

THE VILLAGE

TIKES Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

A quarterly newsletter providing insight and support for the village of caregivers in Louisiana.



TIKES News

Look out! Lisa LaRoche, one of our TIKES consultants from Lafayette, will be presenting at the Teacher Leader Summit on "Supporting Diverse Learners in the Early Childhood Educational Setting" in May!

Roll call 📣 In the past year, our team of passionate consultants has grown! The T-MHCS team welcomes: Brady Moran, Kari Stephens, Cammie Porter, Patrick Sciambra, Crystal Lenard, and Renee Reynolds.

This month, T-MHCS consultants across the state got together at our annual retreat for the chance to engage in professional development, connect with colleagues, and have some fun!



TIKES Tips

How can we help kids bounce back from life's setbacks? Resilience is one's ability to adapt and overcome adversity...and the world needs resilient kids! Here are some strategies for helping young children build resilience:

- 🌱 Spend intentional quality time with children. When children feel loved and secure in a relationship, they develop emotional strength.
- 🌱 Model talking about your emotions so that children learn that they can share their feelings with someone they trust.
- 🌱 Instead of rushing to solve problems, give children time to work things out themselves.
- 🌱 When children experience failure or disappointment, praise their effort and encourage them to try again!



True or False?

A baby is born with just a few brain cells.

Answer on page 3

It takes a village to raise a child,
We're here to support the village.



Stories from the Village

Having a child at your center that is consistently crying and wanting to be held is a challenge many early childhood educators face. Mental health consultant Anna Kennedy Rowe worked with a center to address this concern. A two-year-old had recently started at this center after moving to Louisiana from another country and was having a difficult time being separated from her family while at school. The center was struggling to balance the child's desire to be held and comforted while also responding to the many other needs present in the classroom. Teachers and staff also expressed a desire to create an environment where the child felt safe. In response, Anna wondered with the director about what they might incorporate into the classroom from the child's home life (e.g., playing music or bringing food from her culture). Anna also helped the staff reflect on how different caregiving practices can look across cultures and wondered how this child is used to being cared for.

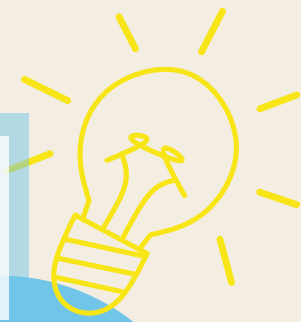
Together, Anna and the center staff incorporated new classroom strategies to ease the student's discomfort. As Anna held space for the child's teacher to process her capacity to support this child, this teacher began to recognize that the child's consistent crying was emotionally draining. Together, Anna and the teacher discussed ways to self-regulate in those overwhelming moments. Anna also validated the struggle that teachers face when trying to balance all the needs of the children in their classroom and began to think with the teacher about moments in the daily routine where she could provide consistent moments of connection to her new student.

Change didn't come overnight, but their efforts paid off. The child began to adjust and feel secure in her new environment. Now, the center reports that the child's crying has decreased significantly and that she is exploring, playing, and thriving in her classroom. While, many factors contributed to this improvement, the center's ability to "hear" this child and understand her perspective was central in her gaining a new sense of safety and security.



Anna Kennedy Rowe, LCSW
Region 8- Northwest Louisiana

True or False?

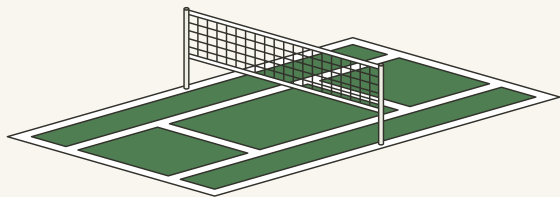


A baby is born with just a few brain cells.

A baby is born with more than 100 billion brain cells. Some of these cells are already connected to other cells at birth. These connections regulate the heartbeat and breathing, control reflexes, and other functions needed to survive. However, much of the brain's wiring does not occur until after birth.

More to Explore

Have you ever heard of "Serve and Return?" No, we're not talking about tennis, but babies! In infant mental health, "serve and return" is an interaction between a baby and caregiver, when the baby "serves" a coo, babble, or movement and the caregiver "returns" with a smile, laugh, or similar sound. While the concept is simple, what is happening in a baby's brain during these interactions is complex! These interactions are building and strengthening the connections in their brains, and are the foundation for ALL learning and development.



So while you are playing peek-a-boo, just know that you are acting as a brain architect as well as a magician. For more, check out this [video](#) from the Center on the Developing Child.

The Cozy Corner

Wondering how to teach children to calm down? Well, it starts with you! Check out these self-regulation strategies that you can practice before teaching your little ones.



Name the emotion



Validate the emotion



Notice when you need a break



Practice deep breathing

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