

Quality Care For Kids Newsletter



June 2023 | Positive Caregiver Relationships

Written by Kim Gonzales, RN, BSN, MBA | Healthy Child Care Iowa

Secure relationships and attachments with caregivers help children develop physically, mentally and emotionally. The attachments and relationships built in early childhood are critical to helping regulate stress as a child, and later in life. These relationships also lead to positive impacts on the development, health, and behavior of children that lead to success.

If a child doesn't have a stable, long lasting and caring relationship with an adult, it could lead to toxic, or prolonged stress. Developing a positive relationship and attachment with a caring adult can help reduce negative effects of potential toxic stress, such as abuse, neglect or bullying.

Additionally, 1 out of 4 children in the country has experienced a traumatic event by the time they enter preschool and high-risk populations experience even more.



Children who experience toxic stress and trauma may:

- Complain about physical discomfort or pain
- Miss developmental milestones
- Fear separation from regular interactions and routine
- Startle easily
- Have behavior issues

To promote secure attachments:

- Respond calmly, even in stressful situations.
- Use positive body language.
- Smile often.
- Offer comfort to upset children.
- Remain visible while allowing children to explore the room.
- Respond to a child's words and sounds with back-and-forth interactions.
- Try to understand and describe what the child is thinking or feeling.
- Keep caregivers with the same children (i.e., continuity of care) for as long as possible.

Early childhood providers have the opportunity to turn their connections with children into impactful relationships. To learn more, view the resource used for this newsletter linked with the "Connections Matter in Early Childhood" fact sheet.

View the "Connections Matter in Early Childhood" fact sheet to see how you can support secure attachments.

<https://hhs.iowa.gov/HCCI/Products>



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CCNC Contact:
Jessica Redden, RN
Scott County Health Department
P. 563.326.8618 ext. 8821
E. jessica.redden@scottcountyiowa.gov

