

PREVENTING ACES - DATA FOR DECISION MAKING

DFCS Region 6: Baldwin, Bibb, Crawford, Houston, Jasper, Jones, Monroe, Peach, Putnam, Twiggs, & Wilkinson 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 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.
2. Expand local collaborations and advocacy across sectors (i.e., nonprofit, government, faith, business) aimed at strengthening families, developing solutions to local challenges, and identifying champions for promoting prevention policies.
3. Promote resilience strategies for children and youth (e.g., stress management, coping, skills development, problem-solving, skills 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.

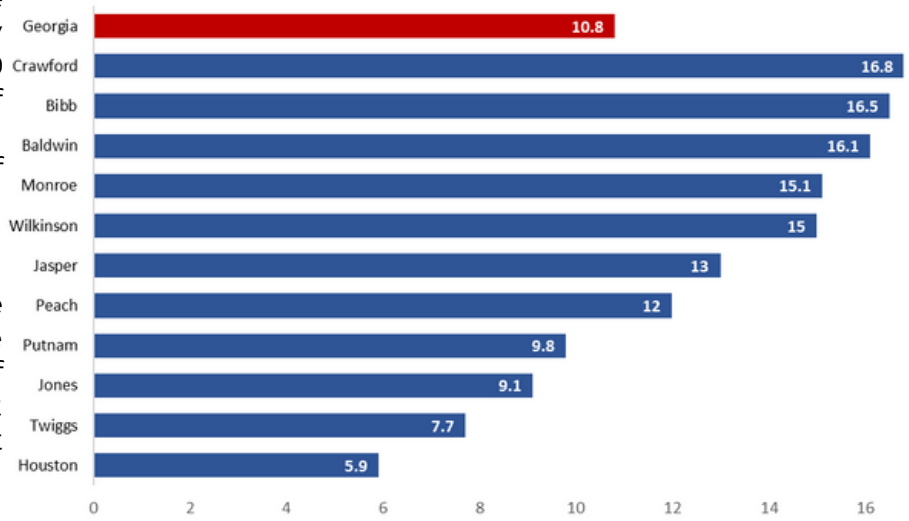


Strategy 1: Increase community knowledge and awareness of the incidence and long-term impact of childhood abuse and neglect, as well as how to accurately recognize and report suspected cases.

The chart to the right shows the number of children subject of maltreatment investigations at the county level in from June 2021 to May 2022. While the numbers vary from 5.9 to 16.8 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.

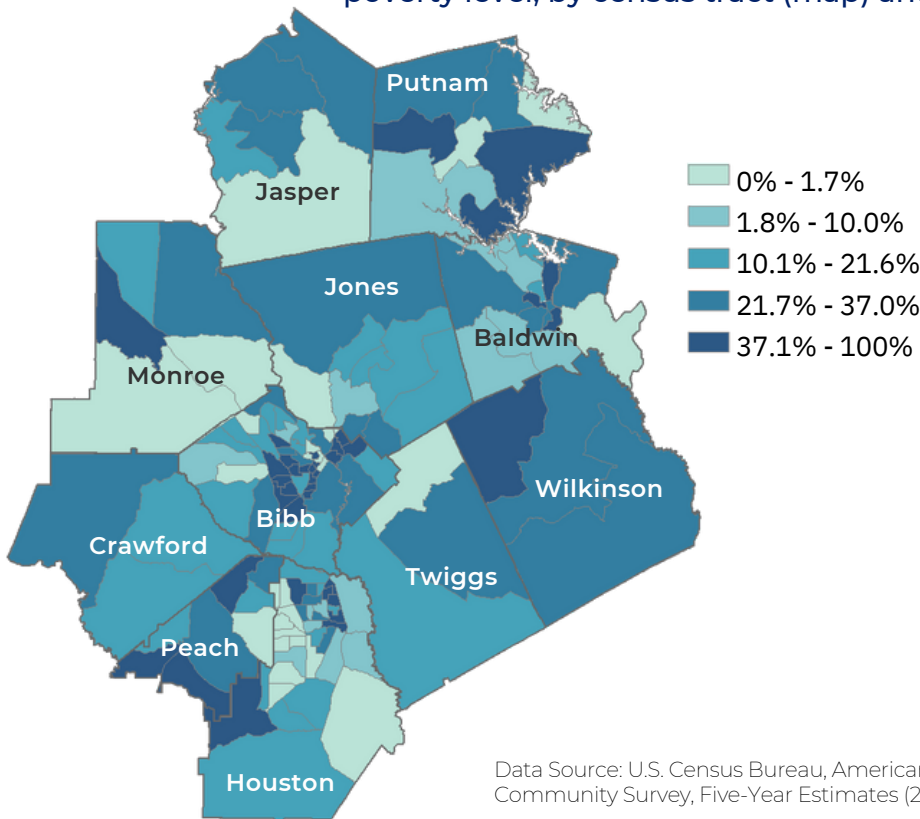
Maltreatment investigations per 10,000 children, by county



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

Experiencing poverty can place a lot of stress on families, which may increase the risk for child abuse and neglect. Poverty also increases barriers to accessing prevention resources for child abuse and neglect, such as employment opportunities, adequate housing, and access to health care and social services (CDC 2016). Rates of child abuse and neglect are 5 times higher for children in families with low socioeconomic status (CDC 2022). Children living in poverty varies widely in Region 6, and several counties in this region have over 1 in 4 children living below the poverty level.

Percent of children in families below 100% of the poverty level, by census tract (map) and county (table)



County	Percent
Houston	12.8
Twiggs	13.2
Monroe	16.9
Crawford	18.5
Jasper	18.9
Jones	19.3
Baldwin	23.7
Peach	29.4
Putnam	33.1
Bibb	38.3
Wilkinson	40.6
Georgia	19.6

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

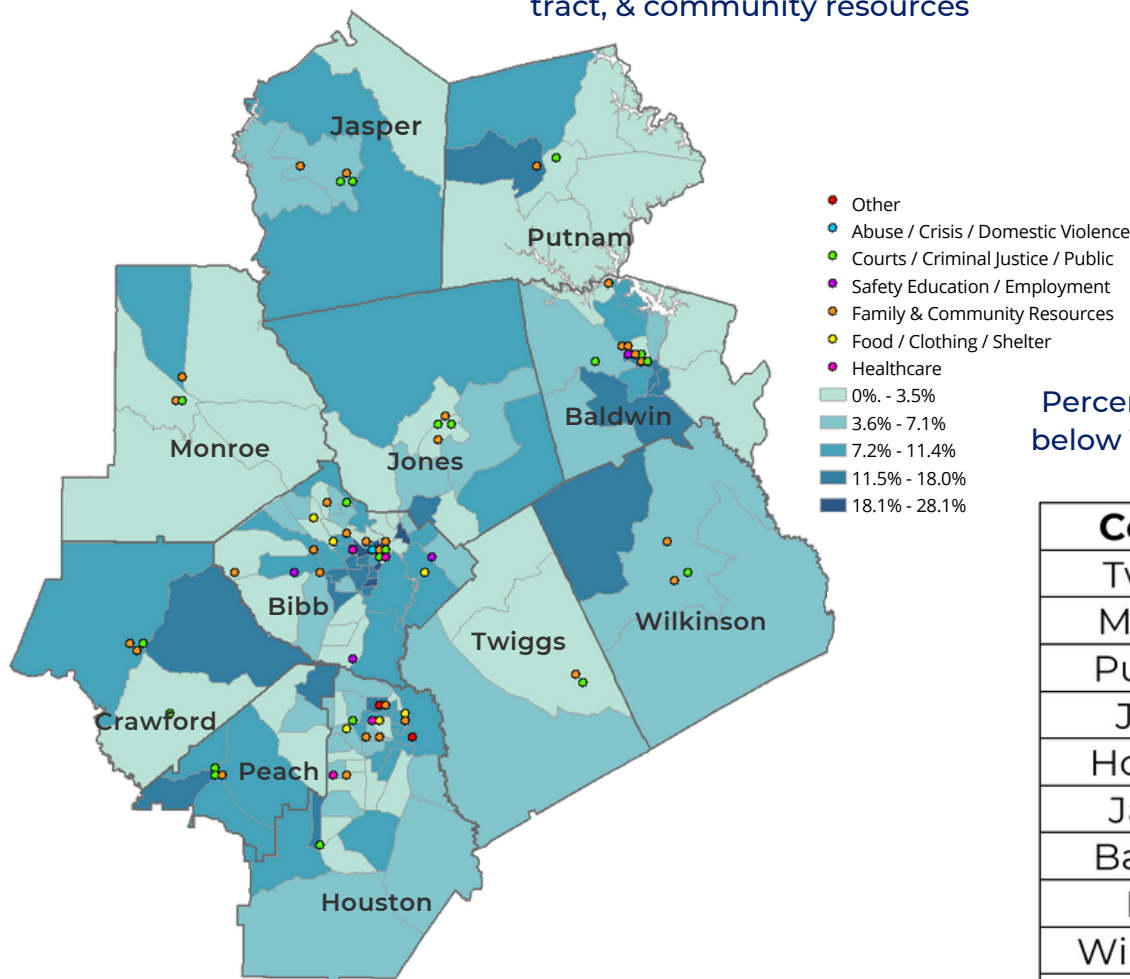
Strategy 2: Expand local collaborations and advocacy across sectors (i.e., nonprofit, government, faith, business) aimed at strengthening families, developing solutions to local challenges, and identifying champions for promoting prevention policies.

Cross-sector collaboration occurs when various community organizations come together to share their expertise to solve local issues in the community they serve. Strong cross-sector partnerships can address issues of physical health, behavioral health, and social determinants of health that are impacting the health of the community by developing solutions to local challenges and identifying champions for promoting prevention policies.

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. 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. Providing family supports, including employment or housing assistance, can prevent the occurrence of ACEs. The dots on the map below show the locations of community resources in the region.

[Find Help Georgia](#) is an online search tool to help find financial assistance, food pantries, medical care, child care, job training, and other free or reduced-cost services across Georgia. This tool can help identify the potential opportunities for collaboration across services and programs.

Percent of population 16 years and older who are unemployed, by census tract, & community resources

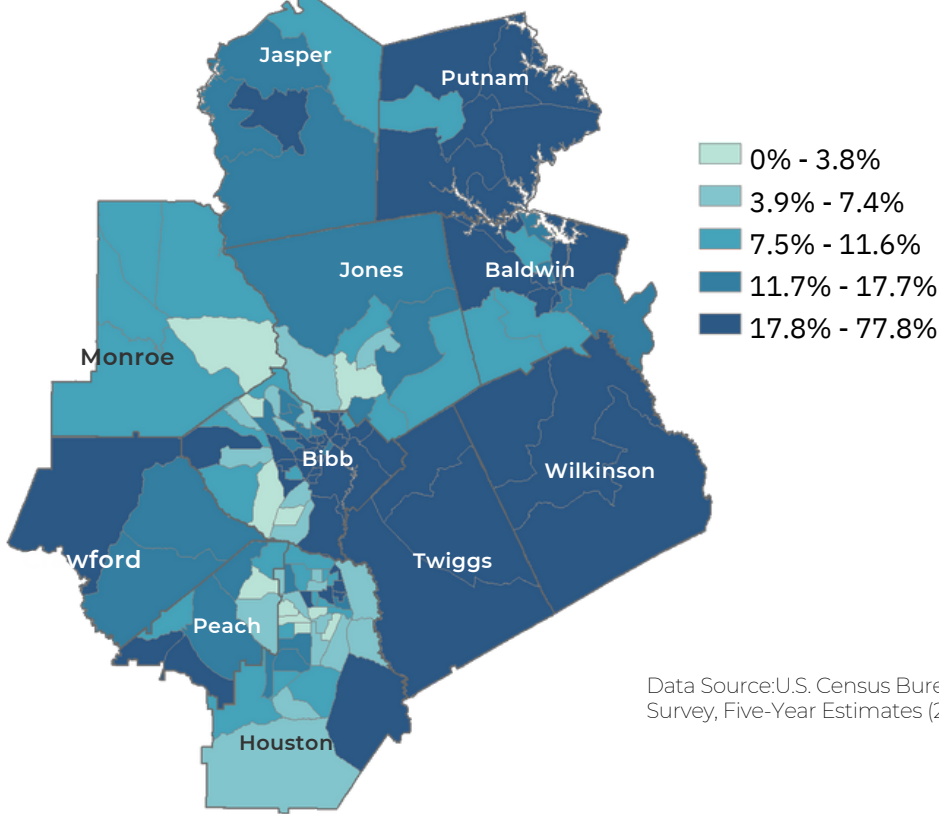


Percent of children in families below 100% of the poverty level by county

County	Percent
Twiggs	3.1
Monroe	4.1
Putnam	4.3
Jones	5.1
Houston	5.4
Jasper	5.6
Baldwin	7.6
Bibb	7.7
Wilkinson	8.2
Peach	8.7
Crawford	9.8
Georgia	5.5

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

Percent of housing units that are vacant, by census tract



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
Twiggs	20.9
Crawford	26.8
Monroe	34.4
Putnam	38.7
Jasper	39.1
Wilkinson	39.1
Houston	42.4
Jones	45.5
Peach	45.8
Baldwin	49.4
Bibb	52.5
Georgia	46.0

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

Strategy 3: Promote resilience strategies for children and youth (e.g., stress management, coping skills development, problem-solving skills development).

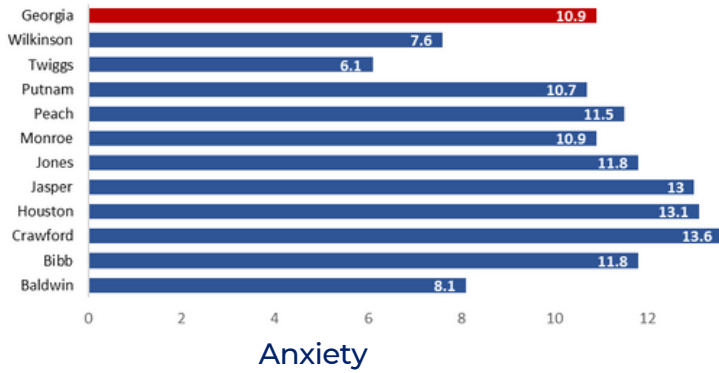
Students in this region have self-reported experiencing anxiety, depression, and traumatic events like bullying and fighting. These events can impact the ability to concentrate in school or make meaningful positive relationships. **Bullying, fighting, depression and anxiety, and substance use** are behaviors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

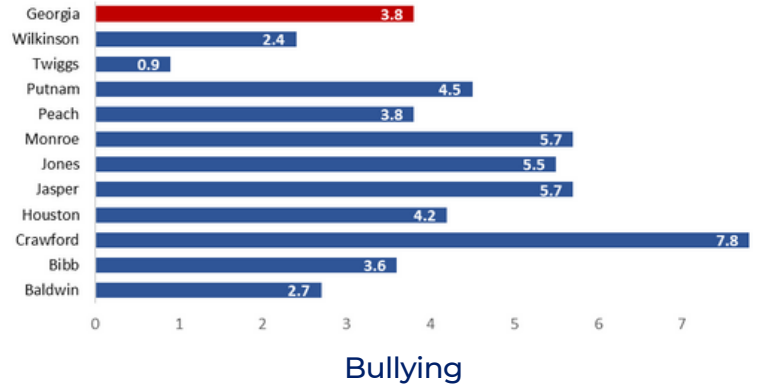
The charts below show Region 6 responses to several Georgia Student Health Survey questions pertaining to mental health: Percent of 6th-12th grade students who reported having been bullied or threatened by other students (Bullying); Percent of 6th-12th grade students who reported having experienced intense anxiety, worries or fears that got in the way of daily activities in the past 30 days (Anxiety); Percent of 6th-12th grade students who reported having had 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row in the past 30 days (5+ drinks); and During the past 12 months, have you seriously considered attempting suicide? (Considered Suicide).



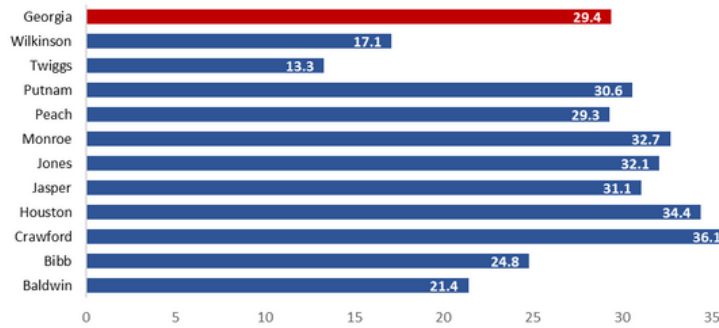
Considered Suicide



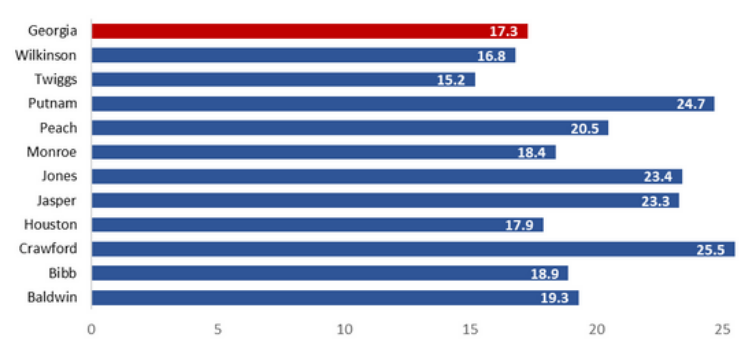
5+ Drinks



Anxiety



Bullying

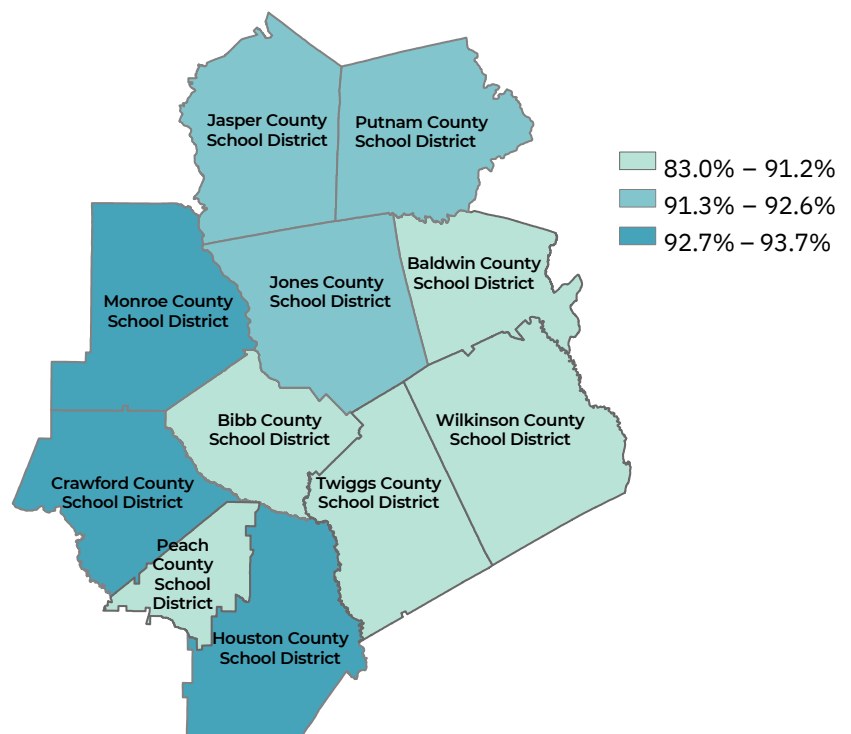


Data Source: Georgia Student Health Survey (2020).

Having meaningful and supportive relationships with peers and adults can mitigate the effects of ACEs and promote resilience in children: the CDC lists 'children who have positive friendships and peer networks' and 'children who have caring adults outside the family who serve as mentors/role models' as two of their ACEs protective factors (CDC 2021). Schools are an important place for children to access positive peer networks and caring adults, particularly when ACEs create instability in the home.

Percent of 6th-12th grade students who reported they feel connected to others at school, by school district

School District	Percent
Wilkinson	89.7
Twiggs	89.9
Peach	90.2
Baldwin	90.9
Bibb	91.2
Putnam	92.0
Jasper	92.3
Jones	92.3
Houston	92.7
Crawford	92.9
Monroe	93.1
Georgia	92.7



Data Source: Georgia Student Health Survey (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:

- Family Advancement Ministries: <http://www.familyadvancementministries.org/>
- Houston County Nurse-Family Partnership/ Georgia Division of Public Health North Central Health District: <https://northcentralhealthdistrict.org/>
- Rainbow House Children's Resource Center: <http://www.rainbowhousecrc.org/>
- Telamon GA Early Childhood and Family Support: <https://www.telamon.org/>
- United Way of Central Georgia: <https://www.unitedwaycgc.org/>

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.dec.al.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

REFERENCES

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Learning card: Trauma Informed. Resilient Georgia. <https://www.resilientga.org/trauma-informed>

Prevent Child Abuse Georgia. Training. <https://abuse.publichealth.gsu.edu/training/>