

PREVENTING ACES - DATA FOR DECISION MAKING

DFCS Region 5: Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Greene, Jackson, Madison, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Rockdale, and Walton 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. Expand trauma-informed practices and resources and increase understanding about the prevalence and impact of ACEs and adverse community environments.
2. 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.
3. Decrease family violence through the adoption and promotion of evidence-based practices and approaches.
4. Expand efforts to develop safe and decent affordable housing for families.

How this factsheet can help prevent ACEs

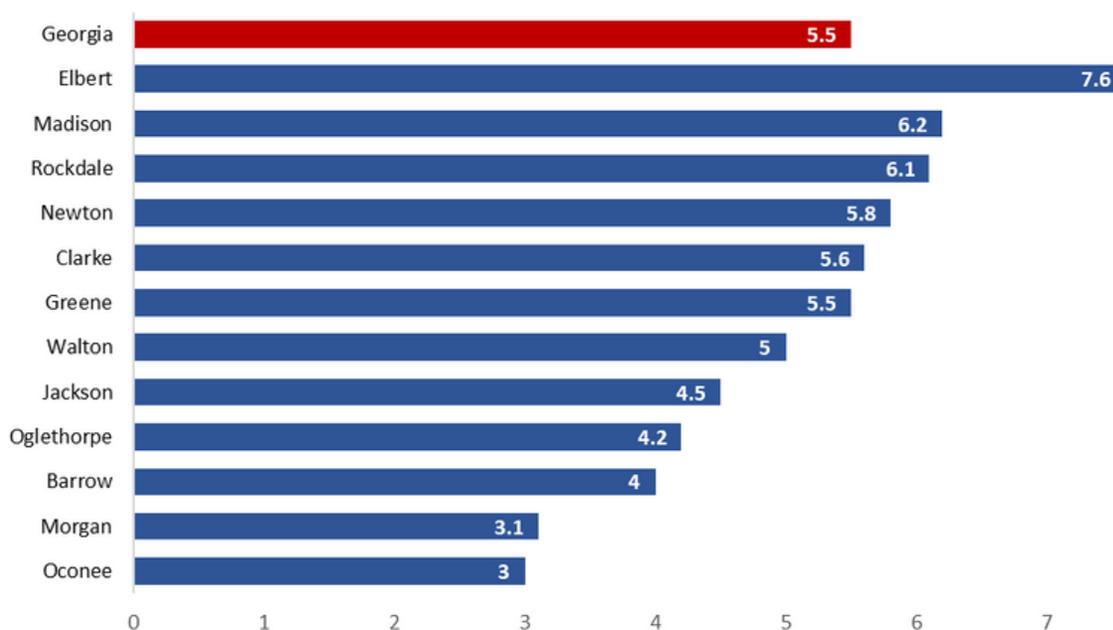
The data presented are measures that influence the occurrence of ACEs. These measures represent potential targets for interventions and are presented to help communities make decisions on the best lines of action.



Strategy 1: Expand trauma-informed practices and resources and increase understanding about the prevalence and impact of ACEs and adverse community environments.

Adverse Community Environments, such as widespread unemployment, community violence, systemic racism and discrimination, and limited access to social and economic mobility create high stress environments and conditions in which ACEs are more likely to occur. Since the community conditions in which a person grows up also impact adversity and trauma, Adverse Community Environments and Adverse Childhood Experiences are closely linked. ACEs tend to thrive in communities affected by these Adverse Community Environments, so addressing these social factors is an important step in ACE prevention (PCA GA).

Percent of population 16 years and older who are unemployed, by county



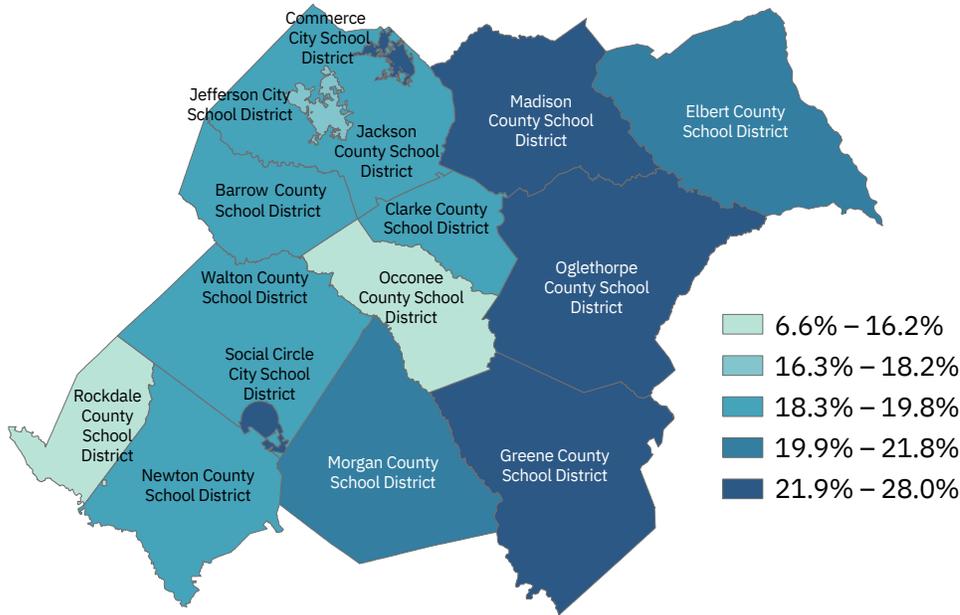
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimates (2017-2021).

Students in this region have self-reported experiencing anxiety, depression, and traumatic events like bullying and fighting, etc. These events can impact the ability to concentrate in school or make meaningful positive relationships. **Bullying, fighting, and substance use** are behaviors that are strongly associated with ACEs.

Improving mental health access for children and providing them with strong support systems are powerful ways to prevent these outcomes. For instance, connecting students to supportive adults through mentorship programs, involvement in religious activities, or after school programs or activities can promote feelings of belonging and engagement in school and decrease the occurrence of these mental health challenges (CDC 2019). 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 (PCA GA).

In Region 1, Bullying was common, with nearly a quarter of students reporting having been bullied or threatened at school in some districts. Having had 5 or more alcoholic drinks in a row (within a couple of hours) in the past 30 days was strongly associated with other behaviors involving the use of drugs and alcohol.

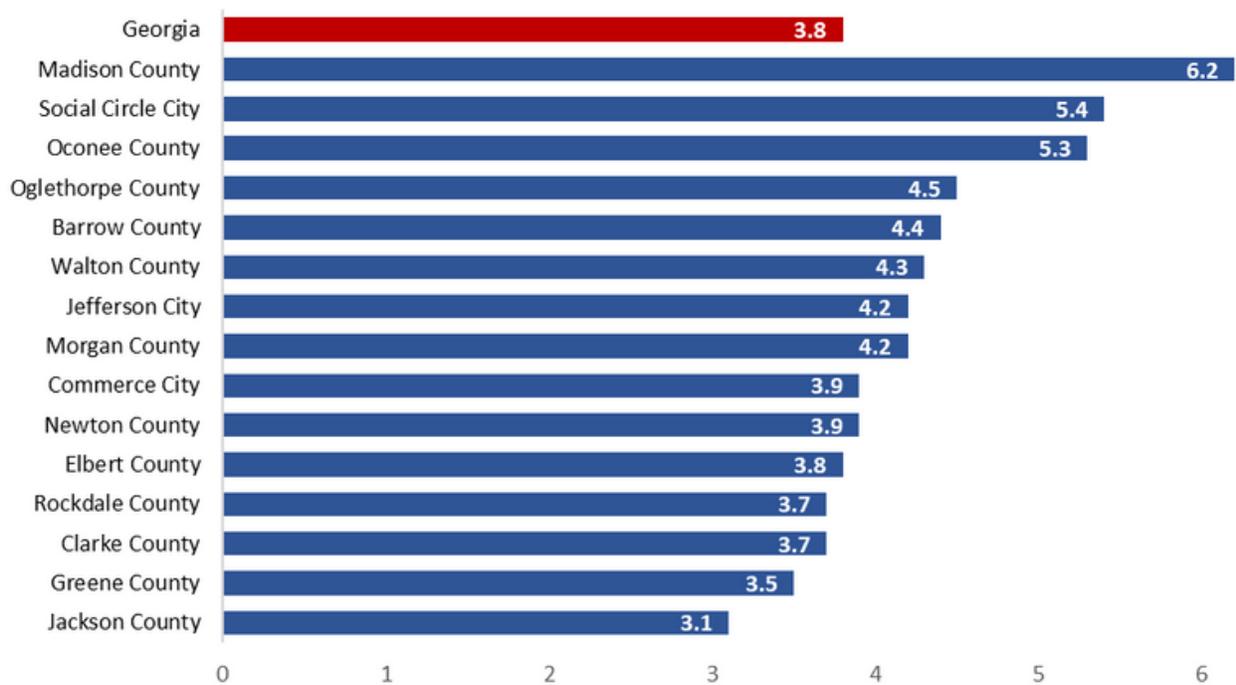
Percent of 6th-12th grade students who reported having been bullied or threatened by other students, by school district



School District	Percent
Oconee County	15.8
Rockdale County	16
Jefferson City	16.8
Walton County	18.8
Newton County	18.9
Barrow County	19.4
Clarke County	19.6
Jackson County	19.6
Morgan County	20.4
Elbert County	21.3
Social Circle City	21.9
Madison County	22.0
Commerce City	22.1
Greene County	22.5
Oglethorpe County	22.7
Georgia	17.3

Data Source: Georgia Student Health Survey (2020).

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



Data Source: Georgia Student Health Survey (2020).

Strategy 2: 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.

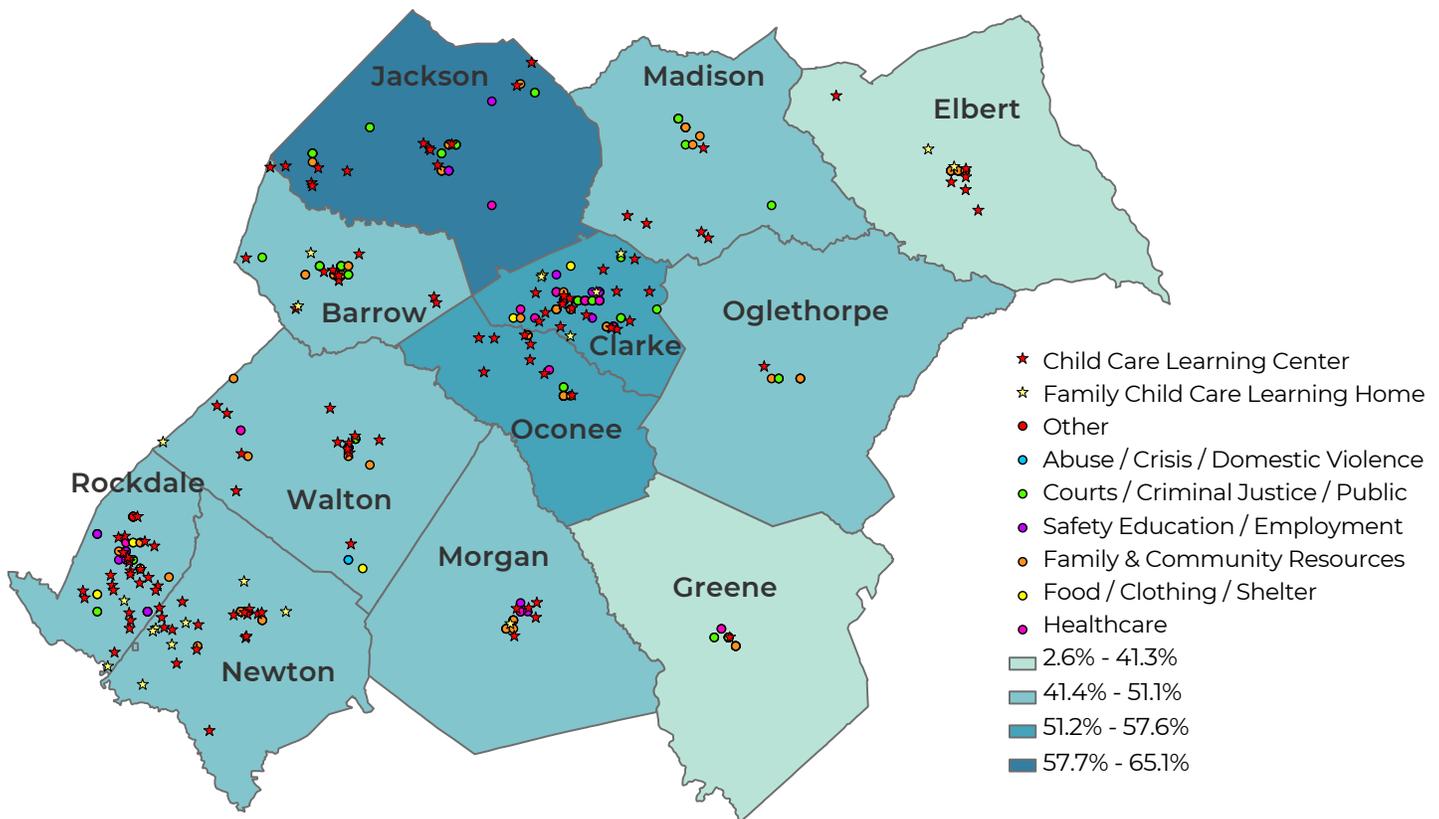
Parenting skills are important to end generational cycles of violence. These skills support the development of healthy family relationships and reduce known risk factors for child abuse and neglect. **PEACH Parenting** is a site that parents can use access information and resources designed to help them 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, such as parenting programs, can prevent the occurrence of ACEs. The dots on the map below show the locations of **community resources** in the region and the stars show quality-rated early education programs.

Percent of 3- and 4-year-olds not in preschool, by county

County	Percent
Greene	25.5
Elbert	31.1
Rockdale	43.0
Morgan	45.0
Walton	45.0
Barrow	48.2
Madison	48.4
Newton	49.0
Oglethorpe	51.0
Oconee	53.9
Clarke	54.0
Jackson	62.0
Georgia	50.9

Percent of 3- and 4-year-olds not in preschool, by county, quality-rated early education programs, & community resources



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Five Year Estimates (2016-2020). Obtained from Kids Count Data Center. Quality-Rates Early Education Programs obtained from Prevent Child Abuse Georgia.

Strategy 3: Decrease family violence through the adoption and promotion of evidence-based practices and approaches.

Communities with high rates of poverty and limited educational and economic opportunities is a risk factor for child maltreatment (CDC 2021). Increasing economic supports can reduce child abuse and neglect by improving parents' ability to satisfy children's basic needs, provide developmentally appropriate child care, and reduce parental stress and depression (Fortson et al 2016).

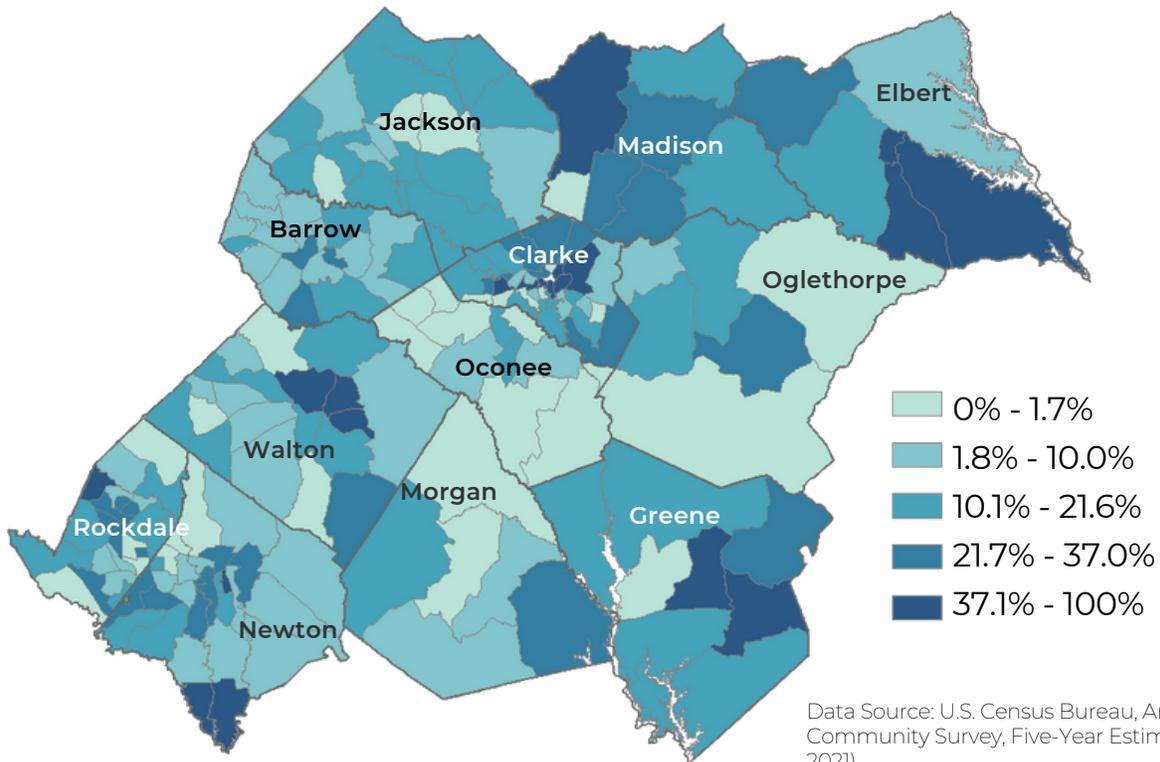
ACEs and associated social determinants of health like poverty can cause toxic stress. Some children may face further exposure to toxic stress from historical and ongoing traumas due to the impacts of multigenerational poverty resulting from limited educational and economic opportunities. This toxic stress can negatively impact cognitive processes, and harm the nervous and immune systems (CDC 2022). Trauma-informed practices and resources can help mitigate the harmful impact of toxic stress.

Children in poverty varies widely in this region, ranging from 4.6% (Oconee) to 38.2% (Elbert).

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

County	Percent
Oconee	4.6
Morgan	7.1
Jackson	10.6
Barrow	13.2
Newton	16.1
Oglethorpe	16.6
Walton	17.0
Rockdale	17.2
Clarke	25.3
Greene	28.9
Madison	31.5
Elbert	38.2
Georgia	19.6

Percent of children in families below 100% of the poverty level, by census tract



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

Maltreatment investigations per 10,000 children, by county

County	Percent
Oconee	5.2
Barrow	6.2
Jackson	8.3
Morgan	8.8
Rockdale	9.0
Newton	9.1
Greene	12.0
Walton	12.3
Oglethorpe	13.6
Madison	15.3
Elbert	15.7
Clarke	17.3
Georgia	10.8

Data Source: Division of Family and Child Services (June 2021 through May 2022). Obtained from Fostering Court Improvement

The chart to the left shows the number of children subject of maltreatment investigations at the county level in 2020. While the numbers vary from 5.2 to 17.3 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 at [Find Help Georgia](#).



Strategy 4: Expand efforts to develop safe and decent affordable housing for families.

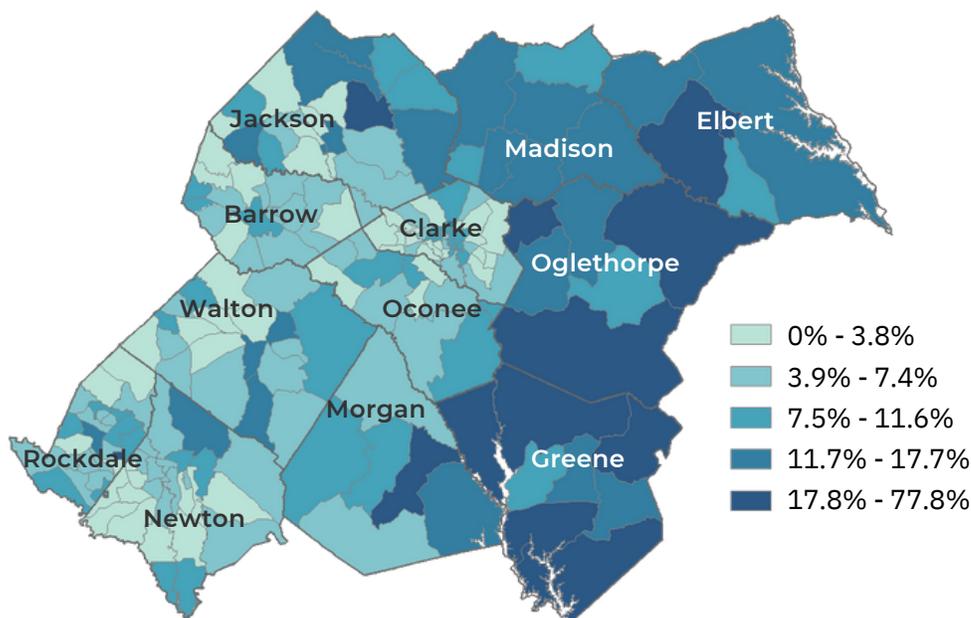
Poverty and economic instability create high stress environments and conditions that put children at risk of experiencing ACEs. High housing costs may make it difficult for families to cover costs for things like healthy food or medical care. It also leads to familial stress, mental health issues, and 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
Oconee	30.2
Morgan	33.0
Elbert	34.7
Jackson	35.5
Greene	39.1
Madison	41.4
Oglethorpe	43.6
Barrow	44.0
Walton	46.4
Rockdale	49.6
Newton	51.1
Clarke	52.3
Georgia	46.0

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

Percent of Housing Units that are Vacant, by Census Tract



Data Source: American Community Survey (2017-2021).

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.

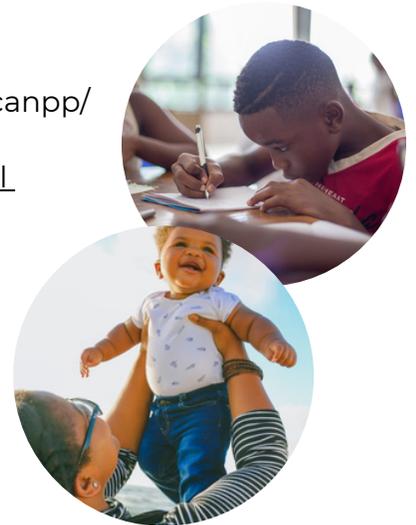
Evidence-based Prevention Programs

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.greendot.org
- Children First, Inc.: www.childrenfirst-inc.org
- Morgan County Family Connection: <https://morgan.gafcp.org/>
- Head Start/Early Head Start: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>
- ACTION, Inc.: www.actionathens.org/morgan-county

Helpful Resources

- Find Help GA: <https://findhelpga.org/>
- 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/
- Peach Parenting: <https://peachparenting.org/>
- DECAL Developmental Milestones: <https://development.decal.ga.gov/#/>
- Georgia System of Care: <https://gssystemofcare.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

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