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.

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. Promote poverty-informed training for local and state policymakers.

To learn more about the CANPP, visit: https://abuse.publichealth.gsu.edu/canpp/

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.

Less than 15.5% 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.

Data Source: Georgia Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 2016 and 2018.
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 chart 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. More than a third of housing units in both counties spend at least 30% of their monthly income on housing.

![Housing Costs Chart]


Strategy 3: Promote poverty-informed training for local and state policymakers.

Social determinants, including poverty, influence health outcomes. Families facing financial hardships are more likely to experience stress which can lead to different forms of violence in the home (CDC, 2008).

The table below shows the percentage of children in families below 150% of the poverty level. The presentation of poverty levels further emphasizes that poverty-informed training is needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Percent of Children in Families Below 150% of the Poverty Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fulton</td>
<td>&lt;26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeKalb</td>
<td>27.0% - 34.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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
- Center for Black Women’s Wellness: www.cbww.org
- Families First: familiesfirst.org
- Latin American Association- Atlanta: thelaa.org
- New American Pathways: newamericanpathways.org
- North Fulton Child Development Association: cdakids.org
- Refugee Family Assistance Program: refugeefap.org
- Scottsdale Early Learning Center: scottsdale.org
- Sheltering Arms: shelteringarmsforkids.com
- YMCA/Chattahoochee Head Start Academy: www.ymcaatlanta.org
- Positive Growth, Inc: www.positivegrowthinc.org
- Mother’s Advocacy Program: www.mothersadvocacyproject.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 jprce.emory.edu/PACE-D2A.html