

Three Keys For A Successful Back To School Transition

Resources for Educators to Create a Safe and Trauma-Informed Classroom

Relationships and Connection Are Fundamental

Lay the groundwork for a supportive classroom by creating space to connect and engage with students every day throughout the day.

“Science and research have repeatedly shown that a consistently caring adult in the life of a child is one of the most important protective factors toward helping the child heal and build resilience.” - Futures Without Violence

Check out the Futures without Violence “Five Gestures” framework for strategies and guidance on simple ways to create and nurture engagement with students:

“Five Gestures” that can help:

- Listen
- Comfort
- Collaborate
- Inspire
- Celebrate

Think “What happened to you?” not “What’s wrong with you.”

This trauma-informed statement has become a mantra and a beacon for creating trauma-informed practice in any setting. Use curiosity about the “why” behind youth behaviors to support youth and boost positive behaviors. Move away from using punishment and verbal admonishment to discourage disruptive student behaviors.

“Single exposure to traumatic events may cause jumpiness, intrusive thoughts, interrupted sleep and nightmares, anger and moodiness and/or social withdrawal — any of which can interfere with concentration and memory.” - National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)

Trauma decreases safety. Support your students by making the classroom a Safe Space:

- **Predictable** routines and explanations of rules in advance can help soothe
- **Choices** reduce anxiety
- **Compliments** and encouragement go a long way

- **Cool down** instead of time out: Cool down activities acknowledge that when distressed, children’s bodies and minds are focused on fear, and they need time and space to physically recover before they are ready for next steps

Check out the [NCTSN toolkit](#) for ideas on cultivating a trauma-informed classroom.

What can be done at school to help a traumatized child? (See detailed suggestions in the toolkit)



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Don't go it alone

Advocate with your school and district to provide professional development and support for school faculty and staff to learn evidence-based, effective practices for maintaining emotional safety and well-being in your classrooms, for yourself as well as for your students.

A report by Policy Analysis for California Education helps link child well-being strategies to improving learning outcomes. Some key principles from this report are:

- Transforming discipline to increase learning potential
- Learning supports increase students' sense of safety and can decrease trauma-related anxiety in the classroom

- Centering culture and equity addresses safety and helps students invest more deeply in their own learning

Check out [the report](#) for in-depth guidance for your classroom, school and district.

Read more on these topics here:



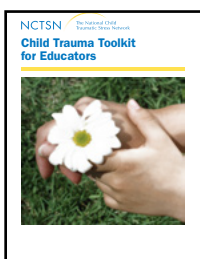
Restorative Restart | Policy Analysis for California Education

Designed for educators to engage best practices for re-engaging students after 18 months of remote learning, this guide co-written by collaborative partners is an excellent resource for creating a supportive classroom environment after COVID and beyond. The guide gives specific tips for strategies that support learning.



Gestures - Changing Minds, by Futures Without Violence

This brief, self-paced audio mini training offers strategies for working with youth who may have experienced trauma. Gestures offers five strategies for nonmental health professionals to effectively connect with and support youth.



Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators

This report from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network provides detailed guidance about designing trauma-informed classrooms, with developmentally appropriate strategies organized by age groups. The guide includes how to recognize trauma reactive behaviors; specific strategies for addressing these behaviors; and information about how to ensure the school as a whole is a trauma informed space for students and staff alike.



8 Ways to Support Students Who Experience Trauma | Edutopia

This article gives 8 quick tips and considerations that educators can apply to help design a supportive, trauma-informed classroom environment.