

**CHANGING THE ODDS FOR CHILDREN EXPOSED TO TRAUMA AND
STRESS:
THE ROLE OF EARLY POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND HIGH QUALITY
EDUCATION**

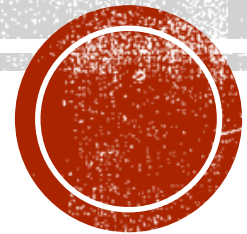
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THREE POINTS

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are the most important public health issue of our time.
- ACEs have enduring, damaging effects physical, cognitive, social and emotional function.
- Protective and Compensatory Experiences (PACEs) are powerful buffers that reduce the effects of ACEs.



ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

ACEs = ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

The three types of ACEs include

ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Mental Illness



Mother treated violently



Divorce



Incarcerated Relative



Substance Abuse



ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

WHAT IMPACT DO ACEs HAVE?

As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk for negative health outcomes



Possible Risk Outcomes:

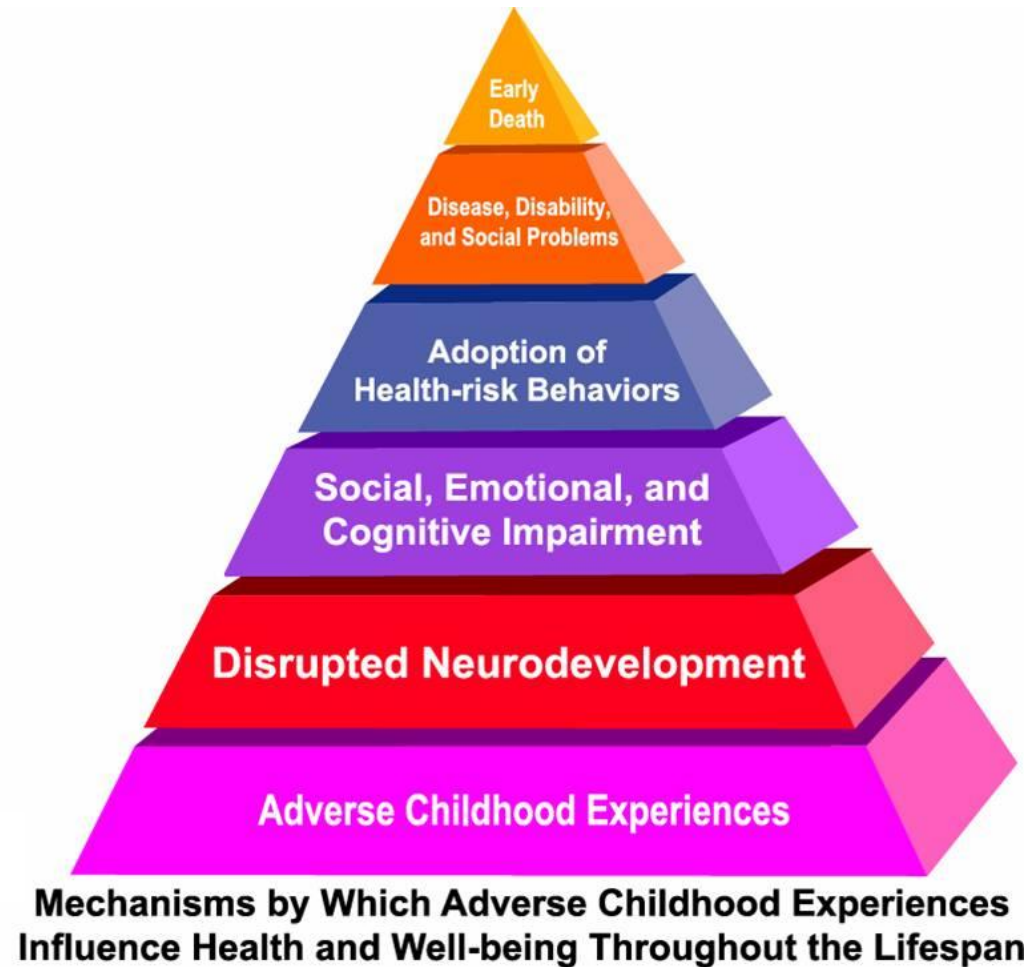
BEHAVIOR				
 Lack of physical activity	 Smoking	 Alcoholism	 Drug use	 Missed work
PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH				
 Severe obesity	 Diabetes	 Depression	 Suicide attempts	 STDs
 Heart disease	 Cancer	 Stroke	 COPD	 Broken bones



ACES INFLUENCE BEHAVIOR & HEALTH

In multiple studies, ACEs predicted

- **Risky health behaviors**
(smoking, obesity, alcohol/drug abuse)
- **Chronic health problems**
Heart disease, cancer, diabetes, fractures, hepatitis, COPD
- **Mental health**
Depression, anxiety, panic reactions



THE ACE IMPACT IN OKLAHOMA

- In a recent national study, Oklahomans were among those at greatest risk for ACEs (Sacks et al., 2014)
 - At least 10% of Oklahoma children experience 4+ ACEs
 - Oklahoma was the only state that fell in the highest prevalence quartile for eight of the most commonly assessed ACEs.
- Perhaps not coincidentally, Oklahoma ranks among the worst in the nation on health conditions associated with high levels of ACEs



OKLAHOMA ACES — CHILDREN NOW

Oklahoma parents were surveyed about child's ACEs (2011-12)

- 30% - Economic Hardship (ranked 45th)
- 30% - Divorce (ranked 50th)
- 17% - Parent abused alcohol or drugs (49th)
- 11% - Witnessed domestic violence (50th)
- 12% - Had a parent with a mental illness (43rd)
- 10% - Had a parent incarcerated (48th)
- 13% - Was a victim of or witnessed neighborhood violence (49th)
- 17% - Already experienced 3 or more ACEs (49th)
- Highest rates (with Montana and W. Virginia) of children with ≥ 4



ACES HIGHER AMONG IMPOVERISHED FAMILIES

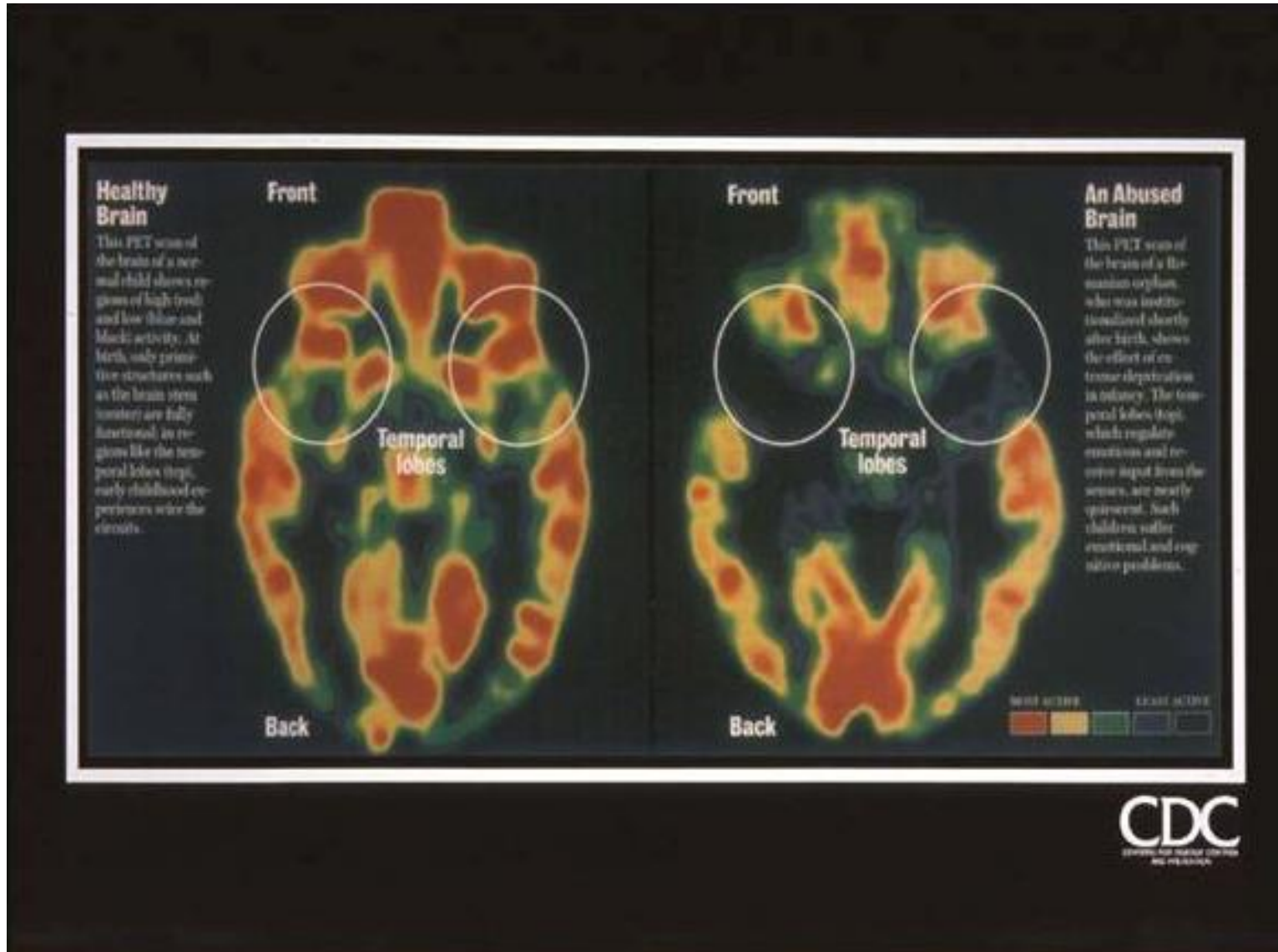
A study of “at-risk” families in Oklahoma
 (families eligible for some form of government assistance with at least one child
 age 0-36 months)
 (Bard, et.al. 2015)

ACE Score	CDC-Kaiser (N = 17,337)	MIECHV At-Risk Parents Baseline (N=1,229)
0	34.1%	18.7%
1	26.0%	10.0%
2	15.9%	15.7%
3	9.5%	24.2%
4+	12.5%	21.3%

22% CDC-K vs 45.5% “at-risk” Oklahomans Experience 3+ ACEs!!!



ABUSE AFFECTS THE DEVELOPING BRAIN



Three Levels of Stress Response

Positive

Brief increases in heart rate,
mild elevations in stress hormone levels.

Tolerable

Serious, temporary stress responses,
buffered by supportive relationships.

Toxic

Prolonged activation of stress response systems
in the absence of protective relationships.



PACES: PROTECTIVE AND COMPENSATORY EXPERIENCES THAT BUFFER TRAUMA/STRESS

- Our communities, organizations, extended families and friends can be part of buffering the damaging effects of adversity and stress.
- Developmental psychologists have identified a number experiences that mitigate or reduce the harmful consequences of ACEs
 - Unconditional love, connectedness, community engagement
 - Security: order, predictability, mastery/self-efficacy
- Because the brain is constantly creating new networks of synapses (based on experiences), creating protective environments can help at any age.



PROTECTIVE AND COMPENSATORY EXPERIENCES (PACES) — MORRIS, HAYS-GRUDO ET AL. (2015)

Relationships and connections	Environmental conditions and resources
Did you have someone who loved you unconditionally (you did not doubt that they cared about you)?	Did you have an engaging hobby -- an artistic or intellectual pastime either alone or in a group?
Did you have at least one best friend (someone you could trust, had fun with)?	Did you have an adult (not a parent) you trusted and could count on when you needed help or advice?
Did you do anything regularly to help others or do special projects in the community to help others?	Did you live in a home that was typically clean and safe with enough food to eat?
Were you regularly involved in organized sports groups or other physical activity?	Did your school provide the resources and experiences you needed to learn?
Were you active in at least one social or civic (non-sport) group with peers?	Were there routines and rules in your home that were clear and fairly administered?



BENEFITS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- Early care and education play a significant role in child development through impacting:
 - Self regulation
 - Academic achievement
 - Psychosocial functioning
- Long term impact documented



BENEFITS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS: PERRY PRESCHOOL PROJECT

ECE Curriculum:

- *Active learning
- *Decision-making and problem solving

7-13% Return on Investment

*33% lower arrest rate for violent crimes

*26% less likely to receive government assistance

*46% less likely to have served time in jail/prison

crimes

*44% higher high school graduation rate

*50% fewer teen pregnancies



Age 20 follow-up

*42% higher median monthly income
*1 more year of school



PROBLEMS PARENTS FACE

■ Education Concerns

- Impact of budget cuts on educational system
 - Large class sizes
 - Reduced bus stops
 - School violence
- Inequality within the educational system
- Not having access to high quality education
- Not having access to affordable, high quality child care

“And yes, we're thinking about moving him to another school, one where he can learn better, because since he's little and then because of the influences, because-- the influences of the other kids also has a lot to do with it for him, because he even had some bad behavior sometimes, when he didn't have it before.”

-Latino Father Groups



PROBLEMS PARENTS FACE

■ Exposure to Violence/Child Safety Concerns

- Fear of outside play
- Not trusting others with children
- Exposure to bad influences
- Living in bad neighborhoods
- Familial mental health concerns
 - interpersonal violence, substance abuse, mental illness

“It's hard for them to play outside and have places to go to be in a safe environment, so I mean, if we're do something we have to go across town for them to go to a park that's safe.”

-Father Group



RECOMMENDATION 1

Supporting high-risk families

- **Make funding priorities to support families in need through:**
 - **Parenting Programs**
 - Home-based parenting programs
 - **Mental Health Support**
 - Treatment for substance abuse and mental health issues
 - Interpersonal violence
 - **Child Safety**
 - Safe, affordable housing
 - **High Quality Education**



RECOMMENDATION 2

Supporting High Quality Education

- Make funding for high quality education programs for Oklahoma children a priority.
- This includes access to high quality:
 - child care
 - early childhood education programs
 - schools that are able to provide a safe and high quality level of education
- Increase focus on early childhood education in current child welfare policy and practice
 - Make child care and early childhood education universally available in some capacity to foster children and families involved with child welfare
 - Shift focus in current legislation and policy to address well-being as an equal priority to safety and permanency



QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

- What is going on in your community to help children and families?
- How do we join forces to have a collective impact?
- What is the role of local and state government in supporting children and families?
- What is the cost of not intervening early with Oklahoma children and families in need?

