

Trauma-Sensitive Teachers

TRAUMA SENSITIVE TOOL

Relationships & Connection

As summer is ending and we are preparing for the start of the new school year, we need to begin thinking about relationships and how we can start connecting to our students. YES, even before the school year begins.

Why must we pre-build strong relationships? When a child has a strong relationship with his or her teacher, that relationship will provide the security and safety the child needs in order for academic achievements to eventually occur.

A student will only learn when they feel safe and secure. Let's repeat that! A STUDENT WILL ONLY LEARN WHEN THEY FEEL SAFE AND SECURE. So, let's begin now. Let's begin to build that bond, build those connections! A strong relationship with their teacher helps students form a strong foundation for success! So, what kinds of things can we do now?

01

Get to know your students: knowledge is power!

- A. Reach out to last year's teacher.** They will have the best insight to your incoming students. Remember, they may not be trauma informed, so take their information with a trauma informed lens and do not pre-judge your students.
- B. Reach out to the parents/caregivers/guardians.** Send a short survey (sample attached) asking about likes, dislikes, whom the student lives with, etc.
- C. Do they have IEP's?** You'll typically get more information here, and special education teachers will have great insight.

02

Reach out to your students and let them know about you!

- A. Send a post card** with your face on it. Let them know who you are and that you are excited to meet them. (sample card attached)
- B. Send an email video** while in your classroom, of the classroom door, front of school, tour of your classroom, your break area, etc.
- C. Send a small token in the mail.** This will help your students feel special, and that you took the time to think about them.

03

Invite your families into your classroom one at a time other than open house, when things are over stimulating, preferably BEFORE school starts. Make sure to show them:

- A.** Where child will enter the building
- B.** Classroom
- C.** Bathrooms
- D.** Where child will hang coat and backpack
- E.** Lunchroom
- F.** Playground/Recess Area
- G.** Desk – where child will sit. If possible, have name tag on his/ her desk.

Relationships are important! Making multiple connections and allowing your students, especially those impacted by trauma, see you & hear you, as many times as possible prior to school starting will set a wonderful beginning foundation to that trusting relationship they need to feel safe and be successful. As you saw in the video, there are a lot of impacts of trauma at play moving into a new school year, as well as a lot of triggers. We are glad you are here and our hope for you is that you can find some simple tools to put into place to help your most impacted students.

RELATIONSHIPS are so CRUCIAL! You need to start early, plant those seeds and keep watering them throughout the year, and we will be here to remind you to water and attend to those most important relationships.

This may all seem overwhelming at first, but make it simple on yourself.

You can purchase blank post cards at any local super store; they don't have to be fancy. Your students will just love seeing what you look like, learn a little about you and of course getting something for them in the mail will make them feel special!

For the video, simply use your cell phone to take a short classroom video and connect by saying hello allowing your students to hear your voice and see your face again. Remember it doesn't have to be perfect, just short and sweet so they can see you, hear you and see a little bit of the classroom helping to ease that anxiety that is already building. Remember to save your files to make these steps easier in the years to come.