



Welcome & Introductions

Our Purpose

We're here to learn, reflect, and grow together as professionals, parents and community supporting one another as we navigate the challenges and joys of early childhood education.

*Early Childhood Coalition Communities of practice Collaborative:
Expertise, Compassionate Care, Lasting Impact.*

The ECC Community of Practice is dedicated to creating safe, caring, and empathetic communities that empower children and families to build strong relationships, fostering a foundation for lifelong learning through collaborative expertise and compassion.

Handling Tantrums & Frustration Fits

A neuro-developmental approach for parents and educators.



Understanding Behavior as communication



TIER 1: FOUNDATIONS



Relationships & Environments

The base of the Pyramid Model is **Nurturing and Responsive Relationships**.

Without a secure attachment, no other intervention will be effective.

High-quality supportive environments include predictable routines, clear visual schedules, and spaces that promote autonomy and safety for every child.



TIERS 2 & 3: TARGETED SUPPORT



Social Skills

Tier 2: Explicitly teaching friendship skills, empathy, and emotional regulation to those who need extra guidance.



Individualized

Tier 3: Intensive, individualized interventions for persistent challenges, involving functional behavior assessments (FBA).



Team-Based

Collaborative planning between families and educators to create a unified support plan (PTR-F process).

Reframing the "Why"

1

Ask: Is this child Safe?

Discussion 2: Reframe a "stubborn" child as "lacking flexible thinking." How does this change your

2

Ask: Is this child Connected?

Discussion 3: Collaborative Planning. Identify one environmental change you can make today to

3

Ask: What skill is missing?

increase safety or connection.

Tier 1: Relationships are the Tool

The Power of "Connection"



Dr. Perry notes that **brief, frequent relational interactions** are more powerful than occasional long therapy sessions.

"The most powerful therapy is a healthy relationship... it provides the 'dose' of regulation needed to change the brain."

Handling Tantrums & Frustration Fits

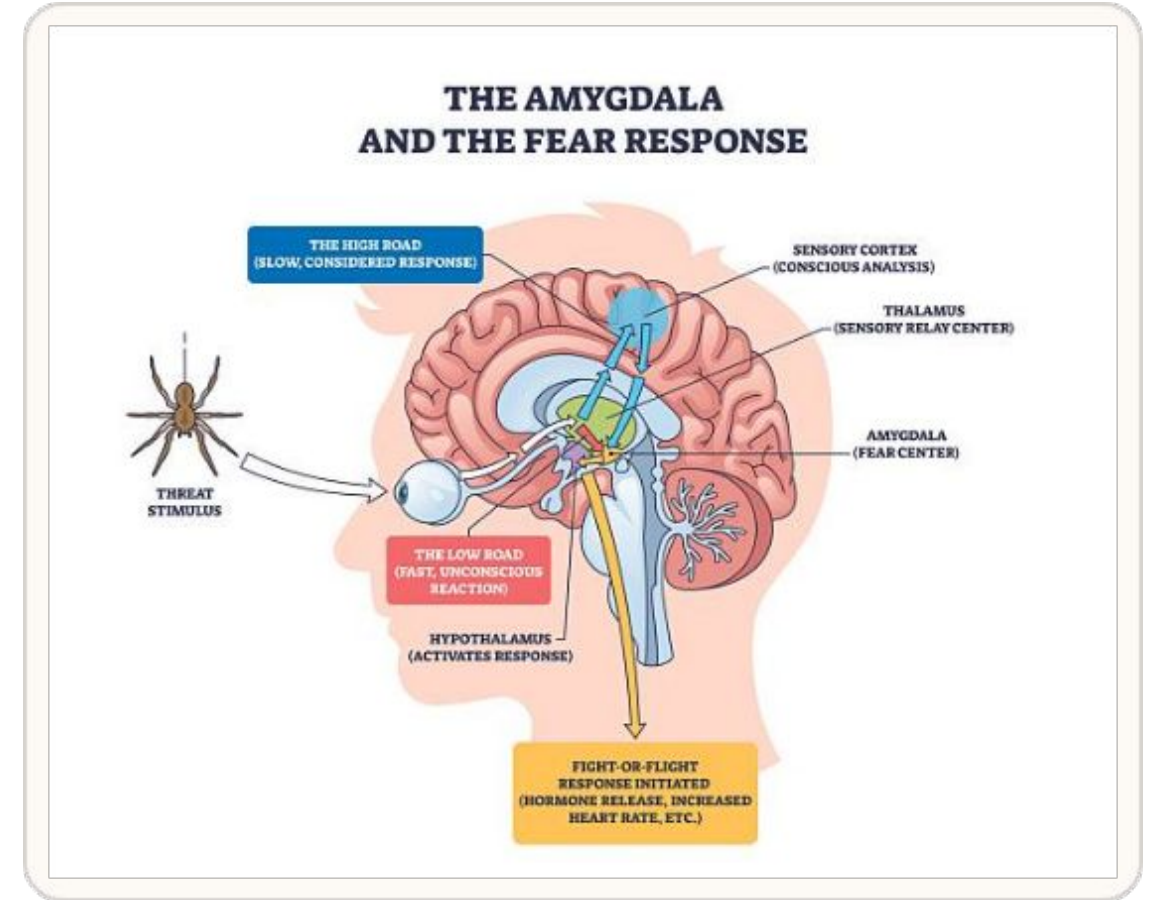


The Brain Behind the Behavior

Shifting from "giving a hard time" to "having a hard time."

Upstairs vs. Downstairs Brain

- To understand tantrums, we must look at the brain's developmental stages and emotional regulation capabilities.
- The **Upstairs Brain** handles logic, reasoning, empathy, and emotional control, but isn't fully developed until our mid-20s.
- The **Downstairs Brain** controls basic survival instincts and massive emotional reactions (fight, flight, or freeze).
- During a tantrum, the Upstairs Brain goes completely offline. You cannot logically reason with a child in this state.



The Anatomy of a Tantrum



Attention & Tangibles

Seeking connection, an audience, or expressing the desperate need to access a highly desired item or activity.



Escape Demand

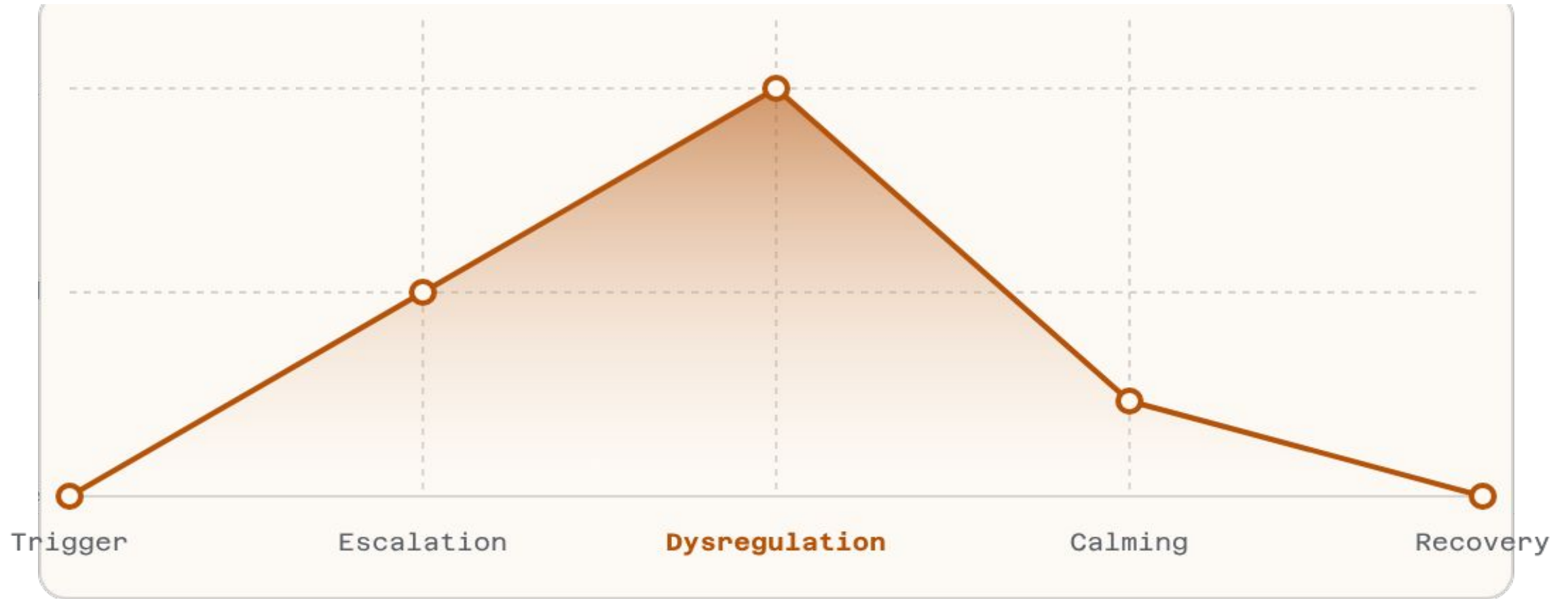
Avoiding a task, an environment, or a situation that feels too overwhelming or difficult for the child to handle.



Sensory Needs

Experiencing profound system overload or fulfilling a basic physical regulation need (e.g., hunger, exhaustion, noise).

The Arc of a Tantrum



Intervening at the peak (Dysregulation Zone) with punishments or demands extends the tantrum duration. The goal is to intervene during Escalation or hold space until Calming.

Proactive Strategies

Stopping the storm before it begins through environment design.

Antecedent Manipulation

Predictable Routines

- Visual timers prepare children for difficult transitions.
- A 5-minute warning gives the brain necessary processing time.
- Significantly reduces "escape-driven" and unexpected tantrums.

Structured Choices

- Provides a sense of autonomy within your established boundaries.
- Example: "Do you want to put your left shoe or right shoe on first?"
- Fulfills the need for control without yielding the adult's limit.

Module 4: In the Storm

- When the tantrum hits, your primary job is safety and co-regulation. A child literally "borrows" your nervous system.
- Ignore the negative behavior, but **do not ignore the child**. Stay physically present and empathetic to their distress.
- Keep your language incredibly brief. The Downstairs Brain cannot process paragraphs of logic right now.
- Use a calm, low voice and repeat a single validating boundary (e.g., "You are mad we have to leave. It is time to go.")



“

You are the anchor; they are the storm. If the anchor gets swept up in the storm, the ship sinks.”

— Emotional Co-regulation Principle

Module 5: Post-Tantrum Repair

Teaching replacement behaviors when the Upstairs Brain returns.

Repair, Reconnect, and Teach

1. Func. Communication

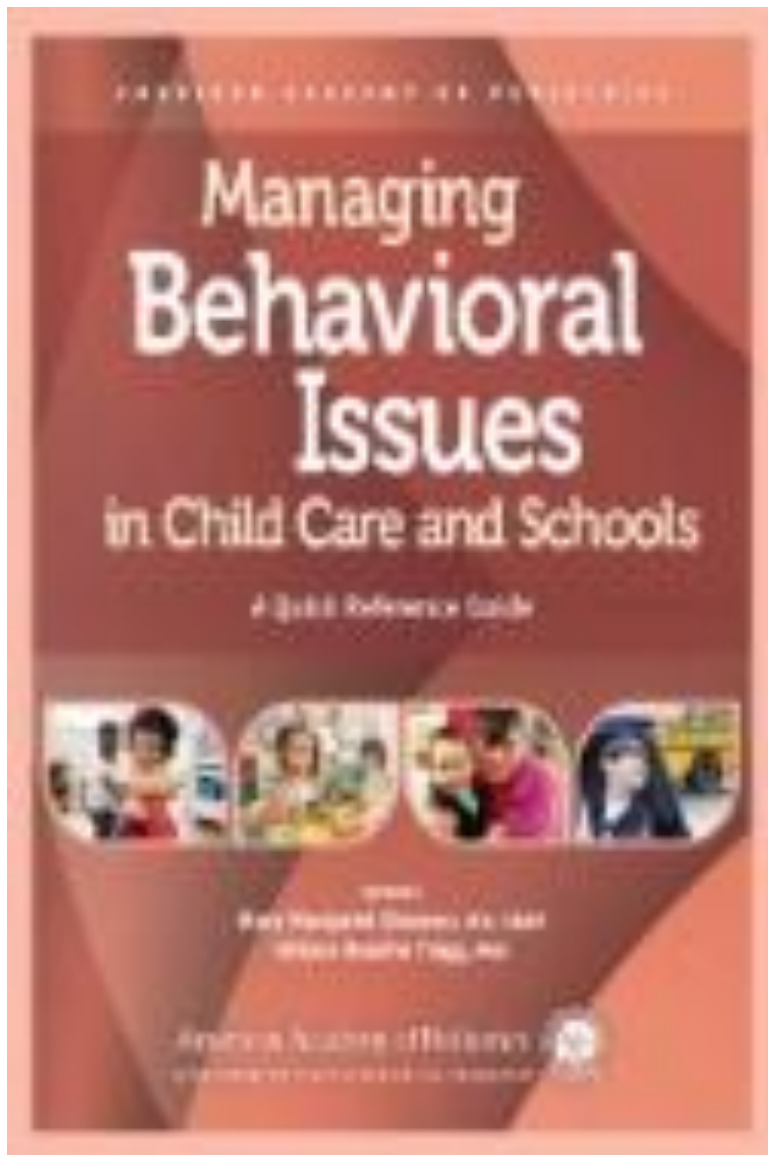
Teach them what to do *instead*. Practice asking for a break or saying "I need help" while calm.

2. Connection & Repair

Shame often follows a meltdown. Reassure them that while the behavior wasn't okay, your love is unconditional.

3. Roleplay & Practice

Rehearse the previous trigger during a happy moment later in the day to build long-term resilience.



eBook

Tools for Managing Behavioral Issues in Child Care and Schools : A Quick Reference Guide

Managing Behavioral Issues in Child Care and Schools : A Quick Reference Guide

By:

American Academy of Pediatrics;

Mary Margaret Gleason;

Allison Boothe Trigg

In:2020eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)

This new quick reference guide provides child care directors, teachers, and caregivers with essential information on managing emotional and behavioral issues in group care settings. Topics cover social-emotional development, biting, napping difficulties, post-traumatic stress disorder, gender development, self-stimulation behaviors, and more. In addition to behavioral issues commonly seen in small children, epigenetics, medications, toxic stress, adverse **childhood** experiences, and how to help children who have undergone traumatic experiences are touched on by the editors. The book contains 25 quick reference sheets on topics such as ADHD, ASD, depression, **tantrums**, and separation anxiety. In addition, sample daily report forms, medication forms, and other informative documents to support working with young children are also included in this comprehensive guide. Case studies are also presented on various difficult situations with small children in a classroom setting and discuss how these situations might be handled.

Simple Signing with Young Children, Revised : A Guide for Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Rev. Ed.

Published in: 2018

Database: eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)

By:

Carol Garboden Murray



Evidence-Based Reference Guide

Scientific Concept	Practical Application	Peer-Reviewed Source
Up/Downstairs Brain Model	Recognizing inability to reason during meltdowns.	Siegel, D. J., & Bryson, T. P. (2011)
Parental Co-regulation	Children utilize adult nervous systems to calm down.	Holodynski, M., & Kärtner, J. (2022)
Emotion Generation & Regulation	Modifying antecedents before the emotion peaks.	Gross, J. J. (1998)
Functional Behavior Analysis	Identifying if behavior seeks attention or escape.	Compas, B. E., et al. (2017)

Image Sources



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Source: www.istockphoto.com



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Source: www.mother.ly



<https://in.ewu.edu/managementtoolbox/wp-content/uploads/sites/204/2018/11/teacher1.jpg>

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