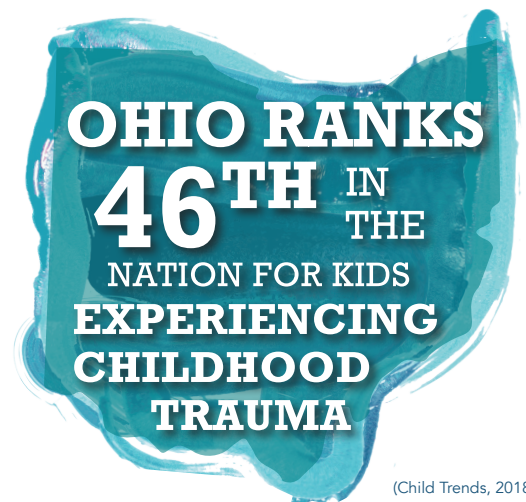


Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)



What are ACEs?

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events that have the potential to cause long-lasting negative effects. During the earliest and most critical years of development, children are highly vulnerable to adversity. Almost half of all children in the United States have experienced at least one ACE, but black and Hispanic children are at much higher risk than their white peers--51% of Hispanic children and 61% of black children have had an adverse childhood experience, compared to 40% of their white peers. As the frequency and length of ACEs increase, so do the impacts on physical and mental health, academic achievement, and self-sufficiency. Ohio ranks 46th in the nation for kids having three or more ACEs, putting them at higher risk for long-lasting negative effects.



What constitutes an ACE?

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study conducted in 1995 outlined ten ACEs that predict negative outcomes later in life. Today, these have been adapted to create the ACE test—an eight question survey to determine the number of significant adversities a child has experienced. The commonly accepted questions on the ACE test ask whether a child has ever:

1. Lived with a parent or guardian who became divorced or separated
2. Lived with a parent or guardian who died
3. Lived with a parent or guardian who served time in jail or prison
4. Lived with anyone who was mentally ill or suicidal, or severely depressed for more than a couple of weeks
5. Lived with anyone who had a problem with alcohol or drugs
6. Witnessed a parent, guardian, or other adult in the household behaving violently toward another
7. Been the victim of violence or witnessed any violence in his or her neighborhood
8. Experienced economic hardship "somewhat often" or "very often" (i.e., the family found it hard to cover costs of food and housing) (Child Trends, 2018)

Prevalence of ACEs in OHIO

49% OF OHIO KIDS
have had at least
ONE ACE

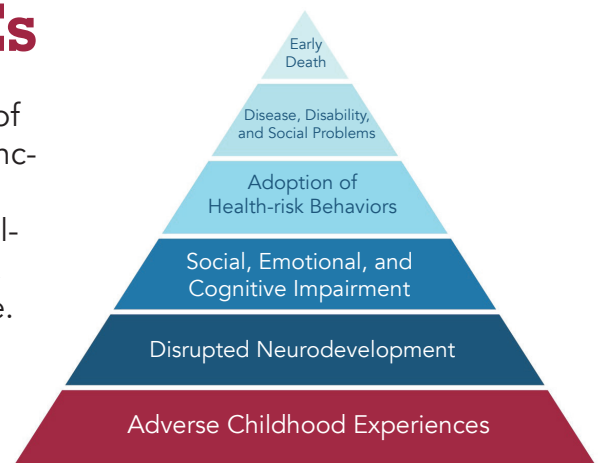
(Child Trends, 2018)

1 IN 7 kids in Ohio
THREE OR MORE

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES,
putting them at much higher risk for
long-term negative effects. (Child Trends, 2018)

Long-Term Impacts of ACEs

The experiences a child has during the first several years of life shape who they become. Adverse childhood experiences have the potential to impact long-term mental health, physical health, and behaviors, including smoking, alcoholism, drug use, missed work, depression, suicide attempts, heart disease, diabetes, severe obesity, cancer, and stroke. On average, people with six or more adverse childhood experiences have a life expectancy of 60 years, which is significantly shorter than the 80 year life expectancy for people with no ACEs.



(Veto Violence)

Preventing Adverse Experiences

ACEs have a multigenerational effect—the impact of a parent’s adverse experiences can also influence their child’s development. Studies have shown that the most successful way to prevent the cycle of adverse experiences is to provide interventions for both parents and children. Successful interventions include:

Giving parents the tools to be successful caregivers and teachers. Programs that allow parents to cultivate strong, healthy relationships with their children, such as voluntary, evidence based-home visiting, give children the emotional security required for health development and provide parents with the knowledge to understand their child’s needs, as well as their own.

Helping struggling families achieve and maintain consistency and self-sufficiency. In order to provide children with the consistency they need for healthy development in the early years of life, programs like quality publicly funded child care and income assistance allow parents to work toward stable employment and self-sufficiency.

Creating stable, nurturing environments that allow kids to ensure healthy physical and emotional development. Access to intimate partner violence prevention programs and mental illness and substance abuse treatment are crucial to ensuring that children are able to grow and thrive without the toxic stress caused by domestic violence and mental illness within the home.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

References

Child Trends. [“The prevalence of adverse childhood experiences, nationally, by state, and by race or ethnicity.”](#) (2018)

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