

Franklin County Family and Children First Council (FC³)

Brain Based Pillar

“Neuroscience” (Brain-based Trauma-Informed Care)

All of our thoughts, feelings, emotions and behaviors are controlled by our brain in some way. Our goal is to increase our understanding of brain science and apply basic concepts to our work. Everyone has a brain, of course, so that means applying concepts to our work with children and families, parents and caregivers, coworkers and supervisors, and most importantly ourselves!

The NeuroSequential Model is a way to frame and describe some basic concepts of brain science. As a model, it is not meant to be an exact description, but some basic ideas are applicable in nearly every situation.

Two of the primary framing concepts include The Sequence of Engagement and the 6Rs.

Regulate → Relate → Reason (the Sequence of Engagement)

The brain processes information and regulates from the bottom up. Therefore, everyone’s brain has to be regulated first before building relationships and then getting to “reason.” For our work with children and families, this means that the first and most important step is to ensure that everyone feels safe and regulated! Paying attention to movement, physical needs and space, and overall safety are generally guidelines for regulation.

Building safe relationships includes things like using familiar language and meeting clients and families where they are (physically and emotionally). Co-regulation is an important step in establishing safe relationships. Following the sequence of engagement typically leads to stronger relational connections.

After ensuring that everyone is regulated and relationally safe, then our brains can fully reason. It might be hard to believe, but unless we follow the sequence of engagement, any “thinking” that we do will be less than optimal, unproductive, and quickly forgotten. It might seem to take more time at first but saves time in the end!

Following the sequence of engagement is important in our work with children and families, but also important when we engage with coworkers and partners in the community. We can go terribly wrong if we try to start with Reason, but we can never go wrong starting with Regulation!

The 6Rs

The NeuroSequential Model describes how the brain is structured and functions. Applying these concepts to practical ways of structuring daily interactions can be summarized in the “6 Rs.” The more intentional we can be about including the 6 R’s in *every* interaction (education, training, therapy, family setting, preschool, courtroom, team meetings, etc.) the more “brain-

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friendly” it will be. Each of the 6R’s highlights a different aspect of how our brains regulate and develop.

- **Rhythm** – Activities that are predictable, patterned, structured and include movement
- **Repetition** – Activities that are repeated and practiced
- **Relationship** – Activities that nurture safe and support relationships
- **Relevance** – Activities that meet the developmental (not chronological) age of a person
- **Reward** – Activities that are fun and that you want to do again
- **Respect** – Activities that recognize and value the culture, values and beliefs of a person

Every individual regulates in different ways, and so the 6Rs can be adjusted and “fine-tuned” for each individual. Like ingredients in a recipe, there is no single perfect “formula,” but the 6Rs can be tailored to the preference of each person or family. The key is to be aware of how we are including the 6Rs in every interaction and learning experience.