

RAISING RESILIENCE

REVILLA ISLAND RESILIENCE INITIATIVE

Volume 1/Issue 4

Raising Resilience

will feature facts about healthy brain development, information on preventing childhood trauma, and tips on how to build healthy relationships between kids and caring adults. Resilient families and communities mean better outcomes for everyone!



Consistent caregiver support is the best way to help a child cope with stress.

[Click on hyperlinks for more resources!](#)

STRESS AND THE DEVELOPING BRAIN

Last week the newsletter talked about brain development. It touched on how children's brains develop neural connections and then strengthen the ones they use and prune the ones they don't.

Stress and the developing brain – this week we are discussing stress. Stress is a natural part of life and can even be beneficial. As mentioned in the first newsletter, there are three types of stress children experience: positive stress, tolerable stress and toxic stress.

Three Levels of Stress Response

Positive

Brief increases in heart rate, mild elevations in stress hormone levels.

Tolerable

Serious, temporary stress responses, buffered by supportive relationships.

Toxic

Prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective relationships.

Center on the Developing Child  HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Positive stress is moderate and brief. Learning to cope with this sort of stress is an essential part of a child's development. Examples of positive stress include: meeting new people (such as new teachers or other children), going somewhere new (like a new school or daycare), or learning a new skill (like how to ride a bike). These events are stressful, but short lived, which helps children learn how to manage the feelings that come along with stress.

Tolerable stress is instances where the stress has the potential to harm a developing brain if experienced for a long period of time.

Tolerable stress can aid brain development when a child has time to recover from the event afterwards. For instance, a death of a pet may be a stressful experience, but with support from caregivers and time to recover, it won't harm a child's developing brain.

Toxic stress is when a child experiences strong, frequent and/or long lasting stressful experiences and does not have a supportive adult to help the navigate the trauma. Examples of this include neglect, caregivers who do not respond consistently to their children, abuse, poverty, or food scarcity.



Experiencing any form of stress activates hormonal responses in the brain. The repeated activation of these responses by toxic stress can upset brain development. Since the brain is still building neural pathways, repeated exposure to stress causes a child's brain to build pathways to stress responses instead of other useful skills. This makes a child hyper-alert and forces them to constantly look for danger. It can impair their ability to respond to nurture or kindness from others. It also harms their ability to control their impulses, retain memories, and function in everyday life.

Lastly, toxic stress has been linked to the development of many stress-related diseases later in life. Children who experience toxic stress are more likely to develop heart disease, diabetes, depression and/or develop a substance abuse problem later in life.

If you want to learn more about stress and the brain [here](#) is an article by the Department of Health and Human Services.



WAYS TO BUILD RESILIENCE

Connection is an important part of all people's lives. Make sure you take time to connect with your own friends and family and ask for help if you need it!

USEFUL LOCAL RESOURCE



If you are looking to distress and re-center yourself, the Ketchikan Public Library offers a free [Mindfulness Yoga Class every Monday night!](#)

Positive Solutions for Families

is a six-week class offered in Ketchikan for parents, foster parents, and other primary care providers with children under 5 years old. The class focuses on ways to build a healthy relationship with your child through every day interactions in order to lay a foundation for lifelong success. Call Community Connections at 225-7825 for information on the next class.