



Building Bridges: Best Practices in Working With Parents Experiencing Homelessness

State Coordinator Webinar for NCHE
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Agenda for Today's Webinar

- Importance of and understanding parents
- Engaging Parents
- Navigating conflict – bridge over troubled waters
- Tips and resources

“Parents are
precious,
precious assets
in education.”

Arne Duncan to
National PTA
June 20, 2014



UNDERSTANDING PARENTS

Believe that
every parent
wants their
child to succeed
and do well.



It is unrealistic to treat parents as one group. The needs and issues are very different.

- Working parents
- Single parents
- Surrogate parents (foster parents, guardians, grandparents, etc.)
- Non-English speaking parents
- Parents with overwhelming personal stressors

Education may

- Not be given a high priority
- Be feared and resented due to personal experiences that were not positive
- Be viewed as a babysitter
- Be viewed as an unavoidable/necessary chore
- Be viewed as NOT a family domain

Trauma-Informed Care: Working with Homeless Families



What is Trauma and What Does it Have to Do with Homelessness?

A traumatic event is sudden and unexpected, and perceived as dangerous.

- Threat of physical harm
- Actual physical harm
- Leads to intense fear
- Overwhelms our immediate ability to cope

What is Trauma and What Does it Have to Do with Homelessness?

Traumatic experiences have several key components:

- Threat to one's physical or mental well-being
 - Intense feelings of helplessness, terror, and lack of control
 - Catastrophic responses
- Trauma survivors' world view also impacts how they access and receive services.

Trauma-Informed Care

DEFINED:

- a strengths-based framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma
- emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors
- creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment

(Hopper et al., 2010)

What is the impact of trauma on service delivery?

- Lack of trust in providers
- Inappropriate responses
- Difficulty asking for and accepting help
- Few coping and problem-solving skills
- Difficulty sustaining long-term relationships

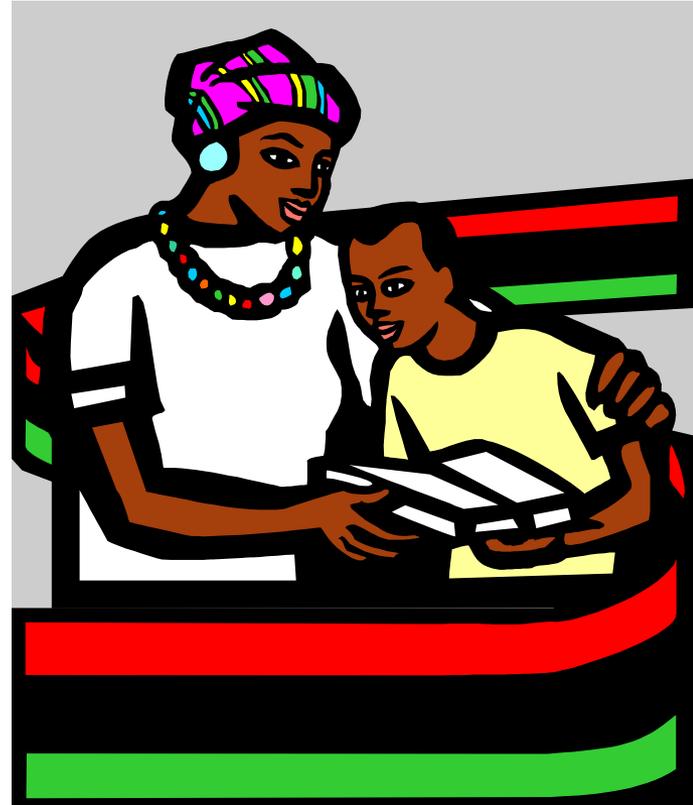
Common Trauma Triggers

- Sense of being ignored or not heard
- Sense of being disrespected
- Sense of being views as wrong or incompetent
- Feeling of being threatened or pushed against a wall
- Perception of being denied what is deserved or having things taken away
- One too many requests
- Being touched



Trauma Responses

- Flight
- Fight
- Freeze





ENGAGING PARENTS

Type In Chat Box:

- What do you believe is a main key to working with parents? What do you always keep in mind?
- Ex. I always try to.....



Building Blocks

- Mutual Respect
- Trust
- Use of language



Communication 101

Communication Skills

- Constructive Assertiveness
- Empathic Responding
- Problem Solving

Critical Skills for working with

- Students
- Parents
- Colleagues

Constructive Assertiveness

Your wants/needs

■ Clear Statement of the Problem

- ID the behavior
- describe the effect

■ “I” messages

■ Sandwich Technique

- Sane messages
- Avoid labeling



Constructive Assertiveness

(continued)

■ Body Language

- ❑ eye contact
- ❑ posture & body orientation
- ❑ congruent facial expression

■ Obtain

Compliance/cooperation



Empathic Responding

Solicits and affirms viewpoint of the other person

- **Listening Skills -**
Acknowledge parent's feelings/ideas
- **Processing Skills –**
Confirm/clarify your perceptions

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sz4dbYgiuT4>



Four Powerful Phrases (Diffusers)

- Nevertheless,...
- Probably so,...
- I understand,...
- I'm sorry, ...



Another communication consideration:

HALT:

- Hungry
- Angry
- Low
- Tired



Email Tips

1. Maintain a professional demeanor: When writing an email, be cordial and respectful.
2. Use a Business writing style: Keep your email message short and to the point.
3. Do not assume your recipient is the only one who will read the email.
4. Never write anything that you wouldn't mind reading on the front page of your local newspaper.
5. Treat the subject line as an information transmittal tool.
6. Before broadcasting your disagreement in an email let the e-mail "rest" in the draft box for several hours or days if possible.
7. Reply to emails.
8. Always do a spell/grammar check.



For liaisons

SOME MORE REMINDERS

Use a Strength-Based Approach

- Identify and nurture their strengths
- Help parents identify their own strengths
- Organize resources and strategies that help them build on these strengths
- Arrange partnership activities to help them build competence and confidence through use of these strengths

Use a Strength-Based Approach

- *Involve the family* in identifying key needs they feel should be addressed.
- *Build trust with homeless families* through well-designed partnership efforts.
- *On-going communication plans and opportunities* are needed to build the involvement of homeless families in their children's education.

Evaluating Meaningful Communication

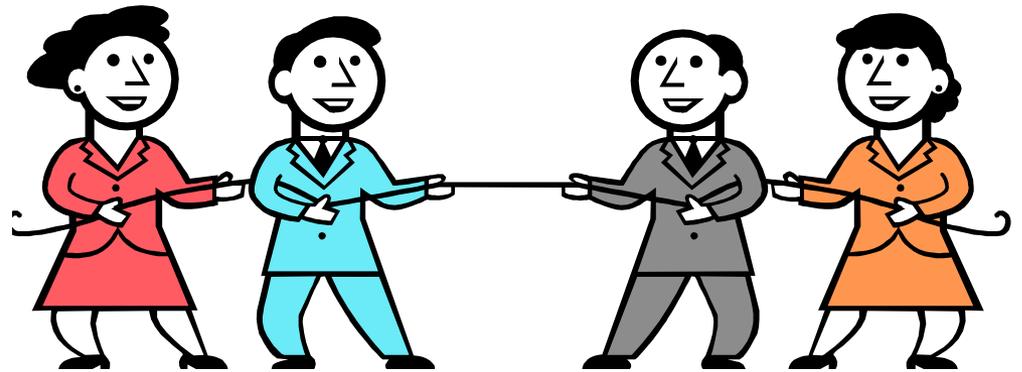
1. Are we responsive to the stressors families are experiencing?
2. What steps have we taken to encourage ongoing communication with homeless families?
3. Are we engaging families in setting the agenda for our engagement activities?
4. What specific steps have we taken to help homeless families feel invited and important in our schools?
5. What are we doing to continually evaluate and improve our communication strategies?



ADDRESSING CONFLICT

Causes of Conflict

- Design
- Delivery
- Relationships



From: CADRE document: *Beyond Mediation: Strategies for Early Dispute Resolution in Special Education*

Strategies to consider when there is potential conflict:

1. Reflect upon your own assumptions about the conflict.
2. Share your assumptions and perspectives.
3. Try to think and feel about the situation from the other's perspective.
4. Find agreement.
5. Reframe the issues.
6. Identify options and opportunities.

Innovations for Early Resolution

- **Prevention Strategies**
- **Disagreement Strategies**
- **Conflict Strategies**

What have you used? Type in the chat box.



Types of Conflict for SC

- MV dispute resolution conflicts
- Conflicts not appropriate for DR but which are MV compliance
- Not MV compliance but allowable/beneficial services
- Not MV

VALUABLE RESOURCES

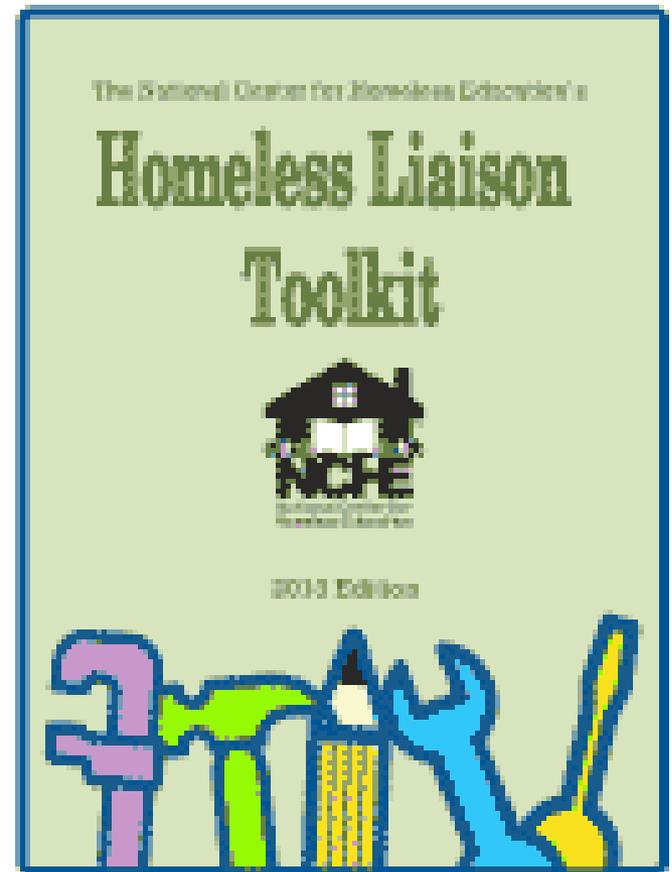


NCHE Homeless Liaison Toolkit

Chapter 10:

Working with Parents

<http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/toolkit2/ch10.pdf>



NCHE Parent Involvement Web Page

http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/parent_inv.php



NCHE State Coordinator Handbook

Section K: Dispute Resolution

<http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/handbook2/k.pdf>



National Parental Information and Resource Centers

Half of PIRC grant
to serve severely
economically
or educationally
disadvantaged



<http://www.nationalpirc.org/>

Trauma-Informed Schools/Services

National Center on Family Homelessness, American Institutes for Research

Trauma Informed Care Resources (including Self Care)

<http://www.familyhomelessness.org/>

http://www.familyhomelessness.org/tic_curriculum.php?p=ss#

http://www.familyhomelessness.org/tic_resources.php?p=ss

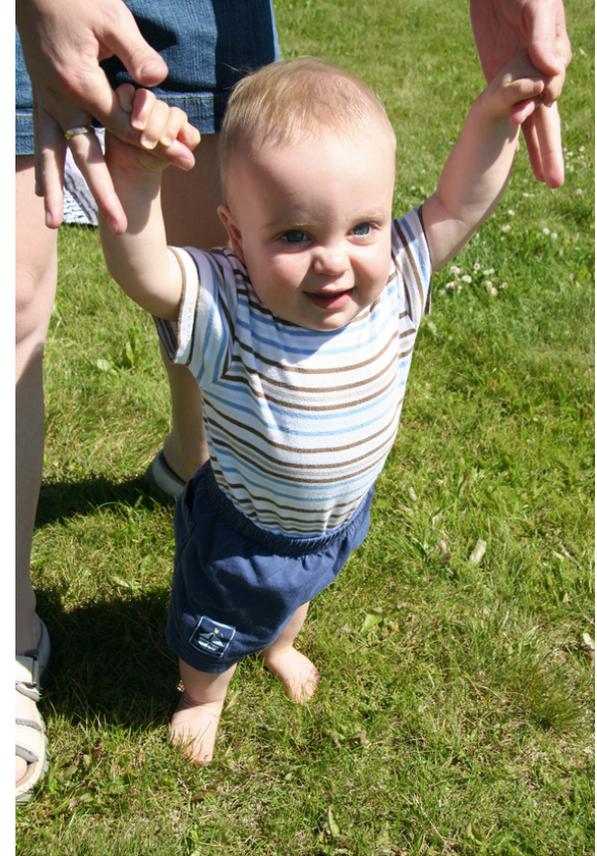
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Best Practices for Providers: Trauma Informed Care

<http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/nctic>

Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIC)

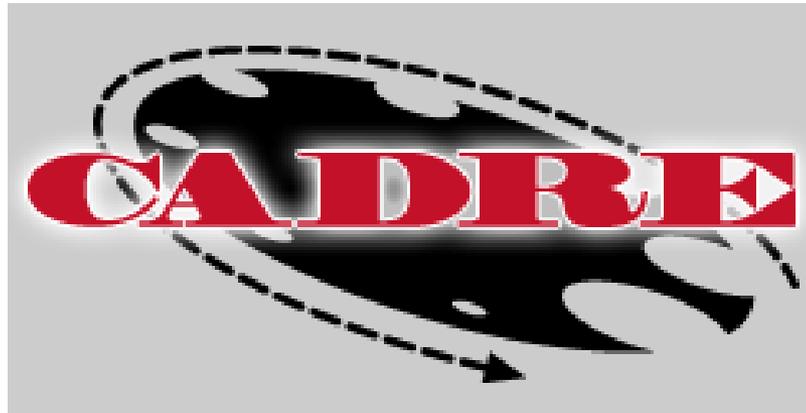
For students
with Disabilities
In every state



<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/>

The National Center on Dispute Resolution in Special Education

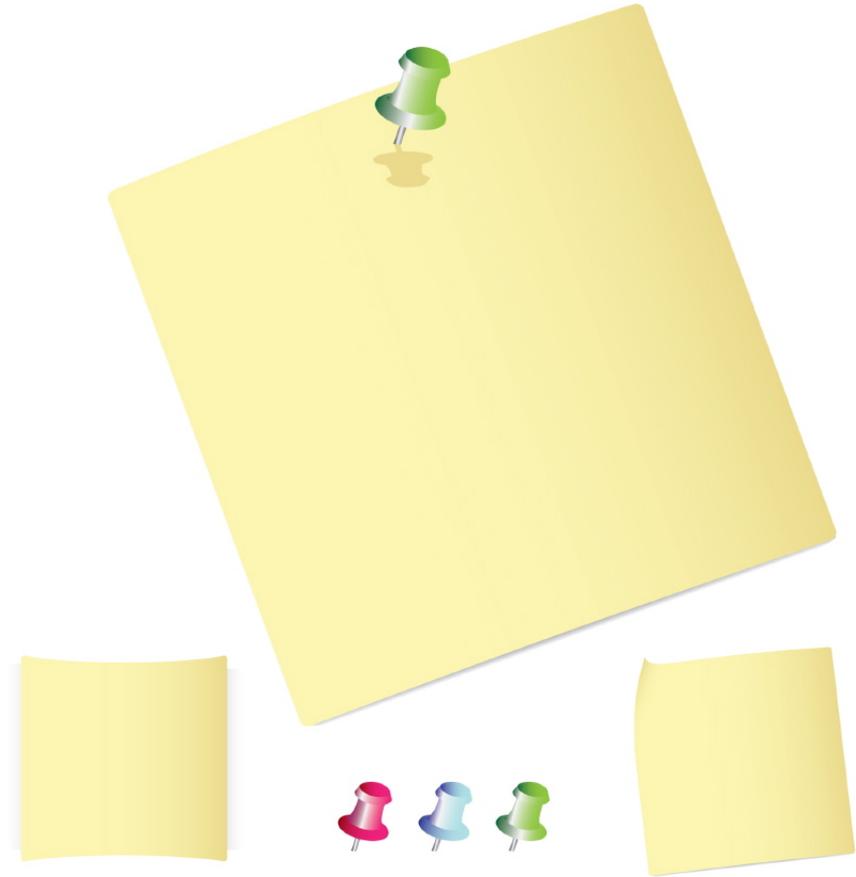
"Encouraging the use of mediation and other collaborative strategies to resolve disagreements about special education and early intervention programs."



<http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/index.cfm>

Tip Sheet for Webinar

- Attachment



Other resources????



Thanks for Joining Us!

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- Handouts:
 - <http://center.serve.org/nche/web/sc-parents.php>

