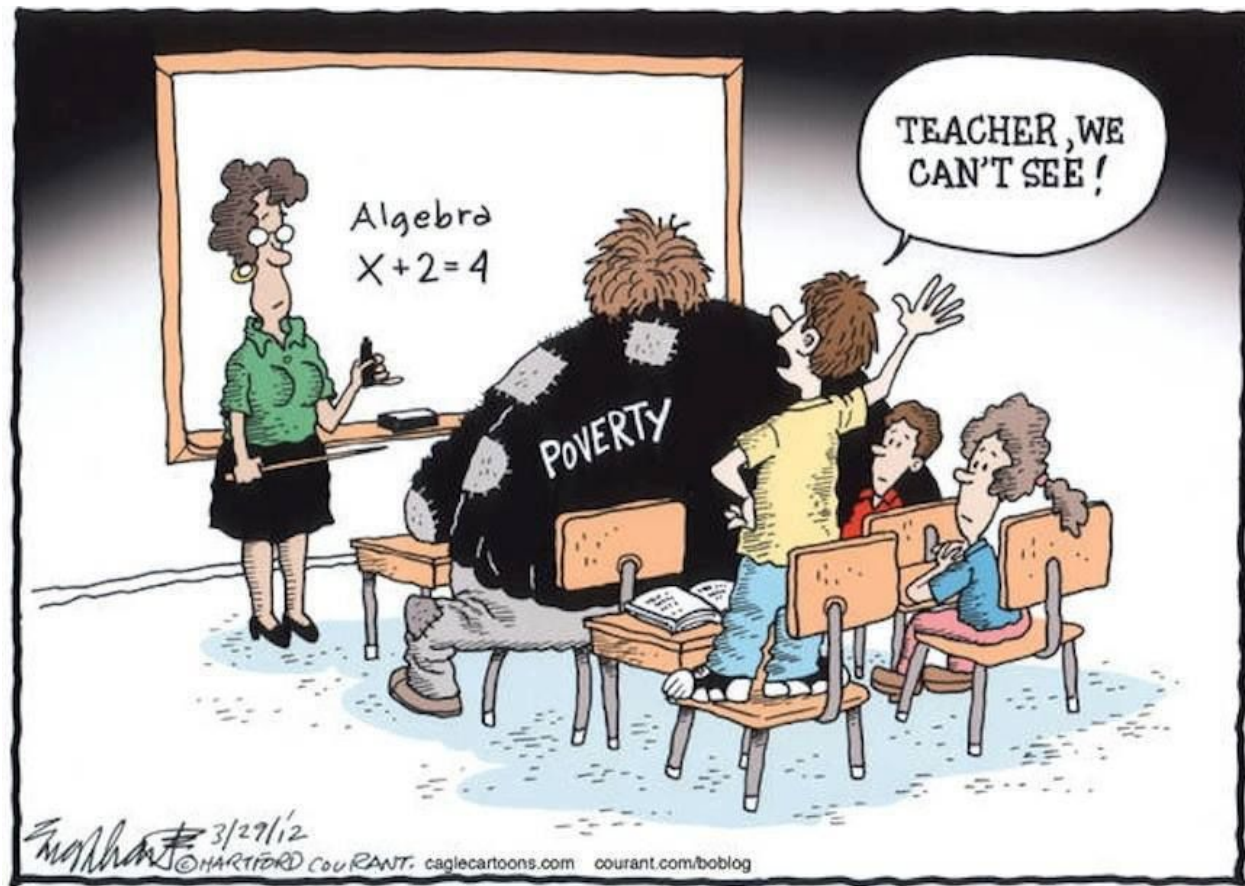


# POVERTY IN EDUCATION

Teaching students with poverty in mind.



# TODAY'S OBJECTIVES

Understand **HOW** POVERTY impacts your students

Actionable **STRATEGIES** to help students in poverty

Praise their



moody

# HOW POVERTY IMPACTS OUR STUDENTS

This is only the ones  
who actually applied!

78% of our students are eligible for free/reduced.  
This equates to a majority of our households with  
income less than 27k for family of 3.



Direct correlation between  
free/reduced and Title 1  
services.

# POVERTY AND TRAUMA AT OUR SCHOOL



Our school has highest rate of free/reduced in district.

# TRAUMA/NEGLECT/POVERTY

**As teachers, we want to help all our students. It's difficult when those that need the most help are often also the ones who give us the most trouble.**

Life experiences have taught them to be wary. They have limited coping skills to deal with everyday stressors.



# FACTORS FOR CHANGE

Think of your most challenging student  
(behaviorally)





# FACTORS FOR CHANGE



Now ask yourself to consider if what that child experiences at home could influence how he/she behaves in your classroom.

# **IT IS VERY DIFFICULT FOR STUDENTS FROM FAMILIES IN POVERTY OR TRAUMA TO ACHIEVE AN ADEQUATE EDUCATION.**

## **Why?**



Children who live in poverty often learn that:

No one cares  
They don't belong  
Everyone else is smarter  
No one can help  
They will fail  
They don't know how to cope

# STUDENTS LIVING IN POVERTY AND TRAUMA HAVE:

## **FIXED** Mindset

**Feel helpless and want to give up**

**Avoid future tasks similar to this one**

**Invest little or no effort since I will not likely succeed**

**I might consider cheating, if need be**



# CLASS RULES: HOW PARENTS SEE THE WORLD

## CHILDREN IN POVERTY

## CHILDREN IN MIDDLE CLASS

Money

To be used, spent

To be managed

Food

Is there enough?

Was it liked/enjoyable?

Clothing

Expression of personality

Quality/acceptance. Label.

Love

Conditional, based on whether child is liked

Conditional based on achievement



© Brenda Ann Kenneally/AmericanPoverty.org

WHAT DOES  
IT LOOK  
LIKE?



# POVERTY CLASS RULES: HOW KIDS RESPOND IN SCHOOL

## **DISORGANIZED**

DECIDE TO WORK  
BASED ON WHETHER OR  
NOT THEY LIKE  
TEACHER

Can't self  
monitor  
behavior

Physically  
Aggressive

**FAILURE TO  
COMPLETE  
HOMEWORK**

**ONLY DO PART OF  
ASSIGNMENTS**

**Talk Back**



--Payne, Ruby K. Ph.D.

# STRESS

How are kids from **LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND** different than kids from higher **SEB**?

At school,  
children funnel  
their stress into  
disruptive  
behaviors.



# DISTRESS

# VS

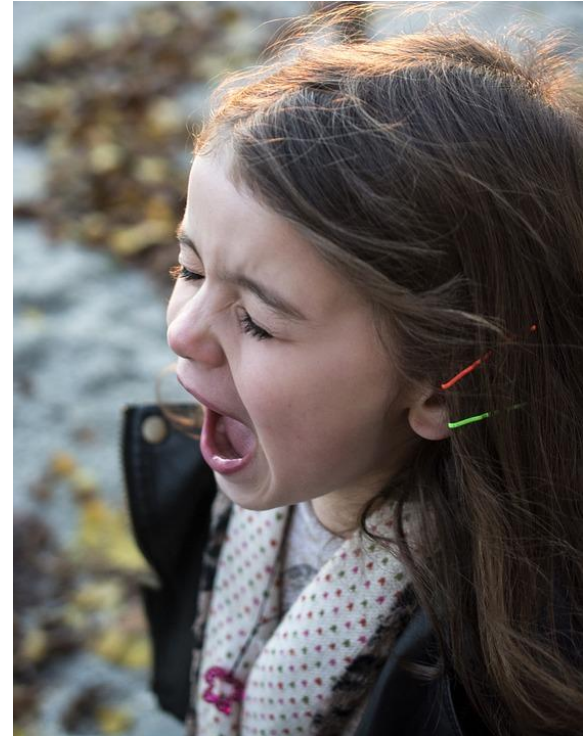
# STRESS

When stress is chronic, it becomes “distress” which is toxic.



Low-income students have:

- greater stressors
- more intense stressors
- Fewer coping mechanisms for dealing with stress





# EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS

Executive Function Skills is our "Operating System." It is how our **brain processes our life experiences** and shapes our current decisions, actions, and understanding of reality.



Every experience, positive and negative, will shape a child's perspective of self and situation.

# Executive Function Skills

So when Jill is giving you the death stare, refusing to work, or shutting down....

**Ask yourself:**

**what in his life may have  
formed the belief that his  
actions are a necessary  
aspect to survival?**



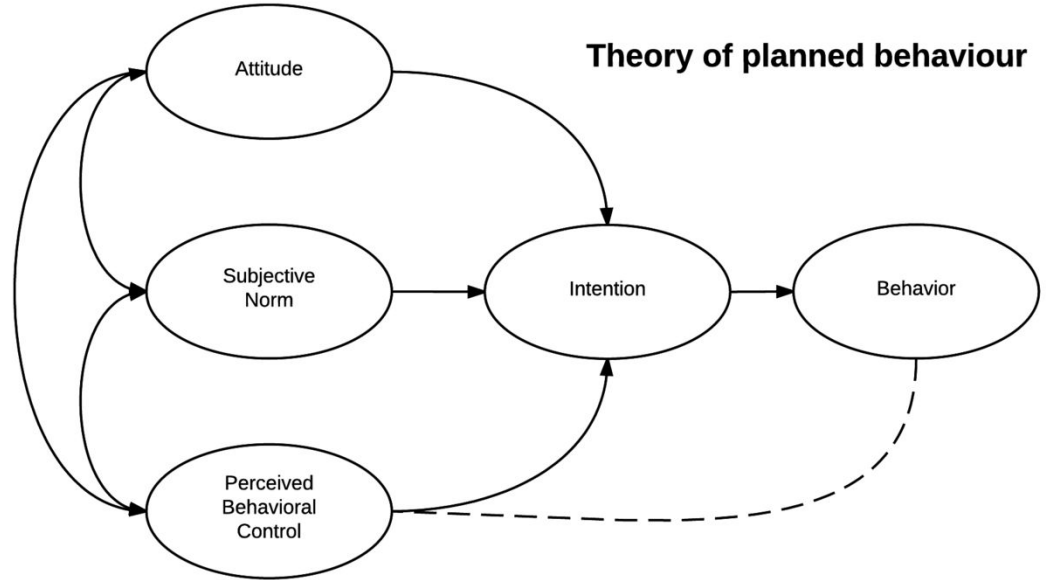
Lack of food  
Loneliness  
Trauma  
Abuse  
Addition in the home  
Homelessness

HOW DO WE HELP?

Adjust our attitudes

Adjust our culture

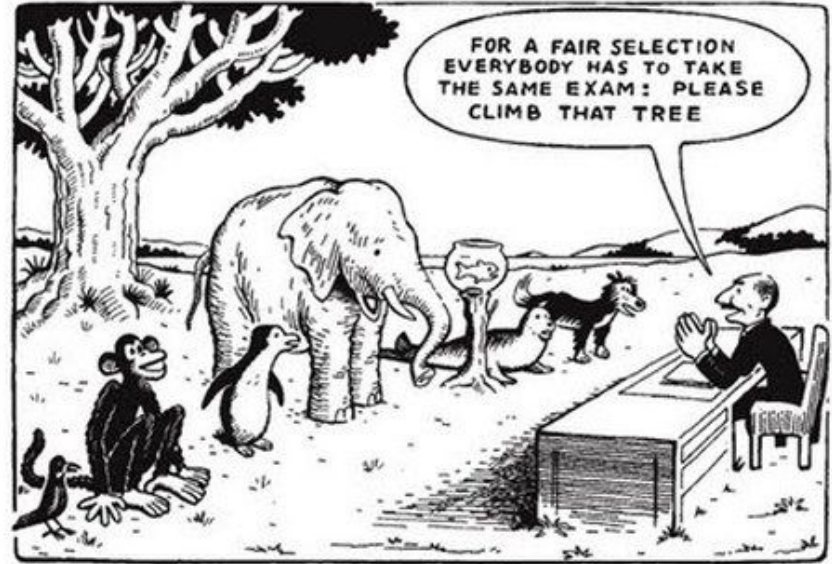
Know that we CAN help



# NORMS & CULTURE

## Privilege

**Each individual brings the hidden rules and norms of the class in which they were raised.**



**Public institutions such as schools operate from middle-class norms and use the hidden rules of the middle class.**

**These norms are never directly taught. We can address this.**

# CLASS RULES: HOW PARENTS SEE THE WORLD

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# LANGUAGE

Some of our students are completely unfamiliar with formal language.

How can we speak so they can understand?

## REGISTERS OF LANGUAGE

REGISTER	EXPLANATION
FROZEN	Language that is always the same. For example: Lord's prayer, Miranda rights, wedding vows, etc.
FORMAL	The standard sentence syntax and word choice of work and school. Has complete sentences and specific word choices.
CONSULTATIVE	Formal register when used in conversation. Discourse pattern not quite as direct as formal register.
CASUAL	Language between friends and is characterized by a 400-800 word vocabulary. Word choice general and not specific. Conversation dependent upon non-verbal assists. Sentence syntax often incomplete.
INTIMATE	Language between lovers or twins. Language of sexual harassment.

# HOW TO ADDRESS CASUAL REGISTER SPEAKING/WRITING

**Have students write in casual register then translate to formal register (start off writing the way they talk).**

**Tell stories both ways - casual, and formal (Cinderella).**

**Use stories in math, social studies, and science to develop concepts.**

**Make up stories with the students that can be used to guide behavior.**

# ENGAGEMENT

One of the key factors for helping children from poverty to succeed is ENGAGEMENT.



One study of almost 2000 students living in poverty (Finn and Rock 1997) found that engagement was a key factor to student success. -- Eric Jensen



# ENGAGEMENT

## WHAT IS ENGAGEMENT?

Eric Jensen defines seven factors that influence ENGAGEMENT:

**Health/Nutrition**

**Vocabulary**

**Effort and Energy**

**Mind-set**

**Cognitive Capacity**

**Relationships**

**Stress Level**



# ENGAGEMENT

As teachers, we are not in control of most of these engagement factors. However, we can build positive **relationships** with these students, which can help foster success.

RATIO OF POSITIVE/NEGATIVE RESPONSES IN HOMES LIVING IN POVERTY:

POVERTY: 1 TO 2 POS/NEG

HIGHER INCOME: 6 TO 1 POS/NEG



# LETTER TO THE TEACHER FROM THAT KID



## Dear Teacher,

"Teacher, I need you!

I know I am hard to handle, and I take everything you have. I know I push your buttons in all the right ways that make you second guess what you are doing. But I need you. I need you to keep pushing me. I need you to set limits and help me understand them.

I know you don't know me. I know if you did, we would get a long a lot better. But, please, teacher, I need you to fight to get to know me. I can't tell you with my words what I need you to know, so I might act out instead. Take that as my sign that I need you. You might be all I have.

I know you have 30 other kids in class. I know they need you too. But, teacher, I need you. I need you to find my good qualities because those other kids don't see them. My teacher last year didn't see them, and most days, if not all, I don't even see them.

I know I throw fits. I know I disrupt your class and what you had on your agenda for the day. But teacher, I need you to believe in me. I need you to believe that my actions are a cry for help, not an act against you. Please don't take it personally. I need you to believe that I want to fit in, but just don't know how.

I know I make it hard, but please, I need you. I need you to see me. I need you to see beyond that behavior, that meltdown, that action and I need you to see the kid behind all the "that's". You might be the only one that can get to the real me. It might take time, It might take patience. You know, it might even take learning about something you know nothing about. But, teacher, I need you! I need you to give it your all to see me.

I know you went into teaching to make a difference. I am here to tell you, I am that difference. I am the one that needs you! I promise, if you reach me, you will change my life. You will make a difference like no test can measure.

You might not see the difference today or tomorrow, but I promise, if you see that I need you, you will make a difference.

Please!

~ signed "That Kid"

COACH HELPS  
HOMELESS  
STUDENT...CHANGES  
HIS LIFE

