

# What are ACEs?

## ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic childhood events, such as abuse and neglect, parental divorce, domestic violence and parental mental illness.

A groundbreaking research survey known as the **Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACES)** asked over 17,000 adults to report whether they had experienced any of these events as children.

### Why do ACEs matter?

Experiencing an ACE like abuse and neglect can actually **increase the odds of later developing serious adult health issues** like cancer, liver disease and heart disease.

ACEs can also make people **more prone to suicide, substance abuse, poor work performance** and a host of other negative outcomes.

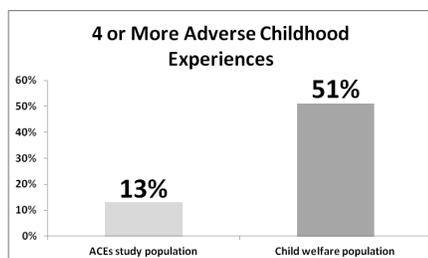
The impacts of these early traumas add up – the **more early ACEs, the higher the chances** of poor outcomes in adulthood.

*The odds of having negative health outcomes in adulthood are up to **12X** higher for those who experienced four or more ACE events than those who did not.*

### Child welfare & ACEs:

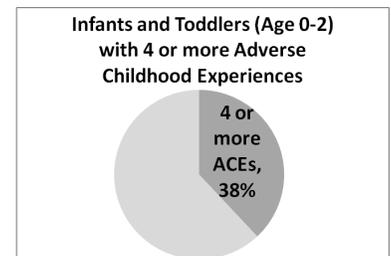
**Children in the child welfare system experience high numbers of traumas.** A recent study showed that one out of every two children in the child welfare system had experienced four or more traumas similar to the ACES measures, compared to only one out of every eight adults in the original ACES study population (which roughly mirrors the general public).

**Even young kids have experienced high levels of trauma.** Almost 4 out of every 10 children aged 0 to 2 in a child welfare sample had already experienced four or more adverse experiences in their young lives.



**Children who have been abused and neglected are:**

**12X** more likely to commit suicide  
**7X** more likely to be alcoholic  
**10X** more likely to inject drugs



### What can we do? *We must try to protect children from negative early experiences.*

**Children can heal if they have safe, stable nurturing supports.** Even if a child has experienced early traumatic or chaotic experiences, supporting the child and their caregivers with trauma-informed practices can help reduce further negative consequences over the child's lifetime. With trauma-informed practice, practitioners infuse trauma awareness, knowledge, and skills into their work with children and families. They work collaboratively, using the best available science, to screen and treat children for any trauma-related issues and help them develop resiliency. **Programs like CASA and SCAN's parenting classes** can help protect children from further trauma and build resiliency in their families.