

THE HYCHE CENTER

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

HEALTHY ATTACHMENTS

Healthy attachment with caregivers is the foundation of children's mental health! Secure attachment allows kids to confidently explore their world and develop independence while being able to be comforted by caregivers when needed. Caregivers can foster secure attachment by building bonds and increasing attunement (our ability to be aware of and respond to kids' emotional states).



CAREGIVER ATTACHMENT

Easy ways to build attachment include playing games focused on eye contact, touch, and attention. Example:

- Tossing a ball - Focusing on eye contact and cooperation.
- Mirroring: Taking turns copying each other's facial expressions and body movements.
- Drawing on backs - Taking turns drawing shapes, letters, or numbers on each other's backs with your finger and guessing what was drawn.

Responding to an Overwhelmed Child

The next time your child gets stressed and overwhelmed instead of getting stressed yourself try out new ways of responding. Approaching an overwhelmed child with calm concerned curiosity can provide a secure base for them to begin regulating their own emotions. "You seem upset, will you help me understand what happened?" Describing the child's behavior and possible emotional state can assist children in noticing their behavior and developing their emotional vocabulary "Your eyebrows are scrunched up and you're frowning so big, I wonder if you're mad?"

(Continued on page 2)

Overwhelmed Child Cont.'d



Offer suggestions to help the child feel better such as breathing, stretching, drawing or singing. Suggestions are just that, do not feel hurt if your child does not want to engage in one of these activities right away. "Let's take a deep breath, that helps me feel better when I'm mad". Provide space to calm down if it is safe and reasonable. If a child pulls away or requests to be left alone and you are able to allow that time, do so.

Remind the child you are nearby when they want to talk or play, check on your child if they appear to be escapating or request your attention. "I see you want to be left alone, I'm going to be right over here when you get ready to talk".



MODELING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

You are your child's biggest role model! They look to you to learn many important skills, including emotional intelligence. Here are two ways you can help children learn these skills. Acknowledge when you're stressed and show kids healthy ways to calm down such as breathing, stretching, or taking a break. Provide appropriate apologies to other adults or your kids. Show kids how to notice when they need to apologize and model a genuine apology without any "but's" or "excuses". Apologizing when we act poorly towards our kids is especially effective as it helps show children that everyone deserves respect.



Why is it so important to be aware of mental health?

Talking openly about mental health can reduce the misconceptions and stigma, and can encourage those who are suffering to seek help and find a support network. It's important for caregivers, friends, and loved ones to understand the impact that mental health has on daily life.

If you believe your child may need Counseling services, please contact your child's Pediatrician who can refer your child to The Hyche Center for a Mental Health Evaluation.