

Implementing Evidence-Based Parenting Interventions to Buffer Young Children Against Adversity



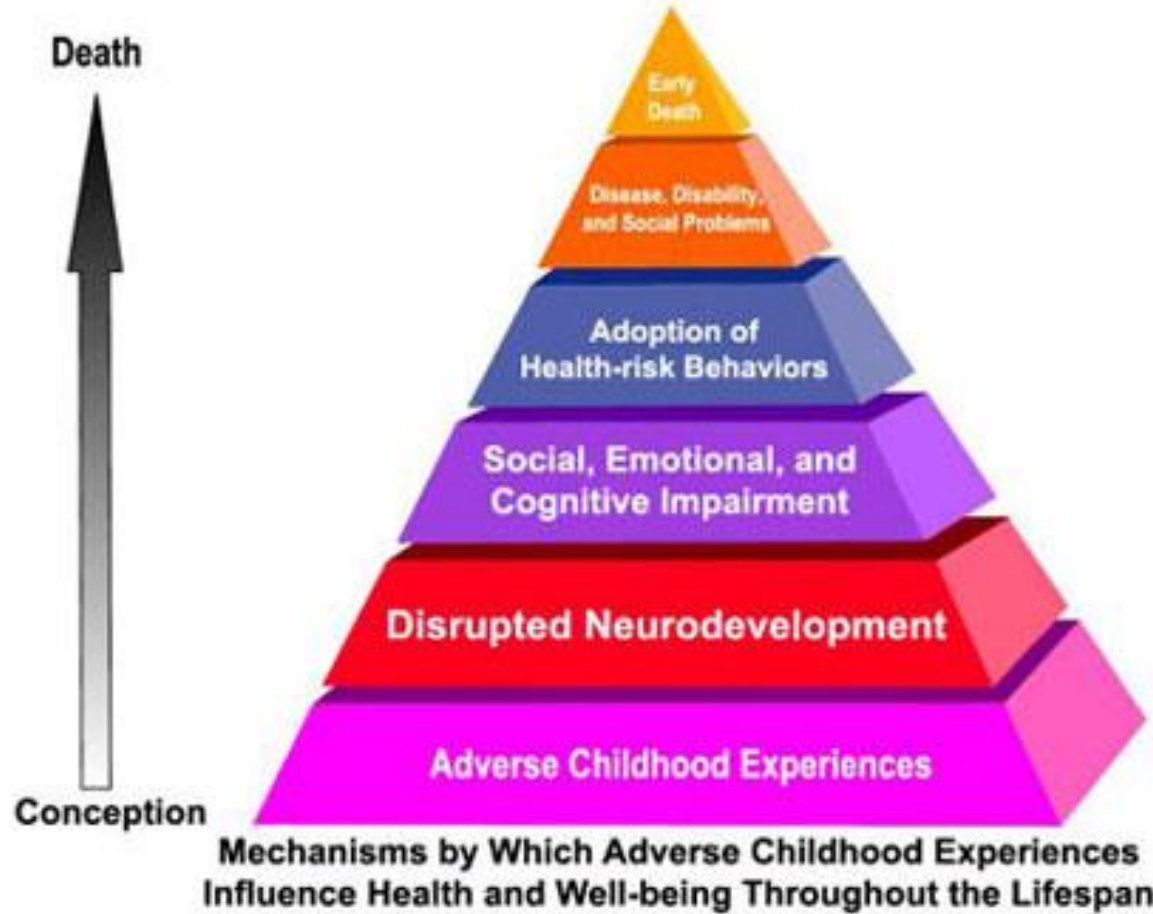
*Brenda Jones Harden, University of Maryland
MARC Brown Bag Webinar*

ROADMAP OF PRESENTATION

- What is toxic stress and what are its effects?
- How can positive parenting buffer children against the effects of toxic stress?
- What evidence exists re: parenting interventions for families experiencing toxic stress?



Lifespan Effects of ACEs to Health & Well Being



Shonkoff's 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.



Toxic Stress: Risks and Contexts

Poverty

Sociodemographic risk (e.g., teen mother, single parent, < HS education)

Intimate Partner Violence

Parental mental illness

Parental substance use/abuse

Compromised parenting and child maltreatment

Toxic Stress

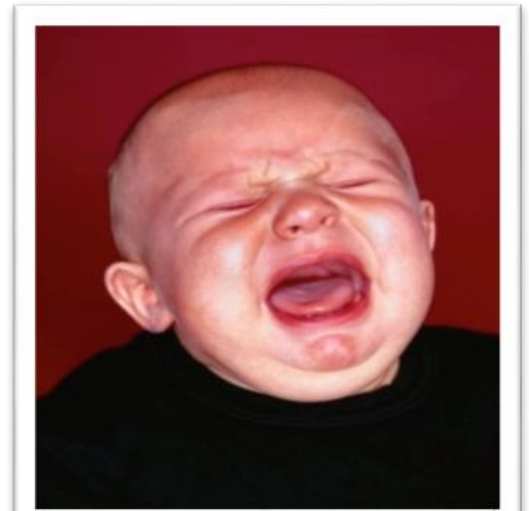
(Gunnar et al., 2009; Fernald & Gunnar, 2009; Cicchetti et al., 2010; Fischer et al., 2011)

- Child toxic stress: strong, frequent, prolonged activation of children's stress-response system
 - increased heart rate/blood pressure
 - release of stress hormones (cortisol)
 - Atypical production in response to stress
 - Atypical diurnal pattern
 - Blunted pattern
 - Lower threshold for response to stress
 - Stress response mediated by caregiving



Toxic Stress (Shonkoff et al., 2009)

- Negative physiologic outcomes
 - Disrupted brain architecture and functioning
 - Effects on other organ systems
 - Premature/LBW African American infants
- Negative child outcomes
 - Health/cognition/mental health
- Root of adult disparities between SES groups re: physical and mental health



Psychological Consequences of Toxic Stress for Young Children



- Increased arousal
 - Increased distress sensitivity to non-stressful events
- Developmental delays
- Executive functioning issues
 - Concentration, Impulse control
- Cognitive/Language delays
- Academic challenges (school readiness)
- Internalizing problems
 - anxiety, depression
- Externalizing problems
 - tantrums, oppositionality, defiance, aggression

Parenting and Child Development

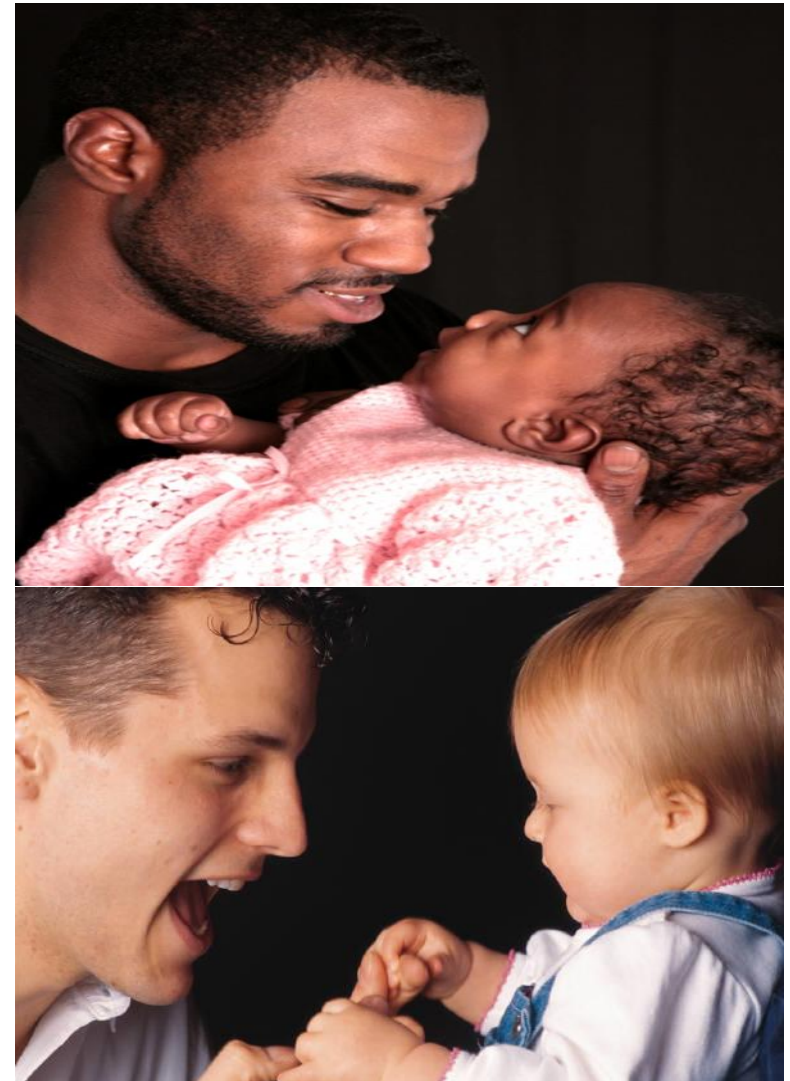
- Parents major socialization agents for young children (Collins et al., 2000)
- Parenting young children (Berlin et al., 2002; Edwards & Liu, 2002; Ispa et al., 2004; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2011)
 - *Positive parenting linked to host of positive child outcomes in high-risk families*
 - High rates of negative parenting among high-risk parents
 - Strong link to negative child outcomes
 - Need to disentangle negative parenting



Parenting Practices & Child Outcomes

(National Academy of Sciences, 2016)

- contingent responsiveness (“serve and return”)
- warmth and sensitivity
- routines and reduced household chaos
- shared book reading and talking to children
- practices promoting children’s health/safety
- use of appropriate (less harsh) discipline



Interventions to support positive parenting practices (NAS, 2016)

- Formal sources of parenting support
 - well-child care
 - center-based child care (Head Start and Early Head Start)
 - home visiting programs
- Interventions targeted to specific populations of parents
 - parents of children with special needs
 - ***parents facing adversities (Toxic Stress)***
- Federal efforts to support parents
 - income assistance
 - nutrition assistance
 - health care
 - housing programs



Elements of Effective Interventions

(NAS, 2016)

Specific elements necessary to address Toxic Stress

- viewing parents as equal partners in service determination
- *tailoring interventions to meet the specific needs of families*
- *integrating services for families with multiple service needs*
- creating opportunities for parents to receive peer support
- *addressing trauma*
- making programs culturally relevant
- enhancing efforts to involve fathers



THREE PATHWAYS TO ADDRESS TOXIC STRESS

PRIMARY PREVENTION

Decreasing poverty, and fostering community and social well-being

Community-based public health, universal education, and income support approaches

SECONDARY PREVENTION

Reducing environmental risks for toxic stress

Programs that provide early care and education, parent education, family support, income support

TERTIARY PREVENTION

Providing interventions for children exposed to toxic stress

Child, parent, dyadic, family, classroom interventions

Evidence-Based Parenting Interventions

- Triple P – Positive Parenting Program
 - Multi-level intervention to improve parenting skills and reduce behavior problems
- Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (Chaffin et al.)
 - Coaching parent to improve parent-child relationship & parental behavior management skills
- Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up (Dozier et al.)
 - Short-term intervention with specific targets
 - nurturance and responsivity to infants
 - “overriding” one’s past experience of caregiving



Evidence-Based Parenting Interventions

- **Child-Parent Psychotherapy** (Lieberman et al.; Toth et al.)
 - Infant/early childhood mental health dyadic treatment focused on enhancing parent-child relationship
- **Child FIRST** (Lowell et al.)
 - Relationship-based infant mental health approach
 - Parent-child psychotherapy and case management
- **Promoting First Relationships** (Kelly, Spieker et al.)
 - Infant mental health approach, use of video-coaching



Evidence-Based Parenting Interventions

- **Family Check-Up** (Dishion, Shaw et al.)
 - Short-term intervention to promote positive parenting and behavior management
- **Safe Care** (Lutzker et al.)
 - Parent-child interaction; safety; maltreatment reduction
- **The Incredible Years** (Webster-Stratton et al.)
 - Parent management, group-based intervention



UM BUFFERING TOXIC STRESS PROJECT DESIGN

Randomized Trial

EHS + Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up (ABC)

EHS + Book-of-the-Week (BOW)

Implementation Study

Pilot Study & RCT

Qualitative & Quantitative

Validating Toxic Stress

Baseline and Post-Test Risk Data

Child Physiologic Data at Post-test

Attachment & Biobehavioral Catch-up (ABC) Program

- Developed by Mary Dozier, University of Delaware
- Grounded in attachment theory and research
- Manualized intervention
- Two randomized trials with children in child welfare
 - Foster & Birth parents
- 10 sessions with mother-infant dyads at home
- ***Use of videotape and in-the-moment commenting***



ABC Content



Parental nurturance



Following child's lead with delight



Reducing threatening and/or frightening caregiving behavior



“Overriding” one's own history and/or non-nurturing instincts



Exclusive focus on these “target” behaviors

Benefits of ABC



Randomized control trials

- *Infants/toddlers in foster care*
 - More likely to be securely attached to foster parents
 - More normal diurnal patterns of cortisol production
- *Infants/toddlers in Child Protective Services (alternative response)*
 - Mothers showed more sensitivity to infants
 - Infants less likely to have disorganized attachment and more likely to be securely attached

Dozier et al., 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009; Bernard & Dozier, 2012

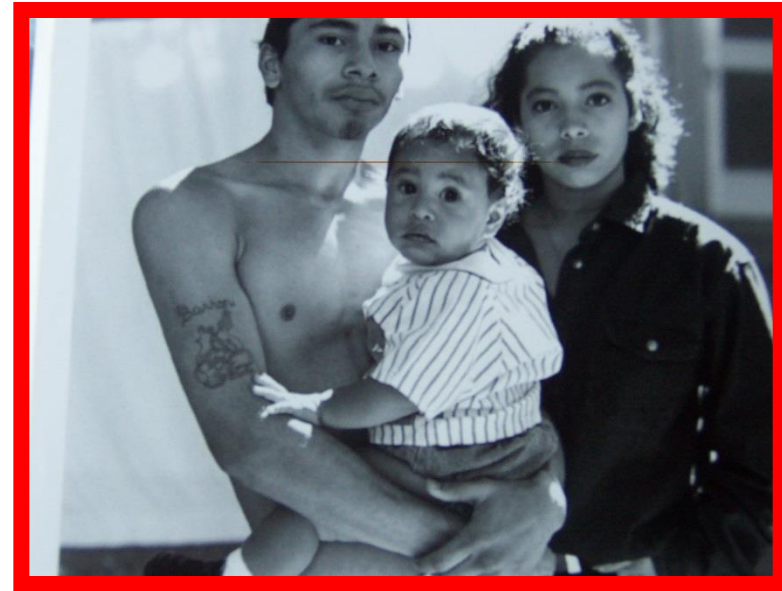
Integrating ABC into Home-Based EHS

- Supplemental parenting intervention feasible
 - Consistent with EHS Standards
 - EHS \neq ABC
 - Component of prevention framework
- Resources for service delivery
 - Videotaping/Technology
- Training of EHS staff
 - Home visitors
 - Mental health consultants
- Sustainability



Using ABC with Early Head Start Latino Families

- Hiring bilingual/bicultural staff who can deliver ABC
- Addressing family context
 - Multigenerational households
 - Employment issues
 - Role of father
- Understanding cultural context
 - Following the lead
- Translating all materials
- Culturally adapting materials
 - Spanish song for montage



ABC Impacts on Parenting Behaviors

- **Sensitivity** *Small Effect*
- **Positive Regard** *Small Effect*
- **Intrusiveness** *Medium Effect*
- **Sensitivity Composite** *Small-Medium Effect*

CONCLUSIONS

- Toxic stress detrimental to early development and leads to negative physical, developmental, and mental health sequelae in adulthood
- Promoting positive early parent-child relationship critical goal of parenting interventions
 - Can reduce effects of toxic stress
- Evidence-based parenting intervention promising strategy for buffering children against toxic stress



THANK YOU!

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