

PREVENTING ACES - DATA FOR DECISION MAKING

DFCS Region 8: Chattahoochee, Clay, Crisp, Dooly, Harris, Macon, Marion, Muscogee, Quitman, Randolph, Schley, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taylor, and Webster 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. Promote trauma-informed training for personnel in all youth-serving programs and all school personnel (e.g., trauma-informed care, addressing implicit bias, empathy, prejudices, attribution).
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.

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).

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

School District	Percent
Quitman	81.8
Talbot	82.9
Crisp	83.4
Dooly	85.4
Taylor	86.0
Macon	86.5
Marion	87.4
Randolph	87.5
Harris	90.7
Stewart	92.0
Muscogee	92.0
Sumter	95.7
Chattahoochee	96.8
Schley	97.2
Webster	100
Georgia	84.1

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

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

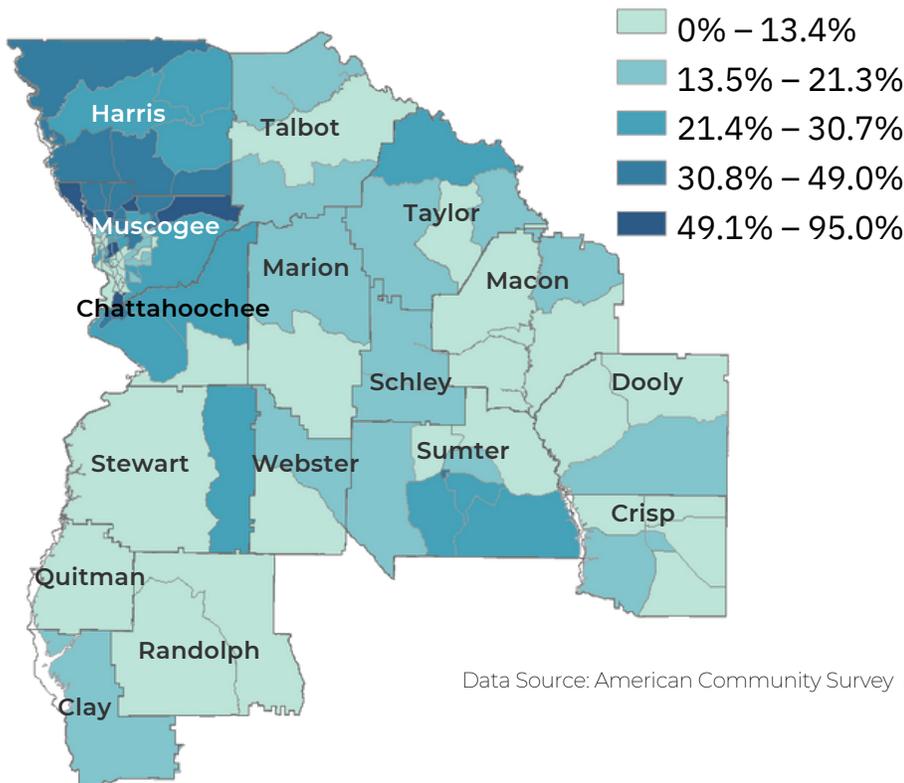
County	Percent
Quitman	9.1
Macon	10.1
Randolph	12.4
Dooly	13.6
Webster	13.6
Crisp	13.7
Talbot	14.1
Marion	14.3
Schley	15.3
Stewart	15.4
Taylor	15.5
Clay	18.1
Sumter	19.4
Chattahoochee	24.7
Muscogee	27.6
Harris	32.4
Georgia	33.0

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

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 the left 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 population 25 Years and over whose highest education completed is bachelor's degree or higher, by census tract



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

Strategy 2: Promote trauma-informed training for personnel in all youth-serving programs and all school personnel (e.g., trauma-informed care, addressing implicit bias, empathy, prejudices, attribution).

Trauma can impact a child's ability to concentrate and succeed in school. Further, strict disciplinary actions in schools can themselves be re-traumatizing for students with existing trauma or ACEs (SAMSHA 2014). Trauma-informed training increases school personnel's compassion for students and understanding of their behavior and improves their ability to meet students' academic and emotional needs.

Adult respect was low in this region. Of the 12 lowest scoring school districts in the state, half were in Region 8.

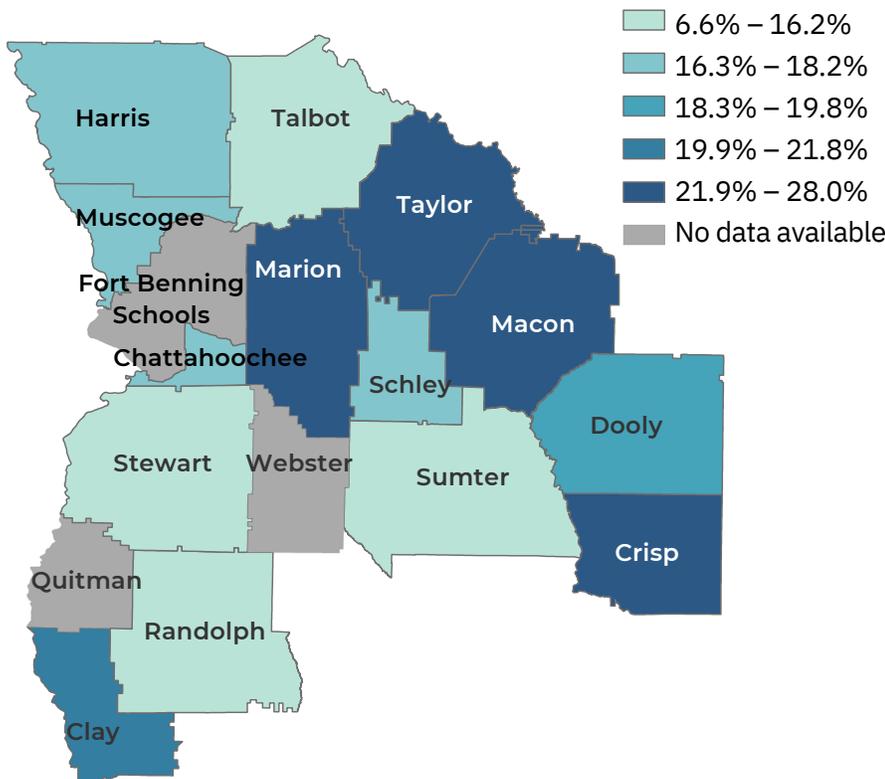


Percent of 6th-12th grade students who reported that adults in their school treat all students with respect, by school district

School District	Percent
Talbot	80.0
Macon	81.4
Randolph	82.9
Taylor	84.2
Stewart	85.4
Sumter	85.7
Dooly	87.3
Crisp	88.5
Clay	89.9
Muscogee	90.2
Harris	91.1
Schley	91.3
Marion	94.0
Chattahoochee	95.3
Georgia	90.8

Data Source: Georgia Student Health Survey (2020).

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



School District	Percent
Talbot	6.7
Stewart	14.6
Randolph	16.0
Sumter	16.1
Chattahoochee	16.3
Harris	16.7
Muscogee	17.0
Schley	18.2
Dooly	18.4
Clay	20.8
Marion	22.0
Macon	22.1
Crisp	22.2
Taylor	23.5
Georgia	17.3

Data Source: Georgia Student Health Survey (2020).

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.

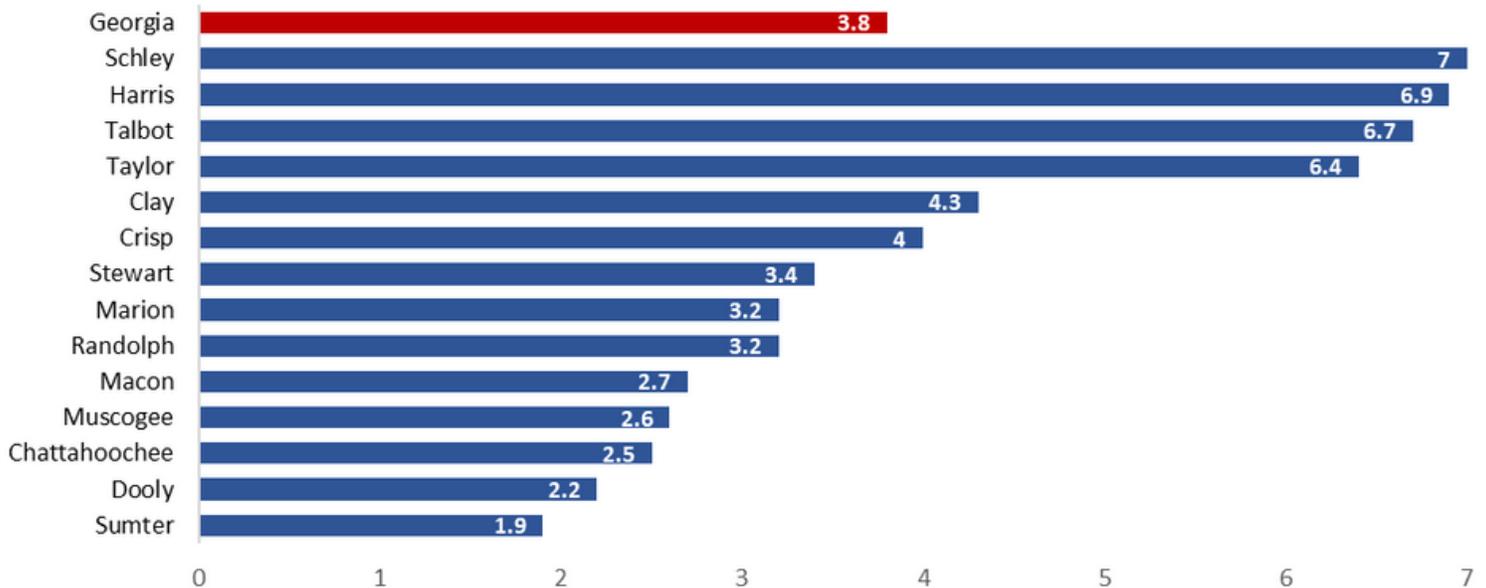
Improving mental health access for children and providing them with strong support systems are powerful ways to prevent these outcomes. For instance, connecting students to supportive adults through mentorship programs, involvement in religious activities, or after school programs or activities can promote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

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, by school district

School District	Percent
Talbot	6.7
Macon	16.0
Dooly	16.1
Randolph	20.2
Stewart	20.2
Sumter	22.8
Clay	24.4
Crisp	24.5
Marion	25.6
Muscogee	27.4
Chattahoochee	27.7
Taylor	28.4
Schley	31.4
Harris	32.2
Georgia	29.4

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



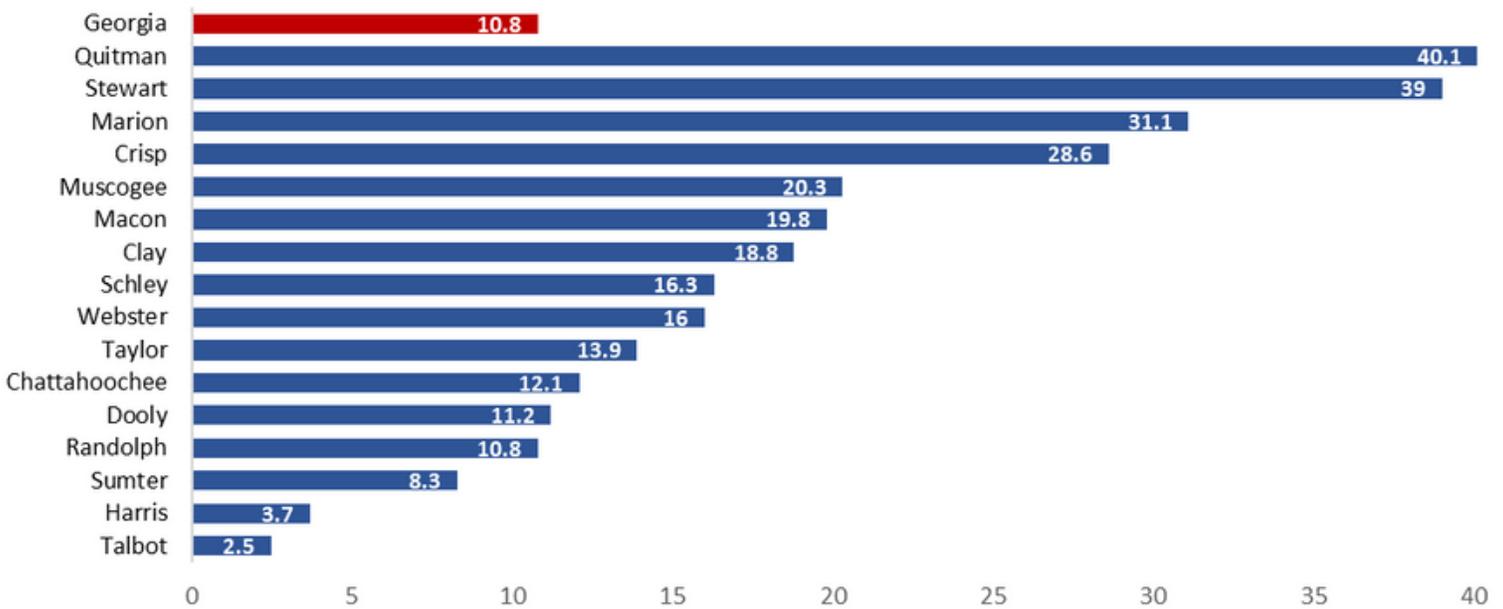
Data Source: Georgia Student Health Survey (2020).

Strategy 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 chart below shows the number of children subject of maltreatment investigations at the county level in from June 2021 to May 2022. While the numbers vary widely in this region from 2.5 to 40.1 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](#).

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

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.

In Region 8, students reported feeling highly connected to others at school; in most school districts, over 90% of 6th-12th grade students reported they feel connected to others at school.

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

School District	Percent
Talbot	83.3
Randolph	87.2
Clay	87.4
Macon	88.2
Sumter	90.1
Dooly	90.2
Stewart	90.4
Crisp	91.0
Taylor	91.6
Muscogee	92.3
Marion	92.4
Harris	94.8
Schley	95.9
Chattahoochee	96.0
Georgia	92.7

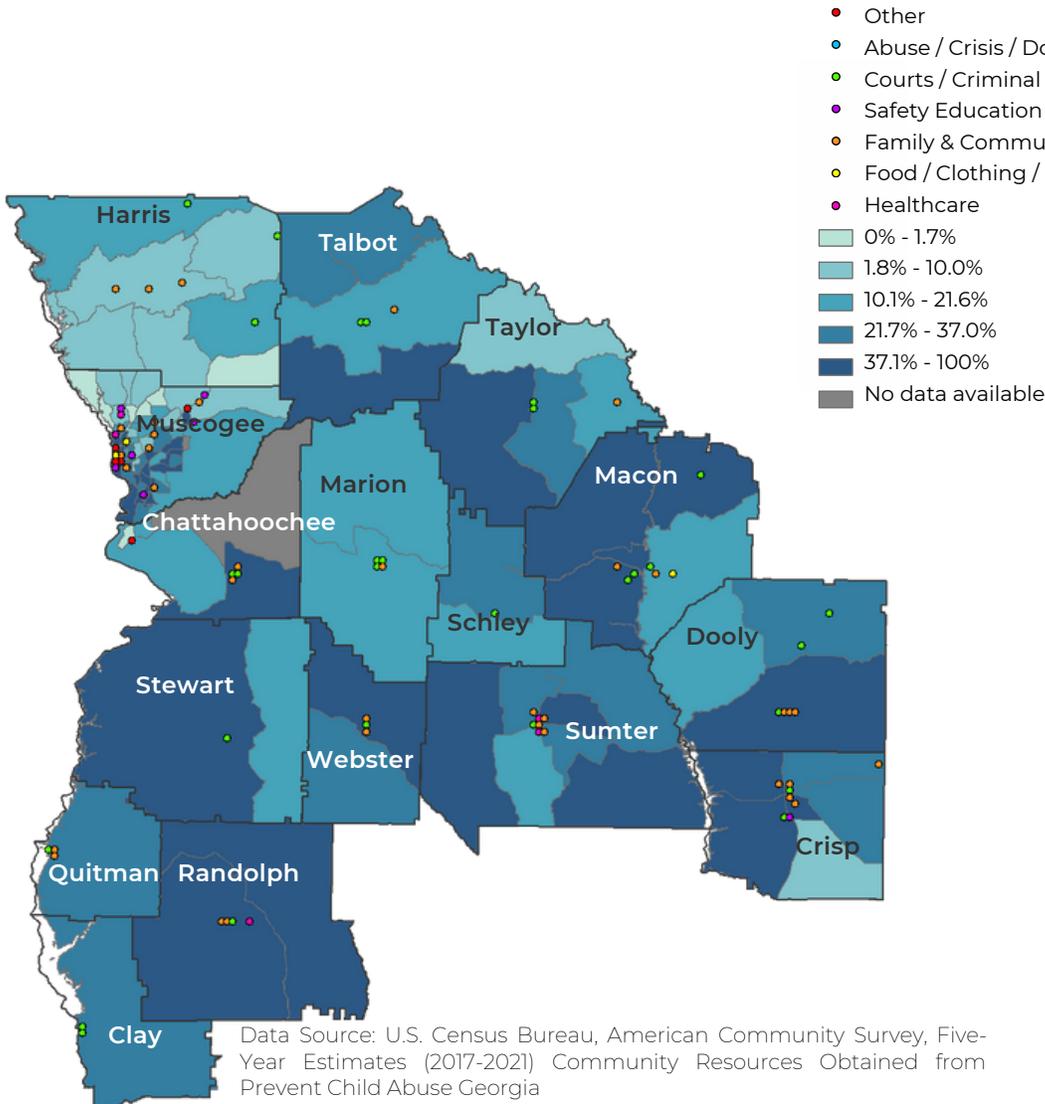
Data Source: Georgia Student Health Survey (2020).

Experiencing **poverty** can place a lot of stress on families, which may increase the risk for child abuse and neglect. Rates of child abuse and neglect are 5 times higher for children in families with low socioeconomic status (CDC 2022). Children living in poverty is high in Region 8; the majority of counties in this region have over 1 in 3 children living in poverty.



Providing **family supports**, such as food assistance, affordable childcare, and employment services, 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 census tract, & community resources



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

County	Percent
Harris	7.5
Marion	15.4
Schley	20.4
Chattahoochee	23.2
Talbot	24.2
Muscogee	28.1
Sumter	29.9
Clay	34.9
Stewart	35.9
Quitman	36.2
Macon	36.8
Taylor	39.7
Webster	39.8
Randolph	42.7
Crisp	45.7
Dooly	48.6
Georgia	19.6

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
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters: www.bbbs.org
- Army Community Service, Ft. Benning: <https://benning.armymwr.com/programs/army-community-services>
- Fort Benning Family Advocacy Program: <https://installations.militaryonesource.mil/military-installation/fort-benning/militaryand-family-support-center/family-advocacy-program>
- Four Points, Inc - Chattahoochee: <https://www.fourpointsinc.org/>
- Great Start GA of Columbus, UGA Extension - Columbus/Muscogee County: <https://extension.uga.edu/county-offices/muscogee/family-and-consumersciences/great-start-georgia.html>
- University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service: <https://extension.uga.edu/>
- Muscogee County Cooperative Extension: <https://extension.uga.edu/countyoffices/muscogee.html>
- Georgia Strong Families / Columbus Health Department: <https://bigdreamsga.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.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

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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>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022,). Fast Facts: Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences. Violence Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/riskprotectivefactors.html>

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

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

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