

ADVERSE CHILD EXPERIENCES (ACES) FACT SHEET

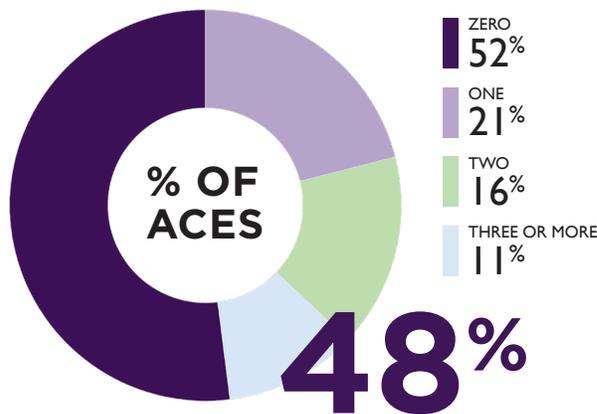
WHAT ARE ACES?

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is the term given to describe all types of abuse, neglect and other traumatic experiences that occur to individuals under the age of 18.

-  Lived with a parent or guardian who became divorced or separated
-  Lived with anyone who had a problem with alcohol or drugs
-  Lived with anyone who was mentally ill or suicidal, or severely depressed
-  Witnessed an adult in the household behaving violently
-  Lived with a parent or guardian who was incarcerated
-  Been the victim of violence or witnessed any violence in his or her neighborhood
-  Lived with a parent or guardian who died
-  Experienced economic hardship

Research shows adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) have a negative impact on a child's health and well-being later in life. The accumulation of multiple ACEs is associated with a detrimental long-term impact on health and development.

Understanding how many children have experienced ACEs helps to determine what interventions or policy changes are needed. One approach to buffer the impact of ACEs is to promote stable and supportive relationships with caregivers.



48% of children in Alabama have had at least one adverse childhood experience

IN ALABAMA

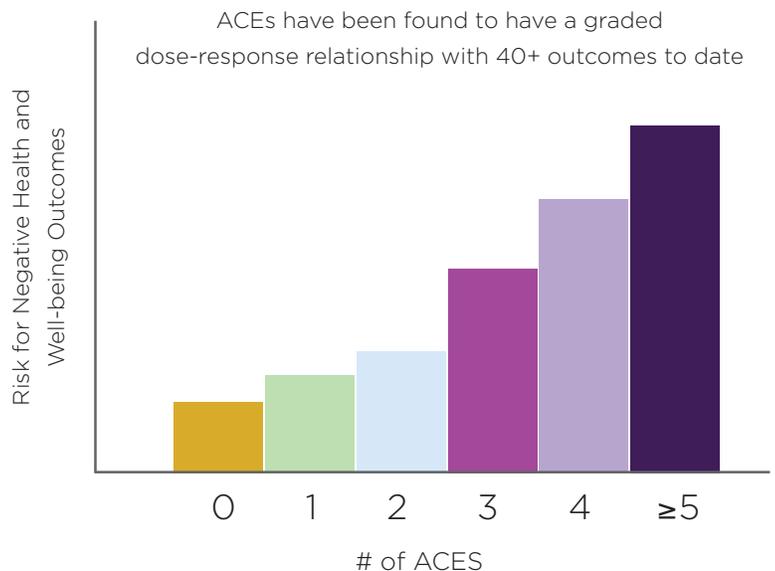
27%

of children have experienced two or more ACEs

THE IMPACT OF ACES

ACEs can have lasting effects on...

-  Health (obesity, diabetes, depression, suicide attempts, STDs, heart disease, cancer, stroke, COPD, broken bones)
-  Behaviors (smoking, alcoholism, drug use)
-  Life Potential (graduation rates, academic achievement, lost time from work)



WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT ACES

These wide-ranging health and social consequences underscore the importance of preventing ACEs before they happen. Safe, stable and nurturing relationships **and environments** (SSNRs) can have a positive impact on a broad range of health problems and on the development of skills that will help children reach their full potential. Strategies that address the needs of children and their families include:

Strengthening Families™ is a research-based, cost-effective framework to increase family strengths, enhance child development and reduce child abuse and neglect. This approach helps child welfare systems, early education, prevention organizations and other programs work with parents to build five protective factors that, when present, increase the overall well-being of children and families. The five protective factors include:

- Enhancing parental resilience
- Providing an array of social connections
- Providing parents concrete support in times of need
- Facilitating knowledge of parenting and child development
- Supporting healthy social & emotional competence of children

Training on the Strengthening Families™ Framework is offered by the Alabama Department of Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention/The Children's Trust Fund, The Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers, and the Alabama Partnership for Children.

Data source: Child Trends. (2018). The prevalence of adverse childhood experiences, nationally, by state, and by race/ethnicity.

*There are two approaches to measuring ACEs. One method, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) asks adults to reflect on their own childhood while the other surveys parents about challenges their family currently faces. The research shown here comes from the second method, a survey administered by Child Trends. This survey contains slightly different questions than the original ACEs study. It does not ask parents to disclose abuse or neglect in their household and instead asks about economic stability. We chose to use this data because the BRFSS has only been administered in VA for 2 years and the Child Trends survey is comparable across states.