

# EARLY MATTERS

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Transforming Our Court System

Healthy Infant Court

# Convergence of Ideas

## Seeds of Change

- Trauma-informed Justice System
- Dr. Connie Lillas – Neurorelational Framework
- Babies in the Child Welfare System
- Optimal Brain Development

## National/Local Court Models

- ZERO TO THREE Safe Baby Court Teams
- Los Angeles Baby Court
  - NRF with Dr. Lillas
- Family Drug Treatment Court

# Early Childhood Epidemic

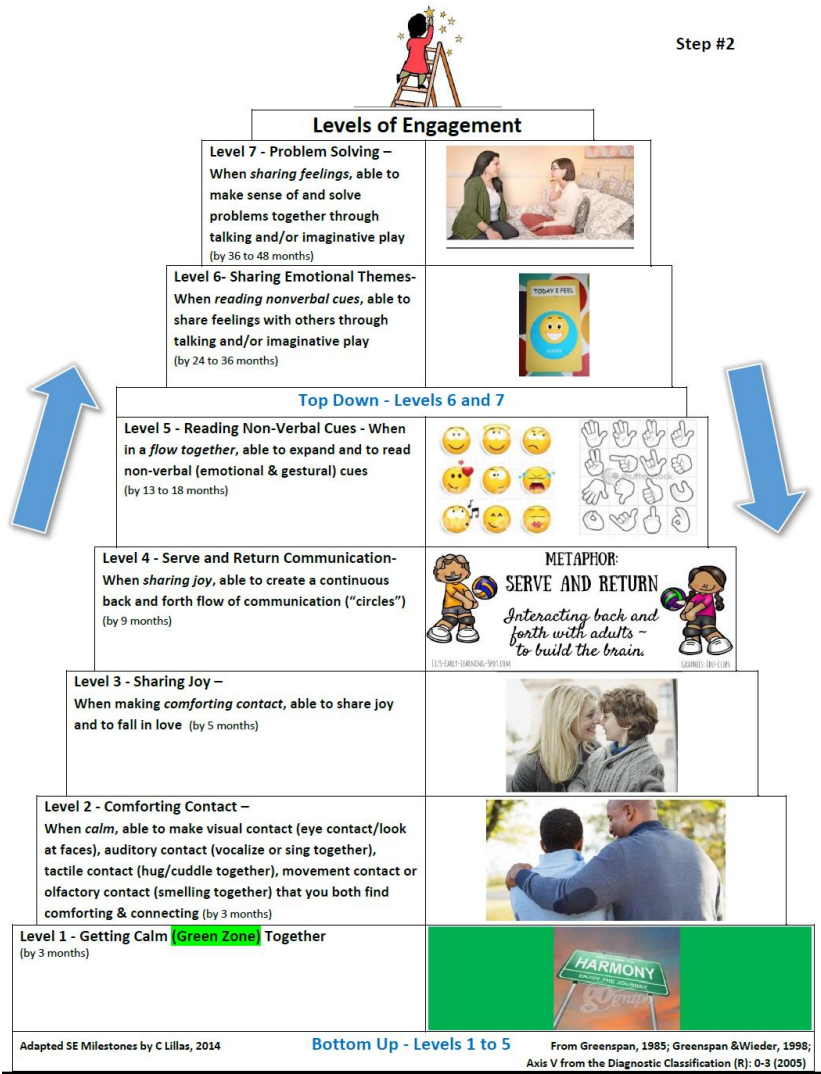
- Children 3 and under are the most vulnerable to child maltreatment
  - 34% Nationwide
  - 28% Wisconsin
  - 79.8% of children who die from maltreatment are 3 and under
- Infants under 3 months old remain in foster care 50% longer than older children
  - 0 to 2 months spend 33% more time in care than infants ages 3 to 12 months old
  - Infants are more likely to be adopted than unified with family
- 1/5<sup>th</sup> of children ages birth to 2 have had prior CPS involvement
  - 3% had prior out-of-home placement
- 85.6% of children under 2 experience one or more changes in first 2 years of life
- 2.2% of all children in United States are eligible for Part C services
  - In child welfare, this number is 35%

# ZERO TO THREE

## Safe Baby Court Teams – Core Components

- Judicial Leadership
- Local Community Coordinator
- Active Court Team Focused on the Big Picture
- Targeting Infants and Toddlers in Out-of-Home Care/Under the Court's Jurisdiction
- Valuing Birth Parents
- Placement and Concurrent Planning
- The Foster Parent Intervention; Mentors and Extended Family
- Pre-removal Conferences and Monthly Family Team Meetings
- Parent-Child Contact (Visitation)
- Continuum of Mental Health Services
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Understanding the Impact of Our Work

# Neurorelational Framework - Lillas



- Cross-sectored Approach using a Common Language
- Three Steps
  - Awake States
  - Levels of Engagement
  - Four Brain Systems
    - Regulation
    - Sensory
    - Relevance
    - Executive

# Family Drug Treatment Court

- Focus on services to child and parents
  - Holistic
  - Services for substance abuse, trauma, mental health, education, job readiness and housing, in addition to services for the children and stability of the family
- Decreased time to treatment entry
- Frequent counseling sessions and longer time in treatment
- Relationship with judge
- Judge, treatment representatives, and parent attorneys attend staffings

# The Beginning

## Behind the Scenes

- Committee formed to create a baby court in Milwaukee
- Applied for grant through ZERO TO THREE
- Ultimately, funding for first three years came through the Department of Children and Families
- Hired court coordinator May 2016

## Work in Progress

- Initial feasibility cases taken from FDTC participants - 2015
- July 2016 – first cases
  - Enrolled six families by October





# Where We Are Today

- Ten cases enrolled – actively recruiting!
- Community collaboration and involvement
  - Training for professionals
  - Community partnerships for families
- Parents Interacting With Infants\* - facilitated playgroups
- Caring for Children Who Have Been Traumatized – NCTSN\*\*
  - Parent/foster parent workshop
- Tracking outcomes
  - Time to permanency, number of placements, re-entering of cases into CPS, SE competency\*\*, parent-child interaction\*\*, pre and post parental surveys\*\*

\*Summer 2017

\*\*Will be initiated by Fall 2017

# National Baby Court Outcomes

- Children involved in baby courts exit foster care nearly 3Xs faster than comparison groups
- Almost 2/3 find permanent homes with family while only 1/3 of babies in general population exit foster care to family members
  - Reunification 38% - National average 29%
  - Adoption 15% - National average 41%
- Estimated cost savings per child - \$7,300
- Rate of reentry reduced significantly
  - 99% reduction recurrence of maltreatment
- Improved child well-being
- Increased placement stability

# JONESHA'S STORY

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