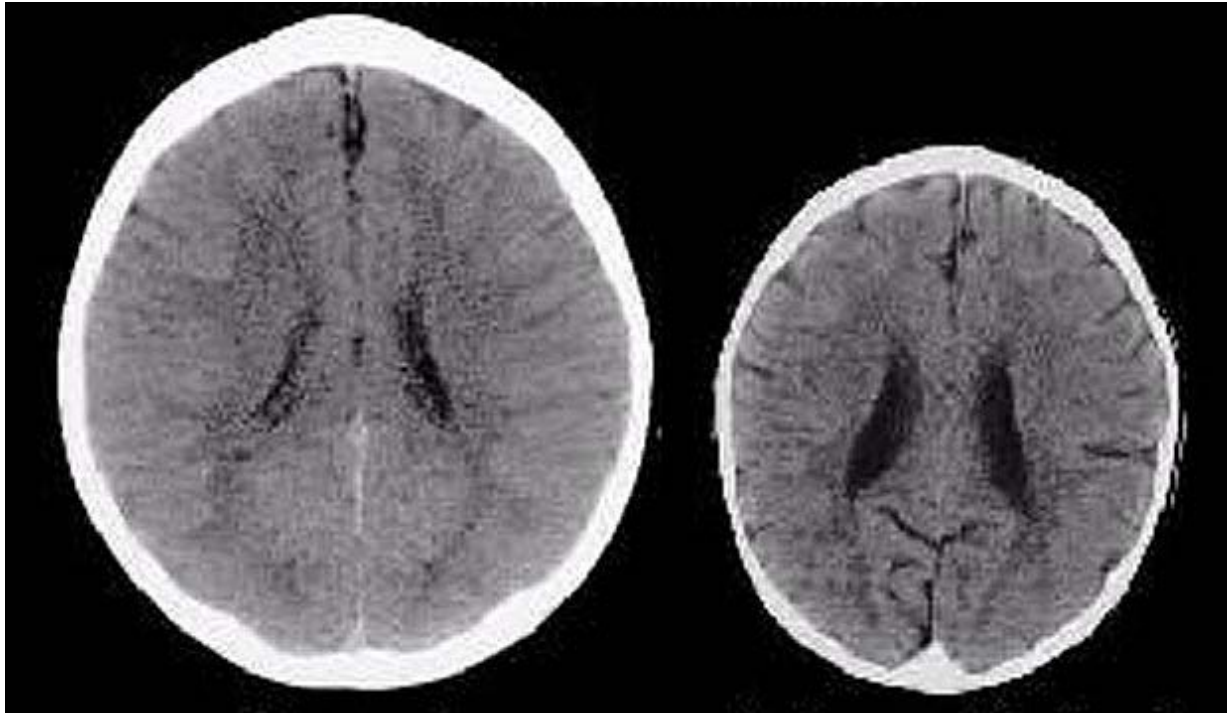
- I am bad, defective, unworthy, unlovable
- Others are coercive, untrustworthy, unreliable
- The world is a dangerous, chaotic place.
- I'm a bad kid (why else would they treat me like that.)

# Trauma

- A life threatening experience that overwhelms an individual's capacity to cope.
- ACE Study
- Chronic trauma creates a conditioned fear response. The amygdala takes over.

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Abandonment, betrayal of trust (such as abuse by a caregiver), or neglect
- The death or loss of a loved one
- Life-threatening illness in a caregiver
- Witnessing domestic violence
- Automobile accidents or other serious accidents
- Bullying
- Life-threatening health situations / painful medical procedures
- Witnessing or experiencing community violence
- Witnessing police activity or having a close relative incarcerated
- Life-threatening natural disasters
- Acts or threats of terrorism

# Effects of Abuse and Neglect



- Less intelligent
- Less able to empathize with others
- More likely to become addicted to drugs and involved in violent crime.
- Much more likely to be unemployed and to be dependent on welfare, and to develop mental and other serious health problems.

# Behavioral Observations of Traumatized Children

- **Dissociative**
  - Withdrawal from others or activities
  - Difficulty responding to social cues
- **Hyper vigilant**
  - Increase in activity level
  - Over- or under-reacting to sounds, movements, and physical contact
  - Distrust of others, affecting how children interact with adults and peers
  - Fighting when criticized by peers
- **Unable to regulate emotions**
  - Anxiety, fear, and worry.
  - Whiny, irritable, moody.
  - Angry outbursts and/or aggression
  - Difficulty with authority, redirection, or criticism
- **Difficulty staying calm and focused enough to learn**
  - Decreased attention and/or concentration
  - Increased somatic complaints
  - Resisting transition and/or change

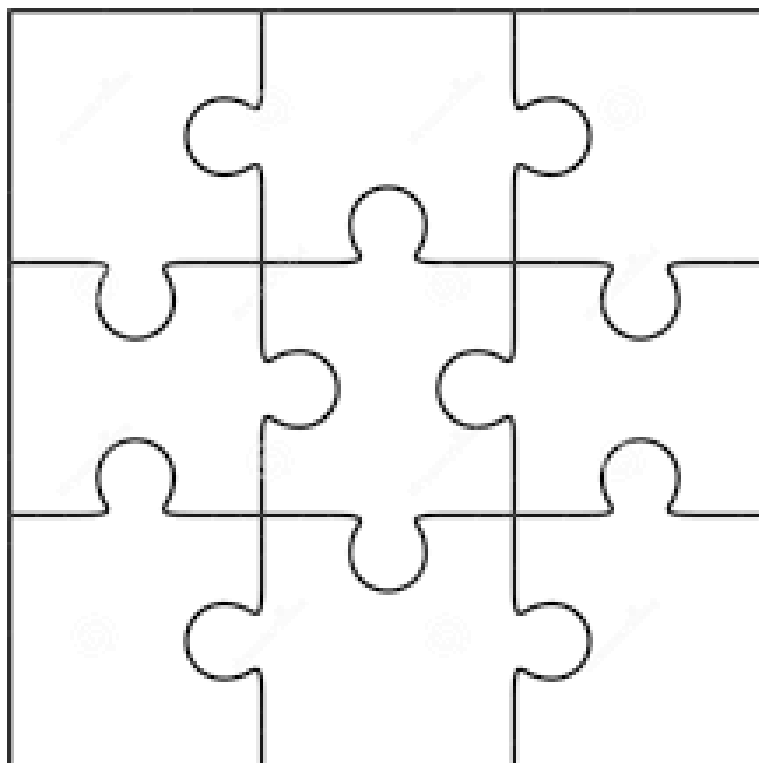
# Keep it Calm, Keep it Positive

- Behavior is coming from a profound sense of shame & overwhelmed stress response system.
  - Can't handle criticism.
  - Reward behavior you want to see with your attention.
  - You did a good job calming yourself down.
- Respond with empathy, not anger.
  - You are so \_\_\_\_\_ (angry, overwhelmed, upset, pissed off).
  - Name it to tame it. Calm the amygdala. Don't talk until thinking brain back on.
  - You ran off. You must have been really upset. I'm here to help you.
- Emphasize safety.
  - We keep everyone safe at this house.
  - I will not let you hurt anyone at this house, and I won't let anyone hurt you.



# Remember...

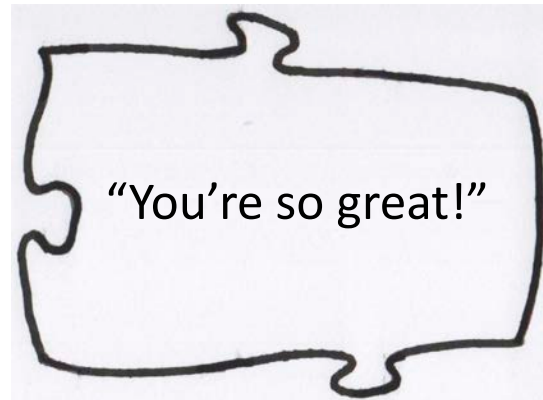
- Don't teach a child to swim when they are drowning.
- Use Reward Based Discipline (vs punishment based discipline) Flip the clip!
- Create a new Self-Concept Puzzle.
- Good Behavior Book/Journal.
- Put on your oxygen mask and Just Breathe.

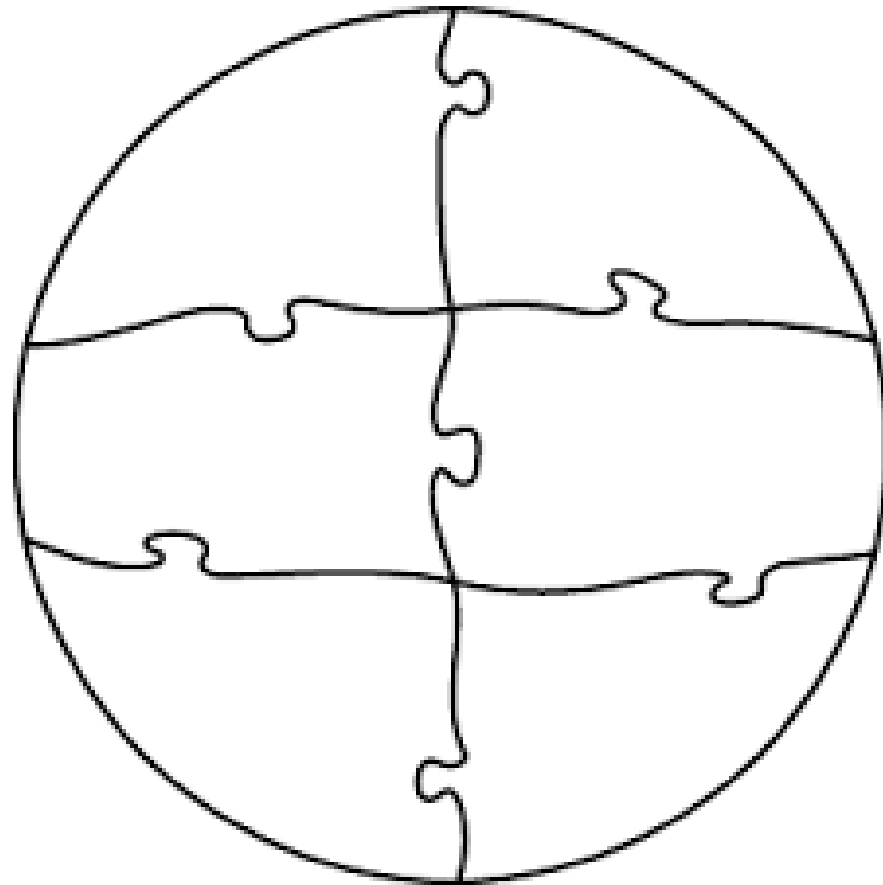


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THE WAY WE TALK  
TO OUR CHILDREN  
BECOMES THEIR  
INNER VOICE.

~ PEGGY O' MARA



# Bibliography

- National Child Trauma Stress Network
- Harvard Center for the Developing Child
- Association for Training on Trauma and Attachment

## Recommended Reading/Viewing

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