

## Role of Parent Support and Education in Preventing and Resolving ACEs



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# Learning Objectives

- Understand current research on the effects of toxic stress on prenatal and child development.
- Summarize current research on how parent support and education programs can prevent ACEs in children and help parents resolve trauma from their ACEs.
- Identify parent support and education resources and describe evidence-based programs.

I know what ACEs are and how they affect children.

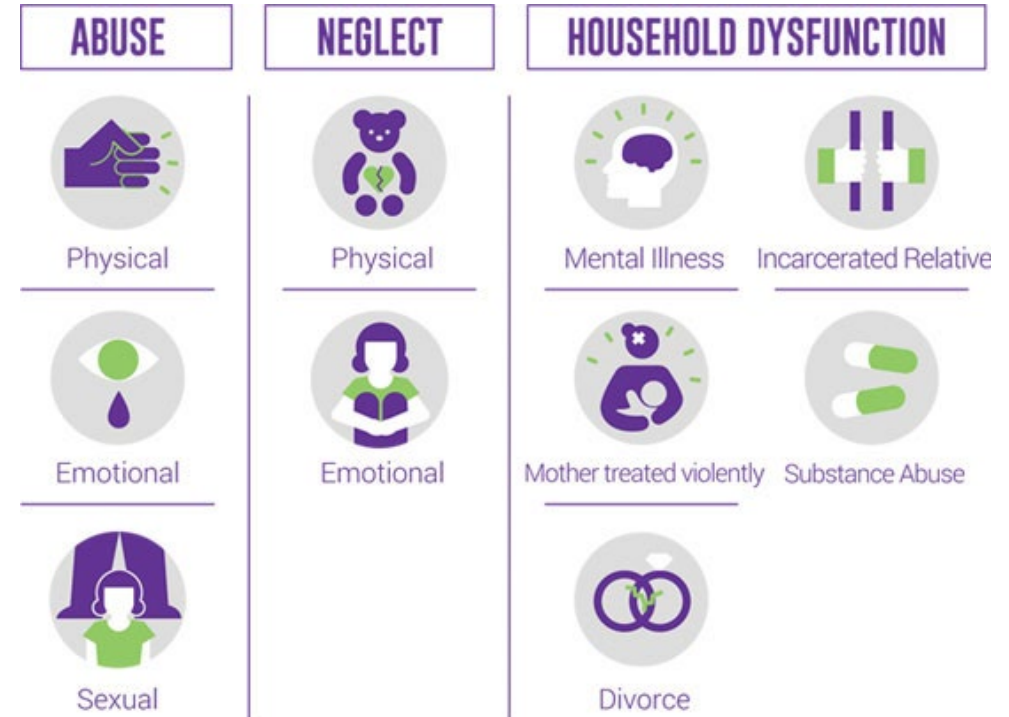
- Yes.
- No.
- I'm not sure.

Only children from poor families experience adverse childhood experiences.

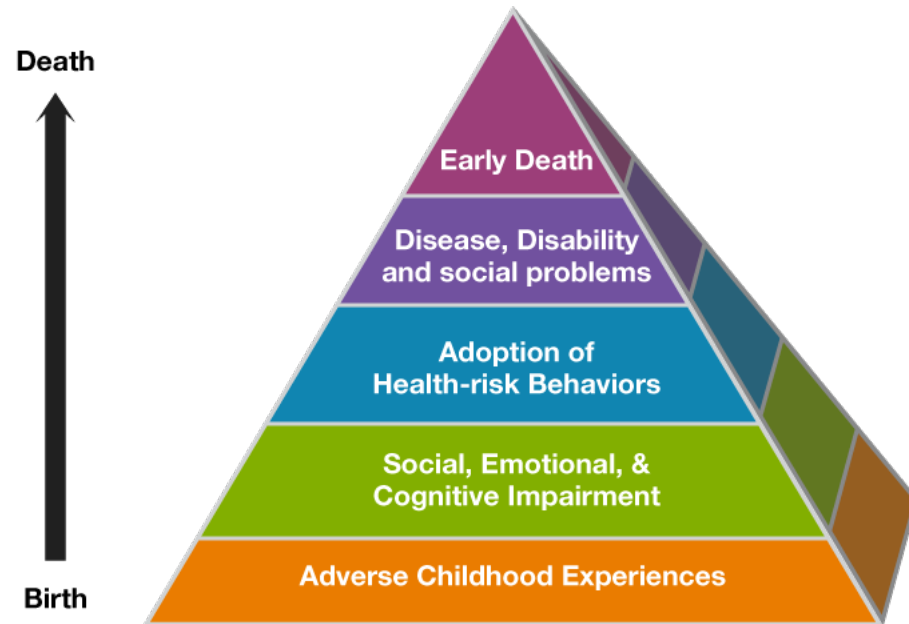
- True.
- False.
- I don't know.

# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

- 10 experiences categorized as child maltreatment or family dysfunction.
- Occur at every income level.
- Higher rates among Blacks and Hispanics.



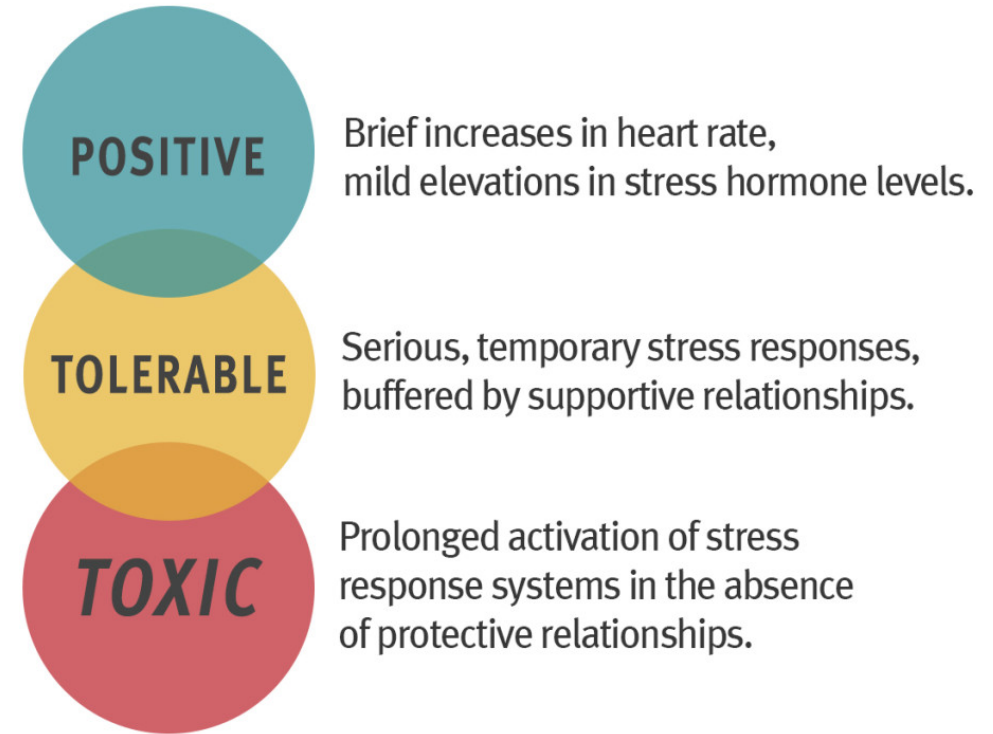
# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)



- Dose-response relationship between number of ACEs and risk of poor physical and mental health.
- Nationally, 1 in 10 children have experienced 3 or more ACEs.
- In New Mexico, this number is 1 in 6 children.

# Toxic Stress

- Learning to deal with stress an important part of development.
- But, ACEs can result in toxic stress:
  - Ongoing stress.
  - Lack of safe, stable, and nurturing relationships to buffer the stress.



# The effects of toxic stress can impact children before they are born.

- True.
- False.
- I don't know.



# Effects of Toxic Stress on Prenatal Development

- Fetal exposure to high levels of cortisol can result in:
  - Altered brain architecture.
  - Hyper-responsiveness of the amygdala.
  - Stunted fetal growth.
  - Premature birth.



Toxic stress affects children's health, but not their ability to succeed in school.

- True.
- False.
- I don't know.

# Effects of Toxic Stress on Child Development



- Children exposed to ACEs may exhibit:
  - Neurobiological changes.
  - Social and emotional dysfunction.
  - Cognitive difficulties.
  - Health-risk behaviors.

# Neurobiological Changes

- Due to an overwhelmed stress response system, children may exhibit:
  - Excessive physiological reactions.
  - Altered cortisol levels.
  - Reduced immune function.
  - Increased inflammatory markers.



# Social and Emotional Dysfunction



- Failure to develop appropriate social skills.
- Negative internal working models of the self and other.
- Impaired emotional regulation.

# Cognitive Difficulties

- Problems with paying attention and memory.
- Poor literacy skills.
- More likely to repeat a grade in school.



# Health-Risk Behaviors



- To deal with toxic stress, youth may cope by:
  - Misusing drugs and alcohol.
  - Engaging in risky sexual activity.
  - Overeating and physical inactivity.

Parents who experienced many ACEs report greater parenting stress.

- True.
- False.
- I don't know.



# ACEs and Parenting Stress

- Parenting stress linked to:
  - Higher likelihood of child maltreatment.
  - More punitive discipline.
  - Less responsive and stimulating parent-child interactions.
- Parents who report high ACEs during childhood also report higher parenting stress, even after controlling for risk factors.



There's nothing we can do to help parents protect their children from ACEs and toxic stress.

- True.
- False.
- I don't know.

# Safe, Stable, and Nurturing Relationships (SSNRs)



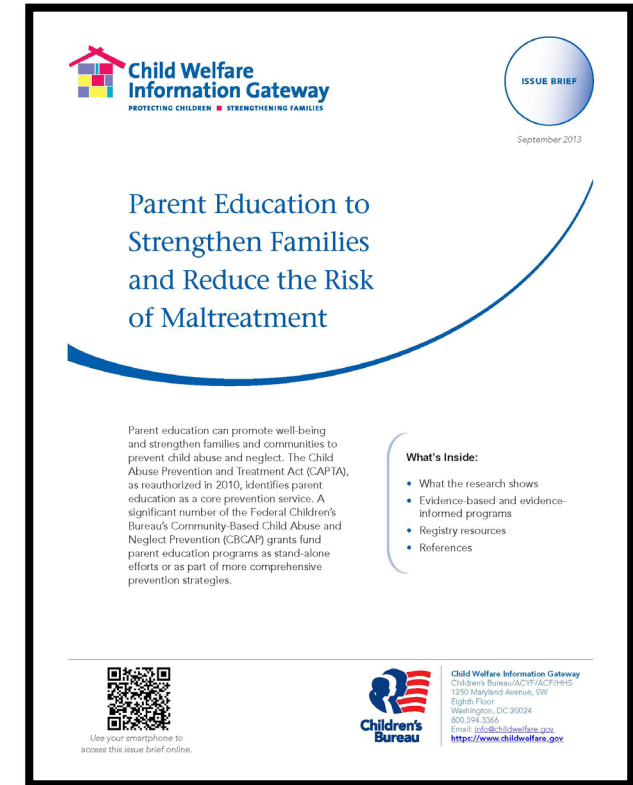
- Safe, stable, and nurturing relationships (SSNRs) protect children from toxic stress.
- Evidence-based parent support and education teach parents how to provide SSNRs.
- Universally available parent support and education can lead to:
  - Healthy growth and development in children.
  - Effective parenting by future parents.
  - Safer communities.
  - Stronger economies.

All parenting programs are structured the same way and are effective in helping prevent ACEs.

- Yes.
- No.
- I'm not sure.

# Resources for Evidence-Based Programs

- Child Welfare Information Gateway
  - Issue Brief (September 2013)
  - [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)
- California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare
  - <http://www.cebc4cw.org/>
- What Works, Wisconsin
  - <https://fyi.uwex.edu/whatworkswisconsin/>



# Levels of Scientific Evidence (Children's Bureau)

- *Emerging and evidence-informed*
  - Strong theoretical foundation and considered generally accepted practice for prevention abuse or neglect. Evaluated using less rigorous evaluation designs.
- *Promising*
  - A least one study using some type of control group and were found to be effective in promoting positive outcomes to prevent child abuse.
- *Supported and efficacious*
  - Supported by at least 2 rigorous randomized control trials (or comparable methodology).
- *Effective or evidence-based*
  - Supported by at least 2 rigorous randomized control trials and replicated at multiple sites.

# Key Parent Education Program Characteristics

- Strength-based
- Family-centered
- Individual and group approaches
- Qualified staff
- Targeted service groups
- Ecological approach
- Parent partnerships
- Clear goals and evaluation



# Implementation Considerations

- Is it evidence-based or evidence informed?
- Will it fit the target audience?
- Are there specific program components that are important for the program?
- What kind of training, staff qualifications, and skills are necessary?
- What are the costs?
- How will the program be rolled out?
- How will outcomes be evaluated?





# Examples of Evidence-Based Programs

- *Families and Schools Together*

- Families with children age 4-12 years who are at risk of academic and social problems, 8 sessions, group setting.

- *The Incredible Years*

- Families with children age 2-10 years who are at risk of conduct disorders, 12-22 sessions, group setting.

- *Nurturing Parenting Program*

- Families with children birth to 5, 5-11 or 12-18 years, 12-48 sessions, individual or group setting, children meet in a separate group.

# Examples of Evidence-Based Programs

- *Strengthening Families Program*
  - Families with children 3-5, 6-11, 12-16 years, 14 sessions, group setting for children and parents.
- *Parents as Teachers*
  - Families with children birth to 5 years, monthly home visits and parent group meetings.
- *Triple P Positive Parenting*
  - Families with children birth to 12 and 12-16 years, ranges from 1-10 sessions, individual or group setting.

# Home Visiting Programs

- *Nurse Family Partnership*

- Provides nurse home visits to pregnant women with no previous live births, most of whom are low-income, unmarried, and teenagers. Monthly visits during pregnancy and the first 2 years of their children's lives.

- *Healthy Families America*

- Targets families prenatally through 5 years, weekly home visits for first 6 months, then frequency is dependent on needs of family.

- *Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters*

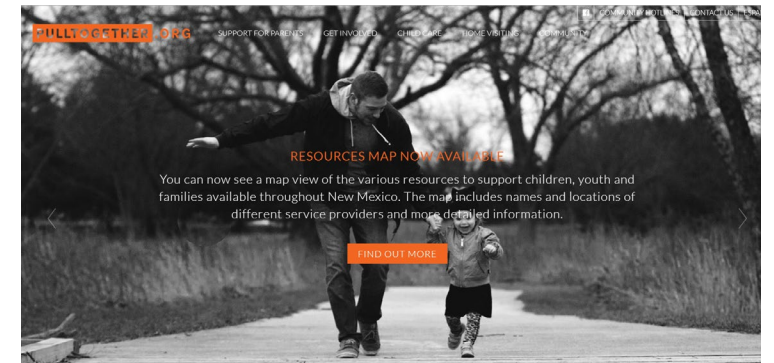
- For families with 3-5 year-olds. Peer parent educators deliver 30 weeks of school readiness curriculum.

# Parents know where to find resources to support them in their parenting role.

- Yes.
- No.
- I'm not sure.

# Community Resources for Parents

- PullTogether website - developed by NM Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) <https://pulltogether.org/>:
  - Information about parenting.
  - Find resources by county.
  - Categories - child care, home visiting, behavioral health, substance abuse, family services, domestic violence services, and career services.
- Healthcare providers.
- School social workers or counselors.
- Faith-based organizations.



# Home Visiting Programs

- Programs are usually for expectant parents or those with children birth to 3 years.
- Provided by a variety of agencies with varying eligibility requirements.
- Long-term benefits of home visiting programs (pulltogether.org):
  - Babies are born healthy.
  - Children are nurtured by parents/caregivers.
  - Children are physically and mentally healthy and ready for school.
  - Children and families are safe.
  - Families are connected to formal and informal supports in their community.



# Group-based Parenting Programs

- Parenting classes not listed on *PullTogether* website
- Usually provided in a group setting over a period of weeks.
- Organizations that offer parenting classes in Doña Ana County:
  - Amistad Family Services, Inc.
  - Jardin de los Niños
- Benefits of group setting:
  - Learning from other parents.
  - Development of social networks.





# Online Resources for Parents

- *Just in Time Parenting* national newsletter- timed email delivery, prenatal through five years, English/Spanish  
<https://family.nmsu.edu/>
- NMSU Extension Family Development Publications  
<https://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/f/>
- eXtension Parenting  
<https://articles.extension.org/parenting>
- Parenting Now website  
<https://parentingnow.org/>





From this presentation, I learned at least one new piece of information about ACEs and how they affect children.

- Yes.
- No.
- I'm not sure.

From this presentation, I learned about at least one new resource to support parents in establishing safe, stable, and nurturing relationships with their children.

- Yes.
- No.
- I'm not sure.

# Thank You!

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