



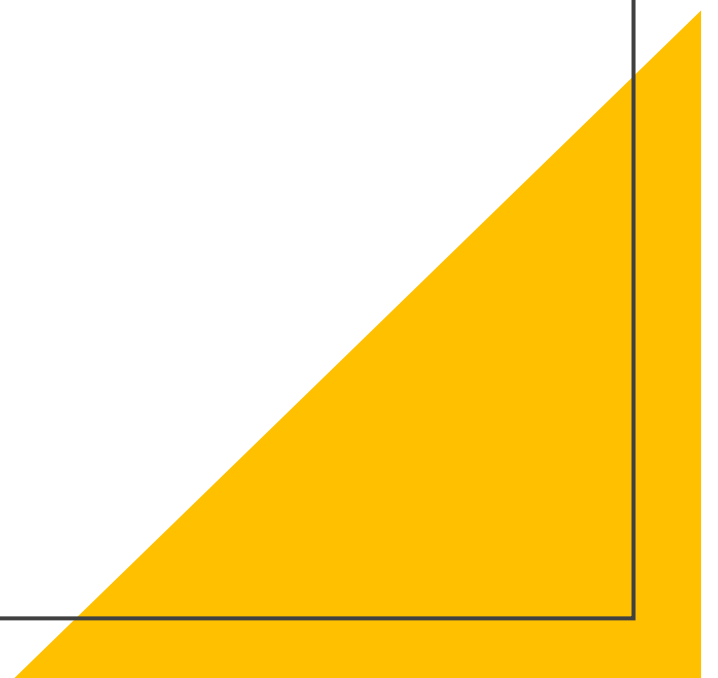
TIES Pre-Placement Education and Preparation Series



Session 2b

Temperament and Attachment – A Primer for
Resource Parents

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Behaviors

Emotions Thoughts

Needs

Why learn about temperament and attachment?

- Better understand your child, yourself, and your relationship
- Enhance parent-child relationship
- Promote resiliency





The 'Why' of Child Behavior Through a Trauma Lens

- **Children may have experienced:**
 - Prenatal substance exposure
 - Traumatic events and stressors
 - Disrupted placements/relationships
 - Changes in cultural context



What is temperament?

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- Temperament is a constellation of inborn traits that contribute to a person's reactions or responses to situations
 - Traits are relatively stable over time



Knowing your child's temperament may help you:

- Better understand reasons for your child's behaviors
- Parent your child in a way that is more tailored to his/her temperament
- Better manage your child's behaviors


Knowing your temperament may help you:

- Better understand your own triggers/preferences
- Better cope with your own feelings when managing your children's behaviors

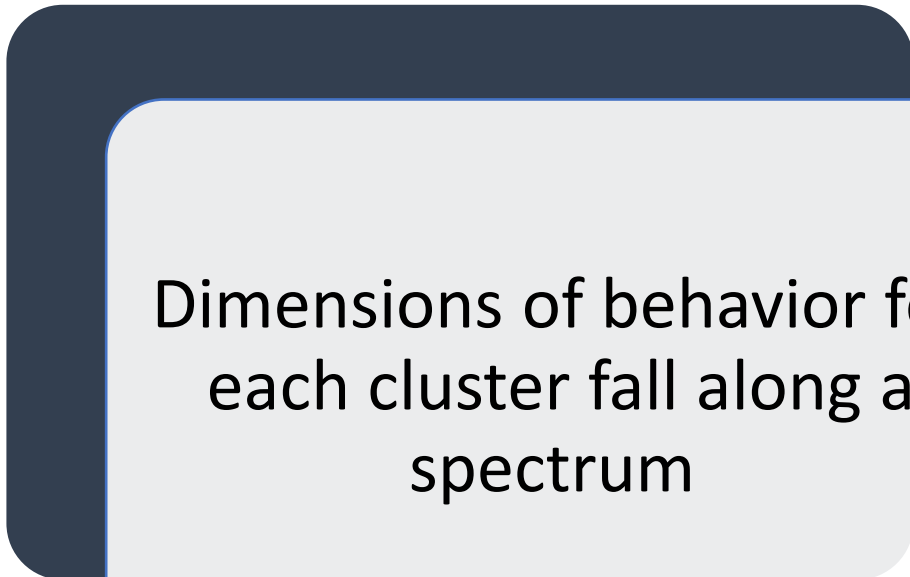




Temperament Clusters



Temperament clusters
have been found across
different cultures



Dimensions of behavior for
each cluster fall along a
spectrum

Approach

What is the child's first reaction to new people, activities, ideas, or new places?

Jumps right in

Cautious

Activity Level

How high is the child's energy level? More quiet and still or busy and on the move?

High activity

Low activity

Adaptability

How quickly does the child adapt to change or shift from one thing to another?

Adapts quickly

Adapts slowly

Frustration Tolerance/Persistence

How persistent is the child? How committed to her/her goals?

Persistent

Easily discouraged or frustrated

Sensitivity

How sensitive or is the child to sights, sounds, smells, textures, and emotions?

Low sensitivity

High sensitivity

Intensity of Reactions

How strong are the child's emotional reactions?

Mild reaction

Intense reaction

Regularity

How predictable are the child's eating, sleeping, and elimination patterns?

Predictable

Irregular

Mood

How often does the child feel serious, analytical, or cranky versus happy and content?

Positive mood

Serious mood

Distractibility

Is the child attentive or easily sidetracked?

Low distractibility

High distractibility



Silver Linings of Temperament Types

Environmental context
of temperament traits

When might a
temperament trait (e.g.,
low frustration
tolerance, distractibility)
be a helpful thing?

Broad Temperament Types

Flexible (aka Easy)

- 40% of population
- Regular sleeping and eating, easygoing, adaptable, calm, and focused

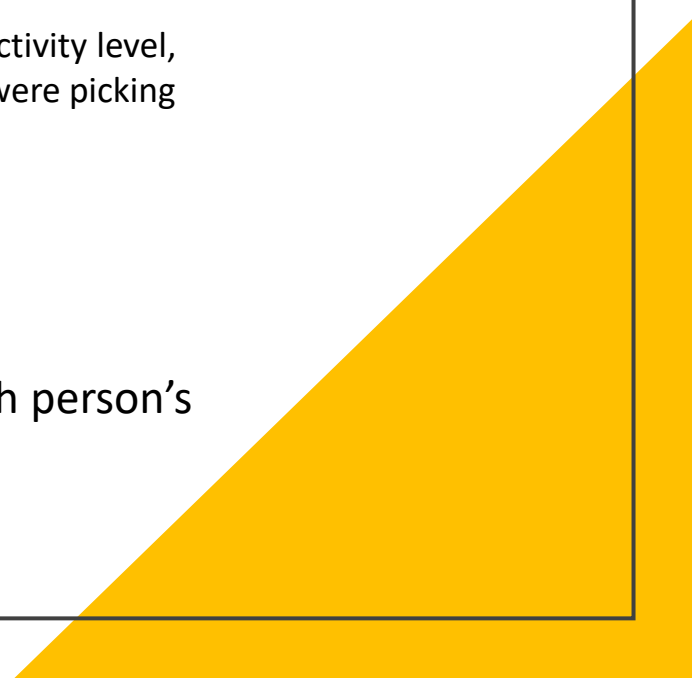
Slow to Warm

- 15% of population
- Sleep, eating, and attention affected by stress, needs time to adjust, and shy

Feisty (aka Difficult)

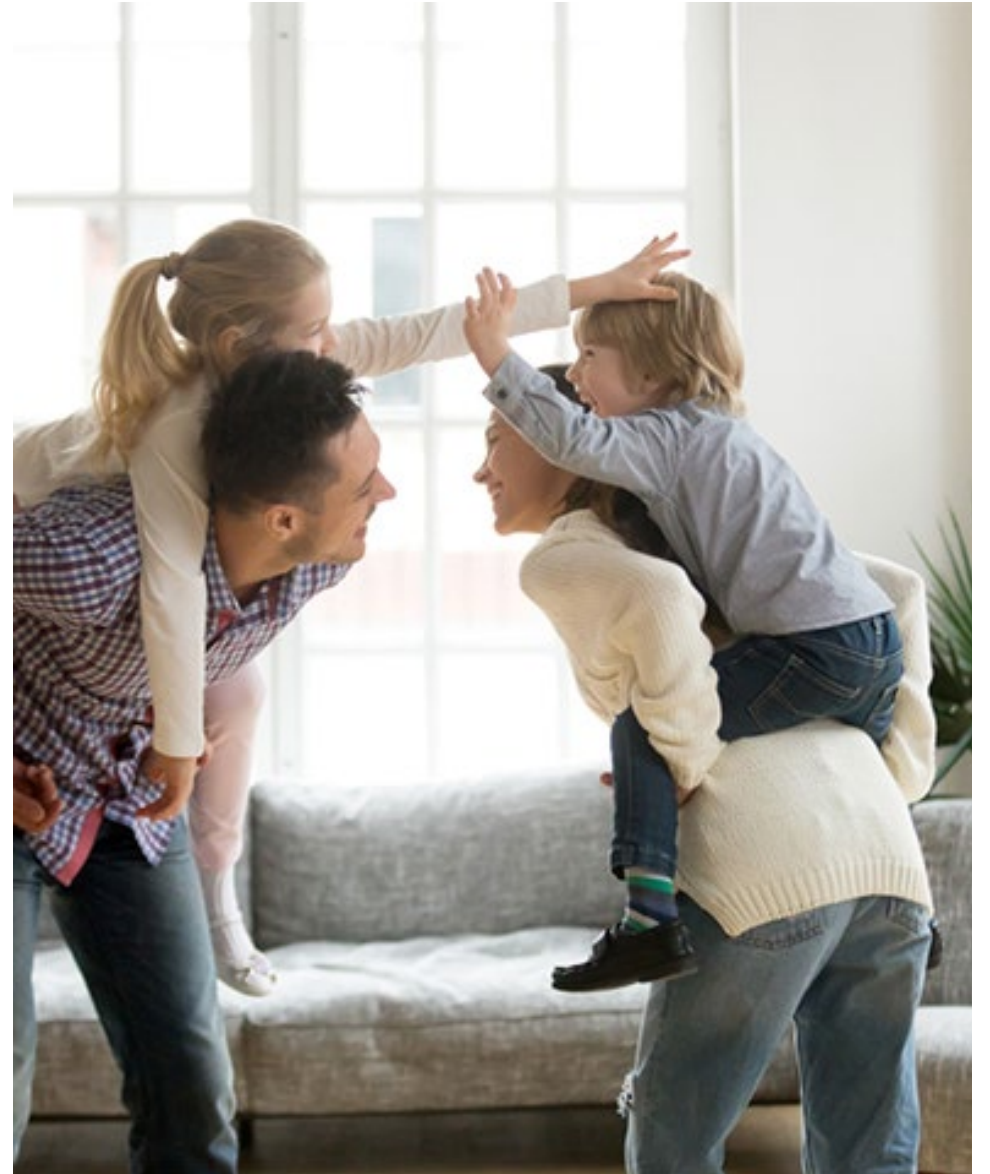
- 10% of population
- Irregular sleeping, picky eating, sensitive, avoids change, easily frustrated, distractible, and high energy

Breakout Session

- It is Saturday morning after a long exhausting week for a parent and his/her 6-year-old child. The parent needs to make a plan for the day.
 - The parent is “Feisty” with a low frustration tolerance, highly distractible, and a desire to be active. The parent has had a hard week at work with lots of “fires” to put out and the boss has been hard on the parent about getting things done better
 - The child is “Slow to Warm” with okay attention and frustration tolerance, and average activity level, but this is affected by stress. During this last week he had less sleep than usual and kids were picking on him at school
 - What does the parent decide?
 - And how do the parent and child feel about the plan for the day?
 - How might the plan, the feelings/reactions to the plan, be affected by each person’s temperament? By stressors from the week?
 - How can the parent solve any problems that occur?
- 

Tailoring Parenting

- Children do well when their environment is tailored to their temperament style
- Match vs. mismatch
- It is easier for parents to adjust their expectations and demands than it is for children to change their temperament





What is attachment?

Attachment is:

- Is a biological imperative for survival
- Begins as an emotional bond between parent and child
- Sets the stage for a child's sense of safety in the world, expectations about relationships, ways of managing emotions
- Promote healthy brain development, if secure






Secure Attachment as a Protective Factor

- Leads to self-confidence and trust in relationships
- Associated with positive developmental outcomes across the lifespan
- Forms foundation for positive relationships and emotional bonds
- Promotes feelings of trust and safety in the world
- Leads to academic, social, and occupational success

Viral video of baby talking to his dad will melt your heart

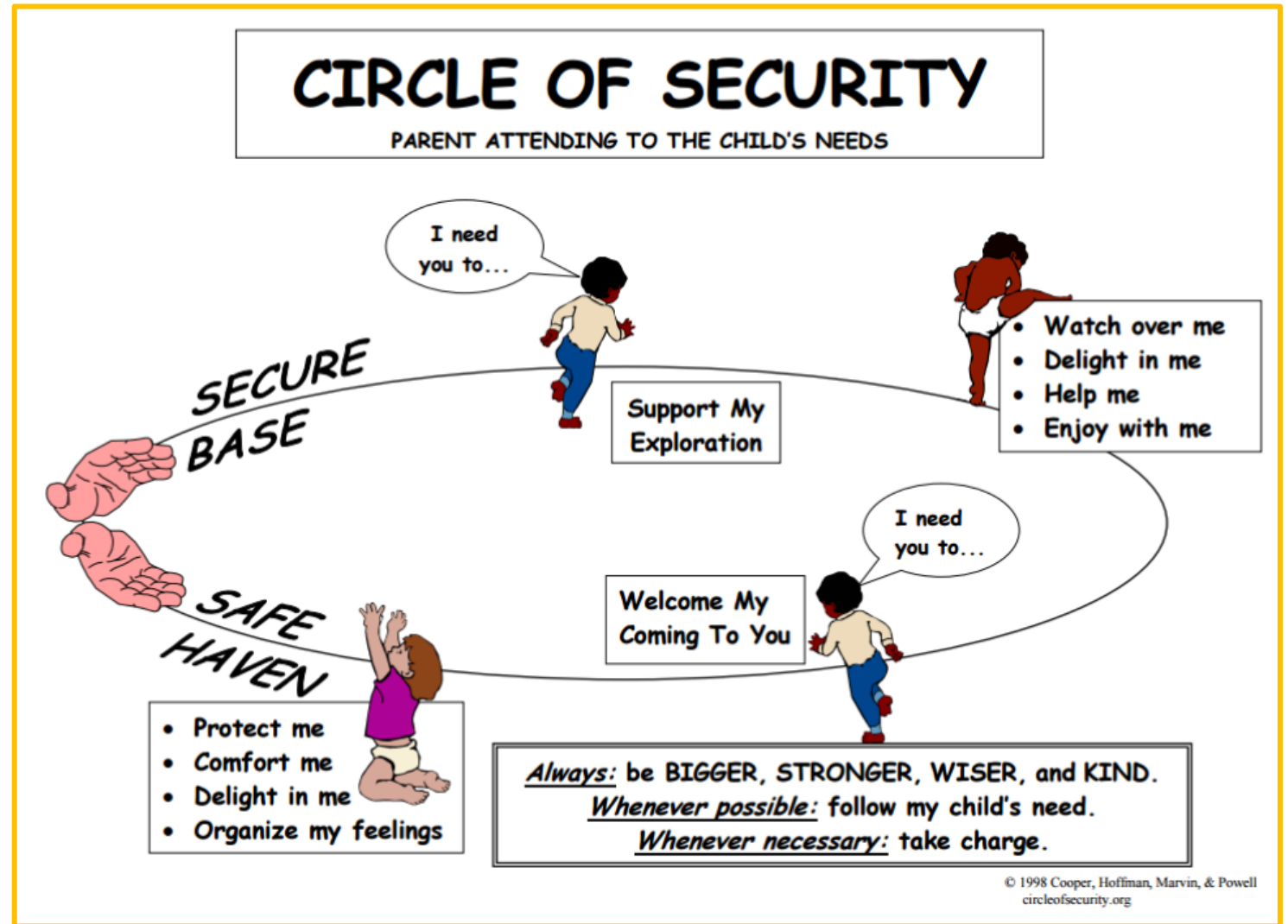




Balancing Closeness and Independence



Security of Attachment



Miscuing

- Some parents (preoccupied) have a need for closeness that overshadows the child's need to explore.
 - Child adapts to parent, begins to miscue or not cue need to explore
 - Autonomy, learning, and confidence may suffer
 - Leads to a more anxious resistant attachment style
- Dismissive parents are not available or comfortable with neediness/closeness/emotion
 - Child learns not to cue need for closeness/comfort
 - May not show emotions or shuts down emotions
 - Avoidant



Opportunities for repair?

Rupture and Repair

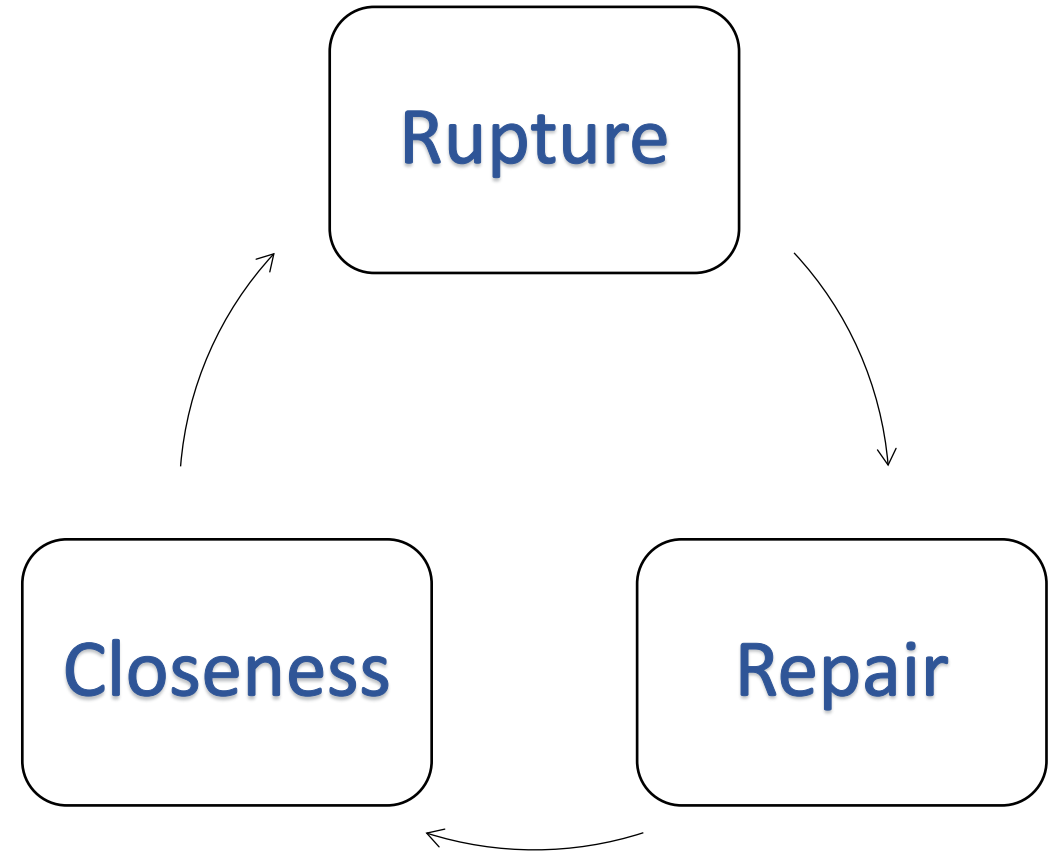
Rupture is inevitable

In healthy relationships, the caregiver and child typically restore their connection after a rupture, in a process known as “repair”

Rupture and repair can strengthen relationships and increase safety

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Implications for Resource Parents

- Older children come with already formed attachment style
- Children may have multiple attachments at the same time (e.g., birth family, previous caregivers)
- Consider environmental stressors (e.g., trauma, race/ethnicity)



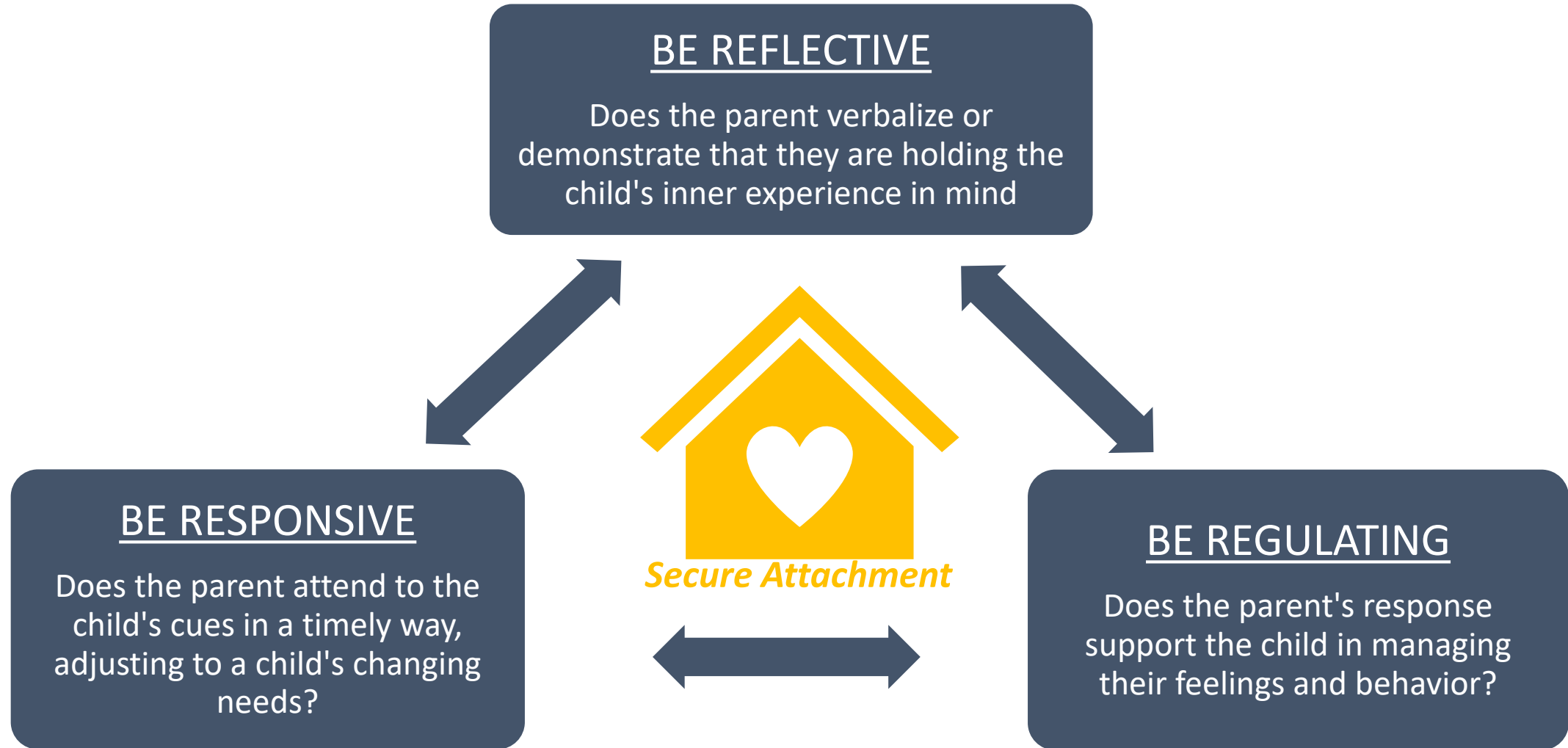
What can you do as a resource parent?

- Understand yourself and your own attachment history and style
- We have our own comforts and needs when it comes to closeness and independence
- Children pick up YOUR needs and can miscue you based on those needs

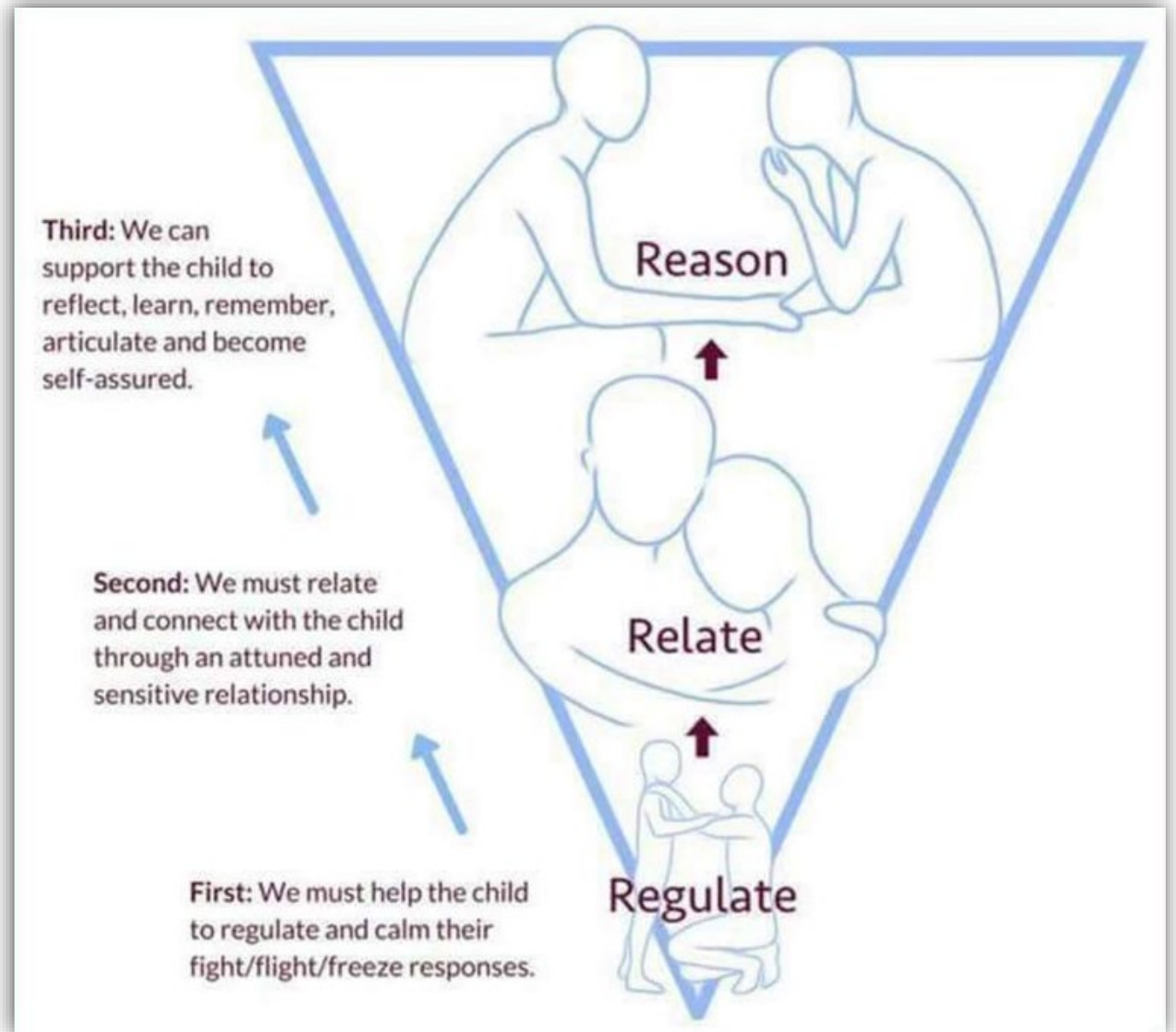


What can
resource
parents do
to create
security?

The 3 R's of Relationship Security



Dr. Bruce Perry, a neuroscientist in the field of trauma, has shown us that to help a vulnerable child to learn, think, and reflect, we need to respond in a simple sequence.



Keep the CHILD in Mind

CO-REGULATION

- Emotionally regulate yourself first. When you regulate yourself, you can regulate your child.

HOPE

- There is hope that YOU can be the caregiver to help the child feel safe and secure in the world

INVESTIGATE

- Your child's behavior can be confusing. Reflect and try to understand your child's feelings and what she is trying to communicate to you

LOVE

- We all struggle to balance closeness and independence. Communicate love through nurturance and support of exploration

DON'T FORGET TO BREATHE

- Take time for yourselves, engage in self care, and make sure you have enough support!