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## HOW CAN CAREGIVERS HELP A CHILD WITH ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACEs)?

The **GOOD NEWS** is that there are many ways to reduce the effect of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in children!



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### WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Resilience is the ability to return to being healthy and hopeful after bad things happen. Research shows that if parents provide a safe environment for their children and teach them how to be resilient, that helps reduce the effects of ACEs.

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### RESILIENCE OVERCOMES ACEs!

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### HOW CAN CAREGIVERS INCREASE RESILIENCY IN CHILDREN?

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#### BEING A RESILIENT PARENT

Parents who know how to solve problems, who have healthy relationships with other adults, and who build healthy relationships with their children.

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#### BUILDING ATTACHMENT AND NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS

Children who have adult who support them by listening and responding patiently and pay attention to their physical and emotional needs do better with physical and mental health.

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#### MORE FACE TO FACE TIME

If children have too much screen time (TV, phones, video games), then other social and physical activities are more limited. Spend some face to face time with your child playing games or just talking.

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#### MEETING BASIC NEEDS SUCH AS:

- Safe Housing
- Appropriate Clothing
- Access to Health Care
- A Good Education
- Nutritious Food – children's and teens' bodies continue to grow and need a variety of vegetables fruits, proteins, and carbohydrates. Eating snack foods with a lot of fat or sugar (donuts, chips, candy) can taste good but may actually increase feelings of anxiety and depression.

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### **BUILDING HEALTH HABITS FOR THE FAMILY**

Exercise can be very helpful in decreasing the effects of toxic stress! Experts say that children should have at least 60 minutes each day of activity (such as running, playing a sport, or playing outdoors).

Children and teens need more sleep than you think! For example, toddlers need 12-14 hours and teens need 9-10 hours each night. Too little sleep can lead to problems with concentration, fatigue, and mood swings.

Children are more likely to do healthy behaviors if the whole family takes part (and maybe everyone else will feel better too).

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### **BUILDING SOCIAL SKILLS**

Helping children learn how to get along with others, be able to talk about their feelings without having to act out (like hitting someone when they are mad) and being able to solve problems with others.

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### **BUILDING COPING SKILLS**

Teaching children about effective ways to cope is important.

- Name and talk about their feelings
- Help them calm down by taking deep, slow breaths
- Discuss different ways to solve a problem and let the child come up with ideas
- Help identify healthy ways to deal with anger (draw pictures, play with clay, use words, run around outside)

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### **BUILDING A “VILLAGE OF SUPPORT”**

Having family, friends and/or neighbors who support, help and listen to children.

It does “take a village” and parents often need help. Try to identify others you can trust to support your child when you can’t be there or need a break.

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### **LEARNING ABOUT PARENTING AND HOW CHILDREN GROW:**

Understanding how parents can help their children grow in a healthy way, and what to expect from children as they grow. Children don’t come with a manual, but there is a lot of support out there for learning more (classes, books, teachers, doctors).

#### **RESOURCES**

Parent Help 123 [www.parenthelp123.org](http://www.parenthelp123.org) 1-800-322-2588

Resilience Trumps ACEs [www.resiliencetrumpsaces.org](http://www.resiliencetrumpsaces.org)

Washington Information Network [www.win211.org](http://www.win211.org) 1-877-211-WASH (9274)

CDC Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study [www.cdc.gov/ace/about.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ace/about.htm)

Adapted from 123 Care: A Trauma-Sensitive Toolkit for Caregivers of Children (Spokane Regional Health District, 2015). <https://www.acesconnection.com/g/Parenting-with-ACEs/clip/123-a-trauma-sensitive-toolkit-for-caregivers-of-children-spokane-regional-health-district-2015>