

Discovering Positive Childhood Experiences

Developed by
the Navarro
County Early
Childhood
Coalition



NAVARRO COUNTY
Early Childhood Coalition
Healthy - Connected - Ready Kids



What are Positive Childhood Experiences?

In the early 1990s, the CDC put together a study to track the effects of childhood trauma on health throughout the lifespan called the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE Study). They found ACEs were a prime factor of past, current and future health behaviors, social problems, and early death in the study population. Examples include an increase in the rates of obesity, drug abuse, smoking, chronic depression, and attempted suicide.

Taken from CPTSDFoundation.org

In 2019, researchers identified positive childhood experiences that are connected to improved mental health and social connectedness for adults. The study showed that the more positive childhood experiences you have, the less likely you are to suffer from lifelong consequences of adverse childhood experiences. Even if your child has not experienced any or many ACEs, PCEs can help a child build resiliency.

Taken from Pinetree Institute, CPTSDFoundation.org, and Lindsay Braman

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Neglect
- Domestic Violence
- Parental Substance Abuse
- Household Mental Illness
- Incarcerated Family Member
- Parental Separation/Divorce

In this guide, you will learn about the Positive Childhood Experiences that shape mental health in adults and learn strategies for implementing these experiences in your home and family.



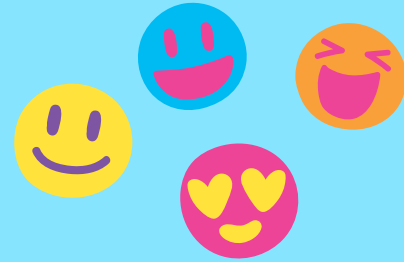
BETHELL C, JONES J, GOMBOJAV N, LINKENBACH J, SEGE R. POSITIVE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND ADULT MENTAL AND RELATIONAL HEALTH IN A STATEWIDE SAMPLE: ASSOCIATIONS ACROSS ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES LEVELS. JAMA PEDIATR. 2019;173(11):E193007. DOI:10.1001/JAMAPEDIATRICS.2019.3007
VISUALLY TRANSLATED BY @LINDSAYBRAMAN

Take the ACEs quiz [here](#)
Take the PCEs quiz [here](#)

1

The ability to talk to your family about feelings

All feelings (good and bad) have a place in our lives. Parents can grow their child's resilience by modeling to their child how to express their feelings and by welcoming a child to share their feelings. Sharing emotions also promotes emotional intelligence in growing minds by identifying and labeling their feelings.



Resources for support:

- [Ms. Rachel/Songs for Littles on Youtube](#)
- [happierhuman.com](#)
- [zonesofregulation.com](#) (for children with ADHD and autism)
- A Little Spot of Emotions by [Diane Alber](#)
- Today I Feel Silly and Other Moods that Make My Day by [Jamie Lee Curtis](#)



Think about this!

- How did your parent talk to you about feelings? What did you learn from them about sharing feelings, both good and bad?
- Ask your child: When you have big feelings, who do you feel comfortable sharing them with?

2

Feeling that family is supportive in difficult times

When a difficult experience occurs in a child's life, a parent offers support through presence and expresses support through words. When a parent practices "being with" a child, the child can overcome that difficult or potentially traumatic event with ease. Some things a parent can do is to practice self-care as a family like going for a walk together. Talking openly about difficult times and coming up with healthy ways to cope make families stronger.



Resources:

- [Circle of Security Parenting](#), "Being with and Shark Music"
- Community programs: [Growing Together](#), [Hope Center](#), [Voice](#)



Think about this!

- How did your parents help you feel supported during difficult times in your childhood?
- Ask your child: What do you want mom/dad/parent to do for you when times are hard?

3 Enjoyment and participation in community traditions

Traditions generally allow us to feel part of a greater whole. This can help a child feel connected, have a greater sense of community, and promote life-long (positive) memories. Whether its a festival, a community center, or holiday events, actively engaging in community traditions helps kids know they are part of a larger more vibrant family.

Resources:
[Corsicana Main Street](#)
[Little Free Libraries](#)

Sign up for [Bright By Text messages](#) to get info on free local events and resources!

Tip: Choose one weekend a month to do a free local event or activity. Encourage everyone in the family to join!

FREE

Think about this!

- What community traditions did you participate in as a child? Is there anything you wished you would have participated in?
- Ask your child: What types of activities do you want to do in our city/town? How often would you like to do them?

4

Feeling of belonging in school

Tip: Look at your child's school's website or yearbook and make a list of what activities, sports, or clubs might interest them. Pick one activity or group they can be involved in weekly and one they can be in monthly!

Going to school (especially in older grades) can be a challenging experience, but a sense of belonging can be found in many places. Feeling connected and having positive relationships with peers is key to feeling like kids belong. Some ideas for helping kids feel like they belong include attending local sporting events, being apart of extracurricular activities, and providing a safe space at home for your children and their friends to be together.

Think about this!

- Did you feel a sense of belonging in your school growing up? Why or why not?
- Ask your child: Who are your favorite people at your school? Where do you fit in best at school?

5

Feeling of being supported by friends

A parent can model what it looks like to have healthy, supportive relationships with friends, and encourage their children to find the same qualities in the friends they choose. Building friendships can help children build community with others. Parental involvement is essential to make sure children are flourishing in their friendships.



Resource:
[Check out these 12 kids books about making and keeping friends.](#)

Think about this!

- What was your experience making friends in school? What impact did those friendships make on your life?
- Ask your child: Do you feel like your friends support you? Why or why not? How do they support you as a friend?

6

Having at least two non-parent adults who genuinely care

While it is vital for a child to feel supported by their family, it is also essential that they have supportive adults outside the home. Parents may feel hesitant or fearful to support these relationships for their child, but a caring neighbor, teacher, or other trusted adult can be a positive influence on your child. It's important that children have another source to turn to in difficult times outside of the home.

Who is a safe adult?

A safe adult for your child to depend on can provide physical, emotional, or social support. These adults know appropriate boundaries, and will communicate with the parent about the time they spend together. Ask your child if they can identify any teachers, neighbors, or mentors in their life that they think fit this criteria. Then have a conversation about what their role is in the child's life.

Think about this!

- Can you identify two adults who were not your parents who made an impact on you growing up? What did those adults mean to you?
- Ask your child: What adults besides mom/dad/parent do you trust and feel like care about you? How do you know they care about you?



7

Feeling protected and safe at home by an adult

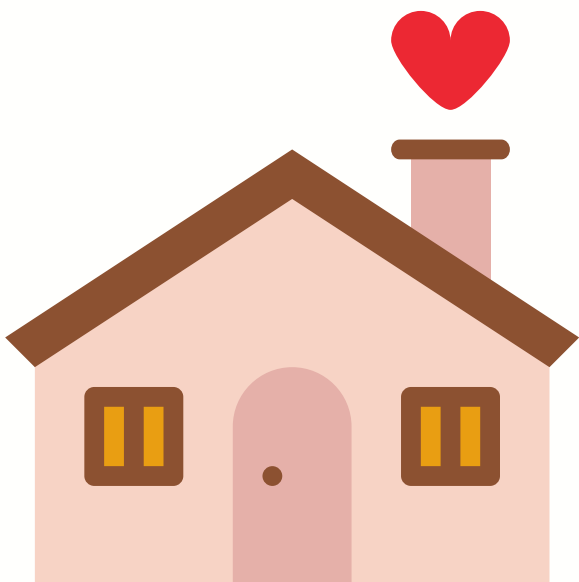
Feeling safe and protected at home by an adult can look like many different things. It can be physically caring for your child, protecting them from actual danger, or even minimizing overwhelming experiences. Whatever it may be, it is crucial that a child feels that the parent(s) in their life are available and doing what they can to keep the child safe and healthy.

Here's a few things you can do with your child at home to safety plan:

- Create an emergency kit and emergency plan
- Memorizing important phone numbers
- Baby proofing home
- Making sure doors can be locked
- Making sure blinds are closed at night
- Creating a safe word with your child
- Teaching children safety around pets and animals

Think about this!

- How did your parents make you feel safe in your home growing up? What did feeling safe mean to you?
- Ask your child: What makes you feel safe in our home? What would make you feel safer?



Thank you for learning about Positive Childhood Experiences with us! We hope this guide will help you and your family build resiliency with your child. We often focus on preventing negative experiences but we don't focus enough on building positive experiences into our lives. We can't change what has happened, but we can provide new uplifting experiences for our children that will protect their future. To learn more about the Navarro County Early Childhood Coalition and our initiatives and events visit www.navarrocountyearly.org. Need parenting support? The Growing Together program can help! Call us at 903-229-4853

To learn more about Positive Childhood Experiences you can visit [Lindsay Braman's Illustrated guide to PCEs](#) that was referenced and quoted in this guide.

Viewing this in print? Scan this QR code to check out all of the [underlined resources!](#)

