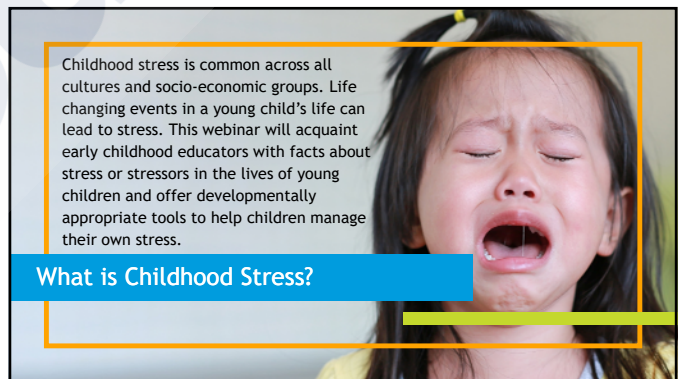
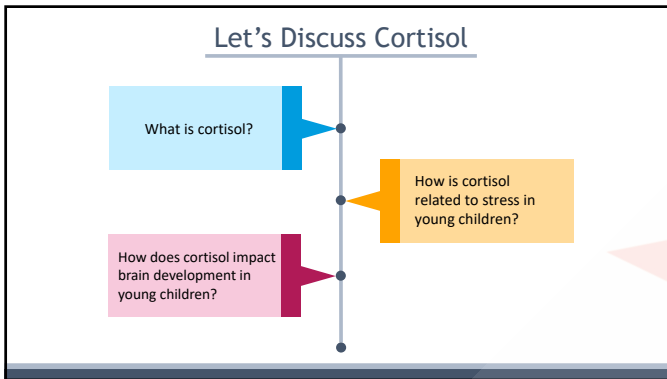


TODAY’S Objectives

- Recognize the link between brain development and stress to establish realistic learning goals for young children.
- Understand the “Window of Tolerance” to provide a safe and developmentally appropriate environment.
- Acquire strategies to support young children as they develop healthy coping mechanisms.

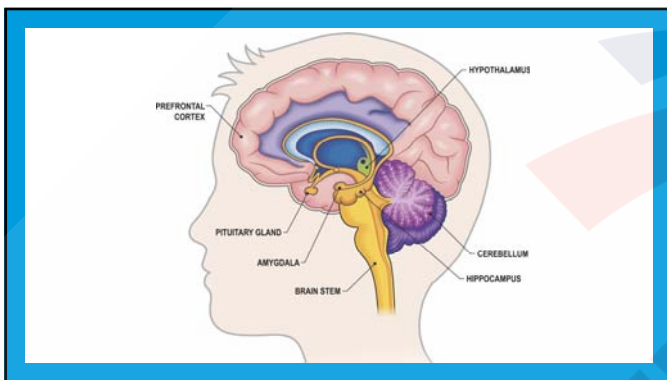




Cortisol

Hormone activated by stress
Increases and decreases

CAUTION
Problems arise if too high or too low for an extended period



Sequence of BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

BRAINSTEM (BIRTH)	MIDBRAIN/LIMBIC SYSTEM (INFANCY)	CORTEX (PRESCHOOL)
"Language of sensation" survival; regulatory; sensory motor systems	"Language of emotions" feelings alert system attachment	"Language of words" learning, language → self-regulation, planning (executive functions)

- ### How Can We Optimize the Child's Cortisol Level?
-
- 01 Create an environment and allowing children to feel safe and secure.
 - 02 Assist in a child's environment and routine to make it more predictable and structured.
 - 03 Teach coping skills that they can use.

- ### Stress in YOUNG CHILDREN
- ▶ What is healthy stress?
 - ▶ What is unhealthy stress?
 - ▶ What are common stressors for young children?
-

Healthy vs. Unhealthy STRESS

- Safety is desired
- Brain and body work together to seek it
- Safe environments
- Secure relationships
- Skills that haven't developed



Common Stressors for Young Children

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

Stress & Anxiety Related Responses



How Can We Optimize the Child's Cortisol Level?

- 01 Create an environment and allowing children to feel safe and secure.
- 02 Assist in a child's environment and routine to make it more predictable and structured.
- 03 Teach coping skills that they can use.

HYPERAROUSAL

Overwhelming Emotions
Too Much Thinking
Anxious

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

Ability to feel and think at the same time.

HYPOAROUSAL

Lack of Emotions - Shut Down
Difficulty Thinking

Classroom Design & ENVIRONMENT



- Minimize sensory stimuli (to improve focus)
- Include personal, familiar, cultural items
- Set up defined areas
- Provide soft, cozy, alone, 1-1 space
- Promote independence and choices
- Offer natural and sensory materials
- Allow for movement: in/outdoors
- Foster community: 1-1, small groups

The Social ENVIRONMENT



- Environments that support interactions, calm down
- Expectations: STRENGTHS based
- Routines: Be predictable! AM/PM Rituals
- Listen and Observe
- Identify and Label Emotions
- *PLAY: allows child control, power, safety, processing, independence*

STRATEGIES

- Provider guidance - use a soft, calm neutral voice (non-threatening)
- Set clear, firm limits and use Logical (Natural) Consequences
- Help children comply - use humor and creativity; provide choices

STRATEGIES

- Give Positive recognition and promote helping
- Model and teach regulation skills: “Smell the flowers, blow out the candle.”
- Cooperation, Compassion, Understanding, Social Skills
- Use TOUCH when accepted (mad vs sad); SMILE!!!
- Pick Your Battles: Stay Calm, Be Patient



- **MIRROR NEURONS** - When two people's eyes meet, they interlink areas of the prefrontal lobe and download inner states into one another.
- When WE are calm, we pass that along!

Positive Relationships → Healthy Brain

Calming STRATEGIES

Infants

Toddlers and Preschoolers

For Educators & to Share with Families



Crying is communication.
 What are they telling me?
 What do they need?
 What can I do?




Strategies for Infants

Is it an emotional meltdown?
 Or a non-emotional behavior?
 What are they telling me?
 What are they lacking?
 What can I do now?
 What can I help to teach them for them to use later?




Strategies for Toddlers & Preschoolers

I must take care of myself so that I can take care of the needs of the children. They sense stresses that are in me which can lead to their behaviors and increased stress level.



Strategies for Educators & Families



“What I do FOR you now, I will do WITH you later, And then YOU can do it on YOUR OWN.”

Universal Calming Strategies

“What I do FOR you now, I will do WITH you later, and then YOU can do it on YOUR OWN”

- React or Response
- Dehydration
- Physical Movement
- Breathing Techniques
- Label Emotions
- Hand Technique

Children:

- Thumb - Upset
- Pointer - Scared
- Middle - Angry or Mad
- Ring - Worried or Concerned
- Pinky - Feeling Bad



Hand Technique

Resources

Websites

1. NCTSN- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network www.NCTSN.org
2. Reiner Foundation. (2005) I am your Child. Retrieved from: <http://www.paretnaction.org/>.
3. Center on the Developing Child. Harvard University www.developingchild.harvard.edu

Resources Books & Articles

4. Siegel, D.J. (1999) The Developing Mind. New York: Guilford Press.
5. Concepts in toxic stress:
[http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/key-concepts/stress response/](http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/key-concepts/stress-response/)



NEXT webinar




EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHING: From Easing Stress to Increasing Engagement


Engaging Communities: Developing and Nurturing Collaborations and Partnerships to Transform Early Learning Experiences

Wednesday, December 9, 2020 @ 1:30 PM ET

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