Trauma & Toxic Stress

Changing the Trajectory for Florida’s Most Vulnerable Children to Help Them Thrive

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FSU Center for Prevention & Early Intervention Policy
Trajectory of Health & Development

Poverty  Maltreatment  Lack of Health Services  Toxic Stress

Nurturing Family  PreK & Quality Child Care  Targeted Supports  Health Services  Early Intervention

Healthy  At-Risk  Delayed or Disordered

Ready to Learn

Birth  Late Infancy  Late Toddler  Health Services  Early Intervention

6 mo  12 mo  18 mo  24 mo  3 yrs  5 yrs

Early Infancy  Early Toddler  Early Preschool
New Opportunity for Systems Change Under Children & Youth Cabinet

• **State Level**
  New Task Force on Trauma & Toxic Stress established in collaboration with Florida’s Children & Youth Cabinet

• **Local Level**
  – Trauma Informed Baby Court Teams
  – Local planning teams
Systems Changes to Mitigate Trauma & Toxic Stress

1. Widespread education about impact of trauma
2. Use a trauma lens across systems
3. Increase trauma screenings
4. Expand evidence based treatments
1. Widespread Education on the Impact of Trauma
ACE Study:
The Relationship of Adverse Childhood Experiences & Adult Health

- Physical, emotional or sexual abuse (25% beaten in childhood)
- Emotional or physical neglect
- Household mental illness, alcoholism or substance abuse (25%)
- Family violence
- Incarcerated family member
- Parental separation or divorce

Of 17,000 respondents, two-thirds had at least one ACE.
Early Adverse Experiences Lead to Multiple Problems in Society

- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- Crime/Delinquency
- Addictions
- Domestic Violence
- Academic / School
Adverse Childhood Events (ACE)

Source: Video Clips from Felitti, Vincent J. MD. The Relationship of Adverse Childhood Experiences to Adult Health Status.
ACE Scores Linked to Problems

Twice as likely to be smokers.

6X more likely to be sexually active before age 15.

7X more likely to be alcoholics.

Twice as likely to have cancer or heart disease.
Untreated Adverse Early Childhood Events

The effects only worsen over time.

Childhood
- Developmental Delays
- Expulsion

Adolescence
- Delinquency
- Mental Health
- Sexual Activity
- Drugs & Alcohol
- Violence

Adulthood
- Psychiatric Problems
- Drug Abuse
- Alcohol
- Crime

Yet, all too often, trauma goes unrecognized.

How many families in child welfare, drug treatment centers, psychiatric units and homeless shelters are the result of unhealed early childhood traumas?
2. Trauma Lens Across Systems

- Health
- Mental Health
- Delinquency
- Child Welfare
- Substance Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Education
- Early Childhood
- Judicial
The Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma
Trauma Informed Child Welfare

Untreated trauma is the root of the intergenerational transmission of trauma

Childhood ACEs
- Witnesses Domestic Violence
- Experiences Child Abuse and Neglect

Adolescence ACEs
- Has Mental Health Issues
- Sexually Active & Becomes Pregnant as a Teen
- Smokes

Adulthood ACEs
- Suffers Psychiatric Problems
- Is Depressed
- Battles Addictions
90% of children known to the foster care system have been exposed to trauma.

Source: Stein, Zima, Elliott, Burnam, Shahinfar, & Fox, et al. (2001)
Unhealed Trauma Linked to Mental Health Problems

63% of Foster Children Have Mental Health Problems

At least one diagnosis in lifetime

54% < Age 5:
Infants are Florida’s Largest Age Group
Trauma-Informed Baby Court Approach

- Understanding intergenerational trauma
- Continuum of mental health services
- Healing trauma to improve parenting capacity
- Quality child care & developmental screening
Most Maltreated Children Have Developmental Problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Type</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Problems</td>
<td>23 – 65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Delays</td>
<td>14 – 64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Problems</td>
<td>22 – 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Delays</td>
<td>4 – 47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Problems</td>
<td>10 – 61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trauma Informed Early Intervention
IDEA Part C: Ages 0-3
IDEA, Part B: Ages 3-18
Trauma Informed Health Care

Have I Considered Whether Trauma Has Played A Role in….

Smoking
Drinking
Maternal Depression
Obesity
Trauma Informed Early Care & Education

Signs of Trauma in Toddlers

- Biting, kicking, tantrums, unprovoked aggression
- Lack of verbal skills to express emotions
- Disengagement with others
- Indiscriminate preferences of caregivers
- Skill regression
Left Behind By Kindergarten: Children living in poverty average 15 IQ points below their peers.

Vocabulary at Age 3
- Poor children: 525 words
- Working class: 749 words
- Professional: 1,116 words

By age 4, the average child in a poor family might have been exposed to 13 million fewer words than child in a working class family and 30 million fewer words than a child in a professional family.

Quality Child Care Can Enhance Development & Reduce Trauma

- **Enhance development**
  - Larger vocabularies
  - Better reading skills
  - Higher math competencies
  - Higher IQ and school readiness scores

- **Foster nurturing relationships**
  - Improved social emotional development
  - Reduced behavior challenges

- **Is a protective factor**

But, many child care options are NOT quality...
ACEs linked to Learning & Behavior Problems

Trauma Informed Schools
1 of 4 children in school have been exposed to traumatic event*

* Source: National Child Traumatic Stress Network
Neglect Impacts Prefrontal Lobe Reducing Executive Functions

Healthy Child                  Neglected Child

Courtesy of Dr. H.T. Chugani from the Children’s Hospital of Michigan, Wayne State University
High ACEs in Florida's DJJ Population

Sample Size 64,329

Youth reporting no ACEs: 2.79% - 1,793
Youth reporting one or more ACEs: 97.21% - 62,536

Two-thirds or more of Florida youth offenders report these three ACEs:
High ACEs in Florida’s DJJ Population

Of the 98% reporting ACEs

**Females**
- Experienced at least two ACEs: 92%
- Experienced at least three ACEs: 80%
- Experienced at least four ACEs: 63%
- Experienced five or more ACEs: 46%

**Males**
- Experienced at least two ACEs: 89%
- Experienced at least three ACEs: 71%
- Experienced at least four ACEs: 48%
- Experienced five or more ACEs: 28%
Extensive Trauma in Florida DJJ Population of Girls

- Diagnosed Mental Health Problems
- Had Conduct & Behavior Disorders
- Sexually Abused
- Physically Abused
- Witnessed Domestic Violence

Florida DJJ Population of Girls
3. Increase Trauma Screening
4. Expand Evidence Based Treatments
Home Visiting Can Help Parents Improve:

- Maternal and prenatal health, infant health, and child health
- Child development & school readiness
- Parenting skills
- Knowledge of child development outcomes
- Referrals to community services
- Positive behavior management
- Reduce accidents and emergency room visits

Evidence Based Home Visiting Programs

- Early Head Start
- Healthy Families
- Nurse Family Partnership
- Parents as Teachers
- HIPPY
Washington is the first state to recognize ACEs such as child abuse and neglect, parental substance abuse, and witnessing domestic violence as a “powerful common determinant of a child’s ability to be successful at school and, as an adult, to be successful at work, to avoid behavioral and chronic physical health conditions, and to build healthy relationships.”
Proposed Framework

Florida Children and Youth Cabinet

- State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care
- Trauma and Toxic Stress ECCS State Taskforce
- Early Learning Workgroup

- Membership includes Cabinet and SAC representatives.
- Provides support to the Early Learning Workgroup.
- Coordinates with the SAC and the Office of Early Learning for implementation of both the early learning and trauma recovery strategies.
Value to the Cabinet

• The Trauma and Toxic Stress Project:
  – Aligns with the Cabinet Headline Indicators and Strategic Plan.
  – Serves as an additional research arm of the Cabinet.
  – Members are embedded within existing groups to prevent duplication of meetings and efforts.
  – Has outcomes and data to update and report to the Cabinet.
The Trauma and Toxic Stress Project:

- Integrates across systems that touch all agencies to promote awareness, increase screening, and expand evidence-based treatment resulting in improved health, well-being, and self-sufficiency.

- Infuses the protective factors framework to build resilience, knowledge of child development, concrete supports, social connections, and social-emotional development while incorporating nurturing and attachment principles throughout.
It’s easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.

-Fredrick Douglas