

PREVENTING ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES - DATA FOR DECISION MAKING

DFCS Region #2: Banks, Dawson, Forsyth, Franklin, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union, and White Counties

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:

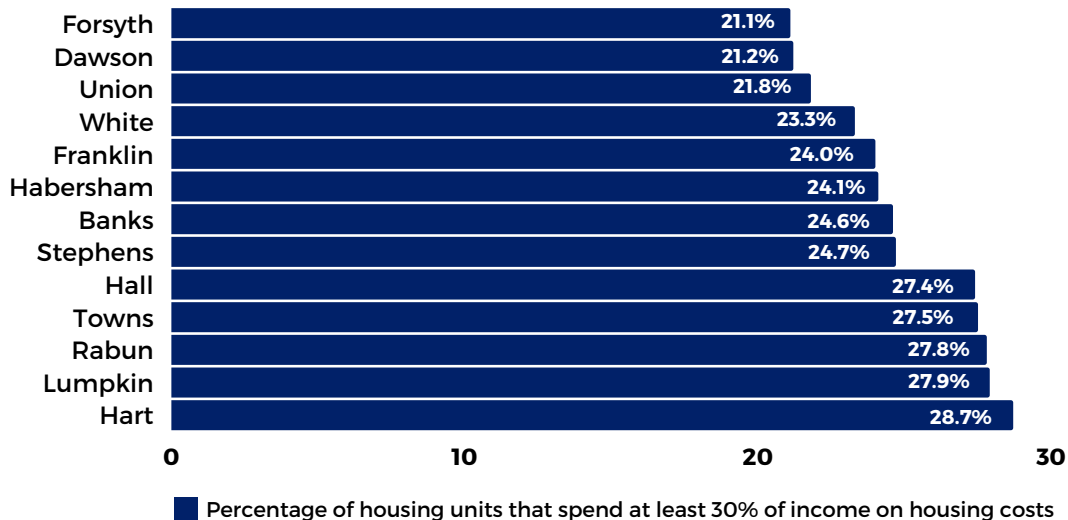
1. Expand efforts to develop safe and decent affordable housing for families.
2. Expand trauma-informed practices and resources across the state as well as increase understanding about the prevalence and impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and adverse community environments (jointly referred to as the Pair of ACEs).
3. Increase community knowledge and awareness of the incidence and long-term impact of childhood abuse and neglect, as well as how to accurately recognize and report suspected cases.

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

Strategy 1: 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. Less than a third of housing units in all counties spend at least 30% of their monthly income on housing.



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimates (2015-2019)

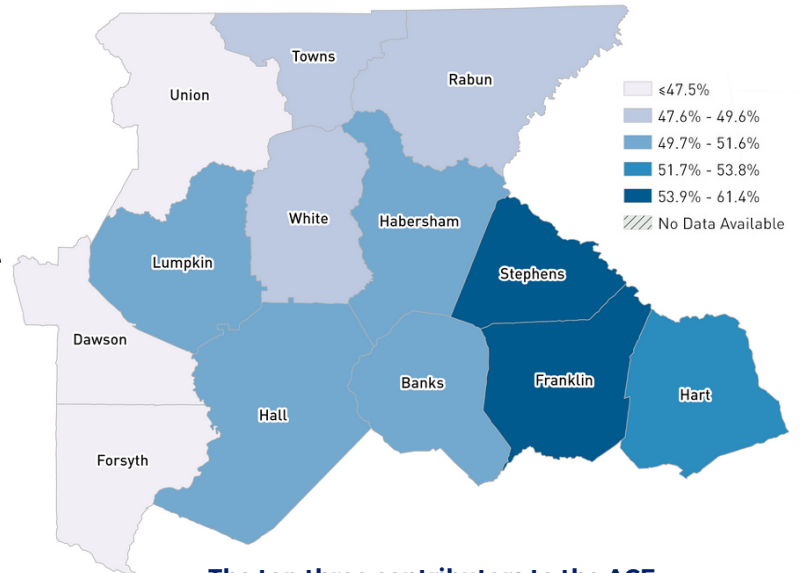
Strategy 2: Expand trauma-informed practices and resources across the state as well as increase understanding about the prevalence and impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and adverse community environments (jointly referred to as the Pair of ACEs).

Students in this region have self-reported experiencing anxiety, depression, and traumatic events like bullying and fighting. These events can impact the ability to concentrate in school or make meaningful positive relationships. Promoting trauma-informed training can help school personnel identify and respond to the trauma students are experiencing. Trauma-informed practices can create a more inclusive school environment that fosters resilience and supports positive childhood experience.

The map to the right shows the percentage of students in grades 6-12 who were above the state median of a composite score that reflects student behaviors associated with ACEs. The measures considered in the composite score are from the Georgia Student Health Survey (2019) and are related to the behaviors - bullying, fighting, substance use, anxiety/depression, and self-harm. **A higher percentage represents a greater rate of students in grades 6-12 reporting behaviors that have been associated with ACEs or that are ACEs.**

Interventions that address these behaviors (i.e., bullying, fighting, etc.) will have the greatest effect on reducing the ACE composite score.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Essentials for Childhood: Steps to Create Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships and Environments SAMHSA's Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative, 2014.



The top three contributors to the ACE composite score by county (in order).

- (Banks) Anxiety/Depression, Bullying, and Self-Harm
- (Dawson) Anxiety/Depression, Bullying, and Self-Harm
- (Forsyth) Anxiety/Depression, Bullying, and Self-Harm
- (Franklin) Anxiety/Depression, Bullying, and Self-Harm
- (Habersham) Anxiety/Depression, Bullying, and Self-Harm
- (Hall) Anxiety/Depression, Bullying, and Self-Harm
- (Hart) Anxiety/Depression, Bullying, and Fighting
- (Lumpkin) Anxiety/Depression, Bullying, and Self-Harm
- (Rabun) Anxiety/Depression, Bullying, and Self-Harm
- (Stephens) Anxiety/Depression, Bullying, and Self-Harm
- (Towns) Anxiety/Depression, Bullying, and Fighting
- (Union) Anxiety/Depression, Bullying, and Self-Harm
- (White) Anxiety/Depression, Bullying, and Fighting

Data Source: Georgia Student Health Survey

Strategy 3: Increase community knowledge and awareness of the incidence and long-term impact of childhood abuse and neglect, as well as how to accurately recognize and report suspected cases.

The table to the right shows the number of children subject of maltreatment investigations at the county level in 2019. While the numbers vary from 3.7 to 20.0 per 10,000 children, any level of maltreatment is worrisome. These data help bring attention to the incidence of child abuse and neglect in this 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 by calling the 1-800-CHILDREN Helpline (244-5373)

County	Number of Maltreatment Investigations per 10,000 children
Forsyth	3.7
Hall	10.0
Habersham	10.4
Towns	11.2
Rabun	11.7
Banks	12.2
Dawson	13.9
Union	14.2
Lumpkin	17.3
Hart	17.5
White	17.8
Stephens	19.3
Franklin	20.0

Data Source: Georgia Division of Family and Children Services, Cases of Abuse and Neglect by County, 2019

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
- **Green Dot:** www.green-dot.org
- **Big Brothers, Big Sisters:** www.bbbs.org
- **Family Resource Center of Northeast Georgia / Prevent Child Abuse Habersham:** <https://frcofneg.org/>
- **Forsyth County Visitation and Family Life Center (Supporting Adoption & Foster Families Together):** <https://safst.org/>
- **Harmony House Child Advocacy Center- Franklin Springs:** <https://harmonyhousecacsac.org/>
- **Lumpkin County PAT/ Lumpkin County Schools**
- **White County Family Connection:** <http://white.gafcp.org/>
- **Ninth District Opportunity, Inc.:** <http://www.ndo.org>
- **Sisu Integrated Early Learning:** <https://www.mysisu.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