27 S’ of Attachment-Focused Parenting
Dan Hughes, Ph.D.

S’ to Increase

1. **Safety**: Presence, predictability, PACE

2. **Structure**: A gift, not a punishment, not rigid, reduces transition stress, “free time” is “anxiety time”

3. **Supervision**: A gift, not a punishment, a relaxed and aware presence

4. **Success**: Does not learn from mistakes; needs expectations to developmental age; shame associated with mistakes

5. **Self-Care**: The parents’ need for relationships, advocacy, services, successes, breaks; care for self if only to better care for child

6. **Soothing**: Gentle, gradual persistence, vicarious through stuffed animal; sooth with eyes, voice, touch when safe for child

7. **Smiling**: A positive attitude within home—the emotional atmosphere

8. **Story-Telling**: A manner of relating without lecture and reasoning. Having a rhythmic, modulated voice. ‘Sing-song’ quality when comforting

9. **Seeking-meaning**: What does the behavior mean? Make sense of it first before considering what to do

10. **Sense of Humor**: To generate hope, maintaining perspective, being close with children who are frightened by signs of affection

11. **Sensory Integration**: Associated with development of attachment in infancy; can facilitate attachment and can be developed with SI activities
12. **Stretching**: Being prepared to expand one's parental skills, interventions, to meet the unique needs of this child

13. **Sorry**: Modeling repairing the relationship after making a mistake; accepting responsibility for one's actions

14. **Sleep**: Crucial for functioning of all, Unique bedtime routines need to be created and protected. Traumatized children often have poor sleep for many reasons

15. **Soup**: A healthy comfort food. Food is both an emotional and physical confirmation of good care

16. **Special**: Your child has a special place in your mind and heart; and knows it

17. **Stamina**: Persistence, fortitude, in it for the duration, seeing the distant horizon

18. **Scaffolding**: Accepting your child where he is in the present; being ready to help him with his next developmental step

---

**S’ to Decrease**

1. **Shame**: Source of denial, opposition, rage, inability to trust and resolve trauma

2. **Stimulation**: Overstimulated by many routine, interesting, exciting events which then leads to dysregulated emotion, thinking, and behavior

3. **Shouting**: Habitual misbehaviors often lead to habitual anger, shouting, and negative emotional atmosphere. Necessary anger needs to be an “I-message” that is clear and brief and is immediately followed by repair; only used for major behavioral problems

4. **“Should”**: Advice from others to raise the child based on his chronological age

5. **Sarcasm**: Often a substitute for anger, which can be just as destructive

6. **Seclusion**: Isolation triggers abandonment. Prevents co-regulation of affect

7. **Smacking**: Likely to re-traumatize and prevent attachment

8. **Secrets**: Events from the past are shameful and frightening and met with avoidance and denial

9. **Shunning**: cold shoulder, ignore, ostracize