



Activity Worksheets

10 STEPS TO CREATE

A TRAUMA-INFORMED RESILIENT
EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

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10 Steps to Create a Trauma-Informed Resilient Early Childhood Center

—ACTIVITIES—

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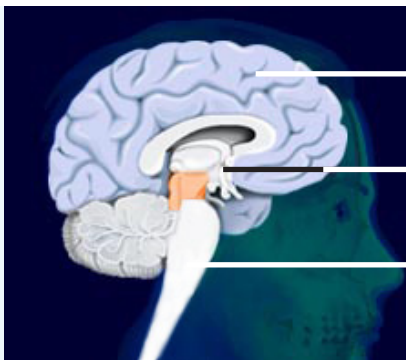
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13725 Starr Commonwealth Road, Albion, Michigan 49224
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ACTIVITY: *Understand Trauma's Impact*

TRAUMA activates the stress response. When the brain stem is activated, do the following physical symptoms increase (▲) or decrease (▼)? Circle the arrow below that applies.

- ▲ Heart rate ▼
- ▲ Respiration ▼
- ▲ Muscle tension ▼
- ▲ Blood flow ▼
- ▲ Cortisol ▼
- ▲ Adrenalin ▼



thinking brain

sensory brain

brain stem

When this activation lasts for LESS than four weeks it is called **acute stress**.

When this activation lasts for MORE than four weeks it is called **postraumatic stress**.

When stressed, the Thinking Brain:

WORKS WELL or DOES NOT WORK WELL

Name or describe three symptoms of trauma as a result of the stress impact on the Thinking Brain:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

When stressed, the Sensory Brain:

WORKS WELL or DOES NOT WORK WELL

Name or describe three symptoms of trauma as a result of the stress impact on the Sensory Brain:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Students in trauma often react by engaging in fight, flight, or freeze responses.

Describe a student experience for each of the responses in the appropriate boxes below.

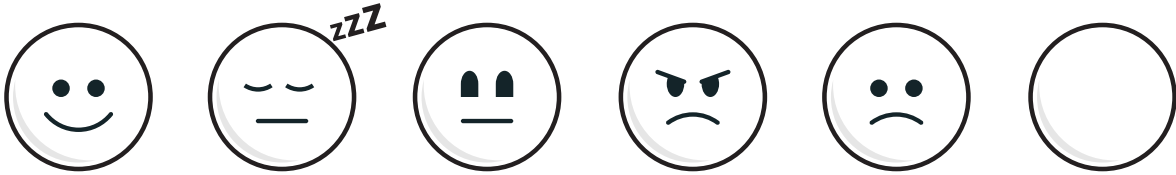
FIGHT

FLIGHT

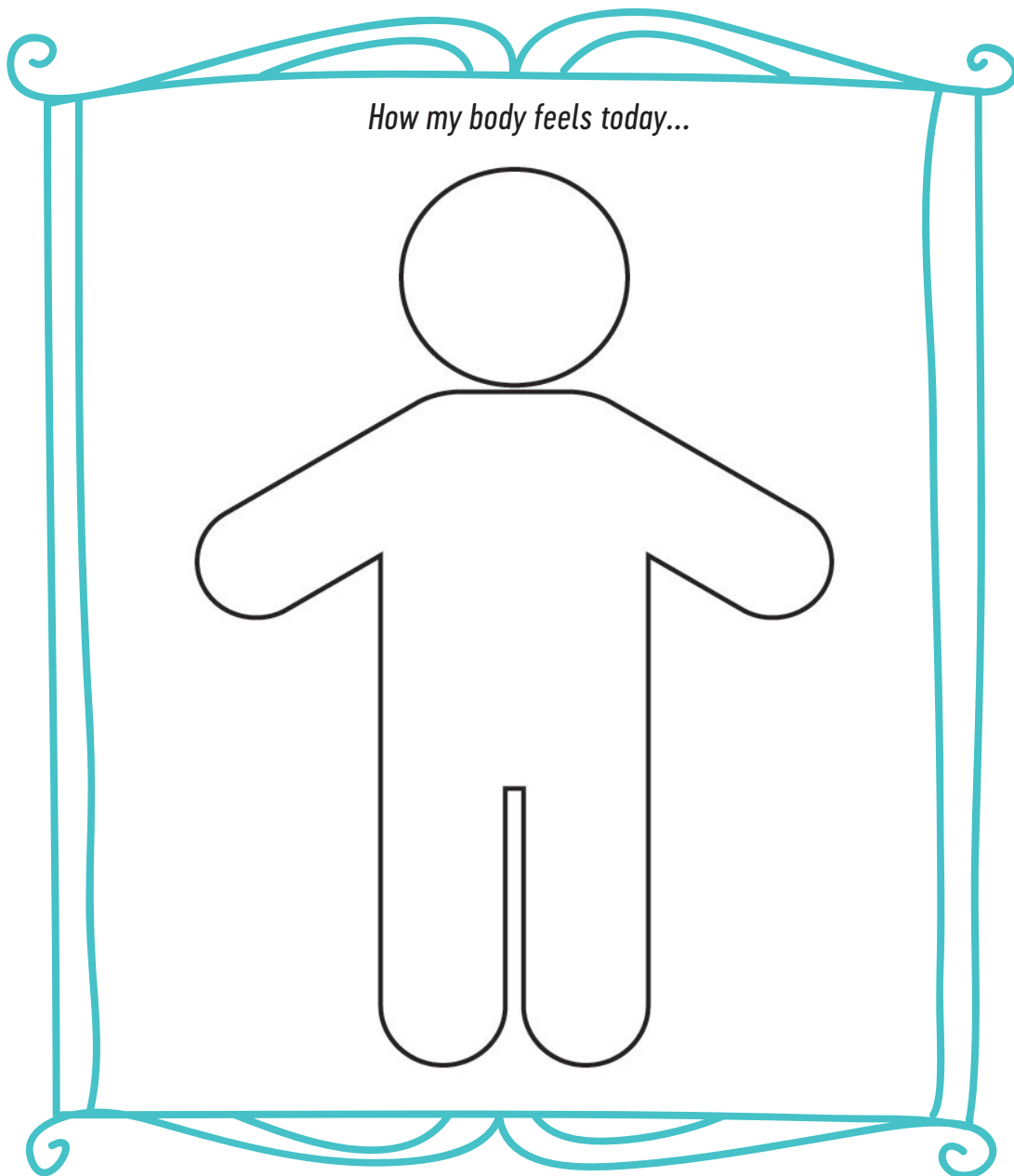
FREEZE

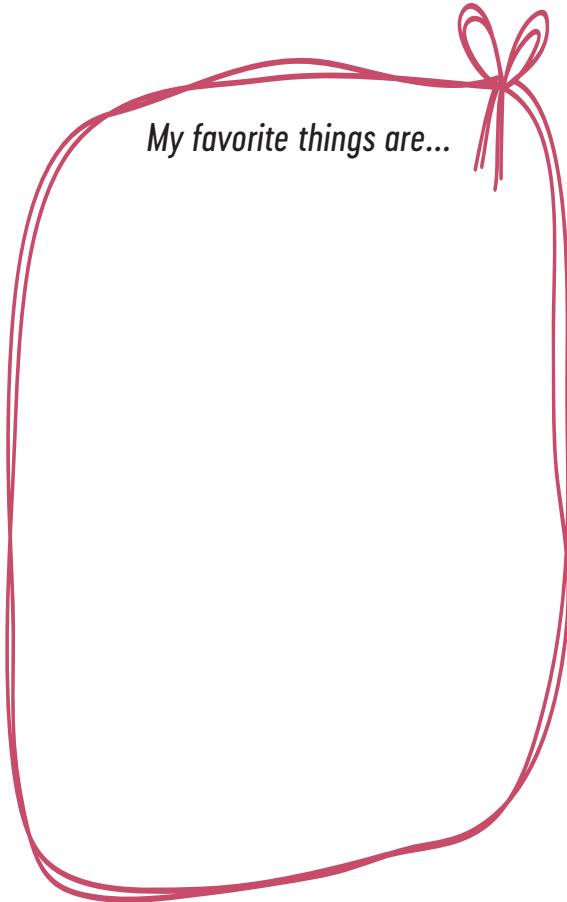
ACTIVITY: All About ME!

Date: _____ Today I feel: _____



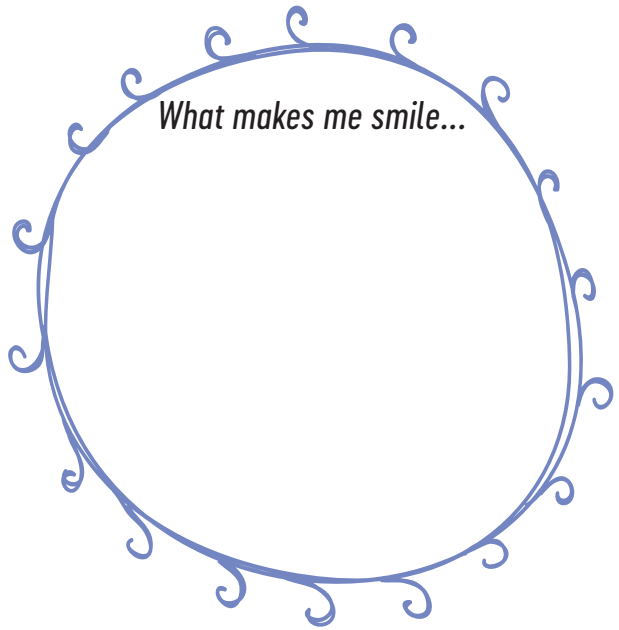
Color in the face above that shows how you feel today or draw a face on the blank emoji.



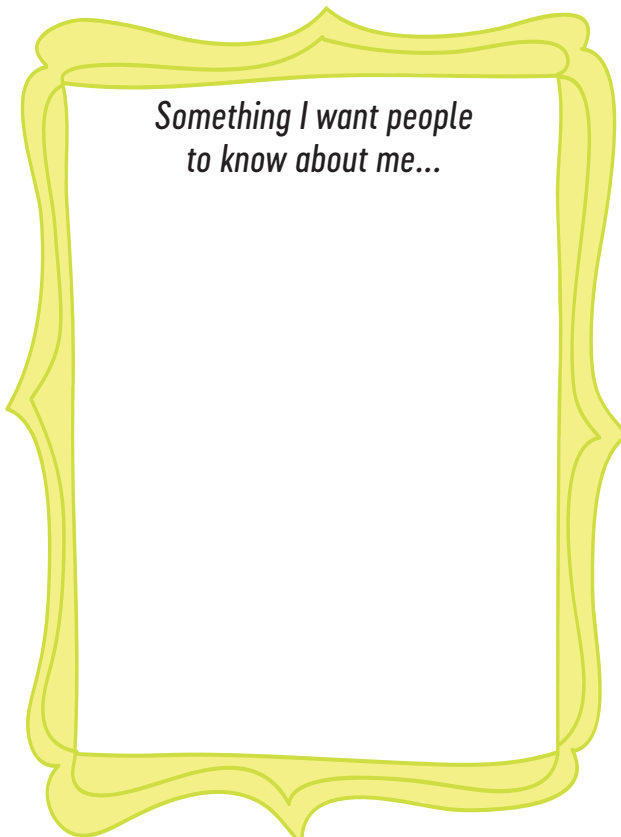


My favorite things are...

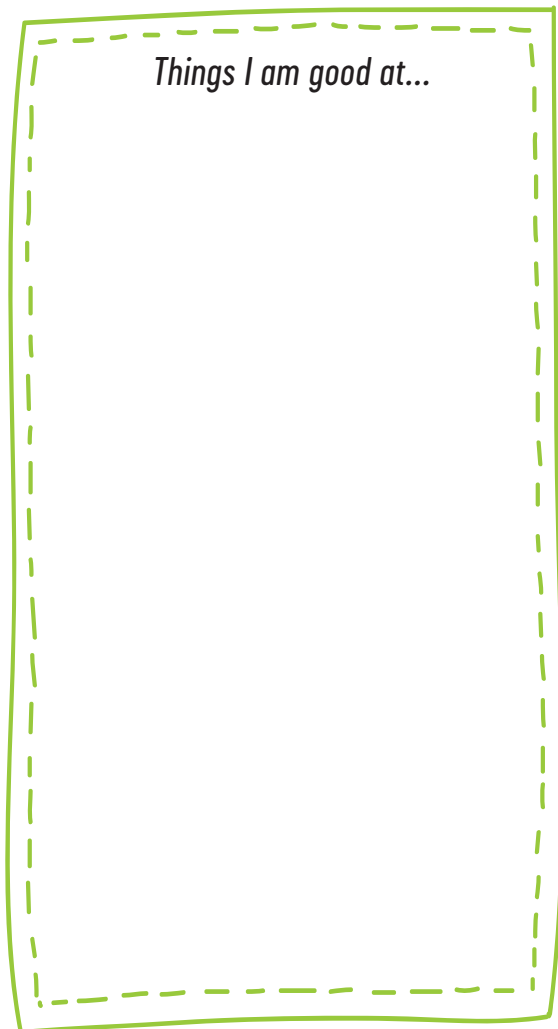
A red ribbon is tied in a bow at the top right corner of the frame.



What makes me smile...



Something I want people to know about me...



Things I am good at...



ACTIVITY: *Connections Assessment*

- First, either list the names or place photographs of every child in your school, grade, or classroom on the walls of the school cafeteria or gymnasium.
- Then, invite all staff members (not only teachers) and consistent parent helpers to walk around the room and place a sticker or check mark next to every child's name or photograph with whom they feel they have a connection.
- Afterward, identify kids who are without connections or have little connections and assign a few staff members to each of these children. Encourage staff to make a point to say hello and greet these kids as often as they can during the school year. Almost every day is ideal. The goal is to make every child feel like an adult, or several adults, notice them and are excited to see them in class, in the hallway, or at school events. The kids with little or no adult connections are the ones who need connections most. The caring adults in your school are the perfect people to help increase the overall school connectedness that children experience.

This is a powerful and effective way to ensure every student in your building feels connected and like they belong.

ACTIVITY: *The Animals Inside of Me*



How are you like a meerkat when you're calm? Stressed?



How are you like a tiger when you're calm? Stressed?



How are you like an owl when you're calm? Stressed?

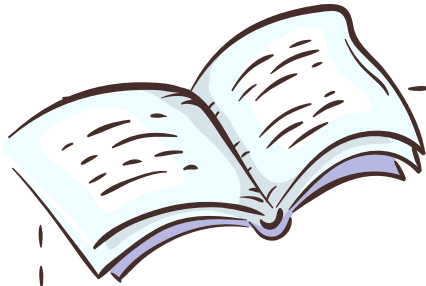
ACTIVITY: *Turning Routines into Rituals*

Write the ways you can turn your school routines or schedule into a ritual in the chart below.

Routine	How to Make It Into a Ritual
LINING UP	TEACHER: Spaghetti! (signal to line up) STUDENTS: Meatballs! (while lining up)

ACTIVITY: *As Easy as ABC*

Spell your first name and connect a stretch or movement with each letter:



ABC MOVEMENT WORD IDEAS:

- | | | | | |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|----------------|
| Arching | Fishing | Kick-boxing | Praying | Uplifting |
| Bending | Golfing | Lunging | Quivering | Violin playing |
| Climbing | Hugging | Motoring | Running | Walking |
| Dancing | Ice skating | Nodding | Swimming | eXercising |
| Energizing | Jumping | Opening | Twirling | Yodeling |
| | | | | Ziplining |

Here is an example for
the name Julie:

- J - JUGGLING**
- U - UNDERWATER SWIMMING**
- L - LAUGHING**
- I - ICE SKATING**
- E - EASTER EGG HUNTING**



dance FUN!
GAMES
TALK play
STRETCH

About Brain Breaks

If you haven't heard of brain breaks, they are short mental breaks (which include physical activity) that normally last less than five minutes, and are used to refocus and wake up your students. A few ideas to use are listed below.

Dance Break

Put on some music, turn off the lights, and DANCE! These websites provide great access to brain break music and activities:

- <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheLearningStation>
- <http://blog.reallygoodstuff.com/67-kid-friendly-brain-break-songs-and-musicians-for-the-classroom/>
- <https://howywood.com/brain-breaks/fun-kids-songs-brain-breaks/>

Social Time

This game allows students to do the one thing they always want to do: talk! Set the timer for one minute and let the students mingle with a partner. When the timer goes off, everyone has to find a new partner to mingle with, and so on, for as many times as you think is necessary.

Simon Says

You can be Simon, or switch it up and let one of the students. Students are not quite sure how to play "Simon Says", so you may need a refresher course for the kids.

Brain trails are brain breaks located in school hallways. In one middle school, the school social worker and occupational therapist worked together to create a brain trail system. Students would log in in the media center on a computer or tablet set up in hallways. When logging in, they indicate how they are feeling (tired, wound up, angry, etc.). The tablets then direct them to activities specific to supporting their identified feeling. The student engages in the activity, and then logs out indicating how they feel after the activity is completed. This provides data to the school's behavior specialists and occupational therapists. Then, there are follow-up meetings scheduled with each student who uses the brain trails where the student has an opportunity to learn similar sensory or regulatory input strategies that can be used in the classroom.

Additional practical ways to add play into classrooms to support learning and self-regulation:

Find someone in the class who...

- Loves peanut butter
- Hates marshmallows
- Is double jointed
- Can touch the tip of their nose with their tongue
- Has visited more than 3 different countries

Real or Fake? Do a Google search for weird fun facts!

- Elephants can understand sign language – real or fake?
- Clouds weigh over a ton – real or fake?

Have students line up in order of...

- Height
- Birth month
- Shoe size
- Middle name alphabetical order



ACTIVITY: *Create a Brain Break Calendar*

Use the calendar template on the next page and write at least one brain break for every day on the calendar.

Ideas to include:

- Give your class a riddle or tell a joke
- Play Simon Says
- Doodle for 5 minutes
- Do 25 jumping jacks
- Play Rock Paper Scissors
- Dance to a top 40 hit

Brain Break Calendar

SUN					
MON					
TUE					
WED					
THU					
FRI					
SAT					

ACTIVITY: *Distress Indicators*

Distress Indicators

Steps to Alleviate Your Distress

What are your emotional distress indicators?

How can you alleviate your emotional distress?

What are your personal distress indicators?

How can you alleviate your personal distress?

What are your physical distress indicators?

How can you alleviate your physical distress?

What are your work distress indicators?

How can you alleviate your work distress?

ACTIVITY: *Your Internal and External Resources*

Identify some of your internal and external resources. Some are listed for you. Reflect for a minute about how you use these resources as protective factors. Are there other ways you could draw upon your internal or external resources to help you?

Internal Resources

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|---------|
| • Strength | • Agility | • _____ |
| • Humor | • Spiritual practice | • _____ |
| • Memories | • Instinct | • _____ |
| • Intelligence | • Inherent talents | • _____ |
-
-
-

External Resources

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------|---------|
| • Nature | • Friends | • _____ |
| • Community | • Animals/pets | • _____ |
| • Hobbies/activities | • Work | • _____ |
| • Sports/exercise | • Family | • _____ |
-
-
-

ACTIVITY: *Reflection Questions*

1. Why did you make the decision to do this work? Is that reason the same today, or has it changed over time? Explain.

2. What are your professional strengths?

3. What is your philosophy of what it means to teach students?

4. What aspect of your job is most challenging?

5. Do you need more support to be your best self professionally? If so, what do you need? Who can help?

6. If you could choose one or two words about how it makes you feel to do the work you do, what one or two words would you select?
