

# Effects of Trauma on Children and Adolescents

## **Trauma in Early Childhood**

Trauma in early childhood is associated with reduced cortex size, which is responsible for many important and complex functions, such as memory, attention, perceptual awareness, thinking, language, and consciousness.

It may also interfere with communication between the left and right hemisphere which:

- Affects IQ
- Alters the ability to regulate emotions
- Can lead to increased fearfulness
- May result in a reduced sense of safety

## **Trauma in School-age children**

In school-age children, trauma affects the development of specific brain regions. As a result of the disruption, this age group might exhibit:

- Sleep disturbances
- New learning difficulties
- Difficulty in controlling startle reactions
- And overly fearful or overly aggressive behavior

## **Trauma in Adolescents**

In adolescents, trauma can disrupt the development of the prefrontal cortex, which may increase their risk for:

- Reckless and risk-taking behavior
- Underachievement in school
- Poor choices
- Aggressive or delinquent activity