



Resilient Bladen

Community Child Abuse Prevention Plan 2021



Table of Contents

Bladen County Background	3
Resilient Community Stakeholders	4
Resilient Bladen County Plan Rational	5
Resilient Bladen Information	7
Resilient Bladen Plan of Action	8
Resilient Bladen Guiding Principals	10
Collective Impact Framework	11
Common Agenda	12
Shared Measurement	14
PACES Science 101	16
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	17
Resilience Building Practices	19
Protective Factors	21
Bladen County Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data	22
Bladen, Robeson, and Columbus Parent Survey	23
Continuous Communication & Backbone Support	25
Resolution of Support	26
References	27
Appendix	28

Bladen County Background

In 2019, The film *Resilience: The Biology of Stress & The Science of Hope* was shown for the first time in Bladen County. The viewing of the film opened the door for the community to learn about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). As a result, community partners came together at Bladen County Courthouse to gather in support to apply for the Kate B. Reynolds funding opportunity that would support a Tri-County initiative to address toxic stress and childhood trauma in Southeastern North Carolina. In early 2020, the funding opportunity was initiated but, due to the pandemic work on the initiative did not begin until the fall of 2020. During a global pandemic, resilience and being trauma informed became more important than ever and gained rapid movement as now everyone in the world were seeing what some families faced everyday before the pandemic.

Our Community

Bladen County is home to approximately 32,722 residents. It is a beautiful rural area that has lakes, rivers, and farmlands. Bladen County farms produce swine, tobacco, blueberries, peanuts, and cotton. Through the beauty are the scars of wars, depression, natural disasters, and a pandemic.

Total Population: 32,722 **Child population: 7,084**
Percentage of children under age 6: 30.1%

Bladen County is known as the "Mother of Counties" or the "Mother County" because 50+ counties have been formed from it. It is strong in agriculture and natural resources. This agricultural heritage makes Bladen strong in productivity and work ethic. Still there is struggle. Families here need support and opportunities to thrive.

The annual rate of child victimization (per 1000 children) for Bladen County is 48.8 while the NC rate is 46.6.



Community Stakeholders

- Bladen Partnership for Children – Smart Start
- Bladen County Dept. of Health and Human Services
- Bladen County Dept. of Social Services
- Bladen Community College
- Juvenile Crime Prevention Council
- District 13 NC Courts
- Bladen Partnership for Children-Smart Start
- Bladen Substance Misuse Task Force
- Bladen County Schools
- Bladen Chapter Autism Society of NC
- Guardian ad Litem – District 13
- Innovative Approaches
- Community Care of the Lower Cape Fear
- NC Families United

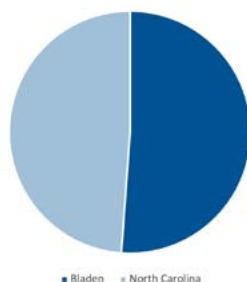
Resilient Bladen Plan Rationale

Bladen County is listed in the bottom 25% out of 100 counties (ranked at 81 out of 100) in NC as one of the poorest counties per capita. With 60% of children in Bladen living in poverty, our county is in desperate need of resources, support, and interventions for children, families, and communities.

Disasters and adversity can happen in the blink of an eye. Our county was devastated by Hurricane Matthew in 2016 and Hurricane Florence in 2018. Unfortunately, there are still families recovering, rebuilding, and/or living in FEMA housing because of these hurricanes. Major flooding, tornados, and loss of life are adversities that cannot always be avoided. Exposure to hurricanes is a well-documented risk for new-onset major depression, generalized anxiety disorder, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). People with substance-use disorders may increase consumption or relapse if they are in recovery. Systems need to be put in place that will address the needs of the community before, during, and after the event occurs.

Mental health, substance abuse, child abuse, violence, and poverty are ongoing challenges in Bladen. Our needs are many and we must start somewhere to help families. Due to the lack of coordination and communication between agencies and organizations, our region needs a comprehensive system to address stressors that families and individuals face when seeking help for their various needs. Families need more encouragement and easier access to ask for help when an issue is too big to handle on their own. The lack of services and understanding of why our residents may fall into dangerous, hazardous activities are a hinderance to finding help. Assistance and resources are needed to truly build resilient and trauma-informed communities to prevent child maltreatment and strengthen families in Bladen County.

60% of children in Bladen live in poor and low-income housing.
27% of children live in households that are food insecure.
The rate of child victimization per 1000 is 48.8



ANNUAL RATE OF
CHILD VICITIMIZATION
(per 1,000 children)

Resilient Bladen Plan Rationale *(con't)*

What was the unmet need?

- Lack of coordination within and between systems in Southeastern NC.
- Lack of care for people impacted by adverse experiences in Southeastern NC.

How was the unmet need identified?

- The unmet needs were identified by an ACEs Survey conducted in March 2018 by Karen Dash Consulting. To increase awareness of the impact of ACEs and to generate interest in forming a coalition to foster a trauma informed community, several screenings of the Resilience documentary were held in the Tri-Counties.

Resilient Bladen Information

Vision Statement

All children in Bladen County grow up in a safe, stable, and nurturing community where families thrive.

Mission Statement

To educate, empower, and support communities on effective child abuse and neglect prevention strategies so every child grows up in a safe, stable, nurturing environment.

Resilient Bladen Essential for Childhood Action Plan Alignment

Safe and Nurturing Relationships

Commitment: Babies, toddlers, and young children across North Carolina will grow up with safe and nurturing family and caregiver relationships.

Social-Emotional Health and Resilience

Commitment: Babies, toddlers, and young children across North Carolina will express, recognize, and manage their emotions in a healthy way, especially under stress.



Resilient Bladen Plan of Action

Goal 1: Build resilience and awareness of ACEs in schools, families, and community.

Objective 1: Build Resilient Bladen Coalition and its capacity to educate and support agencies and families about resilience and adverse childhood experiences.

STRATEGIES

- Gather community stakeholders and family voices for monthly meetings to build Resilient Bladen Coalition.
- Have 2 Resilient Bladen Members trained as trainers in the Protective Factors, Connections Matter and Community Resiliency Model.
- Host trainings for coalition members and have members watch Resilience film and take PCANC's free child maltreatment course.
- Host trainings for the community at large to build knowledge of ACEs, brain science, and resilience.
- Continue monthly meetings with Resilient Bladen to continue to build collaborative and keep communication between agencies and organizations.
- Continue to recruit for Resilient Bladen, engaging more sectors of the community and adding parent voices

Objective 2: Implement a community awareness campaign to educate the community at large about ACEs and the role they play in public health and building resilience.

STRATEGIES

- Create social media pages on Facebook to reach community about ACEs and Resilience.
- Collaborate with PACES Connection to build a webpage for Resilient Bladen.
- Host Resilience Screenings in various parts of the community to reach rural and low-income areas.
- Continue to hold community cafes to reach population and learn more about how we can help them become more resilient and ACE informed
- Media campaign on social media, flyers, and in newspapers to build awareness and advertise the film screenings and training that will take place. We will encourage these to be made available to all, especially target areas of Bladen.

Resilient Bladen Plan of Action *(con't)*

Goal 2: Create a safe, nurturing physical and emotional environments at home, at school, and in the community.

Objective 1: To build the capacity of parents, teachers, medical staff, Faith Leaders, and other community partners to demonstrate knowledge and implement strategies to prevent child abuse and neglect.

STRATEGIES

- Train PreK staff in Connections Matter childcare training and have them complete child maltreatment course
- Partner with DSS and courts to add Protective Factors training in the requirements for future foster parents and for parents who have an open case with DSS as part of the required classes they must attend.
- Continue to train community leaders/parents in the Protective Factors and host quarterly trainings
- Build resilient/trauma informed schools by increasing public and charter school's capacity to understand ACEs and resilience by hosting Resilience film screenings and Protective Factors trainings
- Partner with Bladen County Schools to host a youth forum that will engage selected youth (middle and high schoolers) on the results of the Youth Risk Behavior survey and what they can do to decrease risky behaviors in their peers. (Vermont Public Health has done this as a 2-day retreat and a following community forum to educate public on YRBS results.)
- Support Reach Out and Read Program at 1 pediatric medical practice in Bladen County that serves children 0-5 years old.
- Train and support 1 pediatric practice in Protective Factors and CRM training
- Engage 1 Pediatric practice to start doing an ACEs survey for parents during a well child visit and have materials/resources ready for staff to give parents who have an ACES score of 3 or higher.
- Support cause for a home visiting program for new parents.
- Find funding for Ms. Kendra program for at least one elementary school in Bladen County to be made available to all, especially target areas of Bladen.
- Continue to recruit for Resilient Bladen, engaging more sectors of the community and adding parent voices

Resilient Bladen Guiding Principles

Protect all children from abuse, neglect, and other violence by:

- ***Inter-agency collaboration:***
 - Provide a variety of high-quality, early childhood opportunities for families and their children.
 - Engage child- and family-serving agencies from the public, private, and faith-based sectors to support programs embedded in our communities and contribute to the community-building process.
- ***Individualized strengths-based care:***
 - Emphasize, respect, and support the family's primary responsibility for their children.
 - Acknowledges each child and family's unique set of strengths and challenges and builds care plans that optimize those strengths while meeting the challenges, as well as encouraging families to serve as a resource to their peers.
- ***Cultural competence:***
 - Create relationships based on respect and equality, affirming and strengthening families' cultural, racial, and linguistic identities to enhance their ability to function in a multicultural society.
- ***Family and youth involvement:***
 - Promote family-friendly workplaces.
 - Ensure healthy children and wholesome childhoods.
 - Mutual respect and meaningful partnership between families and professionals at all levels to support the growth and development of all family members – adults, youth, and children.
- ***Community-based services:***
 - Provide surroundings that are safe, healthy, nurturing.
 - Engaging home, school, and community-based resources as the optimal method for providing care and support to children and families. Mobilize formal and informal resources to support family development.
- ***Accountability***
 - Foster expectations, generate hope and encourage aspirations.
 - Advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, responsive, and accountable to the families served while ensuring the continual assessment of practice, organizational, and financial outcomes to determine the system of care's effectiveness in meeting the needs of children and family's.

Collective Impact Framework

To make the most of our Community Child Abuse Prevention Plan, our collaborative proposed utilizing the Collective Impact Model. This model was established in John Kania and Mark Kramer's 2011 study on the effectiveness of coordinated, collaborative efforts. The Collective Impact Model brings people together, in a structured way, to achieve social change.

Common Agenda

Individuals, neighborhoods, key organizations, businesses, education groups, schools, faith communities and policy makers must actively support each other's efforts and work toward a common goal or vision.

Shared Measures

After setting community goal or goals, agree to collect data and measure consistent outcomes across all participants to create alignment, accountability, and the ability to see if/when strategies are working.

Mutually Reinforcing Action Plan

The power of collective action does not come from the number of participants or the standardization of efforts, but from the coordination of activities through the plan of action.

Continuous Communication

Clear, consistent, and open communication is needed between all parties to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.

Backbone Support

A successful plan requires central coordination by a "backbone" organization or organizations and widespread community involvement.

Common Agenda

Our collaborative is utilizing the Protective Factors to form recommendations that will guide the community's work in preventing child abuse and neglect in Bladen County. Various local agencies and programs provide specialized services, and all of them have a direct or indirect impact on the health and safety of children and families. The Protective Factors provide a universal approach to working with families to support research that already guides each system's work in a way that helps create a new way of thinking.

Parental Resilience

Managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity, and trauma.

Social Connections

Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental, and spiritual support.

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development.

Social and Emotional Competence in Children

Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate emotions, and establish and maintain relationships.

Concrete Supports in Times of Need

Access to concrete support and services that address a family's needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges.

Capacity Building

- Build the capacity of parents and prevention partners to understand, deliver, evaluate, and advocate for the prevention of child abuse and neglect
- Increase the social and emotional competence of children in our community
- Build parental resilience
- Increase knowledge of parenting, as well as child and youth development
- Help people build concrete supports they can use in times of need
- Broaden parent's social networks

Partnership Cultivation

- Cultivate beneficial, prevention-focused partnerships between community organizations to create shared language, efficiency, and impact.
- Undertake collective community action to reduce child protection risks, build assets, and increase thriving of families
- Build sustainable networks of services and supports that contribute to child protection
- Influence community leaders to promote and support child protection initiatives

Shared Measurement

What is Child Abuse/Maltreatment and Neglect?

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act defines child abuse and neglect as, "any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act, which presents an imminent risk of serious harm."

Types of Child Abuse

- **Physical abuse:** Physical abuse occurs when a child's body is injured as a result of hitting, kicking, shaking, burning, or other show of force.
- **Emotional:** Emotional and psychological abuse in children is defined as behaviors, speech, and actions of parents, caregivers, or other significant figures in a child's life that have a negative mental impact on the child.
- **Child Neglect:** Child neglect is defined as any confirmed or suspected egregious act or omission by a parent or other caregiver that deprives a child of basic age-appropriate needs and thereby results, or has reasonable potential to result, in physical or psychological harm.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Any sexual behavior imposed on a child. Sexual abuse can occur without any physical contact.

What Factors Contribute to Child Abuse and Neglect?

Children living in poverty experience more abuse and neglect. Rates of child abuse and neglect are 5 times higher for children in families with low socio-economic status compared to children in families with higher socio-economic status.

Risk Factors for Perpetration (Individual)*

- Caregivers who don't understand children's needs or development
- Caregivers with drug or alcohol issues
- Caregivers with mental health issues
- Caregivers who were abused or neglected as children
- Caregivers who are young or single parents or parents with many children
- Caregivers with low education or income
- Caregivers experiencing high levels of parenting stress and economic stress
- Caregivers who use spanking and other forms of corporal punishment for discipline
- Caregivers in the home who are not a biological parent
- Caregivers with attitudes accepting of or justifying violence or aggression

*Content source: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Risk Factors for Perpetration (Community)*

- Communities with high rates of violence and crime
- Communities with high rates of poverty and limited educational and economic opportunities
- Communities with high unemployment rates
- Communities with easy access to drugs and alcohol
- Communities where neighbors don't know/look out for each other
- Communities with few community activities for young people
- Communities with unstable housing and where residents move frequently
- Communities where families frequently experience food insecurity



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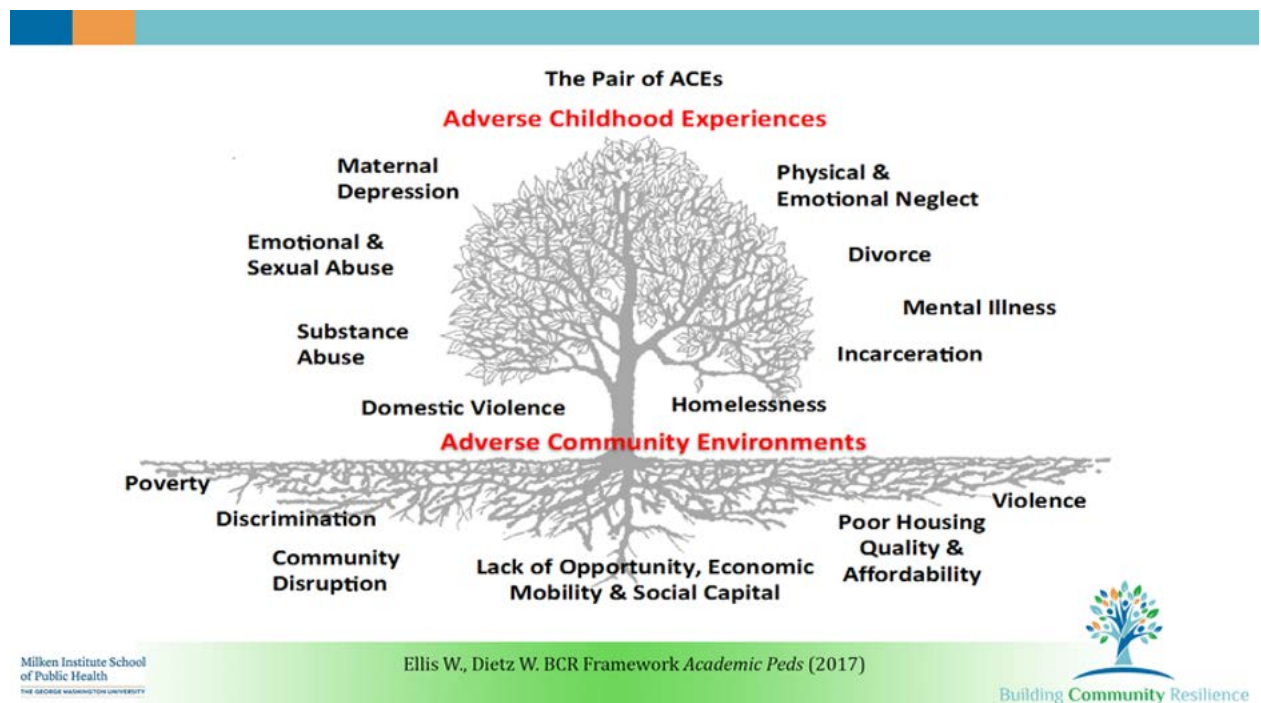
*Content source: *The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

PACEs Science 101

What is PACEs science?

The science of PACEs refers to the research about the stunning effects of positive and adverse childhood experiences (PACEs) and how they work together to affect our lives, as well as our organizations, systems and communities. It comprises:

- 1. The CDC-Kaiser Permanente ACE Study** and subsequent surveys that show that most people in the U.S. have at least one ACE, and that people with four ACEs— including living with an alcoholic parent, racism, bullying, witnessing violence outside the home, physical abuse, and losing a parent to divorce — have a huge risk of adult onset of chronic health problems such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, suicide, and alcoholism.
- 2. Brain science** (neurobiology of toxic stress) — how toxic stress caused by ACEs damages the function and structure of kids' developing brains.
- 3. Health consequences** — how toxic stress caused by ACEs affects short- and long-term health, and can impact every part of the body, leading to autoimmune diseases, such as arthritis, as well as heart disease, breast cancer, lung cancer, etc.
- 4. Historical and generational trauma** (epigenetic consequences of toxic stress) — how toxic stress caused by ACEs can alter how our DNA functions, and how that can be passed on from generation to generation.
- 5. Positive Childhood Experiences and resilience research and practice** — Building on the knowledge that the brain is plastic and the body wants to heal, this part of PACEs science includes evidence-based practice, as well as practice-based evidence by people, organizations and communities that are integrating trauma-informed and resilience-building practices. This ranges from looking at how the brain of a teen with a high ACE score can be healed with cognitive behavior therapy, to how schools can integrate trauma-informed and resilience-building practices that result in an increase in students' scores, test grades and graduation rates.

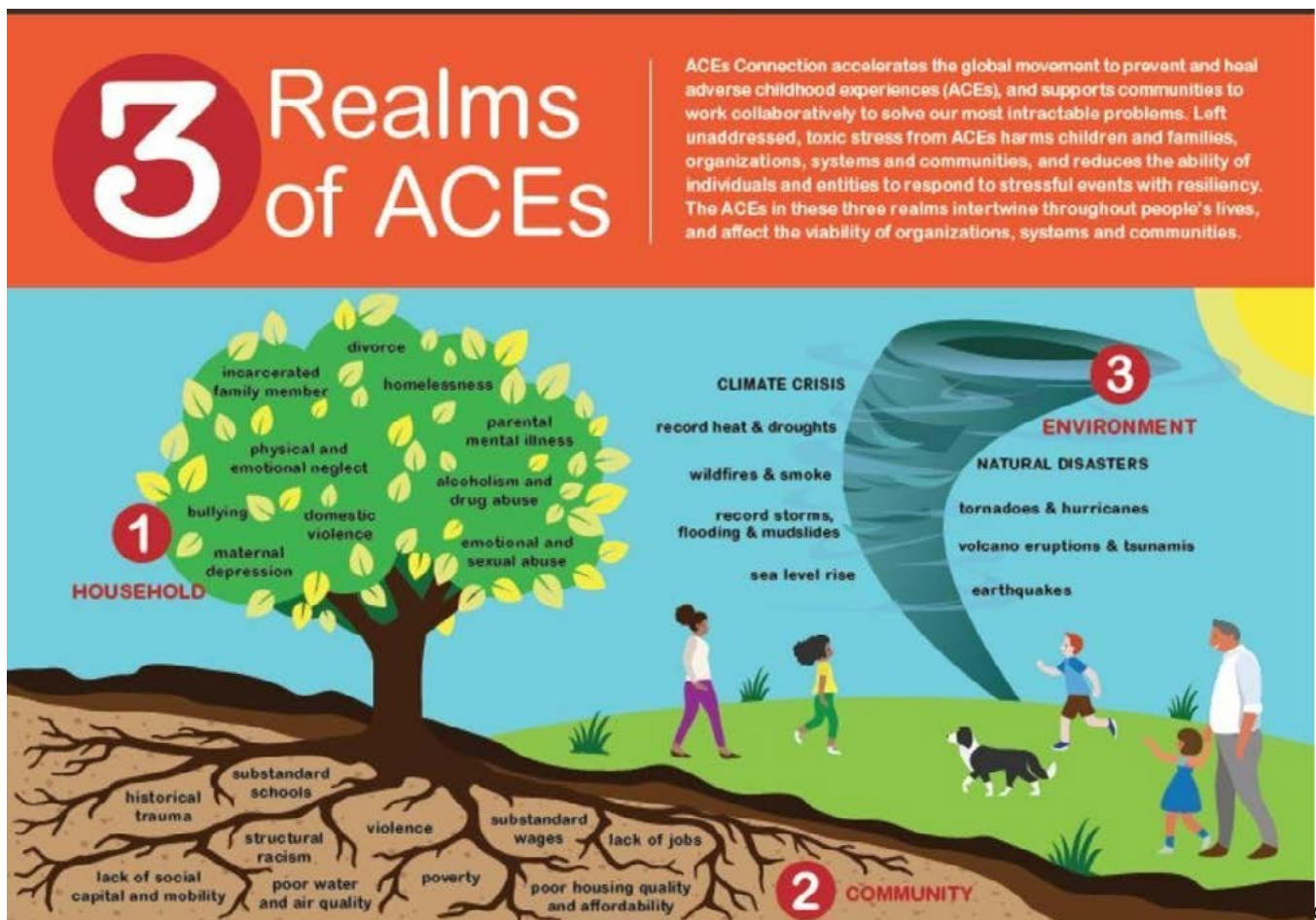


Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

What are Adverse Childhood Experiences?

Did you know that negative experiences in childhood and the teenage years may put children at risk for chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use in adulthood? These negative experiences are known as [adverse childhood experiences](#) (ACEs). ACEs are potentially traumatic experiences, such as neglect, experiencing or witnessing violence, and having a family member attempt or die by suicide, that occur in childhood (birth to 17) that can affect children for years and impact their life opportunities. Fortunately, we can prevent ACEs and we can educate parents, communities, and policymakers about how to help children grow up in a safe and stable environment.

3 Realms of ACEs was created by ACEs Connection with inspiration and guidance from Building Community Resilience Collaborative and Networks and the International Transformational Resilience Coalition. The ACEs in these three realms – household, community, and environment – intertwine throughout people's lives, and affect the viability of families, communities, organizations, and systems.

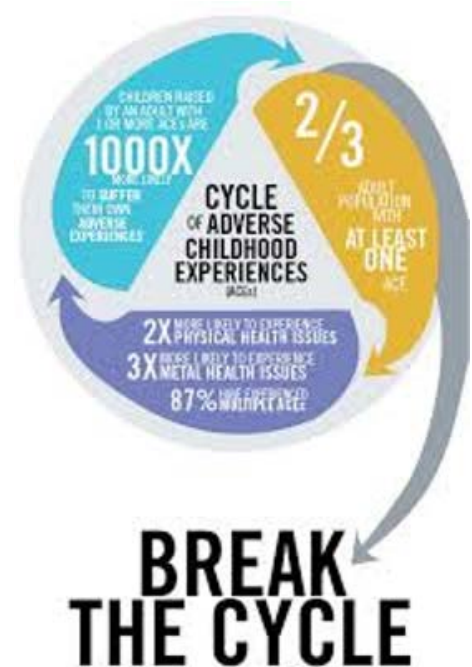


Significance of ACEs

The ACE Study revealed six main discoveries:

- ACEs are common...nearly two-thirds (64%) of adults have at least one.
- They cause adult onset of chronic disease, such as cancer and heart disease, as well as mental illness, violence and being a victim of violence
- ACEs don't occur alone...if you have one, there's an 87% chance that you have two or more.
- The more ACEs you have, the greater the risk for chronic disease, mental illness, violence and being a victim of violence. People have an ACE score of 0 to 10. Each type of trauma counts as one, no matter how many times it occurs. You can think of an ACE score as a cholesterol score for childhood trauma. For example, people with an ACE score of 4 are twice as likely to be smokers and seven times more likely to be alcoholic. Having an ACE score of 4 increases the risk of emphysema or chronic bronchitis by nearly 400 percent, and attempted suicide by 1200 percent. People with high ACE scores are more likely to be violent, to have more marriages, more broken bones, more drug prescriptions, more depression, and more autoimmune diseases. People with an ACE score of 6 or higher are at risk of their lifespan being shortened by 20 years.
- ACEs are responsible for a big chunk of workplace absenteeism, and for costs in health care, emergency response, mental health and criminal justice. So, the fifth finding from the ACE Study is that childhood adversity contributes to most of our major chronic health, mental health, economic health and social health issues.
- On a population level, it doesn't matter which four ACEs a person has; the harmful consequences are the same. The brain cannot distinguish one type of toxic stress from another; it's all toxic stress, with the same impact.

What's particularly startling is that the 17,000 ACE Study participants were mostly white, middle- and upper-middle class, college-educated, and all had jobs and great health care (they were all members of Kaiser Permanente).



Resilience Building Practices

\ ri-'zil-yən(t)s : an ability to recover from or adjust easily to adversity or change.

What is Resilience?

According to the ACES Action Alliance, resilience is the ability to return to being healthy and hopeful after bad things happen. Research shows that if parents provide a safe environment for their children and teach them how to be resilient, that helps reduce the effects of ACEs.

- Resilience is not something someone has or doesn't have. Resilience is built over time.
- There is not one way to show resilience. Resilience can look different within an individual, in different circumstances, contexts and communities.
- Resilience can be expressed through skills, attributes and/or abilities.
- Anyone can become more resilient at any stage of life, but it's easiest to build the basis of resilience in early childhood.

According to the American Psychological Association, being resilient doesn't mean that a person won't experience difficulty or distress. People who have suffered major adversity or trauma in their lives commonly experience emotional pain and stress. In fact, the road to resilience is likely to involve considerable emotional distress.

How Can We Increase Resilience?

A nurturing and supportive relationship with at least one supportive adult is the most important protective factor for children to develop resilience and do well despite experiencing significant adversity. Individual, relational, family, and community protective factors work together to build resilience and increase the likelihood a person will experience positive outcomes, even if they experience severe adversity. Here are ways you can increase your personal resilience to increase your capacity to support the children and families in our community: problems later in life increase. The following health problems have been linked to adverse childhood experiences:

- **Prioritize relationships**
 - Connecting with empathetic and understanding people can remind you that you're not alone in the midst of difficulties. Focus on finding trustworthy and compassionate individuals who validate your feelings, which will support the skill of resilience.
- **Join a group**
 - Along with one-on-one relationships, some people find that being active in civic groups, faith-based communities, or other local organizations provides social support and can help you reclaim hope. Research groups in your area that could offer you support and a sense of purpose or joy when you need it.

Resilience Building Practices *(con't)*

- **Take care of your body**
 - Self-care may be a popular buzzword, but it's also a legitimate practice for mental health and building resilience. That's because stress is just as much physical as it is emotional. Promoting positive lifestyle factors like proper nutrition, ample sleep, hydration, and regular exercise can strengthen your body to adapt to stress and reduce the toll of emotions like anxiety or depression.
- **Practice mindfulness**
 - Mindful journaling, yoga, and other spiritual practices like prayer or meditation can also help people build connections and restore hope, which can prime them to deal with situations that require resilience. When you journal, meditate, or pray, ruminate on positive aspects of your life and recall the things you're grateful for, even during personal trials.
- **Avoid negative outlets**
 - It may be tempting to mask your pain with alcohol, drugs, or other substances, but that's like putting a bandage on a deep wound. Focus instead on giving your body resources to manage stress, rather than seeking to eliminate the feeling of stress altogether.
- **Help others**
 - Whether you volunteer with a local homeless shelter or simply support a friend in their own time of need, you can garner a sense of purpose, foster self-worth, connect with other people, and tangibly help others, all of which can empower you to grow in resilience.
- **Be proactive**
 - It's helpful to acknowledge and accept your emotions during hard times, but it's also important to help you foster self-discovery by asking yourself, "What can I do about a problem in my life?" If the problems seem too big to tackle, break them down into manageable pieces.
- **Move toward your goals**
 - Develop some realistic goals and do something regularly—even if it seems like a small accomplishment—that enables you to move toward the things you want to accomplish. Instead of focusing on tasks that seem unachievable, ask yourself, "What's one thing I know I can accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go?" For example, if you're struggling with the loss of a loved one and you want to move forward, you could join a grief support group in your area.
- **Look for opportunities for self-discovery**
 - People often find that they have grown in some respect as a result of a struggle. For example, after a tragedy or hardship, people have reported better relationships and a greater sense of strength, even while feeling vulnerable. That can increase their sense of self-worth and heighten their appreciation for life.

Protective Factors

What are the Protective Factors?

Protective factors are individual or environmental characteristics, conditions, or behaviors that reduce the effects of stressful life events. These factors also increase an individual's ability to avoid risks or hazards, and promote social and emotional competence to thrive in all aspects of life, now and in the future.



Bladen Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System 2019 Data

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm>

The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)

monitors six categories of health-related behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth and adults, including—

- **Behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence**
- **Sexual behaviors related to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection.**
- **Alcohol and other drug use**
- **Tobacco use**
- **Unhealthy dietary behaviors**
- **Inadequate physical activity**

YRBSS is a system of surveys. It includes 1) a national school-based survey conducted by CDC and state, territorial, tribal, and 2) local surveys conducted by state, territorial, and local education and health agencies and tribal governments.

We identified areas of the YRBSS that were applicable to our plan and otherwise alarming data of the state of our High Schoolers point of view, overall mental health, and adverse childhood experience they face in our community.

- **17%** (112) have rode in a car with someone who was drinking alcohol 1 or more times.
- **14%** (80) have been forced to do sexual things they did not want to do.
- **19%** (129) have been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property.
- **33%** (217) reported gang activity at their school.
- **13%** (77) consider themselves to have a disability.
- **20%** (131) students have seriously considered attempting suicide.
 - **17%** of those had a plan to attempt suicide.
- **13%** (73) students have attempted suicide 1 to 5 times.
 - **2%** (9) of those students reported attempting suicide 6 or more times.
- **4%** (22) said their suicide attempt resulted in injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse.

Bladen, Columbus, and Robeson County Parent and Caregiver Survey Report 2021

Executive Summary Introduction

Staff from Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina (PCANC), Bladen County Partnership for Children, Columbus County Partnership for Children, and the NC Youth Violence and Prevention Center partnered to form a Collective Impact Group and conducted this parent and caregiver survey as one method to inform their work.

Methodology

This survey has been adapted from the Chapin Hall Center for Children for the Voices from Home: Perceptions of Colorado Caregivers on Caring for Kids and Accessing Supports project, the Protective Factors Survey and the American Family Assets Study. To collect the data, agencies posted a SurveyMonkey link on their websites and social media accounts and asked those affiliated with their programming if they would be willing to participate. Respondents were given a \$10 Visa gift card to incentivize participation. Data collection began in December of 2020 and closed in April 2021. This report is compiled from the responses of 139 respondents.

Results

The report includes information on respondents' gender, race/ethnicity, income, zip code, age, educational level, military service, and shared caregiving. It provides child maltreatment data for each county. It also includes the respondents' answers to items assessing availability and use of resources, perceptions of community quality, mutual self- help, family functioning, nurturing and attachment, and knowledge of parenting and child development.

Key Findings

Awareness of Resources

Fifty percent or more of all respondents reported that all thirteen supports are available in their communities. Parent and Caregiver awareness of respite or emergency services for children was low across all three counties.

Use of Resources

In Bladen and Columbus counties, reported use of home visiting, parenting education, and

center-based childcare was low, while it was much higher for Robeson County. Respondents from all three counties reported lower use of programs for pre-school aged children and family resource centers. Conversely, all three counties reported higher use of libraries, medical services, and religious or faith organizations.

Perceptions of Community Quality

A higher percentage of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel safe in their neighborhood and can generally get where they need to go. Neighborhood satisfaction, cleanliness, and access to childcare had slightly lower agreement. Respondents from all three counties reported that access to jobs and educational opportunities for children in their communities is low.

Community Hospitality

Respondents across all three counties reported low levels of occurrence on all items, indicating moderate to low levels of community hospitality.

Mutual Self-Help

Respondents reported low use of both help-seeking and help-giving behaviors. The most common item where respondents gave and received help was "running an errand, helping with shopping, giving a ride somewhere, or helping around the house with a chore or repair."

Family Functioning

Respondents from Bladen and Columbus Counties reported higher levels of family functioning than those in Robeson County. Respondents from Robeson County fell below the 75% benchmark on every item.

Nurturing and Attachment

Respondents from all three counties scored higher on nurturing and attachment. Though Robeson County's respondents scored comparatively lower, no item fell below the 75% benchmark.

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Bladen and Columbus Counties' respondents reported high levels of knowledge of parenting and child development. Four of the five items fell below the 75% threshold in Robeson County.

Continuous Communication & Backbone Support

Continuous Communication

Partners will reach agreements about common messages and how they are used to reach community stakeholders and stay in regular communication with each other.

We are currently having monthly meetings with our Bladen County Leadership Team and the Tri-County Regional Leadership Team Meeting. As we move forward meetings can take place monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly as need for the plans' success.

Backbone Organization

A successful plan will require a "backbone" organization that can engage and offer widespread community involvement.

Resilient Bladen as a committee of local agencies, community stakeholders, and families along with our local Smart Start will continue the work needed to help children and families in Bladen County.

Resolution of Support

Resilient Bladen – Community Child Abuse Prevention Plan

We hereby recognize there are many factors within Bladen County leading to child abuse. Therefore, we strive to change the effects of systemic, behavioral, environmental, institutional, and social issues in a collaborative approach.

We hereby acknowledge adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic experiences that may result in toxic stress within a child having a long-term effect on their development.

We hereby make note that protective factors provide a concrete foundation for preventing families from becoming 'at risk' for abuse and neglect. We strive to educate the entire community on these factors.

We acknowledge multiple agencies and a network of partners within Bladen County. These agencies serve as the foundation of Resilient Bladen and its Community Child Abuse Prevention Plan. They ensure access to evidence based and informed prevention programs for children and their families.

We hereby recognize the collaboration across governmental organizations, the public, private and non-profit sectors to reinforce one another's work towards a successful Bladen County.

The Bladen County Child Abuse Prevention Plan supports these collaborations in reinforcing the outcomes of optimal child development, increased family support, a responsive service system and a decrease in child abuse and neglect in Bladen County.

We hereby identify the network of partners in Bladen County that ensure access to evidence based/informed prevention programs for children and their families.

Whereas the Bladen County Child Abuse Prevention Plan is framed around sound practices, strong families, and quality services to aid Bladen County families.

Moreover, the Bladen County Child Abuse Prevention Plan steers the efforts in Bladen County for promoting community involvement, educating the community, and reducing child abuse and neglect.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that (insert entity) hereby endorses the Bladen County Child Abuse Prevention Plan.

ENDORSED on this day _____ of _____, in the year _____.

Signed _____

References

[https://bladennc.govoffice3.com/vertical/sites/%7B3428E8B4-BA8D-4BCE-9B92-0A719CB4C4FB%7D/uploads/Bladen_2018_CHNA_County_Report\(1\).pdf](https://bladennc.govoffice3.com/vertical/sites/%7B3428E8B4-BA8D-4BCE-9B92-0A719CB4C4FB%7D/uploads/Bladen_2018_CHNA_County_Report(1).pdf)

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm>

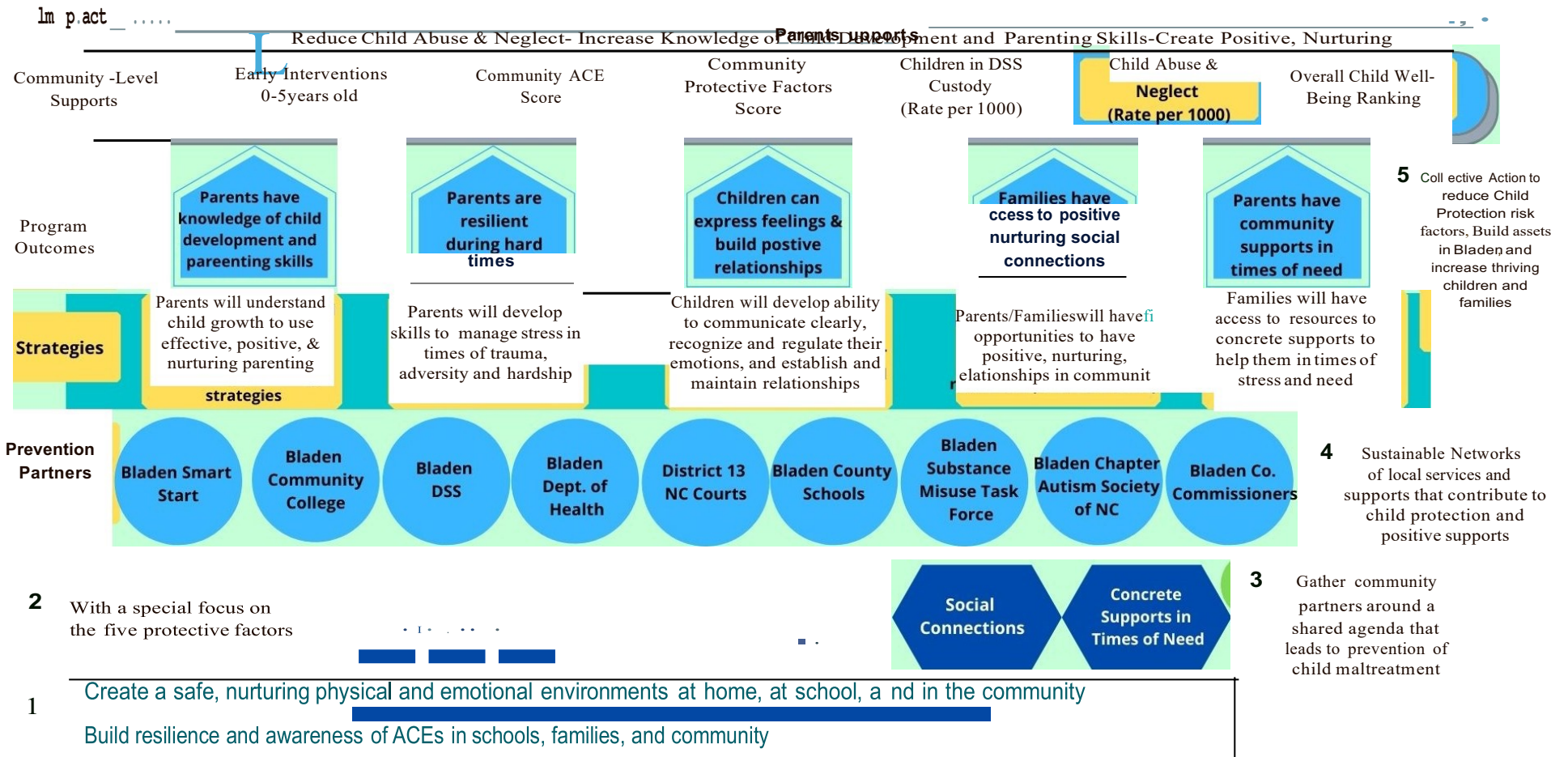
<https://ncchild.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/2021-NCchildhealth-reportcard-.pdf>

<https://ncchild.org/what-we-do/insights/data/2021county-data-cards/>

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/about/department-initiatives/early-childhood/early-childhood-action-plan>

APPENDIX

What Difference Will We Make?



2021 NC DATA CARD






BLADEN COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA

Child population: 2,311,620
 Percent under age six: 31.5%
 Number of live births: 118,725

BLADEN

Child population: 7,084
 Percent under age six: 30.1%
 Number of live births: 344

 <p>A STRONG START</p>	<p><i>Women who receive early prenatal care:</i></p> <p>61.3% 2019</p> <hr/> <p>58.5% 2018</p>	<p><i>Babies born at a low birthweight:</i></p> <p>7.3% 2019</p> <hr/> <p>10.8% 2018</p>	<p><i>Babies born pre-term:</i></p> <p>9.9% 2019</p> <hr/> <p>11.3% 2018</p>
 <p>FAMILY ECONOMIC SECURITY</p>	<p><i>Children living in poor or low-income homes:</i></p> <p>60.6% 2019</p> <hr/> <p>64.1% 2018</p>	<p><i>Children in households that are food insecure:</i></p> <p>27.6% 2018</p> <hr/> <p>24.3% 2017</p>	<p><i>Median family income:</i></p> <p>\$36,173 2015-2019</p> <hr/> <p>\$32,378 2014-2018</p>
 <p>NURTURING HOMES & COMMUNITIES</p>	<p><i>Delinquency rate per 1,000 youth ages 6-15:</i></p> <p>8.0 2019</p> <hr/> <p>7.1 2018</p>	<p><i>Children assessed for abuse or neglect per 1,000:</i></p> <p>48.8 2019</p> <hr/> <p>56.5 2018</p>	<p><i>Teen births per 1,000 girls ages 15-17:</i></p> <p>-- 2019</p> <hr/> <p>-- 2018</p>
 <p>HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION</p>	<p><i>3rd grade students scoring proficient in reading:</i></p> <p>42.6% 2018-2019</p> <hr/> <p>41.9% 2017-2018</p>	<p><i>High school students graduating on time*:</i></p> <p>91.9% 2020</p> <hr/> <p>91.6% 2019</p>	<p><i>Residents with bachelor's degree or higher:</i></p> <p>15.8% 2019</p> <hr/> <p>15.1% 2018</p>
 <p>HEALTH & WELLNESS</p>	<p><i>Children without health insurance:</i></p> <p>4.6% 2019</p> <hr/> <p>4.4% 2018</p>	<p><i>Infant mortality per 1,000 live births:</i></p> <p>5.8 2019</p> <hr/> <p>5.4 2018</p>	<p><i>Child deaths per 100,000:</i></p> <p>74.4 2019</p> <hr/> <p>83.6 2018</p>



Pathways to Success
 NC Pathways to Success
 Learn more at: www.buildthefoundation.org/pathways

NC Child

1
 The Voice for North Carolina's Children

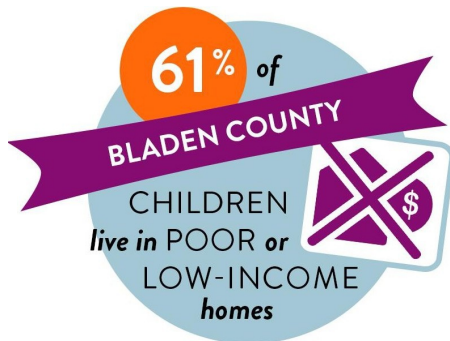
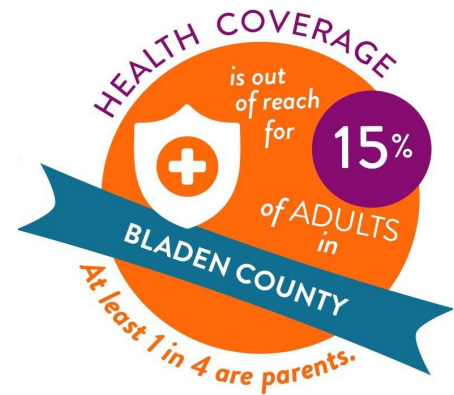


Key data points for families in **BLADEN** COUNTY

Using every tool for pandemic recovery

HEALTH COVERAGE IS KEY FOR FAMILY FINANCIAL STABILITY.

Hundreds of thousands of North Carolina families have lost the health insurance they previously received through their jobs. Congress has put forward major incentives for states like North Carolina to expand health coverage to those who did not previously qualify for either Medicaid, or subsidies under the Affordable Care Act.



LOW INCOMES, JOB LOSS, AND PERSISTENT POVERTY.

Poverty is one of the most important factors affecting a child's long-term health and development. Those who were earning the lowest wages before the pandemic have been most likely to lose jobs and suffer long-term hardship.

Share this County Data Card with leaders and elected officials. We need your voice to make a difference in your community!

About the County Data Cards

These County Data Cards highlight key indicators of child well-being that help policy-makers understand where to target relief so that it is most sustainable and effective.

- These data benchmarks indicate how North Carolina's children were faring before **COVID-19** struck.
- Many families are fighting new and increased stressors like job loss, hunger, untreated health concerns, and isolation from community support. Traumatic episodes like these are shown to have long-term impacts on children's healthy development.
- Officials should use these data points as a baseline and watch for changes as they allocate funds and adopt policies focused on long-term recovery.



For complete data notes and sources, visit www.ncchild.org.
Contact Vikki Crouse, **KIDSCOUNT** Program Director, with any questions: vikki@ncchild.org

Current Community Programs

Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Several research studies have demonstrated that – for both mothers and fathers – high levels of emotional, informational, instrumental, or spiritual support are associated with positive parental mood; positive perceptions of and responsiveness to one's children; parental satisfaction, well-being, and sense of competence; and lower levels of anger, anxiety, and depression. The following list is of community resources addressing the Social and Emotional Competence of Children. The matrix is a starting point; it is not an exhaustive list. The list will grow as more partners join the effort.

Community Resources that Increase Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Program Name	Organization Name	Service Provided	Target Population
Bladen Healthy Collaborative	Bladen County Health and Human Services	A menu representing agencies for resource needs.	All ages.
Bladen County Autism Chapter	Autism Society of NC	Autism resource center. Skill Building/Education recommendations for children.	All ages.
Care Coordination for Children (CMARC)	Bladen County Health and Human Services	Parent/Education Support.	Birth to age 5.
Child Protective Services	Department of Social Services	Investigates abuse/neglect/dependency of children.	Under the age of 18 years of age.
Children's Developmental Services (CDSA)	Bladen County Health and Human Services, State of NC	Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers referral system. Technical assistance to childcare facilities and childcare providers.	Birth to 3.
Child Support	Department of Social Services	Ensures that both parents are responsible for support of their children.	
Exceptional Children's Pre-K	Bladen County Schools	Skill building/ education for children; Parent Education/Support; Information/Screening/Referral.	3- to 5-year-olds.
Food and Nutrition Services	Department of Social Services	End hunger and improve nutrition/health.	Helps low-income families feed their families.

Program Name	Organization Name	Service Provided	Target Population
Head Start	Bladen County Government	Skill building/Education for children.	3- to 5-year-olds.
Innovative Approaches of Bladen County	Division of Public Health, Children and Youth Branch serving Bladen, Columbus, and Robeson counties.	Make referrals and connections to parents with children with special healthcare needs	Birth to 21 years old.
North Carolina Pre-K	Bladen County Schools	Skill building/Education for children.	3- to 5-year-olds.
Parenting Classes	Department of Social Services	Parent Education Support.	Caregivers with a child under 1 year on Medicaid/enrolled in Maternity or Child Service Coordination.
Partnership for Children (Bladen County Smart Start)	Bladen County Government	Fair and equal opportunities for children for success.	Birth to 5
Well Child Health Care	Bladen County Health and Human Services	Parent education/support	Birth to age 5.
Work First	Department of Social Services	Parent training/services to help become employed and self-sufficient.	
NCCARE360	Bladen County Health and Human Services	A statewide network that unites health care and human services organizations with a shared technology that enables a coordinated, community-oriented, person-centered approach for delivering care in NC. NCCARE 360 helps providers electronically connect with those with identified needs to community resources and allow for feedback and follow up	All ages.
NC Triple P Positive Parenting Online Program.	Bladen County Health and Human Services.	An evidence-based intervention program providing simple strategies to encourage positive behavior and prevent and manage misbehavior.	Birth to 12 years of age.

Parental Resilience

Numerous researchers have concluded that how parents respond to stress is much more important than the cause of the stress itself in determining the outcomes for themselves and their children. Parents are more likely to achieve healthy, favorable outcomes if they are resilient. Resilience is the process of managing stress and functioning well even when faced with challenges, adversity, and trauma. The following list is of community resources addressing the Parental Resilience.

The matrix is a starting point; it is not an exhaustive list. The list will grow as more partners join the effort.

Community Resources that Increase Parental Resilience

Program Name	Organization Name	Service Provided	Target Population
Bladen County Autism Chapter	Autism Society of NC	Autism resource center. Skill Building/Education recommendations for children.	All ages.
Care Coordination for Children (CMARC)	Bladen County Health and Human Services	Parent/Education Support	Birth to age 5.
Crisis Social Worker	Department of Social Services	During crisis situations, a food pantry and assistance with financial situations such as heating, and cooling is available.	
Exceptional Children's Pre-K Program	Bladen County Schools	Skill building/ education for children; Parent Education/ Support; Information/Screening/Referral.	3- to 5-year-olds.
Head Start	Bladen County Government	Skill building/Education for children	3- to 5-year-olds.
NCCARE360	Bladen County Health and Human Services	A statewide network that unites health care and human services organizations with a shared technology that enables a coordinated, community-oriented, person-centered approach for delivering care in NC. NCCARE 360 helps providers electronically connect with those with identified needs to community resources and allow for feedback and follow up.	All ages.
Parenting Classes	Department of Social Services	Parent Education Support	Caregivers with a child under 1 year on Medicaid/enrolled in Maternity or Child Service Coordination.

Program Name	Organization Name	Service Provided	Target Population
WIC Program	Bladen County Health and Human Services	Provides pregnant women, postpartum, and breast-feeding women, and infants and children to age 5 with nutritional education and supplemental foods to assist with their health care needs during this critical time of growth and development.	Birth to age 5.
Postpartum Home Visits	Bladen County Health and Human Services	Provides pregnant women, postpartum, and breast-feeding women, and infants and children to age 5 with nutritional education and supplemental foods to assist with their health care needs during this critical time of growth and development.	Birth to age 5.
Innovative Approaches of Bladen County	Division of Public Health, Children and Youth Branch serving Bladen, Columbus, and Robeson counties.	Make referrals and connections to parents with children with special healthcare needs	Birth to 21 years old.
NC Triple P Positive Parenting Online Program.	Bladen County Health and Human Services.	An evidence-based intervention program providing simple strategies to encourage positive behavior and prevent and manage misbehavior.	Birth to 12 years of age.
Social Emotional Learning Efforts/ Initiatives and School Based Mental Health Services	Bladen County Schools	SEL Services Provided SEL Curriculums taught in schools. Positive Behavioral interventions and Support	Elementary and Middle School students All Students
Aggressive Replacement Training (ART)	Bladen County Schools	Aggressive Replacement Training (ART) Peer Group Connections (PGC)	5 th grade students 9 th grade students
Teen Mental Health First Aid Youth Mental Health First Aid for School Staff	Bladen County Schools	Teen Mental Health First Aid Youth Mental Health First Aid for School Staff	10 th grade students All Students
Crisis Prevention Institutes Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training School Crisis Management Teams and select staff	Bladen County Schools	Crisis Prevention Institutes Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training School Crisis Management Teams and select staff	All Students
Mental Health Services Provided Day Treatment Services-ETP and ETMS School Based Outpatient Therapy	Bladen County Schools	Mental Health Services Provided Day Treatment Services-ETP and ETMS School Based Outpatient Therapy	All Students

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Scientists in these fields have provided much evidence of the critical importance of early childhood as the period in which the foundation for intellectual, social, emotional, and moral development is established. Furthermore, numerous research studies show this foundation is determined by the nature of the young child's environments and experiences that shape early brain development. The following list is of community resources addressing the Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development. The matrix is a starting point; it is not an exhaustive list. The list will grow as more partners join the effort.

Community Resources that Increase Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Program Name	Organization Name	Service Provided	Target Population
Care Coordination for Children (CMARC)	Bladen County Health and Human Services	Parent/Education Support	Birth to age 5.
Exceptional Children's Pre-K Program	Bladen County Schools	Skill building/ education for children; Parent Education/Support/Information/Screening/Referral.	3- to 5-year-olds
Parenting Classes	Department of Social Services	Parent Education Support	Caregivers with a child under 1 year on Medicaid/enrolled in Maternity or Child Service Coordination.
Postpartum Home Visits	Bladen County Health and Human Services	Provides pregnant women, postpartum, and breast-feeding women, and infants and children to age 5 with nutritional education and supplemental foods to assist with their health care needs during this critical time of growth and development.	Birth to age 5.
NC Triple P Positive Parenting Online Program	Bladen County Health and Human Services.	An evidence-based intervention program providing simple strategies to encourage positive behavior and prevent and manage misbehavior.	Birth to 12 years of age.
Social Emotional Learning Efforts/ Initiatives and School Based Mental Health Services	Bladen County Schools	Mental Health Services Provided Day Treatment Services-ETP and ETMS School Based Outpatient Therapy	All Students

Concrete Supports

Assisting parents to identify, find and receive concrete support in times of need helps to ensure they and their family receive the necessities everyone deserves in order to grow (e.g., healthy food, a safe environment), as well as specialized medical, mental health, social, educational or legal services. The following list is of community resources addressing the Concrete Support. The matrix is a starting point; it is not an exhaustive list. The list will grow as more partners join the effort.

Community Resources that Increase Concrete Supports

Program Name	Organization Name	Service Provided	Target Population
Care Coordination for Children (CMARC)	Bladen County Health and Human Services	Parent/Education Support	Birth to age 5.
Child Protective Services	Department of Social Services	Investigates abuse/neglect/dependency of children	Under the age of 18 years of age.
Exceptional Children's Pre-K	Bladen County Schools	Skill building/ education for children; Parent Education/Support/Information/Screening/Referral.	3 to 5 years of age.
Food and Nutrition Services	Department of Social Services	End hunger and improve nutrition/health.	Helps low-income families feed their families.
Innovative Approaches of Bladen County	Division of Public Health, Children and Youth Branch serving Bladen, Columbus, and Robeson counties.	Make referrals and connections to parents with children with special healthcare needs.	Birth to 21 years old.
Parenting Classes	Department of Social Services	Parent Education Support	Caregivers with a child under 1 year on Medicaid/enrolled in Maternity or Child Service Coordination.
NC Triple P Parenting Online Program	Bladen County Health and Human Services	An evidence-based intervention program providing simple strategies to encourage positive behavior and prevent and manage misbehavior.	Birth to 12 years of age.
Well Child Health Care	Bladen County Health and Human Services	Parent Education and Support	Birth to age 5.
Postpartum Home Visits	Bladen County Health and Human Services	Provides pregnant women, postpartum, and breast-feeding women, and infants and children to age 5 with nutritional education and supplemental foods to assist with their health care needs during this critical time of growth and development.	Birth to age 5.
WIC Program	Bladen County Health and Human Services	Provides pregnant women, postpartum, and breast-feeding women, and infants and children to age 5 with nutritional education and supplemental foods to assist with their health care needs during this critical time of growth and development.	Birth to age 5.

Social Connections

The following list is of community resources addressing the Social Connections. The matrix is a starting point; it is not an exhaustive list. The list will grow as more partners join the effort.

Community Resources that Increase/Support Social Connections

Program Name	Organization Name	Service Provided	Target Population
Child Support	Department of Social Services	Ensures that both parents are responsible for support of their children	
Celebrate Recovery	DreamWorks	Support group/Counseling	Individuals suffering or recovering from substance abuse and for their family members
Gym/Fitness Center	DreamWorks	DreamWorks offers a 24-hour gym that is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!	
NC 211		2-1-1- 1-888-892-1162 to obtain free and confidential information on health/human services/resources	
NCCARE360	Bladen County Health and Human Services	A statewide network that unites health care and human services organizations with a shared technology that enables a coordinated, community-oriented, person-centered approach for delivering care in NC. NCCARE 360 helps providers electronically connect with those with identified needs to community resources and allow for feedback and followup.	All ages.
Walking Activity Groups	Bladen County Park and Recreation	Exercise opportunities	
Bladen 4-H Program	NC Cooperative Extension		