

Community of Practice

WE'RE BETTER TOGETHER!

ECC

Early Childhood Coalition



Introduction to CARA's Kit & The Brain State Model **July 9, 2026**

- The Neurology: Understanding the three Conscious Discipline brain states (Survival, Emotional, Executive) in relation to daily preschool routines.
- The Framework: Aligning Tier 1 (Universal Supports) of the Pyramid Model with foundational routine adaptations.
- The Practice: Identifying how CARA's Kit adaptations can help shift a child from a Survival or Emotional state into an Executive state.

Adapting the Physical Environment & The Survival State **August 13, 2026**

- The Neurology: Exploring the brainstem's role in triggering "fight, flight, or freeze" responses in chaotic or overwhelming physical spaces.
- The Framework: Designing physical environments that promote engagement and reduce triggers (Pyramid Model Tier 1).
- The Practice: Using CARA's Kit to adapt classroom layouts, boundaries, and sensory inputs to foster a felt sense of physical safety.

Adapting Daily Schedules & The Emotional State **September 10, 2026**

- The Neurology: The amygdala's role in emotional regulation during transitions, schedule changes, and drop-offs.
- The Framework: Fostering connection and relationship-building through highly predictable routines.
- The Practice: Implementing CARA's Kit schedule adaptations (visual timers, sequence cards, transition warnings) to build emotional security.

Adapting Activities & Executive Function **October 8, 2026**

- The Neurology: Strengthening the prefrontal cortex—the center of focus, working memory, and impulse control.

Community of Practice

WE'RE BETTER TOGETHER!

ECC

Early Childhood Coalition



- The Framework: Embedding targeted social-emotional supports within daily activities (Pyramid Model Tier 2).
- The Practice: Simplifying or breaking down activities using CARA's Kit to match the children's current cognitive capacity and prevent frustration.

Adapting Materials & Sensory Processing

November 12, 2026

- The Neurology: How the developing brain integrates sensory information, and the neurological impact of overstimulation.
- The Framework: Creating sensory-friendly Tier 2 interventions for children who easily become dysregulated during play.
- The Practice: Modifying specific materials (texture, size, weight) to accommodate diverse sensory profiles and fine motor needs.

Adapting Requirements & Reducing Cognitive Load

December 10, 2026

- The Neurology: The physiological stress response and how cortisol limits cognitive capacity and working memory in young children.
- The Framework: Adjusting adult expectations based on a child's current brain state as part of individualized behavior support plans (Tier 3).
- The Practice: Using CARA's Kit to alter task requirements and definitions of success to prevent emotional flooding.

Peer Support Adaptations & Mirror Neurons

January 14, 2027

- The Neurology: The science of mirror neurons and their role in developing empathy, imitation, and social learning.

Community of Practice

WE'RE BETTER TOGETHER!

ECC

Early Childhood Coalition



- The Framework: Utilizing peer-mediated interventions to actively build social-emotional competence (Pyramid Model Tier 2).
- The Practice: Structuring peer support adaptations from CARA's Kit to foster cooperative learning and positive modeling.

Adult Support Adaptations & Co-Regulation

February 11, 2027

- The Neurology: The neurobiology of co-regulation—how an educator's calm brain state directly regulates a child's dysregulated brain.
- The Framework: The Conscious Discipline focus on the adult's role in shifting from a reactive state to a responsive state.
- The Practice: Applying CARA's Kit adult-support strategies (proximity, specific praise, physical scaffolding) to aid self-regulation.

Formulating Adaptation Plans & Neuroplasticity

March 11, 2027

- The Neurology: How consistent, targeted adaptations build new neural pathways and promote long-term neuroplasticity.
- The Framework: Integrating these adaptations into functional behavior assessments and comprehensive support plans (Pyramid Model Tier 3).
- The Practice: Working collaboratively to use the CARA's Kit decision-making process to design individualized plans.

Monitoring Progress & Dopamine's Role in Motivation

April 8, 2027

- The Neurology: Understanding dopamine's function in reward, motivation, and sustaining learning success.
- The Framework: Tracking behavioral shifts and data collection as neurological pathways strengthen over time.
- The Practice: Evaluating whether the implemented CARA's Kit adaptations are working, and adjusting them to ensure the child experiences success.

Community of Practice

WE'RE BETTER TOGETHER!

ECC

Early Childhood Coalition



Outdoor Play Adaptations & Brain Integration **May 13, 2027**

- The Neurology: How kinesthetic experiences and navigating uneven natural terrain support whole-brain integration and cross-hemisphere communication.
- The Framework: Utilizing the outdoors as a universal support environment for emotional regulation and relationship building.
- The Practice: Adapting outdoor routines and nature-based play using CARA's Kit to ensure equitable access and engagement for all children.

Year in Review: Building the Resilient Brain **June 10, 2027**

- The Neurology: Reflecting on the neurological growth in self-regulation and executive function observed across the preschool cohorts.
- The Framework: Assessing the overall integration of CARA's Kit adaptations with the Pyramid Model tiers.
- The Practice: Celebrating successes, troubleshooting lingering challenges, and planning the next steps for the community of practice.