

5 TIPS FOR PARENTING CHILDREN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA

1

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS

- As a parent, manage your expectation to be “a perfect parent.” You are doing a great job during a trying time.
- Sometimes we fall back to expectations we had as a child, but your children need a trauma informed parent now more than ever.
- If change is hard for us it is doubly hard for them. Work on helping them adjust to the change calmly and slowly as they “mirror what they see in us.”

2

PRACTICE IDENTIFYING YOUR EMOTIONS AND THE EMOTIONS OF YOUR CHILDREN

- It is okay to say to your child, “I am a little _____ right now, I need to _____.”
- We can see when our kids are starting to “derail” which is great time to try and name the emotion they may be feeling and ask how we can help them to adjust it. If we can have them use their words and state their need we are in the logic brain which helps their emotional brain start to calm down.
- We need to help them deal with their big emotion with regulation skills, like breathing, wall pushes or whatever they have learned.
- Try asking them what they need to do to get through the next few minutes.

3

TIME-INS ARE VERY IMPORTANT FOR BUILDING A CONNECTION

- Time-in is pretty much all we have anyway right now, but let's make it creative.
- They can sit with you and think about what just happened and when they are calm and can talk about it, it is all over.
- Older children can come up with some ideas for “game night,” “dinner choice,” or any activity the family can do when free time is available.

4

AVOID POWER STRUGGLES

- Our kids sometimes are driven to get into power struggles because they are very desperate to feel some sense of power. Giving choices gives you the power of the choice but make sure it is 2 positive outcomes: "You can pick 1 toy to play with for the next 15 minutes." OR "You can do a craft or read a book for the next 20 minutes." It is an art to give choices but it works. You must know your child.
- Compromises are also a great way to deescalate a situation and give a child some power. "Tell me what will keep you busy for the next 15 minutes?"

5

REMEMBER TRAUMA IMPACTS THE BRAIN AND THE BODY

- The body needs food and water every 2 hours and the body needs movement and good nutrition. Provide a water bottle and challenge them to finish it for a reward like a break or a fun snack. Make sure lots of healthy snacks are available. If you are doing school at home make sure they can get up and stretch, run, exercise, and go in the back yard for 5-10 minutes between subjects.
- The most important thing to remember is that we are created to connect and how we connect during this trying time must include "FUN." Try a picnic lunch or dinner outside. Having them plan the "fun" for the family evening time.
- Kids need to feel they are good at something, find something they can do and put them in charge of it for a day, like a weekly chore, etc.
- Laughter is the best medicine. Find ways to laugh with your kids. This builds lifetime connections and great memories. *A happy heart is like good medicine.* — Proverbs 17:22