

## What are Adverse Childhood Experiences?

Childhood experiences, both positive and negative, have a tremendous impact on our lifelong health. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are stressful or traumatic events that occurred during our childhood. They include:

Physical abuse	Sexual abuse	Emotional abuse	Physical neglect	Emotional neglect
Intimate partner violence	Mother treated violently	Parental substance abuse	Parental mental illness	Death of a parent
	Parental separation or divorce		Incarcerated parent	

**Adverse Childhood Experiences have been linked to:**

Risky health behaviors    Chronic health conditions    Low life potential    and Early death.

**As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk for these outcomes.**

## ACES can have lasting effects on....



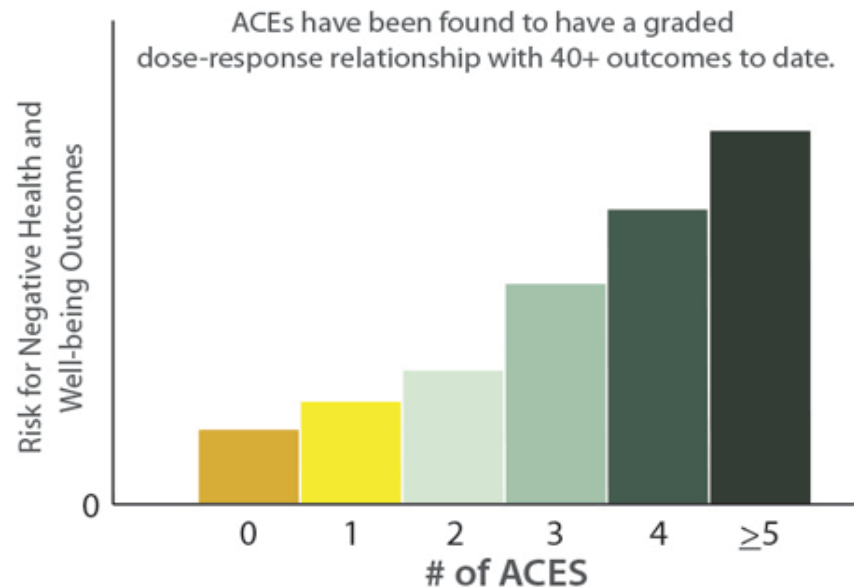
Health (obesity, diabetes, depression, suicide attempts, STDs, heart disease, cancer, stroke, COPD, broken bones)



Behaviors (smoking, alcoholism, drug use)



Life Potential (graduation rates, academic achievement, lost time from work)



\*This pattern holds for the 40+ outcomes, but the exact risk values vary depending on the outcome.

## The Four Positive Experiences that Make a Difference:

1. **Living, playing, and learning** in safe, stable, protective and equitable environments
2. **Engaging** in constructive social / civic activities that develop a sense of connectedness
3. **Learning** social and emotional competencies
4. **Being** in nurturing supportive relationships

Source: Sege and Browne. Responding to ACEs with HOPE: Health Outcomes from Positive Experiences. *Academic Pediatrics* 2017; 17:S79-S85

# What *can* Be Done About ACEs?

These wide-ranging health and social consequences underscore the importance of preventing ACEs before they happen. **Safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments (SSNREs)** 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:

Voluntary home visiting programs can help families by strengthening maternal parenting practices, the quality of the child's home environment, and children's development.  
Example: Nurse-Family Partnership



Home visiting to pregnant women and families with newborns



Parenting training programs



Intimate partner violence prevention



Social support for parents



Parent support programs for teens and teen pregnancy prevention programs



Mental illness and substance abuse treatment



High quality child care



Sufficient income support for lower income families