

REDUCING EXCEPTIONAL STRESS AND TRAUMA

CURRICULUM AND INTERVENTION GUIDELINES

AND

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

*Resources to Help Staff
and Children Identify
and Work Through
Trauma, Stress, and Grief*

California Department of Education
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The two volumes of *Reducing Exceptional Stress and Trauma—Curriculum and Intervention Guidelines* and the accompanying *Facilitator's Guide*—were designed to train child care providers to identify trauma, stress, and grief and help children and their families work through traumatic events.

Organized in an easy-to-follow format, these publications provide a classroom curriculum to be used with children and a training program designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of child development specialists and others who provide child care services. In particular, the publications contain the necessary tools to help children deal with the emotional consequences of exposure to trauma and violence. Each publication features children's artwork related to the topic areas and is ready to be placed in a three-ring binder.

The *Curriculum and Intervention Guidelines* provides activities and intervention strategies that can be applied to any traumatic event. Separate chapters deal with specific suggestions for coping with the aftermath of fires, floods, civil unrest, and other disasters or stressful situations. Each chapter contains recommended books and resources related to specific events.

The *Guidelines* are designed for use by people who work with children between the ages of three and eight years. Helpful chapters include "The Roles of Child Care Staff in Times of Crisis," "Building on Trusting Relationships with Children," "Post-Traumatic Stress: A Reaction to Exceptional Stress and Trauma," "Understanding Cultural Differences," "Learning About Children from Their Families," and "Holding Family Meetings."

Children in all communities are subject to stress and are at risk of trauma resulting from riots, fires, violent crime, abuse, and natural or other disasters.

The *Guidelines* provide many examples of stress- and trauma-reducing activities and intervention strategies, such as providing opportunities for children to talk about their experience; dramatic play in which children use a variety of props related to community helpers who provide assistance when natural disasters occur; or garden projects in which children plant a tree or flowers to honor a loved one who may have died. Sample letters to parents are presented in English, Spanish,

Chinese, and Korean. Additional resources, such as books, reports, and articles, are listed in the back of the document.

The *Facilitator's Guide* is a resource for leading staff training sessions on the material covered in the *Curriculum and Intervention Guidelines*. Each of the 14 training modules can be completed within a 50-minute time period. The modules may be used singly or combined for longer training sequences.

The purpose of the guide is to (1) assist trainers in preparing and supporting child care staff as they develop tools and strategies to reduce the effects of stress and trauma on children; (2) provide trainers with techniques that will enhance their ability to focus on the unique needs and issues found within a classroom; and (3) lead trainers through the steps involved in establishing successful partnerships with families and community-based mental health professionals before, during, and after a traumatic event.

The training modules cover many subject areas, including Signs of Stress in Children; Partnerships with Families: Developing Relationships; Understanding Cultural Differences; Civil Unrest; Death; and Site-Specific Issues. Each module contains training outlines, work sheets, a provider needs assessment and training plan form, checklists for parent meetings, materials for overhead transparencies, and additional information, including a community profile form and suggested readings.

Reducing exceptional stress and trauma is a process, not an event.