

# Addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences: A Roadmap to Early and Lifelong Health



*A new partnership, led by CAHMI and AcademyHealth, seeks to promote child and family wellbeing by building the capacity of children's health services to prevent, recognize and heal childhood trauma.*

## What Children Need

- Healthy development requires safe, stable, nurturing relationships and resilience toward trauma. Strong family units, positive experiences and social emotional skills are essential.
- The building blocks of development are often absent for children who are exposed to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

## The Impact of ACEs

- ACEs include exposure to physical or emotional abuse, violence or neglect, family discord and neighborhood violence.

*Nearly half of US children have been exposed to adverse childhood experiences; nearly a quarter have been exposed to two or more ACEs.*

- Prolonged exposure to ACEs can lead to toxic stress, which impacts brain, socio-emotional and cognitive development. This contributes to poorer health, lower educational outcomes and health risks both in childhood and into adulthood.

## The Role of Children's Health Services

- Children's health services play a crucial part in promoting the relationships, resilience and positive experiences that children need to thrive.
- Better awareness, training, innovation and policy, paired with effective cross-sector partnerships, will enhance the role of these services in promoting early and lifelong health.

## Project Goals

From Spring 2014 to Spring 2016, we aim to:

- **Develop a coordinated child health services and policy research and action agenda**
- **Publish a set of research papers** to review what we know and determine priorities for practice and translational research
- **Share ready-to-use resources** to build awareness, capacity and innovation at four levels:
  - Families
  - Clinicians
  - Healthcare organizations, including hospitals, clinics, and health plans
  - Health policymakers, including system financing, organization, capacity and research support
- **Enrich community-wise partnerships** by strengthening the role of children's health services in broader child wellbeing efforts

For more information, visit:

- [cahmi.org/projects/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces](http://cahmi.org/projects/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces)
- [academyhealth.org/aces](http://academyhealth.org/aces)

To join the conversation, email [info@cahmi.org](mailto:info@cahmi.org)

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## **Progress Highlights to Date (March 2014-February, 2016)**

### **Goal #1: Build a Coordinated National Child Health Services Research and Policy Action Agenda**

- Conducted an ongoing environmental and literature scan of research, policy and programs focusing on addressing social and emotional well-being, ACEs and positive health development.
- Facilitated agenda discussion forums at professional conferences and stakeholder meetings
- Engaged emerging collaborative innovation and learning networks related to resilience and ACEs
- Conducted key informant interviews with national, state and local public and private sector leaders
- Coordinated an online collective impact process (CoDigital) with over 400 stakeholders, including researchers, health care and social services providers, hospitals, health systems, federal, state and local agency stakeholders, community organizations, media, funders, and families to obtain input on what we need to know (research) and what we need to do (policy) to promote social and emotional well-being, resilience and prevent and reduce the impact of ACEs
- Specified key premises, principles and priority research and policy action themes and opportunities

### **Goal #2: Publish applied research, policy and program innovation papers**

We commissioned and invited papers and commentaries from experts and key stakeholders, most of which will be included as a Fall 2016 full supplement in *Academic Pediatrics*. Focus topics include:

- Perspectives on the status of research and policy priority levers for innovation in the prevention and reduction of early and lifelong impact of ACEs and associated toxic and chronic stress
- Conceptual models for framing and engaging researchers, policymakers and families around a relationship-centered and positive health development construct regarding ACEs and resilience
- Empirical and applied assessment of existing data and measures of resilience and ACEs
- The role of pediatric providers in promoting resilience and the role of discussions and education about ACEs with families, provider training and support needs in clinical practice and social services;
- Examples of community collaborations and education models and lessons learned for the field;
- The role of hospitals and health systems to address ACEs and advance resilience and positive health;
- Perspectives from federal and state agencies, provider organizations, families and consumers, etc
- Leveraging current health reform context to address ACEs and promote resilience and healing

### **Goal #3: Share resources to embed awareness, develop capacity and support innovation**

- Created a series of national, state and local level *data-in-action* ACEs, resilience and child health profiles and facilitated in person and remote discussions on the use and need for data and measures
- Scanned and compared current national, state and local child and family serving organization's performance and needs assessment measures and identified shared accountability opportunities
- Developed an applied scientific synthesis and framework for the potential integration of trauma healing, resilience, mindfulness and mind-body based strategies to prevent and address ACEs
- Shared resources with provider organizations and associations interested in championing addressing ACEs and promoting resilience in their communities.

### **Goal #4: Enrich the community-wide partnerships essential to promote health and address ACEs by strengthening the presence of children's health services research, policy and practice in these larger child well-being and ACEs collective impact efforts**

- Presented key premises, principles and findings emerging from the process to further coordinate efforts across stakeholders and evolve a coordinated and shared framework and action focus
- Developing a Champion's Communication Toolkit for individuals and organizations interested in starting or furthering dialogue and action in their organizations and communities;