

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

DESCRIPTION

An adverse childhood experience (ACE) describes a traumatic childhood experience that is remembered as an adult. They can have negative, lasting effects on health and well-being in both childhood or later in life.¹ ACEs have been linked to numerous negative outcomes in adulthood including: alcoholism, drug addiction, depression, suicide, poor physical health and obesity, lower educational attainment, unemployment and poverty.² In childhood, children who have experienced ACEs are more likely to struggle in school and have emotional and behavioral challenges.² People who have experienced multiple ACEs are much more likely to be negatively affected than those who have experienced only one.³ The original ACE study¹ in 1998 asked a large sample of adults about seven childhood experiences (guardian in jail, lives with someone who drinks too much alcohol or uses illegal drugs, verbally or physically abused by guardian, adults in home abuse one another, sexually abused by adult). Since then, the list of ACEs used in several studies has expanded, therefore, ACE scores can be hard to compare. The ACE score, as calculated from the Minnesota Student Survey, ranges from 0 to 7, and is based on the number of the ACE conditions experienced by a student.

HOW WE ARE DOING

Despite increasing attention and resources devoted to preventing ACEs and building resilient individuals and communities, ACEs remain common in the U.S. Over half (55 percent) of Minnesota adults report experiencing at least one ACE during childhood, and of those, most reported more than one.⁴ Among all Ramsey County 8th, 9th and 11th graders, 24.7 percent reported an ACE and within that group, 47 percent reported two or more ACEs. The most common ACE among Ramsey County youth was having a parent or guardian in the past, or currently in jail/prison. This is followed by verbal abuse, physical abuse and living with someone who drinks too much.⁵

DISPARITIES

Black and Hispanic youth in all regions of the U.S. are more likely to experience ACEs than their white and Asian peers.⁷ When comparing ACEs prevalence between groups of Ramsey County students, disparities are evident. Among all Ramsey County students of color surveyed, 25 percent reported one or more ACEs, while among white students the rate was 21 percent. Among all Ramsey County females surveyed, 26 percent reported one or more ACEs, while among the male students surveyed the rate was 23 percent.⁵

RISK FACTORS

ACEs' negative effects can be transmitted from one generation to the next.⁸ Toxic stress experienced by women during pregnancy also negatively affects genetic "programming"

Information to note

- ACEs can make people physically and mentally ill.⁶
- 24.7% of the Ramsey County students surveyed reported one or more ACEs.
- The most common ACE reported among Ramsey County youth was having a parent/guardian in jail.

Community voice

"Lack of peace at home, child abuse, lack of good job, lack of income."
- Black/African American Female, age 25-34

¹ Felitti VJ et al. Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. *Am J Prev Med.* 1998;14(4):245-258. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9635069>. Accessed February 2018.

² Bethell CD, Davis MB, Gombojav N, Stumbo S, Powers K. A national and across state profile on adverse childhood experiences among children and possibilities to heal and thrive. 2017. <http://www.cahmi.org/projects/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces/>. Accessed February 2018.

³ Chartier MJ, Walker JR, Naimark B. Separate and cumulative effects of adverse childhood experiences in predicting adult health and health care utilization. *Child Abuse Neglect.* 2010;34(6), 454-464. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213410000955>. Accessed March, 2018.

⁴ Minnesota Department of Health. Stress and ACEs. <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/program/ace/stress.cfm>. Accessed March, 2018.

⁵ Minnesota Student Survey 2016, Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health data base.

⁶ Priest N, Paradies Y, Trenerry B, Truong M, Karlsen S, Kelly Y. A systematic review of studies examining the relationship between reported racism and health and wellbeing for children and young people. *Soc Sci Med.* 2013;95:115-127. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953612007927>. Accessed March, 2018.

⁷ Child Trends. The prevalence of adverse childhood experiences, nationally, by state and by race or ethnicity. 2018. <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/prevalence-adverse-childhood-experiences-nationally-state-race-ethnicity/>. Accessed February, 2018.

⁸ Monk C, Feng T, Lee S, Krupska I, Champagne FA, Tycko B. Distress during pregnancy: epigenetic regulation of placenta glucocorticoid-related genes and fetal neurobehavior. *Am J Psychiat.* 2016;173(7), 705-713. <https://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/doi/abs/10.1176/appi.ajp.2015.15091171>. Accessed March, 2018.

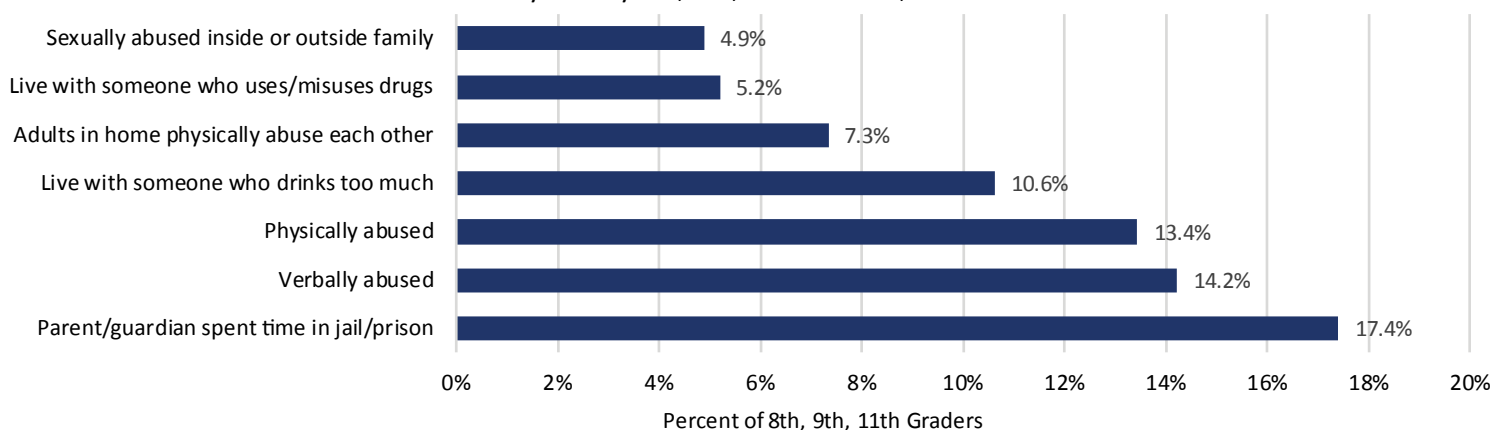
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during fetal development, which can contribute to a host of bad outcomes, sometimes much later in life. Infants born to women who experienced four or more childhood adversities were two to five times more likely to have poor physical and emotional health outcomes by 18 months of age.⁹

WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

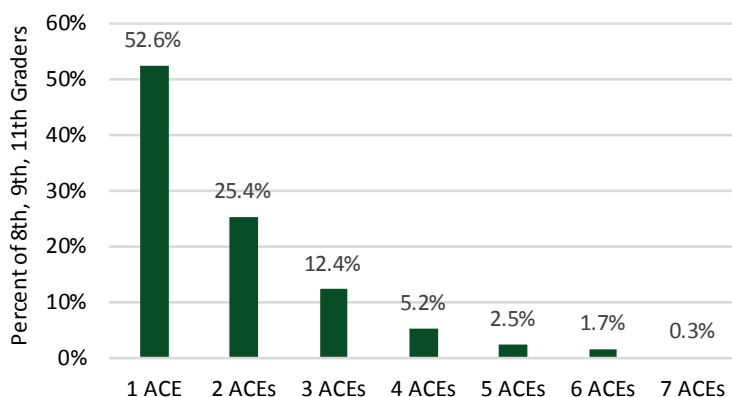
Preventing child abuse and neglect and improving economic stability for families is a priority for Ramsey County. The county's cross departmental Youth Continuum of Care (YCC) initiative is a long-term effort to look at the big picture of the county's programs and systems impacting youth. The YCC is the place where leaders from the county and community partners who serve youth ages 0-24 to discuss, collaborate, coordinate, prioritize and review our efforts to improve outcomes for Ramsey County youth.

Most Common ACEs Reported Among Students Experiencing ACEs, Ramsey County 8th, 9th, 11th Graders, 2016



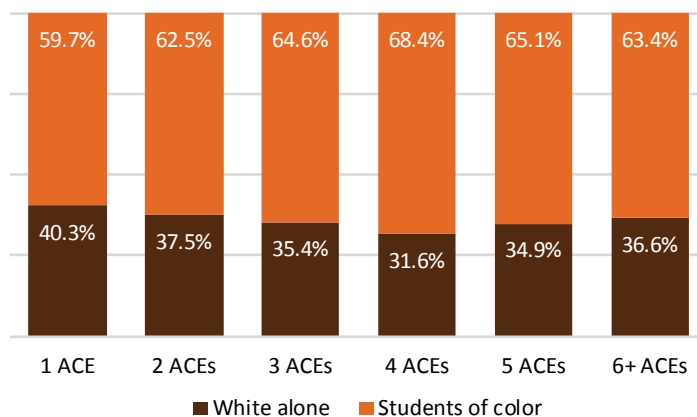
Source: Minnesota Student Survey, 2016; Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health.

Number of ACEs Among Students Reporting Any ACEs, Ramsey County 8th, 9th, 11th graders, 2016



Source: Minnesota Student Survey 2016, Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public

Number of ACEs by Race, Ramsey County 8th, 9th, 11th Graders, 2016



Source: Minnesota Student Survey 2016, Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health.

⁹ Madigan S, Wade M, Plamondon A, Maguire JL, Jenkins JM. Maternal Adverse Childhood Experience and Infant Health: Biomedical and Psychosocial Risks as Intermediary Mechanisms. *J Pediatr.* 2017;187, 282-289.e1. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022347617305991>. Accessed March, 2018.