

DECEMBER 2017 Parents Page

The Holiday Season causes stress for many people. Parental stress has a profound negative impact on children and their development.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is a term used to describe a wide range of factors, which may occur in the home in children under the age of 18 that can contribute to lifelong physical and behavioral health such as:

- emotional, physical, or sexual abuse
- loss of a parent through divorce, death or incarceration
- experiencing hunger or being exposed to violence

A child is more at risk for ACEs when the child's parents experience stressors like social isolation, underemployment, lack of health care, depression or the inability to access basic needs.

The CDC estimates depression to cause **200 million lost workdays** Each year at a cost to employers of **\$17 to \$44 billion**

WHY do we care about child development?

Because when we create healthier environments for all children, we're promoting a healthier and more productive town, county, state and nation! When we don't invest in children now, we pay later as individuals or a society. This goal of a healthy and productive future is undermined by ACEs. ACEs not only lead to lifelong negative impacts for the child who experiences them, but also creates a drain on businesses and taxpayers. Studies have shown that ACEs lead to:

- * higher health care costs
- * increased incarceration rates
- * lost work time
- * mental health outcomes which impair the population's ability to be mentally and emotionally prepared for work

A Positive Environment Sets the Stage for School Success

A new study finds that children's home environment in infancy and toddlerhood can predict their academic skills by 5th grade. Poverty is also a known predictor of academic and other struggles for young children. But parents who read as a family, engage in learning with their child at home, and provide a nurturing environment can counteract many effects of poverty and set their child on a solid path, according to the New York University study. Researchers acknowledged the challenges facing parents who are struggling financially.

"If you're a single parent, if you don't have an education, if you lost your job, all of these situations compromise parenting," Tamis-LeMonda said. "They make it harder to respond to your child. They make it harder to find time to sit down and read to your child. They make it harder to sit down and play with your child. They make it harder to have a regular routine, harder to bring your child to the library, etc."

The researchers found that children whose parents engaged them in meaningful conversations and provided them with books and toys designed to increase learning were much more likely to develop early cognitive skills that led to later academic success.

We often make assumptions that all families are the same. "They're all living in poverty, so these kids will therefore be doing horribly, that parenting will be weak." What is amazing to think about is how much the experiences of these children vary from one another. You have children who are in disadvantaged families who are getting incredibly rich engagement. Parents are talking to them all the time, providing rich language, lots of books, lots of toys, and then at the other extreme, also within low-income families, you have children who are in much more impoverished circumstances.

Children Living with Parents Who Have a Substance Use Disorder

Substance use disorders (SUDs) are characterized by recurrent use of alcohol or drugs (or both) that results in problems such as being unable to control use of the substance; failing to meet obligations at work, home, or school; having poor health; and spending an increased amount of time getting, using, or recovering from the effects of using the substance. Parent substance use and parent experience of an SUD can have negative effects on children. Children with a parent who has an SUD are more likely than children who do not have a parent with an SUD to have lower socioeconomic status and increased difficulties in academic and social settings and family functioning. Children having a parent with an SUD are at risk of experiencing direct effects, such as parental abuse or neglect, or indirect effects, such as fewer household resources. Previous research indicates that the negative effects of parent SUDs may differ depending on the type of SUD the parent has (i.e., alcohol or illicit drug).

Based on data, an annual average of 8.7 million children aged 17 or younger live in households in the United States with at least one parent who had an SUD. This represents about 12.3 percent of children aged 17 or younger who resided with at least one parent with an SUD.

We can promote great childhoods for all children and a brighter future for families!

Upcoming Community Events, Sponsored by Families 1st.:

- Active Parenting – January
- Working with Families Living in Poverty – February 9th
- Open Adoption and Family Services – February/March
- Formation of a Community Task Force – January/February
- Trauma Informed Care – May
- Resilience – May
- Paper Tigers - May



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