



Access to Arts Education

Interim Study 19-24

By
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OAESP

September 26, 2019

1:00 pm

Capitol Room 535

Requested by: Senator Julia Kirt

Assigned to: Senate Education

Committee

Importance of Access to Arts Education

- In recent years, educators have begun to develop a greater understanding about the necessary connection between academic learning and social-emotional learning needs.
- Experiences in the arts engage students' social-emotional learning needs so that students can then self-regulate, cope, and focus in a classroom learning environment.
- “The last things that should be cut from school schedules are chorus, physical education, recess, and anything else involving movement, play, and **joyful engagement**” (Van Der Kolk, 2014, 88).



Research Reviewed Today

- **Dr. Bruce Perry**

- Senior Fellow of The Child Trauma Academy, a not-for-profit organization based in Houston, Texas
- Adjunct Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University in Chicago
- Inaugural Senior Fellow of the Berry Street Childhood Institute, an Australian based center of excellence focusing on the translation of theory into practice to improve the lives of children

- **Dr. Bessel Van Der Kolk**

- Medical Director at the Trauma Center in Boston
- Professor of Psychiatry at the Boston University School of Medicine
- President of the Trauma Research Foundation



Trauma-informed Instruction

- More and more of our students are coming to schools with social-emotional learning needs.
- Much has been talked about recently, from our state Superintendent Joy Hofmeister’s emphasis on Trauma-informed instruction to our Oklahoma first lady Sarah Stitt’s leadership at the March, 2019 showcasing the film “Resilience” and subsequent panel discussion, connected to Oklahoma’s children and their high incidents of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).



Oklahoma Students Today

- 30% of Oklahoma's children experience economic hardship (ranked 45th in the nation).
- 30% experience divorce (ranked 50th, or the highest in the nation).
- 17% of our children have parents who abuse drugs or alcohol (49th).
- 11% witnessed domestic abuse (50th).
- 12% have a parent with a mental illness (43rd).
- 10% had or have a parent incarcerated (48th).
- 13% was a victim of or witnessed neighborhood violence (49th).
- 17% of our children experience three or more ACEs (49th)
- Oklahoma has the highest rates of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) for children >4.

Sacks, V., Murphey, D., & Moore, K. (2014, July). Adverse childhood experiences: National and state-level prevalence. Retrieved from: http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Brief-adverse-childhood-experiences_FINAL.pdf

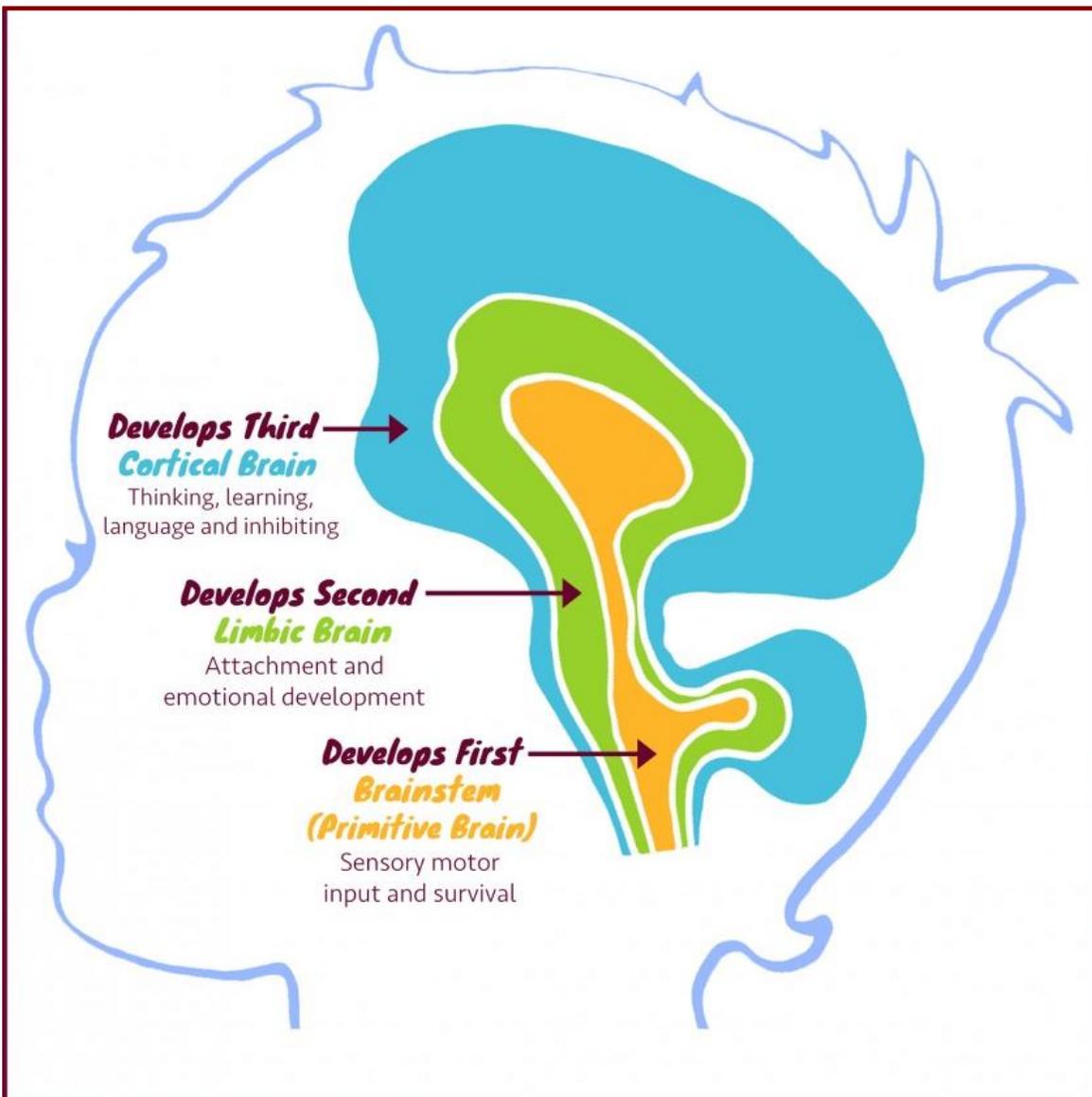


Oklahoma Students Today, cont.

- These ACEs statistics clearly impact our schools and our classrooms.
- Children struggle to learn when they come to school—hungry, experiencing trauma in the home, have no home at all, and many others.
- The needs of students continue to be great.
- So, teachers and leaders need supports and strategies that allow students to learn when they come to school.



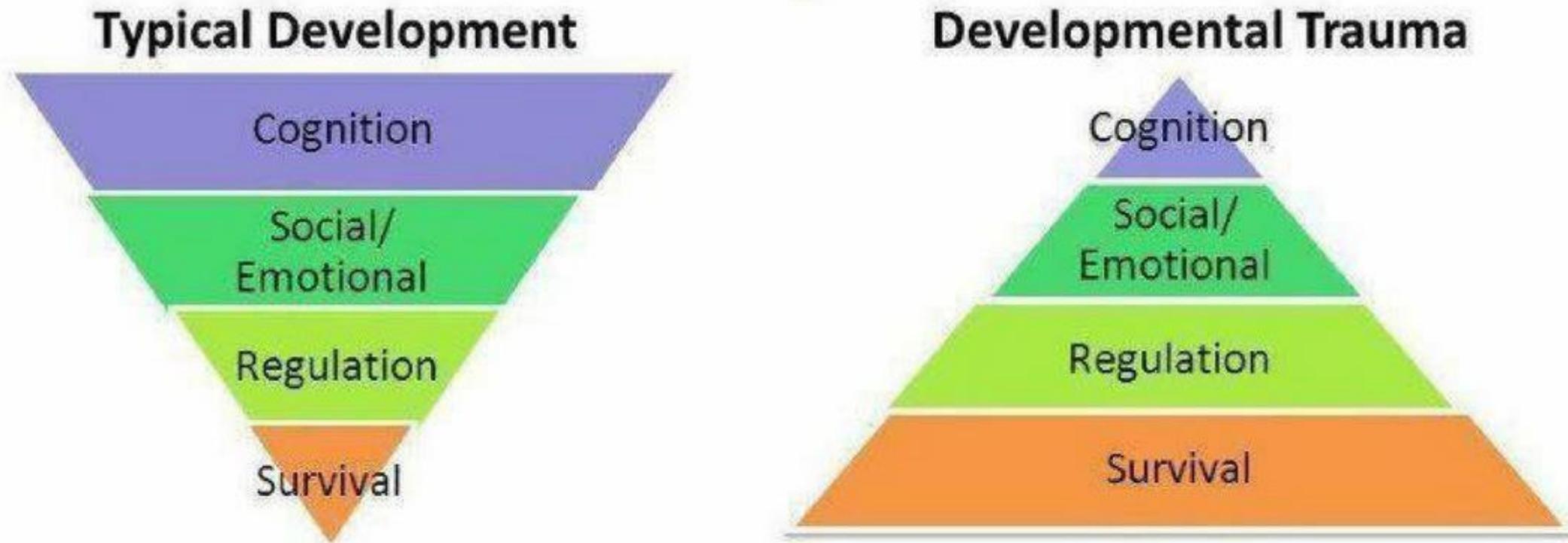
Brain Development



Children's brains develop
from the bottom up.



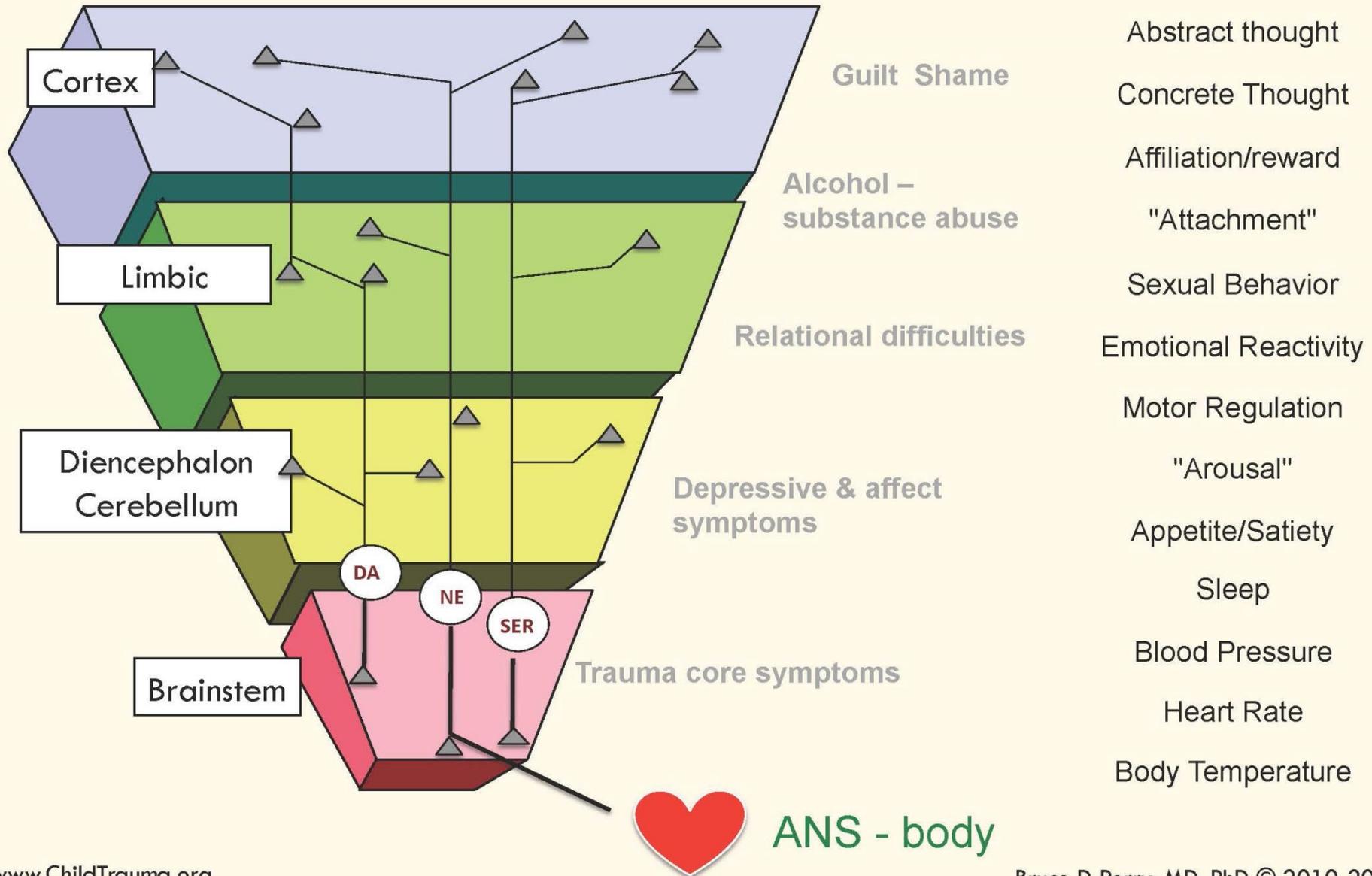
Trauma & Brain Development



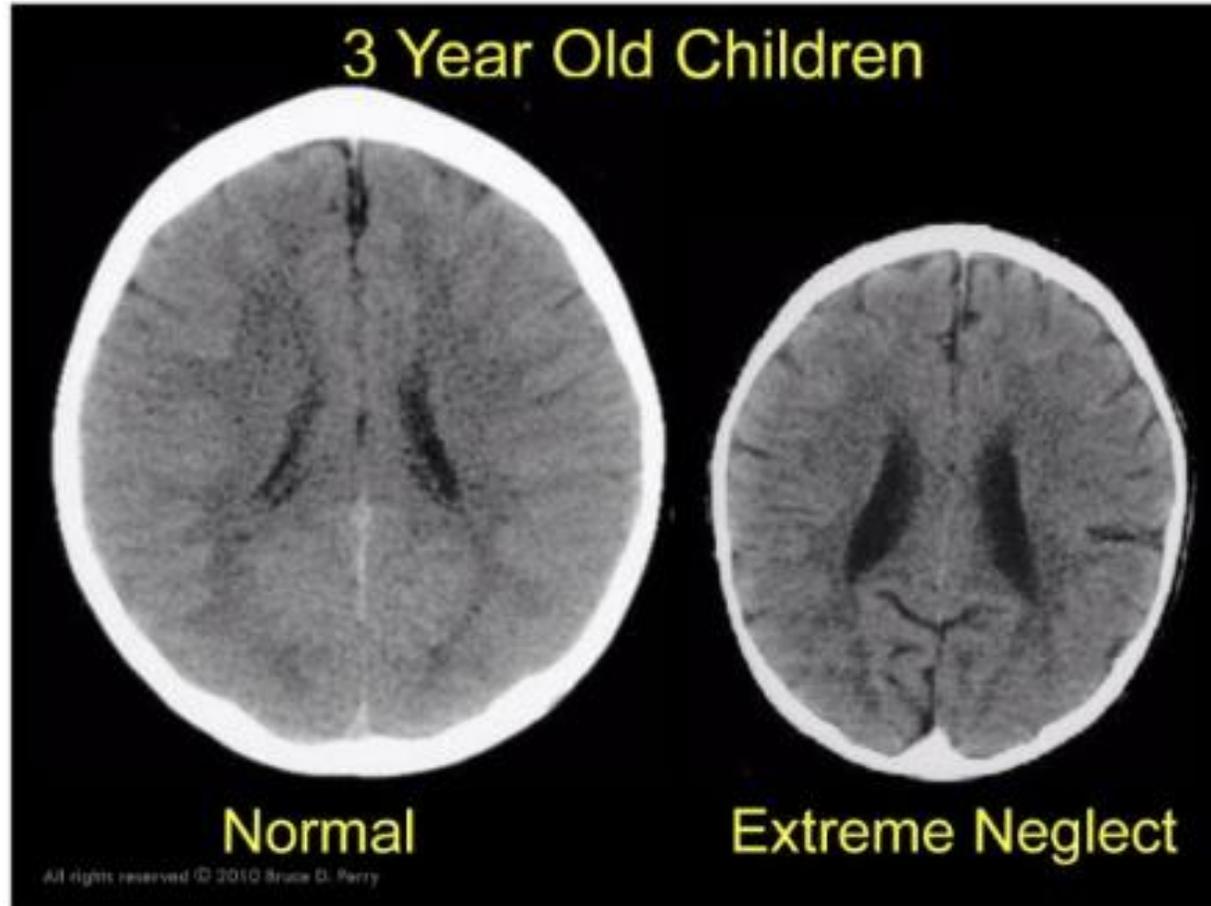
Adapted from Holt & Jordan, Ohio Dept. of Education



Research from Dr. Bruce Perry



Trauma & Brain Development



- Clinicians make a brain map of the child's neurobiological development to gain a better idea of the status of various brain functions.
- A 10-year-old child who has been maltreated, Perry said, might have the social skills of a 5-year-old, the speech and language capability of an 8-year-old, and the self-regulation ability of a 2-year-old (Stevens, 2013).



Self-regulation

- Ability
 - To monitor and manage your energy states, emotions, thoughts and behaviors in ways that are acceptable and produce positive results (i.e. well-being, loving relationships, and learning).
 - To manage disrupted emotions and impulses.
 - To cope effectively with stress, relate well to others, and sustain focus.

Pixar's *Inside Out*

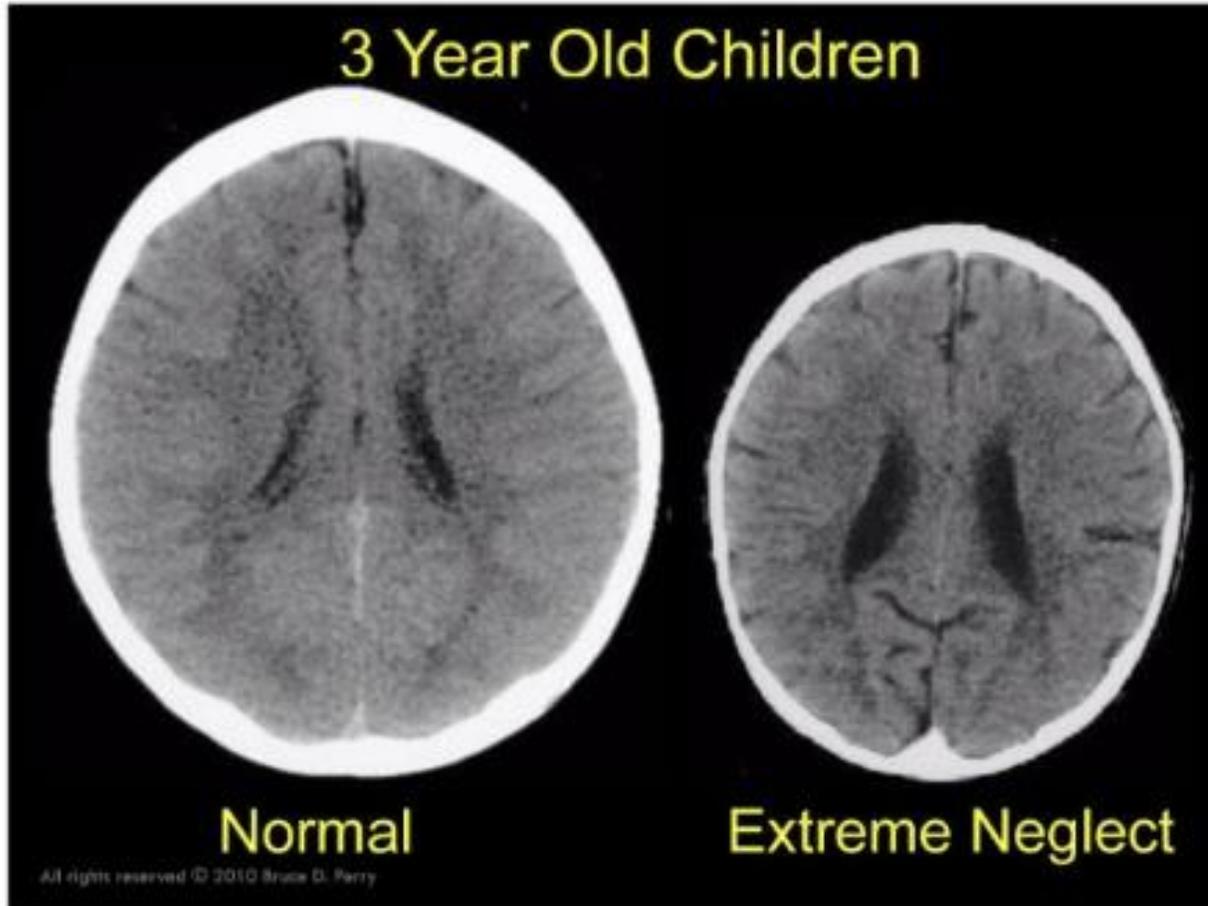


Self-regulation, cont.

- “Self-regulation is like maintaining a consistent rate of acceleration. If we want to go 25 mph, then we will need to adjust the pressure to the accelerator to allow for changes to the road, incline and wind. Driving requires constant changes depending on traffic conditions and speed zones, etc. Learning to accelerate, brake, and change gears smoothly takes time and practice. This is quite similar to children learning to self-regulate. Some children are always pushing too hard on the accelerator, while others jump between gears quickly, and some are slow to accelerate. Children need time and support to master the ability to find and sustain their optimum speed and level of arousal while dealing with a range of stimuli and stressors” (Kalish, 2018).



Trauma & Brain Development



- So, how can teachers and leaders in schools help that 10-year-old child who has the self-regulation of a 2-year-old develop the neural networks within the brain to help him/her cope?



Research from Dr. Bruce Perry

- Children with significant developmental trauma show poor organization and functioning in lower parts of the brain because exposure to trauma alters the functioning of the brain's stress-response systems.
- It is possible to change, or put the brain neural network back on track.
- “If we want to provide reorganising [sic], patterned, repetitive input to reach the dysregulated or poorly organised [sic] neural networks involved in the stress response, we can provide patterned repetitive rhythmic somatosensory activity” (MacKinnon, 2012, p. 214).



Research from Dr. Bruce Perry, cont.

- Rhythmic movement for people who have experienced trauma from Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) helps with self-regulation and “elicits a sensation of safety. Rhythm is regulating” (Perry, B., & Hambrick, E., 2008).
- The list of repetitive rhythmic regulations used for trauma include singing, dancing, drumming, and most musical activities.
- As a branch from Dr. Perry’s research, a recent study from Drexel University suggests that the simple act of art-making, regardless of skill level, reduces cortisol (or stress levels) in the brain (Kaimal, Ray, & Muniz, 2016). This helps students be ready for academic learning.



Research from Dr. Bessel Van Der Kolk

- “The capacity of art, music, and dance to circumvent the speechlessness that comes with terror may be one reason they are used as trauma treatments in cultures around the world” (p. 245).
- “Collective movement and music create a larger context for our lives, a meaning beyond our individual fate...along with language, dancing, marching, and singing are uniquely human ways to instill a sense of hope and courage” (p. 335).
- “We have learned how, throughout life, experiences change the structure and function of the brain...Understanding many of the fundamental processes that underlie traumatic stress opens the door to an array of interventions that can bring the brain areas related to self-regulation, self-perception, and attention back online” (pp. 349-350).



Research from Dr. Bessel Van Der Kolk, cont.

- “The greatest hope for traumatized, abused, and neglected children is to receive a good education in schools where they are seen and known, where they **learn to regulate themselves**, and where they can develop a sense of agency” (p. 353).
- “Athletics, playing music, dancing, and theatrical performances all promote **agency** and community” (p. 357).
- However, “music, theater, art, and sports – timeless ways of fostering competence and collective bonding – continue to disappear from our schools” (p. 341).



Dr. Bessel Van Der Kolk concludes:

- “Sadly, our educational system, as well as many of the methods that profess to treat trauma, tend to bypass this emotional-engagement system and focus instead on recruiting the cognitive capacities of the mind” (p. 88).
- “Focusing only on improving test scores won’t make any difference if teachers can’t effectively address the behavior problems of these students” (p. 354).
- “The last things that should be cut from school schedules are chorus, physical education, recess, and anything else involving movement, play, and **joyful engagement**” (p. 88).



Importance of Access to Arts Education

- CCOSA members recognize the important role that the arts play in a well-rounded education; however, because arts programs in Oklahoma schools have been cut due to past significant revenue failures, it will take time and funding to reintroduce those arts classes and/or experiences in schools.
- There is hope with increased state public school funding this year and in the future, that arts and other programs will be restored.
- Additionally, each school district reflects very different community needs and expectations and should be allowed flexibility in how they reintroduce the arts education experiences that best serve the needs of their students.



Resources

- Kalish, L. (2018). *What is self-regulation?* Move with me. Retrieved from <https://move-with-me.com/what-is-self-regulation/>
- Kaimal, G., Ray, K., & Muniz, J. (2016). *Reduction of cortisol levels and participants' responses following art making.* *Art therapy, 33*(2), 74-80.
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- Perry, B., & Hambrick, E. (2008). *The neurosequential model of therapeutics (NMT).* *Reclaiming children and youth, 17*(3), 38-43.
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- Van Der Kolk, B. (2014). *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma.* New York: Penguin Books.

