



UWGNH SECURE START

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A FEW FACTS ABOUT OUR REGION:

- At the time this intervention began, 92% of children in our region living under the federal poverty level or in low-income families resided in 4 of the 12 towns we serve: New Haven, East Haven, West Haven and Hamden. In New Haven, 58% , in Hamden 33%.
- New Haven is a city that suffers from many of the effects of post-industrial poverty.

AMAZING FACT ABOUT NEW HAVEN:

New Haven, CT has the largest number of non-profit organizations per capita than any city its size in the United States.



SECURE START

*An initiative to build children's optimal development
and school readiness by supporting strong
caregiver -child attachment
at the youngest ages.*

WHY ATTACHMENT?

- Attachments are the emotional bonds that infants develop with their parents and other key caregivers.
It is a core process of child development
- Attachment is universal and present in all cultures.
- Children who are securely attached tend to be:
 - ✓ more socially constructive/less aggressive
 - ✓ more creative and resilient to challenges
 - ✓ able to learn and concentrate more easily

Secure attachment buffers the stress of poverty and trauma.

These advantages persist throughout the lifespan.

ATTACHMENT

- ***SIMPLE AND YET SO PROFOUND.***
- ***SOMETHING OUR GRANDMOTHERS COULD
HAVE TOLD US.***

WHY CIRCLE OF SECURITY- PARENTING?



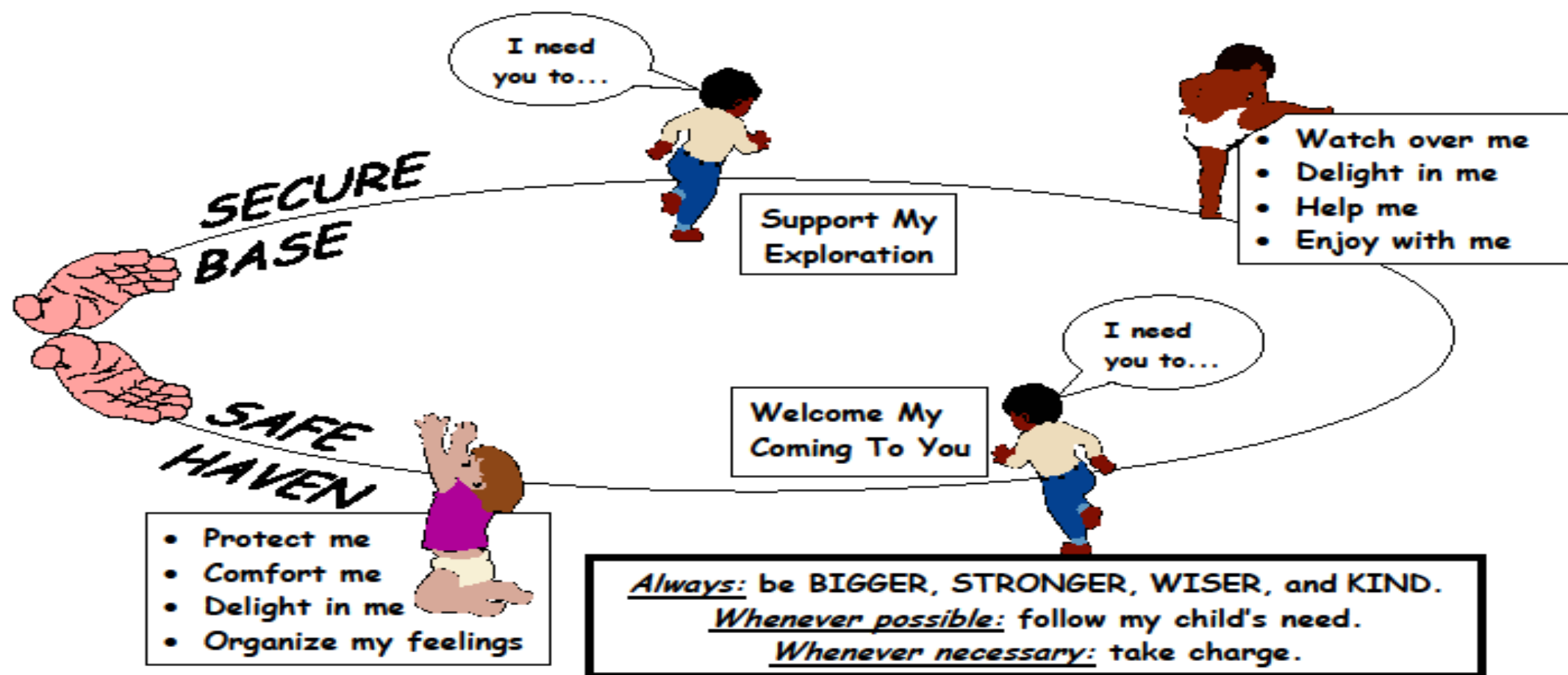
- COS-P© applies decades of attachment research in an accessible, non-shaming, non-judgmental, 8 week intervention.
- Utilized in a variety of settings by a diverse set of providers.
- Takes the position of positive intentionality- that all parents want what is best for their children.
- Helps caregivers acquire basic and fundamental relationship capabilities.

unconditional
LOVE



CIRCLE OF SECURITY

PARENT ATTENDING TO THE CHILD'S NEEDS



IMPORTANT CONCEPTS LEARNED FROM COS-P

- “Good enough” parenting.
- It’s never too late.
- The importance of reflecting on our own past to better understand what is happening now with our child.
- Importance of co-regulation to impact self-regulation.
- Behavior is an expression of a need.

WHAT MAKES COS-P© DIFFERENT?

- Focus is on the caregiver behaviors .
- Enhances caregiver sensitivity- the ability to mentalize or imagine what is going on inside the child.
- Fosters self-reflection on their own experience of being parented and its effects on their parenting now.
- A relational versus a behavioral model.

AND SO IT BEGAN.....

- RFPs were distributed to agencies in the region offering to train staff to facilitate COS-P© groups.
- 5 agencies were chosen for the first year.
- MOUs were drawn up outlining responsibilities.

- Agencies received funding for incentives for caregivers to participate. \$1,000.00 per group
- Expectation for agency to participate in the evaluation process.
- Expectation for the partners to attend Secure Start Network meetings.
- Expectation for partners to file an annual final report.

Funding provides for parent incentives at the discretion of the agency: i.e., food for the sessions, child care, transportation, graduation gifts, celebration of completion. \$1000.00 per group

Secure Start: FY2013-2023

- Began with 5 Agencies - currently the network includes 11 agencies .
- Secure Start Network Meetings: quarterly.
- Number of COS-P© groups held: 151.
- Number of caregivers and educators impacted: 1,462.
- Groups offered in English and Spanish and for specialized groups.
- 2-session Refreshers held at 3 agencies.
- Educator coaching groups at 2 agencies.



QUARTERLY SECURE START NETWORK MEETINGS

- Provides a space to discuss best practices and fidelity to the model.
- Fosters collaboration and sharing of resources.
- Creates a community of practice and a shared sense of promoting secure attachment in the region.
- Participants share impact stories from their COS-P@ groups.

SECURE START TODAY

1. UW funding is now 1500.00 per group.
2. Participants fill out a self-reflection evaluation survey and receive 20.00 gift cards.
3. Partners attend a quarterly Secure Start Network meeting.



4. For some agencies UWGNH provides experienced COS-P© facilitators.

5. Facilitators fill out a group report following each group.

6. I meet with each partner at the mid-point and end of year and file an end -of -year report and budget proposal for the following year.

TYPES OF AGENCIES

- Childcare centers and preschools
- Family daycare program
- Public School districts through Family Resource Centers
- Homeless Shelter
- Post-incarceration, re-entry program
- Behavioral health center
- Child and Family Social Service Agency
- Home visiting program for a health district

SPECIALIZED GROUPS

- Dads
- Parents of children with special needs
- One-to-one in a home visiting program
- Moms in a residential program due to substance abuse

Secure Start Evaluation:2017

- Parental Reflective Function Questionnaire (PRFQ)
- Parenting Sense of Competency (PSOC)
- Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9)
- Parenting Stress Index Short Form (PSI-SF)
- DEX (measure of executive function)
- Child-Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS)
- Baseline, T1, T2, Post, 3 month follow-up

Total sample: 58 parents in published results; 66 recent pairs

Reduction in maternal depression.

TRENDS FROM MORE CURRENT EVALUATIONS

- My level of parenting stress: decrease
- I identify and respond to my child's needs to explore and for comfort and care: increase

- I step back and think about what my child's behavior is telling me before I react: increase
- I feel confident I can meet the emotional needs of my child/children in my group: increase

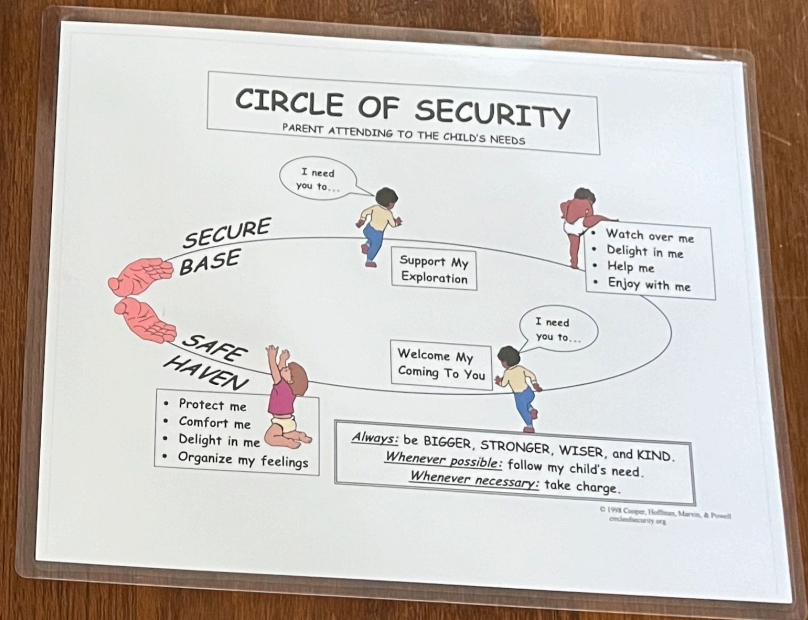
OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

- What I have learned impacts all the relationships in my life, not just with my child.
- COS-P© has helped me relate to my employer and co-workers.
- It is such a relief to be aiming to be “good enough” and not perfect.
- I realize my parents did the best that they could- and so do I.

CHALLENGES

- Recruitment of participants
- 8 week commitment
- Transportation
- Childcare
- Space and technology
- The Covid pandemic
- Collecting Evaluation Data

OTHER INCENTIVES: PARENT BOXES

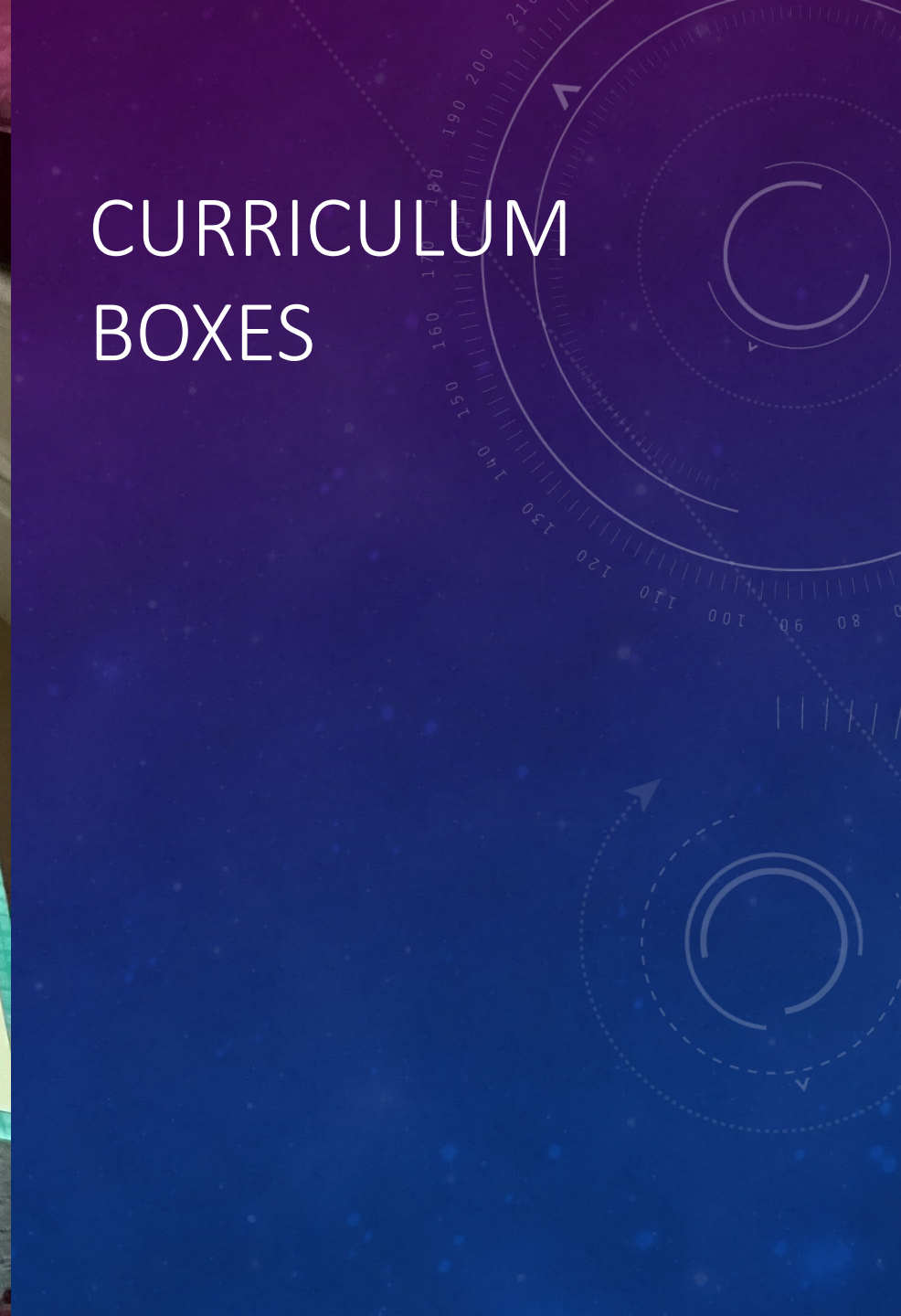
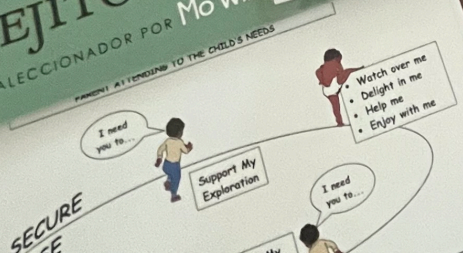


CURRICULUM BOXES



Circle of Security Curriculum Box

Topic	Activities
Sibling Rivalry The arrival of a new sibling in the home Peter's Chair La silla del perro	• Read the book • Draw a picture of the family • Role-play the situation
Anger Management Children learn to have ability to manage anger by using their own words to explain to the adult The Chocolate Kissed Lunatic The Chocolate Kissed Lunatic	• Read the book • Draw a picture of the character • Role-play the situation • Use words to describe feelings
Positive Connections Bring parents and new & old teachers, home and home to form a strong connection Bring parents "Present" I Like A Friend	• Read the book • Draw a picture of the characters • Role-play the situation • Use words to describe feelings
Unconditional Love Reassuring children of our unconditional love for them matters The Bunnies Burry El conejito enterrado	• Read the book • Draw a picture of the characters • Role-play the situation • Use words to describe feelings
Separation Stepping out into the world, understanding to know we are still with them I Love You All Day Long	• Read the book • Draw a picture of the characters • Role-play the situation • Use words to describe feelings
Telling the Truth Learning the importance of honesty is an important life lesson Ruthie and the (Not So) Teeny Tiny Lie	• Read the book • Draw a picture of the characters • Role-play the situation • Use words to describe feelings



BOOKS AND THEMES

Circle of Security Curriculum Box

Young children grow and learn in your presence and with your support and love. This box addresses some common themes using books and props.

Sibling Rivalry

The arrival of a new addition to a family presents unique challenges.

Books	Props
Peter's Chair La silla de Pedro	Wooden doll chair Paint can and brushes Willie the dog

Anger Management

Children grow in their ability to manage emotions by using their words or counting to 10.

Books	Props
Knuffle Bunny El conejito knuffle I Was So Mad!	Knuffle bunny
The Chocolate-Covered Cookie Tantrum	Pretend cookies Cookie counting jar

Positive Connections

Being present and near a child reassures them and helps to form a strong connection.

Books	Props
Penguin Says "Please!" I Like it When ...	Grownup penguin puppet Baby penguin puppet

Unconditional Love

Reminding children of our unconditional love for them matters.

Books	Props
The Runaway Bunny El conejito andarín	Bunny puppet

Separation

Stepping out into the world, children need to know we are still with them.

Book	Props
I Love You All Day Long	Grownup pig puppet Baby pig finger puppet

Telling the Truth

Learning the importance of honesty is an important life lesson.

Book	Props
Ruthie and the (Not So) Teeny Tiny Lie	Wooden camera

LESSONS LEARNED

- Go where the children are: childcare, preschools, family resource centers, mental health clinics, home visiting programs.
- Build on relationships where there is already trust.
- Mentor the facilitators- co-facilitation.
- Be creative with funding streams.
- Be flexible with time and space.

NEW DIRECTIONS

- Refresher: 2 sessions exploring the big ideas from COS-P©: applications and impact.
- Exploring the idea of a group for partners of the re-entry program.
- Improving and strengthening the evaluation process.
- One-to-one COS-P© in home visiting and in behavioral health clients.
- Offering COS-C© to early childhood educators.

*When you see that something is wrong in the world,
you are supposed to try and fix it.*

WITH GRATITUDE :

- UWGNH Leadership and Inspiration: Jennifer Heath, Susan Nappi, Ellie Meise-Munns, Amy Casavina Hall, Aly Fox, Shelly Hicks and Mike Degen
- Charlie Slaughter
- COS-I, its founders and current leaders
- Our amazing team of facilitators and agency directors
- The Attachment Network of Connecticut

Q & A

