

# Children's Medical Group



## Resources:

ACES 101

<http://acestoohigh.com/aces-101/>

American Academy of Pediatrics

[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

CDC-Kaiser Adverse Childhood Experiences Study

[www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/)

## Stress & Adverse Childhood Experiences

### What are ACEs?

ACEs are traumatic experiences during childhood that result in toxic stress that can be harmful to a child's brain. The effects on a child's brain could prevent learning, playing in healthy ways with others, and can result in long-term health problems.

### How do ACEs affect my child's health?

**Through stress-**Frequent or prolonged exposure to ACEs can create toxic stress which can damage the developing brain of a child and affect their overall health.

1. Reduces the ability to respond, learn, or figure things out, which can result in problems in school
2. Increases difficulty in making friends and maintaining relationships
3. Lowers tolerance for stress, which can result in behaviors such as fighting, checking out or defiance
4. Increases problems with learning and memory, which can be permanent
5. Increases stress hormones which affects the body's ability to fight infection
6. May cause lasting health problems
7. May lead to early death by as much as twenty years

### Exposure to childhood ACEs can increase the risk of:

- Adolescent pregnancy
- Alcoholism and alcohol use
- Depression
- Illicit drug use
- Heart disease
- Liver disease
- Multiple sexual partners
- Intimate partner violence
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- Smoking
- Suicide Attempts
- Unintended pregnancies

### Adverse Childhood Experiences can include:

- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional neglect
- Physical neglect
- Mother or other female relative treated violently
- Relative with substance abuse
- Relative with mental illness
- Parental separation or divorce
- Incarcerated household member
- Bullying by an adult or another child
- Being homeless
- Racism, sexism, or any kind of discrimination
- Witness a brother or sister being abused
- Natural disasters or war

**A Survival Mode Response** to toxic stress increases a child's heart rate, blood pressure, breathing and muscle tension. Their thinking brain is knocked off-line. Self-protection is their priority. In other words: **"I can't hear you! I can't respond to you! I am just trying to be safe!"**