

What are ACEs?

ACEs are major childhood trauma which can result in changes in brain development. These changes may affect a child's ability to learn and their social skills. ACEs can also result in long-term health problems. Experts believe ACEs are a major health issue in the 21st century.

Adverse Childhood Experiences can include:

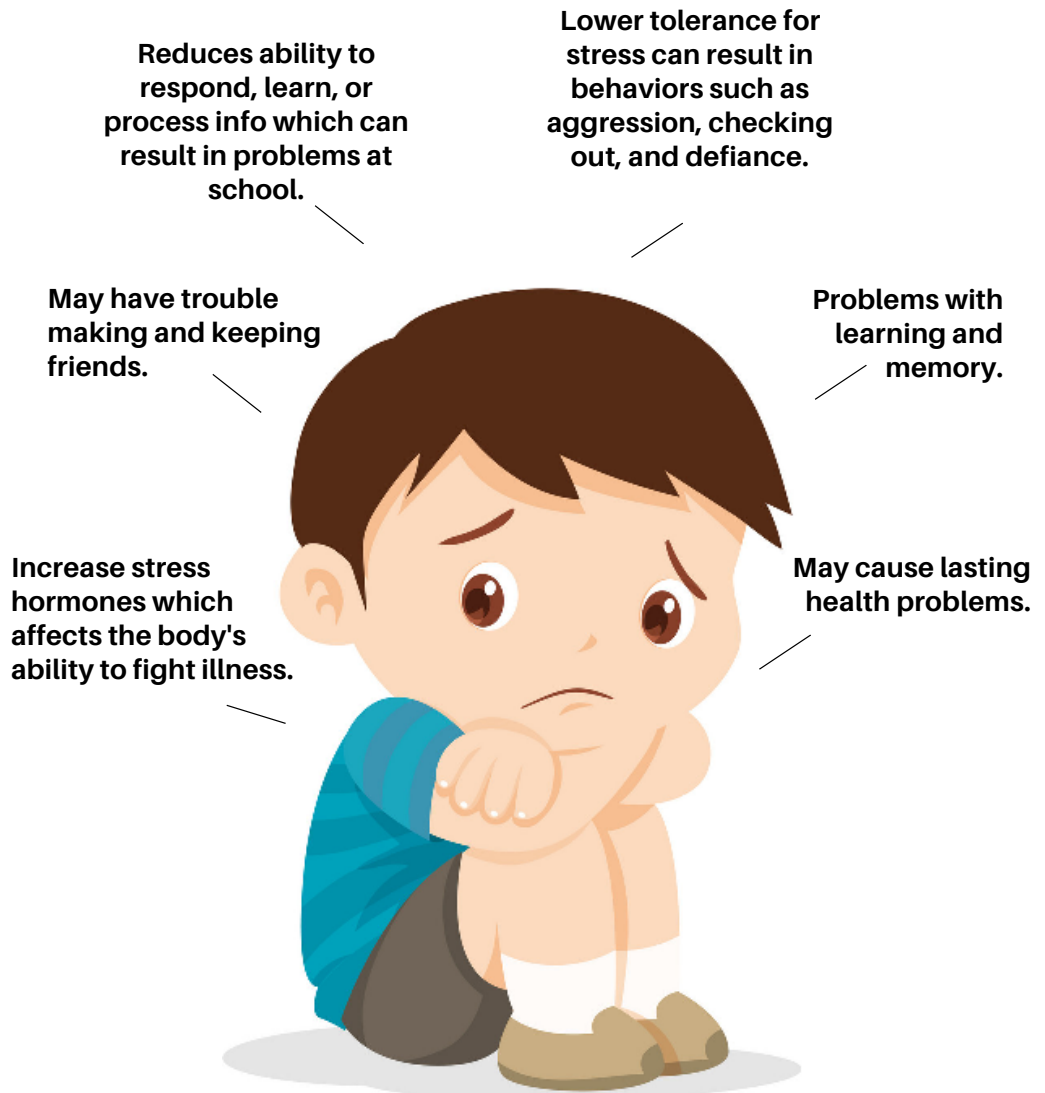
1. Emotional abuse
2. Physical abuse
3. Sexual abuse
4. Emotional neglect
5. Physical neglect
6. Mother treated violently
7. Household substance abuse
8. Household mental illness
9. Parents separate or divorce
10. Household member in prison or jail

Exposure to childhood ACEs can increase the risk of:

- Teen pregnancy
- Alcoholism and alcohol abuse
- Chronic lung disease
- Depression
- Early start of sexual activity
- Early start of smoking
- Fetal death
- Health-related quality of life
- Drug use
- Heart disease
- Liver disease
- Multiple sexual partners
- Risk for intimate partner violence
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- Smoking
- Suicide attempts
- Unintended pregnancies
- Early death

How do ACEs affect health?

Through stress. Frequent or prolonged exposure to ACEs can create toxic stress. Here's how toxic stress can damage the brain of a child and affect overall health.



A **Survival Mode Response** is one that increases heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, and muscle tension. When a child is in survival mode, self-protection is their priority. In other words: "I can't hear you. I can't respond to you. I am just trying to be safe."

What is Resilience?

Resilience is the ability to thrive, adapt, and cope even under stress. Resilience reduces the harmful effects of ACEs. Both children and adults can learn resilience skills.

Building Resilience in Children

Parents, teachers, care givers, and community members can help children by:

- Learning about ACEs
- Creating spaces where children feel safe
- Helping children identify feelings and manage emotions
- Creating protective factors at home, schools, and in the community

What Are Protective Factors?

Protective factors are conditions or qualities that help us build resilience. Five protective factors that help to keep families strong and children safe are:

1. Parent Resilience

The ability to recover from hard life experiences, and often to be strengthened by those experiences.

2. Social Connections

Positive relationships that provide support.

3. Concrete Support in Times of Need

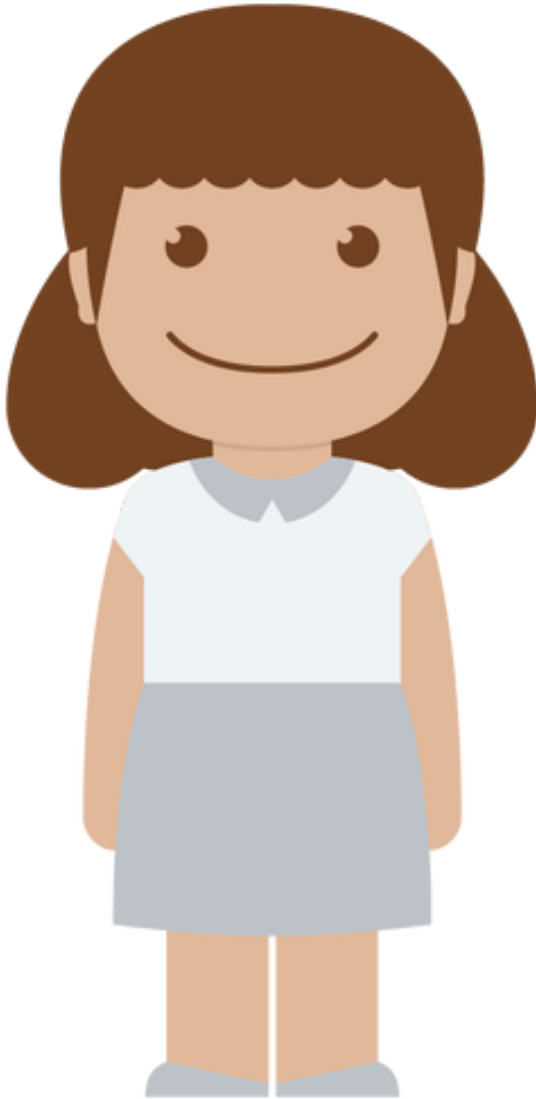
Access to support and services that address a family's needs and lessen stress caused by challenges.

4. Parenting and Child Development Knowledge

Understanding parenting strategies that support child development.

5. Social and Emotional Skills of Children

Family and child interactions that help children communicate clearly, manage their emotions, and form and keep relationships.



RESOURCES:

- acestoohigh.org
- acesconnection.com
- positiveexperiences.org
- kpjrfilms.co/resilience/
- 5 Protective Factors: <https://cssp.org/our-work/projects/protective-factors-framework/>
- CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html>
- Essentials for Childhood: https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/EfC_onepager-a.pdf
- EveryDay Strong: <https://www.unitedwayuc.org/get-involved/everyday-strong>
- Prevent Child Abuse Utah: <https://pcautah.org/>