



National Adoption Competency  
Mental Health **Training Initiative**

Advancing Practice for Permanency & Well-Being

# Therapeutic Strategies to Heal and Promote Attunement, Attachment and Connection

Edna Davis-Brown, MPH  
Lisa D. Maynard, LMSW  
NTI Implementation Specialists



# POLL

What area of the U.S. do you reside/work?

- ✓ Northeast
- ✓ Mid-Atlantic
- ✓ South East
- ✓ South West
- ✓ Mid-west
- ✓ West
- ✓ U.S. Territory
- ✓ Other



# What We Will Cover Today.....



## Welcome & Introductions

- Objectives
- Overview of NTI
- **Healing the mind, body, and spirit utilizing evidence-based protocols, tools, and strategies for supporting attachment, attunement, and connections with those who struggle with adversity.**
- NTI Access & Implementation Options
- Q&A

# Learning Objectives

1. Describe the impact of trauma on attachment, and social-emotional development for adoptive/guardianship families.
2. Identify three evidence-based tools and/or strategies to support healing and attachment.
3. List at least 3 interventions that workers can utilize to support attachment, attunement and promote felt safety.
4. Demonstrate competence using tools as practiced in this workshop that support attachment, attunement and promote felt safety.

# POLL

## What's Your Current Role?

- ✓ Member of the Adoption Constellation
- ✓ Administrator
- ✓ Supervisor
- ✓ Caseworker/ Case Manager
- ✓ Therapist
- ✓ Social Worker
- ✓ Other





*the nonprofit*

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SUPPORT AND EDUCATION**

*since 1998*

- ✓ Adoption competent clinical services
- ✓ Adoption competency training for professionals
- ✓ Publications and educational programs

[www.adoptionsupport.org](http://www.adoptionsupport.org)

C.A.S.E.  
20  
YEARS  
1998-2018

# Advancing Practice for Permanency & Well-Being!



**National** Adoption Competency  
Mental Health **Training Initiative**

Approved by NASW for continuing education credits.



NTI is **FREE** web-based training that enables you to better address the mental health needs of children in foster, adoptive or guardianship families.



*Available nationally in 2020, NTI trainings provide:*

- Tools and free resources to enhance casework and clinical practice.
- Assessment and therapeutic strategies to address behavioral challenges.
- A shared language for **Child Welfare and Mental Health Professionals** to foster collaboration.

Learn more at: [www.adoptionsupport.org/nti](http://www.adoptionsupport.org/nti)



NTI was funded through a cooperative agreement (#90CO1121) between the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services and the Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.).

## **Child Welfare Curriculum**

**20 hours**

**Supervisors – 25 hours**

### **Child Welfare Curriculum Offers:**

- 8 Interactive Learning Modules focused on Casework Practice (20 hours)
- 5 additional hours of supervisor-specific lessons with a downloadable “*Supervisor Coaching and Activity Guide*” to support application of learning to daily practice
- Approved by NASW for 20 / 25 continuing education credits\*

## **Mental Health Curriculum**

**30 hours**

**Coaching Sessions Option**

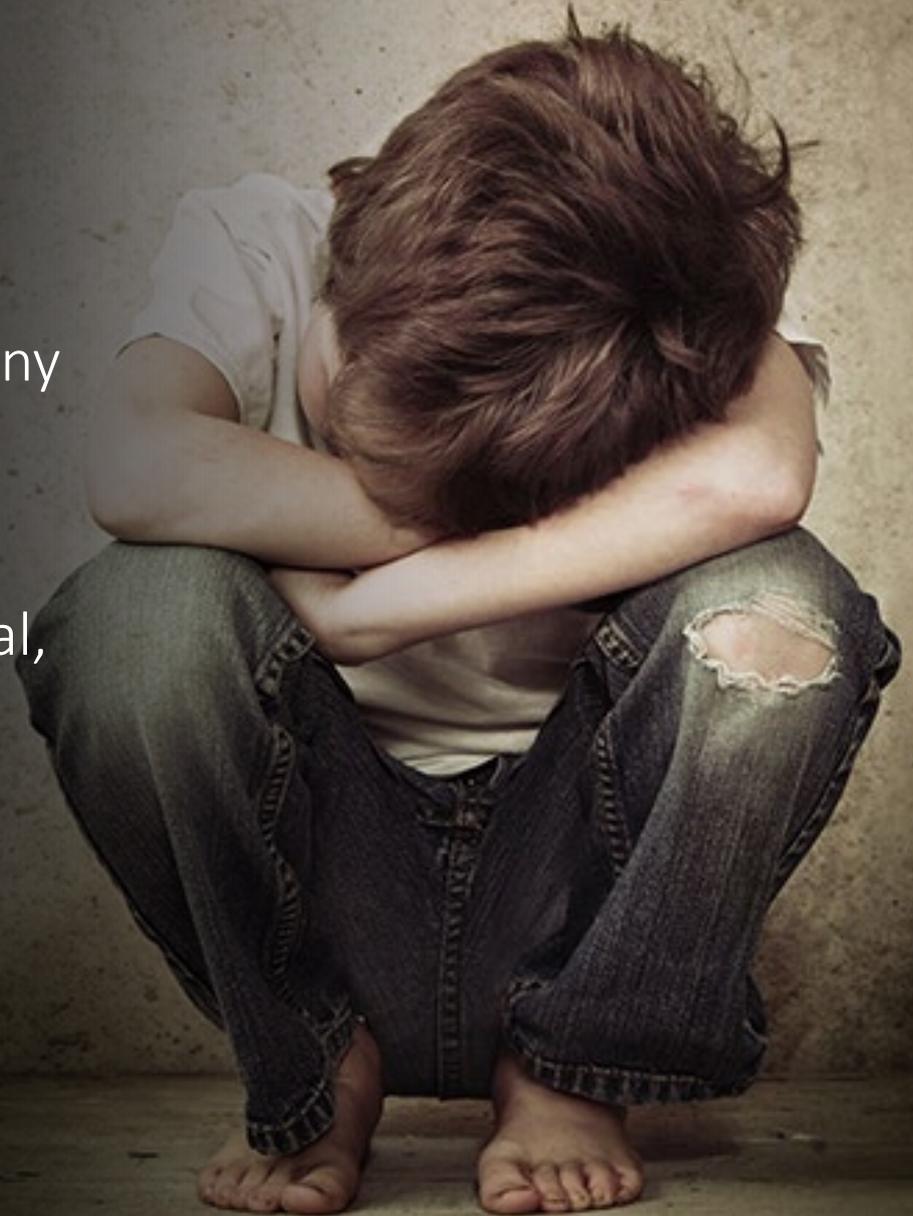
### **Mental Health Curriculum Offers:**

- 10 Interactive Learning Modules focused on Clinical Practice (30 hours)
- Includes new assessment and treatment strategies through an adoption lens
- Provides information on 12 evidence-based treatment interventions
- Approved by NASW for 25 continuing education credits\*

## Why is Specialized Training Needed?

Because of traumatic life experiences and early losses, many children who are adopted, in guardianship or in foster care, experience elevated risks for developmental, health, emotional, and behavioral challenges.

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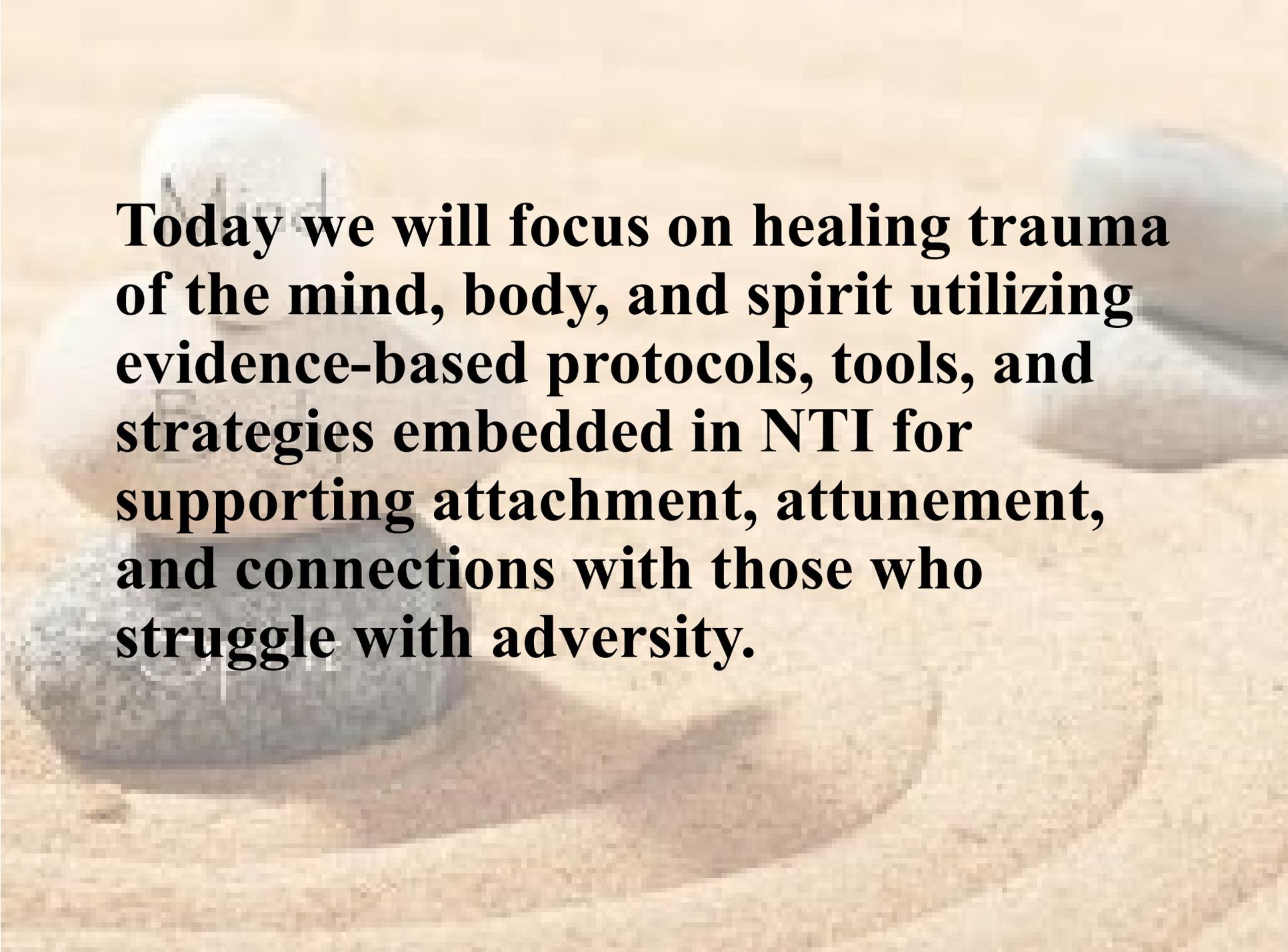
**The impact of these experiences and challenges compromises well-being and family stability, for example:**

The American Academy of Pediatrics (2015) estimates up to **80% of children** come into foster care with a **significant mental health need**.

**40% of youth adopted from foster care** are diagnosed with ADD/ADHD with high incidence of pre-natal drug/alcohol exposure (Smith, 2006).

Adoptive families utilize clinical services at **triple the rate** reported by families formed by birth. (Howard, Smith & Ryan, 2004; Vandivere, Malm & Radel, 2009).

Foster/adoptive parents reported **1/3 of children had emotional problems and 40% had educational problems**. (Festinger, 2006).

A close-up photograph of a person's hands, one resting on the other, with a soft, out-of-focus background. The hands are positioned in the center of the frame, with the fingers slightly curled. The background is a warm, golden-brown color, possibly a wall or a piece of fabric, with a subtle texture. The lighting is soft and even, highlighting the contours of the hands.

**Today we will focus on healing trauma of the mind, body, and spirit utilizing evidence-based protocols, tools, and strategies embedded in NTI for supporting attachment, attunement, and connections with those who struggle with adversity.**

# Developmental Trauma Disorder



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***Characterized by seven domains of impairment in children exposed to complex trauma:***

- Attachment
- Biology
- Affect regulation
- Dissociation
- Behavioral control
- Cognition
- Self-concept



# Trauma Impacts Attachment

- Insecure attachment patterns
- Reactive aggression toward authority figures and peers
- Difficulty empathizing with other's feelings
- Boundary problems





# The Impact of Insecure Attachment

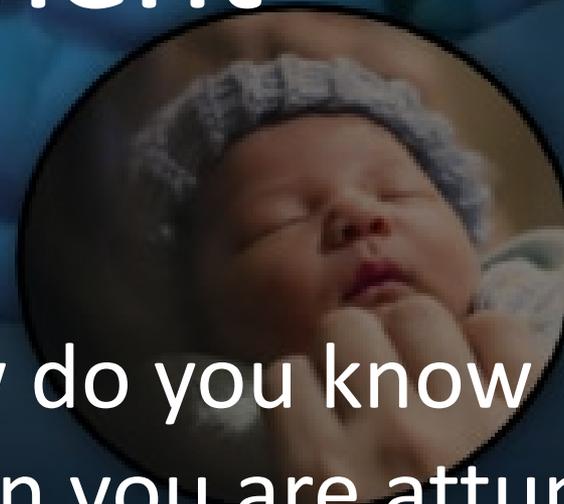


# Trauma Impacts Biology & Affect Regulation

- Extreme mood swings
- Trouble calming down
- Difficulty identifying and communicating emotions
- Depression or anxiety
- Problems managing anger
- Strong fears
  
- **Impaired brain development**
- **Imbalanced neurochemistry**
- **Physical complaints (headaches, stomachaches)**
- **Sensory processing difficulties**



# Attunement



How do you know  
when you are attuned?

# Internal working model



# Dissociation

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**Depersonalization and derealization**

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**Shifts in awareness of the environment**

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**Diminished awareness of own sensation, emotion, bodily states**

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**Excessive daydreaming or spacing out**

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**Distinct alterations or shifts in states of consciousness**

## Behavior Control

- **Impulsivity**
- **Lack of exploration**
- **Oppositional or aggressive behaviors**
- **High-risk behaviors, such as violence, self-injury, substance abuse, and sexualized behaviors**
- **Sleeping or eating difficulties.**

# Cognition

Difficulty with:

- Executive functions
- Higher level cognitive skills, such as working memory, reasoning, flexibility, focused attention, self-reflection, and problem-solving
- Learning problems
- Delayed language development
- Sense of shortened future



## Self-Concept

- Negative self-concept
- Feelings of guilt or shame

"The opposite of fear  
is felt-safety, and we  
know how to promote  
felt-safety: through  
connection."

- Dr. David Cross -



## Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI)

# TBRI

## WHAT IS TBRI?

CHILDREN FROM "HARD PLACES" NEED PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS WHO ARE INSIGHTFUL, PREPARED, EQUIPPED, AND COMMITTED FOR THE LONG-TERM.

### RECOGNIZING HOW PARENTS SOMETIMES GET IT WRONG

- Wait too long to seek help
- Withdraw and isolate themselves
- Believe that all of the family's problems reside with the child
- Fail to understand and embrace a parenting approach that focuses on the holistic needs of the child
- Look for a quick or easy "fix"

PARENTS MUST REMEMBER THAT THEY HAVE BEEN CALLED TO BE THE PRIMARY CHANGE AGENTS IN THE LIFE OF THEIR CHILD.

"ALL CHILDREN NEED TO KNOW THAT THEY'RE PRECIOUS AND UNIQUE AND SPECIAL. BUT, A CHILD WHO COMES FROM A HARD PLACE NEEDS TO KNOW IT MORE DESPERATELY."

—DR. KARYN PURVIS

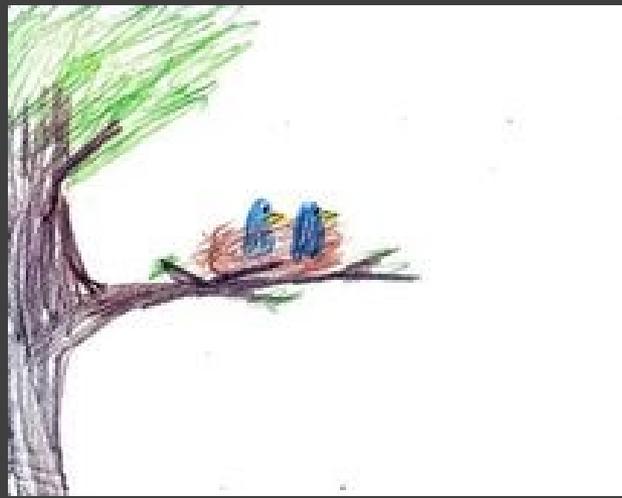
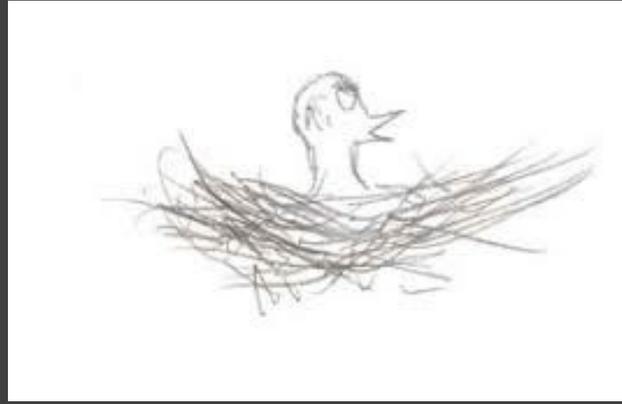
### REMEMBER

- "UN-LEARNING" some of what we already know can be as important as learning new ideas and strategies.
- To recognize that IT IS NEVER TOO LATE to start focusing in the right direction.
- YOUR PRIMARY MOTIVATION—the reason why you are doing what you are doing—must be a desire to love unconditionally.
- Being or becoming the "perfect parent" is not our goal. Our goal is to BE MORE FAITHFUL TO LOVE OUR CHILDREN in the way they need to be loved.
- TRUST-BASED RELATIONAL INTERVENTION (TBRI) HAS PROVEN EFFICACY with children of all ages in all kinds of places and with all behavioral and developmental profiles.

**TRUST-BASED RELATIONAL INTERVENTION® (TBRI) IS AN ATTACHMENT-BASED, TRAUMA-INFORMED INTERVENTION THAT IS DESIGNED TO MEET THE COMPLEX NEEDS OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN.**



Helping Children Tell Their Story



# Bird's Nest Assessment



# Loss Box

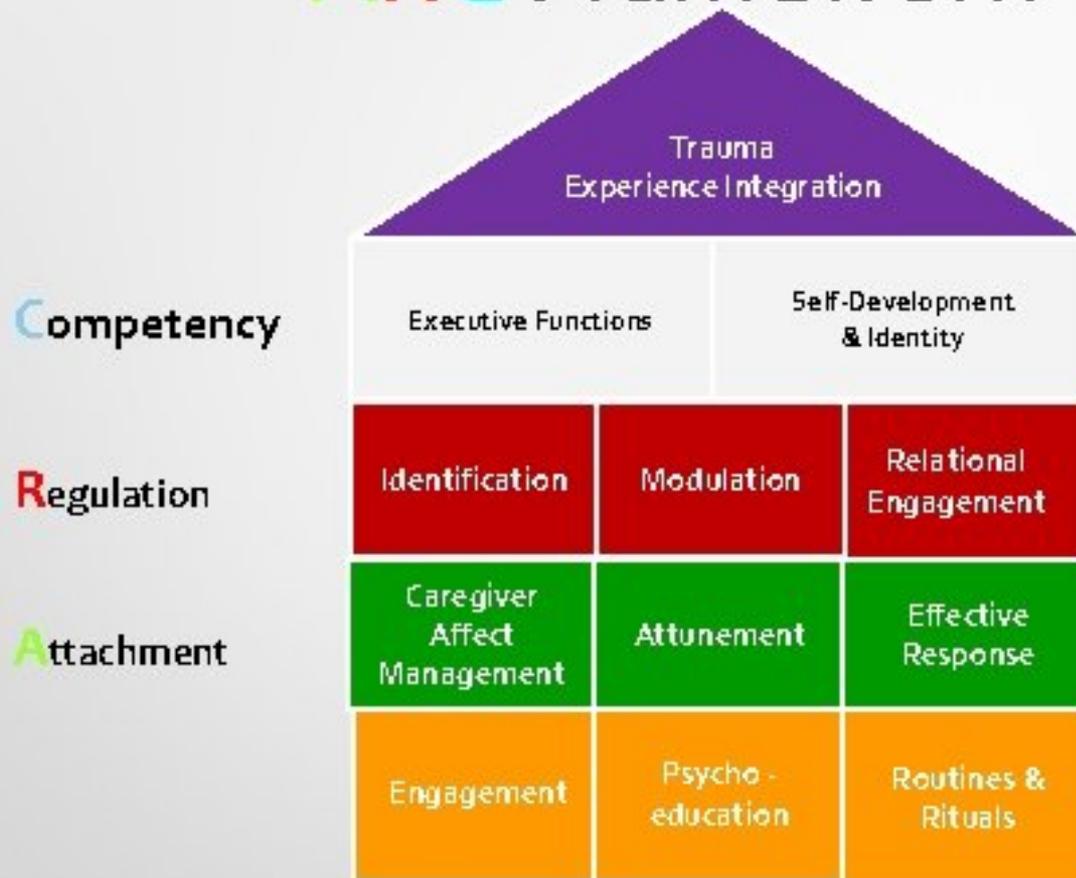
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People didn't  
take care  
of me



# ARC Framework



Graphic by Jeremy Karpen; Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010; Kinniburgh & Blaustein, 2005

# 5 Steps for Brain Building

## 5 Steps for Brain-Building Serve and Return

1



### Notice the serve and share the child's focus of attention.

Every time the song "The Wheels on the Bus" is sung or play the child does a facial expression, he or she smile. Also, I noticed that the child moves her/his arms and legs as if she/he is dancing to the rhythm of the song. Hence, make sounds like "aaah" as if the child is trying to sing. On the contrary, when another song is played the child does not show the same serve. By noticing this serve, I learn about child interests and likes related to this type of song.

2



### Return the serve by supporting and encouraging.

I will return the serve by encouraging the child and letting her/him know that I notice; because, this makes the child know that his/her thoughts and feelings are heard and understood. Every time the song is playing, I can offer comfort in different ways such as nodding and clapping at the rhythm of the song. Thus, by dancing to the song, and singing the song and smiling back at him/her. By doing all the actions mentioned before is to let the child know that I also want to join in and that I also have fun with that song.

3



### Give it a name!

When returning the child's serve, I will name what she/he is doing because that make meaningful language connections in the child's brain, even before she can talk or understand my words. When the song starts playing, I will say, "This song is called the wheel on the bus." Also, when the child smile, I can tell he/she, "You are smiling because you like this song." If the child starts to clap, I can point to them or do the same action as I say, "Yes, we are clapping."

4



### Take turns...and wait. Keep the interaction going back and forth.

When I return the serve by clapping, it is probably that the child is going to take time to do the same. I have to be patient and wait because it will help me understand the child needs. It is important not to stop the return because taking turns sometimes can be quick or sometimes it takes longer for some children. Children need time to develop their responses, particularly when they are discovering so many things at once.

5



### Practice endings and beginnings.

The children start to recognize when the song comes to an end and when this happens, he/she sometimes point the electronic device where the song plays as asking that he or she wants to hear it again. In other cases, the child picks up a new toy that makes sounds and starts to show more interesting in the toy rather than the song. When the child does that is the moment, I notice that he/she is ready to end the activity and begin something new.

SECURE:  
CONFIDENT,  
RECIPROCAL, NON-  
REACTIVE,  
RESILIENT

ANXIOUS-  
PREOCCUPIED:  
EMOTIONAL  
HUNGER, FANTASY  
BOND, LACK OF  
NURTURING,  
TURBULENCE

ATTACHMENT  
STYLES

DISMISSIVE-  
AVOIDANT:  
ISOLATION,  
AMBIGUITY,  
AMBIVALENCE,  
EMOTIONALLY-  
DISTANT

FEARFUL-  
AVOIDANT:  
INTERNAL  
CONFLICT,  
DRAMATIC,  
UNPREDICTABLE,  
AMBIVALENCE



# Ways to Facilitate Attachment





## Ways to Facilitate Attachment

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- Hold and cuddle your child.
- Make eye contact.
- Watch and listen to your baby.
- Comfort your when they cry.
- Speak in a warm, soothing tone of voice.
- Maintain realistic expectations of your child.
- Practice being fully present.
- Practice being self-aware.



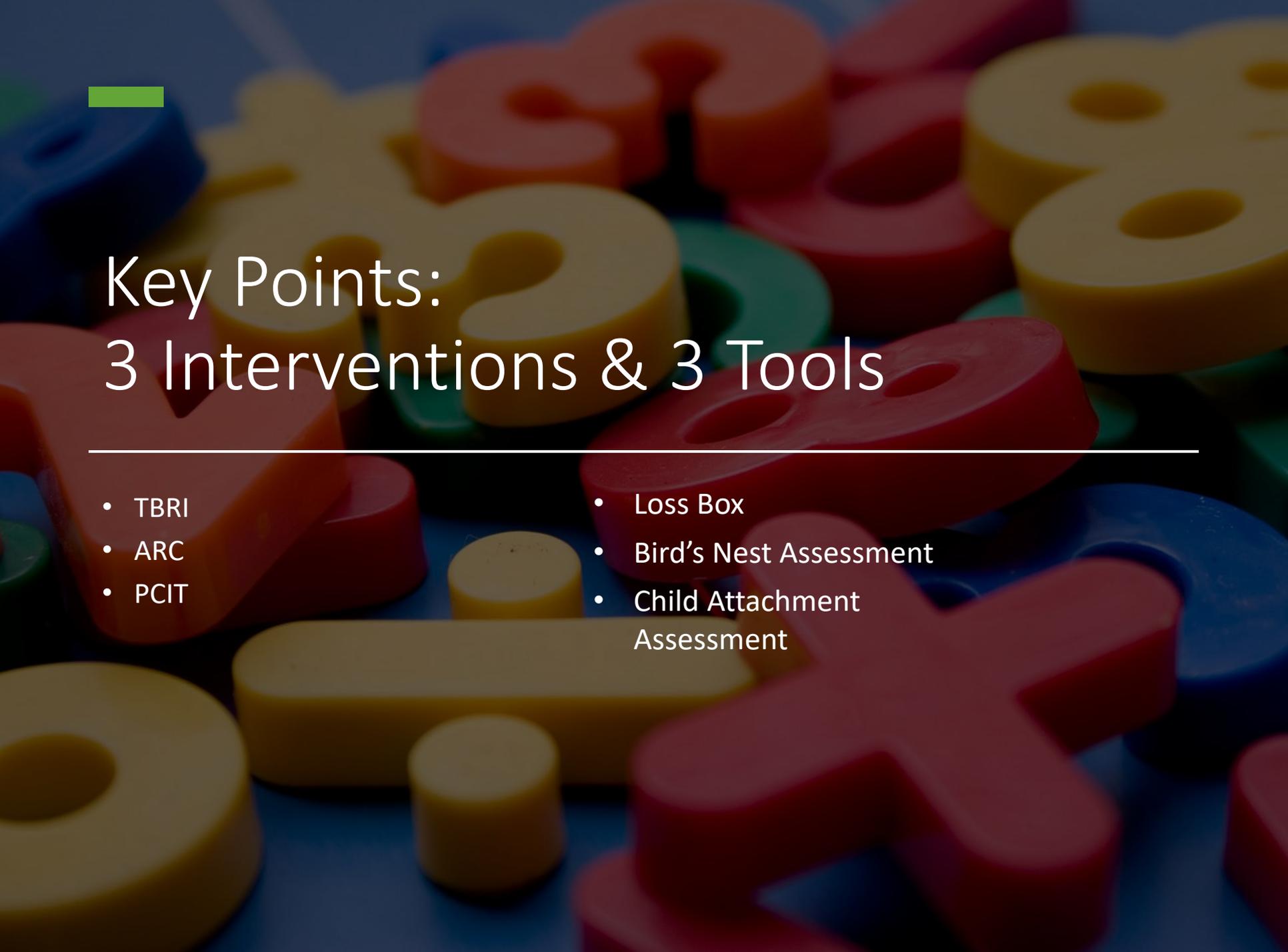
A photograph of a man and a young boy in an outdoor setting. The man, wearing a grey cap and a dark blue jacket, is hugging the boy from behind. The boy is wearing a red puffer jacket and a red baseball cap, and is smiling broadly. The background shows a paved area, possibly a playground or sports court, with a green fence and trees in the distance. The text "Child Attachment Assessment" is overlaid in white on the image.

# Child Attachment Assessment



## Two phases:

- Establish warmth through learning and applying skills to help children feel calm, secure in their relationships with their parents, and good about themselves.
- Learn to manage challenging behaviors while remaining confident, calm, and consistent. Learn proven strategies to help your child accept limits, comply with directions, respect house rules, and demonstrate appropriate behavior in public.



# Key Points: 3 Interventions & 3 Tools

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- TBRI
- ARC
- PCIT
- Loss Box
- Bird's Nest Assessment
- Child Attachment Assessment



## NTI: Advancing Practice for Permanency and Well-Being

- Support children to heal from trauma and loss and build.
- Provide child welfare and mental health professionals with tools and strategies designed to help build and rebuild healthy attachments between children and families.
- Provide parents with skills to facilitate attachment and parent more effectively.



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NTI Trainings ▾

Access Options for Training ▾

Evaluation Outcomes ▾

Communication Tools to Share ▾

Webinars and Events ▾

NATIONAL DIRECTOR

## Accessing NTI Web-Based Training

### *Get Ready to Experience NTI!*

#### *Options for Individuals & Organizations*

Whether you are a Child Welfare or Mental Health professional, or an administrator in an organization, you can choose your preferred way to access the free web-based NTI training. Administrators are encouraged to explore integration options, if needed, so your team can successfully make NTI trainings available to staff and others with the desired data, reporting, tracking and support options.

#### **Individuals can access either LMS:**

**Access on C.A.S.E. LMS**

Get Free NASW CEUs + Help Desk

**Access on CapLEARN**

Get CEUs for purchase

**Frequently Asked Questions**



Would you like to receive NTI Updates?

Please [Click HERE](#).

**Organizational Implementation**





**Edna Davis-Brown, MPH**

**NTI Implementation Specialist**

**240.602.4156**

**[davis\\_brown@adoptionssupport.org](mailto:davis_brown@adoptionssupport.org)**

**Lisa D. Maynard, LMSW**

**NTI Implementation Specialist**

**585.507.7588**

**[maynard@adoptionssupport.org](mailto:maynard@adoptionssupport.org)**



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