

# Child Development for our Foster and Adoptive Children

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## *Part Two*

A presentation of  
Alabama Pre-/ Post-Adoption Connections



# What we learned in Part I:

- Toxins, genetic factors, environmental problems, and abuse or neglect can **impair healthy brain development**
- Children behave according to their **“emotional map”** of the world that is established in infancy
- Negative emotional maps can put the brain on “high alert”, and impair children from successfully mastering increasingly complex developmental tasks, such as **attachment and impulse regulation.**
- But healthy parenting can help create new maps as children grow; this requires coaching our hurt children to develop **trust, autonomy, and a positive sense of self** in their early years.

# What we learned in Part I (cont'd):

- To be effective coaches for hurt children, parents must establish safety, predictability, and healthy limits
- Parents can do this by using consistent discipline that includes:
  - 1) Praise for being ***and*** doing
  - 2) Direction, structure, and achievable tasks
  - 3) Age-appropriate choices and chances to make mistakes
  - 4) Logical, ***non-reactive*** consequences (delayed if necessary)
  - 5) Listening to and offering empathy for the child

# Learning Objectives for Part II:

- 1) How does the **brain** continue developing in school-aged children?
- 2) What are the next “**developmental tasks**” after trust and autonomy?
- 3) How can parents **increase a hurt child's chances** to “catch up” on these more complex tasks?

# Trauma in infancy affects later brain development:

Cortex

Mid-Brain

**Lower Brain**

Brain Stem

A negative internal “map” keeps the ***lower brain on high alert,*** and interferes with accomplishing ***normal developmental tasks.***

TASK

STAGE

IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIP

Initiative vs Guilt

Early childhood (4-9 years)

Basic Family Unit

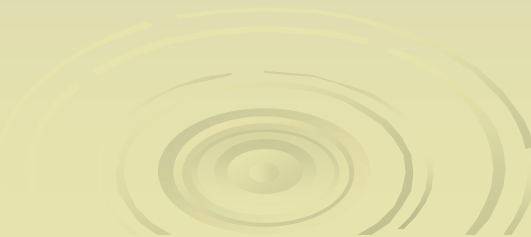
### Dysfunctional Factors

attachment breaks  
trauma  
losses



### Consequences/behaviors:

does not respond to direction  
poor concentration  
inappropriate actions  
toilet weaknesses  
language symptoms  
emotional lability  
poor response to soothing  
vacancy  
significant reaction to correction



# How do we to help young children achieve Initiative?

Impulse / Self  
Regulation

INITIATIVE =  
PURPOSE

(4-9 years)

- Basic family unit
- Make things happen

Create Social  
Opportunities

Allow MORE  
(age-appropriate)  
Choices

Connect Dreams to  
Possibilities

TASK

STAGE

IMP. RELATIONSHIP

Industry vs Inferiority

Pre-Adolescence

Wider Community

### Dysfunctional Factors

attachment  
trauma  
losses  
maladaptive behaviors  
multiple placements

### Consequences and Behaviors:

lying-stealing-cheating  
aggression  
disrespect  
manipulation  
self injurious behavior  
apathy  
withdrawal



# And what about “tweens” achieving Industry?

Impulse / Self  
Regulation

INDUSTRY=  
COMPETENCE  
(9-12 years)

- Wider community
- Participation and achievement

Create Opportunities

Encourage problem  
solving

Allow choices

Teach and enforce  
logical  
consequences

Connect to Possibility

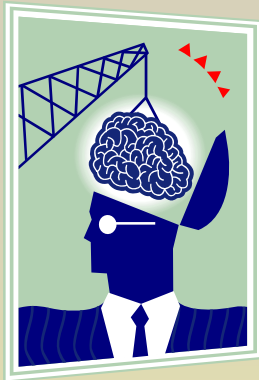
Offer empathy &  
praise for effort

If children do not get help mastering these developmental tasks, the pervasive feeling-states that develop are  
**guilt and inferiority**

***Effective discipline should  
prevent excessive  
feelings of guilt or inferiority!***

# What do you do ???

- You are operating without surgical tools
- You are going to reconnect brain circuitry to pave the way for change for this child

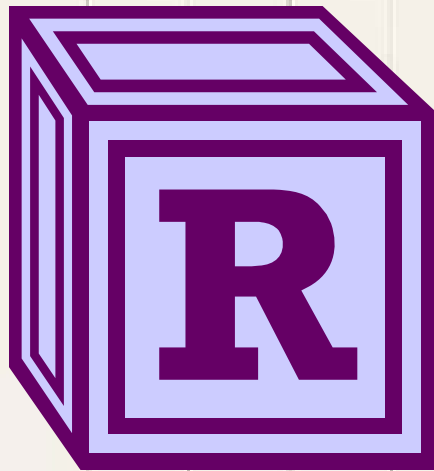


# Emotional Developmental Delay requires redefining our expectations of the child's progress:

Evidence that discipline is effective will look different for our children who have been hurt early on:

- **Baby steps**, baby steps, baby steps – your child has abnormally high levels of “interference” with responding to your coaching
- Remember that **“progress” may not look age-appropriate** because it's regressive (healing needs to happen on an emotionally “younger” level)
- **“Backslides” are to be expected**, and can be treated as opportunities for “repetition and practice”
- Remember that evidence of progress will be in the DETAILS and CUES your **children show you with their behavior**
- “Success” means the child has finally **experienced the developmental milestone appropriately** – NOT mastered everything!!

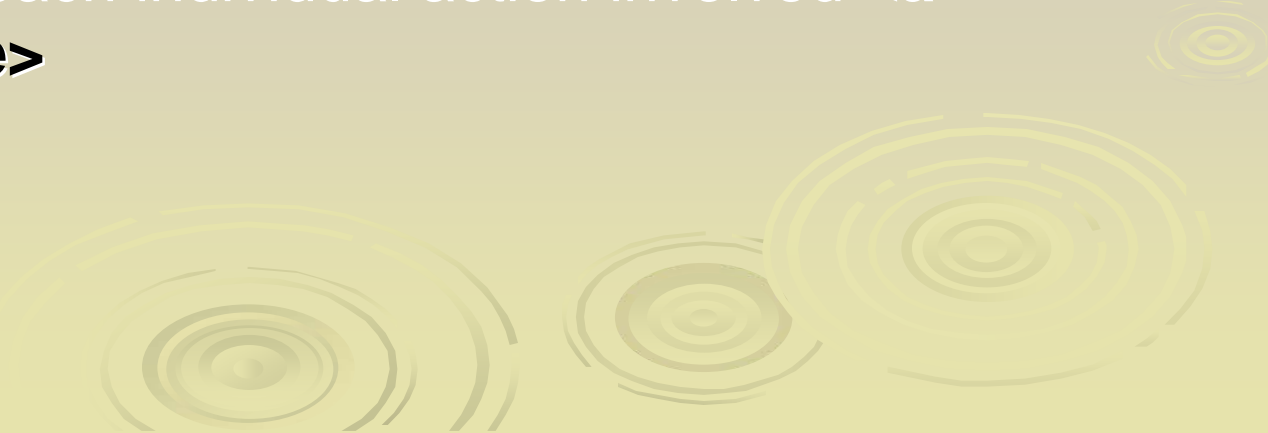
# Core Elements of a Positive Developmental Experience



**R**elevant  
**R**epetitive  
**R**ewarding  
**R**elational  
**R**eciprocal  
**R**hythmic  
**R**espectful

# DELIBERATE PARENTING

***Webster's Dictionary Defines "DELIBERATE" as:***

- **1** : characterized by or resulting from **careful and thorough consideration** <a ***deliberate*** decision>
  - **2** : characterized by **awareness** of the consequences <***deliberate*** falsehood>
  - **3** : **slow, unhurried, and steady** as though allowing time for decision on each individual action involved <a ***deliberate*** pace>
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*Like a **Martial Art**,  
Parenting sometimes  
requires **YIELDING** to aggressive  
energy in order to  
**REDIRECT** it  
and  
**MAINTAIN CONTROL***

# The Deliberate Parent Coaches

- Coaching **removes emotion**, which leads to clearer thinking and communication
- Parents learn to **“trouble-shoot”** and prepare
- Parents develop options for effective discipline (*like a playbook*)
- Parent becomes an **important mentor** to the child

**A coach is a teacher who can **WIN** the  
“parent game”**

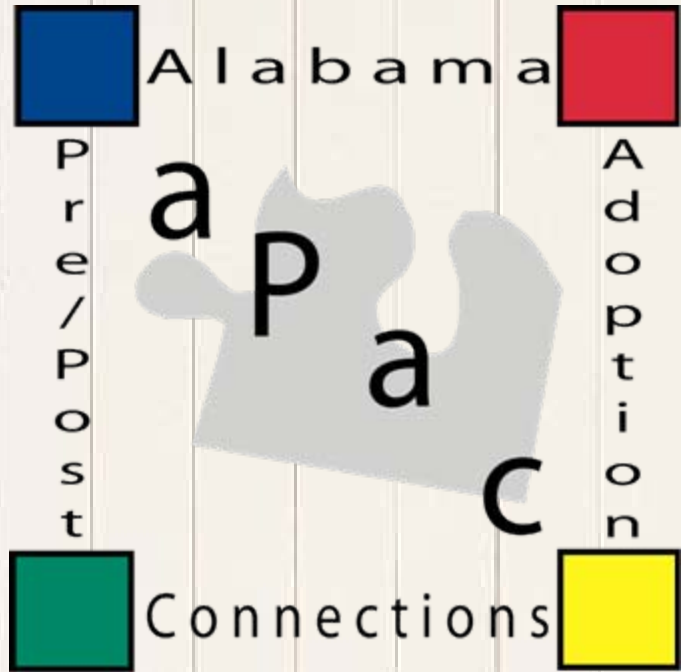


# RED FLAG CHECKLIST

- Does this behavior push my button?
- Have I spent too much time reprimanding this child for the same misbehavior?
- Am I tired or beyond exhausted?
- Have I been putting out too many fires today?
- Am I rushing?
- Am I frustrated because I have “more important” things to do than to do this one more time??!!

# What's in your Coaching “PLAYBOOK”?

- Create problems solving opportunities (identify who the problem belongs to)
- Guided responsibility (opportunities to practice earning trust and respect, taking initiative, and being industrious)
- Give the child some role in the family based upon the child's assets and strengths (parents are responsible for setting the child up for success in a positive position – not just a task)
- REPETITION, REPETITION, REPETITION



- Information & Referral Support
- Family Support Groups
- Adjustment / Crisis Counseling
- Resource Library
- Educational Trainings
- Camp APAC
- Special Events
- Recruitment

**[www.casapac.org](http://www.casapac.org)**

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*This concludes Part  
Two...*

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