



All KITS Programs Are Trauma-Informed

Many children have experienced trauma which can have a negative impact on child brain development. Fortunately, we can counteract these negative effects. Safe, predictable, and nurturing classrooms and home environments, along with positive parenting and supportive teaching, can help reverse the effects of trauma, including depression and anxiety.

All of the KITS programs are based in the assumptions of (SAMHSA's) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administrations trauma-informed approach. We understand the widespread impact of trauma and potential paths for recovery; recognize the signs and reactions of trauma in children, families, staff, and others involved with the programs; respond by integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and resist re-traumatization.

KITS programming promotes positive attachments and supportive classroom environments that allow all children to thrive. We teach parents and educators how to provide safety and predictability along with support and encouragement for the children in their care, empowering them to create safe, consistent, and nurturing environments.

Trauma-Informed Care Principle

Safety

Related KITS Programs Skills and Strategies

- **Parent Group Facilitators (PGFs) and KITS teachers**
 - are clear about the program goals and content
- **PGFs**
 - create an environment in which parents feel that they can trust staff and peers to listen, treat them with respect, and maintain confidentiality
- **Parents and educators learn how to:**
 - utilize limits effectively and follow through so children know what to expect and how adults will respond
 - work with children to create positive, trusting relationships
 - create clear, predictable, and consistent routines and expectations

Trustworthiness and transparency

- **Parents and educators learn**
 - calm, non-harsh limit-setting techniques
 - how to effectively manage their negative emotions during high-stress interactions
 - how to identify predictors of emotional and behavioral escalation and/or withdrawal in children
- **PGFs and other staff**
 - create a warm, non-judgmental environment for group members
 - help the group set expectations about confidentiality and mutual respect

Trauma-Informed Care Principle

Related KITS Programs Skills and Strategies

Peer Support

- Parents learn strategies to support children who have experienced trauma
- Strategies are individualized for children and families to support their specific developmental needs
- Emphasis on parent, school, and community connections to support children and their needs

Collaboration and mutuality

- All staff are trained in trauma-informed approaches
- **PGFs**
 - create an environment, and explicitly label that parents are the experts (not the facilitators)
 - encourage parent-to-parent support and idea sharing
 - label and reinforce parent self-efficacy and parenting skills

Empowerment, voice, and choice

- The curricula and staff focus on parent and child strengths and build on existing skills
- The KITS model focuses on collaborative approaches between staff and participants (rather than top down) where participant choice and voice are important
- Parents and teachers learn to use positive reinforcement with children, build children's self-esteem, and tailor the skills being taught to their own unique family situations and classrooms
- Participants have multiple opportunities to provide feedback about their satisfaction with the KITS program

Cultural, historical, and gender issues

- Staff emphasize that the skills being taught are suggestions and are seen as tools that parents and teachers can personalize to fit with their families' and students' cultures and beliefs
- All materials are presented in the parents' and childrens' preferred languages
- Staff are trained to recognize the impacts of historical trauma

