

From Early Trauma to Security and Joy

Using what I know!

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Professor of Child Development

Readiness

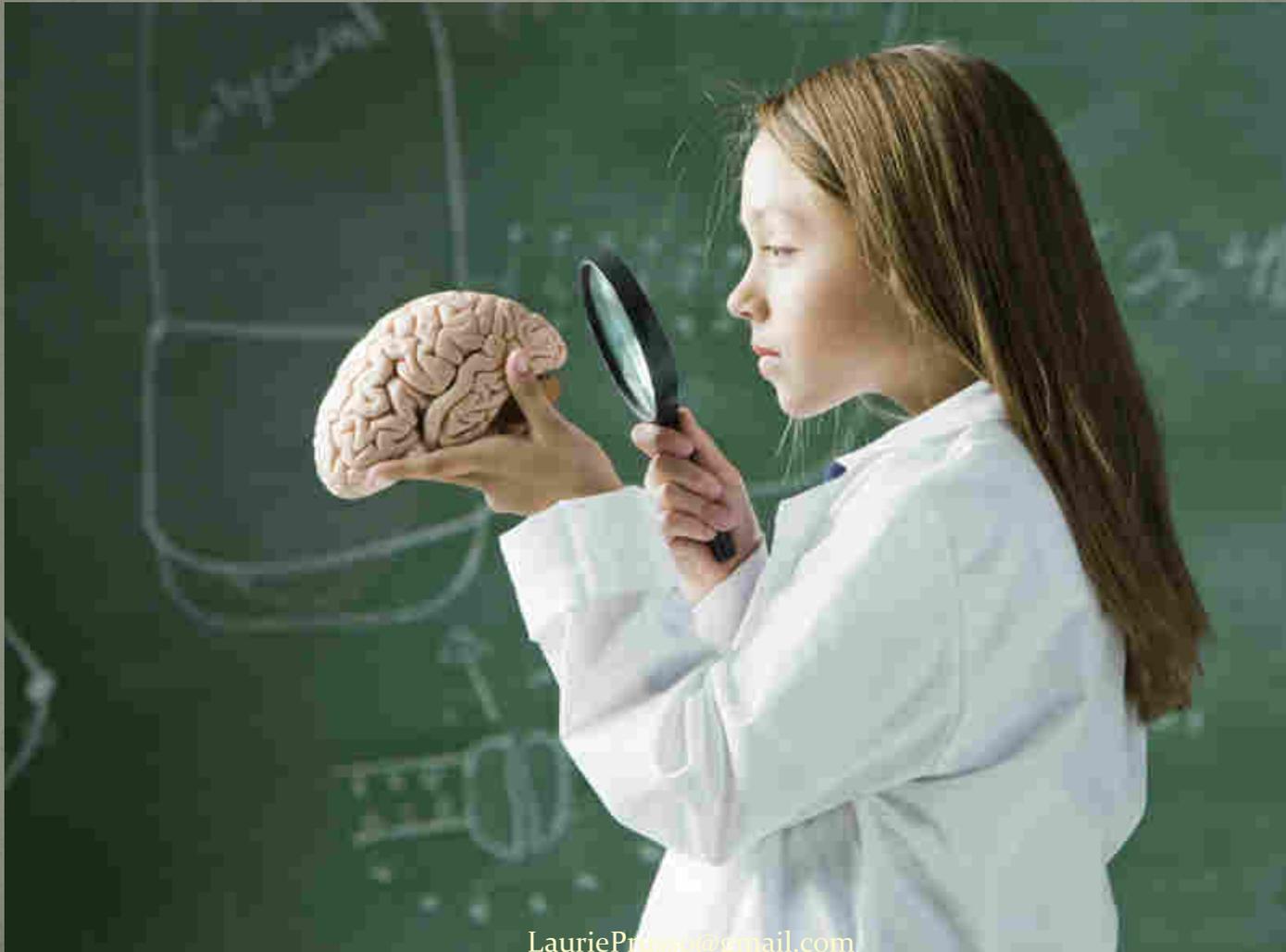
- Security
- Trust
- Connection
- Contribution
- Capability
- Friendship
- Learning
- Emotional Regulation-Social Skills



Children's Behavior is Like an Iceberg.



Hyper-vigilant



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Two Tasks in Changing The Brain

- Diminish the old pathway by not continuing to experience the things that strengthen it!
- Create an alternative pathway for different responses

Daddy

- Stopped working
- Quit recovery
- Wouldn't get out of bed
- Couldn't set boundaries
- Eventually invited to leave our home.

Trauma and Risk



- Mental illness
- Drug abuse
- Neglect
- Transient life
- Parent incarcerated
- Poverty/Stress
- Domestic violence

Traumatic Life Up to this Point

When children have been exposed to adverse childhood experiences, they have a powerful, overwhelming sense of loss, sorrow, sadness, fear, pain, and confusion.

This looks like anger.

In response to his life experiences

- Ineffective, but protective skills included:
 - Frequent *Emotional Tsunamis* (6-10 per day)
 - Lack of access to real emotions: only anger
 - Frequent withdrawal
 - Argued about EVERYTHING
 - Inflexible
 - Literal

Outward Behaviors

- Explosive
- Volatile
- Angry
- Anxious
- Unpredictable
- Intense
- Irregular



What About Grandpa?

- Do what you are told—or I'll make you do it!
- You are not allowed to hurt grandma!
- I'm going to spank him so he'll know he can't do that.
- I doesn't matter what he needs if he can't behave!

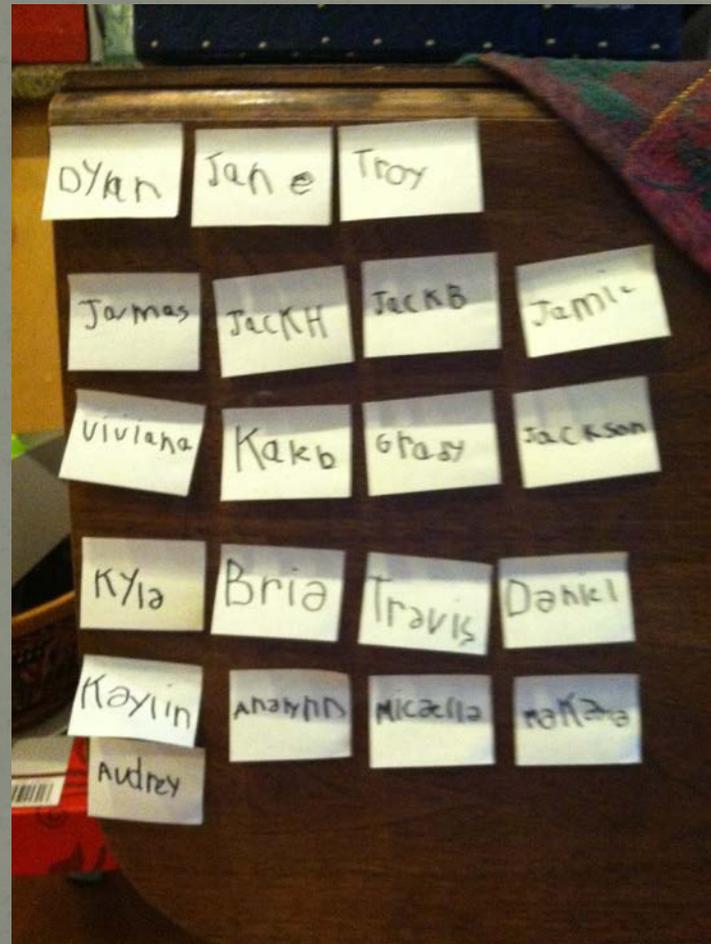
Making Sense of His World

- He created “ORDER” in his external environment wherever he could
- He accepted rules—so we made a routine chart to support him!
- OCD- very smart
- He needed to contribute

Organizing, Categorizing and Symmetry



After two weeks of TK



In the beginning....

- 8-10 Explosive Events Daily
- 6 weeks of summer Head Start. Full-day
- Transitional kindergarten
- Living on edge—well behaved outside of home

Children with ACES

- “Tied in knots”
- No engagement with “playful” settings
- Doll house
- Psychologist intervention weekly at school

This is what we did!

- Created a predictable, monotonous schedule and stuck to it.
- Managed our own feelings and accepted and NAMED his—we did not let his emotional tsunami's become ours!

Used effective Positive Discipline TOOLS

- My favorites were:
 - Say “No!” and mean it
 - Decide what you will do
 - Follow Through
 - MAKE SURE THE MESSAGE OF LOVE GETS THROUGH!



Teach him to get his own cup!



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Whenever Possible

- Let him choose
 - Which cup, bowl, plate etc.
 - What to wear.
 - From selective items for snacks and meals.
- Supported him having personal power when appropriate within an environment with clear limits and rules.

I MISS MY MOM!

Jaden was full of sadness which was expressed as anger. He had the cognitive ability to understand what was happening, but not the emotional and psychological ability to manage it effectively.

What child would?

We DID NOT ask him to behave!

- We did not focus on his behavior at all.
- When he erupted, we carried him to his room, sat with him on the bed or floor while he kicked, screamed, swung, and threw things.
- We reflected his feelings ONCE and then SHUT UP!!!
- When he was calm, we taught him about his brain and read stories and sang songs.

VERY IMPORTANT!

When a child is having an emotional outburst, do not ask for ANYTHING!

- “Stop crying and we can solve this”
- “If you can behave, you can come out”
- “Next time, you should
_____”
- “If you would listen to me, this wouldn’t happen!”

Validate and Keep Safe

- Validate ONCE then just sit with him
- Demonstrate:
 - Patience
 - Compassion
 - Love
 - Trust

Remember that any teaching
must happen when the child is calm.



Wait until later.

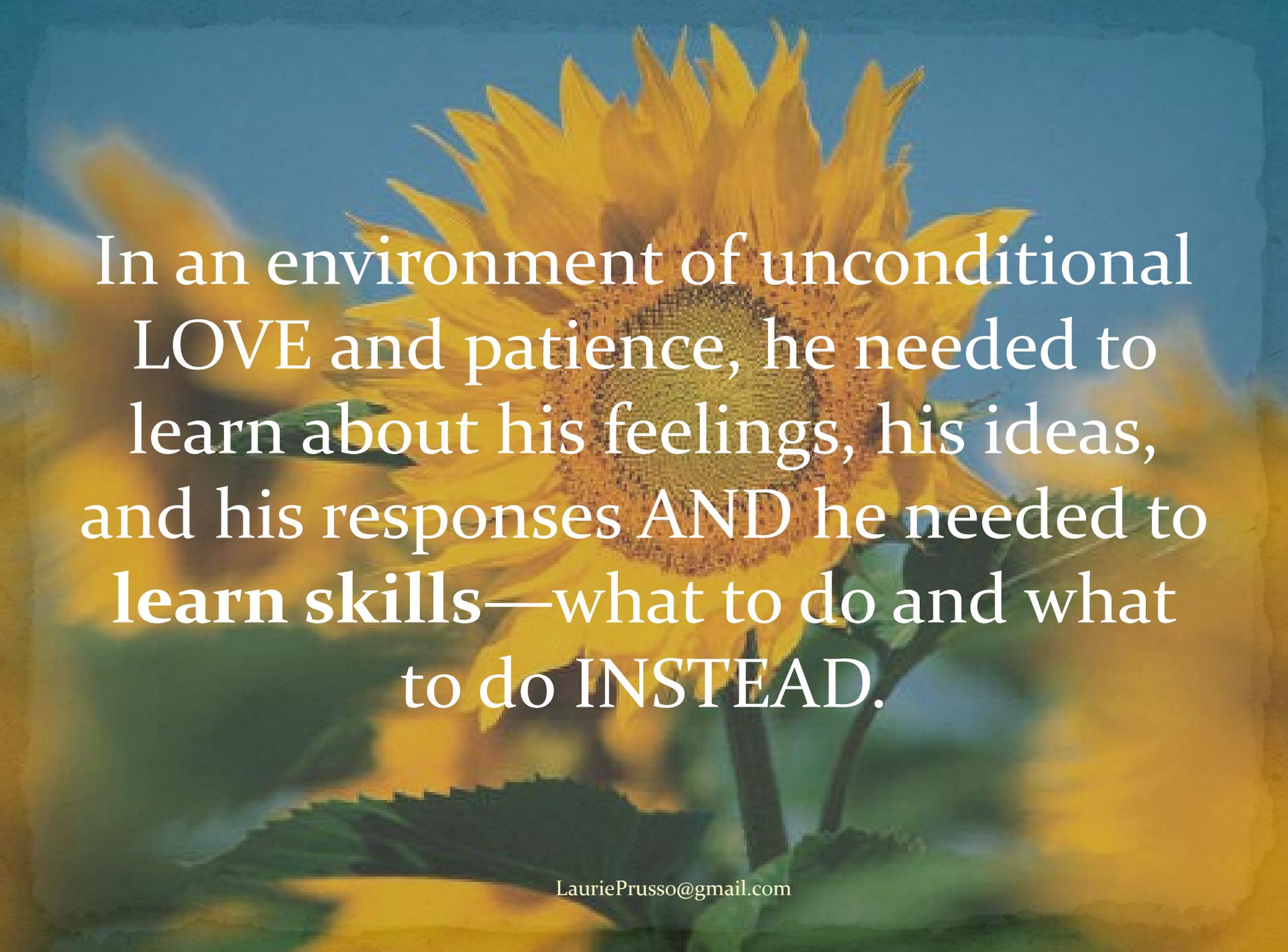
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Important Considerations

It is not about the behavior!
His behavior is NOT who he is!



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In an environment of unconditional
LOVE and patience, he needed to
learn about his feelings, his ideas,
and his responses AND he needed to
learn skills—what to do and what
to do **INSTEAD.**

A close-up photograph of two hands holding a blue flashlight. The hands are positioned on either side of the flashlight, with fingers wrapped around the handle. The background is a dark, textured green surface. The text is overlaid in white, serif font, centered over the flashlight.

We focused on loving,
teaching
and encouraging him.

Explicit Teaching

- Teach only when the child is calm and interested.
- Take your cues from the child's behavior.
 - Explain briefly what happened.
- Use good children's literature to support
 - (see list at end of presentation)
 - Depend on routine chart.
- Teach the child about their brain!

“It is not simply about what we don’t want the child to do, it is about what we want him to be able to do!”

Helpful skills to teach:

- Recognize when your body is getting tense.
- Breathe deep and count to 10...11...12...
- Walk away until you feel better.
- Say how you are feeling.

We attacked the iceberg.



What is Behavior?

- Behavior is the outward expression of a need. The tip of the iceberg.
- Behavior is goal oriented and intended to earn a sense of belonging and significance.

Get under the water line!

Instead of reacting to the BEHAVIOR consider how the child perceives the world and create a counter perspective.

- “I will NEVER hurt you no matter what!”
- “I will ALWAYS love you.”
- “I will ALWAYS treat you gently and kindly.”
- “I will ALWAYS encourage you.”
- “I will ALWAYS teach you.”
- “I will ALWAYS include you.”

Some important things

- Teaching him about his brain and flipping his lid
- “Sad is too close to mad!”
- Listening to him
- Having a doll house
- Art work and writing
- Letting him have a year of down time—without other children to navigate and negotiate
- Loving him NO MATTER WHAT HE DID!!!
- AND... Grandpa’s nightly routine

REACTIVE

*When adults **react** to children's behavior, we are attacking the iceberg above the water line.*

*In the absence of **responsive caregiving** children will only repeat what they already know and the reactive behaviors they observe.*

- *Responsive caregiving addresses the real needs below the water line.*
- *Responsive caregiving exhibits the behaviors we want the child to be able to exhibit: patience, kindness, thoughtfulness, mindfulness, and social-emotional skill.*

We Avoided

- Acting angrily
- Blame
- Shame
- Punishment
- NO “F” WORD!
“Fault”



Behavior based
relationships—he did not
need to “deserve” our respect—
children are inherently
deserving of dignity and
respect.

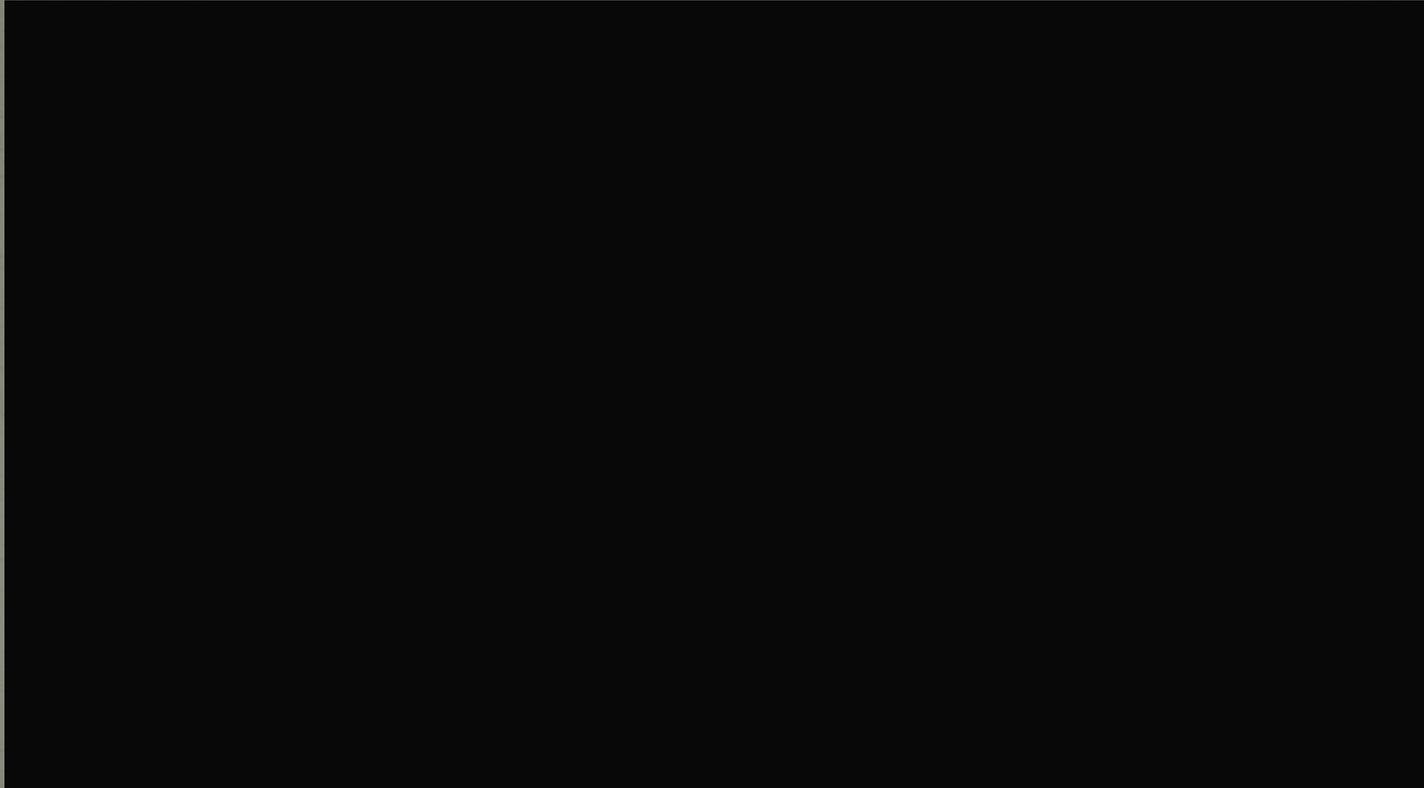
Jaden

- Had habitual repetitive, reactive patterns.
- Had little or NO self-regulation --the LOW ROAD!
- My task was to help him access his Higher Road and diminish the reactive system! (see Daniel Siegel)

Me

- My task was to help him access his Higher Road and diminish the reactive system!
(see Daniel Siegel)

Teach them about their BRAINS!



Everything I knew, everything I could!

- “How do I nurture and teach this child to use his gifts appropriately?”
- Mark and I were absolutely in the space of love, encouragement, and support for Jaden and for each other.
- Everyone in our local family was helping.

Things I Couldn't Control!

- I'm not mad
- Stickers and prizes: so confusing
- “Jaden, how do you get a sticker at school?”
 - “I don't know. You just have to be good!”
 - “James is better than me, He always gets stickers!”

When you love someone

You never truly love a person until the mere thought of hurting that person is enough to break your own heart.



Children's Books I Used

On Monday When it Rained
Tough Boris
Clay Boy
On the Day You Were Born
The Chocolate Covered Cookie
Tantrum
Feelings
Where the Wild Things Are
Sometimes I'm Bombaloo
Alexander and the Terrible,
Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day

He also LOVED Dr. Seuss books!



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- Laurie is a Professor of Child Development at Modesto Junior College and is focused on emotional and social development in young children and adult-child relationships. She is specifically interested in and has done extensive work in the area of the effects of trauma on children and families and the role of relationships in healing.
- Laurie has provided consulting services, workshops, trainings and keynote addresses around the state. She earned her BA in Human Development and a Master's Degree in Education with an emphasis in Early Childhood from California State University. Laurie has been a family childcare provider, preschool teacher and program director. She is a Certified Positive Discipline © Trainer and Parent Educator. and presents workshops
- In addition to her professional career, Laurie is the mother of six grown children, all boys. Her blended family includes 13 children and 42 grandchildren. She is learning to play the Ukulele.

Resources

- For a listing of resources about TRAUMA and what we know we should do, please email me directly at:
- LauriePrusso@gmail.com
- Workshops, trainings, and Keynote addresses are available by contacting me directly.