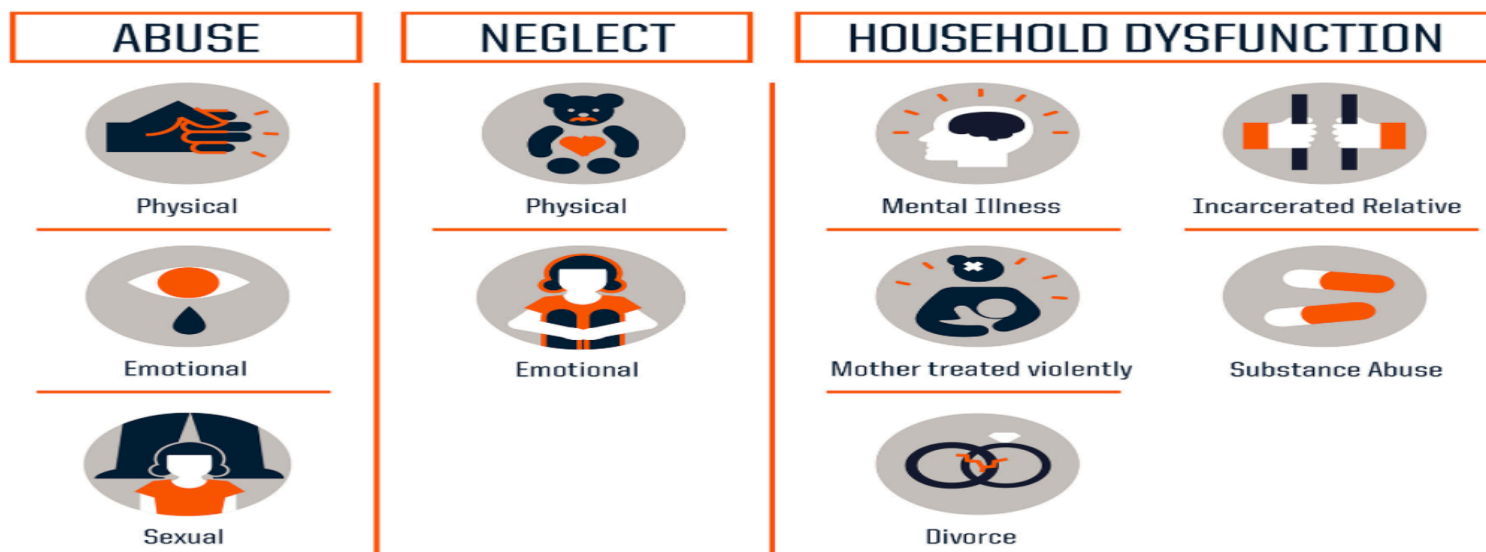




Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)

ACEs are adverse childhood experiences that harm children’s developing brains, and lead to changing how they respond to stress and damaging their immune systems so profoundly that the effects show up decades later in adults.

“ACEs” comes from the CDC-Kaiser Adverse Childhood Experiences Study in San Diego CA, a groundbreaking public health study that discovered that childhood trauma leads to the adult onset of chronic diseases, depression and other mental illness, violence and being a victim of violence, as well as financial and social problems. This study surveyed over 17,000 individuals – about 50% female, 74.8% Caucasian, 75.2% had attended college, and all had jobs and healthcare.



What *can* Be Done About ACES?

Safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments can have a positive impact on a broad range of health problems and on the development of skills that help children reach their full-potentials. Additional strategies that address the needs of children and their families include:

Social Supports for Parents
Making Connections
Nurture a Positive Self Image

High Quality Child Care
Maintaining a Daily Routine
Move Towards Goals

Mental Health Supports
Teaching Self-Care
Maintain Hope

If your child is experiencing a mental health emergency that requires immediate attention, please call the school. Please do not email. If calling after school hours or if your call is directed to voicemail, please call Crisis Intervention at (717) 394-2631 or dial 911 to ensure your emergency is addressed.

STRESS & EARLY BRAIN GROWTH

Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

What are ACEs?

ACEs are serious childhood traumas -- a list is shown below -- that result in toxic stress that can harm a child's brain. This toxic stress may prevent a child from learning, from playing in a healthy way with other children, and can result in long-term health problems.

Adverse Childhood Experiences can include:

1. Emotional abuse
2. Physical abuse
3. Sexual abuse
4. Emotional neglect
5. Physical neglect
6. Mother treated violently
7. Household substance abuse
8. Household mental illness
9. Parental separation or divorce
10. Incarcerated household member
11. Bullying (by another child or adult)
12. Witnessing violence outside the home
13. Witness a brother or sister being abused
14. Racism, sexism, or any other form of discrimination
15. Being homeless
16. Natural disasters and war

Exposure to childhood ACEs can increase the risk of:

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

How do ACEs affect health?

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

Reduces the ability to respond, learn, or figure things out, which can result in problems in school.

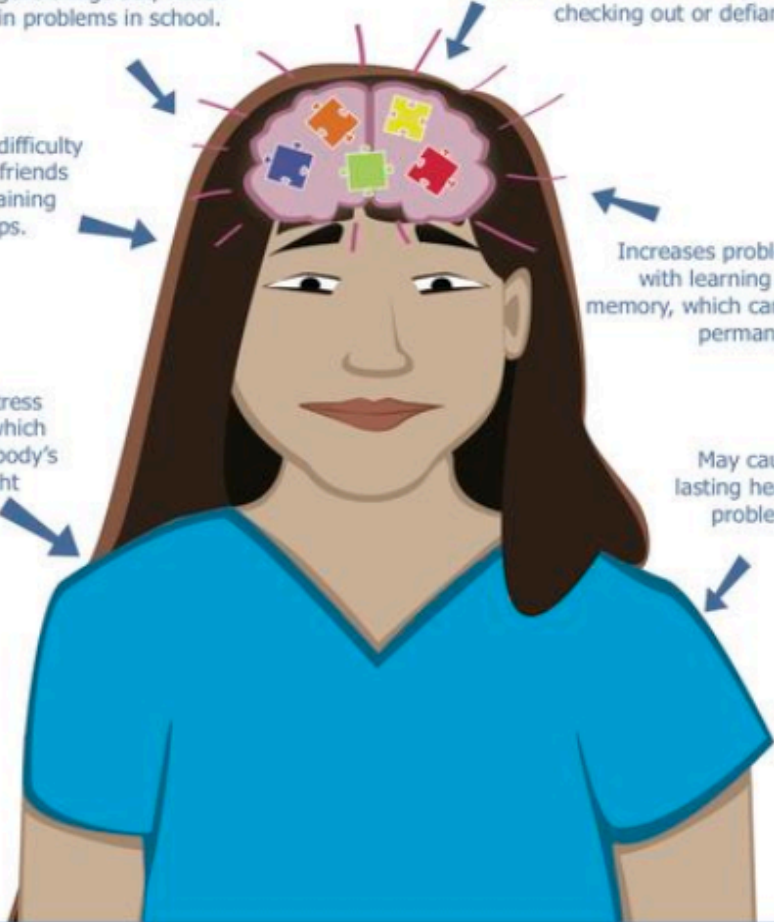
Lowers tolerance for stress, which can result in behaviors such as fighting, checking out or defiance.

Increases difficulty in making friends and maintaining relationships.

Increases problems with learning and memory, which can be permanent.

Increases stress hormones which affects the body's ability to fight infection.

May cause lasting health problems.



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!"