



**Young children between the ages of 0 and 5 are the most vulnerable to the effects of life-changing trauma.**

### Common Causes of Trauma

- Accidents
- Physical trauma
- Abuse and neglect
- Exposure to domestic violence
- Community violence

For infants, even repeated loud noises or sudden, violent movements can lead to toxic stress. Any situation which makes a child feel unsafe can lead to trauma. Infants and toddlers need lots of comforting touch and adult attention to help them feel safe.

### Common Signs of Trauma

- Irritability
- Fussiness
- Being easily startled
- Difficulty calming the child down
- Frequent tantrums
- Clinginess and/or a reluctance to explore the world
- Repeating traumatic events over and over again in play or conversation
- Delays in reaching developmental milestones
- Loss or regression in skills

### Ways to Prevent Trauma

Use words, touch, and attention to help your young child feel safe.

Help your child build resiliency by giving them the comfort and explanations that allow them to deal with, and learn from, the everyday stresses associated with growing up.

When they experience something stressful, let them know:

- They are not alone
- They are not to blame
- You'll keep them safe

### If You See Signs of Stress

- Offer verbal and physical reassurance
- Help them feel safe and secure
- Answer their questions in simple language
- Stick to regular routines/schedules
- Help them find the words to express their feelings
- Do more to make them feel relaxed and have fun
- Be consistent about boundaries and limits
- Be loving and affectionate

**If you believe your child is experiencing trauma, be sure to seek out professionals with specific experience working with children between the ages of 0 and 5.**  
**Learn more and find help at [www.LookThroughTheirEyes.org](http://www.LookThroughTheirEyes.org)**

**LOOK THROUGH THEIR EYES**  
*and Listen With Your Heart* ❤️



Though there are many causes of childhood trauma and many signs to look for, just remember that you know your child's behavior best and can recognize changes that may mean something's wrong. You'll know when their behaviors don't feel normal.

Remember to

# LOOK THROUGH THEIR EYES *and Listen With Your Heart* ❤️

Nearly 35 million children nationally have experienced one or more types of childhood trauma.

Learn about childhood trauma  
and find help at  
[www.LookThroughTheirEyes.org](http://www.LookThroughTheirEyes.org)

 Illinois childhood trauma coalition

 Governor's Office of  
Early Childhood Development

 bright promises FOUNDATION  
give kids a chance

 VOICES  
FOR ILLINOIS CHILDREN

ROBERT R.  
McCORMICK  
FOUNDATION

Traumatic events can affect a child at any age and create life-long problems. But young children and babies often can't express what they are feeling, so...



The world looks different through their eyes. If you're concerned about your child, remember to **LOOK:**

**Learn**  
the signs

**Observe**  
changes in behavior

**Overcome**  
their fears

**Know**  
where to turn

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