

WEST VIRGINIA
EARLY CHILDHOOD
PROVIDER
QUARTERLY



**Does Stress Impair
a Child's Brain**

**Positive Behaviors
Start with You**

Supporting Children During Stressful Times

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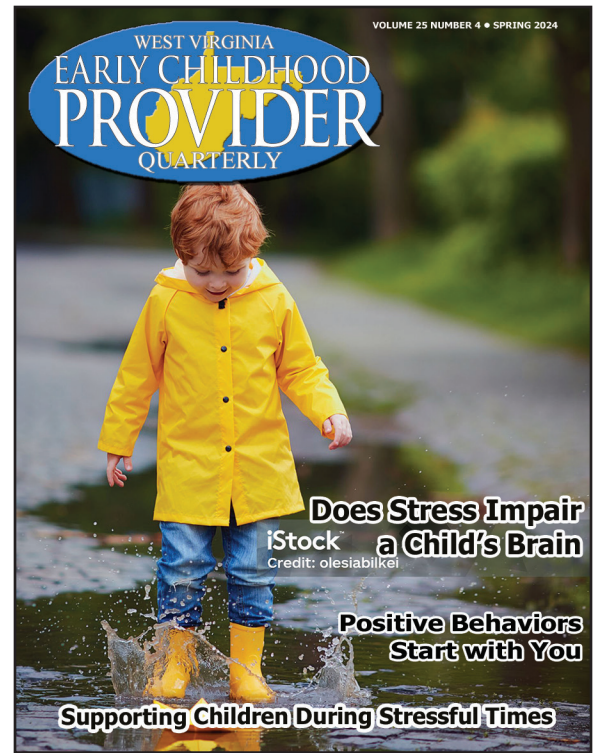
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Are You Ready for Spring Fever?

Taking a glance at a sluggish lymphatic system

Submitted by Lisa Galford, MSN, RN, Child Care Nurse Health Consultant

Excitement is everywhere! The sun has returned from a faraway land. New life is springing up from the depths of the earth. You notice the children are restless. Tons of energy wells up in them. Your mind keeps telling you to get them outside before they tear down the walls. They are ready to run, ready to jump, ready to climb. You need to keep up. Are you ready?

Taking care of yourself is a must if you are caring for little ones. Your good health is essential when you are the person who is responsible. If you are tired and worn out, not able to be your best, the children you care for are not getting the best care. Self-care is often associated with a healthy diet, getting enough sleep, and replenishing yourself by having down time to recuperate (Battaro, 2023). But, have you ever considered the health of your lymphatic system?

If you just asked yourself, “What is this nurse talking about?”, stay with me a few moments and let me explain. Maybe you have never considered how having a sluggish lymphatic system can bog you down



and make you ask yourself, “What is wrong with me?” We often think of a multitude of things such as our thyroid, lack of vitamins, and low iron as possible reasons to be tired and feel drained. This could very well be the case but let’s talk about another issue that often gets overlooked, an improperly working lymphatic system.

In a nutshell (although there is a lot more complexity to it), the lymphatic system is complimentary to your circulatory system. It is part of your immune system. It plays a vital role

in fighting bacteria and viruses in your blood. Lymph fluid is clear to yellowish and contains white blood cells (Valeii, 2023). Most people have felt a swollen lymph node in their neck after coming down with a cold or the flu. That is because the lymph node is a like a little station full of battle buddies (lymphocytes) and when the lymph fluid comes into the node, it is checked for any foreign substance and if found, the battle begins. The substance is neutralized so that it cannot cause damage.

Lymph vessels and nodes are all throughout your body, but unlike your circulatory system there is no heart to keep the fluid moving. The lymph system is passive and requires your very own muscle movement to circulate the fluid (Bustos, 2023). When lymph fluid gets thick from not having enough water to keep it flowing smoothly, it is not able to do its job and filter out all the nasties. You can end up feeling tired and lack the energy needed to make it through the day. Your legs and arms may feel heavy or look swollen. Having a diet containing lots of processed foods can also slow down your lymphatic system as your lymph fluid filters out chemicals and toxins as well. If you are more like a couch potato or depend on a pot of coffee for more of a robust feeling, I can give you a few tips to improve your get up and go. That way you will be ready when spring fever hits.

- Eat a healthy diet with natural or unprocessed foods. All your body systems will thank you.
- Drink plenty of plain water. Try skipping out on your usual caffeinated beverages (ease your way into it if you must).
- Play with the children. Do what they are doing. Run, jump, skip, or walk. Get those muscles contracting

to get that lymph fluid moving. Do not forget to move your arms.

- Get quality, uninterrupted sleep at night. It allows your cells to get a mini makeover.

As caretakers, we should never skimp out on the care of ourselves. Fill your own cup so you will be able to pour into the children you love to care for. You cannot take care of others if are not taking care of yourself. See your doctor if your symptoms persist or worsen.

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Do you know a child who is not *moving *hearing *seeing * learning or *talking like others their age?

By 3 months,
Does your baby...

- grasp rattle or finger?
- hold up his/her head well?
- make cooing sounds?
- smile when talked to?

By 6 months,
Does your baby...

- play with own hands/feet?
- roll over?
- turn his/her head towards sound?
- holds head up/looks around without support?

By 9 months,
Does your baby...

- sit alone or with minimal support?
- pick up small objects with thumb and fingers?
- move toy from hand to hand?

By 12 months,
Does your baby...

- wave goodbye?
- play with toys in different ways?
- feed self with finger foods?
- begin to pull up and stand?
- begin to take steps?

By 18 months,
Does your baby...

- cling to caretaker in new situations?
- try to talk and repeat words?
- walk without support?

By 24 months,
Does your baby...

- point to body parts?
- walk, run, climb without help?
- get along with other children?
- use 2 or 3 word sentences?

If you are concerned about your child's development, get help early.

Every child deserves a great start.

WV Birth to Three supports families to help their children grow and learn.

To learn more about the
WV Birth to Three services
in your area, please call:

1-866-321-4728

Or visit www.wvdhhr.org/birth23



WV Birth to Three services and supports are provided under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and administered through the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health.

Nurturing Young Minds: An Exploration of Stress Behavior in Early Childhood

Submitted by Amy Carlson, Ed.D. CCC/SLP, WV ECPBIS Coordinator

The formative years of childhood lay the foundation for lifelong development, and understanding the impact of stress during this critical period is imperative. Stress is not a new term by any means, but our understanding of how it impacts and influences development is growing with advancements in neuroscience. While stress is commonly associated with adults, young children are not exempt from its effects. This article seeks to delve deeper into the multifaceted causes, varied effects, and practical strategies for managing stress behavior in early childhood. Aimed at parents, caregivers, and educators, this exploration of stress seeks to shed light on this often-overlooked aspect of early childhood development and behavior.

Some Common Causes of Stress in Early Childhood:

1. Family Dynamics: Unstable family environments, such as those marked by divorce or separation, can disrupt a child's sense of security. Additionally, financial instability and housing concerns may contribute to heightened stress levels.
2. Parental Expectations: Overly high expectations from parents, whether academic or behavioral, can create pressure on the child, potentially leading to stress.
3. Transitions and Changes: Significant life changes, such as moving to a new home, starting preschool, or welcoming a new sibling, can be sources of stress for young children navigating these transitions.
4. Environmental Factors: Exposure to violence, trauma, the threat of trauma, or chaotic and unpredictable surroundings can contribute to an elevated stress environment for young children.

Effects of Stress on Early Childhood:

1. Emotional Impact: The emotional toll of stress in early childhood is often expressed through increased irritability, heightened anxiety, or withdrawal from social activities. Children may also have trouble expressing their emotions and understanding those of others.
2. Behavioral Changes: Stress can manifest as regression in previously acquired skills as well as impact critical social emotional development skills.

Additionally, aggressive, or oppositional behavior may become more prevalent in children who are experiencing higher levels of stress.

3. Cognitive Impairment: Stress can impair cognitive functions, leading to difficulties in concentration, attention, and memory. This, in turn, may affect academics in early childhood settings.

Supportive Strategies:

1. Create a Stable Environment: Establishing consistent and predictable routines and schedules can provide children with a sense of predictability, contributing to a stable and secure environment. Ensuring a safe and nurturing home environment is crucial for healthy development across all domains.
2. Encourage Open Communication: Fostering an environment where children feel comfortable expressing their feelings is key. Validating their emotions and offering age-appropriate explanations helps create an open channel of communication. This in turn allows children to better understand how their mind and body is feeling in response to “big” feelings or emotions.
3. Teach Coping Skills: Introducing simple stress-reducing activities, such as deep breathing or mindfulness exercises, can empower children to manage their stress. Using age-appropriate language to explain stress and its effects aids in comprehension. Also, engaging in play with your child or students can reduce stress and increase positive interactions with our kids. These also strengthen the relationship you have with your child/student.
4. Promote Healthy Relationships: Encouraging positive interactions with peers and adults fosters a supportive social network and more importantly, strengthens the learning connection between a child and an adult. Building secure attachments with caregivers contributes to emotional well-being through self-regulation skill building. A positive, healthy relationship will also strengthen the learning and engagement of children and adults. Nurturing and responsive relationships are the foundation of The Pyramid Model for good reason.

Recognizing and addressing stress behavior in early childhood is a shared responsibility of parents, caregivers, and educators. By comprehensively understanding the causes, effects, and implementing supportive strategies, we can collectively contribute to creating a nurturing environment that fosters resilience and positive growth in young children. This growth leads to healthier social emotional development and in turn less challenging behavior at home and at school. Nurturing young minds today ensures a brighter and more resilient tomorrow.

Does Stress Impair a Child's Brain

Submitted by Harmony Vance-Tissenbaum, West Virginia Child Care Health Educator



Stress is the mental or emotional effect of internal or external pressure. Though stress is completely normal and even at times can be a good thing, it can quickly impact a person's well-being. According to the American Psychology Association (2023), "Stress involves changes affecting nearly every system of the body, influencing how people feel and behave. By causing mind-body changes, stress contributes directly to psychological and physiological disorder and disease and affects mental and physical health, reducing quality of life." Stress has the

power to make a heart race, change a mood, encourage overeating, increase anxiety and depression, and it can cause changes to a person's behavior.

Since we know that stress affects the bodies' different systems it is no wonder that it also impacts behavior. This is in part due to the impact stress has on the nervous system, which includes the parasympathetic nervous system, sympathetic nervous system, and brain. One's ability to make good decisions, be empathetic, rationalize, regulate

emotions, and be self-aware are all areas of the brain's function that are inhibited by stress. To help people better understand just how much stress affects a child's behavior, Seigal and Bryson wrote *The Whole-Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind*. They encourage people to think of the brain as a house split into a top and bottom floor. The first floor holds the necessary rooms also thought of as the survival needs. This would be things like blinking, breathing, blood circulation, and intense emotions

like anger and fear. Now the second floor is where the extra bedrooms and game rooms are located, also known as higher-level thinking. This would include one's ability to problem-solve, reason, make decisions, and think of others.

Seigal and Bryson point out that a child's brain is like a young adult's house. They purchase the kitchen tools, the couch, the bathroom supplies all to make the first floor livable, and then over time they begin to fill that second level with furniture and other items. In comparison a child's brain development is similar as they equip their lower brain for those necessary needs starting even before birth, but they are still learning and practicing the tools needed for the function of the upper brain. As people navigate through life, they learn different skills to help mitigate their stress. This leads to them having a multitude of tools at their disposal to help them manage their stress as well as their reaction to stress. For young children this is not the case. They are just starting to learn how to meet their basic necessities, let alone know how to manage or react to stress appropriately.

For example, if you have a child who wants a toy someone else has, their desire to obtain that toy will apply pressure resulting in stress. Sometimes this build up of stress

can be clearly witnessed as they hover around the toy, are constantly asking for their turn, or unable to play with anything else while they wait. This very well might bring about the use of their lower brain without accessing their upper brain, which could in turn result in hitting, kicking, biting, or throwing a tantrum.

This disconnect between the two brain halves can also be seen at a lunch table. Food is placed in front of a child that they do not like and the anxiety and stress they have over food puts them into their lower brain, which results in them crying, flipping their tray, and throwing a tantrum that seems inconsolable. Both instances are a result of the child having impaired reasoning and regulation, which is the function of their upper brain.

Now, the big question is how the adults in a child's life help them to connect the two halves of their brain. Through the scope of Seigal and Bryson's book and their own research, the University of Michigan created a list to help parents and caregivers guide children through this process.

- “Don't expect kids to be able to make good decisions, remain calm, and consider others' feelings all the time. If you do, you're setting them (and yourself) up for failure. Their

upstairs brain is still under construction and at times, they simply cannot access these qualities and behaviors” (Pace, 2016).

- “Even as their upstairs brain is developing, experiences of danger, fear, anger, and trauma can overwhelm and block your child's access to the functions of that part of their brain. Learn to recognize when your child's stairway from the downstairs to the upstairs brain is blocked by these strong reactions (Pace, 2016).

- “Connect and redirect by sharing love, hugs, and comfort and then distract kids from the intensity of the moment until they can regain perspective and more fully access their upstairs brain” (Pace, 2016).

- “Help kids integrate their downstairs and upstairs brain. Developing connections, linkages, and balance between these important parts of their brains (as well as the right and left parts of their brain) is essential to overall health and well-being. For example, when kids are experiencing strong emotions (downstairs brain), you can help them reconnect to their upstairs brain (planning, imagining, thinking) by having them release energy by moving their bodies. When emotions have calmed, you can play, ‘what would you do if...?’ games that involve asking questions that



tap their upstairs brain” (Pace, 2016).

- “Teach kids to ‘name it to tame it.’ When your child is experiencing intense emotions, say things like, ‘I wonder if you’re feeling scared’ and encourage them to name their feelings. This practice releases important chemicals in the brain which helps kids (and adults) calm themselves down, and return to emotional balance so that they can access their upstairs brain in ways that support kindness, empathy, resiliency, and mental health” (Pace, 2016).

- “Strengthen your parenting [caregiving] through the practice of mindfulness and help children learn to navigate stress and challeng-

es through their own practice of mindfulness” (Pace, 2016).

What about when a child is in the middle of stress and is locked into their bottom brain without a key. According to the Mayo Clinic (2023) “Exercise in almost any form can act as a stress reliever. Being active can boost your feel-good endorphins and distract you from daily worries.” Knowing this it is no wonder that physical activity can help with stressful events in a child’s life. Including providing them with the key to exiting their bottom brain, research shows that “when we change our physical state – through movement or relaxation, for example – we can change our emotional state” (Siegel, Bryson 2011). For some this could

be simply changing their breathing pattern, placing their finger on their nose, or even just smiling. All that it truly entails is providing their nervous system with enough physical input to impact the brain’s chemical reactions. This physical distraction can give children the tools they need to calm their big emotions and balance their bodies so that can access the upper level of their brain.

Here is a list of physical activities to try next time a child needs your help getting to their upstairs brain:

1. Anything physical – you could have them do jumping jacks, run, hop on one foot, or even spin in a circle
2. Take a deep breath – Trace an

imaginary shape, and as they run their finger along the sides of the shape, breathe in on one side and out on the other

3. Self-hug- have them squat down and wrap their arms around their legs and hug tight

4. Make a mouth bubble – Have them fill their mouth with air (it should look like chipmunk cheeks) then gently pull on their own earlobe. They should then swish all the air in their mouth to the side of the earlobe they tugged. They can repeat going back and forth until they touch their nose to release the air

5. Smile – have the child stand in front of a mirror and smile at themselves

6. Wall press – have them put their back on the wall and press their body up against the wall

7. Finger circles – have them try to draw circles in the air with one hand going left and right

8. Stretch- Have the child stretch their arms far above their head, out to their sides, and then touch their toes

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West Virginia Infant/Toddler
Mental Health Association

Supporting the social and emotional well-being of children



A NEW RESOURCE...

WV PREPAREDNESS FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE TOOLKIT

A Social-Emotional Relational Approach

What is this new resource?

This comprehensive toolkit offers a framework in thinking through emergency preparedness plans in a developmentally appropriate and trauma informed manner to further the social emotional development of infants and young children.

What is covered?

This toolkit is divided into three sections: emergency preparedness, emergency response, and emergency recovery. Each section focuses on the social and emotional needs of infants, young children, and their families. Resources by disaster type are provided at the end of the toolkit.

Key considerations for emotional regulation during emergency situations

- Both children and adults experience intense feelings such as fear or helplessness during emergencies.
- Children and adults who have been exposed to adverse experiences early in their lives might have increased difficulty managing and coping after an emergency.
- All children, because of their developmental immaturity, will require extra support with emotional regulation during times of stress.



SCAN ME

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document here

THE WEST VIRGINIA INFANT/TODDLER MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

nurturingwvbabies.org

Positive Behaviors Start with You

Submitted by Kristin Smith, Afterschool Early Childhood Specialist

Children's behavior nowadays is a hot topic that arises in schools and in childcare settings. Being a former elementary school teacher for 15 years, I was a firsthand witness to the effects COVID had on not only us, but our children as well. It is easy to put the blame onto COVID or their guardian's way of raising children, but we cannot change the past or a child's home life. As a teacher or child care provider, you are often with children more than their parents or guardians. Think about that. You are someone who can have the biggest impact on a child's life for the time they are with you. So, what can you do to promote positive behaviors in the children you work with?

There is often talk about the importance of teaching empathy to students. Empathy is the ability to sense other people's emotions and understand their perspectives. But how can this be taught if you don't practice what you teach? When working with children, take their perspectives on things and create time for some self-reflection. Ask yourself next time a certain negative behavior or action happens, "Did you lose your temper and react to the child with sarcasm, anger, or scolding?" If so, this can really damage your teacher-student relationship. How would you react if someone responded to you like that? Chances are it would make you angry and upset, and you may even react poorly toward that person. Kids feel the same way and often there are underlying issues, like something is occurring in their home life, that causes them to act out. To address their needs, we must know our students on more than the surface level.

Positive relationships are essential to building positive behaviors. Therefore, we must connect positively with our students. This starts simply by making it a priority to learn everyone's names and getting the students to learn each other's names. Making time for a greeting in your room every day can be an easy way to do this. Encourage the kids to say hello to everyone cheerfully in the room by calling them by their names. Imagine how our students would feel if we did not acknowledge them and say hello when starting the day.

A positive classroom culture is one where every student feels valued, accepted, and part of the group. Sharing gives students a chance to learn more about each other and build listening skills, while stressing the importance of being respectful. You could ask one guiding question like "What is your favorite food?" or "If you had one wish, what would it be?" Then allow

everyone in the class to respond and listen to one another. Listening to the students and watching their actions during this sharing time can not only help you get to know each student, but it can also tell if a child is having a good or bad day. If they are upset or more quiet than usual, you will know ahead of time and be able to watch them more closely or know to not push them. I encourage you to then find an opportunity to have some one-on-one time to see if they want to talk about anything or just need a hug. Let them know you care and that you are there for them.

Having the students know that you notice them helps ensure safety in your classroom. Practicing safety drills in the classroom is actually a great opportunity to instill that you are there to protect them. Not only do you want the students to feel physically safe in the room, psychological safety is just as important to build a trusting relationship. When children believe they can ask questions, share information, explore ideas, and make mistakes without being humiliated, psychological safety is built with you and hopefully with the entire group. If they don't feel this type of safety in class, they may not engage well, or will be afraid to make mistakes. Then they might refuse to participate or start acting out because they are unsure of the feelings they are experiencing.

A whole group activity can encourage a world of opportunities for children to explore their creativity, increase their problem-solving skills, find their strengths and weaknesses, and improve communication skills. The class should be working collaboratively toward a common goal to build trust and encouragement with one another. Team building activities are a great way to accomplish these goals.

A group activity is even a great time to get the children moving. Allowing lots of opportunities for children to move throughout the day can be an effective way to decrease behaviors. Kids simply have a lot of energy and need to burn it off so they cannot sit still for long periods of time. This is often overlooked, and young children are expected to sit for too long. Kids get bored quickly, especially when they are expected to wait during transitions with nothing to do. According to Brain Balance Centers, the average child's attention span by ages is as followed:

- 2 years old: 4 to 6 minutes
- 4 years old: 8 to 12 minutes
- 6 years old: 12 to 18 minutes
- 8 years old: 16 to 24 minutes
- 10 years old: 20 to 30 minutes
- 12 years old: 24 to 36 minutes
- 14 years old: 28 to 42 minutes
- 16 years old: 32 to 48 minutes

If a 16-year-olds average attention span is 32 to 48 minutes, how can we expect young children to sit for 20-30 minutes without rolling around, getting up, or blurring out? Brain breaks can easily help with this. Brain breaks are short, mental breaks you can take multiple times throughout the day that last anywhere from 1 to 5 minutes. Jumping jacks, hopping on one-foot, short dance breaks are some examples to get blood and oxygen flowing to their brain, which helps with focus and attention. There are even calming brain breaks for those times when children are already hyped up like yoga poses or deep breathing. Make sure to “read the room” and when you see a few kids are being restless or crazy then stop what you are doing, do a brain break, and get focus back into your original activity.

Those times when a child or children start to make a poor decision, believe it or not, can be an opportunity to strengthen your teacher-student relationship. Often, teachers do not take the time to explain why there are rules. Calmly talk with the child or children about how their decision may hurt them or someone else. Also, allowing the children to create the rules helps them remember what they are, opposed to just telling what the rules are when they may not really know what they mean. By establishing clear guidelines, you can create a predictable and fair environment where students know what is expected of them and they are treated with respect.

There are many things I wish I had known about children’s behaviors when I started teaching. A lot of the things shared with you were learned through years of experience and lots of self-reflection. When students feel valued and respected, they strive to be better. Disengage in negative mindsets and try to see the good in people and situations. Model positive behaviors, build relationships, and provide stability with your children. As an educator, you can be the most influential person in a child’s life. I challenge you to reflect on the past, practice self-control, and start to be the change that our youth need.

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Why Should WV Child Care Professionals Consider Infant Mental Health Endorsement?



Myth: Endorsement is only for those who have lots of degrees and experience.

FACT: Neuroscience tells us that the first three years of life are critical to lifelong health and well-being, making the role and responsibilities of home visiting professionals incredibly important to family and community success. The IMH Endorsement® recognizes professionals who work with or on behalf of infants, toddlers, and their families. It's the largest and most recognized IMH credentialing system in the United States, and it's available to you here in West Virginia! Anyone in the early childhood field can work toward earning Endorsement, including directors, supervisors, child care professionals, and service coordinators.

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Good for You: Earning IMH-E® enhances your credibility and confidence in working with or on behalf of infants, toddlers, and their families. You'll gain recognition and belong to a cross-systems, multi-disciplinary network of Endorsed professionals in WV.

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IMH-Endorsement® supports the belief that positive social-emotional development is foundational to other learning, and that healthy development happens within the context of nurturing relationships and environments.

IMH competencies® provide a professional development "road map" for acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to attend to the often complex nature of early social and emotional development and parent-child relationships.

Financial assistance is available for Endorsement. Local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies have funds available to provide financial assistance for those seeking Endorsement within the Early Childhood field.

For more information, please contact the West Virginia Infant/Toddler Mental Health Association or visit www.nurturingwvbabies.org

Special thanks to the Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health for sharing information

Supporting Children During Stressful Times

Submitted by Lena Graham, Early Childhood and Afterschool Specialist

We experience stress daily in our lives. How we manage that stress is based on our previous experiences with stress. As adults, we can utilize times when we have managed stress positively. Children do not have that previous experience to think back on. Children need to learn how to manage stress in a positive way through adults in their lives.

Not all stress is negative. Stress can be positive. If children have the right support during a stressful challenge, it can provide them with a positive boost that will help them rise to the challenge. Positive stress can lead to children building inner strengths and skills such as resilience. Parents, guardians, or caregivers can assist children with positive stress by allowing the child to learn how to use that positive stress. This type of positive stress can promote coping skills needed in life. We, as adults, often want to step in and “manage the situation” when children appear stressed. Doing it for them will not promote any growth in them. Positive stress could be things like presenting at a science fair. This might cause the child to feel stressed, but this is not negative stress.

Stress can become harmful if it is too intense, long-lasting, or the child is unable to cope due to the overwhelming nature of the stress. If children lack support to cope during stress, they can begin to show behaviors. Children are not able to identify that their feelings are because of stress.

Life event stress is stress that stems from life events or adversity. These events could be a hospital stay, parents who are divorcing, the loss of a loved one, or moving to a new school zone. During this life event stress, parents, guardians, or caregivers should provide children with extra support and stability. Creating a routine can assist with the child feeling secure and settled. Not all life event stress has to be negative stress though. Things like holidays, birthdays, or traveling can cause positive stress in children. During this positive stress, parents, guardians, or caregivers can talk with the child about the event that is coming up to ensure that they are not feeling too overwhelmed due to the event.

Chronic stress is stress that lasts for more than a few weeks. Chronic stress can be hard on children when they do not have a break from the stress, or the support needed to cope with the stress. Chronic stress can be things like a serious health condition, losing a parent or close family member, dealing with discrimination, racism, or gun violence. This type of stress can affect children's physical and mental health. Parents, guardians, or caregivers can assist the child with dealing with chronic stress by providing love and care, teaching coping skills, helping the child take a break from the stress, and if needed, advocating for the child.

Traumatic stress is stress that is serious, intense, or sudden. This can be things like a serious accident or injury, abuse, or violence. Parents, guardians, or caregivers can provide extra support and care, spend positive time together, encourage the child to use their strengths, and if needed, reach out to mental health services.

Stress is an inevitable part of life. Having a support system to assist a child during a stressful time can reduce the effects the stress causes on the child. There is a continuous theme with how best to help children with stress. Children need support during stressful situations. Supporting children could look like having conversations about what is going on, giving extra time to complete tasks, and keeping a consistent routine for the child.

References: <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/stress.html>

The Five C's of ADHD Guidance

Submitted by Kaylyn Jennings, Behavioral Consultant, MountainHeart Community Services, Inc.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, also known as ADHD, affects children in various ways including how the brain develops, executive functioning, and how they handle big feelings. ADHD is currently defined as a “persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity that interferes with functioning or development” (Saline, 2018). There are three different types of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: Inattentive, Hyperactive, and Combined.



Inattentive ADHD is when it is hard for an individual to organize or finish a task, to pay attention to details, or to follow instructions or conversations. This person is easily distracted or forgets details of daily routines. Hyperactive ADHD is where a person fidgets and talks a lot. It is hard for them to sit still for long. They may also feel restless and have trouble with impulsivity. Combined is when there are symptoms of both Inattentive and Hyperactive and they are equally present. Individuals with ADHD may also have challenges with reading, writing, or math. They might struggle with anxiety, depression, or disruptive behaviors (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023).

Almost half of all kids with ADHD (hyperactivity or combined types) have disruptive behavioral issues, atypical patterns of high irritability, negativity, aggression, temper outbursts, and arguing that cause them serious difficulties at home and at school. “ADHD is not a choice or bad parenting. Kids with ADHD work twice as hard as their peers everyday but receive more negative feedback from the world” (DRB).

The 5 C's of ADHD Guidance can assist with helping these children who are struggling with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (Saline, 2018). 1) Self-Control; learning to manage your feelings first so you can act effectively and teach a

child with ADHD to do the same. 2) Compassion; frame of mind that withholds judgment and embraces others for who they are at a given moment, even if it's not who you want them to be. 3) Collaboration; work together with your child and other important adults in their life to find solutions to daily challenges instead of imposing your rules on them. 4) Consistency; doing what you say you are going to do repeatedly, as best as you can. 5) Celebration; notice and acknowledge what's working by continuously offering words and actions of encouragement, praise, and validation.

To teach yourself self-control, take a deep breath when dealing with

anything related to an ADHD child is always the first best step. It can take anywhere from ten to fifteen minutes to regain full focus from these regular disruptions. When you are a bit calmer, take time to reflect on the issue at hand. Remember that handling behavioral outbursts starts with you and how you react to the situation.

There are three steps to building compassion. Listen to voices, whether they are good, bad, or indifferent. When you talk to children and parents, always try to have honest conversations that lead to change. Face daily challenges with an open mind about what the child might be going through. Remember that when you're experiencing challenges, children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder are also experiencing challenges that other children may not.

Collaborate by gathering information from family or school about the child and what they like and dislike. Plan to sit down together with the parents to discuss goals that you have for the child. Over time, find out what works for the child based on what they are struggling with. If a child is struggling to play with others, figure out what their interests are and use this knowledge to help integrate them with other children.

Children with ADHD who naturally have less control over their schedules can feel frazzled. By fostering consistency, you can help them remember, organize, and follow through with what is happening and when. These children depend on routines to organize their lives. Remember to give children the necessary support, guidance, and sustenance without taking over the direction of the routine.

Celebrate with the children when they are successful. Encouraging comments go a long way toward building self-confidence and emphasizing the positive efforts that children with ADHD are making. If adults tell children repeatedly how their efforts aren't good enough or how they can do better, those negative words remain louder than the positive ones and children internalize our voices.

Forgetfulness happens for several reasons - challenges with working memory, internal or external distractions, trouble putting tasks into steps, and anxiety about forgetting. Changing how you talk to the child about the task at hand can improve all these things. As you follow the 5 C's of ADHD Guidance, keep in mind these three steps to help implement this information (Saline, 2018). Step 1: Get down on the child's eye level, touch them gently on the shoulder, and say their name.

Make sure they are looking at you, listening, and are engaged. If their eyes are wandering or their bodies are moving, gently help them focus on you by saying "Your eyes on my eyes." Step 2: State your task clearly and calmly. Step 3: Ask them to repeat your request exactly twice. By giving directions in this way, you activate several areas of the brain-sight, touch, sound, and speech-to help the brain process the information better and they are more likely to remember and complete the task.

Remember that you are teaching these children the skills they need to become successful. Meet the children where they are, not where you expect them to be. Do not get frustrated if children do not listen the first time, it will take time. Finally, be consistent with the things you are telling them.

Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023, October 16). Learn about attention-deficit / hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/index.html>

Saline, S. (2018). What your ADHD child wishes you knew: Working together to empower kids for success in school and life. TarcherPerigee.



WEST VIRGINIA EARLY CHILDHOOD

Training
CONNECTIONS
AND RESOURCES

Financial Support For Training Opportunities



We have funds available to:

- Bring Early Childhood Training to Your Community
- Assist with State Early Childhood Conferences

If you are involved in an early childhood collaborative team, we have funds available, per county, to assist your team with costs associated with early childhood trainings.

We also have grants available to assist with early childhood conferences statewide.

CONTACT INFORMATION

(304) 529-7603
1-888-WVECTCR
tcr@rvcds.org

APPLICATION INFORMATION



www.wvearlychildhood.org



This program is being presented with financial assistance as a grant from the WV Department for Health and Human Resources and is administered by WV Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources, a program of River Valley Child Development Services.

Learning More About TRAILS

Submitted by Jennifer Powell, TRAILS Early Childhood Specialist, Choices

The Traveling Resource And Information Library Service has been serving the state of West Virginia since July 1, 2000. Each of our 55 counties are served by a TRAILS team that consists of early childhood specialists and/or an early childhood associate. These professionals promote high quality child care by empowering caregivers to utilize resources, gain professional development, and establish nurturing relationships with children. Our vision is to provide developmentally appropriate resources and training to caregivers thereby ensuring a future with quality child care available for all children. Choices CCR&R serves 8 counties in Region 2. The counties we serve are Calhoun, Doddridge, Gilmer, Harrison, Pleasants, Ritchie, Wirt, and Wood counties. We are able to visit child care providers every 4-6 weeks, weather permitting. Rotation varies with each team throughout the state depending on service area and number of providers seen. The TRAILS program focuses on family child care providers but also visits child care centers, pre-k's, and Head Starts throughout the



state. TRAILS is a FREE program funded by the Department of Human Services and is unique to West Virginia!

TRAILS materials are organized by interest areas to make it easier for caregivers to select items that will cultivate learning with children in developmentally appropriate ways. The TRAILS common inventory has all interest areas available for providers to choose from, although each van labels their materials differently. These areas are math, science, literacy, puzzles, active play, dramatic play, music, infant toddler, children's books, resource books, art, curriculum, manipulatives, and blocks.

In addition to toys and resources, large items such as shelves, tables, and outdoor equipment are available to programs but need to be requested before visits. These items vary between regions. A list of the common inventory items is available from your TRAILS team showing items that are available on each van. A new inventory system has been adopted across the state that will allow providers to view items online as well!

This new inventory system, Soutron, will be utilized by teams in every region! Some teams have been using this system for over a year, while others are just getting started with their transition. This system will enhance our TRAILS program

by allowing providers to log in to their TRAILS region's website to view and request items, as well as get updates on upcoming events and professional development opportunities. These new websites will give child care programs access to useful links, cleaning procedures, our lending agreement, consumable resources, and will be an easy way to contact TRAILS team members.

Another important project that the TRAILS teams take on annually is the Family Child Care Conference each fall. The conference is hosted in the southern part of the state in October and in the northern part of the state in November. Family

child care providers receive WV STARS credit and resources when they attend the conference. Topics are based on surveys distributed at the end of the previous year's conference. The TRAILS teams also participate in other state conferences representing the Traveling Resource And Information Library Service as an informational vendor for attendees to learn about this great program.

An additional initiative created by the Division of Early Care and Education is the Traveling Resource Infant Toddler Program (TRIP). This program is a collaboration between TRAILS and infant toddlers

specialists to support family child care providers who are caring for children from birth to 36 months of age. Quarterly, the TRAILS team and the infant toddler specialists will do visits together. This gives family child care providers the opportunity to ask questions, gain information, and learn more about what the infant toddler specialists can do for them.

In Region 2, we host a family child care network called HomeGrown WV. This group meets quarterly to receive training on current topics and developmentally appropriate practices, as well as network with each other. Providers have the





chance to speak candidly, ask for advice, and share expertise about their experiences as family child care professionals.

TRAILS specialists are available for technical assistance on a variety of topics. We can assist with room arrangement, lesson planning, positive guidance, developmentally appropriate practice, health and safety, or any topic that interests the provider. This professional development is done in the child care setting. We also connect providers with other specialists from the professional development team when needed. TRAILS specialists offer many different training opportunities as well, including single sessions and module series. The module se-

ries are a seven week course called West Virginia Elements of Family Child Care and a four week course called Building a Firm Foundation with TRAILS One Block at a Time.

To wrap things up, it is essential to talk about the importance of relationships with providers to this program. The TRAILS teams have unique opportunities to connect with family child care in our regions and to be welcomed into their homes. Providing support, resources, and information allows us to create these trusting relationships that benefit children and families. It is an honor to get to serve some of the most important people in our state!

Please reach out to your local Resource and Referral agency to schedule your next TRAILS visit! Any program interested in participating in TRAILS can reach out to your TRAILS team or enroll online by filling out our lending agreement. As an incentive to sign up, new family child care providers in Region 2 receive a provider pack of art supplies for participating in the TRAILS program.

Parent Blocks

NEWSLETTER



"Providing resources to parents throughout West Virginia"

Volume 20, Issue 2, Spring 2024

Supporting Positive Early Childhood Experiences

Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years). For example:

- experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect
- witnessing violence in the home or community
- having a family member attempt or die by suicide

Also included are aspects of the child's environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding, such as growing up in a household with:

- substance use problems
- mental health problems
- instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail or prison

Please note the examples above are not a complete list of adverse experiences. Many other traumatic experiences could impact health and well-being, such as not having enough food to eat, experiencing

homelessness or unstable housing, or experiencing discrimination.

ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use problems in adolescence and adulthood. ACEs can also negatively impact education, job opportunities, and earning potential. However, ACEs can be prevented.

Creating and sustaining safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for all children and families can prevent ACEs and help all children reach their full potential.

Raising awareness of ACEs can help:

1. Change how people think about the causes of ACEs and who could help prevent them.
2. Shift the focus from individual responsibility to community solutions.
3. Reduce stigma around seeking help with parenting challenges or substance misuse, depression, or suicidal thoughts.
4. Promote safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments where children live, learn, and play.

Let's help all children reach their full potential and create neighborhoods, communities, and a world where every child thrives.

WV Parent Blocks Newsletter is a project of West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources, a collaborative project of West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources/Bureau for Family Assistance/Division of Early Care and Education; WV Head Start State Collaboration Office; Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health/West Virginia Birth to Three; and West Virginia Home Visitation Program and is supported and administered by River Valley Child Development Services.

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- Reprinted from [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

Concerned about Development?

How to Get Help for Your Child



Talking to the doctor is the first step toward getting help for your child if you are concerned about his or her development (how your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves). **Don't wait.** Acting early can make a real difference!

1 Make an appointment with your child's doctor

- When you schedule the appointment, tell the doctor's staff you have concerns about your child's development that you would like to discuss with the doctor.

2 Complete a milestone checklist

- Before the appointment, complete a milestone checklist by downloading CDC's free [Milestone Tracker mobile app](#) from the App Store or Google Play or printing a paper checklist from www.cdc.gov/Milestones
- Write down your questions and concerns; take these with you to the doctor's appointment.

3 During the doctor's appointment

- **Show the completed milestone checklist to the doctor**
 - > If your child **is** missing milestones, point them out, and share any other concerns that you have.
 - > If your child **is not** missing milestones but you still have concerns, tell the doctor about them.
- **Ask the doctor for developmental screening for your child**
 - > Developmental screening is recommended whenever there is a concern. It gives the doctor more information to figure out how best to help your child.
 - > For more information about developmental screening, go to www.cdc.gov/DevScreening.
- **Ask the doctor if your child needs further developmental evaluation**
 - > If your child does, ask for a referral and call right away. If you have difficulty getting an appointment, let the doctor know.

4 Make sure you understand what the doctor tells you, and what to do next

- Before you leave the appointment, check the notes you have written and make sure all of your questions have been answered.
- If you do not understand something, ask the doctor to explain it again or in a different way.
- When you get home, review your notes and follow the steps the doctor has given you. Remember, you can always contact the doctor's office if you have any questions.

You Know Your Child Best

If your child's doctor has told you to "wait and see," but you feel uneasy about that advice:

Talk with another doctor to get a second opinion

AND

Call for a free evaluation to find out if your child can get free or low-cost services that can help.

- **If your child is under age 3:**

Call your state's early intervention program. Find the phone number at www.cdc.gov/FindEI.

- **If your child is age 3 or older:**

Call the local public elementary school.

You do not need a doctor's referral to have your child evaluated for services.

Find more information, including what to say when you make these important calls, visit www.cdc.gov/Concerned.

Don't wait.
Acting early can make a real difference!



www.cdc.gov/ActEarly
1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)



Download CDC's
Milestone Tracker App



Learn the Signs. Act Early.



Concerned about your CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT?

Help Me Grow, a free developmental referral service, provides vital support for children from birth to age five including:

- Information and community resources to aid development
- Free developmental screening questionnaire
- Coordination with your child's doctor

Talk to a care coordinator and schedule a developmental screening for your child today.

Help Me Grow: 1-800-642-8522

www.dhhr.wv.gov/helpmegrow



Help Me Grow

West Virginia

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services

SUPPORTING YOUNG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN MAKING THE MOST OF FAIRS, FESTIVALS, AND PARADES

WEST VIRGINIA INFANT/TODDLER MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION



Spring, summer, and fall in West Virginia often include lots of fairs, festivals, and parades. This is a great time for young children to explore different foods, music, animals, and fun new experiences. It can also mean that young children may experience unfamiliar sounds, smells, lights, and crowds. Preparing young children in advance, and a little pre-planning, will help to make the experience enjoyable for all! Fairs and festivals are a great way to explore the state, both in your own area and beyond.

WWW.NURTURINGWVBABIES.ORG



To access more resources of the West Virginia Infant/Toddler Mental Health Association, please scan the QR code.

Start with a plan. Begin with making sure the festival, fair, or parade is the right fit for your family. Other considerations could be the time when you attend, how long you attend, and what activities your family would be interested in seeing. Visit the areas that your family is most interested in first, in case you need to leave early. Depending on the length of time you will be staying, you may want to bring:

- comfort item for naptime,
- snacks to stretch between meals,
- sunscreen for hot days,
- jackets for cooler evenings, or
- change of clothes for water rides.

Consider sensitivity to sounds, lights, and costumes. Some children LOVE loud noises, bright flashing lights, and characters in costumes. Others do not. If your child is sensitive to these things, you may consider:

- bringing ear plugs or head phones, or leaving the event earlier before all the loud noises begin.
- avoiding activities with bright lights, or attending in the daytime when the lights are not as bright.
- redirecting the child away from an area that has characters in costumes. Children should not be made to interact with characters in costume if feeling anxious or afraid.

Recognize your child's need to have some quiet time if feeling overwhelmed. Signs that your young child is feeling overwhelmed:

- irritable or crying,
- anxious,
- agitated, or
- clingy behavior.

Plan for breaks and look for quiet areas. Sometimes, fairs and festivals will offer a sensory room that offers young children a quiet place to rest and recharge.