

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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# Behavior Management and Trauma-Informed Literacy Strategies

Course Modules  
*in accordance with Bulletin 996*

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# Purpose

The purpose of this course is to meet certain requirements outlined in BESE policy - Bulletin 996 - in accordance with [Act 438](#) of the 2021 Louisiana Legislative Session. Specifically, these modules address the following areas for teacher candidates in grades kindergarten through third:

- behavior management.
- trauma-informed principles and practices for the literacy classroom.
- other developmentally appropriate supports to ensure that students can effectively access literacy instruction.



# Additional Training

- The Louisiana Department of Health, in partnership with the Child Welfare Training Academy, developed a training on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma-informed best practices for general instruction. That training provides a deeper dive into the topics and may be useful to supplement this course's literacy-focused instructional information.
- The [Louisiana Early Childhood Key Training Modules](#) also feature numerous trainings and resources, many of which touch on trauma-informed practices and high-quality interactions.

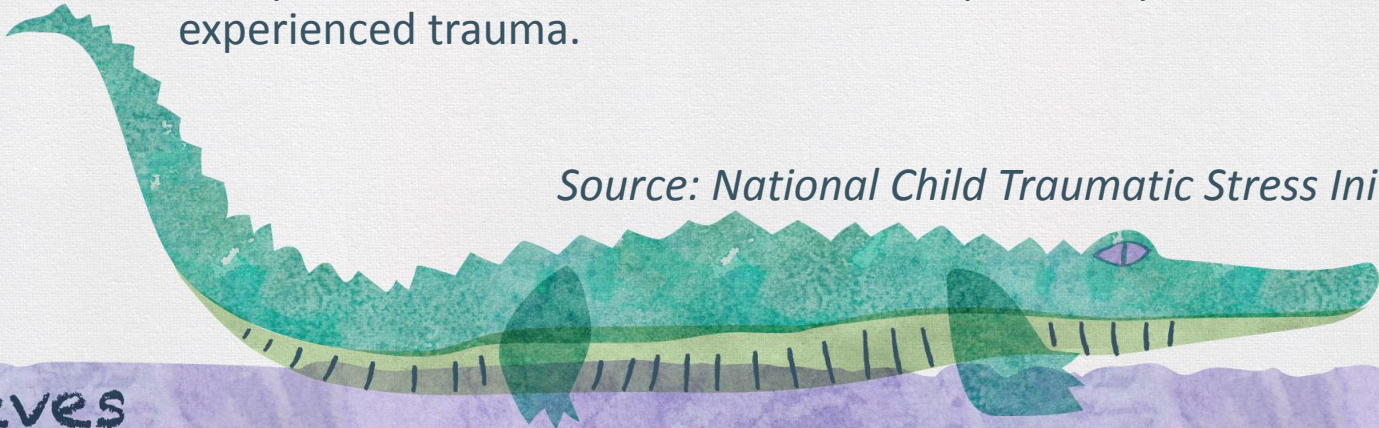
# Agenda

- The Need
- Trauma-Informed Strategies
- Behavior Management
- Other Developmentally Appropriate Supports
- Certificate
- Contact Information

# The Need

- Approximately **two-thirds** of children in the U.S. under 16 report experiencing at least one traumatic event.
- Trauma can affect **cognitive development and function** as well as have **physiological effects**.
- **One** positive teacher-student relationship can help students who have experienced trauma.

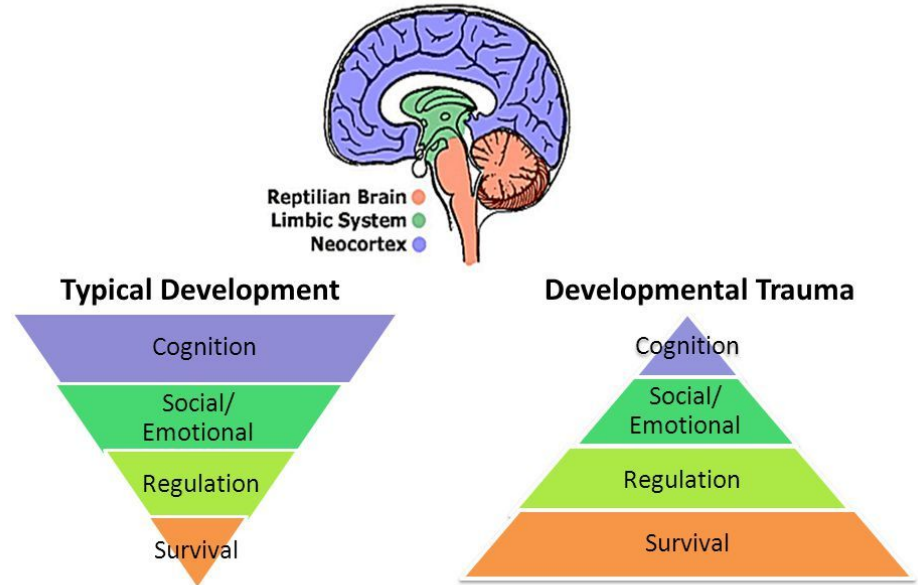
*Source: National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative, 2021*



# How Trauma Affects the Reading Brain

- Learning to read requires significant cognitive functions and processes such as orthographic mapping.
- Trauma can greatly reduce the development of cognition due to the brain's focus on survival.
- Therefore, students who experience trauma or adverse childhood experiences may struggle to read, comprehend, and respond appropriately.

## Trauma & Brain Development



Adapted from Holt & Jordan, Ohio Dept. of Education

**Module 1:  
Trauma-Informed Strategies**



# This Module

## Trauma-Informed Strategies

- Impacts on Learning
- Addressing Trauma in the Classroom
- Addressing Trauma at School
- Strategies for Literacy Instruction



# Definition

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
  - abuse
  - neglect
  - other traumatic childhood experience
- Trauma
  - frightening, dangerous, or life-threatening events
  - poverty and/or homelessness



*Source: Partners for Family Health*

# Impacts on Learning

- academic performance
- fatigue
- irritability
- stress
- misbehaviors
- learned hopelessness



# Addressing Trauma in the Classroom

- promote equity
- support healthy development
- facilitate a safe learning environment
- develop trusting relationships
- avoid mislabeling behaviors associated with ACEs
- incorporate arts, creativity, or other multi-sensory approaches to learning

*Source: Cramer, 2018*



# Addressing Trauma at School

- counselor
- mentorship
- access to community resources



# Strategies for Literacy Instruction

- Allow student to share their story or self-express through writing
- Model appropriate language
- Use graphic organizers to help connect thinking processes
- Partner with a student who can provide support and encouragement
- Engage families and community members





## **Key Takeaways**

- Trauma can impact all aspects of a child's life, including their ability to read and participate in school activities.
- There are helpful ways teachers and other school personnel can support children who have experienced trauma.
- Literacy instruction can also be a tool to combat challenges students face.

# Module 2: Behavior Management



# This Module

## Behavior Management

- Determining the Cause
- Strategies for Literacy Instruction



# Definition



- Behavior
  - the way a student acts or conducts themselves
  - can be consistent or a sudden change
- Behavior Management
  - low intensity
  - increasing positive habits, behaviors, and interactions
  - reducing negative behaviors

# Determining the Cause

- Track when and where behaviors most often occur and notice any trends.
- Talk with family members and other teachers or people who interact with the child.
- Understand that while the behavior may be directed at you, it is not about you.
- When in doubt, just ask.



# Building Relationships

## Reflection Questions to Build Relationship Awareness

- What are the names of the one, two, or three students about whom you feel strong negative emotions?
- What does each of these students respond positively to; what makes each of them smile? What motivates each of these students; when do they get excited and show joy?
- What is each of these students' biggest behavioral struggles, what help is each of them asking for through their behaviors?
- What small thing can you do with each of these students tomorrow to show them that they have a place in your classroom?
- Which adults have been able to make even a small connection with each of these students, and can you go to them for help?



# Strategies for Literacy Instruction

- Keep the focus on instruction rather than emotion.
- Model positive language by maintaining a 5:1 ratio of positive affirmations to corrections. Remember it isn't always what you say, but how you say it.
- Use graphic organizers and writing as an outlet for students (and yourself).
- Design intentional activities that reduce triggers or feelings of isolation.



# Steps to Recognize and Respond to Behaviors

1. Identify what the actual need is from the student.
2. Recognize the student's worth and use their strengths.
3. Understand that students will not learn effectively or behave appropriate if they do not feel safe and cared for.
4. Approach your response with a team perspective.
5. Treat students with patience and grace throughout the process.

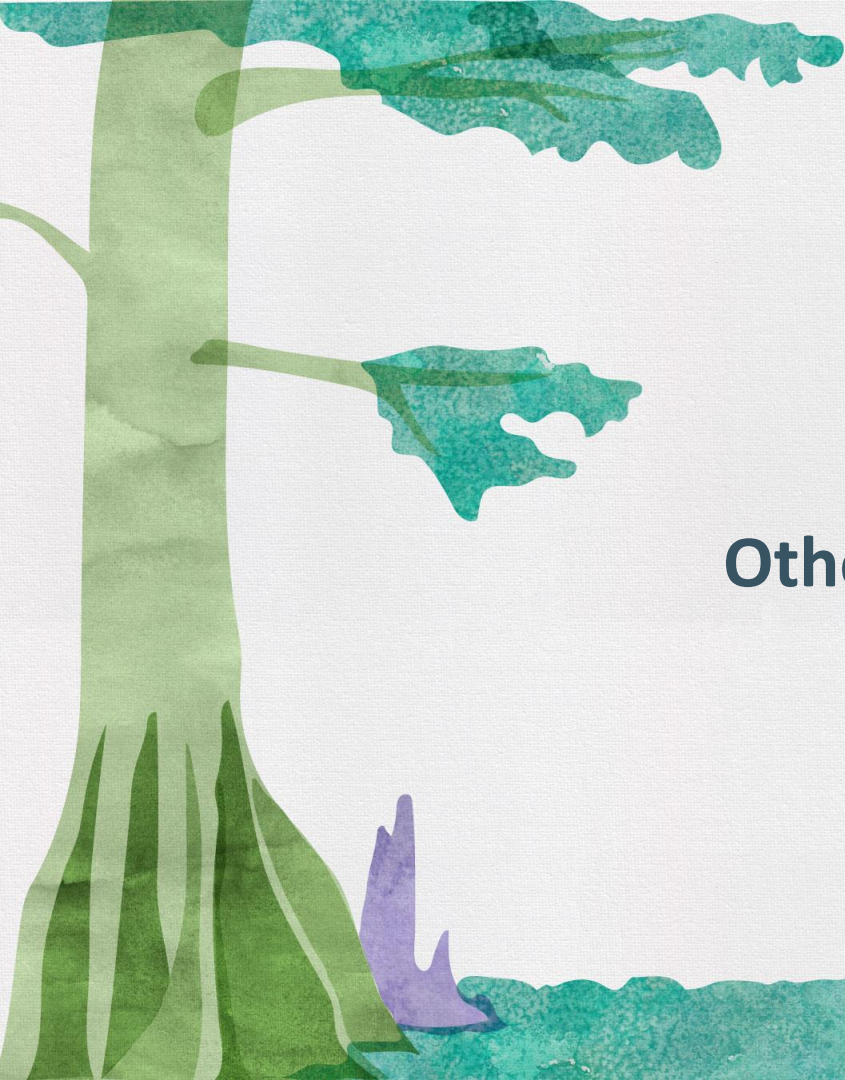
*Source: Cramer, 2018*





## **Key Takeaways**

- Behavior management includes strategies that can improve student behavior and develop positive relationships.
- Behaviors often stem from external factors, and grace and patience go a long way.
- Literacy strategies can provide supports for managing student behaviors.



## **Module 3: Other Developmentally Appropriate Supports**

# This Module

## Other Developmentally Appropriate Supports

- General Guidelines
- Strategies for Literacy Instruction



# Definition

- What is developmentally appropriate?
  - learning opportunities that are suitable for a child's age and stage of development
  - may look different for different children



# General Guidelines

- Set clear expectations in student-friendly language.
- Develop routines and procedures for all tasks.
- Teach strategies for better behaviors rather than using punishment.
- Develop a behavior management system that promotes positive behaviors and does not publicize negative behaviors.
- If you must correct a behavior, do so privately.



# Strategies for Literacy Instruction

- Post a daily/weekly schedule so students know what to expect.
- Establish routines and procedures for lessons and activities.
  - hand motions for skills
  - chants/phrases for transitions or everyday activities
  - signals for needs (bathroom, tissue, question, pencil)
- Foster a learning community.
  - Allow students to work together when they can.
  - Set clear expectations and guidelines for partner/group work.
  - Pair/Group students together strategically.





## **Key Takeaways**

- Developmentally appropriate may look different for different students.
- Focus on positive reinforcement rather than punishment.
- Literacy instructional strategies can be customized to support students at their developmental stages.

# Final Thoughts

Understand that you cannot solve the hardships students face or undo the causes of their behaviors, but you can create a safe environment where they feel comfortable, cared for, and accepted.

Additional Resources and Strategies to Research:

- Social-Emotional Learning
- Conscious Discipline
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Mindfulness Techniques
- Distress Tolerance
- Whole Brain Teaching



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This certifies that

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completed a course fulfilling the  
requirements of Bulletin 996 for Behavior  
Management and Trauma-Informed Literacy  
Practices

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Date



## Contact Information

For questions or comments about this course, please contact:

[louisianaliteracy@la.gov](mailto:louisianaliteracy@la.gov)

# References

- Bachelet, E. (2022). Behavior Management Doesn't Have to Tank Relationships. <https://www.ascd.org/blogs/behavior-management-doesnt-have-to-tank-relationships>
- Bulletin 996 - Standards for Approval of Teacher and/or Educational Leader Preparation Programs.
- Cramer, N.V. (2018). Using Trauma-Informed Pedagogy to Make Literacy and Learning Relevant and Engaging for Students of Poverty. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1290813.pdf>
- National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative. (2021). <https://www.samhsa.gov/child-trauma>
- Partners for Family Health. <https://partnersforfamilyhealth.org/>