

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Information for Educators



WHAT ARE ACEs?

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events that occur before age 18.

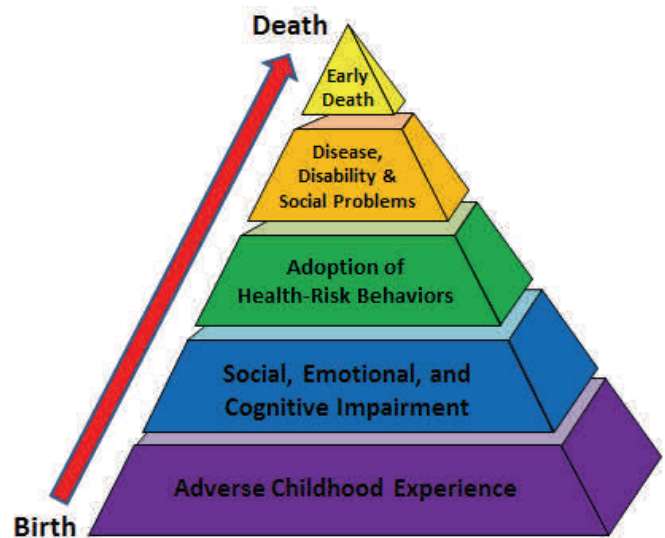
Examples include:

- Abuse and neglect
- Bullying or exclusion
- Poverty
- Discrimination
- Household substance abuse
- Witnessing violence
- Household mental illness
- Divorce, deportation or other family separation



Did you know that children exposed to an ACE often have a lower GPA, decreased reading ability, higher rates of truancy, and increased likelihood to drop out or be suspended or expelled?

THE ACE STUDY is one of the largest investigations ever conducted to assess the connection between childhood trauma and adult health and well-being. More than half of the 17,000 participants reported exposure to at least one traumatic experience before age 18.¹ The study proved that childhood traumatic experiences are associated with risk factors for illness and death.



HAVE OUR CHILDREN BEEN EXPOSED?

In Oregon, 51% of parents reported that their child had been exposed to at least one traumatic experience.² As the child aged, the likelihood of experiencing at least one ACE also increased.



1. <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/>
2. <http://www.childhealthdata.org/>

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR EDUCATORS

One out of every four children attending school in the US has been exposed to a traumatic experience that can affect their learning and behavior.³ ACEs are a social problem that are present regardless of gender, race, age or socio-economic status.



EXPOSURE TO TRAUMA CAN

- ◆ Adversely affect attention and memory
- ◆ Reduce ability to focus
- ◆ Interfere with effective problem solving
- ◆ Result in overwhelming feelings of anxiety
- ◆ Lead to physical and emotional distress, such as headaches, stomach aches, impulsive behaviors and overreacting to loud noises or sudden movements



Did you know that students are more likely to succeed academically when they feel connected to school? School connectedness is the strongest protective factor to decrease substance use, school absenteeism and violence.⁴

3. <http://www.nctsnet.org/>

4. <http://www.cpc.unc.edu/projects/addhealth>



WHAT EDUCATORS CAN DO

- ◆ Foster resiliency by building on strengths
- ◆ Create an encouraging atmosphere
- ◆ Work with caregivers to address school issues
- ◆ Refer to community resources when a child shows signs of being unable to cope with traumatic stress

HELP TRAUMATIZED STUDENTS BY

- ◆ Maintaining a sense of normalcy
- ◆ Increasing the level of encouragement
- ◆ Setting clear limits for inappropriate behavior
- ◆ Recognizing that behavioral problems may be temporary and related to trauma
- ◆ Providing a safe place for the child to talk
- ◆ Providing simple and realistic answers to the child's questions about traumatic events
- ◆ Being sensitive to any environmental triggers

Resources:

Washington County Educational Resources - Coming Soon
<http://www.co.washington.or.us/HHS/>

National Child traumatic Stress Network
<http://www.nctsnet.org/>

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study
<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/>

The Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health
<http://www.childhealthdata.org/home>

The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health
<http://www.cpc.unc.edu/projects/addhealth>

