



EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONNECTION

MOVING LIVES FORWARD

BUILDING THE BRAIN - RESTING THE BRAIN

The brain grows at a rapid rate beginning before birth into early childhood. Brain development is the foundation where other areas of development begin to occur; therefore, this is where a child's earliest impacts have long-term effects. An infant's brain experiences critical rapid growth that forms the neural networks that influence functioning for the rest of life.

Caregivers interactions build the healthy architecture necessary for future healthy brain development. Caregivers playing and interacting appropriately with children is a vital key to teaching them how to form healthy attachments. As we know, healthy attachments build self-concept and awareness that then promotes good social and emotional development.

Without this interaction and teaching from caregivers, children cannot build strong brain circuits. When children have positive experiences, it builds brain architecture, which provides the foundation for future behavior and learning. Our body is a house (temple) and when the foundation is compromised (adverse experiences) it can impair brain architecture and unfortunately these effects can last into adulthood. Brain architecture is made up of billions of connections between individual neurons across different areas of the brain. The interactions of genes and experience shape the developing brain. Children are born with the capacity to learn to control impulses and retain information, but their experiences as an infant helps lay a foundation for how other executive function skills develop.

Needless to say, those first three years are SO important for building the brain.

Yet because the brain (just like children) are remarkable resilient, it is possible for a child's brain to "catch up" in most all of the developmental domains. For example, when neglected children receive responsive care, they can recover. Anyone who thinks that past a certain age there is nothing you can do is not aware of brain science. We all can learn extremely interesting facts about studying this amazing organ. Even of more importance, is knowing that early intervention makes a huge difference.

Lastly, a fact which is true for all ages, the more we reduce stress, the more it helps the brain! The stress response in our bodies is

necessary for survival, but in today's world, we often are experiencing too much stress. Stress can kill brain cells; chronic stress has a shrinking effect on the prefrontal cortex, the area of the brain responsible for learning and memory.

Some of the psychological signs of stress are:

- *Anger or anxiety, sometimes leading to depression,*
 - *Feeling overwhelmed, unfocused or unmotivated,*
 - *Making bad decisions,*
 - *Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much.*
- (Watch for an article on this in the July newsletter.)*

As stated, earlier, we all may be feeling one (or more) of these states of being with all that is happening in today's world. Remember that we can only control certain aspects of our lives, and staying safe in our own little worlds is most important. Remember, we are more resilient than we realize at times. And we are role models for those little ones in our lives. They will watch and react in the ways that they perceive us.

I want to close with 6 things needed to HEAL the stress response system:

1. NUTRITION
2. EXERCISE
3. SLEEP
4. MINDFULNESS
5. MENTAL HEALTH
6. HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Sources/Resources:

www.iechc.org
csefel.vanderbilt.org
www.BrainArchitects.edu

Cheryl's Corner of Caring

*"Keep your thoughts positive because your thoughts become your words.
Keep your words positive because your words become your behavior.
Keep your behavior positive because your behavior becomes your habits.
Keep our habits positive because your habits become your values.
Keep your values positive because your values become your destiny."
(Mahatma Gandhi)*

MEET CENTENNIAL'S EARLY CHILDHOOD CONSULTATION TEAM



LAUNCHING ZOOM SECURE TELEHEALTH SERVICES!

Our ECMH team is excited to announce that consultation services are now available using Zoom Secure Telehealth Services. These services are available to client families, schools, childcare centers and community partners with group and individual meetings available. All services will be provided using this private, secure video platform, and can be accessed using most electronic devices. For more information or to set up a consultation appointment, please contact our ECMH team or your local Centennial Mental Health Center office.



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Ages 0-5

Covers the following
counties:
Logan, Morgan

For additional support during
the COVID-19 Pandemic you
can call Centennial's
**COMMUNITY
SUPPORT LINE**

You can do this by calling your
nearest Centennial office:

Akron - 970.345.2254
Burlington - 719.346.8183
Cheyenne Wells - 719.346.8183
Elizabeth - 303.646.4519
Fort Morgan - 970.867.4924
Holyoke - 970.854.2114
Julesburg - 970.474.3769
Limon - 719.775.2313
Sterling - 970.522.4392
Wray - 970.332.3133
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Covers the following counties:
Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson,
Lincoln & Yuma

Contact your local Centennial Mental Health Center for assistance with any Early Childhood need.

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