

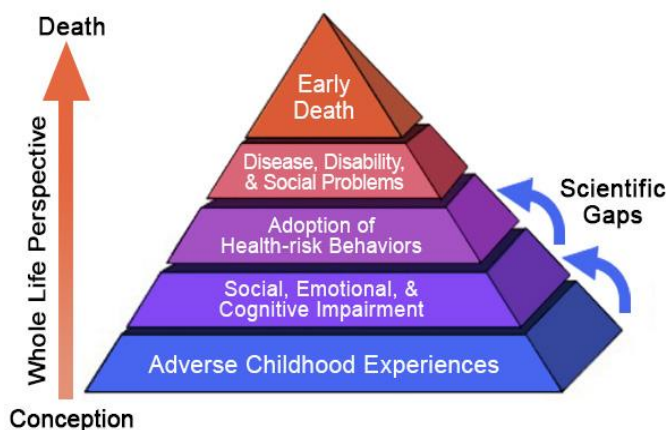
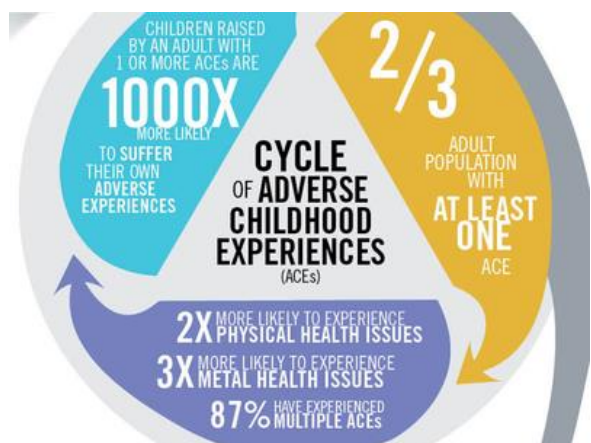
Adverse Childhood Experiences



"Our whole existence is based on the vitality and the dynamic experiences of our very beginning. This period, is the foundation of our life and our experiences of our relationship to the world."

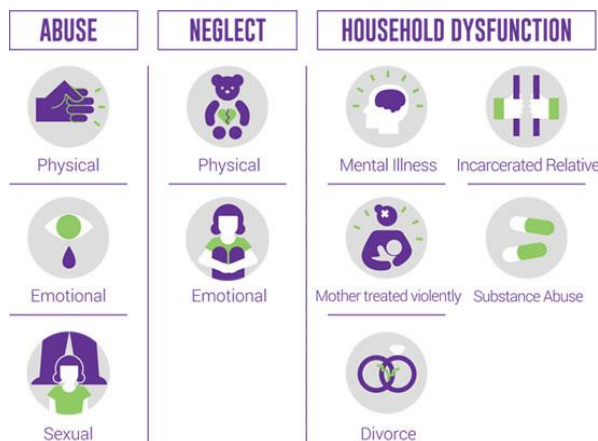
– Ludwig Janus, MD

Brains are built similar to that of a community or a house. The foundation begins developing as early as three weeks following conception. The cells of the brain start making connections even before birth. Imagine your arms, hands, and fingers – by grasping your hands together, you are making a connection between your fingers. This is the way brain functions; however, instead of fingers making the connections, every childhood experience and relationship, or lack-there-of, contributes to the making and breaking of these connections. A child's relationships, experiences, and environment directly impact brain development. Positive experiences in childhood lead to healthy, strong brains. Adverse experiences can hinder brain development and damage the foundation, leading to lasting, negative outcomes.



What exactly are ACEs?

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events that disrupt and prevent the brain from developing and thriving as healthy brains should. ACEs can lead to stress and difficulty starting in childhood and lasting through adulthood. ACEs can cause **disease, substance abuse, intimate partner violence, smoking, fetal death, mental illness, and early death.**



Sources: Parents as Teachers
<https://parentsasteachers.org> and ACEs in Tennessee
https://tn.gov/assets/entities/health/attachments/Tennessee_ACE_Final_Report_with_Authorization.pdf