



CALIFORNIA CENTER  
for Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health  
at WestEd Center for Prevention & Early Intervention

# Trauma-Informed Practices (WestEd TIP)

## Developmentally-informed practices to promote resilience & wellness

**Addressing the impact of early childhood trauma is a pervasive challenge in the United States.**

According to the American Psychological Association, approximately half the children in the U.S. experience some type of trauma during their childhood. These children need teachers, providers, and caregivers who understand the impact of trauma on children's physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development. Because few resources about trauma-informed practices exist, many individuals who work with young children don't have the necessary knowledge, skills, or tools to effectively support them.

### TRAINING SERIES

WestEd's Trauma-Informed Practices supports early childhood professionals and caregivers to be:

- Informed about trauma and its effects
- Sensitive to those effects
- Equipped with the skills and knowledge that promote caring and responsive programs for children from prenatal through 8 years old affected by trauma

Recognizing that adult learners need opportunities to practice and apply new knowledge and skills, WestEd TIP is offered through a topic-specific format, with follow-up reflective practice sessions to support practitioners as they integrate theory with practice. Topics include:

### 1. INTRODUCTION TO DEVELOPMENTALLY-INFORMED TRAUMA PRACTICES

This topic offers an overview of trauma and its impact on children's development. Participants are introduced to trauma-informed practices that can be used to support children who may have experienced trauma. Focus areas include:

- Risk vs. trauma in children: Understanding the difference
- Brain development, resilience, and trauma
- Recognizing symptoms of trauma
- Behavioral responses to trauma
- Calming the stress response system
- Buffering and building resilience: Relational and environmental strategies

### 2. STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA

This topic is available to participants who have completed the Introductory session. Participants become familiar with relational, environmental, and sensory strategies that support all children, and particularly children who have experienced trauma. Participants will integrate new skills in the following areas:

- Recognizing and minimizing trauma triggers
- Strategies for dealing with trauma responses
- Emotional literacy
- Sensory awareness
- Determining the need for specialized infant-family and early childhood mental health interventions

### 3. ENGAGING AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA

This topic promotes understanding of the impact of trauma on young children and their families. Participants become familiar with the types of trauma experienced by families and how trauma manifests in behavior and health. Strategies that support families are introduced and practiced during the session. Focus areas include:

- Risk vs. trauma in families: Understanding the difference
- Impact of ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences)
- How to frame questions about risk and trauma
- Family engagement strategies
- Strategies for supporting families
- Supporting family resilience; building family and community buffers

### 5. REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN THE CONTEXT OF TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES

This topic provides an overview of individual and group reflective practices that enhance one's effectiveness when working with children and families who may have experienced trauma. Participants are introduced to the principles of reflective practice and will have an opportunity to explore specific practices that support relationship-based work. Focus areas include:

- Self-understanding and recognition of personal feelings and biases
- Gentle inquiry and critical thinking skills
- The parallel process
- Reflection as a support for decision-making
- The role of reflective supervision

### 4. SELF-CARE IN THE CONTEXT OF TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES

This topic addresses the needs of practitioners and providers who work with families who may have experienced trauma. Participants understand the signs and symptoms of compassion fatigue, typical adult triggers, and ways to manage their own experience of this work. Focus areas include:

- Reducing stress and secondary trauma
- Reflective practices to support self-care
- Self-awareness and mindfulness practices

### 6. RACE AND EQUITY IN THE CONTEXT OF TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES

This topic examines trauma through a lens of equity and social justice. Participants will be introduced to how historical and current systemic injustices result in trauma and how that is carried in young children. Participants to further explore:

- Impacts of racial equity and inequities
- The prevalence and impact of implicit/unconscious bias
- The importance of asset/strengths-based, culturally responsive, trauma-informed practices in work with children, families, and communities
- How to support young children's social and emotional competence and strategies to disrupt inequitable disciplinary practices, including suspensions and expulsions, in early learning and care programs

#### LEARNING FORMATS

WestEd TIP is offered in several learning formats and can be customized to meet the needs of a specific group. Training on selected topics, whether in-person or delivered remotely through distance learning, is followed by opportunities for reflection and support in applying learning into daily practices. Follow-up sessions can be facilitated by our staff or by your own staff with support from our training team.

Please contact WestEd at [tip@wested.org](mailto:tip@wested.org) to discuss your specific professional development needs or to create a training plan to meet your needs.

#### CALIFORNIA CENTER FOR INFANT-FAMILY AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH

AT WESTED CENTER FOR PREVENTION & EARLY INTERVENTION

1000 G Street, Suite 500  
Sacramento, CA 95814

(916) 538-9032

[www.cacenter-ecmh.org](http://www.cacenter-ecmh.org)  
[tip@wested.org](mailto:tip@wested.org)