

Michael Activity

Read the vignette. Each group is going to come up with strategies to help calm that network of stress-related neurobiological structures in the brains of Michael and his parents we described earlier—the amygdala, hippocampus, hypothalamus, and the HPA axis to provide the support they need.

- **Group 1: Michael's stress-response system**
- **Group 2: Parents' stress-response systems**
- **Group 3: Your stress-response system** (to allow you to support Michael & childcare provider)

Vignette

Michael is an 18-month-old toddler who has been coming to a childcare program since he was 3 months old. He's been in his current classroom for just over 6 months. Michael has always had an abundance of energy, but lately it seems like he's "in overdrive," running around and crashing into people and objects.

In the past few weeks, he has also started hitting and biting other children in the classroom. In fact, one of the parents of another child recently complained about Michael being too aggressive. If Michael's biting and hitting doesn't get under control, the parent of this other child may complain to the director, jeopardizing Michael's attendance. The childcare provider tries talking with Michael's mom about the situation, but she seems irritable and distracted. Mom says that she's late for work and doesn't have time to discuss the problem right now.

After another challenging day dealing with Michael's disruptive behavior, it's finally pick-up time. Dad arrives to take Michael home. When the childcare provider talks to Dad about Michael's behavior, he seems almost angry, asking what she expects him to do about it, and isn't this how typical toddlers behave? He says he sees kids all the time worse than Michael. Dad goes on to share that he and Michael's mom have separated and are planning to divorce. They are living separately, so Michael is taking turns staying with each of his parents. Dad adds that the financial strain and emotional strain of the divorce have been worse than he imagined. After obtaining consent, the childcare provider shares this information with you to seek support for Michael's behavior in the classroom.

Your Group # _____

Strategies to Help Calm the Stress-Response System for _____