

SMITH FAMILY CASE EXAMPLE

Jada is a 31-year-old mother of three children. Trey is 8, Nick is 4, and Maria is 2. Jada was extremely excited for her first child to be born, and ensured she had consistent prenatal care and took care of herself. Trey was born healthy and happy. Shortly after Trey was born, Jada's relationship with his father, Will, became violent due to his sudden drug use. For the next six years, the family experienced frequent moves in low-income housing. Furthermore, they were frequently evicted and periodically homeless, due to Will's drug activity and violence that resulted in frequent police visits. Because of the moves, Nick was never in one daycare or preschool for long. Jada used alcohol to cope with her stress and trauma.

Nick was born prematurely and was hospitalized for several weeks. During his stay in NICU, Jada visited him, but spent much of her time caring for Trey at home. When Nick went home, he had difficulty nursing, and was hard to soothe. Nick's frequent crying irritated Will and he frequently verbally and physically lashed out at Jada. Jada made sure that domestic disputes between herself and Will were always taken to their bedroom so that Trey and Nick did not see the violence. During these few years, Jada, Trey, and Nick did not always have adequate, nutritious food, and there was gang activity in their neighborhood. There were frequently many people in and out of their apartments. Sometimes, Jada returned home from work when Will was supposed to be watching the children and she found them alone, or she found strangers watching television with the children.

When Nick was almost 2, Will was incarcerated, and after a short period of homelessness, Jada moved in with her mother and uncle, with whom the children already had a positive relationship. The three-bedroom house was small for the family, but the neighborhood was safe enough for Trey to walk to school and he joined a baseball team. Jada's uncle is a retired school teacher who helps coach Trey's baseball team, assists Trey with his homework, and is teaching Nick his letters and numbers. Jada's mother had a history of substance use, but has been clean for 15 years and is involved in AA/NA, and her local community center. She watches Nick when Jada is at her part-time job.

After moving, Jada reconnected with her high school sweetheart who had a steady job as a manager at an auto parts store, and she became pregnant with Maria. During her pregnancy, Jada did not use any substances, and continued to live with her mother and uncle. She experienced some depression and anxiety and sought outpatient counseling services at her doctor's suggestion. Maria was born full-term and met developmental milestones.