

---

# A Bottom-Up Approach to Supporting Reasoning Skills

## INSTRUCTIONS

This handout was designed for use with the infographic, “The Three R’s: Reaching the Learning Brain,” from Beacon House. The questions and activities in this handout could be used in a work session (e.g., professional learning community, professional development session), for individual coaching, or for self-reflection.

## Goals

- ◆ Understand how to best support a young child who has experienced trauma using the three R’s to support their reasoning skills.
- ◆ Reflect upon your current practices and the ways you support children’s reasoning skills.
- ◆ Create an action plan to provide effective intervention to support the reasoning skills of the young children in your care who have experienced trauma.

## Activity

- ◆ Read the infographic.
- ◆ Young children who have experienced trauma may be in a state of dysregulation (e.g., fight/flight/freeze response that impacts their behaviors and emotions). After reading, use the questions below to guide your discussion and action plan.
- ◆ Implement your plan and adjust as needed to support reasoning skills.

---

**...to help a vulnerable child to learn, think, and reflect, we need to intervene in a simple sequence.**

**Beacon House**

---

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- ◆ What caught your attention from the infographic? What made that fact, excerpt, or example meaningful to you?
  
- ◆ This infographic highlights the three R's that help adults to support children's learning: Regulate, Relate, and Reason. Additional information on this learning process can be found in the additional resource, "Meeting Children Where They Are: The Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics," and may further support your discussion and action planning (find a link on page 3 of this guide).
  - How might dysregulation impact a child's ability to reason?
  - When providing support, educators may attempt to reason with children before addressing their dysregulation. How might a child respond to reasoning while dysregulated?
  - How might taking a bottom-up approach (i.e., supporting a child to regulate and relate *before* engaging in reasoning) support a child's thinking and reasoning skills?
  
- ◆ Reflect upon your current practices to support children's reasoning. Consider an interaction with a child who was dysregulated as a result of trauma.
  - How did you respond to the child? Did you engage in a bottom-up approach or top-down approach?
  - How did the child respond to your approach? What emotions, behaviors, and reasoning skills did they display?
  - What challenges arose during the interaction? What supports might be helpful to support children's reasoning in the future?
  
- ◆ Develop an action plan to engage in a bottom-up intervention to best support the reasoning skills of the children in your care who have experienced trauma. Consider how you will:
  - Support the child to regulate.
    - What strategies will you use to help the child regulate? Examples include a hug, a quiet space, positive talk, soothing music, or a preferred activity.
  - Relate to the child.
    - How will you engage in a responsive and caring interaction?
  - Engage in reasoning.
    - What supports will you provide to help the child reason and understand the event or experience? You might consider narrating reasoning and curiosity, asking open-ended questions, and prompting explanations.
  - Carefully monitor children's progress and modify your supports as needed.