



ACEs 101 Participant Packet

Sponsored by the Outreach and Awareness Team of the
Growing Resilience Movement Collaborative

ELIMINATE ABUSE. EMPOWER FAMILIES.

SAFEchild
864 West Morgan Street | Raleigh, NC 27603
tel: 919.743.6140 | fax: 919.743.6143

SAFEchild Advocacy Center
2815 Kidd Road | Raleigh, NC 27610
tel: 919.231.5515 | fax: 919.231.5516



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Seek support

- [Wake Network of Care](#) – Information about community services, addiction/recovery, domestic violence, financial assistance, and other services
- [Wake Connections](#) – A coordinated intake and referral system that connects families of children under five years with high-quality home- and/or group-based programs
- [Wake Smart Start](#) – Family-focused resource list
- [Oak City Cares](#) – Hub for connecting families experiencing homelessness and housing instability to services
- [SAFEchild](#) – Parenting support and information
- [Interact](#) – Services for ending the cycle of domestic and sexual violence in Wake County
- [WCHS Family Support Services](#)
- [Alliance Health](#) – Network of providers offering treatment and support for mental illness, substance use disorders, and intellectual/developmental disabilities
- [Family Resource Center South Atlantic](#) – Programs designed to help individuals and families achieve self-sufficiency
- [Project Enlightenment](#) – Early childhood education and prevention program provided by the Wake County Public School System
- [Lucy Listens](#) – Up to four free sessions for parents of children birth to 12 years old
- [Southlight](#) engages, educates and empowers those living with substance use and mental health challenges
- [Recovery Communities of NC](#) promote addiction recovery, wellness and citizenship through advocacy, education, and support
- [Triangle Family Services](#) – Offering a wide range of therapeutic and life skills programs for families and children
- [Hopeline](#) – Call or text **(919) 231-4525 or (877) 235-4525**
- [Hope4NC](#) – Call or text **855-587-3463**

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Learn More:

ACEs and Resilience resources:

- [Nadine Burke Harris TED Talk about ACEs](#)
- [Reconnect for Resilience](#) – free Reset tools and videos, and training opportunities
- [Conscious Discipline](#) – free printables, seminars, and resources
- [Devereaux Center for Resilient Children](#) - free resources, webinars, information, videos
- [Prevent Child Abuse NC](#) – Free online trainings on “Recognizing and Responding to Child Maltreatment”, Connections Matter, and Protective Factor trainings and resources
- [PACES Connection](#) - Resources, articles, handouts and blogs
- [CDC: Learn about ACEs](#)
- [Roadmap to Resilience](#) – podcasts
- [ACEs Aware](#)- resources, ACEs inventories (medical community)
- [Trauma Informed NC](#)
- [CTF Alliance](#)- free online trainings
- [Resilience, the Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope Trailer](#) – email Gespino@safechild.org if interested in a screening

Epigenetics and racial equity resources:

- [Epigenetics and ACEs](#)
- [Racism and Health | Health Equity | CDC](#)
- [Racism is an Adverse Childhood Experience \(ACE\) - NC Center for Health & Wellness](#)
- [PACES Connection](#)
- [FUNDAMENTALS \(racialequitytools.org\)](#)

Books

- **Raising a Secure Child** by Hoffman, Cooper and Powell
- **The Deepest Well** - Nadine Burke Harris
- **The Whole Brain Child** – Dan Siegel
- **The Body Keeps the Score.** Bessel Van Der Kolk

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Things You Can Do Today:

Biological Supports for Everyone

These are some practices that increase resilience and reduce a person's stress level, and also serve to shift behavior in a way that supports others rather than adding to others' "stress load."

Use these for yourself, talk a child through one of them, or share with a friend. If working with a child, it is very valuable to make a habit of one or more, so it's a normal and familiar activity which makes it even easier to use under stress. Then try to use it early when someone is growing upset - but these can be introduced full-meltdown, too!

These support the nervous system in calming, and build neuropathways in the brain that make it normal to feel good, which can become more of our "default."¹

- Breathe. Take a deep breath and feel it move all the way down toward your belly. Then exhale completely. Other breathing patterns can be helpful too.
- Sing – the exhale is longer than the inhale. This can be used just for yourself, or you can encourage children or others to join you.
- Ground. Walking, running and most physical activity is grounding.
- Pay attention to what your body feels like.
- Think of a time you felt really good, or when you felt better than you feel right now. Then feel what that felt like. This isn't just a thinking exercise but a body sensation practice.
- Legs up the wall – just what it sounds like! Another nervous system reset that is calming.

Some Activities to Support Your Kids

These can be done in everyday life – if you do them ahead of time, kids begin to learn to calm themselves. If you do them in stressful moments they also settle kids down.

- Sing in the car with your children – or at home!
- The 20-second hug – this "co-regulates" people's nervous system. It's calming and gets people "in sync." If a child is upset this shares your calm with them, even if you are only a little calmer. If someone pulls away, let go.

¹ This material is based on information from *Resources for Resilience* and the *Community Resiliency Model*.

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- Talk your child through any of the activities above. Each one of them changes brain activity and can be calming.
- Take a few deep breaths for yourself. This helps calm your mind and body. It's also a way kids learn to self-regulate – seeing someone else do it and then feeling it.
- Offer more than one choice when you can, rather than being directive.
- Give compliments on how well they do something, or how they are practicing a skill.
- Use one of the attached exercises – drain, star, pretzel, balloon. Kids need to focus to do these which shifts attention. If they learn ahead of time they follow your lead in the moment better.
- Ask for help from other grownups, and be specific. People love to help but they need to know what to do.

Parental Resilience and Social Connections

- Ask parents how they are doing.
- Offer empathy.
- Call a friend.
- Invite someone for coffee, at your home or out. Offer to stop by their place too – it's hard to travel with kids sometimes.
- Drop off a treat or meal.
- Do a favor. "I'm running to Target, do you need anything?"
- If you have the resources, consider giving a grocery gift card to a family you know could use it.
- Affirm positive parenting. "You're so good with your child!" or "I like how you ____."

I'm not a parent – what can I do? ²

The tools listed for community members, and some parental skills, can also be used by anyone.

- Practice shifting your own physical reactions during times of stress or through everyday practices using the biological supports above.





² Partially inspired by [Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina's "Ways to Be a Connection."](#)

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- Make personal connections with people in public spaces, whether you know them or not. Kindnesses can support parental resilience. Even if people you engage with don't have children, they too engage with people who are parents:
 - Make eye contact.
 - Greet people by name if you know them.
 - Make an observation about the environment.
 - Ask a question, as simple as "How are you doing today?"
 - Be kind and friendly to customer service workers. Their jobs are often inherently stressful.
 - Don't take it personally when someone doesn't reciprocate. We can't know their experience.
 - Say "thank you."
 - Give a compliment, for something a person has done, or for their "look" – their shirt or jewelry.
 - In the checkout line:
 - Kids get tired and can't be patient to checkout. Distract the child - "I like your Spiderman t-shirt!" Then connect with the adult they are with - "My cousin loves superheroes."
 - When a child melts down in the candy aisle, empathize with the grownup they're with. "Those packages are so colorful, aren't they! Anyone would want them!"
- If you're comfortable, offer to stay with someone's child while they run an errand or two.

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Conscious discipline icons:

 <h3>Drain</h3> <p>Extend arms out, pretending your arms are faucets. Tighten arm, shoulder, and face muscles. Exhale slowly making a "ssssh" sound and release all your muscles, draining out the stress.</p>	 <h3>S.T.A.R.</h3> <p>Smile, Take a deep breath And Relax. Encourage belly breathing where the tummy goes out when the air goes in, and in when the air goes out. Also help children learn to exhale slower than they inhale.</p>
 <h3>Pretzel</h3> <p>Standing up, cross your ankles. Now cross your right wrist over left, turn your hands so your thumbs are facing the floor, put palms together and interlace fingers. Bend your elbows out and gently turn your hands down and toward your body until they rest on the center of your chest. Put your tongue on the roof of your mouth. Relax and breathe.</p>	 <h3>Balloon</h3> <p>Place your hands on top of your head and interlace your fingers. Breathe in through your nose as you raise your arms, inflating an imaginary balloon. Release the air in the balloon by pursing your lips, exhaling slowly, lowering your arms and making a "pbbpbbpbbp" sound.</p>

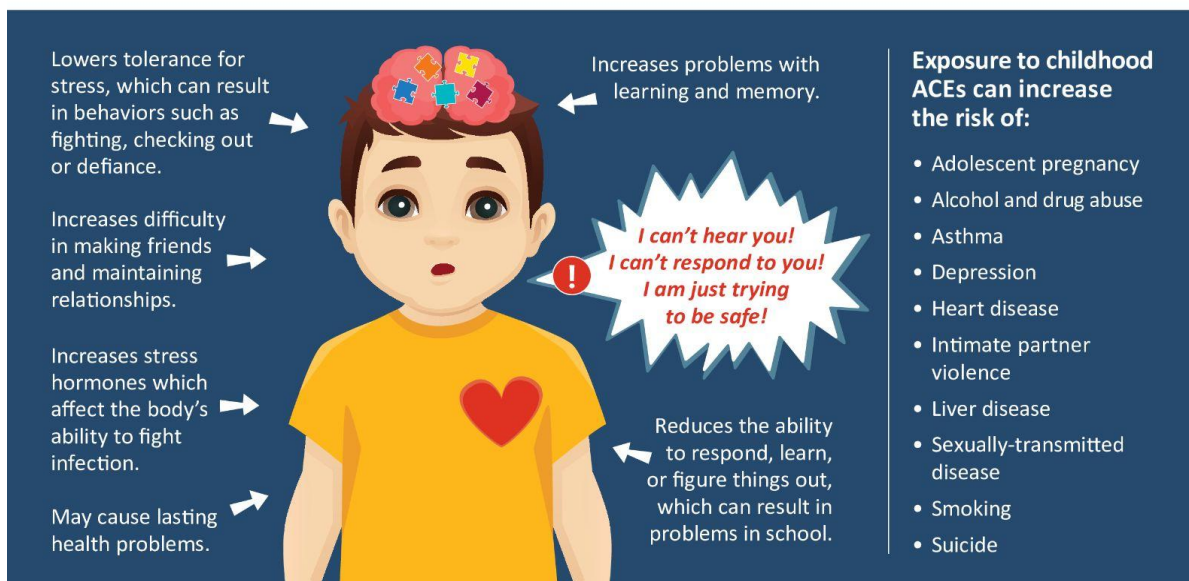
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Adverse Childhood Experiences

Understanding ACEs

ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) are serious childhood traumas that can result in toxic stress. Prolonged exposure to ACEs can create toxic stress, which can damage the developing brain and body of children and affect overall health. Toxic stress may prevent a child from learning or playing in a healthy way with other children, and can cause long-term health problems.



ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) can include:

- Abuse: Emotional / physical / sexual
- Bullying / violence of / by another child, sibling, or adult
- Homelessness
- Household: Substance abuse / mental illness / domestic violence / incarceration / parental abandonment, divorce, loss
- Involvement in child welfare system
- Medical trauma
- Natural disasters and war
- Neglect: Emotional / physical
- Racism, sexism, or any other form of discrimination
- Violence in community

! SURVIVAL MODE RESPONSE

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.

Parents and caregivers can help. **Turn over to learn about resilience.**

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Help children
identify, express and
manage emotions.



Create safe physical and
emotional environments.
(home, school, community, systems).



Understand,
prevent and
respond to ACEs.



“...One of the biggest myths that we have to bust is that if you have experienced childhood adversity, there’s nothing we can do about it.”

– Nadine Burke Harris, MD, MPH, FAAP, Surgeon General of California

What is resilience?

Research shows that if caregivers provide a safe environment for children and teach them how to be resilient, that helps reduce the effects of ACEs.

What does resilience look like?

Having resilient parents and caregivers who know how to solve problems, have healthy relationships with other adults, and build healthy relationships with children.

Building attachment and nurturing relationships:

Adults who listen and respond patiently to a child in a supportive way, and pay attention to a child’s physical and emotional needs.

Building social connections.

Having family, friends, neighbors, community members who support, help and listen to children.

Meeting basic needs:

Provide children with safe housing, nutritious food, appropriate clothing, and access to health care and good education, when possible. Make sure children get enough sleep, rest, and play.

Learning about parenting, caregiving and how children grow:

Understand how caregivers can help children grow in a healthy way, and what to expect from children as they grow.

Building social and emotional skills:

Help children interact in a healthy way with others, manage emotions, communicate their feelings and needs, and rebound after loss and pain.

Resources:

 [National Parent Helpline](#)

1-855-4A PARENT
(1-855-427-2736)

 [Number Story](#)

 [ACEs Too High](#)

 [PACES Connection](#)

 [Resource Center](#)

 [Parenting with PACES](#)



Special thanks to the Community & Family Services Division at the Spokane (WA) Regional Health District for developing and sharing the original parent hand-out.
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FROM

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SAFEchild Programs

SAFEchild's mission is to eliminate child abuse
and empower families in Wake County



Moms Supporting Moms - Mentoring and support for pregnant and postpartum women and their partners through the baby's first year and beyond. Prospective participants choose from an array of services that will best fit their needs, including a support group for new moms dealing with mental health challenges and a one-year mentor program.



SAFEchild's parenting programs focus on strengthening families by helping them to communicate effectively, manage anger and encourage cooperation. Group support reduces isolation, builds self-esteem and reinforces positive parenting. Except for MENS, children are encouraged to attend classes with their parents (when classes are held in person). Classes are currently virtual and are two hours each week for 11 to 13 weeks.

MOVE (Mothers Overcoming Violence through Empowerment and Education)

Empowering moms to move beyond domestic violence to a safer, happier future

Circle of Security Parenting

For parents/caregivers of children birth to teens, focusing on strengthening the caregiver-child bond and boosting children's confidence

Crianza con Cariño

SAFEchild's Spanish-language parent education program

MENS (Men Engaged in Nurturing Strategies)

Helping fathers create and strengthen nurturing relationships with their children

Nurturing Program

For parents/caregivers of children 6 and up, focusing on positive discipline, effective communication and anger management. NOTE: At this time, Nurturing is not on the program schedule.

Flip page for our current program schedule and contact information



Funny Tummy Feelings

A one-hour interactive, engaging presentation teaching first graders the skills they need to protect themselves from physical and sexual abuse. It is presented in all Wake County elementary schools, as well as private and charter schools.

Elizabeth Clark - eclark@safechildnc.org



SAFEchild Advocacy Center

A child-friendly, community-based facility providing comprehensive medical evaluations for children when there is concern for sexual or severe physical abuse or neglect. Children and their families receive advocacy services for ongoing support and referrals for other services such as mental health therapy. **Jennifer Farmer Keating** - jfarmerkeating@safechildnc.org



Growing Resilience Movement

SAFEchild is the backbone of a partnership of youth-serving organizations, government agencies, faith communities and parents working to strengthen our community by eliminating risk factors for child abuse while building resilience. **Ginger Espino** - gespino@safechildnc.org

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SAFEchild Program Dates- Spring 2022

All classes are virtual until further notice unless otherwise noted

Learn more and register at safechildnc.org/find-a-program

Or contact intake coordinator Laura Gouliau at lgouliau@safechildnc.org



Krystal Grady - kgrady@safechildnc.org

- ♥ Tuesday 10 am Biweekly parenting support group for moms with children birth to 5
- ♥ Thursday 7 pm Weekly support group for pregnant or postpartum women dealing with mental health challenges (clinical diagnosis not required)
- ♥ One-year mentor program that pairs new moms with trained, experienced moms
- ♥ Postpartum planning class at Rex Hospital



Stacey Sullivan - ssullivan@safechildnc.org

- ♥ Tuesday Dates TBD, evenings
 - ♥ Wednesday Dates TBD, evenings
- Intake required for all prospective participants*



Laura Brimberry - lbrimberry@safechildnc.org

- ♥ Weekdays New 15-person groups starting each month
- Mornings, evenings



Gladys D'Estefano - gdestefano@safechildnc.org

- ♥ Tuesday, Thursday March 29 - June 7
- Mornings, afternoons, evenings



Stacey Sullivan - ssullivan@safechildnc.org

- ♥ Monday Dates TBD, evenings
- Professional referral and intake required for all prospective participants*



- ♥ *At this time, Nurturing is not on the program schedule*

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