

# The Case for ACEs Prevention



## Resilient Georgia is dedicated to healing adversity and promoting resiliency in children and families.

We do this through the prevention and early intervention of ACEs and by sharing best practices. We all have a role to play in providing better futures for children.

### What are ACEs?

**Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)** are traumatic events that can have negative, lasting effects on the health and well-being of children now and in the future.<sup>1</sup>

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Caregiver mental illness
- Household dysfunction
- Communal violence
- Experienced racism
- Pervasive poverty
- Inability to access needed social services

### ACEs can be passed from one generation of Georgians to the next.

Many children who experience ACEs have a parent or caregiver who has also experienced ACEs. Limited parenting skills and toxic environments get passed down from parent to child, and so it continues—a cycle of intergenerational trauma.

**ACEs are common. 3 in 5 adults in Georgia have experienced at least one ACE<sup>3</sup>.**

### ACEs affect development.

Persistent exposure to one or more ACEs as a child or adolescent can cause prolonged activation of the body's stress response, which triggers toxic stress. Toxic stress, when not properly addressed and reduced, can dramatically change how the brain develops and can lead to many learning and behavioral issues as a child, as well as many common life-threatening health conditions as an adult.<sup>2</sup>

## Early Intervention is More Effective and Less Expensive

Funding policies and programs that prevent ACEs by enabling positive conditions for early childhood and supporting families at risk as early as possible are more effective and less expensive than attempting to address the consequences of adversity later.

**The estimated lifetime costs associated with new child maltreatment cases in 2020 is \$147 billion.**

A CDC study concluded that compared with other health problems, **the economic burden of child maltreatment is substantial, underscoring the importance of ACEs prevention efforts.**<sup>4</sup>

**\$102.1  
Billion**  
Lost-Productivity

**\$29.8  
Billion**  
Healthcare

**\$5.5  
Billion**  
Special Education

**\$5.4  
Billion**  
Child Welfare

**\$4.6  
Billion**  
Criminal Justice

\*Source: CDC Publication (Fang X, Brown D, Florence C & Mercy J, 2012)  
with estimates in 2010 dollars; converted to 2020 dollars using \$1.19 inflation factor<sup>5</sup>

# The Next Pandemic: Mental and Behavioral Health



COVID-19 has not only interrupted the treatment of people already managing mental illness or substance use disorders, but also has placed broader segments of the population at risk for developing mental health conditions.

***The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, sure to touch so many young children, has the potential to exacerbate the adverse events in young children's lives and introduce new ones, all while deepening shameful inequalities.***

Source: Adversity in Early Childhood – The Role of Policy in Creating and Addressing ACEs, Center for American Progress, Aug 27 2020

**New data shows that Americans are suffering from record levels of mental anguish.**

The COVID pandemic could claim up to 75,000 additional deaths from alcohol and drug misuse and suicide. <sup>6</sup>

A majority of American adults (53%) believe that the pandemic is taking a toll on their mental health. <sup>7</sup>

One third of U.S. adults currently have symptoms of depression or anxiety. <sup>8</sup>

## How You Can Help Build Resilience Now

***Prevention is critical to mitigate a significant rise in behavioral health needs as a result of the stress, anxiety, and social isolation triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic decline.***

Source: McKinsey & Company article "A holistic approach for the US behavioral health crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic", Aug 6 2020.

Too often, behavioral health prevention attracts scarce attention and few resources. However, high-quality prevention and early intervention programs for mental and substance use disorders, such as school-based mental well-being efforts, can yield **returns on investment as high as \$65 per \$1 invested.** <sup>9</sup>

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**Do something today. Now is the time to plan and offset the next public health pandemic. By acting quickly our communities will be safer, more resilient, and proactive rather than reactive.**

- Visit [ResilientGA.org](https://ResilientGA.org)
- View our free Trauma Informed [Training Roadmap](#) and low-cost training resources
- Coordinate a training for your organization
- Help fund our partners and enable them to offer more training opportunities to the public at low or no cost
- Contact us at any time with questions at [info@resilientga.org](mailto:info@resilientga.org)
- If interested, see our sourced references [HERE](#).