



# Building Resilience: Resources for Supporting Young Children Who Have Experienced Trauma and Maltreatment and Their Families

This list was compiled and annotated  
by [Camille Catlett \(camille.catlett@unc.edu\)](mailto:camille.catlett@unc.edu)  
for Pennsylvania’s Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL).

**Last Updated:** October 2020

## Table of Contents

Evidence .....	2
Print .....	4
Audiovisual .....	6
Online .....	8
Pennsylvania .....	10

## Evidence

### [Childhood Adversity Screenings Are Just One Part of an Effective Policy Response to Childhood Trauma](#)

This brief addresses the implications—both promising and troubling—of integrating adversity screening into child and family service settings that are not exclusively focused on mental health, such as pediatric care, early care and education settings and schools, child welfare agencies, and home visiting programs. It briefly summarizes how the research has both informed work with vulnerable children and families, and inadvertently provided a rationale for a strategy that could do harm. It also recommends steps to minimize the unintended consequences of screening and provide a more comprehensive, holistic response to children who have experienced adversity.

### [Clinical Considerations Related to the Behavioral Manifestations of Child Maltreatment](#)

This report from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the National Center for Child Traumatic Stress provides guidance for pediatricians and other pediatric health care providers in recognizing and managing the behavioral and mental health symptoms exhibited by children who have been maltreated. In addition to summaries of the consequences of maltreatment, the report discusses currently available treatment approaches.

### [A National and Across-State Profile on Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\)](#)

This issue brief offers hope and a way forward so that all children and their families can attain optimal physical, social, and emotional development and well-being. Presented are the latest data documenting the prevalence of ACEs among children in the U.S. This brief also points to strategies that families, caregivers, providers, and communities can implement to reduce the negative health effects associated with ACEs, heal, and help children thrive in the face of adversity.

### [Position Statement on Child Maltreatment](#)

The position statement from the Division for Early Childhood outlines the expected role of special education professionals who directly support and care for children with disabilities who have been maltreated or are at risk due to factors within their environment. It also provides action recommendations and guidelines for working with families.

### [The Prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences, Nationally, By State, and By Race or Ethnicity](#)

Research summarized in this report reveals that 45% of children in the US have experienced at least one adverse childhood experience. Economic hardship and parental divorce or separation are the most common, both nationally and in almost every state. The prevalence of other adverse childhood experiences (including parental incarceration, parental death, and other experiences) varies by state and by race and ethnicity. Black and Hispanic children are more likely than white children to have had at least one adverse childhood experience.

### [Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\): Leveraging the Best Available Evidence](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines ACEs as “traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years) such as experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect.” This report explains the prevalence of ACEs and provides a number of strategies to prevent children from experiencing them.

### [Prevention of Child Abuse in Early Childhood Programs and the Responsibilities of Early Childhood Professionals to Prevent Child Abuse](#)

NAEYC offers the following recommendations as strategies to prevent child abuse in early childhood programs, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, to the greatest extent possible. These recommendations outline specific roles for early childhood professionals, early childhood programs, family members, and public regulation. Particular attention is given to the role of early childhood programs, focusing on the importance of carefully planned and implemented policies with regard to practices with children, staff screening and recruitment, and partnerships with families. In addition, this statement outlines responsibilities of early childhood professionals to prevent child abuse in other settings.

### [Responding to Trauma through Policies that Create Supportive Learning Environments](#)

This brief introduces a Trauma-Informed Policy Framework to Create Supportive Learning Environments to help state officials create supportive learning environments that meet the needs of students with a history of traumatic experiences and ensure that all students succeed in school. A supportive learning environment is a school that provides a safe and positive school culture and climate, and attends to the physical, mental, social, emotional, and academic needs of all students.

### [The Science is Clear: Separating Families Has Long-Term Damaging Psychological and Health Consequences for Children, Families, and Communities](#)

Clear evidence indicates that the trauma of separation under highly stressful circumstances can have lasting effects on the affected children. This evidence brief describes scientific evidence on the effects of child separation and the implications for public policy.

### [Trauma-Informed Integrated Care for Children and Families in Healthcare Settings](#)

This position statement from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network provides policymakers and other stakeholders an overview of trauma-informed integrated care and its importance for children who have experienced trauma, as well as policy-relevant and child trauma-focused recommendations to assist them in their response to child trauma and healthcare issues.

### [A Trauma-Sensitive Approach to Education and Learning for Children Aged 0-8 Years](#)

This Australian review focuses on the impact of trauma and concepts from neurobiology. It is written for early childhood educators who encounter infants and children, from newborns to 8-year-olds, who have suffered the effects of significant trauma in their young lives. It aims to enhance existing knowledge of child development by focusing on attachment, neurobiology and the impact of trauma on learning

Print

### [Asking the Question That Counts: Educators and Early Childhood Trauma](#)

Educators face challenges when trying to help young children who've undergone trauma. This white paper provides evidence-based tips on responding to early childhood trauma and handling the turbulent feelings that children's behavior can often arouse.

### [The Biological Effects of Childhood Trauma](#)

This article focuses primarily on the peer-reviewed literature on the neurobiological sequelae of childhood trauma in children and adults with histories of childhood trauma. It also reviews relevant studies of animal models of stress which can help us to better understand the psychobiological effects of trauma during development.

### [Calmer Classrooms: A Guide to Working with Traumatized Children](#)

Understanding the experience of the abused and neglected child assists us to develop compassion, patience and empathy. This Australian publication informs and encourages teachers and other school personnel to forge attachments through two key mechanisms: understanding traumatized children and developing relationship-based skills to help them.

### [The Child Maltreatment Report 2018](#)

This was released in January 2020 by HHS' Children's Bureau. It is the most recent collection of child maltreatment data from across the country. Since 1991, this important resource has broken down the data at the national and state levels and shows trends in data on child maltreatment. Links are available to each chapter, the summary pages, data tables, and the glossary.

### [Child Welfare Toolkit for Early Childhood Professionals](#)

This set of resources highlights effective approaches early childhood educators can take to supporting young children who have experienced trauma and to building relationships with the families of those children.

### [Creating Trauma-Sensitive Classrooms](#)

This article provides resources and guidance on trauma-sensitive practices for educators working with young children.

### [Helping Young Children Who Have Experienced Trauma: Policies and Strategies for Early Care and Education](#)

This report from Child Trends and the National Center for Children in Poverty includes a definition of early childhood trauma, including different types, a review of the prevalence of early childhood trauma and its effects, and information about the special needs of young children who have experienced trauma. The report offers promising strategies for child care and preschool programs looking to help young children who have endured trauma and presents recommendations of policies that could increase the capacity of ECE providers to help children who have experienced trauma learn and thrive.

### [How Abuse and Neglect Affect Children's Minds and Bodies](#)

This brief report highlights relevant evidence and summarizes implications for policy and practice.

### [How Do Acute and Chronic Stress Impact the Development of Self-Regulation?](#)

This brief summarizes key concepts of self-regulation and stress and presents findings from a literature review on the relationship between stress and self-regulation.

### [How to Identify and Support Children Experiencing Stress](#)

This January 2017 resource highlights ways in which infants and toddlers may show caregivers that they are experiencing stress. The publication also offers effective strategies to reduce children's stress levels.

### [How to Implement Trauma-informed Care to Build Resilience to Childhood Trauma](#)

This research brief from Child Trends summarizes current practices for implementing trauma-informed care to support children who have been exposed to trauma. The authors outline the ways in which a broad range of programs (including afterschool programs, schools, early care and education providers, medical providers, and social services) can incorporate trauma-informed care into their services and help children build resilience against past and future traumatic experiences.

### [InBrief: The Science of Neglect](#)

Thriving communities depend on the successful development of the people who live in them and building the foundations of successful development in childhood requires responsive relationships and supportive environments. This brief summarizes, in English and Spanish, the outcomes to anticipate when those components are not available. **¡También disponible en español!**

### [The Lifelong Effects of Early Childhood Adversity and Toxic Stress](#)

This report by Shonkoff et al, which was published in Pediatrics, presents a framework that illustrates how early experiences and environmental influences can leave a lasting signature on the genetic predispositions that affect emerging brain architecture and long-term health. The report also examines extensive evidence of the disruptive impacts of toxic stress, offering intriguing insights into causal mechanisms that link early adversity to later impairments in learning, behavior, and both physical and mental well-being.

### [A Model for Creating a Supportive Trauma-Informed Culture for Children in Preschool Settings](#)

This paper describes Head Start Trauma Smart (HSTS), an early education/mental health cross-systems partnership designed to work within the child's natural setting—in this case, Head Start classrooms. The goal of HSTS is to decrease the stress of chronic trauma, foster age-appropriate social and cognitive development, and create an integrated, trauma-informed culture for young children, parents, and staff. The HSTS program emphasizes tools and skills that can be applied in everyday settings, thereby providing resources to address current and future trauma.

### [The Opioid Crisis](#)

Addiction can suffocate a community—especially its youngest members. But schools that employ trauma-informed practices are giving childhood victims of the opioid epidemic a fighting chance. This thoughtfully researched and written article from Teaching Tolerance magazine pays specific attention to how the opioid epidemic affects children, how it manifests in the classroom, and what educators can do right now to make a difference.

### [Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: A Technical Package for Policy, Norm, and Programmatic Activities](#)

This technical package offers strategies based on the best available evidence to help prevent child abuse and neglect. The strategies in this package include those with a focus on preventing child abuse and neglect from happening in the first place as well as approaches to lessen the immediate and long-term harms of child abuse and neglect. They range from a focus on individuals, families, and relationships to broader community and societal change. This range of strategies is needed to better address the interplay between individual-family behavior and broader neighborhood, community, and cultural contexts.

## Audiovisual

### [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACES\) Primer](#)

This video provides an overview of ACES and the impact of them, as well as links to additional resources.

### [Breaking Through: Understanding Stress and Resilience in Young Children](#)

This video provides the perspectives of parents, Head Start staff, health care professionals, and others on the issues of adverse childhood events (ACEs), toxic stress, and resilience. [A discussion guide and links to additional resources are also available.](#)

### [How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime](#)

Childhood trauma isn't something you just get over as you grow up. Pediatrician Nadine Burke Harris explains in this TED Talk that the repeated stress of abuse, neglect and parents struggling with mental health or substance abuse issues has real, tangible effects on the development of the brain. This unfolds across a lifetime, to the point where those who've experienced high levels of trauma are at triple the risk for heart disease and lung cancer. She makes an impassioned plea for pediatric medicine to confront the prevention and treatment of trauma, head-on.

### [InBrief: The Impact of Early Adversity on Child Development](#)

This video outlines, in English and Spanish, basic concepts from the research on the biology of stress, which show that major adversity can weaken developing brain architecture and permanently set the body's stress response system on high alert. Science also shows that providing stable, responsive environments for children in the earliest years of life can prevent or reverse these conditions, with lifelong consequences for learning, behavior, and health. A companion guide is also available. **¡Un resumen complementario también disponible en español!**

### [InBrief: Resilience Series](#)

Reducing the effects of significant adversity on young children's healthy development is critical to the progress and prosperity of any society. Yet not all children experience lasting harm because of adverse early experiences. Some may demonstrate "resilience," or an adaptive response to serious hardship. These three videos provide an overview of why resilience matters, how it develops, and how to strengthen it in children.

### [InBrief: The Science of Neglect](#)

Extensive biological and developmental research shows significant neglect—the ongoing disruption or significant absence of caregiver responsiveness—can cause more lasting harm to a young child's development than overt physical abuse, including subsequent cognitive delays, impairments in executive functioning, and disruptions of the body's stress response. This 6-minute video provides an overview of [The Science of Neglect: The Persistent Absence of Responsive Care Disrupts the Developing Brain](#), a Working Paper from the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child.

### [Mindfulness: A Resiliency Practice](#)

Watch this 90-second video to discover the impact of stress and the way that mindfulness practices can help teachers become more resilient. Additional resources (video notes, assignments, presenter suggestions) are included at the site.

### [Promoting Resilience in Children, Families, Staff, and You!](#)

Resilient people of all ages are better able to cope with stress, adversity, and change. This webinar focuses on the concept of resiliency. It offers practical ways to promote resilience in children, families, and staff.

### [Protecting Brains, Stimulating Minds: The Early Life Roots of Success in School](#)

If you haven't seen it yet, take a few minutes to watch Jack Shonkoff's latest video. It reminds us that understanding both the biology of adversity and the science of early learning are essential for building a strong foundation for reducing disparities in educational achievement. The benefits of evidence-based curricula in the early childhood years cannot be fully achieved without effective strategies for preventing the consequences of toxic stress.

### [Strategies to Fight Trauma and Stress in Children](#)

Some estimate that nearly half of the children in the U.S. experience one or more types of childhood trauma by the time they are 17. This video summarizes findings about the impact of trauma and chronic stress on the children's health and offers insights about the things that can protect children from the negative impact of adverse experiences.

### [Stress & Resilience: How Toxic Stress Affects Us, and What We Can Do About It](#)

In this video, learn more about what toxic stress is, how it can affect you, and what you can do—both by yourself and in connection with your community—to deal with what you're experiencing.

### [Tipping the Scales: The Resilience Game](#)

In this interactive feature, you will learn how the choices we make can help children and the community as a whole become more resilient in the face of serious challenges. Negative events can occur at any moment, and it's your job to choose positive events to counteract these negatives.

### [Toxic Stress Derails Healthy Development](#)

Without caring adults to buffer children, the unrelenting stress caused by extreme poverty, neglect, abuse, or severe maternal depression can weaken the architecture of the developing brain, with long-term consequences for learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health. This video summarizes the relevant facts on this topic.

### [Trauma, Brain, and Relationships: Helping Children Heal](#)

This 23-minute documentary features Bruce Perry, M.D., Daniel Siegel, M.D., Marti Glenn, Ph.D., Jeanne Segal, Ph.D., Bryan Post, and other renowned experts in the field of childhood trauma, and attachment and bonding. It summarizes our understanding of how trauma affects children's behaviors and social relationships.

### [Understanding Trauma and Promoting Resilience in Vulnerable Children](#)

The science of resiliency tells us that children are not born with resiliency, but it develops over time through the strong relationships with the important adults in their family and community. The topic of this 67-minute webinar recording discusses how resilience can be developed and nurtured, and what parents can do to build resilient children. A facilitated discussion follows the presentation, and resources on resilience are provided.

## Online

### [ACEs and Toxic Stress: Frequently Asked Questions](#)

The terms adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and toxic stress seem to be everywhere right now, but what are they exactly and how are they related? Clear up the confusion in this new, easily shareable resource that includes a helpful, downloadable infographic and answers to the most frequently asked questions (FAQs). Most importantly, information is included about how to help mitigate the effects of ACEs and toxic stress, whether you've experienced them yourself or want to help others.

### [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\): Preventing Early Trauma to Improve Adult Health](#)

This issue of CDC Vital Signs, a monthly report from the CDC, focuses on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and their prevention. It provides findings from a recent analysis of data from 25 states showing links between ACEs and 14 negative outcomes. Helpful graphics, key findings, a link to the full report, and links to related resources are all available on the webpage. **¡También disponible en español!**

### [Adverse Childhood Experiences · ACEs Too High?](#)

Ten types of childhood trauma are measured in the ACE Study. Five are personal — physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect, and emotional neglect. Five are related to other family members. This website will enable any individual to assess their ACE score and to obtain information about the implications of that score.

### [Adverse Childhood Experiences are Different than Child Trauma, and It's Critical to Understand Why](#)

It is important to understand how ACEs differ from other commonly used terms, including childhood adversity, trauma, and toxic stress, and this blogpost clearly and succinctly defines and clarifies each term.

### [Adverse Childhood Experiences Resources](#)

This website offers a variety of resources, ranging from materials to support educators and families to model programs and the results they've achieved, as well as infographics, articles, PowerPoint presentations, and research.

### [The Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACE\) Study](#)

This study, conducted in the late 1990's, is one of the largest investigations of childhood abuse and neglect and later-life health and well-being. Questionnaires, protocols, and findings are all available at this website.

### [Resource Collection on Trauma-Informed Care](#)

The Center for Parent Information and Resources has compiled this collection of resources for caregivers to gain knowledge and effectively assist children impacted by trauma. The collections cover several areas, including basic information about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), caring for specific populations affected by trauma (e.g., children with disabilities), building trauma-informed schools, and responding to disasters. **¡También disponible en español! Other languages also available.**

### [Sesame Street in Communities – Traumatic Experiences](#)

This child and family friendly website features familiar characters from the Sesame Street show and provides activities, articles, workshops, and printable information. These include links to an app called, "Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame" and another app activity called "Art Maker" through which children can create art that helps express their feelings after a traumatic event.

### [State and National Fact Sheets: America's Opioid Crisis: The Unseen Impact on Children](#)

The American Academy of Pediatrics, in partnership with Casey Family Programs, had assembled state and national fact sheets that examine the intersection of the opioid epidemic, child welfare systems, and child health. These fact sheets also offer policy solutions that can support vulnerable children and families at both the state and federal level.

### [Supporting Children and Parents Affected by the Trauma of Separation](#)

In response to the more than 2,300 children who were separated from their families at the U.S. border, Child Trends and the National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families created this online publication to provide guidance to child care professionals and policymakers helping immigrant children and parents traumatized by the event. The brief includes topics from recognizing the signs and symptoms of trauma to assisting families in culturally responsive ways and promoting resilience.

### [Trauma-Informed Practice](#)

To provide trauma-informed care to children, youth, and families involved with child welfare, professionals must understand the impact of trauma on child development and learn how to effectively minimize its effects without causing additional trauma. This website provides information on building trauma-informed systems, assessing and treating trauma, addressing secondary trauma in caseworkers, and trauma training. It also offers trauma resources for professionals, caregivers, and families.

## Pennsylvania

### [Pennsylvania's Enhancing Family Engagement Learning Modules](#)

Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA) offers self-paced and pre-registered evidence-based professional development opportunities that are free for early interventionists, home visitors, PD Instructors, Institutes of Higher Education and early educators. Modules can be used alone or embedded in coursework. Examples of offerings are listed below. [Create an account to access the following PD and Job Tools.](#)

- **Building Resiliency in Young Children:** This job aid offers tools and strategies to support building resilience in young children. Reference is made to supporting children who are deaf or hard of hearing and with disabilities, but information is applicable to ALL children.
- **Diagnosed Physical or Mental Conditions with High Probability of Delay:** This job aid covers the requirements and documentation needed to determine an infant/toddler eligible for Early Intervention using the criteria of a diagnosed condition with a high probability of delay.
- **Young Children and their Families Experiencing Homelessness Webinar:** This job aid highlights the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) announcement regarding young children and their families who are experiencing homelessness in Pennsylvania. It focuses on laws, regulations and policies that outline responsibility in addressing this population. The job aid details existing OCDEL programs and offer resources that can help alleviate some of the barriers families experiencing homelessness face.

### [Trauma-Informed PA Practices: A Plan to Make Pennsylvania a Trauma-Informed, Healing-Centered State](#)

In July 2020, this plan was released to guide the commonwealth and service providers statewide on what it means to be trauma-informed and healing-centered in PA. The plan focuses on six key areas. Within these six areas there are 43 recommendations that range from building a Pennsylvania network on the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Connection web platform to connect all community-based movements focused on ACEs and trauma to reforming regulations and policies that can retraumatize children and families receiving services from the state.