

Children's Community Charter School

1st Grade

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Symptoms of Trauma:

Personality changes - The personality changes started occurring close to 3 months after the traumatic event. Social butterflies became quiet and disengaged (stare off into space); mild-tempered students have outbursts over seemingly trivial events (crayon breaking, computer turning off, etc.); students started taking food from the teacher's cabinets and the overflow lunch bins throughout the day to put in their backpacks "just in case" and will eat every chance they get; refusing to wear underwear; recurring nightmares (reported by multiple parents); fear of loud noises; many "what if" questions

Sickness and exhaustion - all students in the class have been sick with cold and flu-like symptoms 3-5 times from November to February; March was a healthier month; students are more likely to come to school exhausted and some fall asleep in class; students had dark circles under their eyes until around March (some still do) doctors report that students are in good health when they get check-ups; certain students have shown an increase in medical/emotional attention (hurt tummy/skinned knee/mosquito bite results in a need for attention from teacher/trusted adult)

Retention and memory - writing numbers and letters horizontally (an 8 is written as an infinity sign); misspelling their own names for the first two weeks back at school after traumatic event; not recognizing spelling words from the previous week; not remembering +, -, or = signs; unable to put a simple sentence structure together during a guided writing activity (e.g. writes, "Next.they Then flyiny invented.the first airplane.")

Trauma talk - students casually chit chat about the traumatic event while working on a simple task by simply stating matter-of-fact things that happened ("My mom was screaming in the fire") and then they immediately get back on task; students recount almost daily about the animals they lost in the traumatic event; some students have become fixated on the animal they lost (writes the name of her animal over and over almost daily on pieces of paper to cope with the loss of her pet, pretends to be their lost pet during playtime); students will call themselves "victims" and will talk about the ways they have been victimized

Needs of the students:

- Small class sizes (temporarily)
- High quality and ongoing trauma training for the teachers
- Child psychologists that the teachers can reach out to for advice
- Free and reduced lunch/breakfast
- Some flexibility in academic performance for 1-2 years (long term plan)

Accommodations in Class:

Self regulation -

- Emotions are identified via books, Emotional ABCs; *Tribes* activities, IsraAid activities, etc.
- Integration of Emotional ABCs online curriculum
- Students are introduced to 3 new coping strategies for anger or anxiety weekly
 - students are able to choose 1 of the 3 strategies to practice during the week at any time when they are feeling angry or anxious
 - the 3 strategies are a combination of: art, physical activity, reading, or writing
- Two class stuffed animals have been introduced as a comfort source through role play
 - The stuffed animals have been named Rosy and Fennec and given personalities by the students
 - “If you give them permission to, they can listen to your worries”
 - Students think-talk to the animals while they hug them
 - Students will hug a stuffed animal if frustrated with a problem, miss their parents/pet, or are upset with another student
 - Students will bring an upset classmate one of the stuffed animals to hug
- Teacher will encourage students to verbalize or draw their worries after disruptive outbursts
- Class meetings held every Friday
 - Socio-emotional lesson with verbal and/or visual reflection
 - Each student pays a compliment to another student, parent, friend, etc.

Prevention -

- Our daily schedule is addressed each morning and daily routines don't change
- Food is always available to the students
- Students are still held accountable to their behavior and putting forth effort
- When the majority of students are “glossed over” or just having a bad day the teacher will change the lesson plans to allow them to exercise outside, paint to music, do an outside scavenger hunt, “healthy play” games, etc.
- Physical activity inside or outside every day
 - Pilates, dance, speed walk/jog, competitive (but facilitated) and non-competitive cardiovascular games
 - Healthy Play Rules: 1. We play for fun 2. If someone gets hurt, the person nearest to them must take them out of the game and assist them until they're ready to rejoin the game 3. If you have a disagreement with someone you must resolve it with them outside of the game
- Calming piano music is played as background music throughout each day
- Safety drills were practiced with only the class and no sound for two weeks. Followed by a whole school practice drill (alert via walkie talkie). The following week the whole school practiced with a short alarm (Rosy and Fennec joined us). Two weeks following the

whole school participated in a regular safety drill. Safety Drill is put on the class schedule and mentioned the day it is going to occur.