

Trauma Informed Practice Strategies (T.I.P.S.) for Law Enforcement

As much as is safe and possible, do the following:

1. Plan investigations, assessments, possible removals ahead as much as possible; reduce the element of surprise.
 - Slow down, plan out investigations and removals with Child Protective Services with the intent of minimizing trauma to the children.
 - Collaborate with other agencies, especially Child Protective Services.
Examples:
 - In Multnomah County the Child Abuse Team police detectives are housed in the same building as the child abuse hotline.
 - In Salem, caseworkers work in partnership with DART (Drug Activity Response Team) officers investigating drug houses.
 - Establish rapport with other first responders. Promote dialogue between law enforcement and child welfare about clarifying roles and expectations.

2. When responding to a CPS, domestic violence, or drug activity call where children are present,
 - Remain calm. Move slowly.
 - Talk down the parents. Calm the parents to calm the child.
 - If possible, avoid interrogating parents in a child's presence.
 - If possible, avoid making an arrest in a child's presence.
 - Keep children with known adults. Identify someone at the scene who can focus on and take care of them, perhaps take them to another room. Call CPS if they aren't there or haven't yet been contacted.
 - Don't talk badly about a parent in the child's presence.
 - Introduce yourself and describe your role in simple terms to the child.
 - Be physically at the child's level when talking to them.

3. Engage the parent in helping the child.

- Help the parents to consider and focus on the child's well-being. Ask them how their child looks to them, how they think they are doing.
- When possible, allow the parent to talk to the child to reassure them.
- If the child is being removed, allow the parent to gather together some of the child's belongings and to say good-bye.