

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

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# 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

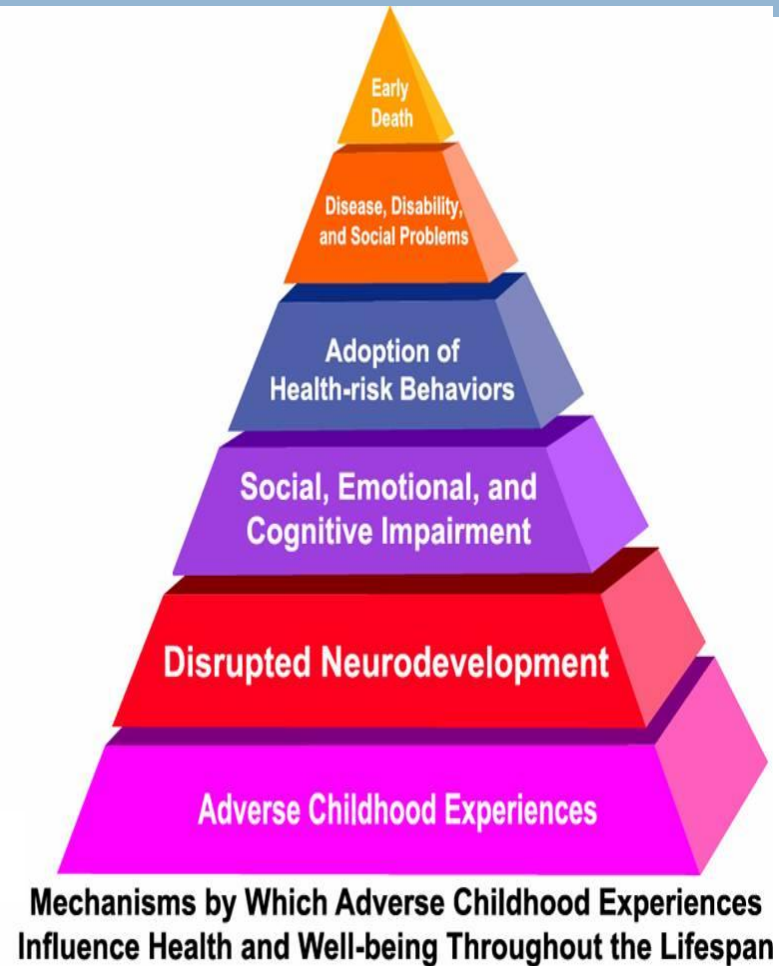


Substance Abuse

# 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



# ACEs are MORE common in Oklahoma

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES: NATIONAL AND STATELEVEL PREVALENCE. Vanessa Sacks, M.P.P., David Murphey, Ph.D., and Kristin Moore, Ph.D., **Child Trends**

“States vary in the pattern of specific ACEs. Connecticut and New Jersey have some of the lowest prevalence rates nationally for all ACEs, while Oklahoma has consistently high prevalence.”

[http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Brief-adverse-childhood-experiences\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Brief-adverse-childhood-experiences_FINAL.pdf)

# 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	26.1%	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” Oklahoma Experience 3+ ACEs!!!**

# 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.

# 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