Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are preventable, traumatic events that occur in childhood, that can potentially lead to negative near- and long-term health outcomes (CDC, 2019).

Key Points:
- Trauma informed supports can mitigate the effects of adversity by fostering inclusion and helping families and children manage stress.
- Promoting positive social norms about parenting and acceptable parenting behaviors or destigmatizing mental health care can reduce the incidence and limit the harmful impact of ACEs.

How this factsheet can help prevent ACEs

The data presented are measures that influence the occurrence of ACEs, but they are not ACE scores. These measures help spot potential areas of improvement and make decisions on the best line of action.

Strategy 1: Increase life-skills training for school-aged children and youth.

Life skills curricula with a focus on social-emotional learning (SEL) can reduce peer violence and improve reading, writing, and math proficiency (CDC, 2019).

The table below shows the percentage of students that graduated high school by county. In each county, more than 50% of high school students graduated in 2020. Increasing life-skills training (with a focus on SEL) for school-aged children and youth can further improve academic achievements, such as graduation rates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>Not available*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worth</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell</td>
<td>79.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dougherty</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colquitt</td>
<td>87.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrell</td>
<td>88.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decatur</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grady</td>
<td>89.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminole</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calhoun</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Georgia Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (2019-2020)

*Baker County did not report graduation rates in 2019-2020. The graduation rate in 2018-2019 was 86.96%.

GA Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Plan (CANPP)

The data presented align with select strategies from the GA Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Plan (CANPP).

The following CANPP strategies were selected to implement by a team of community stakeholders:

1. Increase life-skills training for school-aged children and youth.
2. Promote trauma-informed training for all school personnel.

To learn more about the CANPP, visit: https://abuse.publichealth.gsu.edu/canpp/
Based on responses collected from the Georgia Student Health Survey, students have experienced anxiety, depression, and traumatic events, such as bullying and fighting. Traumatic events can impact school success, such as the ability to concentrate or make meaningful relationships (SAMHSA’s Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative, 2014).

Trauma-informed training can help school personnel identify and respond to the trauma students are experiencing. Training can include addressing implicit bias and understanding trauma-informed practices, empathy, prejudices, and attribution. This approach will facilitate the healing and recovery process for impacted students and help avoid re-traumatization (SAMHSA’s Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative, 2014).
Preventing the Impact of ACEs

The most impactful prevention strategies, such as those found in the CANPP, offer real solutions at the family, society, and community levels. Communities that have affordable housing, opportunities for economic mobility, and low occurrences of violence have the most potential to create healthy and vibrant environments where children can thrive. Policies and programs that promote early education, mental health, and caring relationships can lessen the stressful load some families experience and by doing so, limit exposure to and prevent the negative impact of ACEs.

Evidence-based Prevention Programs

Evidence based programs are scientifically proven to promote health and prevent disease. Listed here are just a few evidence-based programs that lessen the harms of ACEs:
- Green Dot: www.greendot.org
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters: www.bbbs.org
- Telamon GA Norman Park Migrant & Seasonal Head Start: www.telamon.org
- Thomasville Community Resource Center: www.tcrconline.org

Helpful Resources

- Belonging for Hope: www.belongingforhope.org
- Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Plan: abuse.publichealth.gsu.edu/canpp/
- Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences: www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/preventingace-datatoaction.html
- Prevent Child Abuse Georgia: abuse.publichealth.gsu.edu
- Essentials for Childhood: abuse.publichealth.gsu.edu/essentials/

Looking for more ACE and ACE-related data like the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS), Georgia Student Health Survey (GSHS), and other sources?

Visit our website at iprce.emory.edu/PACE-D2A.html