

THE CHILDRESS INSTITUTE

DEVELOPMENTALLY SUPPORTIVE PARENTING & CO-PARENTING
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THE CHILDRESS INSTITUTE: Mission Statement

To use the latest scientific knowledge in the fields of child development and the healthy neuro-development of the brain during childhood to create solutions for the social, emotional, and psychological challenges facing children and their families.

CURRENT FOCUS: Parental Alienation in High-Conflict Divorce

Creating the solution to the family pathology of “parental alienation” in high-conflict divorce by providing training and Certification to mental health and legal professionals in an attachment-based model of “parental alienation” (AB-PA).

FUTURE PROJECTS & DIRECTIONS:

The Terrorist Mind & the Extremism of Pathological Anger:

Developing an attachment-based understanding of the terrorist mind, pathological hatred, and fanatical extremism, with the goal of developing primary and secondary treatment interventions to resolve the social and psychological attachment-related trauma pathology that creates the terrorist mind and the extremism of pathological anger.

Developmentally Supportive Parenting, ADHD, and Foster Parenting:

Providing education and training in developmentally supportive parenting for all parents and all families, with a special focus on providing education and training in relationship-based parenting that can effectively resolve the symptoms of attention deficits, impulsivity, and hyperactive behavior in children through non-medication relationship-based parenting approaches. Incorporate the latest scientific advances in child development and the socio-developmental role of parenting into providing parent training and education support for foster parents.

Redeveloping Education Infrastructure:

Providing conceptual leadership in developing a model for foundationally reformulating the educational approach for children in the United States away from the current 12th Century “Cathedral School” model toward a 22nd Century education model based in the current scientific research on child development, the scientific research on childhood learning, and the now-available advances in the full-range of supportive information technologies and media.

Reduction of Prison Recidivism:

Intervention development and research into catalytic change models for reducing the trauma-impacted mindset that leads to recidivism in released prisoners and juvenile offenders.

DESCRIPTION OF FUTURE PROJECTS & DIRECTIONS:

PROJECT: The Terrorist Mind

The loving bond (attachment) established between a parent and child is the foundation for the healthy emotional and psychological maturation of the child. Through the parent-child attachment bond, the authentic empathy shown by the parent for the child's psychological experience is fundamental to psychologically creating the child's self-experience as a psychological entity.

Psychological damage that occurs within the parent-child attachment bond can create lifelong psychological injuries that will manifest as subtle personality pathology in love and bonding, particularly in the later adult's bonding within the human community and the capacity for empathy. Psychological trauma within the love and bonding systems of the brain leaves a lasting imprint in pathologies of love and human relationship.

The attachment system¹ is the brain system that governs all aspects of love and bonding throughout the lifespan, including grief and loss. Attachment-related trauma during childhood will be reflected in pathologies of deficient empathy in which grief and sadness are unable to be effectively metabolized and instead become translated into disorders of pathological anger (such as the multi-faceted aspects of pathological racism, violent misogyny, antisemitism, and terrorism).

Four primary emotional networks (anger, sadness, anxiety, and happiness) serve as regulatory systems in organizing the response of the organism to the environment. The healthy functioning of each of these emotional-regulatory systems allows for the organism to develop flexibly adaptive responses to a full range of environmental challenges. However, pathological disruptions can occur in any of these four emotional systems leading to dysregulated emotional states, such as panic attacks and phobias reflecting pathology in the fear-anxiety system, depression and suicide as pathology of the brain's sadness emotional networks, and manic elevations in mood and behavior as disorders of the happy-joyful networks of the emotion systems.

While pathologies within the anxious, sad, and pleasure emotional networks of the brain have been identified and studied, the pathologies within the anger networks of the brain have yet to be described in psychiatric diagnostic systems, which has led to a fragmented and incomplete understanding of disorders of pathological anger, such as violent pathological racism and antisemitism, rape and hostile-violent misogyny toward women, and the violence of terrorism.

¹ Bowlby, J. (1969). Attachment and loss. Vol. 1. Attachment. NY: Basic Books.

Bowlby, J. (1973). Attachment and loss: Vol. 2. Separation: Anxiety and anger. NY: Basic Books.

Bowlby, J. (1980). Attachment and loss: Vol. 3. Loss: Sadness and depression. NY: Basic Books.

The work of Dr. Childress in identifying and exposing the damaged information structures of the attachment system (the love and bonding system of the brain) that lead to pathologies that have been described as the “the core of evil” (the Dark Triad personality; Book & Visser, 2015)² as manifested in family relationships, has opened the door to a more advanced understanding for development of pathologies of anger and hatred across a spectrum of manifestations, from terrorism, to antisemitism, to violent misogyny, as representing attachment-related damage to a select set of information structures within the love and bonding system of the brain. Building on the work of Dr. Childress in exposing the trans-generational transmission of attachment trauma in damaged information structures in the attachment system of the brain, *The Childress Institute* plans to extend the exploration of childhood attachment trauma into additional manifestations of pathological anger, specifically the attachment trauma that creates the terrorist mind of profoundly failed empathy and deep psychological alienation.

In his work exposing the attachment-related pathogenic structure of “parental alienation” in high-conflict divorce, Dr. Childress identified the core attachment trauma structure as an incest pathogen moving through the attachment-system across generations, with the pathology of “parental alienation” representing a second or sometimes third generational iteration of the incest (sexual abuse) damaged information structures in the attachment system. Based on his initial analysis of the damaged information structures surrounding pathologies of hatred and violence, damage from profound psychological neglect and possibly a trans-generational incest pathogen appears to be a prominent feature in creating the pathogenic structure of the terrorist mind. Profound psychological neglect alone does not appear capable of fully creating the psychopathology of pathological violence and hatred, and the structures of the incest (sexual abuse) pathogen appear to be evident in the attachment system displays of pathological anger and hatred (violent pathological racism and antisemitism, rape and violent misogyny, and terrorism).

The Childress Institute intends to open a research and intervention development division to identify the core damaged pathogenic structures in the attachment networks of the brain (the love and bonding system of the brain) that are responsible for the development and expression of pathological anger, with the goal of then developing interventions designed recover and restore the normal-range functioning of the damaged information structures of the attachment system that lead to the profound failure of empathy and profound psychological alienation associated with the pathologies of hatred and violence.

Preliminary analysis of the pathogenic attachment structures of the terrorist mind suggest that enhanced interrogation techniques (such as waterboarding) would have the effect of unlocking the cooperation of the terrorist pathogen through the assertion of dominance and the violent induction of psychological submission (a key information structure expressed by the

² Book, A., Visser, B.A., and Volk, A.A. (2015). Unpacking “evil”: Claiming the core of the Dark Triad. *Personality and Individual Differences* 73 (2015) 29–38.

pathological anger pathogen). However, enhanced interrogation techniques are in themselves psychologically violent and are therefore deemed morally repugnant to the collective majority of people with healthy attachment systems, and enhanced interrogation techniques would continue and reinforce the damaged information structures of the terrorist mind pathogen rather than treat and release the damage from the attachment networks of the terrorist mind.

Moral imperatives require that we never use people as a means to an end. As much as information may be desired from another person, employing techniques of violence to psychologically dominate and create psychological submission of the other person is morally unacceptable. An alternative approach to unlocking the attachment-related pathology of the terrorist mind is needed that restores the healthy functioning of the attachment systems of the brain, thereby leading to the voluntary cooperation of the person in our efforts to create a healthy human society.

The Childress Institute will lead this effort to understand, treat, recover, and restore the healthy attachment networks of the brain that will unlock the pathogenic structures of the terrorist mind and pathological anger, restoring healthy human empathy and recovering the person from the profound psychological alienation imposed by the pathogen of pathological anger.

PROJECT: Developmentally Supportive Parenting & Psychotherapy

In the 1940s, psychologists conducted research on behavior modification with lab animals in which the principles of behavioral change using schedules of reinforcement and punishment were systematically studied and described. This research gave birth to the principles of behavioral psychology which were subsequently used as the guidelines for parenting recommendations with children. Behavioral psychology continues to remain the principal approach recommended by professional psychology for altering the behavior of children.

In the mid-1980s, however, new developmental research began emerging from actual research directly with children, rather than from extending behavior modification research with lab animals to the parenting of human children. The research on children revealed that the principles of behavioral psychology which were extrapolated from behavior modification with lab animals was inappropriate, misguided, and highly problematic when applied to children. Actual research with children discovered that principles of parent-child communication and the interactive social-communication features expressed in the parent-child relationship are the central and critical features for the healthy neuro-development of the brain during childhood, and are far more important than behavioral principles for the healthy emotional and psychological development of children.

Two parent-child relationship systems were discovered that create complex relationship interactions that support the neuro-development of the child's various brain systems for emotional, behavioral, and social self-regulation; 1) the attachment system that governs love

and bonding throughout the lifespan, and 2) a system for psychological connection in which two people share a similar emotional-psychological brain state (called “intersubjectivity”).

In the mid-2000s a set of brain cells called “mirror neurons” was discovered that serve to mediate the intersubjective brain system of psychological connection. One of the leading investigators of the parent-child relationship describes both the intersubjective system and the mirror neuron substrate for this relationship brain system;

“Our nervous systems are constructed to be captured by the nervous systems of others. Our intentions are modified or born in a shifting dialogue with the felt intentions of others. Our feelings are shaped by the intentions, thoughts, and feelings of others. And our thoughts are cocreated in dialogue, even when it is only with ourselves. In short, our mental life is cocreated. This continuous cocreative dialogue with other minds is what I am calling the intersubjective matrix.” (Stern, 2004, p. 76)³

“The discovery of mirror neurons has been crucial. Mirror neurons provide possible neurobiological mechanisms for understanding the following phenomena: reading other people’s states of mind, especially intentions; resonating with another’s emotion; experiencing what someone else is experiencing; and capturing an observed action so that one can imitate it --- in short, empathizing with another and establishing intersubjective contact.” (Stern, 2004; p. 78)

Despite these advances in our scientific understanding regarding the social-communicative role of the parent-child relationship in supporting (“scaffolding”) the use-dependent neuro-development of the child’s maturing emotional and behavioral self-regulatory systems (Siegel, 2001; Cozolino, 2006)⁴, this more advanced understanding of the parent-child relationship has yet to be integrated into the broader parenting recommendations of professional psychology. Instead, professional psychology continues to rely on an outdated and inappropriate animal derived model for parenting with human children (behaviorism) that emphasizes control of behavior through the contingent application of rewards and punishments, but that does not comprehend or reflect the deeper and more important neuro-developmental aspects of the parent-child relationship and the foundational role of the two relationship systems for attachment and psychological connection (intersubjectivity).

The Childress Institute will bring an integration of current scientific research from child development and the socially-mediated neuro-development of the brain during childhood to parenting recommendations that support the healthy emotional and psychological development of children. The scientific research on the attachment system, the intersubjective systems, and the relationship-mediated phased maturation and use-dependent neuro-

³ Stern, D. (2004). *The Present Moment in Psychotherapy and Everyday Life*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

⁴ Siegel, D.J. (2001). Toward an Interpersonal Neurobiology of the Developing Mind: Attachment Relationships, “Mindsight” and Neural Integration. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 22, 67-94.

Cozolino, L. (2006): *The Neuroscience of Human Relationships: Attachment and the Developing Social Brain*. WW Norton & Company, New York.

development of emotional and behavioral regulatory systems during childhood will be applied to parenting recommendations, leading to the creation of a comprehensive set of online parent training seminars based in the latest scientific research on child development and the socially-mediated neuro-development of the brain during childhood.

This online parenting website will contain organized sets of parenting training seminars in the basic fundamentals of developmentally supporting parenting. These foundational seminars lead then to more advanced training and education parenting seminars. Parents will be able to access these seminars through the Internet, thereby making these foundational and advanced parenting seminars broadly available. Since the presentation of parenting educational seminar content will be organized into computer-mediated modules, differing seminar module content will be developed for the issues relevant for each age range (infancy, toddlers, early primary school-age children, later primary school-age children, young adolescence, and older adolescence). The modularized content will allow the Childress Institute's Developmentally Supportive Parenting website to present both foundational seminars with information generally applicable to the parent-child relationship, and also age-specific application of this parenting information to specific developmental periods of childhood.

These parenting education seminars will be translated into a variety of the principle languages, thereby making the foundational and advanced education seminars, as well as the developmental age application seminars, broadly available across cultural and national origin boundaries, adapting the seminar curriculum content modules appropriately to the cultural context.

Using a computer mediated organization for the presentation of these parenting education seminars will allow parents to progress at their own pace while also allowing management of the presentation sequence for the educational material, with more advanced seminars becoming "unlocked" and available following the parent's completion of the more foundational parenting seminars. Once parents obtain a foundational level of knowledge from the parenting seminars, additional parent-oriented seminar modules will become available targeting specific challenges faced by parents, such as neuro-developmentally supportive parenting for behavior regulation issues (such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), child oppositional and defiant behavior, school-related "behavior problems," and for child emotional regulatory issues such as child depression, child anxiety, and child anger-management problems.

Since the parenting education seminars will be organized into modules, the continuing application of scientific advances can be readily and systematically incorporated into the online curriculum structure by adding seminar modules or modifying the content of the specific existing seminars that become affected by the latest scientific advances in child development research on the parent-child relationship. This curriculum flexibility will allow The Childress Institute Developmentally Supportive Parenting Website to efficiently incorporate the latest scientific research on healthy child development into the parenting course curriculum that would be available across languages.

Child-Focused Educational Modules

Additional child-focused educational modules will also be developed for children regarding issues commonly faced by children and adolescents, such as developing friends and social skills, and approaches to managing the emotions of anger, sadness, and anxiety. Child-oriented educational seminar modules discussing the transition of families surrounding divorce, parental remarriage, and the issues surrounding step-family formation, will also be available for children. These child-oriented educational seminar modules will be with parental permission and will be offered in coordination with collateral support seminar modules for the parents that address the same issues and information being offered to the child, but from the parental-support perspective.

Child & Family Therapy Modules

Additional seminar modules will be constructed for training of child and family therapists in the foundational and advanced principles of children's socially-mediated neuro-development within the context of the attachment and intersubjective relationship systems. These child and family therapy modules will lead to a more advanced and scientifically grounded approach to child and family therapy than the current models that are based in the (inappropriate) application of animal-based models developed in the 1940s for the behavioral control of lab animals to the emotional and psychological development of human children.

These "developmentally supportive child therapy" modules will be targeted toward mental health professionals who are conducting psychotherapy with children, improving their knowledge, competence, and expertise in employing the most advanced scientific understanding of child development to child therapy practices.

PROJECT: Reformulating the Education System

Our current approach to educating children in the United States is based on the "Cathedral School" model of the 13th Century, in which education was limited to the clergy and children would go the local cathedral to be educated. Since child abuse was acceptable at the time, and learning was a privilege, the standard approach to education for the past 700 years has been to drill students in rote learning exercises with the abundant use of corporal and physically abusive discipline practices to enforce child compliance in both behavior and learning instructions. Even during the industrial revolution of the 1800s, physical discipline and child abuse remained common in schools as a means of enforcing behavioral and instructional compliance in the children.

However, the societal and cultural advances in child rearing practices during the mid-20th Century began to reduce the harsh cruelty of child discipline practices in school, so that by the latter half of the 20th Century corporal punishment and child abuse were no longer a staple of the U.S. educational system. Yet with the elimination of child abuse as a motivational force within the education system, responding to child behavior problems in the classroom has become increasingly more challenging for the educational system to address. In addition, since curriculum instruction over the past 700 years of using the Cathedral School model for

education relied on motivating children through child abuse, the actual educational curriculum and teaching approach did not need be made interesting or captivating for the child's curiosity and natural interest. Instead, excessively boring rote education models could merely rely on harsh physical discipline practices to ensure child compliance with instruction in tedious and excessively boring learning methods.

Another foundational flaw to the current educational approach with children imposed by the Cathedral School model is the reliance on a single instructor for 20 to 30 children in the classroom. Since the Cathedral School model is predicated on the limited availability of educational instructors (the priest), and since the resource allocation decisions of society do not support more than a minimal interest in creating a quality educational experience for the child, teaching resources have typically been stretched as far as possible in response to budgetary limitations. If children do not respond favorably to the educational experience provided, they are simply left behind academically or expelled from the primary educational track to secondary and inferior educational tracks.

The exceedingly rapid developments in technology and media over the past half century have, however, radically altered the available resources which can be committed to educating children, and the changing socio-cultural economic pressures are increasing emphasizing the increasing importance of information knowledge rather than product creation (which is increasingly being handled by machines). Factories that once employed people to make products now use robots and machines to manufacture these same products, and the shifting economics of the 21st Century are increasingly focused on the exchange and processing of information.

Education of children represents a basic infrastructure of American society. Investing in the infrastructure of educating our children for the 22nd Century challenges they will ultimately face is vital to the future prosperity of the United States, and the future prosperity of our children. No longer is education a luxury. Education is now a necessity of childhood development and a requirement for adult success. We have reached a time when both the challenges and the available resources require a fundamental revision in our core approach to educating children, away from a fundamentally flawed and hopelessly obsolete Cathedral Schools model from the 13th Century into a foundationally new computer-mediated and media integrated model of education necessary to provide for both the current demands and for the future challenges of the 22nd Century.

Investment in the foundational infrastructure of educating our children will pay lasting and substantial dividends for economic prosperity of American society generally, and also for the healthy emotional and psychological development of our children and of their children, allowing them full-measure of opportunity to reach their potential as successful adults in a vibrant and ever-changing information society. The Childress Institute will serve as the catalytic agent working with government, colleges and universities, and private sector computer and media technology leaders and innovators, in creating a foundationally transformative and comprehensive redevelopment of our approach to educating our children that integrates into the very fabric of the educational approach the currently available neuro-developmental

research on child development and learning during childhood, with the currently available and emerging computer and media technology available in the 21st and 22nd Centuries.

Rather than seeking to fix, revise, and change a fundamentally flawed and hopelessly inadequate Cathedral Schools model of education, The Childress Institute will provide catalytic leadership in creating a foundationally transformative change in the core conceptual framework used to educate children, a change that fully integrates the knowledge base available from our colleges and universities with the computer-mediated instruction potentials and media technology creativity and innovation available from the private sector. The Childress Institute will develop an educational model for the foundational revision of the approach used in educating our children, and The Childress Institute will provide the catalytic leadership necessary to bring together the stakeholders needed to create a foundational change to the education system.

Working with the government, The Childress Institute will provide catalytic leadership with the Department of Education to provide grants to major universities for the development of developmentally sequenced curriculum modules across all subject domains. Providing catalytic leadership with computer and media technology innovators (Microsoft, Apple, DreamWorks, Disney, Pixar, Blizzard, EA), The Childress Institute will assist in the translation of the curriculum modules provided by the leading universities into captivating and interactive educational modules appropriate to the child developmental period. From basic arithmetic to advanced calculus, through all levels of earth science, astronomy, chemistry, and biology, from music modules to history modules, from learning to read to advanced language arts, The Childress Institute will act as the catalytic agent for the translation of educational curriculum modules developed by our leading universities into innovative, creative, compelling, and captivating interactive educational presentations created by industry leaders in computer and media technology for children across each and all stages of child development.

All change first begins with a vision. Bill Gates began with a vision. Steven Jobs began with a vision. Walt Disney began with a vision. George Lucas began with a vision. Bringing visionaries together with the common shared goal of foundationally redeveloping our approach to educating our children required to meet the emerging challenges and opportunities of the 22nd Century will lead to the infrastructure investment in our children's education that will return immense dividends for society generally and for our children, and for their children.

PROJECT: Prison Recidivism Reduction

New catalytic intervention models for change are emerging that offer alternative approaches to recovering the normal-range functioning of attachment networks impacted by complex trauma (chronic relationship-based childhood trauma). These catalytic change models employ a different approach from standard psychotherapy for the restoration of the normal-range functioning of the attachment system that has been impacted or damaged by complex trauma.

The actions that lead to incarceration are often born in childhood experience of complex trauma (relationship-based trauma), and the incarceration itself can be psychologically

traumatizing. Helping prisoners recover from complex trauma and restoring the normal-range functioning of motivational and self-regulatory brain systems can lead to a reduction in the trauma-generated actions that lead to incarceration and recidivism.

The Childress Institute will support the development of catalytic interventions that restore the normal-range functioning of self-regulatory, motivational, and social attachment networks, and will research the effectiveness of these catalytic intervention models for reducing incarceration and prison recidivism rates.