



HOW EXPERIENCES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CREATE A HEALTHY SOCIETY

The human brain is an amazing and complex organ that allows each of us to think, feel and act. The qualities of humanity which have allowed us to create a democratic government, complex economies, astounding technologies and all other manifestations of our current society are mediated by the human brain.

In turn, these brain systems which allow us to think, feel, and act are shaped by experience. Furthermore, it is increasingly clear that the experiences of childhood act as primary architects of the brain's capabilities throughout the rest of life. These organizing childhood experiences can be consistent, nurturing, structured and enriched - resulting in flexible, responsible, empathic and intelligent contributors to society. Or, all too often, childhood experiences can be neglectful, chaotic, violent and abusive - resulting in impulsive, aggressive, remorseless, and intellectually-impoverished members of society. One set of experiences will produce tax-payers and one set of experiences will produce tax-consumers.

WHAT DOES GOVERNMENT NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT?

- ◆ The brain is undeveloped at birth. During the first three years of life, the brain organizes in a 'use-dependent' way, mirroring the pattern, quality and quantity of the experiences of the infant.
- ◆ The root neurobiological structures for all future functioning are established in early childhood and provide the foundation for more complex feeling, thinking and behaving which develop during the rest of life. Roughly 85 % of these core brain structures are 'organized' by age three.
- ◆ Chaos, neglect and violence in early childhood result in disorganized and under-developed brains.
- ◆ Consistent, nurturing, predictable and 'enriched' experiences in a safe setting result in optimal brain organization and function.

WHY SHOULD GOVERNMENT BE INVOLVED IN EARLY CHILDHOOD?

- ◆ These are public health issues. Government has already decided that it is in the public interest to aggressively legislate interventions which decrease destructive and expensive health problems such as infectious diseases. Childhood experiences have no less a critical role in determining the health and productivity of the population - and deserve equal standing in public health policy.
- ◆ If programs and policies can increase the percentage of intelligent, empathic, productive members of our society and decrease the percentage requiring special education, mental health, child welfare, child protective and juvenile justice services, it is clearly in the best interests of our society.

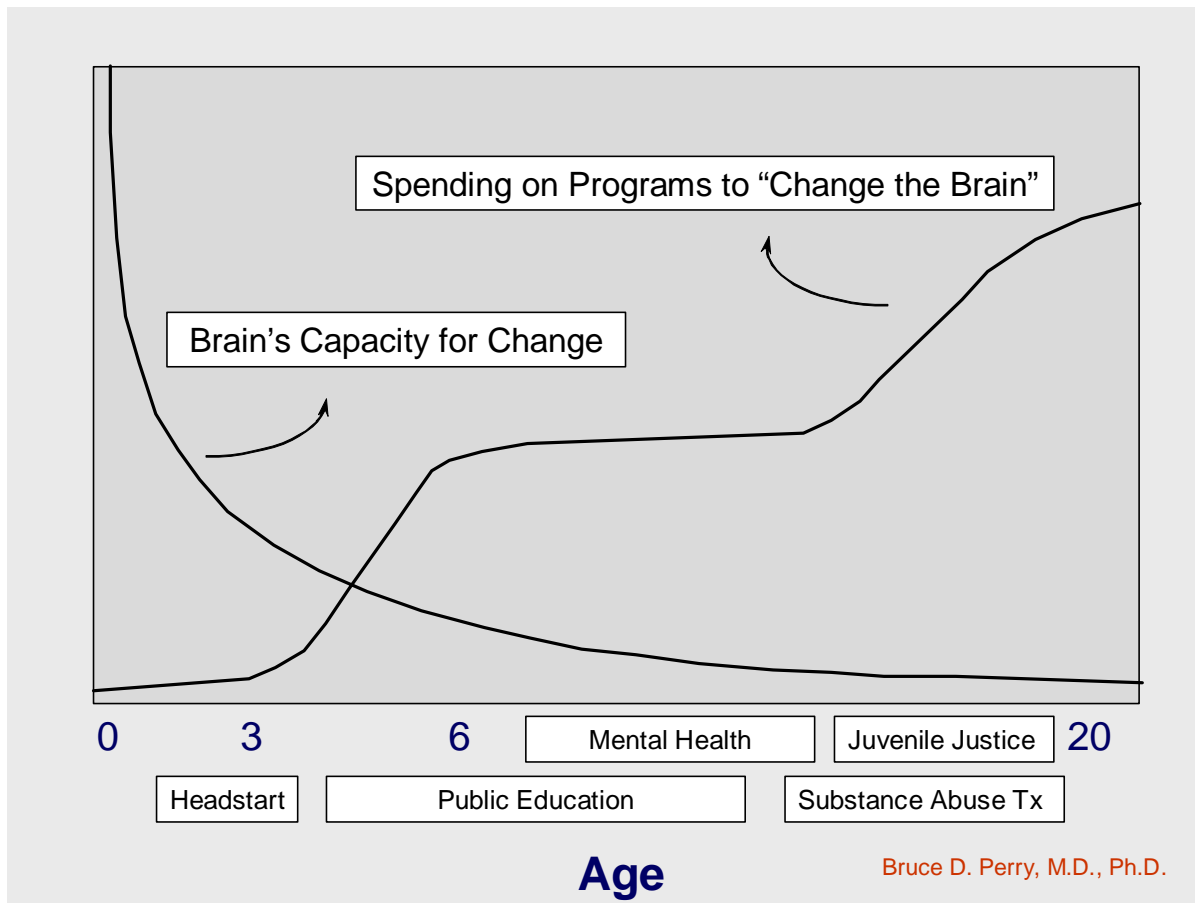
HOW CAN GOVERNMENT HELP CREATE OPTIMAL EXPERIENCES FOR CHILDREN?

- ◆ Innovative and effective early intervention and enrichment models exist. Find out about them. Integrate them into the policy and practices that exist in your community.
- ◆ Demand and support high standards for day-care, foster care, education and child protective service.
- ◆ Support research in child development and basic neurobiology. With more knowledge will come more efficient and effective programs - for children and adults.
- ◆ The major providers of early childhood experience are parents. Programs to support and strengthen the family will increase the likelihood of optimal childhood experiences.
- ◆ Integrate key principles of child development and caregiving into public education. At present we require more formal education and training for driving cars than for raising children.



Neglect and abuse during the first three years of life can result in a lifetime of lost potential. Safety, structure, nurturing and enrichment in these first three years can result in a lifetime of productivity.

The Mismatch Between Opportunity and Investment



The ChildTrauma Academy is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to research and education on child maltreatment. To support its mission, the Academy has two main activities; 1) Specialized education and training services and 2) Program development and consultation.

Please visit www.ChildTrauma.org for more information about the Academy's educational materials and related products.

For more information or to direct donations:

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SERIES 1

UNDERSTANDING TRAUMATIZED AND MALTREATED CHILDREN: THE CORE CONCEPTS

#1 Program CHALLENGING OUR BELIEFS In this introductory program, Dr. Perry and Art Linkletter challenge us to evaluate existing childcare systems, and urge us to consider their effectiveness.

#2 Program THE AMAZING HUMAN BRAIN Dr. Perry covers the basics of brain anatomy and function. Understanding the hierarchical make-up of the human brain helps caregivers and professionals to better diagnose children's problems and formulate effective treatment approaches. Adverse affects caused by neglect, fear, trauma, and violence are presented.

#3 Program HOW THE BRAIN DEVELOPS: THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD Dr. Perry stresses the importance of bonding and attachment as the cornerstones of early childhood optimal brain development. Various behaviors and problems of children who missed these early opportunities are discussed and examples to help in recognition and appropriate treatment paths are presented.

#4 Program NEGLECT: HOW POVERTY OF EXPERIENCE DISRUPTS DEVELOPMENT Dr. Perry presents new and dynamic information on this often ignored subject. Severe neglect and even simple missed caregiving opportunities cause various degrees of brain effects and behavior problems in maltreated children. An absence of stimulation and chaotic stimulation are both responsible for promoting an absence of experience that contributes to disruptive childhood development.

#5 Program THE FEAR RESPONSE: THE IMPACT OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA Caregivers learn to effectively recognize the behaviors and physical reactions of children in the various stages of "the fear response." This is particularly helpful in assessing, treating, and intervening with children who have been exposed to a traumatic experience.

#6 Program LIVING AND WORKING WITH TRAUMATIZED CHILDREN Dr. Perry presents in-depth information and effective skills for those who are "on the front lines" of care giving for traumatized and maltreated children. Recording a child's progress, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and respite care for caregivers help to promote effective and optimal opportunities for a healing environment.

#7 Program VIOLENCE AND CHILDHOOD Children today are bombarded with violence: violence in the media, gang violence, domestic violence, abuse, and school violence. Dr. Perry presents information concerning how insufficient brain Cortex modulation and primitive Brain Stem impulsivity can lead to acts of violence.

SERIES 2

THE SIX CORE STRENGTHS FOR HEALTHY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

#1 Program DEVELOPING POTENTIAL In this introductory program, Dr. Perry discusses the core strengths that provide a child with the framework for a life rich in family, friends, and personal growth. Teaching children these core strengths will allow children to learn to live and prosper together with people of all kinds—each bringing different strengths to create a greater whole.

#2 Program ATTACHMENT *The template for future relationships* The cornerstone to all other core strengths, attachment is the capacity to form and maintain healthy emotional bonds with another person. Healthy attachments allow a child to love, to become a good friend, and to have a positive and useful model for future relationships. As a child grows, other consistent and nurturing adults will shape his ability to develop attachments.

#3 Program SELF-REGULATION *The capacity to regulate internally* Developing and maintaining the ability to notice and control primary urges (hunger, sleep, frustration, anger, fear) is a lifelong process. Its roots begin with the external regulation provided by caregivers. Its healthy growth depends on a child's experience and the maturation of the brain. Pausing a moment between an impulse and an action is a life tool but it's a strength that must be learned—we are not born with it.

#4 Program AFFILIATION *Joining In* Affiliation is the glue for healthy human functioning. It allows us to form and maintain relationships and to create something stronger, more adaptive, and more creative than the individual. Human beings are biologically designed to live, play, grow, and work in groups. The family is a child's first and most important group. Most other groups they will join are based on circumstance or common interests. Children will have thousands of brief emotional, social, and cognitive experiences in these groups that can help shape their development.

#5 Program ATTUNEMENT *Thinking of Others* Awareness is the ability to recognize the needs, interests, strengths, and values of others. Infants begin life self-absorbed and slowly develop awareness - the ability to see beyond themselves and to sense and categorize the other people in their world. An aware child learns about the needs and complexities of others by watching, listening, and forming relationships with a variety of children. He sees ways in which we are all alike and different. With experience, he can reject labels used to categorize people, such as skin color or the language they speak. The aware child will be much less likely to exclude others from a group, to tease, and to act in a violent way.

#6 Program TOLERANCE *Accepting Differences* Tolerance is the capacity to understand and accept how others are different from you. This core strength builds upon another - awareness (once aware, what do you do with the differences you observe?). To become tolerant, a child must first face the fear of differences. This can be a challenge because children tend to affiliate based on similarities—in age, interests, families, or cultures. But they learn to be more sensitive to others by watching how the adults in their lives relate to one another. With positive modeling, caregivers can insure and build on children's tolerance. The tolerant child is more flexible and adaptive. When a child learns to accept difference in others, he becomes able to value the things that make each of us special and unique.

#7 Program RESPECT *Respecting yourself and others* Appreciating one's self-worth and the value of others grows from the preceding five strengths. An aware, tolerant child with good affiliation, attachment, and self-regulation strengths gains respect naturally. The development of respect is a lifelong process, yet its roots are in early childhood. Having respect enables a child to accept others and to see the value in diversity. He can see that every group needs many styles and strengths to succeed and he can value each person in the group for her talents. When children respect—and even celebrate—diversity, they find the world to be a more interesting, complex, and safer place. Just as understanding replaces ignorance, respect replaces fear.

EDUCATORS PACKAGE

This CD contains a set of six unique articles designed to complement and supplement each of the videos in the “Series 1 - Understanding and Working with Traumatized and Maltreated Children” video series or the “Series 2 – Six Core Strengths for Healthy Child Development.” The content is presented with images, tables, figures and other useful teaching aids. Each article is ready to print and distribute to trainees. The package also provides trainers with teaching objectives, pre- and post-tests, additional references, handouts and resources for additional learning. In addition, these materials can be used to provide up to 32 CEU credits through the ChildTrauma for post-graduate continuing education and for approved foster care educational credit in selected states (please review your state’s specific requirements).

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION SERIES

For educators and trainers wishing to use our materials for ongoing training activities, the Training Slides CD provides seven separate but complimenting Powerpoint presentations (each more than 50 slides) and handouts for each of the videos and articles in each series.

Specialized Training Packages

The ChildTrauma Academy staff can help assemble a personalized combination of videos, print and Powerpoint materials that meet the specific needs of an instructor, organization or institution. Any selection of individual tapes, articles, handouts and presentations can be assembled. Contact The ChildTrauma Academy for more information on the process and pricing for these individualized training packages.