



## CCPS Mental Health Update

Cecil County Public Schools is committed to empowering our staff and families to meet the social and emotional needs of our students, with a focus on behavioral health and trauma-responsiveness, to assure that every student is ready to learn, achieve success, and experience positive relationships.

### Did you know:

**Regressive behavior** is when a child displays behavior(s) that are typically seen in younger ages. This may include showing behaviors they have already grown out of.

### Strategy of the Month:

#### Responding to Regressive Behavior



\* Adapted from Live Well with UnityPoint Health, Crisis Prevention Intervention

### Regression

- Is normal during childhood
- Can be caused by stress, frustration, disruption in regular routines, and/or a traumatic event
- Is a form of communication

Regressive behavior not only impacts the child, but it can lead to feelings of confusion, frustration, or disappointment in the caregiver.

The **main underlying cause** for regressive behavior is stress.

- Major impact on brain function
- Increased stress hormones target areas of the brain that influence behavior, emotions,

### Strategies for Behavior Regression

- *Stay calm and evaluate your child's regression-* behavior is a form of communication. Evaluate what needs your child may need met.
  - What is your child trying to tell you?
  - How can you support your child?
- *Identify the problem and develop solutions-* by understanding the antecedent to the regressive behavior, you can properly address the issue with your child. After addressing the issue, work on ways you and your child can work together to reduce the stressor.
  - Family dinners
  - Time to play as a family

decision making, and/or memory functions

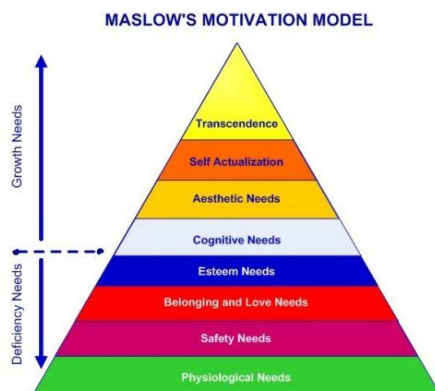
### **Signs of Regression During Child Development**

- *Bathroom accidents* in children that are currently potty trained
  - This can also manifest as constipation leading to bathroom accidents
- *Sleep disruptions* in children who typically sleep throughout the night. He/She may wake in the night looking to be comforted.
- *Decrease in the ability to be self-sufficient* in children who played independently. The child may display behaviors that are more clingy or needy.
- *Learning disruption* in children who were developing appropriately. The child may become more forgetful.
- *Language regression* in children who were speaking appropriately for their developmental age. The child may participate in more "baby talk".
- *Disruptive behavior* in children who demonstrated self-regulation skills and self-soothing strategies independently. The child may engage in more disruptive behaviors including temper tantrums or excessive crying. The child may also revert to more intrinsic behaviors such as withdrawal, shyness, or more depressive behaviors.

**When the unmet need of the child is addressed, the regressive behavior typically corrects.**

- Behavior regression *varies in length*. It will last longer in environments with harsh punishment.

**Parenting/Caregiving during child regression is difficult. Give yourself some grace. Engage in positive self-care methods to help manage your own emotions.**



- Reading together
  - Cuddling
  - Yoga/Meditation
  - Deep Breathing
  - Journaling
- *Sympathize and be nonjudgmental*- be understanding of what your child is going through and make them aware. Validate and reassure their feelings.
  - *Respect personal space*- personal space helps to decrease a person's anxiety. If you must enter your child's personal space explain your actions to reduce confusion and fright.
  - *Avoid overreacting*- use non-threatening body language and a calm, even tone when speaking. You cannot control another person's behavior, but you can control how you respond. How you respond to a behavior, action, or language will directly affect if the situation escalates or deescalates.
  - *Use of positive reinforcements, but set limits*- set clear, simple, and enforceable limits, but refrain from harsh punishments. Instead offer concise and respectful choices and/or consequences.
    - If/then statements
    - When/then statements
    - First/then statements
  - *Allow for silence and decisions*- when a person is upset, decision making becomes more difficult. Provide a chance to reflect on what happened and then work together to develop a plan for the next time this challenging situation occurs. Reward your child for their efforts to demonstrate positive behavior and be flexible during this time.
  - *Create a new language*- adjust the way you address the people around you. State the feeling you believe is being displayed and then provide a request.
  - *Re-Evaluate rules and choose wisely what you insist upon*- ask yourself
    - How flexible can you be while maintaining the safety of all involved?
    - Why do I have that rule?
    - Who does the rule benefit?
    - Are there things we are able to compromise on?

It is impossible to provide everyone with everything they are asking for and people don't have to do anything you request of them. **Be creative when deciding negotiable and nonnegotiable rules. Decide on other options that can be considered.**

**If you have a child in need of support and/or resources click on the following link.**  
[Student Support Request Form](#)

The Maryland Coalition for Families is available to provide the following supports

- Parents and caregivers of children with mental health needs
- Anyone who cares for a loved one struggling with substance use disorder
- Anyone who cares for a loved one struggling with problem gambling

**Families and others can reach MCF by:**

- Calling our statewide intake line at 410-703-8267
- Emailing [info@mdcoalition.org](mailto:info@mdcoalition.org)

