



SUMMER SAMITY

Parent Companion PDF



for kinship foster &
adoptive parents,

FOSTERING HOPE™

CONTENTS



- 01 Surviving Summer:
Why Structure Still Matters
- 02 From Power Struggles to
Peaceful Moments
- 03 The Power of Play:
Connecting on Purpose
- 04 Big Behaviors & Tiny Clues
- 05 Correction That Connects
- 06 Sibling Stress & Shared Spaces
- 07 When “Fun” Feels Like Too Much
- 08 Summer Reset & Fall Prep

OUR TEAM



JOE STRYCHALSKI

Executive Director

Joe brings 20 years of leadership in child welfare. He and his wife, Carol, adopted through foster care and share a deep passion for child advocacy.



JOSH OWEN

Director of Programs

Josh, a TBRI® Practitioner and adoptee, equips churches in foster care ministry. He and his wife parent five kids and love the outdoors.



KIM HOLTZCLAW

Regional Coordinator

Kim is a foster/adoptive mom, former CASA, and church ministry leader who equips others to care for children from hard places with wisdom and empathy.



PATTY MADDEN

Babysitting Administrator

Patty, a longtime foster parent and adoptive mom, leads our Babysitting Program, equipping caregivers and building strong support networks for families.

FOSTERING HOPE™



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PROGRAM MANAGER

Dear Parents!

Summer can be both a beautiful opportunity and an overwhelming challenge—especially for those of us raising children who've experienced loss, trauma, separation or transition. The goal of this guide is to help you move from surviving to intentional connection using tools from TBRI®: Trust-Based Relational Intervention®.

This companion follows the weekly "Summer Sanity Series" Fostering Hope will be posting about throughout the summer on our social media pages. We will offer bite-sized strategies, reflection prompts, and simple tools to care for your child—and yourself.

We see you. You're doing holy work. I'm cheering you on!

*With Hope & Grace,
Jordan Hope Vera
TBRI® Practitioner & Foster/Adoptive Mom*

What is TBRI®?

TBRI® (Trust-Based Relational Intervention®) is a trauma-informed model of care developed by Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross. It helps caregivers respond to children's needs in ways that build trust, strengthen connection, and teach new skills.

Connect: Build attachment through trust and presence

Empower: Help regulate the body and brain

Correct: Teach social and behavioral skills through nurturing guidance



SURVIVING SUMMER: WHY STRUCTURE STILL MATTERS

Predictability builds safety.



FOSTERING HOPE™

REFLECTION PROMPT:

What time of day is most chaotic in your home?

I know summer can feel like a whirlwind—especially when your calendar disappears but your kids' needs don't. Structure isn't about being rigid; it's about helping our kids feel safe when everything else feels uncertain. You don't have to get it perfect—just predictable.

CONNECTING PRINCIPLE

Stay Calm. See Clearly. Respond Wisely.

Establish a shared morning or evening ritual to start your day with connection before chaos.

EMPOWERING TIP

Hydration & Nutrition are important!

Keep a snack/water break planned at least every 2 hours. Use a visual schedule (pictures for littles, whiteboard/calendar for bigs)

CORRECTING TIP

What are your family's Life Value Terms?

Can you come up with a list together? Use them to practice "do-overs" for transition struggles



TIPS FOR APPLYING TBR1® ACROSS AGES AND STAGES

FOR THE LITTLES

Young children thrive on routine, and transitions are much easier when they know what's coming. Using songs or hand motions helps them internalize cues in a fun and calming way.

- Sing a "clean-up" song when transitioning from play to meals.
- Use a goodbye wave or phrase ("See you soon, raccoon!") before nap or quiet time.
- Clap out a rhythm and have them repeat it before moving to the next activity.

FOR THE BIGS

Older kids crave autonomy, so giving them ownership of their routines boosts cooperation. A simple structure with a couple of non-negotiables helps reduce resistance.

- Let them design their own daily planner or decorate a whiteboard calendar.
- Choose two fixed daily expectations, like "1 chore" and "30 min of reading," and let them pick when they do them.
- Involve them in planning the week with a Sunday night "what's ahead" session.



FROM POWER STRUGGLES TO PEACEFUL MOMENTS

Regulated kids = less reactive kids.



FOSTERING HOPE™

REFLECTION PROMPT:

What behaviors seem linked to sleep, hunger, or sensory needs?

Power struggles usually show up when someone doesn't feel seen, safe, or in control. This week, give yourself permission to slow down and ask: "What does my child need right now?" Your calm presence in those moments is more powerful than the loudest tantrum.

CONNECTING PRINCIPLE

What do I bring to the table? (Mindfulness)

What might I be bringing into the day that I can be aware of? Offer snuggles or presence before correcting behavior.

EMPOWERING PRINCIPLE

How did my child/teen sleep?

Offer a rest or nap time ... no matter what age!

Keep snacks, water, and breaks consistent

CORRECTING PRINCIPLE

Remember the IDEAL Response: (I)mmediate, (D)irect, (E)fficient, (A)ction-Based & (L)eveled at the Behavior NOT the Child.

Reframe tantrums as dysregulation, not defiance



TIPS FOR APPLYING TBR1® ACROSS AGES AND STAGES

FOR THE LITTLES

Toddlers and preschoolers can't tell you when they're running low, but their bodies will. Building "power-up" moments into your day keeps them regulated.

- Offer a protein-rich snack every 2–3 hours, like cheese sticks or apple slices with nut butter.
- Schedule a 10-minute movement break between activities (jumping, dancing, crawling).
- Have a "calm-down corner" with cozy items like a soft blanket, stuffed animal, or chew toy.

FOR THE BIGS

Help older children connect the dots between their body and their behavior. When they notice how food, sleep, and stress affect them, they can start to take ownership.

- Ask reflection questions like, "How did skipping lunch affect your mood?"
- Create a simple self-check chart or engine plate: green (good), yellow (off), red (overwhelmed).
- Encourage journaling or using a mood app to track how basic needs affect their day.



THE POWER OF PLAY: CONNECTING ON PURPOSE

Play builds trust faster than words.



FOSTERING HOPE™

REFLECTION PROMPT:

What's one playful moment your child still talks about?

Play is our superpower. When words aren't working, laughter and connection can speak louder than correction. It might feel silly or small, but those moments on the floor—or doing something they love—are the building blocks of trust and healing.

CONNECTING PRINCIPLE

Stay Curious (Not Furious).

Spend 10 minutes in 1:1 "yes play" daily.

Connection can help US regulate throughout the day too.

EMPOWERING PRINCIPLE

Is your child getting vestibular input?

Too much or too little can lead to meltdowns.

Use playful voice tones to redirect minor misbehavior

CORRECTING PRINCIPLE

Meet behaviors with the appropriate Levels of Response (LOR).

Once calm, use role play to practice new skills & re-dos for both you & your kids. Always return to playful engagement.



TIPS FOR APPLYING TBR1® ACROSS AGES AND STAGES

FOR THE LITTLES

Play is how young kids process the world. Getting on their level and matching their energy builds trust and connection.

- Narrate their play like a sportscaster: “You’re stacking the red block on the blue!”
- Join in their pretend play without taking over—be the dinosaur or the chef when invited.
- Use puppets or stuffed animals to model kind words or behavior.

FOR THE BIGS

Play looks different for older kids, but it’s just as powerful. Entering their world—even briefly—shows you care about what matters to them.

- Sit and watch them game, asking questions instead of offering advice.
- Invite them to teach you something they’re good at, like drawing or sports.
- Create “hang-out time” with no agenda—just music, snacks, and space to be together.



BIG BEHAVIORS & TINY CLUES

All behavior is communication.



FOSTERING HOPE™

REFLECTION PROMPT:

What might your child be trying to tell you with their hardest behavior?

Sometimes the hardest behaviors are actually quiet cries for help. This week, lean into curiosity over control. You don't have to solve every mystery right away—just staying close and wondering out loud is already a step toward healing.

CONNECTING PRINCIPLE

Use Valuing Eye Contact to communicate compassion & curiosity, not intimidation.

Stay curious—"I wonder if you're feeling scared right now?"

EMPOWERING PRINCIPLE

Is your child getting proprioceptive input?

Watch for signs of stress or hunger before behavior escalates. Adding in some deep pressure (bear hugs, lifting weights, etc.) can help regulate.

CORRECTING PRINCIPLE

"Don't go after a gnat with an elephant gun." - Dr. Karyn Purvis (Levels of Response)

When we don't respond well, we can debrief calmly after—"What do you wish I had known in that moment?"



TIPS FOR APPLYING TBR1® ACROSS AGES AND STAGES

FOR THE LITTLES

Little ones often act out when they don't have words for what they feel. Help them name emotions and find safe ways to express them.

- Say aloud, "It looks like you're frustrated—let's stomp it out together."
- Use emotion flashcards or mirrors to explore facial expressions.
- Offer choices: "Do you want to yell into a pillow or squeeze your squishy ball?"

FOR THE BIGS

Teens and tweens need to feel heard before they'll open up. Reflecting after conflict helps them learn without shame.

- Ask, "What were you needing when that happened?" instead of "Why did you do that?"
- Use a shared journal to write notes back and forth when emotions are high.
- Normalize hard feelings by sharing your own stories of stress or struggle (age-appropriately).



CORRECTION THAT CONNECTS

*Discipline is teaching,
not punishing.*



FOSTERING HOPE™

REFLECTION PROMPT:

Do your corrections help your child feel safe and seen—or shamed and scared?

Correcting with connection doesn't mean we avoid hard conversations—it means we do them with compassion. You're not just shaping behavior; you're shaping how your child sees themselves when they make mistakes. That's powerful work.

CONNECTING PRINCIPLE

Incorporate Healthy Touch into connecting moments with littles & bigs!

Physical touch can help us both feel & stay emotionally present, even when giving consequences

EMPOWERING PRINCIPLE

Establish family routines & rituals.

This can offer connection & offer regulation support before discipline (deep breaths, walk it off)

CORRECTING PRINCIPLE

Offer Choices & Compromises.

Re-dos, Choices & Compromises can keep us moving in connection to changed behavior.



TIPS FOR APPLYING TBR1® ACROSS AGES AND STAGES

FOR THE LITTLES

Kids learn best through do-overs, not discipline. Keeping your tone kind and your body language calm makes correction a teaching moment.

- Gently model: “Oops, let’s try that again with kind hands.”
- Practice redirection: “Blocks aren’t for throwing—let’s throw these soft balls instead.”
- Use a “re-do rug” or “try again” space in your home for practicing skills safely.

FOR THE BIGS

Older children need correction that protects their dignity. Avoid sarcasm or lectures and focus on real-world consequences tied to the behavior.

- Replace “You’re always on your phone!” with, “Let’s talk about how screen time affects your sleep.”
- Use natural consequences like repairing what was broken or writing an apology.
- Debrief later: “What was going on, and how can we do better next time?”



SIBLING STRESS & SHARED SPACES

Competition and conflict can trigger survival responses.



REFLECTION PROMPT:

How do your kids react when they have to share your time or space?

When kids compete for your attention, it's not because you're failing—it's because you matter so much to them. This week, find little ways to speak to each child's unique worth. Even 5 minutes of undivided attention can go a long way in helping them feel secure.

CONNECTING PRINCIPLE

Practice your Tone, Volume & Cadence (TVC) proactively, not just reactively.

Create 1:1 moments for each child weekly & notice your TVC while in play.

EMPOWERING PRINCIPLE

What's happening around your child?

External input can be overwhelming. Build quiet spaces for retreat

CORRECTING PRINCIPLE

Connection is the biggest tool in correction.

The more time you spend connecting, the less need for correcting. Coach them in empathy and conflict resolution—practice calm scripts



TIPS FOR APPLYING TBR1® ACROSS AGES AND STAGES

FOR THE LITTLES

Young children often need help taking turns and managing jealousy. Visual aids and time limits help make sharing more fair and predictable.

- Use a kitchen timer for turn-taking with toys.
- Make a picture schedule showing when each child gets one-on-one time.
- Praise cooperative moments out loud: "You shared your truck! That was kind."

FOR THE BIGS

Older kids crave independence but still need help navigating shared spaces and emotional boundaries. Respect their space and guide conflict with empathy.

- Give them a private space (even a corner with a curtain or tent) that's just for them.
- Talk through conflicts one-on-one after emotions have cooled.
- Teach "I" statements for conflict: "I feel ___ when you ___ because ___."



WHEN "FUN" FEELS LIKE TOO MUCH

Overstimulation can look like defiance.



REFLECTION PROMPT:

What's one summer activity that seems to overwhelm your child?

Even the "fun" stuff can be overwhelming for kids with trauma. It doesn't mean they're ungrateful—it means their nervous systems are doing what they were wired to do: survive. You're not doing it wrong. You're doing your best. You're learning each other.

CONNECTING PRINCIPLE

Playful Interactions.

Plan some "play" throughout your day. Preview what's coming ("We'll be at the pool for 1 hour, then home.")

EMPOWERING PRINCIPLE

Transitions can be hard.

Talk early & often. Have a transition plan for switching activities. Pack snacks, headphones, and sensory tools for outings.

CORRECTING PRINCIPLE

Re-dos give us all a do-over!

Exit calmly, then reflect later when everyone's regulated & give them the chance to "try it again!"



TIPS FOR APPLYING TBR1® ACROSS AGES AND STAGES

FOR THE LITTLES

What looks fun to us can feel overwhelming to little ones. Preparing in advance lowers anxiety and gives them tools to cope.

- Read a social story before going to a new place (library, pool, family gathering).
- Role play how to ask for a break or hold your hand when it gets loud.
- Use noise-reducing headphones or sunglasses to reduce sensory overload.

FOR THE BIGS

Tweens and teens may not show it, but overstimulation still affects them. Giving them a say in what they participate in—and how long—builds trust.

- Let them opt out of certain parts of outings (e.g., skip the group photo).
- Schedule quiet downtime before and after big events.
- Talk openly: “What part of this weekend sounds hard for you?”



SUMMER RESET & FALL PREP

*Transitions are easier when we
prepare emotionally.*



FOSTERING HOPE™

REFLECTION PROMPT:

What do you want to carry into the school year—and what do you want to leave behind?

You made it through the summer—and hopefully found a few sweet moments in the chaos. As you look ahead, remember: your family doesn't need a perfect fall. They just need a connected, present you. You're already enough.

CONNECTING PRINCIPLE

Connect through Behavioral Matching.

What are some ways we can connect through things our children like. Reflect on summer memories together

EMPOWERING PRINCIPLE

Transitions can be bigger than daily - don't forget life transitions, holidays & schedule changes.

Create a transition countdown with visuals or checklists

CORRECTING PRINCIPLE

Offer opportunities for Voice & Choice.

Give the both where areas of control are shareable. Role play new routines before school starts.



TIPS FOR APPLYING TBR1® ACROSS AGES AND STAGES

FOR THE LITTLES

Transitions are smoother when they're visual and hands-on. Give your little one opportunities to anticipate what's next with joy.

- Read books about going back to school or making new friends.
- Let them decorate their backpack or lunchbox.
- Create a countdown chain with paper links—remove one each day until school starts.

FOR THE BIGS

Older kids do best when they feel ownership of change. Let them lead in designing routines that support success.

- Invite them to create their own morning and evening checklist.
- Set up a "launch pad" by the door for keys, shoes, and school supplies.
- Reflect together: "What's one thing that worked this summer we want to keep?"



CONTACT US

info@iamfosteringhope.org

13300 Pond Springs Rd.

Austin, TX 78729

(512) 953-3421

www.iamfosteringhope.org

