Parenting Toolkit for Harder to Parent Kids
Outline

- Why are some kids harder to parent and why especially are kids who have experience trauma, including prenatal trauma, often harder to parent?
- Understanding the cause of the behavior is the root of parenting harder to parent kids.
- Establish the basics to make their lives predictable so they can feel safe and grow and heal. The elements for establishing this base:
    1. Routines- may be judged by others
    2. Establish yourself as a safe base-empathetic and nurturing but in control
        i. Engine with train behind and avoiding jumping the track
        ii. Respond to the child, not to the child's demand
    3. Be honest about their story, contact, etc. – be factual, but don't fill in the gaps
    4. Establish strong, clear boundaries- what to do when these boundaries are crossed?
    5. Use natural or life consequences
        - Our kids may not recognize cause and effect.
            - Early trauma, including prenatal exposure, can hinder a child's ability to recognize cause and effect
            - Our kids may be developmentally younger than their chronological years which also impacts understanding.
        - Natural consequences help children recognize that they can make an impact on the world-helps them make sense of the world
        - Combine natural consequences with nurturance.
- How to handle incidents when they happen. PARENTS model.
    - Pause-to allow you to respond with intention not emotion.
    - Assess-is anyone in danger or serious damage.
    - Reflection-quick reflection to identify the trigger.
    - Empathize rather than ask questions
        - use empathetic commentary-
        - respond to their feelings rather than the behavior.
        - Examples of language to use.
    - Nurture-examples of nurturing in the heat of the moment.
    - Think about next action to take.
        - What strategies might I use to resolve this? Do you need to do anything else?
        - How can we avoid this situation in the future?
    - Self-care
- Example of this model in action.
- Other parenting strategies for harder to parent kids. Other tools for your toolkit.
    - Identify your triggers.
    - Set realistic expectations.

- Use silliness or playfulness.
- Remove the audience.
- Help kids show they are sorry rather than demand they say they are sorry.
- The phone strategy.
- Watch what the child is doing rather than what she is saying.
- Payback time.
- Admit it when you made a mistake.