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 access to evidence-based or research-informed programs for parenting skills and support that help parents/caregivers understand all stages of their child’s development.

Adults that witnessed domestic violence between their parents are at greater risk of abusing their partner or children.

Between 18.0% and 19.5% of adults in this region, when they were 18 years old or younger, lived with parents or caregivers that slapped, hit, kicked, or punched each other.

Parenting skills are important to end generational cycles of violence. These skills support the development of healthy family relationships and reduce known risk factors for child abuse and neglect.

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 access to evidence-based or research-informed programs for parenting skills and support that help parents/caregivers understand all stages of their child’s development.
2. Expand efforts to develop safe and decent affordable housing for families.
3. Increase life-skills training for school-aged children and youth.

To learn more about the CANPP, visit: https://abuse.publichealth.gsu.edu/canpp/
**Strategy 2: Expand efforts to develop safe and decent affordable housing for families.**

Families facing financial hardships are more likely to experience stress which can lead to different forms of violence in the home. Policies that reduce financial pressures, such as housing costs, can improve family relationships.

The graph below shows the percentage of housing units that spend 30% or more of their monthly income on housing costs (including mortgage, rent payments, taxes, and insurance). It is recommended that a maximum of 30% of monthly income go towards housing costs; anything more represents a housing-cost burden. Up to a third of housing units in this region spend at least 30% of their monthly income on housing.


**Strategy 3: 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.

Data Source: Georgia Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (2019-2020)
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](http://www.greendot.org)
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters: [www.bbbs.org](http://www.bbbs.org)
- Georgia Division of Public Health- South Health District/ Baby Luv/PAT GA Strong Families Healthy Start: [https://southhealthdistrict.com/programs-services/project-baby-luv/](https://southhealthdistrict.com/programs-services/project-baby-luv/)
- Telamon GA Valdosta Migrant & Seasonal Head Start: [https://www.telamon.org/](https://www.telamon.org/)
- Action Pact (Atkinson, Bacon, Brantley, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Pierce, and Ware County Service Center): [https://www.myactionpact.org](https://www.myactionpact.org)
- Ben Hill County Head Start: [https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/](https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/)
- Berrien County/Nashville Head Start: [https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/](https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/)
- Brooks County Head Start: [https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/](https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/)
- BW Lester Head Start: [https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/](https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/)
- Cook County Head Start: [https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/](https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/)
- Hallmark Heights Head Start: [https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/](https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/)
- Irwin County Head Start: [https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/](https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/)
- Lanier County Head Start: [https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/](https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/)
- Lowndes Head Start: [https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/](https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/)
- R.L. Mack Head Start: [https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/](https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/)
- Turner County Head Start: [https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/](https://www.coastalplain.org/head-start/)

Helpful Resources

- Belonging for Hope: [www.belongingforhope.org](http://www.belongingforhope.org)
- Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Plan: [abuse.publichealth.gsu.edu/canpp/](http://abuse.publichealth.gsu.edu/canpp/)
- Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences: [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/preventingace-datatoaction.html](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/preventingace-datatoaction.html)
- Prevent Child Abuse Georgia: [abuse.publichealth.gsu.edu](http://abuse.publichealth.gsu.edu)
- Essentials for Childhood: [abuse.publichealth.gsu.edu/essentials/](http://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](http://iprce.emory.edu/PACE-D2A.html)