

# ACES & TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

TO SUPPORT FOSTER/ADOPTIVE CHILDREN WITH ACES

## DEFINITION

ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) refer to traumatic events that occur before the age of 18 and can have long-term effects on health and well-being (Bhutta et al., 2023).



## TYPES OF ACES

**Abuse:** Physical, emotional, sexual  
**Neglect:** Physical, emotional  
**Household Instability:** Domestic violence, substance abuse, incarceration, mental illness, and parental separation

## EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

Children who experience ACEs are at a higher risk of developing mental health challenges like anxiety, depression, PTSD, and difficulty forming trusting relationships, as well as long-term physical health issues such as heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and sleep disturbances (Bhutta et al., 2023).



## SCREENING TOOLS

**Pediatric ACEs & Related Life Events Screener (PEARLS):** <https://www.acesaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/PEARLS-Tool-Child-Parent-Caregiver-Report-De-Identified-English.pdf>  
**CYW Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (ACE-Q) Child Version:** <https://www.allegropediatrics.com/asset/6516df52e38b9/adverse-childhood-events-ace-screening---child-0-12.pdf>



## STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS

- Create a safe & predictable environment
- Build trust through connection
- Support emotional regulation (Loria et al., 2023)



## RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

- Center for Advanced Practice at Adoption Rhode Island
- Center on the Developing Child at Harvard
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network
- Fostering Health Program at Hasbro Children's Hospital

## REFERENCES

Bhutta, Z. A., Bhavnani, S., Betancourt, T. S., Tomlinson, M., & Patel, V. (2023). Adverse childhood experiences and lifelong health. *Nature Medicine*, 29(7), 1639-1648. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-023-02426-0>  
Loria, H., McLeigh, J., Wolfe, K., Conner, E., Smith, V., Greeley, C. S., & Keefe, R. J. (2023). Caring for children in foster and kinship care during a pandemic: Lessons learned and recommendations. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 17(1), 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15548732.2021.1965065>

