

# 123 CARE

A TRAUMA-SENSITIVE TOOLKIT FOR CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN



AGE	TRIGGERING EVENT	DEVELOPMENTALLY-APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR	FLIGHT	FIGHT	FREEZE	SUGGESTED TRAUMA-SENSITIVE CARE
0-1 yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexpected changes in routines or caregivers</li> <li>• Loud, unexpected noises</li> <li>• Strong emotions (often anger)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Startle, but is able to self-soothe (clasp hands, suck)</li> <li>• Cry, but is able to be comforted by caregivers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excessive sleeping with difficulty arousing</li> <li>• Avoid eye contact</li> <li>• Crawl or more away</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cry inconsolably, caregiver may be unable to soothe</li> <li>• Cling to adults</li> <li>• Fuss</li> <li>• Arch back</li> <li>• Pull &amp; push away</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dull-looking face and eyes</li> <li>• Look away (disengage)</li> <li>• Sleep a lot</li> <li>• Show little emotion</li> <li>• Go from "awake" to "sleep state" quickly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide consistent routines</li> <li>• Provide consistent caregivers</li> <li>• Allow comfort items (thumb, blanket)</li> <li>• Show sensitivity to children's cues</li> <li>• Be physically and emotionally available through challenging feelings / behaviors</li> <li>• Verbalize sympathy</li> </ul>
1-3 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexpected changes in routines</li> <li>• Transitions</li> <li>• Strangers</li> <li>• Crowds, disorder and chaotic environments</li> <li>• Anger (real or perceived) from others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are excited about with their world</li> <li>• Eager to engage, but can be shy</li> <li>• Easily frustrated, which can lead to tantrums or aggression</li> <li>• Fear of strangers</li> <li>• Engage in parallel play rather than group play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty paying attention</li> <li>• Fearfulness</li> <li>• Isolate self from others</li> <li>• Refuse to participate through withdrawal</li> <li>• Run or walk away</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggressive behavior (biting, hitting, pushing)</li> <li>• Cling to adults</li> <li>• Have a tantrum</li> <li>• Refuse to participate through disruptive behavior</li> <li>• Throws toys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Check out"</li> <li>• Unresponsive, does not appear to hear or understand</li> <li>• Difficulty with learning activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help identify &amp; label feelings</li> <li>• Minimize power / control and focus on collaboration with the child</li> <li>• Encourage movement and exercise</li> <li>• Teach deep, slow breathing games like: blowing candles out, breathing in the smell of roses</li> <li>• Allow extra time for children to prepare for transitions</li> <li>• Allow children to take breaks from activities as needed</li> <li>• Give children verbal warnings 5-10 minutes prior to transitions</li> <li>• Allow comfort items (blankets, stuffed animals)</li> <li>• Show sensitivity to children's cues</li> </ul>
3-5 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexpected changes in routines</li> <li>• Transitions</li> <li>• Perceived aggressive behavior</li> <li>• Disorder and chaotic environments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily excited and talk a lot</li> <li>• Eager to engage</li> <li>• Easily frustrated, which may lead to aggression</li> <li>• Curious about strangers</li> <li>• Watchful when they perceive adult anger</li> <li>• Need comfort items</li> <li>• Seek comfort from familiar caregivers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run away</li> <li>• Hide</li> <li>• Cry inconsolably</li> <li>• Seek comfort items</li> <li>• Move away from others</li> <li>• Complain frequently of aches, pains &amp; illnesses</li> <li>• Regressive behavior (bathroom accidents, sucking thumb)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get in caregiver's face when angry</li> <li>• Throw things</li> <li>• Have a need to tell their side of the story</li> <li>• Rapidly escalating aggressive behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Check out"</li> <li>• Difficulty with learning activities</li> <li>• Difficulty paying attention or following directions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask children, "How can I help you feel safe?"</li> <li>• Allow children the time they need to regulate their emotions</li> <li>• See all of the recommendations listed in sections above</li> </ul>

**What is the Need Behind the Behavior?**

**TRIGGER:**  
an event or situation that results in negative and/or disturbing feelings – feelings of being threatened or unsafe.

Triggering Event: something that triggers a person or makes them feel threatened using the mind to move away from the person thought to be a threat (standing still while "checking out")

Flight: moving toward the person thought to be a threat (fighting and returning the negative energy)

Freeze: moving away from the person thought to be a threat (fleeing)