

Considerations for Decisionmakers: Is Our Approach Trauma- Informed?

1. Is the child connected? Does the child feel safe?
2. Are we asking, “What happened to the child? What does the child need?”
3. Are we being proactive or reactive? Do we have a plan (a) to avoid triggers and re-traumatizing situations, (b) to recognize reactions and behaviors that may be related to trauma, and (c) to address these reactions and behaviors in a calm and supportive way?
4. Have we given the child any labels without taking his or her trauma history into account? Are we discussing the child’s strengths?
5. If there is an incident, are we looking at what happened before the incident to see if something may have triggered the child?
6. If the child is being redirected or corrected, are we ensuring that healthy connections are maintained? Are we sure the child feels safe and trusts the person doing the correcting? Have we helped the child learn to manage his/her emotions? Are we giving the child time to learn and practice appropriate responses and behaviors?
7. If we take away a strategy the child has used to survive, are we replacing it with a healthy alternative? Have we taught the child how to engage the healthy alternative?
8. Does the child have a voice?
9. Does the child need any additional tools to learn, connect with the world, connect with others?
10. Does the caregiver need any additional tools to connect with the child, or to help the child manage his or her emotions?