



Aligning Resources Across Georgia To Support Resiliency

To Our Resilient Georgia Partners and Stakeholders:

We hope you are all managing to remain safe, well, and resilient as we usher in a new year and resume the school year. Resilient Georgia continues to be here to support you and share as many helpful resources as possible.

In this edition of the newsletter, we are maintaining our focus on taking a preventative approach to addressing the impact of the global pandemic on mental health. We will also continue to provide additional resources on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), managing back-to-school anxiety, COVID-19, and racial equity.

We would like to highlight several resources and news updates:

- We are incredibly excited to share that The Georgia Department of Education is awarding \$1,080,000 in five-year grants to school systems to expand and improve mental health services for students. Bibb County Schools, Hall County Schools, and Houston County Schools will each receive a \$360,000 grant

through Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education) to improve school climate and provide mental health services for students and families. Resilient Georgia's Executive Board member Ms. Rebecca Blanton has led much of this work over the last several years and we are so excited to see it continue to flourish.

- When newsworthy events happen in the world, kids need help making sense of it all. Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Strong4Life has created a helpful [step-by-step guide](#) with guiding principles you can follow when having these difficult conversations.
- Clayton State University recently launched a [new scholarship program](#) aimed at recruiting more Black men to become nurses in Georgia. The university has committed \$5,000 toward student scholarships as part of a statewide effort led by the Georgia Nursing Leadership Coalition to address a lack of diversity in the field.
- ProPublica sheds light on [how COVID-19 hollowed a generation of young black men](#). Highlighted in the article is the work of Dr. Gene Brody, a [Distinguished Research Professor at the University of Georgia](#), who has spent more than 25 years tracking the health of Black families in rural Georgia.
- The Center for Leadership in Disability, in partnership with the Georgia Department of Public Health, is hosting a [Positive Behavior Support Parent Academy training series](#). Parent Academy trainers help parents and caregivers complete the Positive Behavior Support process to understand, prevent, and replace persistent challenging behaviors of children ages 3-5 years old.

During these unprecedented times, we'd like to continue sharing an uplifting, positive story in each newsletter, as we could all use a regular dose of good news now more than ever. If you know of any local problem-solvers and unsung heroes helping to address children's behavioral health needs and building family resilience in our Georgia communities, please share these stories with us at info@resilientga.org. Enjoy this story about ASCEND below:

- ASCEND is a Kennesaw State University program that provides various support services including housing, academic and professional mentoring for students with backgrounds with homelessness, food insecurity, or the foster care system. The goal of the program is to alleviate housing stress and provide a safe space and guidance to help students smoothly transition into adulthood. Click [here](#) to read more about their work.

Lastly, thank you as always for your continued partnership and support, and for continuing to share helpful resources and training with us to disseminate as we all work collectively towards a more resilient and trauma-informed Georgia!

Sincerely,

Brenda Fitzgerald, MD
Executive Board Chair
&
Emily Anne Vall, PhD
Executive Director

Mental Health is the Next Pandemic



COVID-19 has brought about many new challenges and has exacerbated existing issues around mental health. According to the annual [Health and Healthcare Gallup Survey](#), Americans' latest assessment of their mental health is worse than it has been at any point in the last two decades. [Mental Health America's \(MHA's\) new report](#), *Young People's Mental Health in 2020: Hope, Advocacy, and Action for the Future*, shares the perspectives of 1,906 teens and young adults - 45% of 14-18-

year-olds are not hopeful about the future, and only 1 in 4 young people think they can make a change in mental health in their communities. The Kids, Families and Covid-19 report published by the [Annie E. Casey Foundation in December](#) examines how households with children are faring during the pandemic, and identifies pain points for children and families that require immediate action.

During these challenging times, work at the intersection of health equity and ACEs is more important than ever. California Surgeon General, [Dr. Nadine Burke Harris](#), [touches on the long-term health impacts of the pandemic](#). The pandemic has taken a heavy emotional toll on many people, and if you know someone struggling with despair, depression, or thoughts of suicide, here are [nine things you can do that can make a difference](#). Amidst surging COVID-19 cases, psychologists say it's important in 2021 for us all to keep up human contact. This NPR article [emphasizes nine creative ways to socialize safely](#).

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

In the following recent publications, foremost health experts share the most important influences on brain development and cognitive functioning such as childhood experiences.

The Child and Family Research Partnership, an independent, nonpartisan research group at The University of Texas at Austin, has released a new research brief that provides a great overview of the science of the developing brain and body during the earliest years and what it means for parents, caregivers, and systems. This is an excellent resource for anyone who works with children of any age and their families - [Why is the prenatal-to-3 age period so important?](#)



PBS NewsHour will air [“Invisible scars: America’s childhood trauma crisis,”](#) a 4-part series examining the effects of childhood adversity. The devastating and long-term consequences of childhood trauma are expected to be more pressing with a year that’s seen unprecedented disruption – a global pandemic, economic collapse, and racial unrest. The series will explore how racial and socioeconomic issues magnify the health crisis and the importance of using treatment to overcome childhood trauma. Focusing on the latter years is Dr. Sanjay Gupta, Emory Neurosurgeon and CNN Chief Medical Correspondent on NPR podcast, [Fresh Air](#). During the interview, he discusses new research on brain cell regeneration and shares practical advice on maintaining optimal brain health at any age.

Managing Back-to-School Anxiety



Cultivating trauma-informed educators is crucial to creating a better world for both students and adults. [Ready, Set, RISE!](#) provides educators with no-cost, evidence-based resources that help build a community of advocates through trauma-informed practices and strategies.

As part of their special series on the pandemic, [NPR reported on teachers' and educators' concerns](#) about student absences and the difficulty of fostering teacher-student connections amidst unreliable internet access and other barriers associated with virtual schooling.

To help working parents keep their kids focused on remote learning, one school switched up its schedule. This New York Times article highlights KIPP Newark, a free, public charter school network in Newark, N.J., that has started offering a kindergarten and first-grade class at night. Click [here](#) to read more.

COVID-19 Resources

- [The COVID-19 Vaccine: The Facts & Way Forward](#). Listen to panel experts from Morehouse School of Medicine and Fulton County Board of Health discuss covid-19 vaccine development, the state's distribution plans, and the role of equity and consideration of severely impacted communities in the distribution.
- [Monthly WellStar Health Briefings: Covid19](#). Get updates on COVID-19 Response and Vaccines, including the latest scientific information and what everyone should know about protecting themselves and others.
- [What to Expect From Coronavirus Testing at Children's Hospital Colorado](#). This 49-sec video shows how the Covid test works and what families can expect during testing. If your child is old enough to understand, it might be helpful to watch a video like this together and then talk about it afterward before testing.



Racial Equity Resources

- Morehouse School of medicine and CommonSpirit Health are teaming up to [address health disparities through a 10-year initiative](#) to develop and train more Black Physicians.
- This TEDx Santa Barbara conversation discusses the impact of racial trauma and COVID-19 on mental health and the need for collective radical healing. Listen to it [here](#).



Be sure to read additional resources on the topics above, and more, [here](#).



“When we least expect it, life sets us a challenge to test our courage and willingness to change; at such a moment, there is no point in pretending that nothing has happened or in saying that we are not yet ready. The challenge will not wait. Life does not look back.”
- Paulo Coelho

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