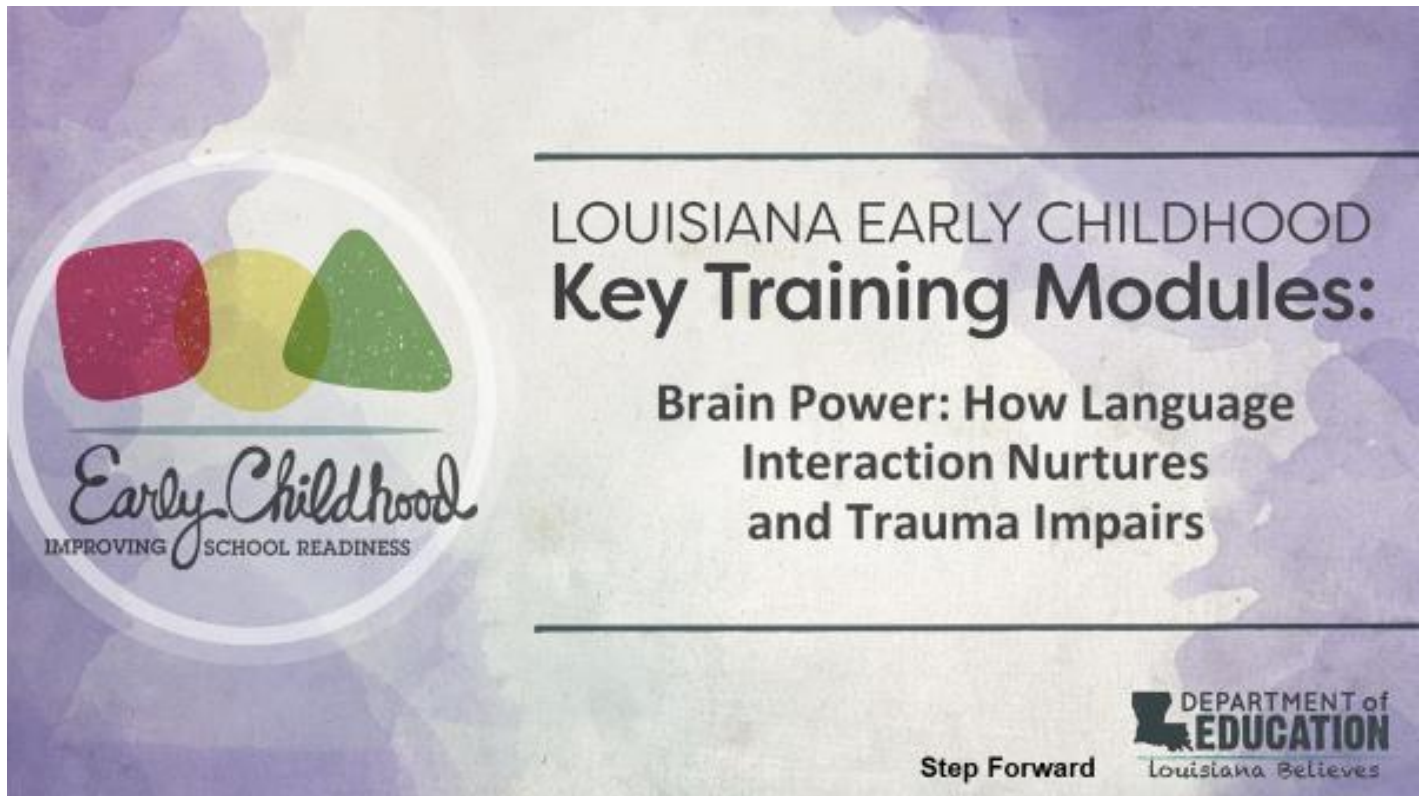


Module 3E: Outline & Manual

Brain Power: How Language Nurtures and Trauma Impairs

Contents

Module Description	2
Learning Outcomes	3
Training Agenda	3
Training Manual	4



Module Description

This training module will focus on early brain development and the effects that trauma can cause on the brain in early childhood. Participants will explore steps in the back and forth interactions between children and adults, and both executive function activities and self-regulation skills with children of all ages.

Pre-Work

- Review 5 Steps for Brain-Building Serve and Return
- Review Understanding Adverse Child

Materials

- Chart paper and markers
- Copy paper
- Pencils or pens for participants
- Materials for the Brain Architecture Game (**there is a \$99 fee for Life Experience Cards*)
- Handouts
 - *5 Steps for Brain-Building Serve and Return*
 - *Enhancing and Practicing Executive Function Skills and Children from Infancy to Adolescence*
 - *Brain Architecture Game Instructions*
 - *Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences*
 - *Pre- and Post- Assessments*

Learning Outcomes

Candidates who actively participate in this session will be able to...

- Understand that a young child’s brain is still rapidly growing and developing
- Understand the elements needed for optimal brain development – including a language-rich environment, caring and responsive relationships, developmentally appropriate limits to learn self-regulation and buffering from toxic stress
- Discuss adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress
- Understand how toxic stress impedes healthy brain development and leads to maladaptive behavior
- Practice strategies to promote language development within the context of caring
- Practice strategies to buffer young children from toxic stress

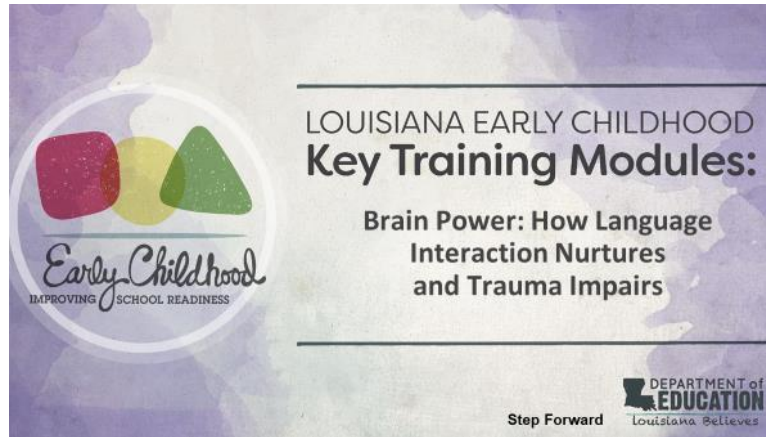
Training Agenda

Total Content Time: 2.0 hours

Total Session Time: 3.0 hours

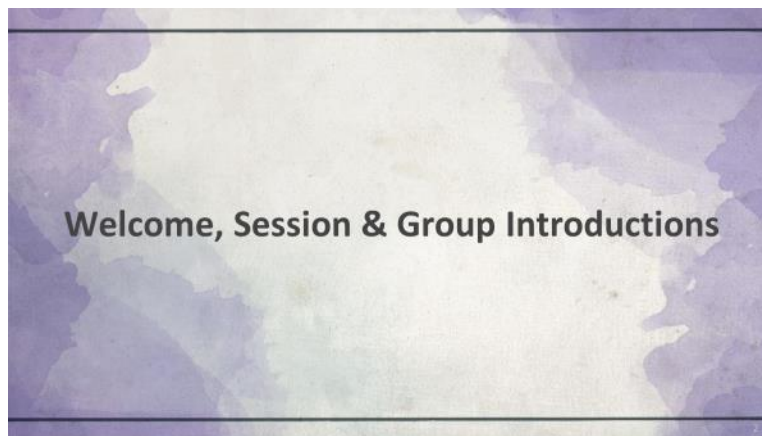
Item	Time/Duration
Registration/Sign-In	30 minutes prior to course start <i>(not included in total course time)</i>
Welcome, Session & Group Introductions	20 minutes
A Healthy Environment Stimulates Brain Development in Young Children	15 minutes
The Importance of a Language-Rich Environment	15 minutes
The Lifetime Effects of Childhood Trauma and Toxic Stress	15 minutes
The Role of Informed Early Care and Education Programs	45 minutes <i>(*add one hour if including Brain Architecture Game)</i>
Session Closing & Post-Assessment	15 minutes <i>(not included in total course time)</i>
Individualized Q&A	15 minutes following course completion <i>(not included in total course time)</i>

Training Manual



Distribute the Pre-Assessment Evaluation as participants enter the training.

- *Ask them to complete the Pre-Assessment Evaluation and return to you*
- *Briefly review the forms to identify the group's needs*
- *Emphasize the learning objective(s) identified by the group as needing support*
- *Modify the session to spend more time on knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by the group*

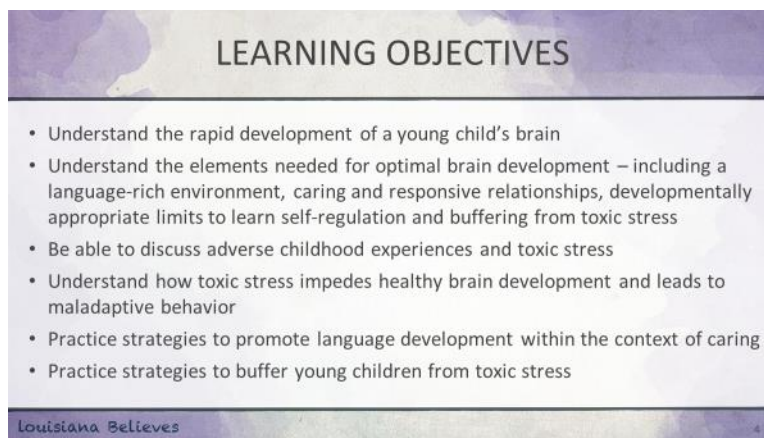
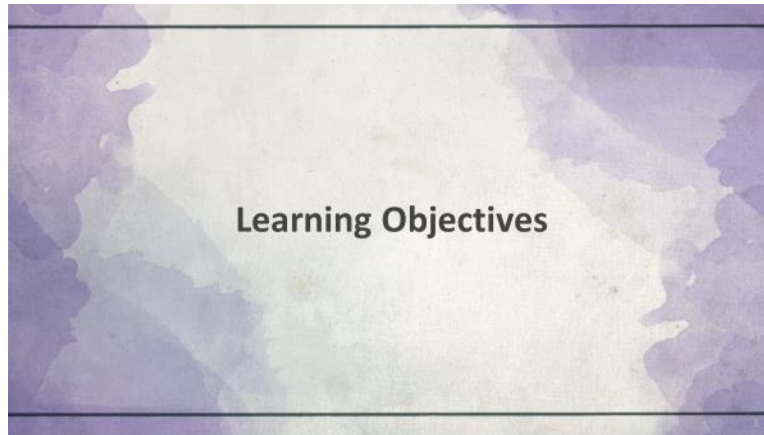


Good morning/afternoon. This is a presentation of the Louisiana Early Childhood Key Training Modules. I am (insert name) and I will be your trainer today.

This morning/afternoon, we will begin by getting to know a little bit about one another, and also review what you will be learning today.

First, I want to welcome and thank you for taking the time to join us today. I/we appreciate your dedication to young children in Louisiana. Your efforts to grow will help them grow, so thank you.

Today we will learn about the power and potential of our brains before age five.



Read each learning objective aloud.

- **Understand the rapid development of a young child's brain**
- **Understand the elements needed for optimal brain development – including a language-rich environment, caring and responsive relationships, developmentally appropriate limits to learn self-regulation and buffering from toxic stress**
- **Be able to discuss adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress**
- **Understand how toxic stress impedes healthy brain development and leads to maladaptive behavior**
- **Practice strategies to promote language development within the context of caring**
- **Practice strategies to buffer young children from toxic stress**

Are there any additional points we should add to our list of objectives for today?

Record responses on chart paper.

In summation, we will learn both what boosts, and what blocks, early brain development.

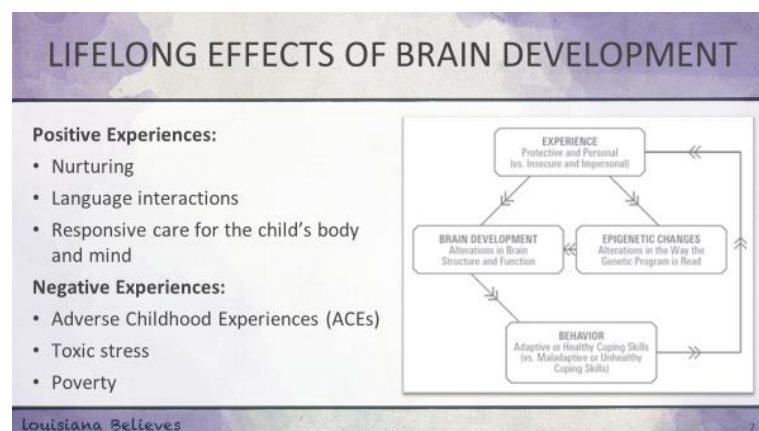
A Healthy Environment Stimulates Brain Development in Young Children

We are going to begin by talking about the ideal conditions for early brain development. What is the essential nutrition for the developing brain?

Factors in Brain Development

- Proper nutrition starting in pregnancy
- Exposure to toxins or infections
- The child's experiences with other people and the world

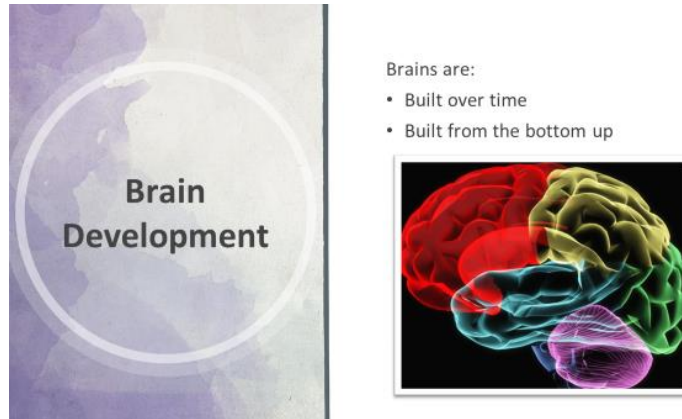
How well a brain develops depends on many factors in addition to genes. Brain development begins before birth, but does not stop there. A child's brain continues to grow rapidly for the first five years of life – often called the period of neuroplasticity. Many factors can affect this growth, including environmental toxins, infections, and life experiences.



Positive experiences enhance brain development. These are essential nutrients for building a strong brain.

Negative experiences can delay or damage brain development. Although family income itself does not limit a child's potential, factors related to poverty, such as food insecurity, may directly impact this development.

The flow chart illustrates how both positive and negative experiences have the potential to impact brain development, including the ability to process and respond to new experiences. Experiences (positive or negative) have a cumulative effect – each experience builds on the one before.



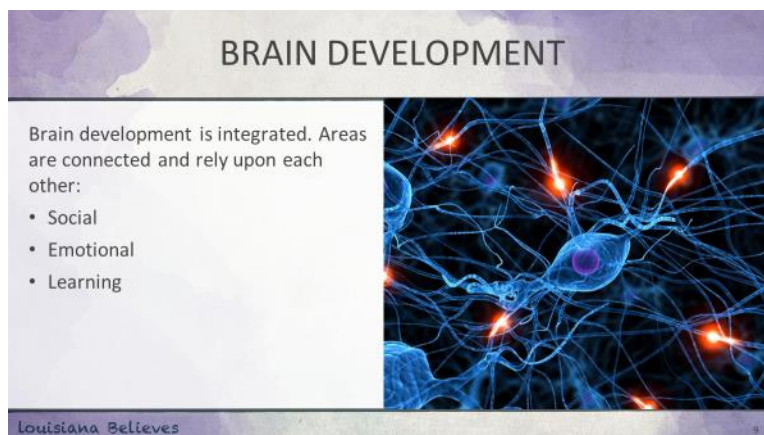
Due to rapid neural growth, the brain is highly responsive to learning, and it is also easily impacted by negative experiences.

Brains are built over time:

- Continuous process from before birth through adolescence
- Rapid growth of connections of neurons during first year
- Infant brain is exquisitely sensitive to early experiences – particularly relationships

Brains are built from the bottom up:

- Experiences and activities influence development
- Early connections of neurons become more complex pathways and behaviors
- A solid foundation is required for future skills, health, and success



Brain development is integrated. Areas are connected and rely upon each other. The capacity to change, or plasticity, decreases significantly by age four.



Click the picture on the slide to play the video. (Duration: 1:00)




The first two and a half years are critical for early brain and child development.

- **Improve readiness for school and ultimately school success**
- **Nurture foundational skills as they emerge**
- **Improve resiliency, emotions, and behavior**
- **Provide a healthy start for lifelong productivity**

EXPERIENCE IN BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

- All sensory information is received in the brain
- These experiences mold the neuronal circuits
- A significant amount of molding occurs within the first four years of life



Louisiana Believes 12

All sensory information is received in the brain.

- Information is “transduced” by the nervous system into changes in nerve cells
- Repetitive sensory input allows the child to learn about the world which surrounds him or her – also known as Piaget’s “sensorimotor period” from birth to age two when young children are learning through their sense

These experiences mold the neuronal circuits.

- Patterns define how neurons connect with each other
- How many connections form

A significant amount of molding occurs within the first four years of life.

- Less molding can occur as children get older

The Importance of a Language-Rich Environment

13



Parent talkativeness predicts IQ and language: 30-million-word gap

- Study of children 7 months through 36 months of age
- Three groups:
 - Professional
 - Working class
 - Impoverished families

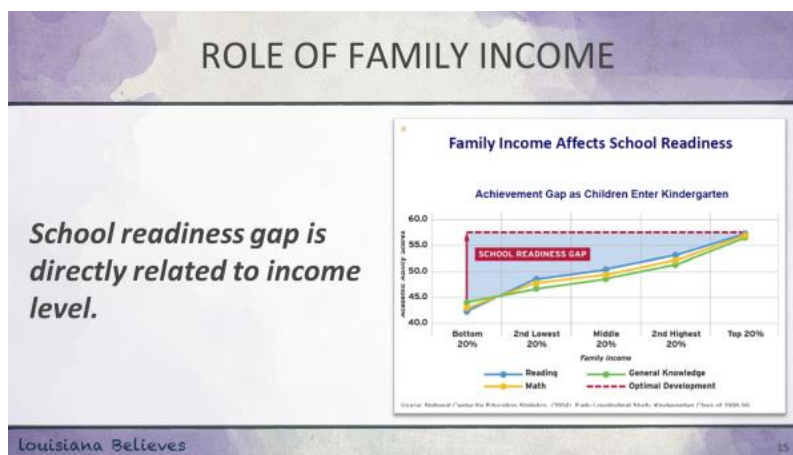
There was a **study of children seven through 36 months of age** – three groups of family income levels were represented: **professional, working class, and impoverished families.**

Major finding was that in higher income families, young children heard an average of 30 million more words than did low-income families. The result of hearing fewer words was the children in lower-income families had smaller vocabularies (500 compared to 1100 spoken words).

A two-year-old’s vocabulary is a predictor school readiness – a predictor of reading proficiency by third grade – a predictor of high school graduation. What happens in early childhood matters for a lifetime.

Other findings from the 30 Million Word Gap study:

- Two types of talk:
 - “Business talk” – get things done, ex. “stop,” “come here,” “put on your shoes,” does not predict IQ and language
 - “Non-business talk” – extra conversation, praise, restatements, active listening, reciprocal
- Talkative families had 5-6 times more “praise” and “chats” than “prohibitions”
- Quiet families had more “prohibitions” than “praise”

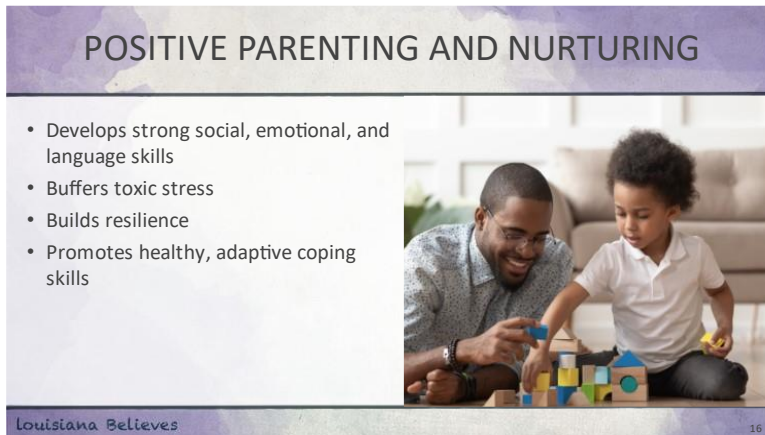


What are some reasons that families in poverty may spend less time conversing with children? *Encourage participants to discuss with a partner and make a list of some of the potential reasons. After about five minutes, participants will share with the larger group.*

Potential answers include:

- Overwhelmed by many stressors
- Single parent
- Working nontraditional hours or more than one job
- Energy spent on survival tasks

Is it possible to change this outcome for children in low-income households? How? *Encourage participants to discuss with their partner. After about five minutes, participants will share with the larger group.*



POSITIVE PARENTING AND NURTURING

- Develops strong social, emotional, and language skills
- Buffers toxic stress
- Builds resilience
- Promotes healthy, adaptive coping skills

Louisiana Believes 16

Positive parenting and nurturing:

- **Develops strong social, emotional, and language skills,**
- **Buffers toxic stress,**
- **Builds resilience, and**
- **Promotes healthy, adaptive coping skills.**



Five “Rs” of Early Education

1. **Read** – together, every day
2. **Rhyme** – play and cuddle every day
3. **Routines** – have routines around meals, sleep, and family fun, children know what to expect
4. **Reward** – praise for everyday successes, builds self-esteem, and promotes positive behavior
5. **Relationships** – strong and nurturing relationships are the foundation for healthy child development

What are some of your favorite books for young children?

Potential answers include:

- *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*
- *Goodnight Moon*

- *Pat the Bunny*
- *Other examples*

What songs or rhymes did you like as a child?

Potential answers include:

- *Down by the Bay*
- *If You're Happy and You Know It*
- *Other examples*

What songs or rhymes did you like as a child?

Potential answers include:

- *Reach to be picked up when distressed*
- *Bring a blanket to be held when they are tired*
- *Other examples*

How do young children respond to praise?

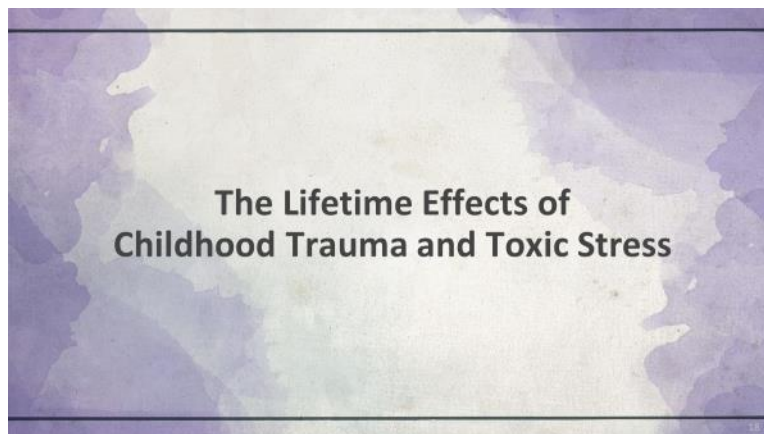
Potential answers include:

- *Smile*
- *Do more of the behavior that is praised*

Who do the children in your care go to when upset? Where do they seek comfort?

Potential answers include:

- *Adults they know*
- *Adults who have offered comfort*



PHYSIOLOGIC STRESS IN CHILDHOOD			
FEATURE	EFFECT ON CHILD		
Stress response	Positive	Tolerable	Toxic
Duration	Brief	Sustained	Sustained
Severity	Mild/moderate	Moderate/severe	Severe
Social-emotional buffering	Sufficient	Sufficient	Insufficient
Long-term effect on stress response system	Return to baseline	Return to baseline	Changes to baseline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Epigenetic modifications Changes in brain structure and function Behavioral attempts to cope may be maladaptive

Stress is a normal part of life. All children will experience stress to some degree, and the vast majority will bounce back and resume functioning. However, if stress is long-lasting or severe, and if there is a lack of comfort from adults, this can result in damage to critical brain structure.

MEDIATORS OF CHILDHOOD RESPONSE TO STRESS	
Sources of Resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temperament Social-emotional supports Learned social-emotional skills 	Vulnerabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temperament Delays in development Limited social-emotional supports

Sources of resilience to stress:

- Temperament
- Social-emotional supports
- Learned social-emotional skills

Vulnerabilities to stress:

- Temperament
- Delays in development
- Limited social-emotional supports

CHILDHOOD ADVERSITY AND TOXIC STRESS

Child/Individual	Parental/Family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse • Physical or emotional neglect • Chronic fear state • Other traumas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural disasters • Accidents and illness • Exposure to violence • Disabilities/chronic illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental dysfunction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance abuse • Domestic violence • Mental illness • Parent separation or divorce/single parenting • Incarceration • Poverty

Louisiana Believes 21

There are many types of traumatic experiences. A child’s resilience determines the impact.

TOXIC STRESS

Center on the Developing Child HARVARD UNIVERSITY
NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL ON THE DEVELOPING CHILD

INBRIEF

Click the picture to play video.

Louisiana Believes 22

Click the picture on the slide to play the video. (Duration: 5:58)

TOXIC STRESS

- Disrupts the developing brain
- Has lifelong effects
 - Learning
 - Behavior
 - Health

Louisiana Believes 23

All of us, including children, experience stress. Stress is a normal part of life and keeps us safe from danger.

Stress can become toxic when it is unrelenting (constant) or when there is insufficient support. For young children, support must include both comfort and protection from danger.

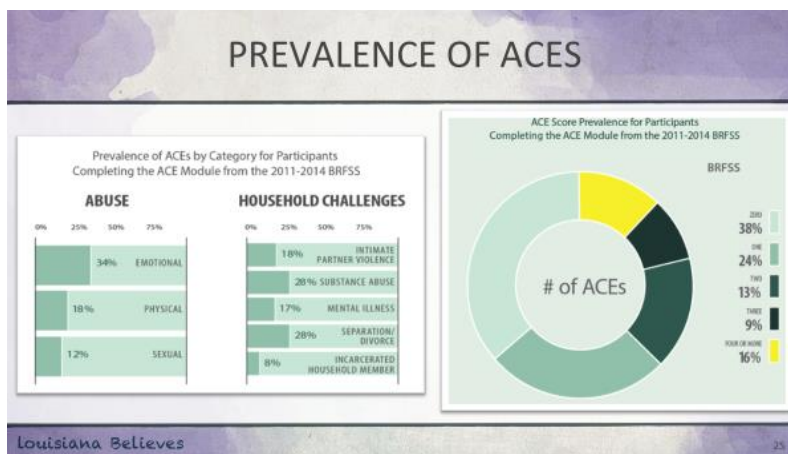
Toxic stress can result in damage to the young child’s sensitive, developing brain. This can impact the child’s ability to learn, concentrate, and get along with other.



The number of adverse events in childhood is related to an **increased risk** for chronic health conditions, including:

- **Alcoholism/alcohol abuse,**
- **Unsafe sex, STIs,**
- **Unintended pregnancy,**
- **Depression, anxiety, PTSD,**
- **Suicide attempts,**
- **Intimate partner violence,**
- **Obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and**
- **Poor academic achievement leading to decreased educational, occupational, opportunities.**

However, resilient factors can provide protection.



These findings, supplementing the original ACE study, indicate that most children (62%) have experienced one or more Adverse Childhood Experiences.

As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk for many chronic mental health and physical health problems.

The Role of Early Education Programs and Informed Child Care Centers

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Increase classroom/center interactions and experiences that help children develop language and learn new skills
- Include activities that encourage analysis and reasoning
- Increase back-and-forth engagement and feedback loops necessary to encourage connections between concepts and ideas
- Provide trauma-informed care
- Family engagement

Louisiana Believes

37

What can you do?

- **Increase classroom/center interactions and experiences that help children develop language and learn new skills**
- **Include activities that encourage analysis and reasoning**
- **Increase back-and-forth engagement and feedback loops necessary to encourage connections between concepts and ideas**
- **Provide trauma-informed care**
- **Family engagement**

Promoting Early Brain Development – Alignment with CLASS®

ALIGNMENT WITH CLASS® – INFANTS

Infants

- Teachers describe their own and infants' actions during activities and routines. They comment on events happening. Their language often includes descriptive and variable words spoken in complete sentences.
- Teachers encourage infants to verbalize by initiating sounds and words with infants or imitating sounds expressed by infants.
- Teachers extend infants' communication attempts by adding words to actions and sounds. They engage in back-and-forth verbal exchanges with infants, using pauses and eye contact to encourage turn taking.

Louisiana Believes

29

The following is how teachers foster language development for **infants**:

- **Teachers describe their own and infants' actions during activities and routines. They comment on events happening. Their language often includes descriptive and variable words spoken in complete sentences.**
- **Teachers encourage infants to verbalize by initiating sounds and words with infants or imitating sounds expressed by infants.**
- **Teachers extend infants' communication attempts by adding words to actions and sounds. They engage in back-and-forth verbal exchanges with infants, using pauses and eye contact to encourage turn taking.**

Encourage participants to give examples of these standards. Potential answers include:

- *“Now we are about to eat a snack. We are going to have some goldfish crackers. I love to eat goldfish.”*
- *Teacher imitates babies making cooing sounds.*
- *When babies make verbalization babbling sounds, the teacher responds with words to praise the baby or describe what is happening as if they are having a conversation.*
 - *“You are really talking a lot.”*
 - *“We are going outside for a walk.”*

ALIGNMENT WITH CLASS® – TODDLERS

Toddlers

- The teacher uses conversational language and provides opportunities for children to use language through conversations and questioning.
- The teacher repeats and extends children’s communication attempts and language.
- Teachers describe and narrate their actions or children’s actions using self- and parallel talk.
- The teacher uses a variety of words and provides words and language for children to use, labeling objects and concepts with language.
- The teacher describes unfamiliar words to children.

Louisiana Believes

30

The following is how teachers foster language development for **toddlers**:

- **The teacher uses conversational language and provides opportunities for children to use language through conversations and questioning.**
- **The teacher repeats and extends children’s communication attempts and language.**
- **Teachers described and narrate their actions or children’s actions using self- and parallel talk.**
- **The teacher uses a variety of words and provides words and language for children to use, labeling objects and concepts with language.**
- **The teacher describes unfamiliar words to children.**

Encourage participants to give examples of these standards. Potential answers include:

- “You said ball. Let me give you the ball. The ball is round and bouncy.”
- “This long block is called a rectangle.”

ALIGNMENT WITH CLASS® – PRE-K

Preschoolers

- There are frequent conversations taking place in the classroom.
- Teachers ask many open-ended questions.
- Teachers often repeat or extends the children’s responses.
- Teacher maps their own actions and the children’s actions through language and description.
- Teachers often use advanced language with children.

Louisiana Believes

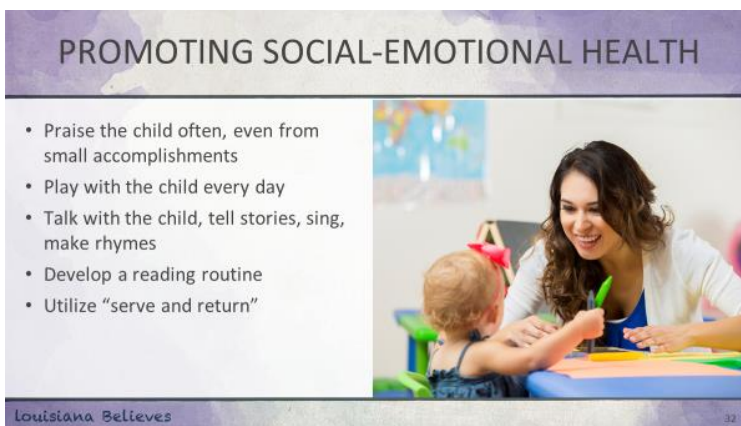
31

The following is how teachers foster language development for **preschoolers**:

- **There are frequent conversations taking place in the classroom.**
- **Teachers ask many open-ended questions.**
- **Teachers often repeat or extend the children’s responses.**
- **Teacher maps their own actions and the children’s actions through language and description.**
- **Teachers often use advanced language with children.**

Encourage participants to give examples of these standards. Potential answers include:

- *“What do you think will happen?”*
- *“We are walking down the sidewalk. We are going to the playground. When we get there, we will run and make noise.”*
- *“You said you are feeling happy. Are you happy to see your friends?”*



Serve and return means responding back and forth – the adult responds to the child’s verbal or nonverbal interaction by repeating, praising, or responding positively to encourage continuation of the child’s effort to communicate. The adult continues this back and forth response as long as the child is engaged.

What are some ways that young children communicate without words?

Potential answers include:

- *Gestures*
- *Facial expressions*

How can adults respond to nonverbal children to promote language?

Potential answers include:

- *Describe what the child is looking at*
- *Respond to the child’s facial expression – “You look sad. Are you sad that it is time to clean up?”*

ALIGNMENT WITH CLASS® – INFANTS

Infants

- Teachers consistently display positive behaviors with infants by being physically close, being on eye level, sharing attention, and providing affection and contact to the infants in their care.
- There are frequently episodes of smiles and laughter by teachers and infants.
- Teachers and infants generally appear happy in the classroom
- Teachers use a calm tone, respectful language, and gentle touch when moving or holding infants. They verbally prepare infants for what is about to happen and use respectful language, referring to infants by their names.

The following is how teachers foster emotional well-being for **infants**:

- **Teachers consistently display positive behaviors with infants by being physically close, being on eye level, sharing attention, and providing affection and contact to the infants in their care.**
- **There are frequently episodes of smiles and laughter by teachers and infants.**
- **Teachers and infants generally appear happy in the classroom.**
- **Teachers use a calm tone, respectful language, and gentle touch when moving or holding infants. They verbally prepare infants for what is about to happen and use respectful language, referring to infants by their names.**

Why is a happy, affectionate environment important for children?

What can you do to create a happy environment?

Potential answers include:

- *Music*
- *Keeping expectations for children age-appropriate*
- *Understand that negative behaviors are normal, and create an opportunity to learn*
- *Manage your own emotions and stress through self-care*
 - *What does self-care look like for you?*

ALIGNMENT WITH CLASS® – TODDLERS

Toddlers

- The teacher and children enjoy warm relationships with one another.
- There are many episodes of smiling and laughter by teachers and children. The teacher and children show enthusiasm and affection with one another.
- The teacher consistently demonstrates respect for the children.

The following is how teachers foster emotional well-being for **toddlers**:

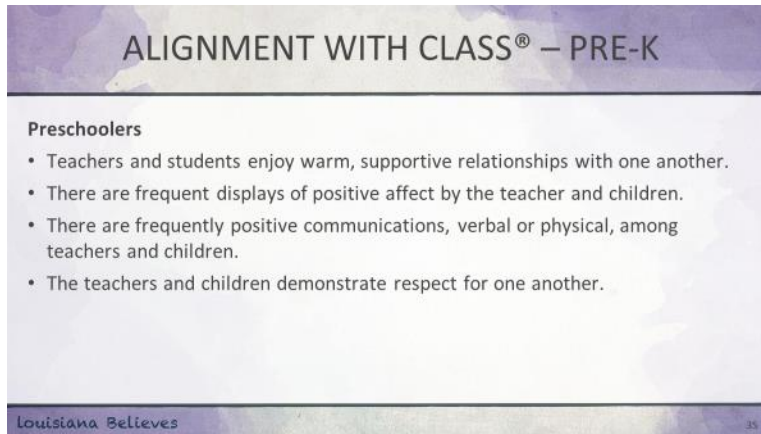
- **The teacher and children enjoy warm relationships with one another.**
- **There are many episodes of smiling and laughter by teachers and children. The teacher and children show enthusiasm and affection with one another.**
- **The teacher consistently demonstrates respect for the children.**

Give an example of a time when creating a happy classroom environment was a challenge because of a child's behavior.

- *A child that bites other children*
- *A child that wants to be held constantly*

Brainstorm how a teacher might create a happy, affectionate environment even when children act out.

- *Respond with a soothing voice*
- *Identify and validate negative feelings like sadness or anger – "I can see you are angry but we have to keep our friends safe."*



ALIGNMENT WITH CLASS® – PRE-K

Preschoolers

- Teachers and students enjoy warm, supportive relationships with one another.
- There are frequent displays of positive affect by the teacher and children.
- There are frequently positive communications, verbal or physical, among teachers and children.
- The teachers and children demonstrate respect for one another.

Louisiana Believes 35

The following is how teachers foster emotional well-being for **preschoolers**:

- **Teachers and students enjoy warm, supportive relationships with one another.**
- **There are frequent displays of positive affect by the teacher and children.**
- **There are frequently positive communications, verbal or physical, among teachers and children.**
- **The teachers and children demonstrate respect for one another.**

What does a warm, supportive, and respectful preschool classroom look like?

- *Adults are responsive*
- *Adults are patient*
- *Adults gently remove children from the group when they need time to manage emotions*

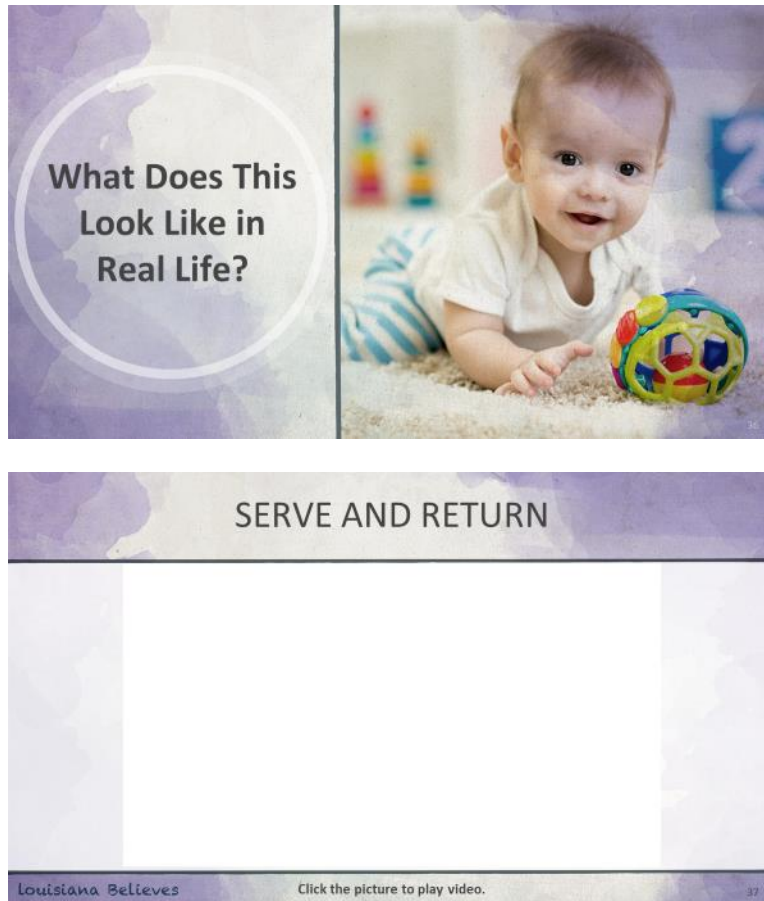
What would a teacher be doing in this classroom?

- *Smiling*
- *Singing*
- *Reassuring by describing what is happening or about to happen*

What are the challenges to having a warm, supportive, and respectful classroom?

- *A child is hungry, tired, or otherwise distressed*

- *A child behaves aggressively*
- *A teacher is stressed for personal reasons*
- *A teacher feels unappreciated*

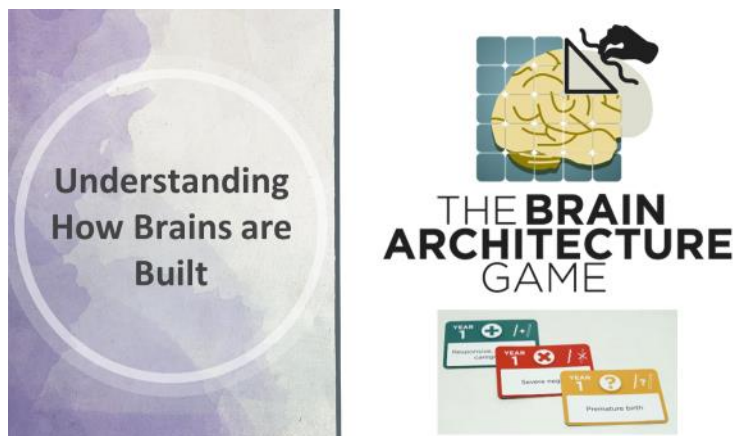


What Does This Look Like in Real Life?

SERVE AND RETURN

Louisiana Believes Click the picture to play video. 37

Click the picture on the slide to play the video. (Duration: 6:06)



Understanding How Brains are Built

THE BRAIN ARCHITECTURE GAME

Neuroplasticity, Secure attachment, Premature birth

The **Brain Architecture Game** is a tabletop game experience that builds understanding of the powerful role of experiences on early brain development – what promotes it, what derails it, with what consequences for society.

Since 2009, thousands of people in groups around the world have played the Brain Architecture Game, gaining a memorable, compelling perspective on the lifelong impact of early childhood experiences.

The game is a 75-90 minute experience optimized for groups of 4-6 people per table. It can be played in small workshops, conferences, and large events, with as few as eight people, or as many as 300 participants.

Life Experience Cards are available for purchase and are only \$99. All other game materials are available DIY.

Trainer Note: Link to the Brain Architecture Game is here – <https://dev.thebrainarchitecturegame.com>

COMMON REACTIONS TO STRESS

<p>Behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive aggression or violence toward self or others • Repetitive violent play • Explosive behavior • Disorganized behavioral stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very withdrawn or excessively shy • Bossy and demanding behavior with adults and peers • Sexual behaviors not typical for child's age • Difficulty with sleeping or eating • Regressed behaviors
--	--

Scenario
A two-year-old whose language development is delayed, arches his back, stiffens his body, and begins screaming whenever there is a transition from one activity to the next.

Is this normal, age-appropriate behavior? Why or why not? What would a trauma-sensitive adult response look like?

Louisiana Believes 39

Many of these behaviors may be occasionally exhibited by the normally developing young child as they learn to manage emotions and interact with others.

However, if these behaviors indicate sudden changes or regression from previous milestones, the caregiver should note that the child may be experiencing undue stress.

Ask participants if they have any examples that they would like to share.

Now, we will look at a scenario of a behavioral reaction to stress in a young child.

Scenario: A two-year-old whose language development is delayed, arches his back, stiffens his body, and begins screaming whenever there is a transition from one activity to the next.

Is this normal, age appropriate behavior? Why or why not? *Allow participants time to respond.*

This is likely normal behavior for this age. Given that the child's language skills are not well-developed, frustration is likely to be exhibited behaviorally.

What would a trauma-sensitive adult response look like? *Allow participants time to respond.*

The caregiver should get down on the child's level, use a quiet voice and describe how the child is feeling about the transition. Introduce the child to something that might distract and engage him. "I can see you were really having fun playing outside. You must feel sad that outside playtime is over. I am glad that we will get to play outside again tomorrow. Would you like to come with me and choose your favorite book for story time?"

COMMON REACTIONS TO STRESS

Emotions

- Chronic sadness
- Very flat affect or withdrawn behavior
- Quick, explosive anger

Scenario

A three-year-old girl with well-developed language skills exhibits detachment and a lack of interest in social interaction or engaging play activities. This is new behavior for her.

Is this normal, age-appropriate behavior? Why or why not? What would a trauma-sensitive adult response look like?

Louisiana Believes 40

Emotion responses to stress include:

- **Chronic sadness**
- **Very flat affect or withdrawn behavior**
- **Quick, explosive anger**

Ask participants if they have any examples that they would like to share.

Now, we will look at a scenario of an emotional response to stress in a young child.

Scenario: A three-year-old girl with well-developed language skills exhibits detachment and a lack of interest in social interaction or engaging play activities. This is new behavior for her.

Is this normal, age-appropriate behavior? Why or why not? *Allow participants time to respond.*

Given that this seems to be regressive behavior, rather than a shy personality, the caregiver should be concerned.

What would a trauma-sensitive adult response look like? *Allow participants time to respond.*

The caregiver can label the child’s feelings by asking, “Are you feeling sad?” The caregiver may also provide comfort and security by sitting by the child and inviting her to participate in a soothing play activity, such as sand or water play.

COMMON REACTIONS TO STRESS

Attachment

- Lack of eye contact
- Sad or empty eyed appearance
- Overly friendly with strangers
- Vacillation between clinginess and disengagement
- Failure to reciprocate (hugs, smiles, vocalizations, play)
- Failure to seek comfort when hurt or frightened

Scenario

A four-year-old boy routinely avoids adults when he experiences negative emotions such as fear, frustration, or sadness.

Is this normal, age-appropriate behavior? Why or why not? What would a trauma-sensitive adult response look like?

Louisiana Believes 41

Attachment responses to stress include:

- **Lack of eye contact**
- **Sad or empty eyed appearance**
- **Overly friendly with strangers**
- **Vacillation between clinginess and disengagement**
- **Failure to reciprocate (hugs, smiles, vocalizations, play)**
- **Failure to seek comfort when hurt or frightened**

Ask participants if they have any examples that they would like to share.

Now, we will look at a scenario of an attachment response to stress in a young child.

Scenario: A four-year-old boy routinely avoids adults when he experiences negative emotions such as fear, frustration, or sadness.

Is this normal, age-appropriate behavior? Why or why not? *Allow participants time to respond.*

A normal response to distress in a young child is to seek comfort or intervention from a trusted adult. However, a child who has experienced unresponsive caregivers may not trust adults to meet his needs and may have insecure attachments.

What would a trauma-sensitive adult response look like? *Allow participants time to respond.*

The caregiver should be observant of these negative responses, and routinely offer (but never force) support and encouragement to the child.



- What are some common adult responses to these behaviors in young children?
- What are some trauma-sensitive adult responses to these behaviors in young children?

What are some common adult responses to these behaviors in young children?

Encourage participants to talk about examples of unhelpful adult responses and why these may be unhelpful, for example ignoring, anger, frustration, or lack of acceptance or invalidating feelings (i.e. “big boys don’t cry”).

What are some trauma-sensitive adults responses to these behaviors in young children?

Encourage participants to give examples of trauma-sensitive adult responses. Refer to CLASS® standards for prompts.



REVIEW LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the rapid development of a young child's brain
- Understand the elements needed for optimal brain development – including a language-rich environment, caring and responsive relationships, developmentally appropriate limits to learn self-regulation and buffering from toxic stress
- Be able to discuss adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress
- Understand how toxic stress impedes healthy brain development and leads to maladaptive behavior
- Practice strategies to promote language development within the context of caring
- Practice strategies to buffer young children from toxic stress

Louisiana Believes

44

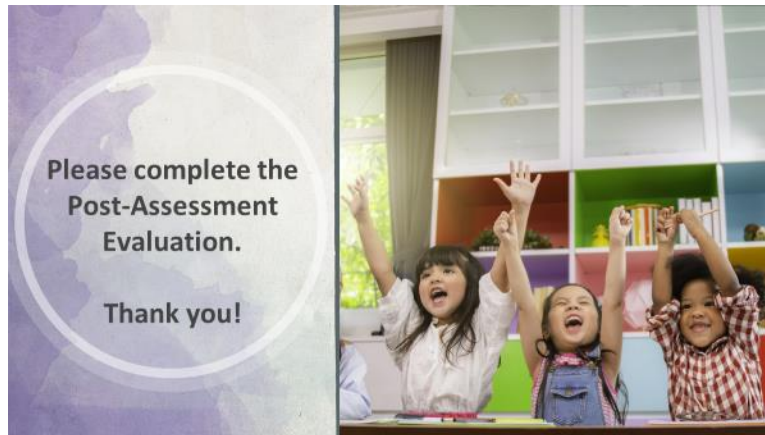
Explain that for each statement, they will show a “thumbs up” if they think we covered the objective, a “thumbs down” if we did not cover the objective, and a “sideways thumb” if we partially covered the objective.

Review Learning Objectives.

- **Understand the rapid development of a young child's brain**
- **Understand the elements needed for optimal brain development – including a language-rich environment, caring and responsive relationships, developmentally appropriate limits to learn self-regulation and buffering from toxic stress**
- **Be able to discuss adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress**
- **Understand how toxic stress impedes healthy brain development and leads to maladaptive behavior**
- **Practice strategies to promote language development within the context of caring**
- **Practice strategies to buffer young children from toxic stress**



Open the floor for participants' comments and questions.



That brings us to the end of our time. Thank you so much for your attention and hard work today. Before you go, please complete the Post-Assessment Evaluation.

Distribute the Post-Assessment Evaluation.

When you have completed the evaluation, please fold it and leave it in the center of your table before you leave. I hope this has been valuable! If you have any additional questions, I will be available to talk further.

Thank you.

Post-Assessment Evaluation Guidance

- *Review the forms to identify the group's responses*
- *Compare the results and identify the areas in which participants expressed greatest growth and the areas in which participants might still need support*
- *Share results with Louisiana DOE representative to inform local continuing professional development efforts*