



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Fact Sheet

(ACES)

Childhood experiences, both positive and negative, have a tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunity. ACEs are adverse childhood experiences that harm children's developing brains so profoundly that the effects show up decades later; they cause much of chronic disease, most mental illness, and are at the root of most violence.

Prevalence of Youth Trauma

- 68% of children and adolescents experienced at least one potentially traumatic event by age 16.
- In a study, 78% of children reportedly had multiple adversities, with an average initial exposure at age 5 years.
- Data suggests that every classroom has at least one student affected by trauma.
- Students living in poverty, homelessness, and with other social vulnerabilities are significantly more apt to experience stress and trauma.



Mechanism by Which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan

Adverse Childhood Experiences Have Been Linked To



- Risky health behaviors
- Chronic health conditions
- Low life potential
- Early death

What You May Notice:

- Reactivity and impulsivity
- Aggression and defiance
- Withdrawal and avoidance
- Perfectionism
- Repetitive thoughts or comments about death or dying
- Non-age appropriate behavior
- Anxiety/worry about safety of self and others
- Poor or changed school performance and attendance
- Overly protective of personal space or belongings

How Trauma Affects Learning:

- Traumatic stress from adverse childhood experiences can undermine the ability to form relationships, regulate emotions, and impair cognitive functions.
- Hyper arousal, intrusion or constriction may interfere with processing of verbal/nonverbal and written information.
- Ability to organize material sequentially may be inhibited due to coming from a chaotic environment.
- Difficulty with classroom transitions
- Problem solving from a different point of view, inferring ideas, or working in group/exhibiting empathy may result when students do not feel safe expressing a preference.

Adverse Childhood Experiences Include:

- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional neglect
- Physical neglect
- Mother treated violently
- Household substance abuse
- Household mental illness
- Parental separation or divorce
- Incarcerated household

Resources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Orange County Department of Education, Center for Healthy Kids and Schools
- American Academy of Pediatrics

