

Supporting Connections: For Children in Care

MSPCC's Kid's Net & MAFF Conference

COFFEE AND REGISTRATION

8:30 - 9:30

Vendors - Hallway

WELCOME

9:30 - 10:30

Nancy Allen-Scannell, MSPCC Executive Director
Cathie Twiaga, MAFF President
MAFF Representative Presentations
Staverne Miller, Assistant Commissioner of Permanency

Keynote: The Power of Cultural Rituals & Routines to Heal Legacies of Intergenerational Historical Trauma and Nurture Joy in Parent-Infant

Relationships: Talk, Touch & Listen While Combing Hair!

10:30 - 12:00

Marva Lewis, PhD, IMH-E

Founder/Director of the Place for Natural Connections

In 2021 the American Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse (ASPCA) declared that experiences of discrimination and racism as a form of psychological maltreatment of young children. The shared trauma response to historical trauma of slavery continues to impact the quality of modern interpersonal relationships. The practice of colorism - valuing lighter skin tones and straighter hair texture - is an underrecognized form of discrimination experienced by children in their relationships with parents and Infant and Early Childhood Professionals. Family routines, celebrations, and rituals are powerful organizers of family life and stability for young children during times of stress such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Routines protect mental health under high-risk conditions and strengthen family identity. Dr. Lewis presents findings from two decades of research on the everyday routine of hair combing interaction as a rich context for healthy interaction with children. She argues that the cultural 'call and response' synchrony of this caregiver-child interaction during the critical first three years of life, supports the development of secure-base partnerships. This daily routine provides a no-cost opportunity for parents and caregivers to nurture attachment, be connected to their culture, and build community with parent-peers.

LUNCH

12:15 - 1:15

Vendors - Hallway

WORKSHOPS

1:30 - 3:00

Option 1: Help Kids Heal: 4 Key Ingredients

- Steve Gross, Chief Playmaker, Life is Good Playmaker Project

Room TBD

This inspiring presentation by Steve Gross, helps all parents, families and caregivers discover a 4-step framework for building corrective play experiences that help build healing relationships with children. Through a thoughtful blend of fun, experiential activities and discussions, participants will explore ways to enhance joyfulness, social connection, internal control, and active engagement with their kids and walk away with concrete tools to apply...well...the very next day.

Option 2: Navigating Family Relations, While Providing Kinship Care

- Jessica Tierney, Family and Support Coordinator, Treehouse

Room TBD

This workshop will discuss the importance of child-centered kinship care. Inevitably, relationships with family become complicated when one family member begins caring for another family member's birth children. There arise new needs for boundary setting with both biological parents and extended family members. Additionally, the importance of healthy relationships as self-care for kinship caregivers must be prioritized. When caregivers feel confident, competent, and cared for while making decisions, they can be fully-attuned to their children's needs. As a result, a truly healing environment can be created and sustained for those in their care who are recovering from trauma and traumatic loss.

Option 3: Birth Family Connections

- Barb Clark, Director of Training, Families Raising (formerly NACAC)

Room TBD

We discuss the importance of maintaining a child's connection to family, culture, and community in order to support their development of a strong and positive sense of self, a deeper understanding of who they are and their authentic story, and a sense of continuity in their relationships.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE: FOSTER FAMILIES COLLECT A SPECIAL GIFT!