



Child Abuse Prevention



Kansas Children's Service League
Stronger families start here.



Who We Are

- Statewide nonprofit organization
- Serving children and families since 1893
- **OUR MISSION:** to protect and promote the well-being of children

What We Do

*KCSL works to
create, repair and
restore healthy
parent-child
relationships.*





How We Do It

- Successful programs for children and families
- Focus on health, safety and education
- Breaking cycles of neglect, abuse and trauma

Our Programs Help

- Children and parents develop skills for success in their families, schools and workplaces
- Parents manage impacts of ACEs





Our Work With Children and Families

- Improves school readiness
- Helps parents be better parents and employees
- Creates a stronger, more resilient workforce
- Reduces future crime and incarceration

Essentials for Childhood (EfC)

- EfC is the broad umbrella & strategic direction for all child maltreatment work through the CDC.
- **THEIR VISION:** all children live in safe, stable & nurturing relationships and environments to prevent child maltreatment & to assure that children reach their full potential.
- However, safe, stable & nurturing relationships and environments are important for adults as well.





Essentials for Childhood (EfC), continued

- **SAFETY:** the extent to which a child is free from fear & secure from physical or psychological harm within their social & physical environment.
- **STABILITY:** the degree of predictability & consistency in a child's social, emotional & physical environment.
- **NURTURING:** the extent to which a parent or caregiver is available & able to sensitively respond to & meet the needs of their child.

CDC's strategic direction for CM prevention.

A photograph of a family of four—a father, a mother, and two young children—smiling warmly at the camera. The image is covered with a semi-transparent red overlay. The text "Who was there for you?" is centered over the family. A thin white horizontal line is positioned below the text.

Who was there for you?

The ACE Study



One of the largest studies to assess  associations between childhood maltreatment health & well-being later in life

The diagram consists of three blue circles connected by a horizontal line. Each circle is positioned above a light blue rectangular box containing text. The first circle is on the left, the second in the middle, and the third on the right. The text in the boxes describes the study's purpose, collaboration, and timeline.

Collaboration  the Centers of Disease Control & Kaiser Permanente's Health Appraisal Clinic in San Diego, CA

Initial phase  1995 - 1997

3 Realms of ACEs

Adverse childhood and community experiences (ACEs) can occur in the household, the community, or in the environment and cause toxic stress. Left unaddressed, toxic stress from ACEs harms children and families, organizations, systems and communities, and reduces the ability of individuals and entities to respond to stressful events with resiliency. Research has shown that there are many ways to reduce and heal from toxic stress and build healthy, caring communities.



The three types of ACEs include

ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Mental Illness



Incarcerated Relative



Mother treated violently



Substance Abuse



Divorce

ACEs not included in the traditional measure:

- Bullying
- Commercial Sexual Exploitation / Trafficking
- Historical Trauma
- Violence: Peer-to-Peer, Community, School
- Death of a Parent
- Homelessness, Poverty
- Pandemic
- Racial Disparities
- Immigration/Deportation

WHAT IMPACT DO ACEs HAVE?

Healthy Development...DERAILED



HEALTHY BRAIN

thought & control
emotion
basic survival:
fight or flight reflex



TRAUMATIZED BRAIN

Impact on the Child

- Impact on Relationships
 - Ability to self soothe
 - Ability to trust
 - Ability to freely explore our environment
 - Understand self and others
 - Understand that we can impact the world around us

Behavioral Impact

- Reactivity & Impulsivity
- Aggression
- Defiance
- Withdrawal
- Perfectionism



HEALTHY OUTCOMES FROM

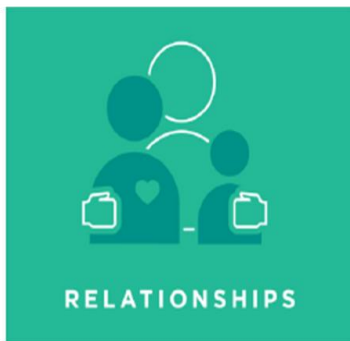
POSITIVE EXPERIENCES H.O.P.E.

What do you see?



Healthy Outcomes From Positive Experiences (H.O.P.E. Framework)

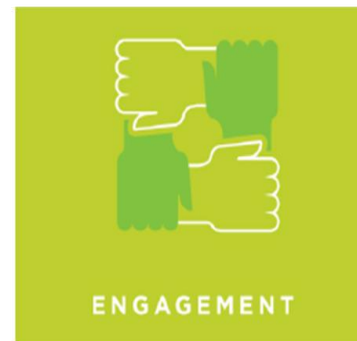
Positive childhood experiences can help protect against poor health outcomes associated with adverse childhood experiences.



NURTURING,
SUPPORTIVE
RELATIONSHIPS



A SAFE, STABLE,
EQUITABLE
ENVIRONMENT



SOCIAL AND CIVIC
ENGAGEMENT THAT
PROMOTES BELONGING



SOCIAL AND
EMOTIONAL GROWTH
OPPORTUNITIES



Moments of HOPE

In Each Encounter

- Start each with a moment of HOPE: what has gone well since the last visit

During Intake and Assessments

- Ask about strengths first. Consider open-ended questions about the four building blocks

- When Creating or Revising Policies
 - Do policies promote or block access to the building blocks?
 - Are certain groups of individuals disproportionately affected by the policy?
- Internal Organizational Culture
 - Review your organization using the building blocks
 - More resources at PositiveExperience.org

HOPE framework in a clinical setting

- What routines make the child feel secure?
- Where does the child feel most comfortable and safe?
- How does the child handle frustration?
- How do you take care of yourself when you are not feeling your best?



Strategies that Address the Needs of Children & their Families



Home visiting to pregnant women and families with newborns

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



Parenting training programs

These programs work to improve the quality of parent-child relationships and change how parents and children interact with one another.



Intimate partner violence prevention

Teen dating violence can set the stage for problems in future relationships, including intimate partner violence throughout life. Early prevention is needed to help teens develop respectful, non-violent relationship skills that can be carried forward into adult relationships.



Social support for parents

Social support involves guidance, social reinforcement, practical assistance with the tasks of daily living, and social stimulation.



High quality child care

Preschool enrichment is important for long-term development and other outcomes, including violence. Access to high-quality child care is important, too, as it can affect parents' ability to work and to support a family as well as children's exposure to safe, stable and nurturing relationships and environments.



Sufficient income support for lower income families

Living in poverty and low-income conditions can increase the risk for child maltreatment and partner violence. Income supports like cash transfers, tax credits, vouchers for food or housing, subsidies for child care and health insurance, unemployment insurance, or paid leave may provide some relief for parents.

Dr. Jeffrey Linkenbaugh

“When we start to look at the world through this positive, hopeful lens, it has a profound impact on the questions we ask, the data we collect, and the way we address health and safety issues.”





PCEs Reduce Economic Burden in Four States

From the 2015 to 2020 BRFSS data in Kansas, Montana, South Carolina, and Wisconsin among adults who report having 3+ PCEs



\$216B
SAVED in four states

\$3.1
BILLION

Lower Medical
Spending

\$212.8
BILLION

Savings due to additional
healthy life years

\$28,000

Saved per adult with
3+ PCEs annually

\$782,000

Saved per adult
over their lifetime

Sege RD, Aslam MV, Peterson C, et al. Positive Childhood Experiences and Adult Health and Opportunity Outcomes in 4 US States. JAMA Netw Open. 2025;8(7):e2524435. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.24435



Reflection Questions

1. Does your current practice with families and/or communities seek to identify strengths, risk, or a combination of both?
 2. How can you more intentionally celebrate a patients' strengths?
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1-800-CHILDREN

Provides valuable information,
resources, and supports for
families, early childhood
professionals, and
communities statewide.



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THANK YOU!