
Preparing Families for Success

— Through Family Engagement —

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Objectives:

- Learn what family engagement is and how it can help prevent ACES
- Learn about the protective factors framework and strengths based approach to engaging families
- Share practical strategies in implementing Family engagement into your practices



What is Family Engagement?

According to Family Engagement Inventory:

“Family engagement is the process used to build genuine relationships with families. Relationships with families support overall family well-being and children's healthy development. When families are engaged, partnerships are created that have a common focus—helping children grow and thrive. Family engagement happens in the home, early childhood program, school, and community. It is a shared responsibility of all those who want children to succeed in school and in life.”



The Effects of ACES

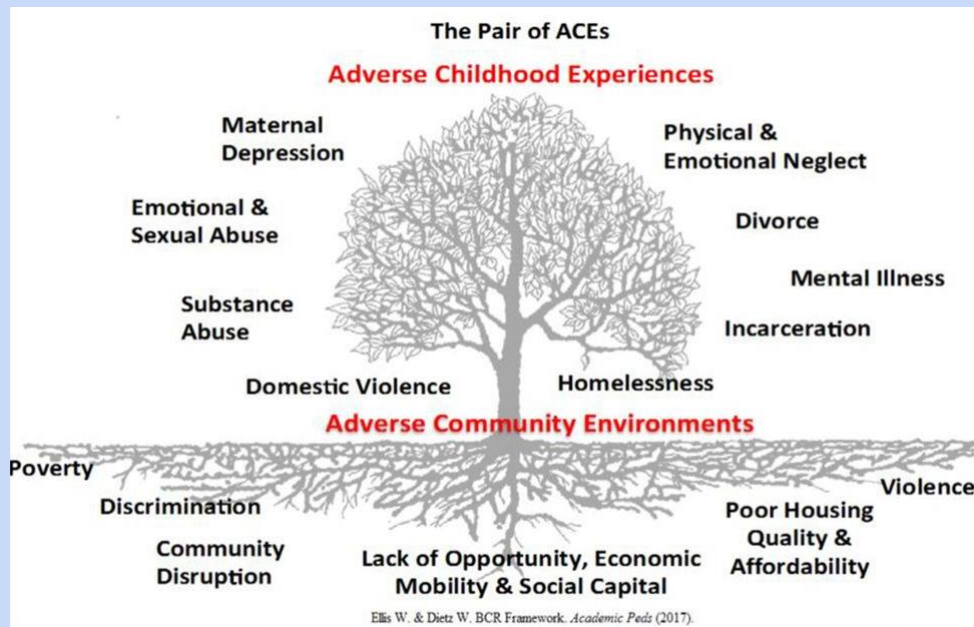
ACES refers to Adverse Childhood Experiences

The ACE study found that the more one has exposure to ACES, such as domestic violence, addiction, poverty, depression and other negative factors in early childhood, the greater the chance for later in life chronic issues such as illness, poverty, and negatively impacted life potential, education, employment and more.



How Can Family Engagement Help Prevent ACES

Engaging with families early can help prevent instances of violence in the home, abuse, homelessness...



What are protective factors

According to Child Welfare Information Gateway:

“Protective factors are conditions or attributes in individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that mitigate or eliminate risk in families and communities, thereby increasing the health and well-being of children and families.”



1. Parental Resilience

Parents exercise flexibility and develop inner strength which creates resilience and belief in themselves as parents and decision makers. (Stronger because of the challenges faced and survived)



1. Parental Resilience

Strategy examples:

- Relationship building. We partner with families.
- Build on strengths instead of focusing on perceived deficits.
- Recognize they are the key decision-makers for their family.
- Listen to what families need.
- Validate/support good decisions; normalize the fact that parenting is stressful
- Encourage parents to take care of themselves, especially in times of stress.

2. Social Connections

Families/caregivers connecting with each other helps to build a support system and makes a family strong. (Especially challenging, yet needed during this time of Covid)



2. Social Connections

Strategy examples:

- Check in with individual families with a personal call.
- Invite families to online social gathering resources-parent cafe's, public library virtual events.
- Create an online social gathering for families-family engagement activity.*

3. Concrete Support in Times of Need

The act of asking for help. When families ask for help, they can more readily connect with community support and resources.



3. Concrete Support in Times of Need

Strategy examples:

- Identify barriers families may have accessing services.
- Help families navigate systems - provide warm handoff to services.
- Build a resource catalog of programs and events to provide referrals.
- Help caregiver understand their role as an advocate for themselves and their family.

4. Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Parents can learn to be their child's expert. Parent education helps make a family strong. Parenting is part natural and part learned.



4. Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Strategy examples:

Connect and collaborate with outside agencies and programs that provide education or home visiting.

PPP (Positive Parenting Program)

PAT (Parents as Teachers)

Parent Cafes

Family Centers

5. Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Providing children the tools and words to express how they feel. Families that can communicate effectively build positive relationships.



5. Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Strategy examples:

- Storytime - stories build empathy, perspective of others, identifying feelings.
- Create a calm down area - a corner with a soft pillow, some fidgets, for a child to use coping strategies.
- Connecting families to resources that promote social emotional development (second step, games, counseling).
- Being aware of trauma and how it can manifest in a child's behavior and interactions.

How to remember the 5 PROTECTIVE FACTORS that make your family strong.



Use your Thumb to remember

**Social & Emotional
Competence of
Children**

because a "thumbs up"
is one of the first ways
we learn to communicate
our emotions.



Your Pinky Finger signifies
**Concrete Support
in Times of Need**

because it is the smallest
finger and reminds us that we
all need help sometimes.



Your Index Finger represents
**Knowledge of Parenting
and Child Development**

because you are your child's
1st teacher!



Your Ring Finger stands for
Parental Resilience

because your first commitment
must be to yourself in order
to be strong for others.



Your Middle Finger can
help you remember
Social Connections
because it should never
stand alone! We all need a
positive social network.



Charlevoix, Emmet
Northern Antrim Counties

stronger
strengthening families

Takeaway: Family Fun Activity

Warm and Cozy Party:

1. Invite families to attend virtually in their pajamas.
2. Read a winter story possibly relating to an SEL topic managing big emotions -like frustration or excitement.
3. Demonstrate Hot Chocolate Breathing (hold the imaginary mug, breathe in and smell the hot cocoa, breathe out through the mouth to cool the cocoa).
4. At end, encourage a home activity. Ask families to create a calm corner using pillows and blankets. Families can share pictures of their space to class.
5. Send a kit home to tie the event together. Include a packet of hot chocolate, popcorn, and/or a paperback copy of the book. The family can recreate the activity any time, encouraging family time and connection.



Questions, Comments, Discussion



Resources:

PTICC (Pottstown Trauma Informed Community Connection)

<https://pottstownmatters.org/>

PEAK (Pottstown Early Action for Kindergarten Readiness)

<http://www.pottstownready.org/>

Pennsylvania Strengthening Families

<http://www.pa-strengthening-families.org/>

Social and Emotional Learning

<https://casel.org/>

