

Introduction

In Part 1, you will learn about how the curriculum is framed within *Everyday and Special Focus Moments* in family life, conscious decision-making, and family strengths and how to foster resilience in families with very young children. TRHV is grounded in the *Protective Factors* and pulls from research and practice in the fields of resilience, neuroscience, attachment, and social cognition to build a curriculum that engages families, builds trust, and supports positive parenting. Best practices from parent education and infant mental health are integrated throughout the content and offer support to new and highly experienced home visitors. You will get your first introduction to the materials for home visits, including how they are grouped and a description of one-on-one activities.

By the end of Part 1, you will be able to:

1. Describe why TRHV is framed in *Everyday and Special Focus Moments*.
2. Identify the five *Protective Factors* as part of the foundation of TRHV.
3. Recognize the different materials and tools of the curriculum.

Recognizing Decisions in Everyday Moments

Focusing on decision-making with families provides an opportunity for families to pay attention to specific moments and interactions in the course of their incredibly busy and, at times, overwhelming everyday lives. This focus can make it possible for parents to recognize their effectiveness and strengths as they develop new ideas and strategies to handle daily moments that span crying, feeding, bathing, dressing, dealing with challenging behaviors, getting out the door, and sharing

the care—all while trying to maintain their own personal, relational, and work commitments—often without enough sleep, time, or all-hands-on-deck!

Parents recognize some decisions that they make, perhaps because those choices are tied to a specific desire, goal, or part of their own understanding of what parents do. Yet, other decisions are not as visible or recognizable, and they may appear to an outsider to be impulsive, reactive, or on autopilot. TRHV helps parents see and understand the decisions that they make on behalf of their young children and family throughout the *Everyday Moments* of family life. Building greater awareness of these decisions can smooth some of the bumpy transitions into parenthood or the welcoming of another young child into their home.



Focusing on Family Strengths

The parents you serve face many challenges, which may include their young age, being far away from home, the stresses of deployment or homecoming, an injury seen or unseen, and past experiences of maltreatment or family violence. In addition, each is parenting a baby or toddler, which, in the best of circumstances, can be stressful and leave parents feeling vulnerable and in need of support even as they may be fearful of being judged.

At the same time, parents bring strengths to their family and to your work together. These strengths may include having dreams for their child's future success, possessing a sense of humor, having raised



younger siblings, considering how they were parented and using the best practices they experienced as children, sharing a love of music, having a special smile for their baby, or making the commitment to be there each time you come into their home. TRHV meets families where they are and offers information and strategies families can use to build upon approaches or plans that work for them. In using TRHV, you can support families by making daily interactions and activities smoother, more engaging, and enjoyable for the child and adult.

Throughout the curriculum, family members will be invited to become more aware of and consider ways to build on their strengths, identify areas to develop (as opposed to weaknesses), and recognize the manageable steps they can use to increase their strengths. Intentionally taking a strengths-based approach within the home visitation relationship and building on the strengths you see from visit to visit are good ways to advance parents towards meaningful and lasting positive change in parenting practices. These are changes parents will own because the changes are built upon the parents' knowledge and skills, which allows parents to feel and be more effective. In turn, parents can enjoy and deepen relationships with their children during *Everyday Moments*, which reinforces the cycle of positive change.

This being said, there will be times when you will need to take more direct action. For example, when you see health or safety hazards, such as bottles of medications being stored on a low, available shelf or observe a parent startle and have an outsized response (e.g., losing it by yelling or other angry, defensive actions and words) at the sudden noise of his toddler dropping blocks on the floor, these types of issues need to be addressed. In addition, observed signs of neglect or abuse need to be documented and reported, even if they may fall outside the boundaries of your direct work with a family.

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The TRHV integrated documentation system helps you identify when direct action should be taken. While strengths will vary across families, adopting a strengths-based approach begins with you. Identifying your expectations and being aware of your own feelings and values can help you avoid making assumptions.

- Your expectations. Expecting to see and find parents' strengths is the first step to being strengths-based. Every parent brings strengths to their family and to your work together. In some cases, strengths may take time to see, but knowing strengths are there will help you remain engaged and build upon them.
- Awareness of your own feelings and values will help you avoid making assumptions. Self-awareness allows you to be your own best resource as you apply your observations, knowledge, and skills during a home visit. You need to be aware that you will bring a set of assumptions to every home visit.

When you acknowledge and understand that, you can then be more open to see, listen, and discover what a parent may be feeling or what a parent's behavior might mean. When you understand the situation, you can decide what to say and how to respond in ways that truly meet parents where they are and be a genuine, respectful decision-making partner with families.

Take a Moment: Your First Interaction with a Family

How do you first approach working with a family? Do you find that your approach is effective? How so?

Would you describe yourself as open to seeing a family's strengths as you begin your work with them? If yes, how does this make your work more effective?

If no, what shifts might you make in your expectations and approach to become more strengths-based?

Creating a Genuine, Respectful Partnership

Every aspect of TRHV is designed to support you in creating a genuine, respectful partnership. This partnership is integral to creating positive and lasting change for families and children. To this end, the TRHV materials intentionally do the following:

1. **Reflect the reality of being a parent to convey the message to parents: “You are seen.”** Parenting is a demanding, exhausting, full-time, amazing, loving, heartwarming, and difficult endeavor. No one has all the answers. There are no perfect parents. The purpose of this curriculum is to help parents be their best.
2. **Promote conversations with families.** Each topic creates opportunities for family members to get to know more about their own family strengths and challenges and those of their child. The planning documents support a parent-home visitor collaboration to select topics that address specific areas of interest and need. This is in sharp contrast to the home visitor assuming the stance of expert and telling families what to do.
3. **Integrate *Family Pages*.** These pages invite families to personalize content as a means to empower and give voice to family members at every visit. Design and text elements of these pages make the conversation accessible and welcoming to families of varying levels of literacy and English proficiency.
4. **Offer practical, hands-on, and inexpensive ideas for strategies and activities.** Affordable and easily doable activities for parent-child interactions and play-based learning are based on daily routines and use common household items.



Theory and Practice Foundations of Take Root Home Visitation

Several different fields of research, their theories, and best practices come together as the foundation of TRHV.

In *Figure 1* there is a thick, purple circle encapsulating the different elements that provide the foundation for this curriculum.



Part 1 Foundations of Take Root Home Visitation



Figure Key: A Guide to Understanding Figure 1

Protective Factors: Families Centered within the 5 Protective Factors

Families are the focus of our work and, for this reason, are centered within the 5 *Protective Factors*. Arrows from the factors into the family system indicate that these factors influence the daily life and well-being of families.

Five grey circles represent each of the *Protective Factors* in the *Protective Factors Framework* (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2012). These are written in parent-friendly language for you to use in your home visits. These are also available as a laminated card/fridge magnet that parents can keep:



Social Connections – When you and family, friends, and others in your school, work, and child care communities can count on each other, life is easier and more enjoyable. Giving and receiving support makes everyone stronger.



Concrete Supports of Families – Every person and every family needs help sometimes. Learning who can help you meet your family's needs and where to go for support makes you stronger in good and challenging times.



Parental Resilience – Parenting can bring great joy and stress. When you draw upon your strengths and wisdom, stay flexible, and become an even better problem-solver, you teach your child positive ways to handle difficult times—a key skill for life success.



Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development – Learning how your young child grows and learns will help you respond to his or her changing needs and abilities with sensitivity and care. By building a positive, trusting relationship, you prepare your child for a life of learning and engaging with others.



Social and Emotional Competence of Children – When you have positive interactions, you help your child learn to manage behaviors, communicate feelings, and get along with others.

Theories and Fields of Research

Family resilience, attachment, neuroscience, social cognitive theories, and their respective fields of research guided the topic selection and details of the *Everyday and Special Focus Moments*. These theories and research findings enrich our understanding of what information is important to share with families, while the practice strategies shape the curriculum's beliefs about the most effective ways to share that information. These elements in the graphic are represented by blue text:

1. Family Stress and Resilience – The study of family resilience has grown significantly in the past two decades. In practical terms, TRHV draws from family resilience literature to integrate ways in which the home visitation relationship can foster family growth, recovery, and repair in the face of a variety of challenges. Families thrive when members are able to build and expand healthy coping and relational capacities.

When young children have a safe, caring, and responsive caregiving environment, they can gain the necessary life skills of healthy social and emotional regulation through positive and adverse experiences. The *Protective Factors Framework* is a direct outgrowth of linking family resilience theory with research that shows which factors matter in reducing and preventing child maltreatment.

2. Attachment – As professionals who work with high needs families, you already know how vital a healthy and dynamic attachment relationship is for a young child. Some of the parents you work with may have experiences from their own childhood that challenge their abilities to form healthy connections with their child. TRHV provides opportunities for parents to recognize their

young child's verbal and non-verbal cues for safety, care, comfort, and dependability and helps them see their own reactions to their child's needs, behaviors, and emotions.

Activities include parental practice in responding appropriately and with empathy, incorporating their knowledge of their child's development and abilities, and helping parents see what factors might be driving their own reactions and decisions.

3. Neuroscience – We learn more about how our brains work every day and how responsive our brains can be to internal conditions (e.g., maturation, getting older) and external conditions (e.g., nutrition, poverty, violence, high- or low-quality care, injury).

The first 3 years of life are critical for brain development in the areas of the brain that work to identify safety and threats. When young children assess their social world as safe, their brains build neural pathways for engagement and growth. When young children assess their social world as threatening or unpredictable, their brains build neural pathways to minimize threat and optimize safety. These pathways encode experiences across all five senses, and the more certain senses are part of the experience, the stronger the memory—whether positive or adverse. TRHV provides practical activities to help parents build healthy experiences and moments with their child to build pathways that support engagement and growth.

For example, parents may create a bath routine that shows care, safety, and emotional engagement (e.g., supportive holds, singing about body parts, gentle touch). This may become a routine that reinforces development of positive pathways, and the child learns to count on this as a stable routine filled with good things. Parents may also choose to engage with a 2-year-old's public meltdown

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by meeting the child where they are and providing support to help their child through the meltdown. This type of reaction turns a highly emotional and negative experience into an opportunity to provide positive emotional coaching, so the child can start to learn how self-regulate when upset.

Please note, parents' brains are also changing as they gain parenting experiences and engage with the material you share through the home visitation relationship! Everyone can build and foster healthy response pathways in the family system by improving interactions with one another.

4. Social Cognitive – Social Cognitive theory drives many parent education curricula, including TRHV. The premises are that an individual's learning and engagement with content is influenced by several factors, including one's own sense of self-efficacy; ability to self-regulate emotions and behaviors; history of being parented and cared for; and expectations for self, child, and program participation. TRHV is designed to help you create conversations with parents that elicit their own understanding of materials and how information is similar to and different from what they already know and believe. These conversations are opportunities for change and to reinforce current practices and ideas parents may have.



Areas of Professional Practice

For prevention and intervention work, best practices have been identified throughout the Home Visitation and Allied Health fields. The following areas of professional practice provide important touchstones for TRHV service delivery decisions: assessing incoming families, developing strong alliances with families, and selecting and presenting materials with respect for each family's context.

In purple text, three areas of professional practice offer specific ways to build empathic, professional, and therapeutic alliances between early intervention specialists and the families with whom they work:

1. Anticipatory Guidance – This approach is often used within the pediatric health fields to provide parents and caregivers with targeted knowledge that is useful in understanding their child's needs and abilities at the time of a visit (e.g., well-baby, acute care) and in the near future (e.g., things to look forward to, typical things to expect as baby changes and grows). Anticipatory guidance strategies can introduce topics that can then be revisited as changes occur due to maturation, illness or injury, or if an expected ability or behavior does not seem to be progressing as expected.

TRHV integrates anticipatory guidance opportunities throughout content whenever possible, so conversations can continue as children grow and their needs change. For example, a home visitor can work with parents before a family visit or vacation where many relatives will be present who are not familiar to their 7- to 14-month-old infant. Parents benefit from understanding common infant reactions of stranger anxiety and separation anxiety and can learn strategies to support their infants who do not want to be held by unfamiliar people or become overwhelmed by enthusiastic greetings and big groups of new people. Providing anticipatory guidance can also help parents find their voices as advocates for their child to be able to say no or offer alternatives to well-meaning relatives in similar situations.



2. Infant Mental Health – This area of practice focuses on nurturing the healthy development of the infant-family caregiving system. It is a means to promote early mental health in very young children and reduce risks posed by mental and physical health challenges that may be experienced by their parents. As such, attention is given to identifying potential peri- and post-partum mental health needs of women, attachment and bonding, the transition to parenthood, and the early identification of infant developmental and sensory disorders that could adversely impact the development of effective and responsive caregiving. Infant mental health practice always places children within their caregiving context to understand growth and change. TRHV follows this practice by placing infants, toddlers, and their families at the center of our model and by placing the infant-family system at the center of modeling reflective and mindful parenting (see pg. 6).

3. Trauma-Informed Care – A trauma-informed approach to practice is one that can work across multiple populations whether trauma has occurred or not, whether the trauma is recent or historical, whether it was an acute experience or has chronic characteristics, whether it was singular or multiple moments, and whether a client wants to bring it up with a professional or prefers not to talk about it. Within TRHV, principles of *Trauma-Informed Care* center on creating a professional-client alliance that works from a family strengths perspective (SAMHSA, 2014):

- Fostering a sense of physical and psychological safety;
- Modeling transparency in program decisions to build and maintain trust;
- Encouraging peer support and mutual self-help to build empowerment and resilience;

- Building a collaborative process to highlight the roles of shared power and decision-making within the family system and the client-home visitor relationship;
- Cultivating empowerment, voice, and choice by building on what clients have to offer as both parties work toward greater thriving and resilience; and
- Offering gender- and culture-responsive services, valuing traditional connections, and addressing historical trauma.

In summary, here are some of the ways TRHV assists you in your work that supports families as they grow stronger and more resilient:

- 1. Take Root Home Visitation supports you in promoting the Protective Factors.** Research indicates that building these five factors reduces the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.
- 2. The content of Take Root Home Visitation is based on Everyday Moments in the lives of families and their babies and toddlers.** You will be offering practical information, hands-on strategies, and activities parents want and need to make *Everyday Moments* work for themselves and their young child.
- 3. Starting with assessing families, Take Root Home Visitation is strengths-based.** Using information from multiple sources, the TRHV curriculum and materials support you and each family in creating a plan tailored to build on strengths and address challenges. It supports parents in setting their own goals for family resilience with your support.



The Context of Everyday Moments and Special Focus Moments

Everyday Moments and *Special Focus Moments* frame the content of this curriculum because these experiences build family systems and set the tone and expectations for how family members relate and interact with one another. *Protective Factor* icons are used to quickly identify that the content addresses one or more specific factors within each *Everyday Moment* topic. Further, the content uses the principles of *Trauma-Informed Care* to foster a collaborative relationship.

Because they happen so often, *Everyday Moments* open a window for you to gain understanding of family life and how you can step in to help families grow to be more resilient.

Patterns and habits develop through every collective experience and individual experience in the family system. *Everyday Moments* group these experiences into three basic categories:

1. Daily Care and Living Routines

Parents develop several daily routines to ensure basic care of their young children, such as establishing sleeping, feeding, bathing/toileting, and dressing routines. Yet, they are not just functional for the health of the infant. These routines form a deep foundation of how to interact with each other, develop expectations, and learn variations in patterns.

2. Young Children's Play and Exploration

Infants and toddlers are active observers and explorers and are often described as little scientists who are trying to figure out how people, pets, and things in their environment work. TRHV highlights key developmental milestones from 0-36 months and emphasizes the critical social worlds of very young children's

important adults and caregivers and their early friendships. As much as possible, these topics are in the voice of the child, which emphasizes the child's perspective on their own development.

3. Parenting Life

Sometimes parents are surprised to realize that learning a little bit more or adding a new skill to their toolkit helps them meet a parenting challenge. Sometimes these challenges involve recalibrating a balancing act of self-care, sharing care of their infant with others, and learning or unlearning discipline strategies that can vary in their appropriateness and effectiveness with each child. And sometimes, young families are faced with difficult circumstances and significant adversities that can impact their individual and family well-being. Home visitation can provide empathic and concrete support during times of increased stress.

The adults in a young child's life provide a range of everyday experiences whether they are parents, foster parents, grandparents, or guardians. The *Everyday Moments* we focus on happen in all families in unique and common ways, depending upon the individuals involved and their childhood experiences, cultures, hopes, and dreams. Each is an opportunity for you to offer basic parenting information and to identify existing skills and strategies and promote new ones, many of which will be useful across moments.

Our military families face some challenges that are not necessarily common in the non-military population. Thus, TRHV also includes two *Special Focus Moments* that pertain specifically to experiences of military families:

- 1. Parental Absence in Military Life:** When parents must be absent for an extended period of time or repeatedly over time due to the nature of their jobs, the absences and reunions can pose challenges for young children's relationships and their parents' intimate and co-parenting rhythms and expectations.
- 2. Parenting After Injury:** When a parent is affected by injury, whether visible or invisible, with acute or chronic effects, their parenting abilities and sense of parenting self-efficacy may be affected, and co-parenting strategies may need to be altered. The recovery trajectory of the injured parent has the potential for disruptions in caregiving due to travel for care, changes in daily caregivers and routines, and the sense of stress and (dis)stress that is felt in the family system.



Reflective and Mindful Parenting

Each *Moment*, whether *Everyday* or *Special Focus*, is an opportunity for you to help parents learn to be more mindful and intentional, as opposed to reactive, by modeling and encouraging parents to ask themselves three questions as they decide when and how to interact and how to handle a situation. These three questions, listed below, help parents develop awareness of their own responses and their child's, which can help parents see themselves as decision-makers as opposed to operating on autopilot.

This self check-in can begin to free parents from responses that are habitual and have been learned from their childhoods and that they want to change. Each *Moment* has *Family Pages* that are designed to help reinforce this practice of pausing to think about self, wondering what a child is experiencing, and then deciding how to move forward together:

1. What am I feeling and thinking?

We begin with the adult because his or her decisions about what he or she says and does shape and color a child's learning about self, others, and the world. Taking a minute's pause is also an unspoken reminder to adults who are under stress—whether from everyday parenting and/or other complicating circumstances and situations—to take a breath, a first step to more mindful responses.

2. What is my child feeling and thinking?

Children's behavior has meaning and may change over time as a child develops. It is the job of the adults in the child's life to figure out what that meaning is. The only way to do this is to watch and listen from the outside for clues about what is happening on the inside.

3. How can we work this out together?


Here is where the adult uses the information gathered about self and the child to problem solve and decide what to say and/or do.



Moments are also rich opportunities for you to support children and their most important adults and to promote the strengthening of *Protective Factors*, even within a limited number of visits. If, for example, you visit a family only six or seven times, these *Moments* are still important opportunities to promote meaningful and lasting change because they do the following:

1. Allow you to meet a family where they are. You will gain insight into and be able to address a family's current questions and challenges as you identify the *Protective Factors* to center on and decide together on the *Moment* that will be your shared focus.
2. Provide the opportunity for families and you to learn together about a child. As you invite a parent to share a story or two about how an *Everyday* or *Special Focus Moment* is going, you will discuss and discover aspects of a child's development, temperament, and preferences.
3. Invite collaborative problem-solving and decision-making about what strategies might work best for a parent and child to make the *Everyday Moment* as smooth and enjoyable as possible. This can help parents feel more effective as they realize there are steps they can learn about, discover, and decide to try, which could make life easier and more fun for everyone.
4. Offer extraordinary learning opportunities for babies and toddlers. They happen often enough to give children a sense of predictability, yet there is enough variation to invite interest and exploration to promote learning about self, others, and the world.
5. Allow families to experience success. This can lead to increased confidence, competence, and more success—in your presence or not.

The chart to the right shows the *Everyday Moments* included in this curriculum and the *Protective Factors* embedded in each.



Everyday Moments and the Protective Factors

Everyday Moments: Daily Care and Living Routines	
TOPICS	Protective Factors
Sleeping	<div> <div></div> <div>Parental Resilience</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Social and Emotional Competence of Children</div> </div>
Nutrition and Feeding	
Diapering and Toileting	
Bathing and Dressing	

Everyday Moments: Young Children's Play and Exploration	
TOPICS	Protective Factors
Exploring and Learning about the World	<div> <div></div> <div>Concrete Supports of Families</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Parental Resilience</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Social and Emotional Competence of Children</div> </div>
Building Trusting Relationships	
Nurturing Guidance and Discipline	

Everyday Moments: Parenting Life	
TOPICS	Protective Factors
Co-Parenting and Sharing Care	<div> <div></div> <div>Social Connections</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Concrete Supports of Families</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Parental Resilience</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Social and Emotional Competence of Children</div> </div>
Parental Self-Care	
Loss, Grief, and Growth in Young Families	

Special Focus Moments: Military Family Life	
TOPICS	Protective Factors
Parental Absence in Military Life	<div> <div></div> <div>Social Connections</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Concrete Supports of Families</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Parental Resilience</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Social and Emotional Competence of Children</div> </div>
Parenting After Injury	

TRHV Everyday Moments and the Protective Factors Chart.

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One-on-One Activities

In addition to the *Moments*, TRHV also provides a set of cards that describe a series of one-on-one activities to share with families. As you plan for a home visit, you will choose a one-on-one activity(s) that offers a family the opportunity to build skills they can use to make the selected *Moments* work for them and their child. For example, during a visit where sleep is discussed, the one-on-one activity may be a soothing activity (e.g., baby massage, reading, singing, telling a story about the child's bedtime routine).

These activities give you the chance to embrace and strengthen the parent-child relationship and support the parents' positive interaction as you do the following:

1. Introduce the activity and offer simple, clear directions and any materials needed. Note: Materials should largely be household objects, recyclable materials, or homemade items.
2. Model as needed.
3. Sit back a short distance.
4. Pay close attention to the interaction—as if shining a light on this parent-child *Moment* to express the message that it matters.
5. Coach parents on how what they say and how this supports their relationship and/or their child's learning.
6. Highlight strengths of the adults and child.
7. Reinforce messages about how children and parents are growing, changing, and learning.
8. Build a family's resilience through the creation of a resource kit that contains a variety of activities that parents and children can do together anytime with affordable, available materials.

One-on-One Activities Incorporated into the TRHV Curriculum

Several parent-child activities are suggested in the accompanying TRHV Activity Card deck. These highlight opportunities for parents and children to connect, wonder, learn, and laugh together.

Face-to-Face

These activities are times to connect, grow trust, learn about each other, and dance your unique “together dance.”

Play with Words, Sounds, and Numbers

These activities are a chance to explore ideas, build skills, discover patterns, and support your child to understand pictures and words.

Pretend Together

These activities will inspire imagination and help your child understand their world.

Quiet and Calm Together

These activities will help you both when it is time to slow down and lower stress.

Move Together

These activities help you to be free and silly while you help your child learn about their body.

Touch, Taste, Feel, Hear, See

These activities encourage curiosity and let your child make choices and ask questions.

Lead and Follow; Follow and Lead

These games are times to gently guide and to give your child a chance to practice self-control.

Explore Your Community

These activities help you open the doors to new possibilities for connection and support for you and your child.



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In Summary

TRHV is a curriculum designed to support home visitors as they meet families where they are, pay attention to the family's historical and current contexts and their perceived strengths and needs, and focus on helping parents support their infants and toddlers by building a healthy family system. The materials are designed to foster strong and trusting alliances with families, and the content focuses on daily parenting and caregiving experiences and insights from a young child's perspective

about their own development and life. Careful attention is given to link the content with the five *Protective Factors* so information is clear, and the decisions home visitors and parents make are more visible and intentional.

The next section focuses on the seven guiding principles of *Trauma-Informed Care and Practice (TICP)*. Practical examples are provided which are likely to affirm aspects of your practice and that of your colleagues.

