



Trauma Smart
c/o The ELC/WWCC Foundation
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News Release

More than 500 local preschoolers will benefit from a new, trauma-informed approach to early care and education.

The Trauma Smart® approach will teach childcare providers, preschool staff and families how to manage challenging behaviors while helping young children become more competent, mindful and resilient.

WALLA WALLA, Nov. 4, 2015 – Trauma Smart is an evidence-based approach to promoting resilience in preschool-age children who are at risk for adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). ACEs can include traumatic events such as violence, or chronic circumstances such as family stress and instability, poverty, and parental substance abuse. Trauma Smart employs preschool teachers, pediatric mental health professionals, parents and many others in a wrap-around, team-oriented process that helps adults nurture children's social-emotional and self-regulatory skill development. Trauma Smart training covers topics such as Caregiver Affect Management, Attunement, Grief & Loss and Executive Function. Teri Barila, Director of the Children's Resilience Initiative, said in a written statement that "Resilience is a set of skills that can be learned. The earlier we begin teaching children these skills – and teaching adults how to model their use and how to create safe, stable and nurturing environments – the more likely children are to meet with happiness and success down the road."

Six local organizations with early childhood-focused missions and/or programs are collaborating to bring the Trauma Smart program to Walla Walla. The partners in the collaboration are the Children's Resilience Initiative, Walla Walla Public Schools' Head Start/Early Childhood Education Assistance Program, Inspire Development Centers, Children's Home Society of Washington, The Health Center at Blue Ridge and the Walla Walla Valley Early Learning Coalition. "This initiative is a great example of collective action at work in our community," Barila explained, "We're bringing partners together to do more than any one of them could do alone".

The initiative represents a combined, local investment of almost \$80,000. Several area philanthropists and trusts, including the Stubblefield Trust, the Mary Garner Esary Trust, the Clara & Art Bald Trust, the American Association of University Women, the George Welch Testamentary Trust, the Blue Mountain Community Foundation and Columbia Rural Electric Association, are contributing funds to supplement those provided by the partner agencies. Deborah Peters, Program Manager for the Walla Walla Valley Early Learning Coalition added that "The support of the community has been essential to bringing about this widespread adoption of Trauma Smart. It's a farsighted investment in our children that will yield long-lasting benefits for Walla Walla. Closing the achievement gap, preventing crime and creating civic-minded future adults start here." Local training is beginning this week and will continue monthly, January through May of 2016. Members of the Trauma Smart development team will travel to Walla Walla to facilitate all of the training sessions.

For more information, email WallaWalla@PromotingEarlyResilience.org.