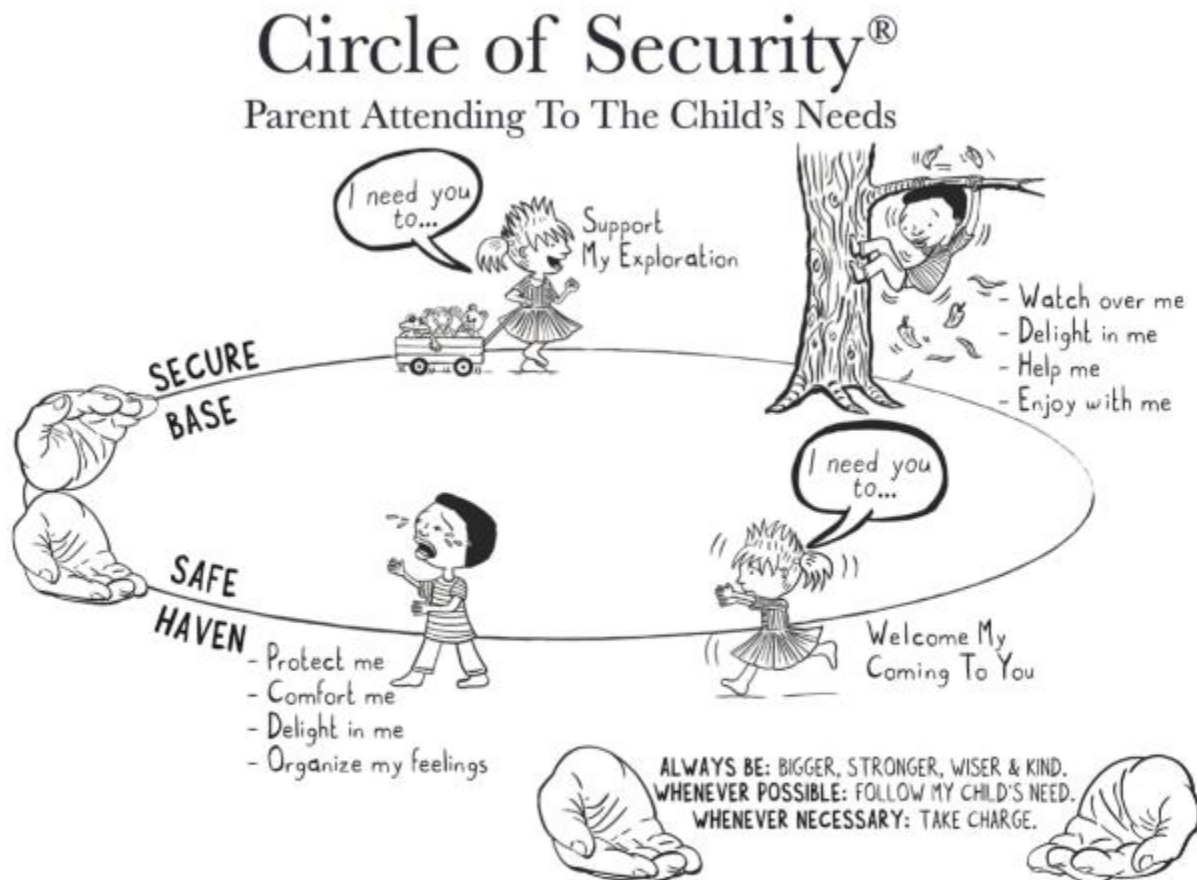


Trauma Toolbox

Provided by the OCYF Trauma Team

Please direct all questions and suggestions to RA-PWOCYFTRAUMA@pa.gov

[What is the Circle of Security - Circle of Security International](#)



The Circle of Security: A Visual "Map" of Caregiver-Child Attachment

[information-for-parents-emotion-coaching.pdf \(parentingcounts.org\)](#) - Emotion Coaching

Emotion Coaching is a research-based tool developed by Dr. John Gottman that can help you learn to value your child's range of emotions, such as happiness about an upcoming birthday party or sadness over a lost toy. It is a five-step method for guiding your child in how to respond to her feelings. Becoming an Emotion Coach for your child will improve your relationship and teach her how to respond to emotions – valuable skills that will last a lifetime.

Dr. Bruce Perry and the Power of Brief Relational Interactions ([Video](#))

[InBrief: Connecting the Brain to the Rest of the Body \(harvard.edu\)](#) – Research

Compared with the adult brain, the adolescent brain has much less white matter, which is the connective wiring that helps information flow efficiently from one part of the brain to the other.

This means that adolescents still rely heavily on the emotional center of the brain for decision making, reacting to rapid-firing pleasurable emotions and rewarding sensations.

Perhaps most importantly, as the brain develops, different regions of the brain connect and communicate with each other in a process known as neural integration.

The right opportunities can make the most of a young person's sprinting brain — rewarding accomplishments, providing new outlets for affirmation from peers — while also building the marathon skills of going a little further each time, training and learning from mistakes. Strong connections, healthy habits and positive relationships are like having the right shoes and optimal weather for the race; conversely, chronic stress, trauma, the experience of institutional and internalized racial inferiority and unhealthy self-medication during adolescence serve as the hills, potholes and headwinds in the way of reaching the finish line.

While adolescents may appear to physically mature faster than before, their brain development is spread out over a longer span of time. As a result, adults may assume that young people are more mature than they actually are — a phenomenon that research has shown is particularly true for young people of color.

- Regulation Neurological research shows us that young people can evaluate risks as well as adults; however, the intensity of dopamine — the pleasure chemical — flooding the brains can easily outweigh consideration of potential negative outcomes.¹³ Positive experiences during adolescence can “fortify healthy neural connections, develop executive function and stimulate learning and healing.”¹⁴ Positive experiences that contradict the negative expectations of a child who has experienced trauma are critical to helping the brain readjust itself.
- Relationships During adolescence, young people experience heightened arousal in the brain regions that are sensitive to social acceptance and rejection. Adolescents are particularly attuned to emotional cues such as facial expressions. This means that adolescents actually learn more when they are with their friends and peers. Such influence can be used to help young people grow together in a nurturing, positive environment.
- Rewards Adolescents are more receptive to reward based learning than punishment-based learning. Rewards extend beyond gold stars and the promise of a new toy. Things such as peer approval, acceptance and praise trigger a flood of dopamine into the brain, reinforcing actions and behavior.