

Childhood Adversity and the Educational Setting

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Disclosure

I declare that neither I nor my immediate family have a financial interest or other relationship with any manufacture of a commercial product or services which may be discussed at the conference.

Background and Acknowledgements

American Academy of Pediatrics

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child

National Trauma Center - Bruce Perry, M.D., Ph.D.

Terminology

- Trauma
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Trauma-informed care
- Toxic Stress
- ACES
- Restorative Practice
- Resilience

Take Home Points

- Stress can be good or bad
- Stress affects the brain – and everything else!
- We can help our students, our staff, and ourselves at both the individual and institutional level
- To do this, requires changes in mindset and organizational practices

Three Levels of Stress

Positive

Brief increases in heart rate,
mild elevations in stress hormone levels.

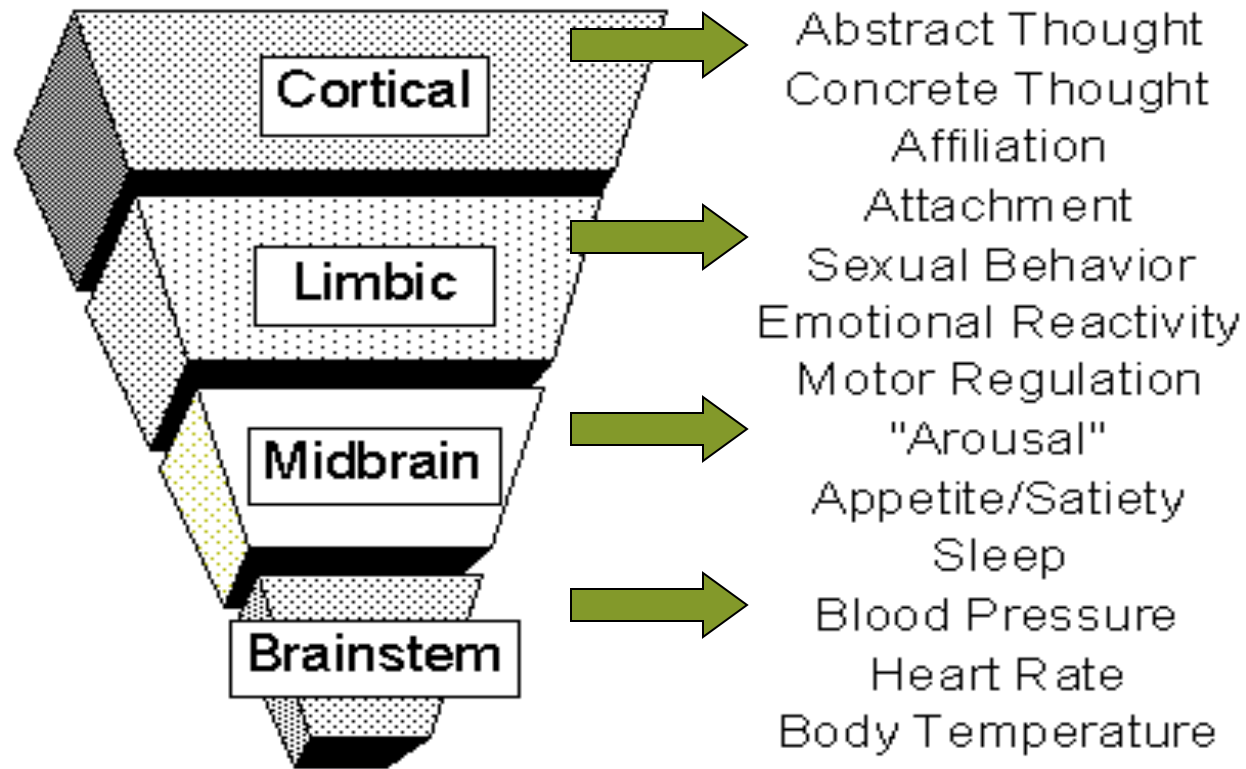
Tolerable

Serious, temporary stress responses,
buffered by supportive relationships.

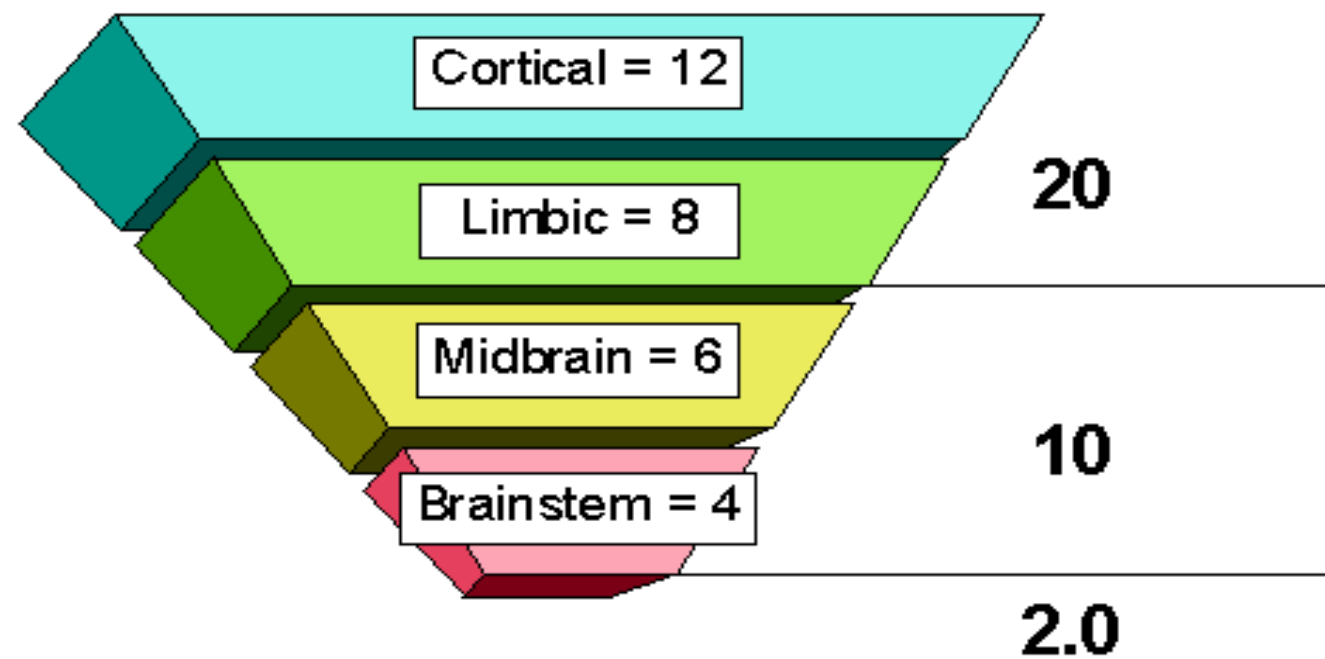
Toxic

Prolonged activation of stress response systems
in the absence of protective relationships.

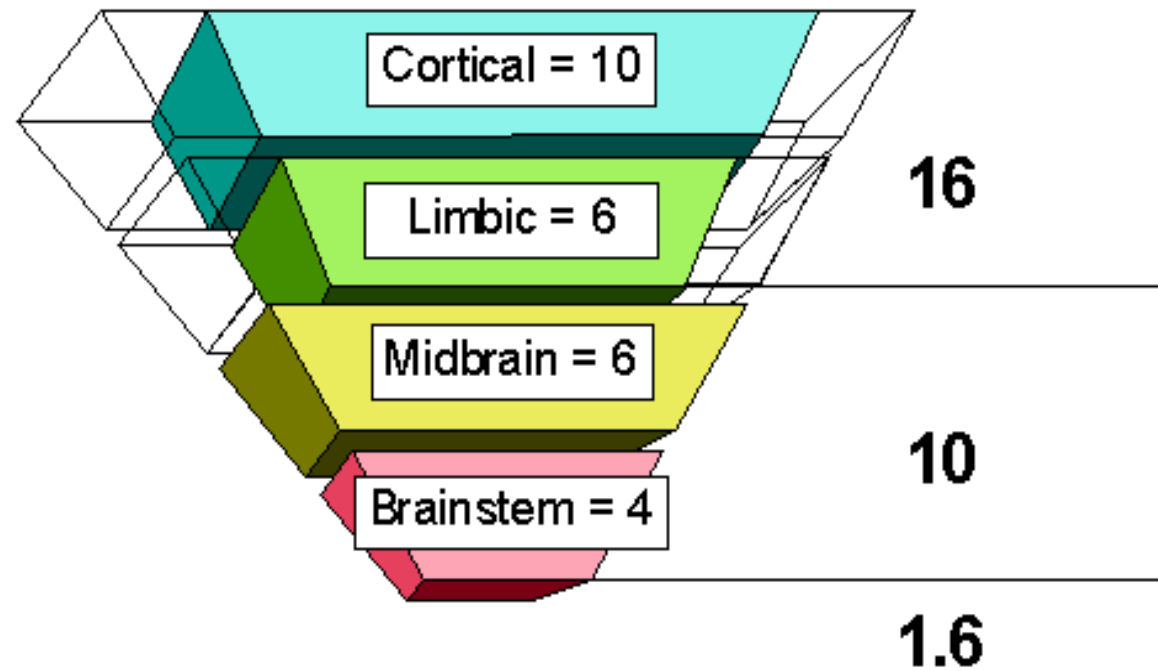
Hierarchy of Brain Function



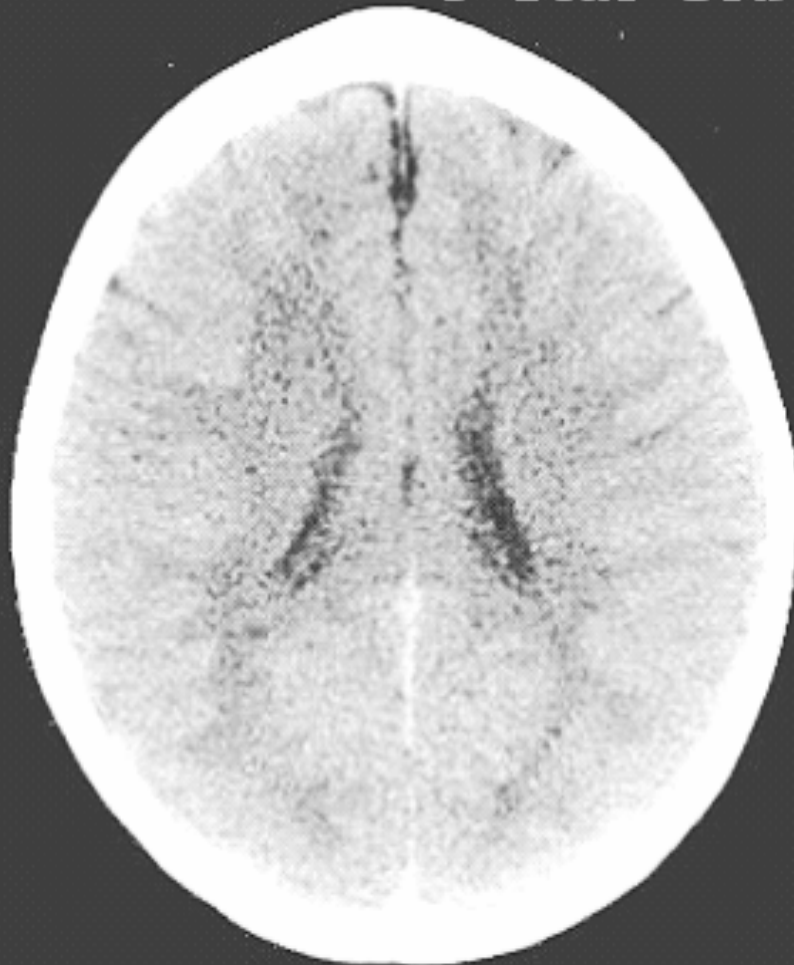
Optimal Developmental Experience



Developmental Neglect



3-Year-Old Children

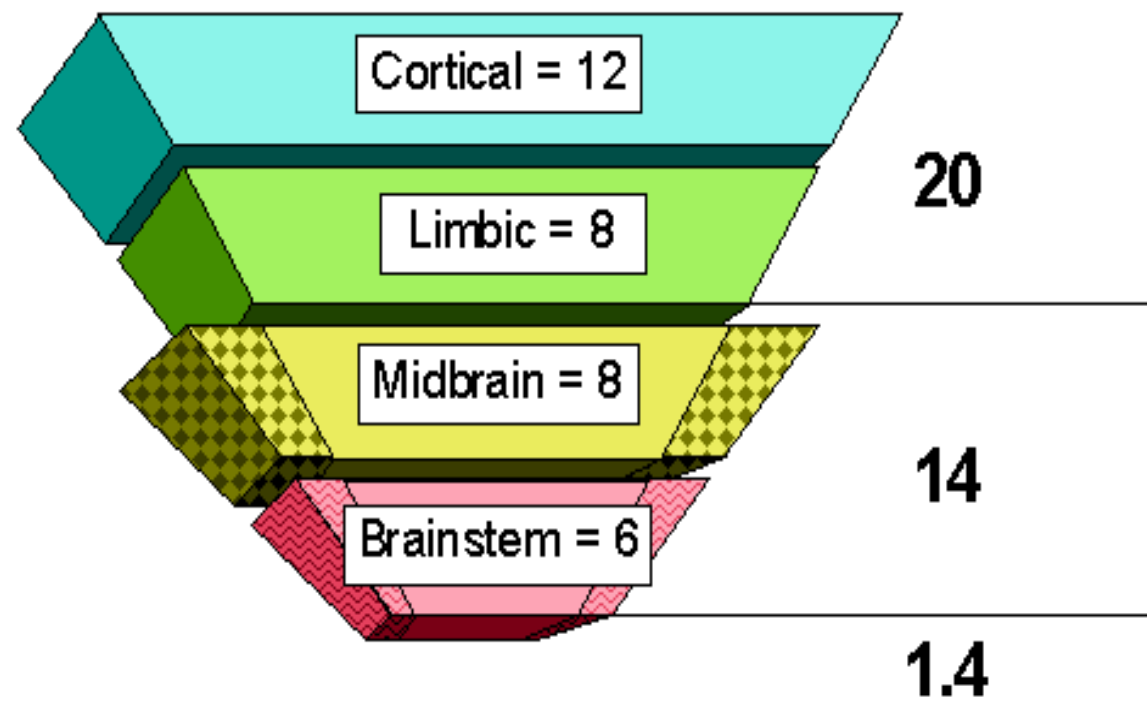


Normal

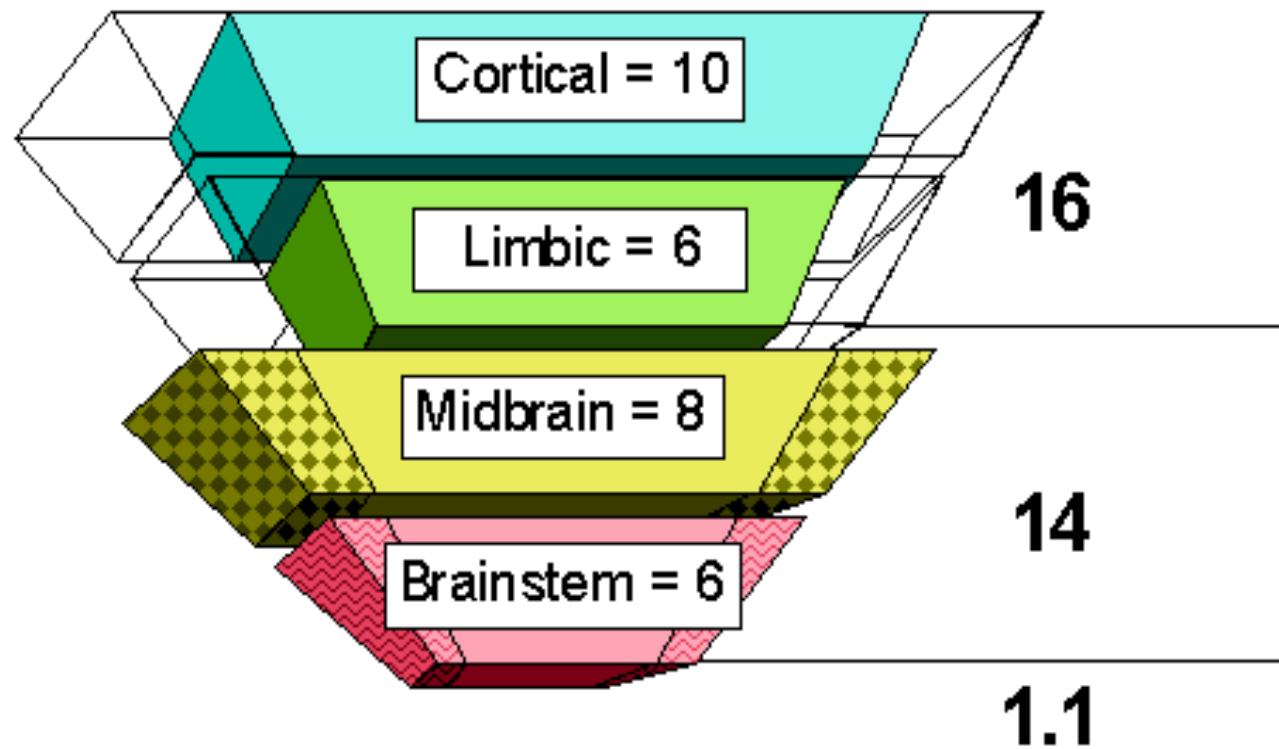


Extreme Neglect

Developmental Trauma



Neglect and Trauma



Three Levels of Stress

Positive

Brief increases in heart rate,
mild elevations in stress hormone levels.

Tolerable

Serious, temporary stress responses,
buffered by supportive relationships.

Toxic

Prolonged activation of stress response systems
in the absence of protective relationships.

Three Strategies

Decrease stress when possible

Mitigate stress when possible

Facilitate resilience when possible

Take Home Points

- Stress can be good or bad
- Stress affects the brain – and everything else!
- We can help our students, our staff, and ourselves at both the individual and institutional level
- To do this, requires changes in mindset and organizational practices

Opportunity!

Children's Mental Health, Childhood Trauma, and the Impact on Learning

Delreen Schmidt-Lenz, LCSW, I/ECMH-C
Consultation Coordinator, Illinois Children's
Mental Health Partnership

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- Let's take a moment...

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, childhood trauma is defined as:

“The experience of an event by a child that is emotionally painful or distressful, which often results in lasting mental and physical effects.”

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- I imagine all of you can think of a child with whom you work who has experienced trauma. As you think about that child, how might trauma affect his or her learning?

IT'S AN UNFORTUNATE TRUTH – CHILDHOOD TRAUMA EXISTS

Research from the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership shows that roughly **20% to 25%** of children in the United States will experience some form of childhood trauma before they reach adulthood.

But, there is hope.

We can all do something to identify trauma in children.

Behavior is communication.

It all starts when we **Look Through Their Eyes.**

Let's stop for a moment and think about this:

Looking
Through
Their
Eyes

All children have a story. All of us have a story.

- Bad things happen in life...

- Some “traumatic events” are obvious;

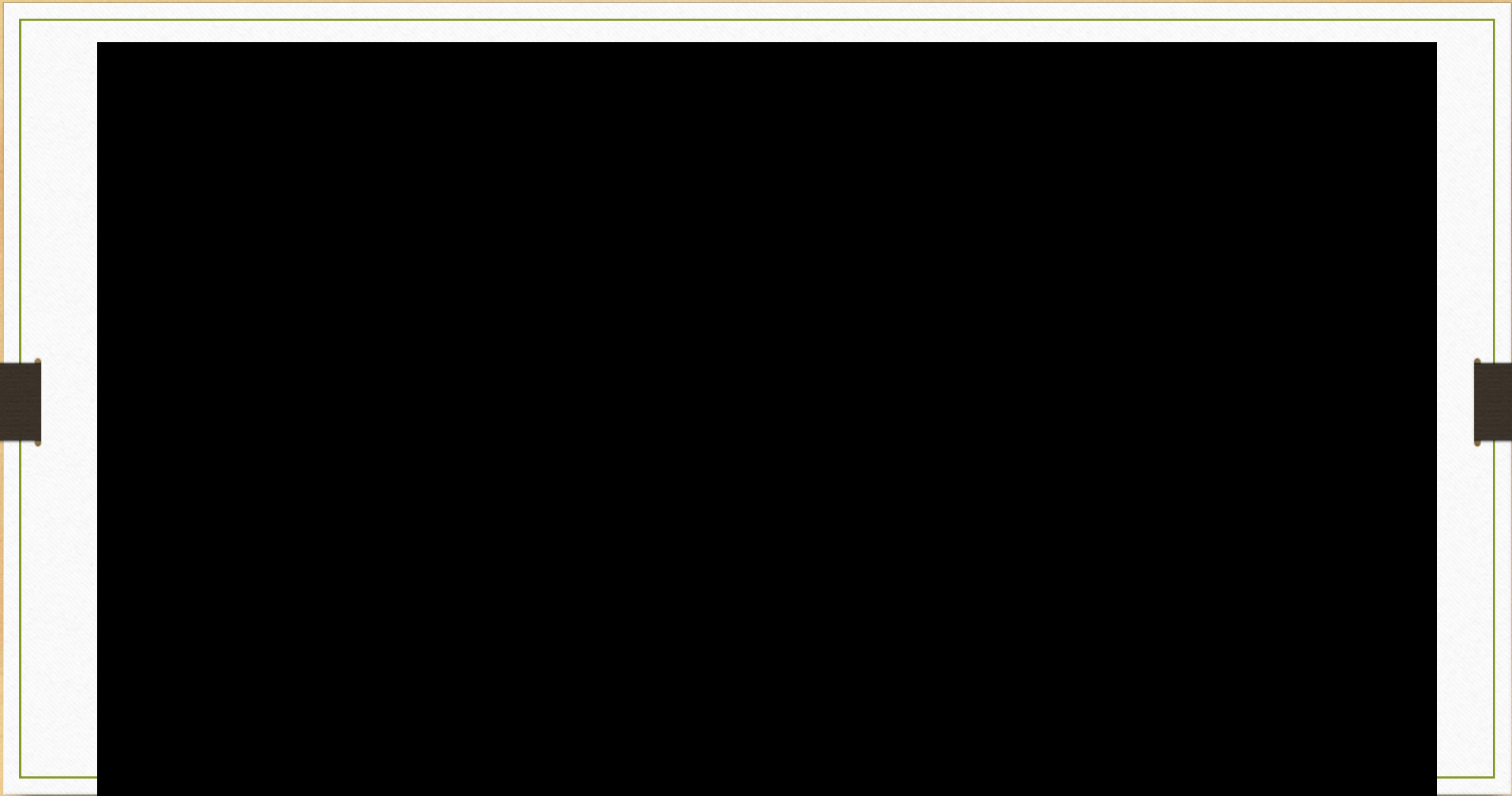
- Others can also rock a child’s sense of safety and well-being.

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- Two children exposed to the same event – such as the death of a parent – may react completely differently.
 - No one can predict how each individual child will react.

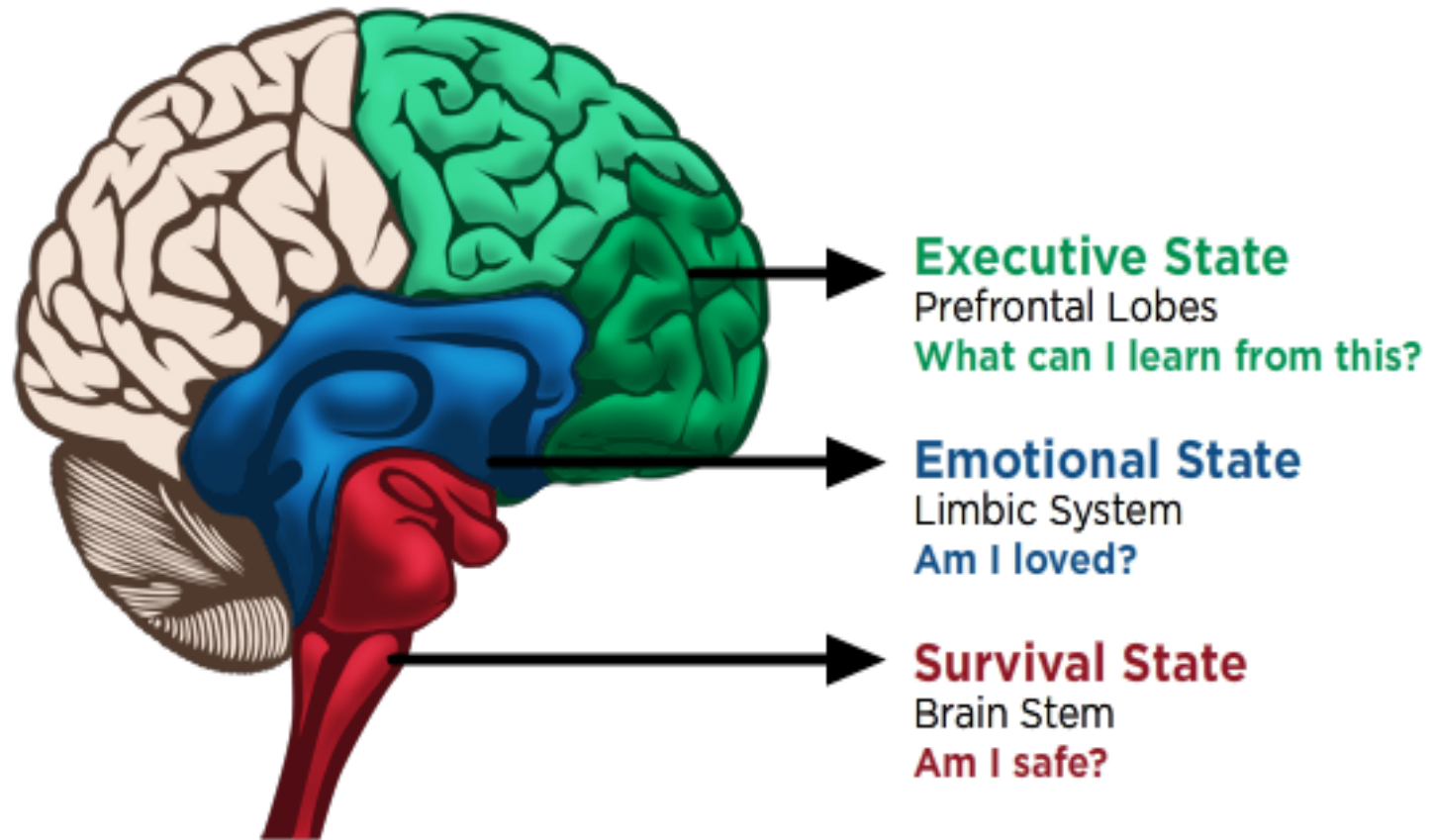
YOUNG CHILDREN AND TRAUMA

- Children can experience trauma as early as infancy.
 - In fact, young children between the ages of 0 and 5 are the most vulnerable to the effects of trauma since their brains are still in the early formative years.

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- That's why we, as professionals, teachers, caregivers and parents need to **Look Through Their Eyes—and Listen** —to be aware of the children in our lives who may be experiencing trauma.
 - We will now watch a clip created by the Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition on childhood trauma...



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- When children experience trauma, they may become fearful of the world as an unpredictable and frightening.
 - And, brain development 101 reminds us that...



Conscious Discipline: Dr. Becky Bailey

-
- Think about a child you know who might be in the “brain stem” part of their brain – in that “survival state.” Are they using their prefrontal lobes??

(The frontal lobes are involved in motor function, problem solving, spontaneity, memory, language, initiation, judgement, impulse control, and social behavior.)

There are a myriad of things to do for children, but here are four things you can do to help a child deal with trauma:

- 1. Create an environment of safety.**
- 2. Surround them with supportive adults.**
- 3. Teach them self-soothing techniques.**
(ABCs: Awareness, Balance, Connection)
- 4. Build on their strengths.**

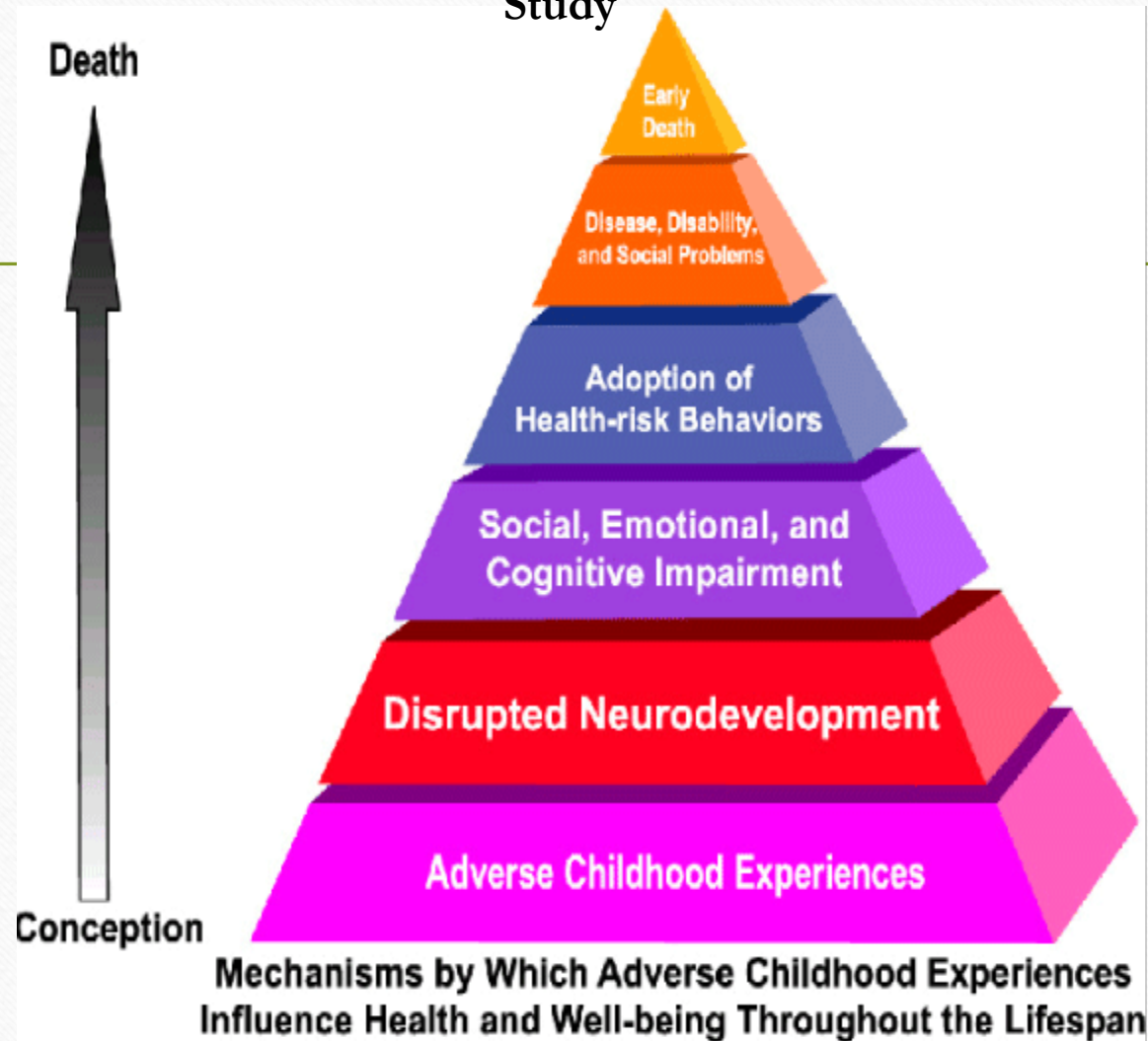
OTHER CONCRETE WAYS THAT MAY HELP

- Maintain usual, daily routines (use verbal and visual cues).
- Provide a safe, private place for the child to talk about what happened.
- As a professional in a child's life, look, listen and recognize their story of trauma (remember that behavior is communication).
- Be sensitive to cues that may cause a reaction.

→ **Remember that as adults, we also need to be mindful of the effects on us.**

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- As we think about trauma in children, please consider accessing the following information and resources:

Become Knowledgeable on the ACE Study

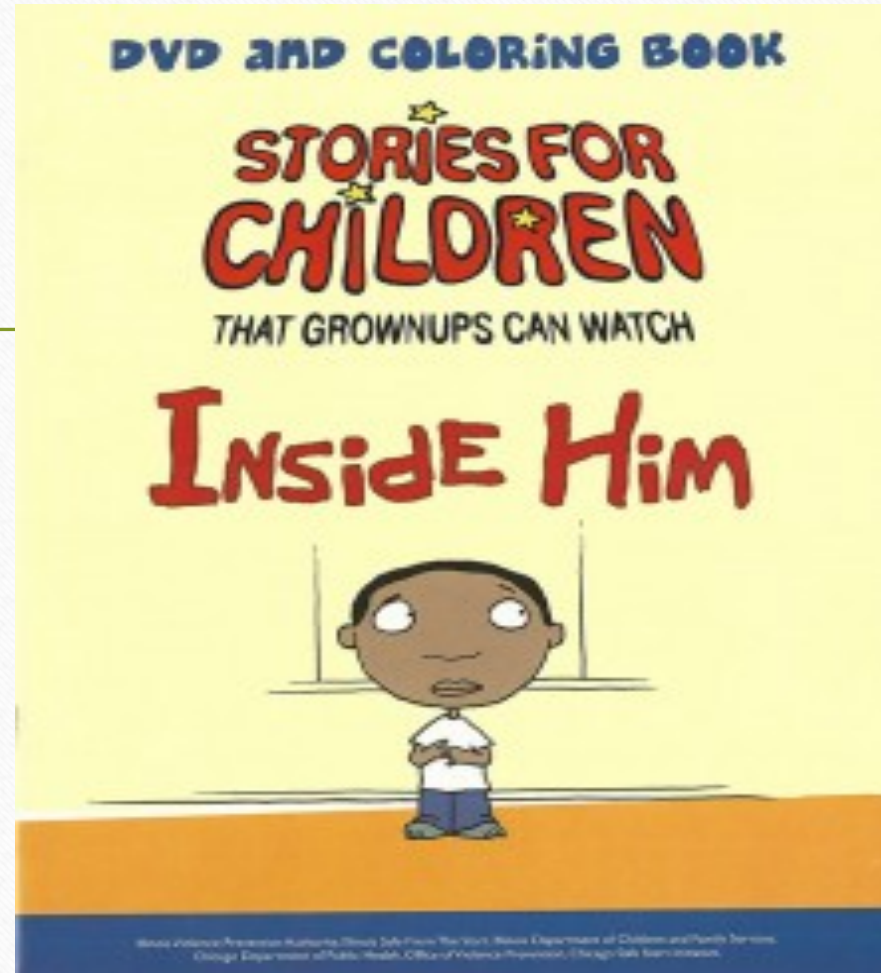


“STORIES” FOR CHILDREN THAT GROWNUPS CAN WATCH

- “Stories” is an innovative set of materials that identify and highlight warning signs resulting from childhood exposure to trauma and violence. The goal is to raise awareness of the need to prevent, identify and treat exposure to trauma and violence in young children and to provide resource information for families. The target audience is infants and children under age of 6, and their parents, caregivers, and service providers.

(These can be incorporated into classroom lessons and activities.)

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- The information is presented as a collection of tools in a series of interactive DVDs with animated films, support video segments, coloring/activity books, and professional tutorials from leading experts in the field. The core message, which carries throughout the Stories project, is “Bring the kids back into focus... so every child can be safe from the start.”



<http://lookthroughtheireyes.org/videos-2/>

Palm Cards (in English & Spanish)

There are many causes of childhood trauma and many signs to look for, but remember that you know your child's behavior best and can recognize changes that may mean something's wrong. If you're concerned about your child, remember to **LOOK:**

Learn
the signs

Observe
changes in behavior

Overcome
their fears

Know
where to turn

Learn about childhood trauma
and find help at
www.LookThroughTheirEyes.org

Courtesy of the Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition,
Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development,
Bright Promises Foundation, Voices for Illinois
Children, Robert R. McCormick Foundation

Young children between the ages of 0 and 5 are the most vulnerable to the effects of life-changing trauma.

Common Causes of Trauma

- Accidents
- Physical trauma
- Abuse and neglect
- Exposure to domestic violence
- Community violence

For infants, even repeated loud noises or sudden, violent movements can lead to toxic stress. Any situation which makes a child feel unsafe can lead to trauma. Infants and toddlers need lots of comforting touch and adult attention to help them feel safe.

Common Signs of Trauma

- Irritability
- Fussiness
- Being easily startled
- Difficulty calming the child down
- Frequent tantrums
- Clinginess and/or a reluctance to explore the world
- Repeating traumatic events over and over again in play or conversation
- Delays in reaching developmental milestones
- Loss or regression in skills

Ways to Prevent Trauma

Use words, touch, and attention to help your young child feel safe.

Help your child build resiliency by giving them the comfort and explanations that allow them to deal with, and learn from, the everyday stresses associated with growing up.

When they experience something stressful, let them know:

- They are not alone
- They are not to blame
- You'll keep them safe

If You See Signs of Stress

- Offer verbal and physical reassurance
- Help them feel safe and secure
- Answer their questions in simple language
- Stick to regular routines/schedules
- Help them find the words to express their feelings
- Do more to make them feel relaxed and have fun
- Be consistent about boundaries and limits
- Be loving and affectionate

Access these sites:

- Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition

<http://lookthroughtheireyes.org/ictc/>

The ICTC is a voluntary collaboration of organizations that are committed to applying a trauma lens to their efforts on behalf of families and children in the state. Founded in 2005, the Coalition is made up of more than 80 public, private, clinical, research, advocacy and educational institutions.

- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network:

<http://www.nctsn.org/trauma-types/early-childhood-trauma>

More and more research is being conducted every day to understand the biological and emotional impacts of trauma and the impact on learning.

Remember...

Look

Through

Their

Eyes

Illinois School Discipline Reform: Implementing SB100

Educational Equity Project

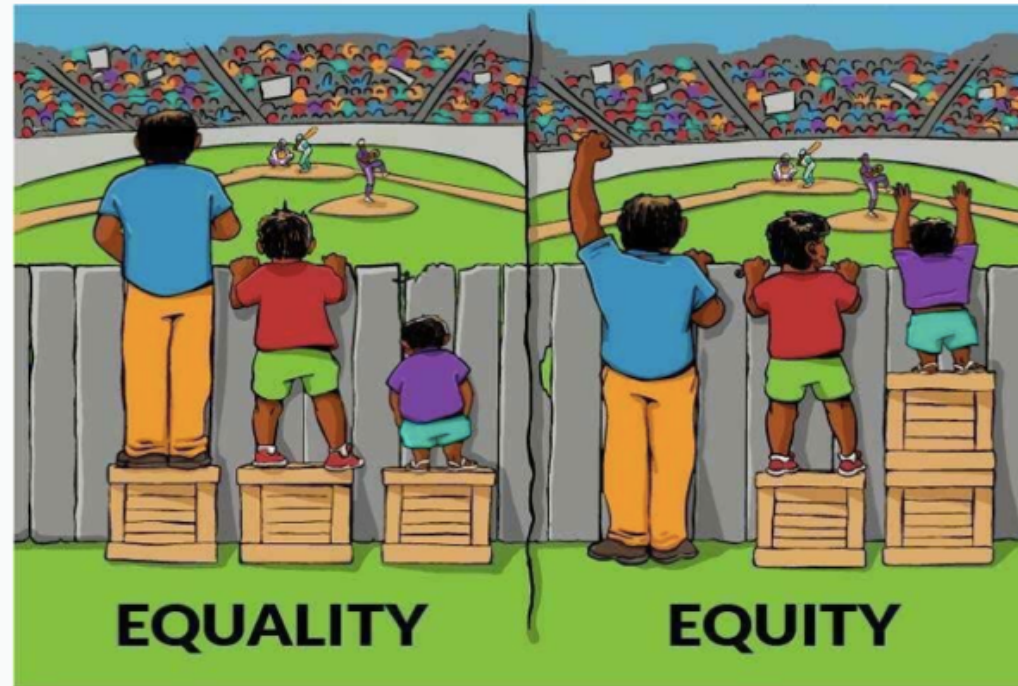


THE ILLINOIS JOURNEY TOWARD
DISCIPLINE REFORM

Illinois Discipline Reform: Two Key Bills

- Illinois General Assembly Public Act 098-1102 (Effective August 26, 2014) "Discipline Data Bill":
 - <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=098-1102>
- Illinois General Assembly Public Act 099-0456 (Effective September 15, 2016) "Discipline Reform Bill"
 - <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=099-0456>

Canary in the Mine



Equality = Sameness

Equality provides the same thing for everyone. This only works when people start from the same place, history and set of circumstances.

Equity = Justice

Equity is about fairness, and providing people with the resources and opportunities they need, given their history and set of circumstances.

Adapted by the City of Portland, Office of Equity and Human Rights from the original graphic:
<http://indianfunnypicture.com/img/2013/01/Equality-Doesnt-Means-Justice-Facebook-Pics.jpg>

Discipline Reform Legislation: Public Act 099-0456

- Takes effect September 15th, 2016.
- Discipline requirements now apply to **charter schools**

New! Suspensions and expulsions

- School officials should limit the number and duration of suspensions and expulsions to the **greatest extent practicable**.
- Recommended that they are used only for **legitimate educational purposes**.
- Recommended that **non-exclusionary discipline** is **considered** before suspension and expulsion to avoid unnecessary school removal.

New! Practices Not allowed

- *Zero tolerance policies* that require administrators suspend or expel for particular behaviors, unless mandated elsewhere by law [e.g., federal laws for weapons/drug offenses].
- *Encouraging students to dropout* because of behavioral or academic issues.
- *Imposing a fine* as a disciplinary consequence (unless restitution for action like stealing).

New! categories of Suspensions

Out-of-School Suspensions of 3 Days or Less:

- Allowed only if the student's continued presence in the school would pose a *threat to school safety* or a *disruption to others' learning opportunities*.

Out of School Suspensions More than 3 days/ Expulsions/Removals to Alternative Schools

- Unless otherwise specified, can be used only if:
 1. *appropriate and available* disciplinary and behavioral interventions have been *exhausted AND*
 2. *the student's presence in the school would:*
 - *pose a threat* to the safety of students, staff or members of the school community *OR*
 - *substantially disrupt, impede or interfere* with the operations of the school.

New! Support services

Student Suspended More than 4 Days

- Must be provided *appropriate* and *available* support services.

Students who are Expelled:

- Can be referred for *appropriate* and *available* services.

Other requirements:

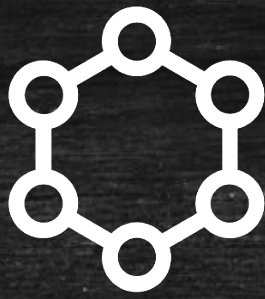
- School districts must develop a *reengagement policy* for students who are suspended/expelled, or returning from alternative placement
- School district must create a policy for students who are suspended to *make up academic work*.

New! Professional development and MOU

- **Other provisions:**

- School districts should make *reasonable efforts* to provide professional development to *teachers, administrators, staff, school board members, school resource officers* on . . . *school exclusion, juvenile system involvement, effective classroom management strategies, culturally responsive discipline.....positive and healthy school climates.*
- Districts are encouraged to create *memoranda of understanding* with local law enforcement officials that clearly define law enforcement's role in schools.

Implementing Discipline Reform: A Collaborative Effort



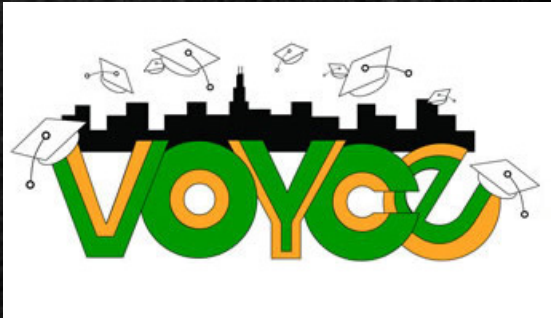
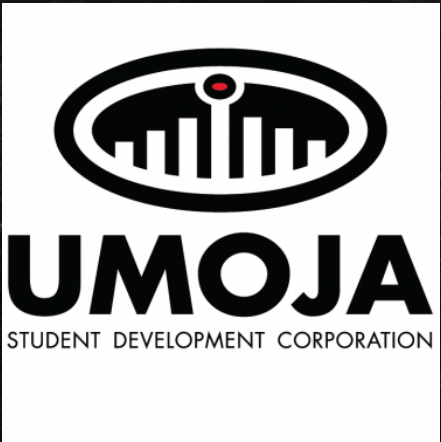
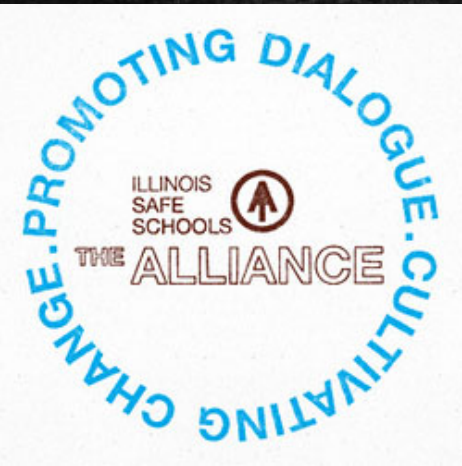
TSDC

Transforming School Discipline Collaborative

The Transforming School Discipline Collaborative (TSDC) is an interdisciplinary team of attorneys, school psychologists, policy advocates and community partners dedicated to supporting districts and schools to implement equitable and non-exclusionary discipline practices.

We aim to meaningfully reduce the high numbers of school days that students lose due to exclusionary discipline policies and to eradicate inequities in the administration of discipline.

The Collaborative



Resources for School Administrators

1. **Checklist** for school district's compliance with the new legislation
2. **Model Student Code of Conduct** that serves as a road map for your schools to develop more holistic, inclusive policies and practices that prevent and respond to student misbehavior
3. **Administrator's Toolkit** to guide implementation of the model code
4. **Administrator Academy trainings** that provide professional development credit for IL administrators
5. **Website** to provide wide access to resources

www.transformschooldiscipline.org

TSDC's Model Code of conduct

Goals

- (1) is compliant with recent changes to Illinois law and
- (2) advances the goal of fairness and equity in the discipline process.

Model Code of Conduct

1. Discipline Philosophy

Before developing your district or school's code of conduct, it is important to first come to a consensus about your discipline philosophy. The discipline philosophy that this model code articulates is a positive vision based on best practices, research and experiences of communities.¹ The discipline philosophy sets the tone for the climate of the district or school and should be aligned with other systems and practices that support all students to stay in school, learn and be successful.

Developing your district or school's discipline philosophy presents a meaningful opportunity for the educational community to engage in a collaborative process that results in a commitment to a shared vision. Your district or school should carefully consider how this process can be inclusive of voices often underrepresented in these decisions, particularly the students and families that tend to be most impacted and excluded by the discipline system.² The sections below are examples of what can be produced with input and collaboration from key constituents, particularly students, families and teachers.

Our district or school takes a preventive, positive approach to discipline rather than focusing exclusively on "punishment." We respond to misbehavior with interventions and consequences aimed at teaching alternative expected positive behaviors, understanding and addressing the root causes of the behavior, resolving conflicts, meeting students' needs and keeping students in school.³ We take deliberate steps to create a positive school climate in which every student can learn, fully engage in a rigorous curriculum, and feel safe, nurtured, and welcome.⁴ In our district or school, we utilize school discipline as an opportunity for teaching, repairing relationships and fostering growth among the whole school community.

Model Code Components

1. Discipline Philosophy
2. Rights and Responsibilities
3. Participation and Collaboration
4. Prevention, Intervention and Disciplinary Responses
5. Approach to School Discipline and the Investigative Process
6. Due Process Procedures
7. Procedures following Suspension and Expulsion
8. Procedural Guidelines for Discipline of Students with Disabilities
9. Professional Development
10. Data Collection and Monitoring

Discipline Philosophy

- Effectuating a **positive school climate** is critical to transforming disciplinary practices
- Discipline should be **prevention-oriented** and build upon **academic and behavioral supports** for students
- Disciplinary responses should be **instructional** and **corrective**
- Out-of-school discipline is **counterproductive** and should be **limited** to the extent possible.

Approach to School Discipline and the Investigative Process

Incident Occurs

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graph TD; A[Incident Occurs] --> B[Consider Immediate Classroom-Based or Restorative Interventions]; B --> C[Gather Information]; C --> D[Review the Disciplinary Checklist];
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Consider Immediate Classroom-Based or Restorative Interventions

Gather Information

Review the Disciplinary Checklist

Approach to School Discipline and the Investigative Process (cont'd)

Refer Student to Appropriate Support Services or Interventions

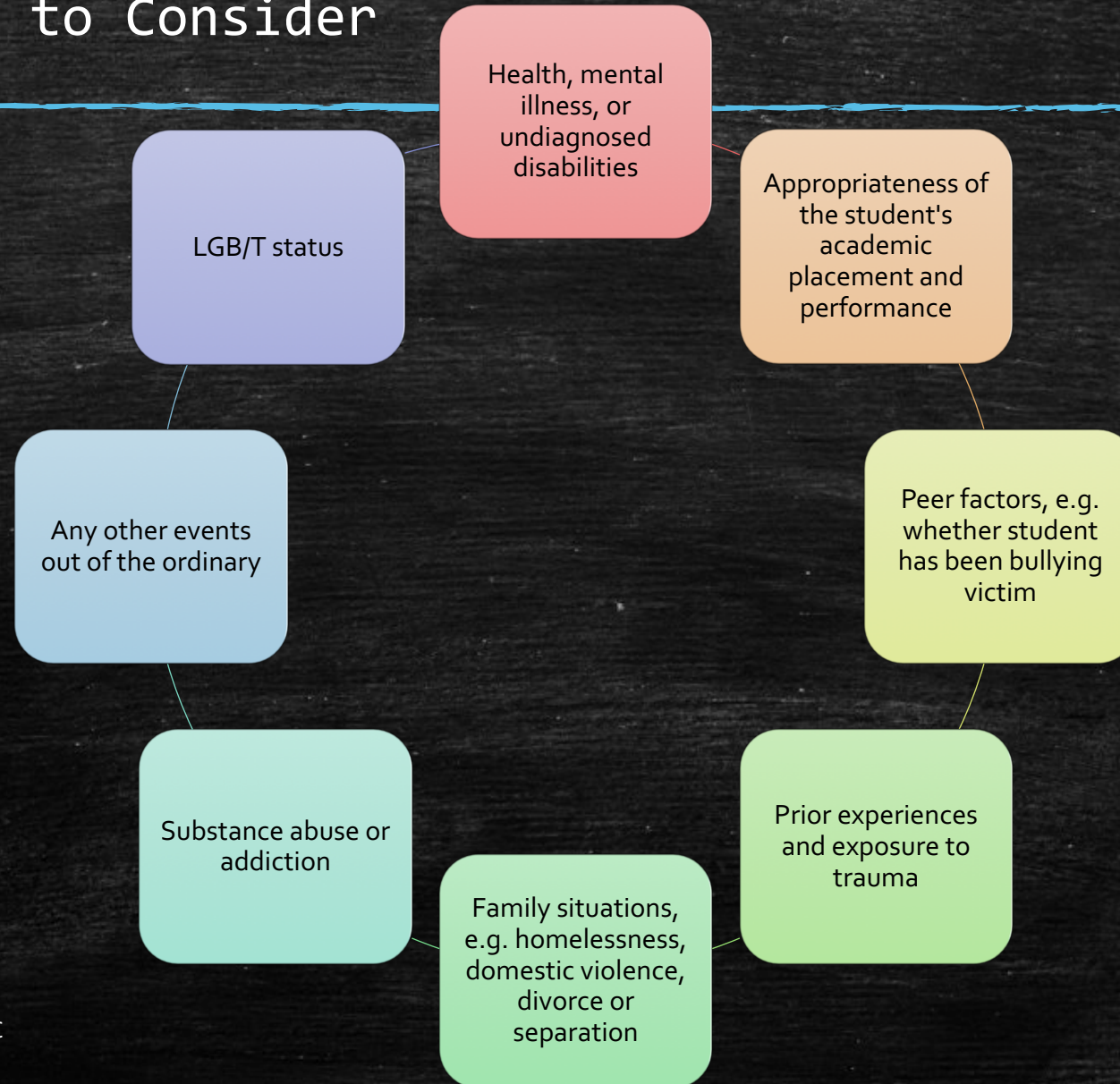


Document All Interventions and Measures



Exclusionary Discipline is a Last Resort

“Root Cause” Factors for Districts and Schools to Consider



Disciplinary Checklist



Is the offense eligible for suspension or expulsion?



Would the student's continuing presence in school cause a threat to school safety or a disruption to other student's learning opportunities?



Has the school exhausted alternatives to suspension and expulsion?

Disciplinary Checklist (cont'd)



Has the student previously violated the school code?



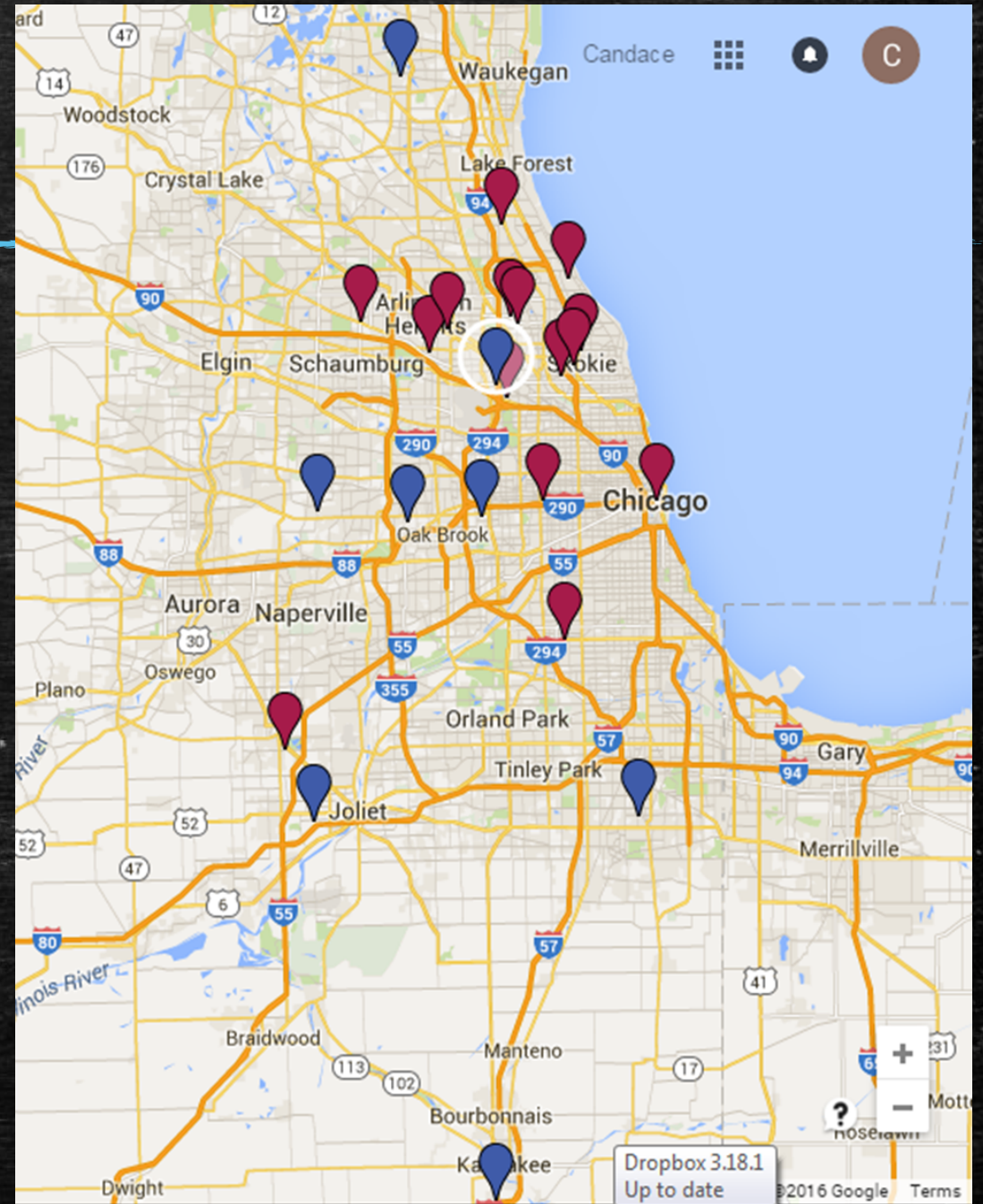
Is suspension or expulsion appropriate given the student's grade?



Has the district and school considered whether the student has a disability and provided all required procedural protections?

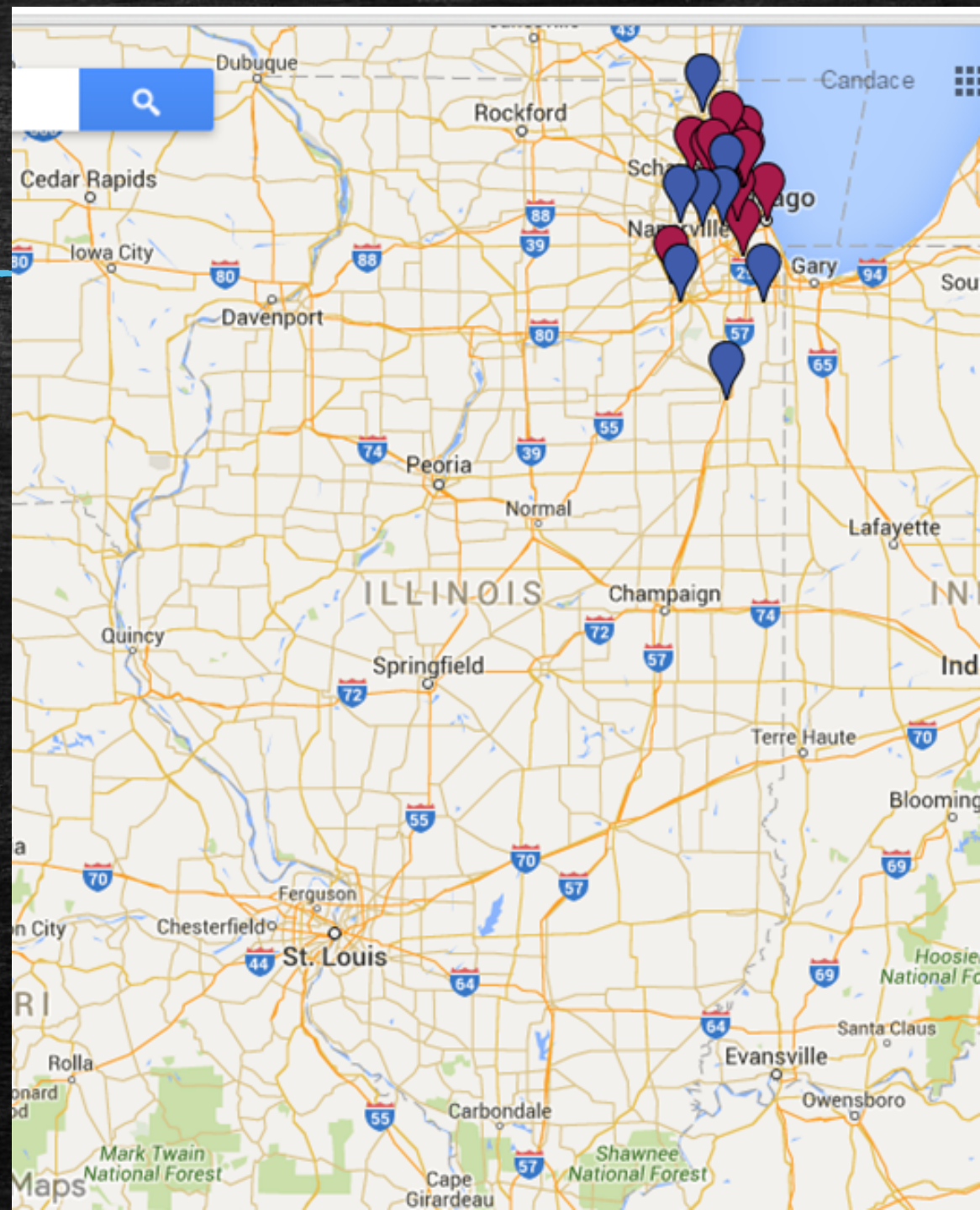
Administrator Academy Trainings

1. May 5th – West 40 Intermediate Service Center (Hillside)
2. May 17th – North Cook Intermediate Service Center (Des Plaines)
3. June 3rd – Professional Development Alliance (Joliet)
4. June 10th – South Cook Intermediate Service Center (Chicago Heights)
5. June 15th – DuPage Regional Office of Education (Wheaton)
6. June 22nd – West 40 Intermediate Service Center (Hillside)
7. June 24th – Iroquois/Kankakee Regional Office of Education (Kankakee)
8. August 18th – DuPage Regional Office of Education (Wheaton)
9. September 14th – Lake County Regional Office of Education (Grayslake)



The Challenges

- Capacity- our reach is limited
- There is a need for on the ground technical assistance
- There is a need to build out resources to help students and families
- Changing hearts and minds of a community



RACIAL EQUITY TOOL

The Racial Equity Tool is a simple set of questions:

1. Proposal: What is the policy, program, practice or budget decision under consideration?

What are the desired results and outcomes?

2. Data: What's the data? What does the data tell us?

3. Community engagement: How have communities been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement?

4. Analysis and strategies: Who will benefit from or be burdened by your proposal? What are your strategies for advancing racial equity or mitigating unintended consequences?

5. Implementation: What is your plan for implementation?

6. Accountability and communication: How will you ensure accountability, communicate, and evaluate results?

CREDITS

- These presentation slides were developed by several members of the Transforming School Discipline Collaborative.
- Slides were created/adapted by:
 - Candace Moore, Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Inc.
 - Margie Wakelin, Equip for Equality
 - Miranda Johnson, Education Law and Policy Institute, Loyola University Chicago School of Law
 - Dr. Pamela Fenning of the Loyola University Chicago School of Education