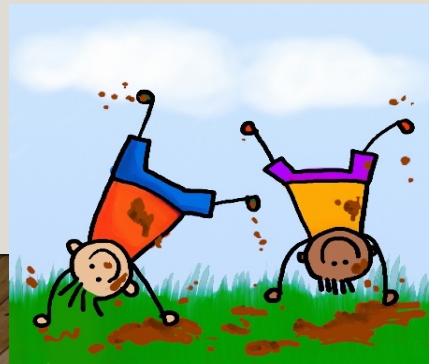


POWER OF PLAY AS A TOOL TO HEAL TRAUMA

JANEECE R WARFIELD, PSY.D., REGISTERED PLAY THERAPIST SUPERVISOR
WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
COLLEGE OF HEALTH EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES
JANEECE.WARFIELD@WRIGHT.EDU



OBJECTIVES

1. Participants will be able to describe the role a caregiver or provider plays in co-regulating a child demonstrating traumatic reactions.
2. Participants will be able to identify at least two playful activities which can be used with children demonstrating traumatic reactions.

DEFINITION OF A TRAUMATIC EVENT

“A traumatic event is frightening, dangerous, or violent event that poses a threat to a child’s life or their physical body.”

NCTSN.org (n.d.). *About child trauma.*

<https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/about-child-trauma>



DEFINITION OF CHILD TRAUMATIC STRESS

“Child traumatic stress occurs when a child has been exposed to one or more traumas over the course of their lives whereby they develop reactions that persist and affect them after the traumatic event has ended.”

NCTSN.org (n.d.). *About child trauma.*

<https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/about-child-trauma>

EXAMPLES OF TRAUMATIC REACTIONS

- Intense and regular emotional upset
- Depressive symptoms or anxiety
- Behavioral changes
- Difficulties with self-regulation
- Problems relating to others or forming attachments
- Regression or loss of previously acquired skills
- Attention and academic difficulties
- Nightmares
- Difficulty sleeping and eating
- Physical symptoms, e.g., aches and pains

NCTSN.org (n.d.). *About child trauma.*

<https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/about-child-trauma>

PLAY

- Serves as a medium for children's expression of emotions.



PLAY

- Builds trust and mastery
- Fosters learning and acceptable behaviors
- Regulates emotions
- Reduces stress
- Encourages open and voluntary communication
- Promotes creative problem-solving
- Elevates spirit

-The Association of Play Therapy



PLAY SUPPORTS...

- Relationships
- Life skills
- Regulation



PLAY PROMOTES RESILIENCE

- Three critical protective factors important to the development of resilience in young children are:

Attachment/Relationships

Initiative

Self-Regulation

BENEFITS OF USING PLAY TO ADDRESS TRAUMA

- Play offers a way for young children to co-regulate through:
 - Developing a **connection** with a caregiver who provides the opportunity for the child to **be safe** in their body, **safe** in the environment, and **safe** in relationship.

(Dana, 2021)

ROLE OF THERAPIST, CAREGIVER, AND TEACHER

- Provide a supportive and safe environment
- Provide consistency
- Provide nurturance
- Enhance self-regulation

TAKE THE ROLE OF A DETECTIVE



- What does the child need right now?
- Where is the child:
 - Developmentally
 - Kinesthetically
 - Emotionally
 - Socially
 - Cognitively

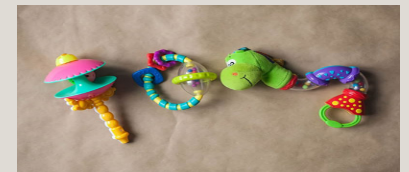
GoodYear Brown, 2019

FACILITATING PLAY AT DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

Birth to 18 months:

Infants are exploring and discovering their world through sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell:

- Provide them with things that they can grasp and mouth such as rattles and teething rings
- Play with bright colored noise/music makers
- Experiment with nesting cups, activity boxes, stacking rings, large blocks, and shape sorters, water play, and give them roll and push-pull toys
- Provide them with cloth and board books



FACILITATING PLAY AT DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

18 months to 3- years:

At this age range the infant and young child are “Active”

Engage them in play with:

- Low climbing toys
- Large balls
- Take-apart toys
- Pop-up toys
- Knob and chunky puzzles
- Modeling clay/play dough
- Musical Instruments/dress-up clothes
- Doll houses and farm sets



FACILITATING PLAY AT DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

3 to 6 years of age

During this age range you want to promote children's imagination and interactive play by providing them with:

- Dramatic play toys such as telephones, kitchen appliances, medical kits, dress-up clothes
- Finger or hand puppets for acting out and mastering day-to-day experiences
- Board games where they can practice turn taking
- Art materials
- Jump ropes, tricycles



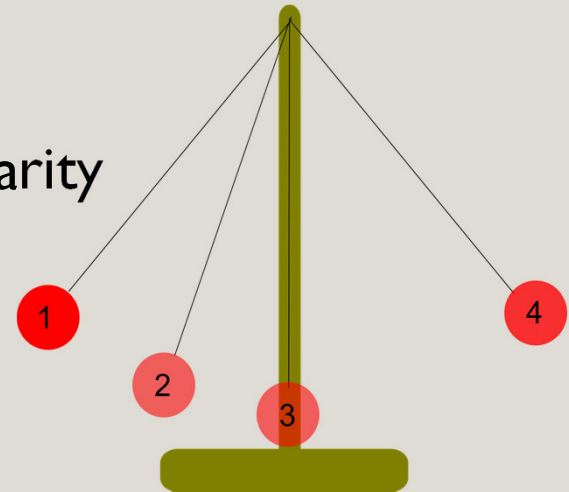
SETTING THE STAGE TO PLAY

- Assess your environment
- Facilitate safety



ENGAGING IN PLAY

- Engage in play that involves **connection**
 - Reciprocity/ “Serve and Return”
- Begin with activities that have some familiarity



CONNECTING PLAY ACTIVITIES

- Rolling Ball Back and Forth
- Peanut Butter and Jelly
- Mirroring

Row Row Row Your Boat

Balloon Volleyball

Hand Stacks





(Booth, & Jernberg, 2010)

“ Enter into children’s play and you will find the place
where their minds, hearts, and souls meet.”

- Virginia Axline



ZONES OF REGULATION!

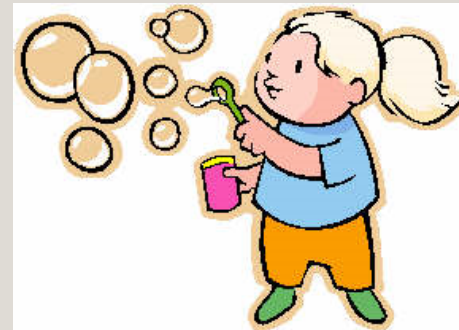
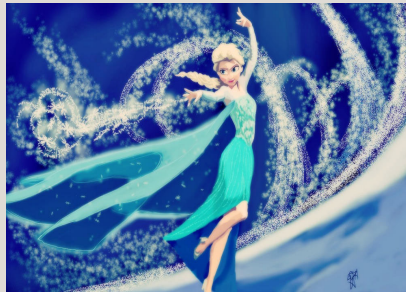
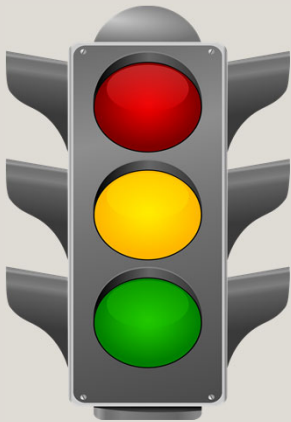
Blue	Green	Yellow	Red
			
Sick Sad Tired Bored Moving Slowly	Happy Calm Good to Go Focused Ready to Learn	Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Anxious Excited	Mad/Angry Mean Yelling/Hitting Out of Control I Need Time and Space

SELF-REGULATION

- A child's ability to demonstrate a range of feelings, behaviors, and impulses in a developmentally appropriate way.
- A child that can self-regulate can demonstrate feelings without taking it out on people or things.

FIVE GAMES FOR SELF REGULATION

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_OIbrYwdSY



PLAY-BASED ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE REGULATION

- Breathing
- Moving
- Rhythm
- Sensory Integration
- Grounding

(Warfield, Lucas, & Snell, 2021)

BREATHING

- Five Finger breathing

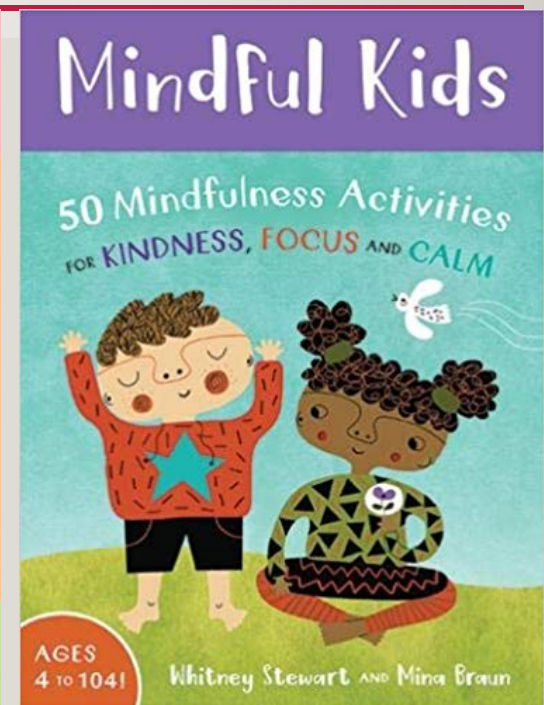
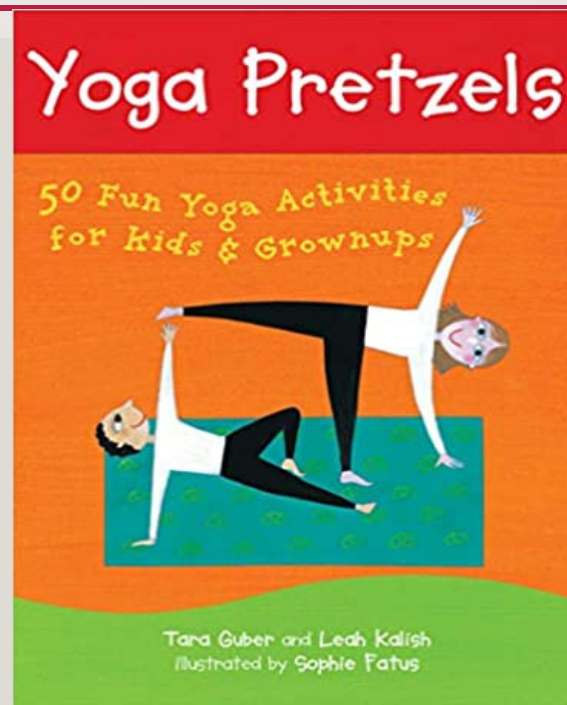
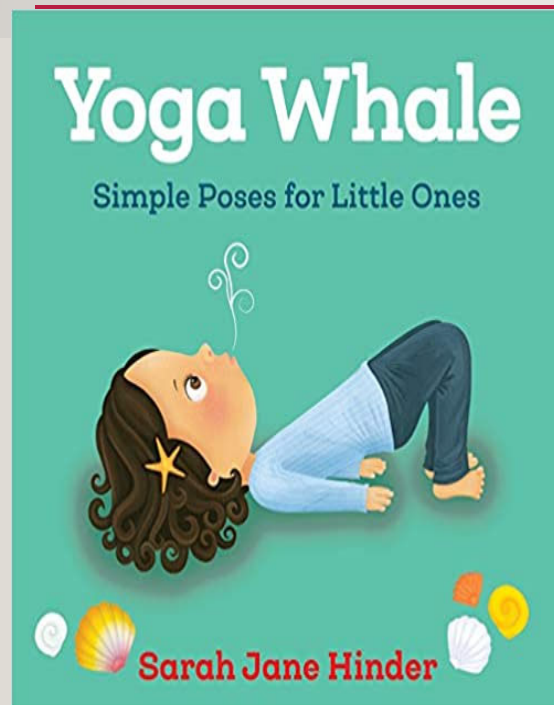


- Cookie Breathing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMdOPZGruYI>



YOGA AND MINDFULNESS EXERCISES



MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES



MOVING

- Satisfies sensory needs of children
- Promotes healing and development
- Encourages regulation in relationships

(Warfield, Lucas, & Snell, 2021)



MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES

- Ring around the Rosie
- London Bridge
- Conga Line
- Parachute Play
- Obstacle Courses
- Spoon Races



RHYTHM

- Play-based activities for children include rhythm as it helps to regulate children
- Musical beats to increase regulation
- Jack Hartman's "I can Move My Body Like Anything":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLaJ4jyKBUY>



SINGING SONGS AND FINGER PLAYS

- Teach little ones the sounds of words
- They hear the rhythm of language
- They gain large and small motor skills through mindful movements
- **Resource**: Rivas, E. (2020). 10 classic handclapping games to teach your child. Retrieved from: <https://www.todaysparent.com/family/10-classic-hand-clapping-games-to-teach-your-kid/>

SENSORY INTEGRATION

- **Sensory-based activities with things like**

- Sand
- Play-Doh, clay
- Shaving cream
- Frozen pom pom balls
- Painting, coloring, drawing
- Pipe cleaners



(Warfield, Lucas, & Snell, 2021)

WATER PLAY

- Promotes feeling of mastery
- Outlet for aggression
- Relaxation and absorption
- Satisfaction for the immature
- Liberation
- Versatile



GROUNDING

- Caregivers can practice noticing, paraphrasing, and repeting to serve as grounding activities to promote regulation.



GROUNDING ACTIVITIES

5-4-3-2-1 Senses – Have child identify:

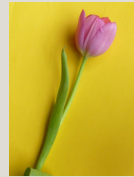
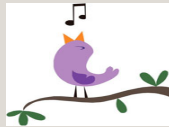
5 things they see,

4 things they hear,

3 things they smell,

2 things they can touch, and

1 thing they can taste



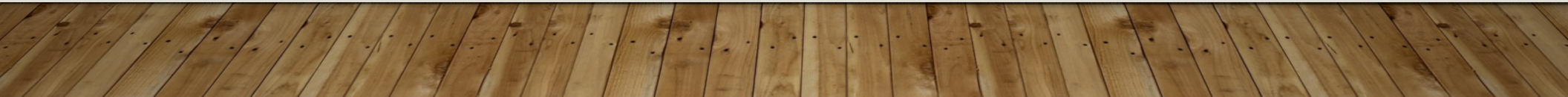
Counselorkeri.com (2019, April 2). *10 grounding exercises for kids*. <http://www.counselorkeri.com/2019/04/02/help-kids-manage-worry/>

GROUNDING ACTIVITY

- Be a Tree

Have the child feel their connection with the ground by imagining they are a tree. Have them say “ I am firmly planted. I feel my feet rooted to the ground. My back is a strong trunk helping me feel stable in the moment. I feel my toes connecting with the ground. My arms are my branches. I feel them reach out into the world.”

Counselorkeri.com (2019, April 2). *10 grounding exercises for kids.*
<http://www.counselorkeri.com/2019/04/02/help-kids-manage-worry/>



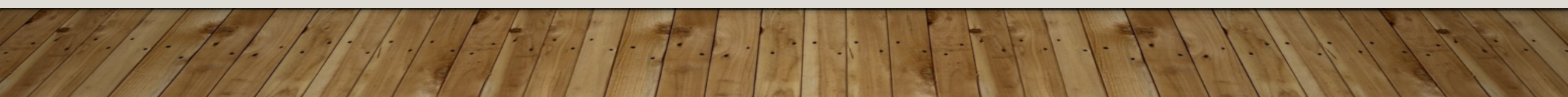
GROUNDING ACTIVITY

- Adapted Power Hug

Have the child place their left hand on the right shoulder and tap and then their right hand on the left shoulder and tap. Then have them give themselves a squeeze hug while saying an affirmation, e.g., I am safe in the moment, or I am in control. Have them repeat this pattern (tap, tap, squeeze, affirm) as many times as possible.

Counselorkeri.com (2019, April 2). *10 grounding exercises for kids*.
<http://www.counselorkeri.com/2019/04/02/help-kids-manage-worry/>

WHAT ALL CHILDREN NEED:5 R'S

- **Relationships** that are safe, secure, and loving—these help the child feel cared for and worthy of love.
-
- **Responsive** interactions that allow the child to initiate a sound, a task, a game—and get a positive response from an adult. These help children learn that what they do has an impact on the world around them.
 - **Respect** for the child, and for the child's family and culture. Treating the child as an individual with rights and feelings goes a long way toward establishing feelings of self-esteem.
 - **Routines** provide comfort for the child, allowing him to predict what will come next during the day. They also encourage memory and the development of early organizational skills.
 - **Repetition** of activities actually strengthens the connections between brain cells. While adults usually tire of repetition, children are drawn to repeat activities and tasks over and over again in an attempt to master them.
 - *Source:* Adapted from Seibel, Britt, Gillespie, and Parlakian (2006).
- 

SELF-CARE

- As caregivers, teachers, and providers, remember the importance of implementing self-care.
- It is difficult to serve as a co-regulator if you are not regulated yourself
- Engage in self-care practices:
 - Chair Yoga
 - Mindfulness



RESOURCES

- Bailey, Becky.A. (2000). *I love you rituals*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Booth, P.B., & Jernberg, A.M. (2010). *Theraplay: Helping parents and children build better relationships through attachment-based play* (3rd ed). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-bass.
- Dana, D. (2021). *Anchored: How to befriend your nervous system using polyvagal theory*. Louisville, CO: Sounds True.
- Ms. Flete's Counseling Spot (n.d.) Cookie Breathing. Retrieved from:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMdOPZGruYI>
- Goodyear Brown, P.(2019). *Trauma and play therapy*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hartman, J. I can move my body like anything: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLaJ4jyKBUY>

RESOURCES

- Hartman, Shake break Brain exercise- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-8CSs7XnIo>
- Head Start Early Child /Learning and Knowledge Center Active Play Resources
Website::<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/browse/keyword/active-play>.
- Kearney, B., Ritzenthaler, H., Gray, Georgie, & Yoder, W. (2018). *Joyful Together: using everyday moments to build resilience in children*: Ohio Guidestone.
- Kreative Leadership (2017). 5 Incredibly fun games to teach self regulations (self control) social emotional learning. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_O1brYwdSY
- Morin, V.K. (1993). *Messy activities and more*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press.

RESOURCES

- Rivas, E. (2020). 10 classic handclapping games to teach your child. Retrieved from:
<https://www.todaysparent.com/family/10-classic-hand-clapping-games-to-teach-your-kid/>
- Seibel, N., Britt, D., Gillespie, L.,& Prlakian, R. (2006). Preventing child abuse and neglect: Parent Provider Partnerships in Child Care. Washington, DC: Zero to Three.
- Sesame Street Resilience Tool Kit- Retrieved from:
https://www.google.com/aclk?sa=l&ai=DChcSEwjCrbz8u7z0AhX8dG8EHZ7vA6sYABAA GgJqZg&ae=2&sig=AOD64_0xQYtNWqyQMjUJPfbYwcxqHBSOg&q&adurl&ved=2ah UKEwjrlLD8u7z0AhXVQs0KHaJXBp8Q0Qx6BAgCEAE
- Stewart, W.& Braun, M.(2017). *Mindful kids:50 mindfulness activities for kindness, focus, and calm*. Cambridge, MA: Barefoot Books.

RESOURCES

- Turner-Brumberry, T. (2018) 2,4, 6, 8, *this is how we regulate: 75 Play therapy activities to increase mindfulness in children*. Eau Claire, WI, PESI Publishing.
- Unicef (n.d.). *Safe fun and learning during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak*. Retrieved from: <https://www.unicef.org/parenting/coronavirus-covid-19-guide-parents/indoor-play-ideas-stimulate-young-children-home>
- Warfield, J. Lucas, E., Snell, K.(2021) The power of play in IECMHC intervention therapy. On-line module for OCCRA, Early Childhood Infant Mental Health Credential.