

# PREVENTING ACES - DATA FOR DECISION MAKING

DFCS Region 11: Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, Tift, Turner, and Ware Counties

## Adverse Childhood Experiences

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

### Key Points:

- Trauma-informed practices recognize and respond to the signs, symptoms, and risks of trauma to better support the needs of people who have experienced ACEs. Trauma-informed care is an approach defined by treating the whole person, considering past trauma and resulting behaviors and health outcomes (Resilient GA).
- 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.

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

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

1. Increase life-skills training for school-aged children and youth (e.g., financial literacy as a core competency).
2. Expand efforts to develop safe and decent affordable housing for families.
3. Expand substance-abuse prevention programs aimed at school-aged children and youth.
4. Expand access to affordable childcare for parents who are working or in school, especially for lower income and hourly-wage earning.
5. 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.

## How this factsheet can help prevent ACEs

The data presented are measures that influence the occurrence of ACEs. These measures represent potential targets for interventions and are presented to help communities make decisions on the best lines of action.



## Strategy 1: Increase life-skills training for school-aged children and youth (e.g., financial literacy as a core competency).

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

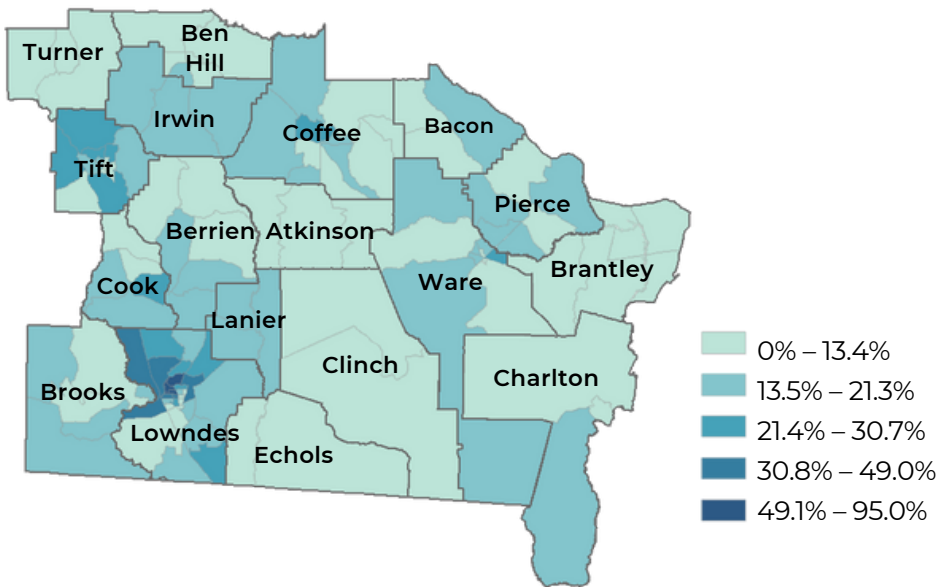
The tables on this page shows the percent of students that graduated high school on time by school district and the percent of adults 25 and older who earned a Bachelor's degree or higher. Increasing life-skills training (with a focus on SEL) for school-aged children and youth can further improve academic achievements, such as graduation rates and higher education, which can decrease the likelihood of ACEs (CDC 2019, 2021).



Percent of high school students who graduated on time, by school district

School District	Percent
Ben Hill County	82.61
Turner County	91.25
Irwin County	92.11
Tift County	93.32
Cook County	97.52
Berrien County	83.48
Brooks County	95.49
Valdosta City	95.28
Lowndes County	95.38
Echols County	96.00
Clinch County	85.00
Lanier County	92.00
Ware County	86.45
Atkinson County	95.74
Coffee County	92.59
Bacon County	92.86
Brantley County	88.84
Pierce County	93.86
Charlton County	97.09
<b>Georgia</b>	<b>83.7</b>

Percent of population 25+ with bachelor's degree or higher, by census tract



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimates (2017-2021)

Data Source: Governor's Office of Student Achievement (2021-2022 School Year)

## Strategy 2: Expand efforts to develop safe and decent affordable housing for families.

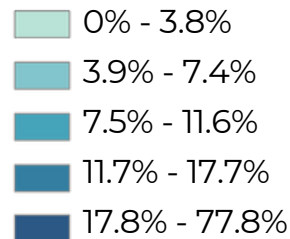
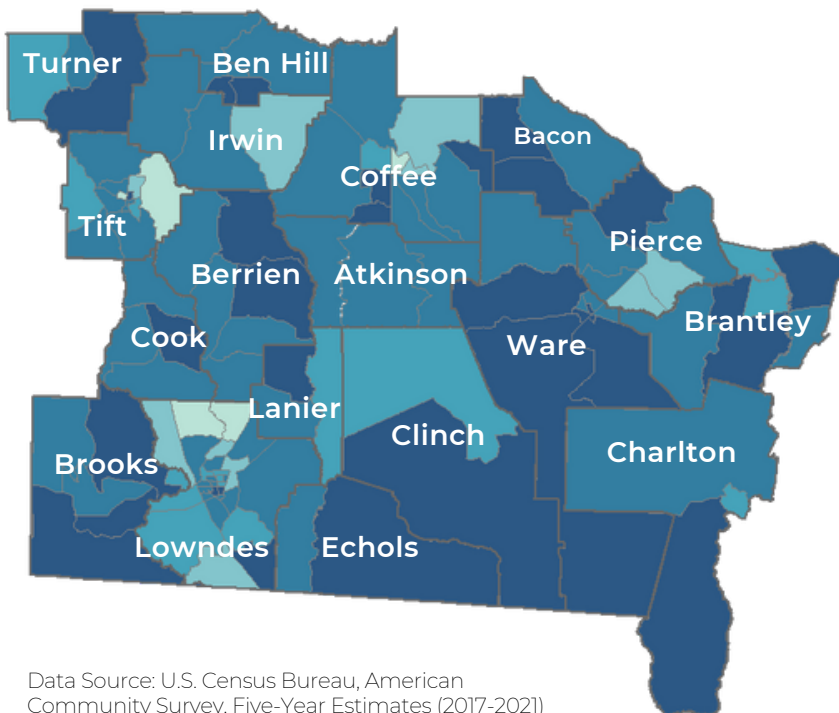
Poverty and economic instability create high stress environments and conditions that put children at risk of experiencing ACEs. High housing costs may make it difficult for families to cover costs for things like healthy food or medical care. It also leads to familial stress, mental health issues, and increased risk of disease (Healthy People 2030). Policies and programs that support economic stability by making housing, food, education, or healthcare more affordable or assisting with employment can reduce poverty and prevent ACEs.



Percent of renter households for whom gross rent (contract rent plus tenant-paid utilities) is 30% or more of household income., by county

County	Percent
Ben Hill	27.9
Turner	34.7
Irwin	37.5
Tift	36.7
Cook	38.1
Berrien	29.1
Brooks	40.6
Lowndes	45.0
Echols	16.3
Clinch	26.0
Lanier	50.8
Ware	46.3
Atkinson	32.8
Coffee	32.6
Bacon	27.0
Brantley	27.3
Pierce	33.7
Charlton	32.0
<b>Georgia</b>	<b>46.0</b>

Percent of housing units that are vacant, by census tract



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimates (2017-2021)

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimates (2017-2021)

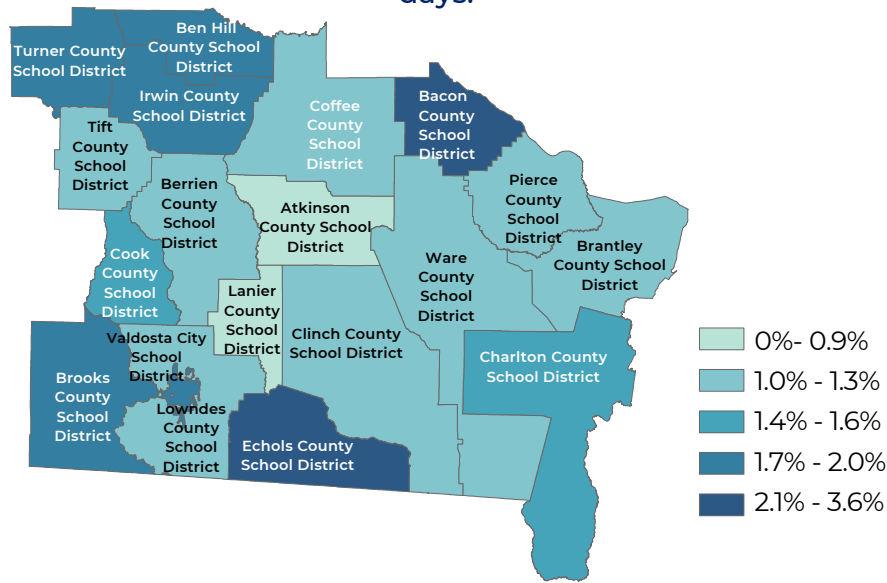
### Strategy 3: Expand substance-abuse prevention programs aimed at school-aged children and youth.

Children with a history of exposure to ACEs are at a higher risk of engaging in health-compromising behaviors such as alcohol or drug use (CDC 2019). Substance use can affect children for years, impacting their health and life opportunities.

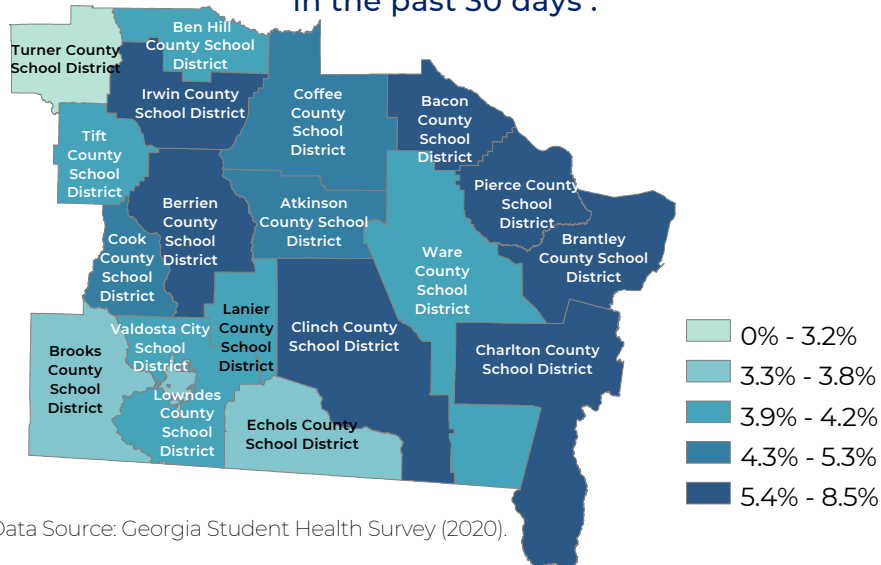
The CDC lists communities where families have access to mental health services as a protective factor against ACEs and their impacts (CDC, 2021). Family-centered treatment programs offering substance use disorder treatment and various preventative services can benefit both children and parents (CDC 2019). Treatments such as Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) and Multisystemic Therapy (MST) have both been shown to reduce symptoms of depression, anxiety, and behavioral problems (CDC 2019). These treatments and services are associated with improved child development, emotional and behavioral functioning, and parent mental health and parenting behaviors (CDC 2019).

The maps below show the percentage of 6th-12th grade students who reported methamphetamine use in the past 30 days and the percentage of 6-12 graders who reported having 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row in the past 30 days by school districts in this region.

Percent of 6th-12th grade students who reported having used methamphetamine in the past 30 days.



Percent of 6th-12th grade students who reported having had 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row in the past 30 days.



Data Source: Georgia Student Health Survey (2020).

**Strategy 4: Expand access to affordable childcare for parents who are working or in school, especially for lower income and hourly-wage earning.**

Poverty and economic instability create high stress environments and conditions that put children at risk of experiencing ACEs and can lead to toxic stress that may negatively impact cognitive processes and harm the nervous and immune systems. Access to affordable childcare reduces parental stress and maternal depression, and can prevent ACEs by increasing economic stability and family income, increasing maternal employment, and improving parents' ability to meet children's basic needs (CDC 2019).

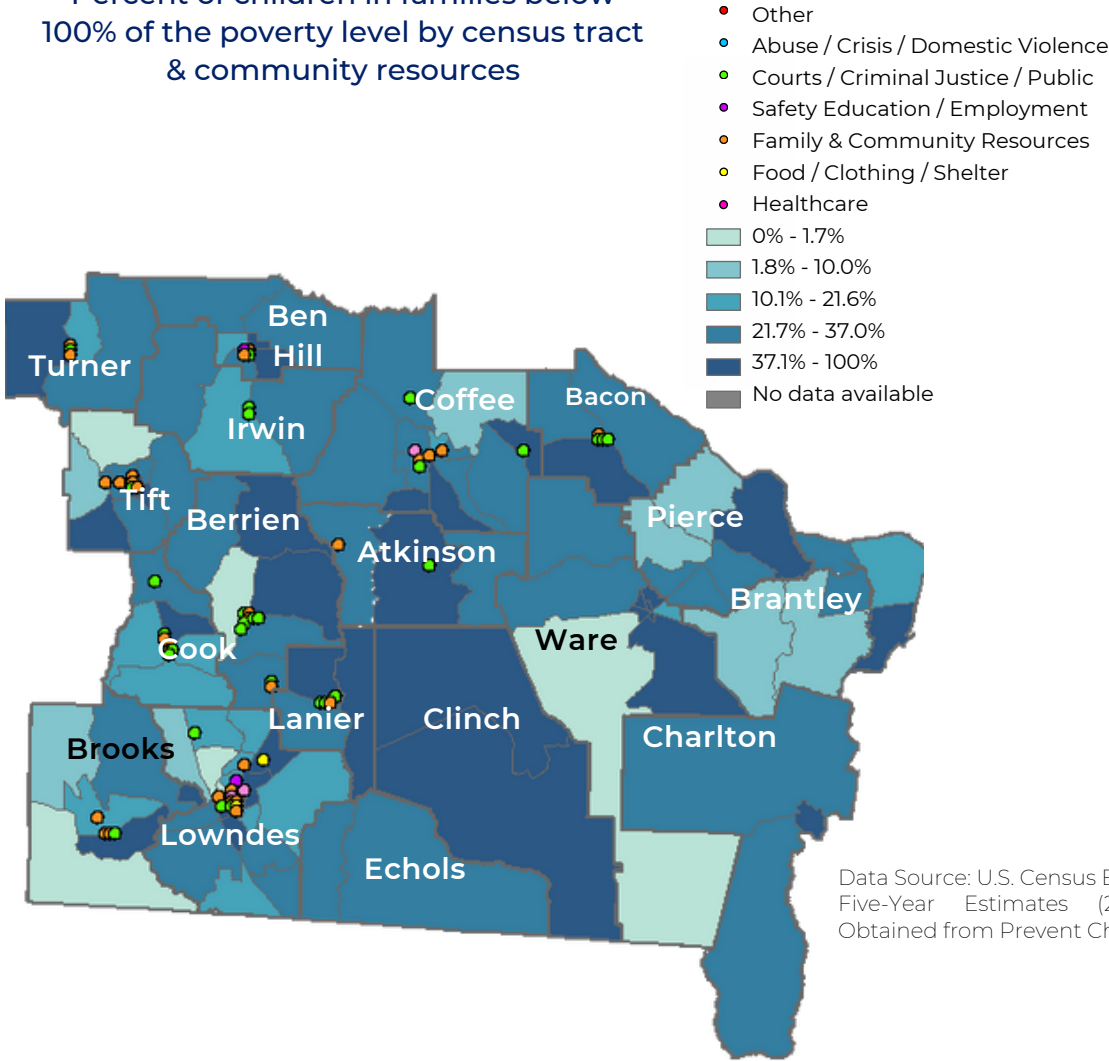
Children in poverty is high in this region. While the rate of child poverty in Brantley County is slightly below the Georgia average, half of the counties in Region 11 have a rate of child poverty of over 30%. Many counties in this region have more than one in five children in families that live below the poverty level.

Providing family supports, including affordable childcare, can prevent the occurrence of ACEs. The dots on the map below show the locations of community resources in the region.

**Percent of children in families below 100% of the poverty level, by county**

County	Percent
Ben Hill	38.1
Turner	41.6
Irwin	20.9
Tift	34.3
Cook	24.1
Berrien	27.0
Brooks	30.5
Lowndes	30.4
Echols	26.9
Clinch	38.7
Lanier	27.0
Ware	39.7
Atkinson	43.7
Coffee	33.0
Bacon	30.7
Brantley	18.0
Pierce	28.7
Charlton	33.4
<b>Georgia</b>	<b>19.6</b>

**Percent of children in families below 100% of the poverty level by census tract & community resources**



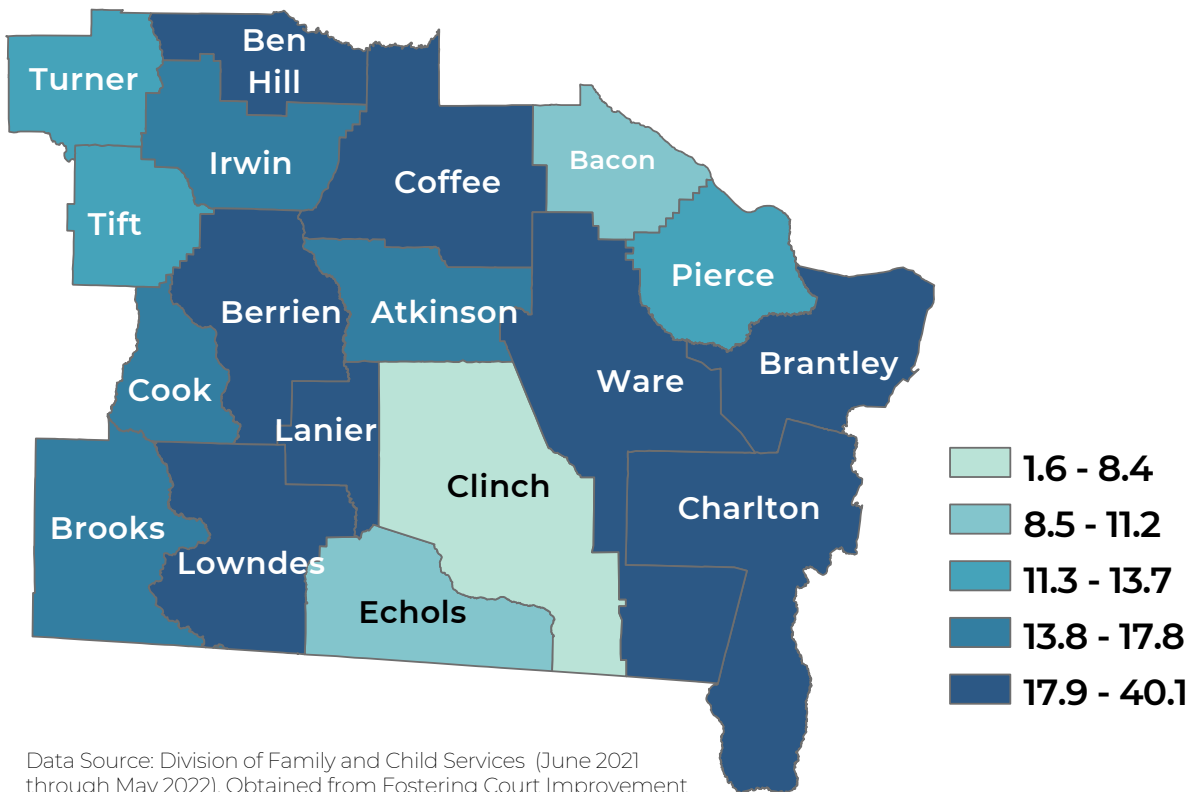
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimates (2017-2021) Community Resources Obtained from Prevent Child Abuse Georgia

**Strategy 5: 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.**

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. [PEACH Parenting](#) is a site that parents can use access information and resources designed to help them become stronger parents. Here, they will learn ways to adapt to stress by responding in healthy ways so that they can provide better care to their children.

Providing **family supports**, parenting programs, can prevent the occurrence of child maltreatment and ACEs. The dots on the map below show the locations of community resources in the region. Prevent Child Abuse Georgia is an organization that works to increase public awareness of child abuse prevention and recognition of suspected child abuse and neglect cases. Click [here](#) to learn more about their public trainings. Find supportive family resources at [Find Help Georgia](#).

Maltreatment investigations per 10,000 children, by county



## 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:

- **Dating Matters:** [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/datingmatters/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/datingmatters/index.html)
- **Green Dot:** [www.greendot.org](http://www.greendot.org)
- **Safe Care:** Children First, Inc., [www.childrenfirst-inc.org](http://www.childrenfirst-inc.org)
- **Ware County Family Connection:** <https://ware.gafcp.org>
- **Parents As Teachers:** Clarke County Schools, [www.clarke.k12.ga.us](http://www.clarke.k12.ga.us); [www.parentsasteachers.org](http://www.parentsasteachers.org)
- **Lanier County Family Connection:** <https://www.lanierfamilyconnection.com/>
- **Communities in Schools Ben Hill County:** <https://cisbenhill.org/>

## Helpful Resources

- **Find Help GA:** <https://findhelpga.org/>
- **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/)
- **Peach Parenting:** <https://peachparenting.org/>
- **DECAL Developmental Milestones:** <https://development.decal.ga.gov/#/>
- **Georgia System of Care:** <https://gasystemofcare.org/>
- **Resilient Georgia:** <https://www.resilientga.org/>



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)

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021,). Risk and protective factors. Violence Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/riskprotectivefactors.html>

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Healthy People 2030. Housing and Homes. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/housing-and-homes>

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