

# How to increase resiliency in children overcoming Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

**Link:** <https://health.choc.org/handout/how-to-increase-resiliency-in-children-overcoming-adverse-childhood-experiences-aces/>

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**There are many ways to reduce the effect of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in children by instilling 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.**

One way of reducing the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in children is by instilling 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.

## **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.

## **Building nurturing relationships**

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

## **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. For example, you can dedicate 5 minutes a day for special play time, where all electronics are silenced, and your sole focus is playing and spending time with your child. Research has found that just those 5 minutes can help enhance the parent-child relationship.

## **Meeting basic needs**

The California Surgeon General recommends the following [seven stress-busting strategies](https://osg.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/266/2022/05/Caregivers-and-Kids_California-Surgeon-General_Stress-Busting-Playbook.pdf) ([https://osg.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/266/2022/05/Caregivers-and-Kids\\_California-Surgeon-General\\_Stress-Busting-Playbook.pdf](https://osg.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/266/2022/05/Caregivers-and-Kids_California-Surgeon-General_Stress-Busting-Playbook.pdf)) for kids to help mitigate toxic stress in their bodies

- **Quality sleep:** 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.

- **Balanced nutrition:** Ensure that your child is getting proper nutrition to combat stress with meals that include fruits, vegetables, and foods rich in omega-3-fatty acids (i.e., fish, nuts, fiber)
- **Physical activity:** 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.
- **Mindfulness practices:** Practice the daily dozen at home – 12 minutes of meditation, yoga, prayer, or guided imagery on a daily basis. There are some great apps that include specialty programs for children and teens or go on a mindful walk around the neighborhood where you point out things you see, hear, and feel all around you.
- **Experiencing nature:** Spending time in nature and being active outside has been found to help combat toxic stress. This can include hiking, watching the sunrise, or going on a picnic.
- **Mental healthcare:** Taking care of our mental health can include seeing a provider, seeking social support, or minimizing stressors or triggers (i.e., media content that may be upsetting).
- **Supportive relationships:** 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.

## 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.

## Building coping skills

Teaching children about [effective ways to cope](https://www.choc.org/mental-health/mental-health-video-library/) (<https://www.choc.org/mental-health/mental-health-video-library/>) 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 their feeling words, run around outside)

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# Crisis Resources

If your child expresses thoughts of wanting to harm themselves or others, call **9-1-1** or visit the nearest emergency department.

## 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:

**Call 9-8-8**

**Text any message to 9-8-8**

**Chat online at [988lifeline.org/chat](https://988lifeline.org/chat)**

## Crisis Text Line:

**Text “HOME” to 741741**

## Resources

### CDC Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)

[www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces) (<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html>)

## Childhood trauma TED talk by Dr. Nadine Burke Harris

[www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)

([https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine\\_burke\\_harris\\_how\\_childhood\\_trauma\\_affects\\_health\\_across\\_a\\_lifetime](https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine_burke_harris_how_childhood_trauma_affects_health_across_a_lifetime))

## ACES 101

[acestoohigh.com/aces-101](http://acestoohigh.com/aces-101) (<http://acestoohigh.com/aces-101>)

## The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

[www.nctsn.org](http://www.nctsn.org) (<https://www.nctsn.org/>)

**Center for Youth Wellness** [centerforyouthwellness.org](http://centerforyouthwellness.org) (<https://centerforyouthwellness.org/>)

## ACES AWARE

[www.acesaware.org](http://www.acesaware.org) (<https://www.acesaware.org/>)

## Learn more about CHOC's pediatric mental health services

At CHOC, we specialize in providing a full spectrum of pediatric mental healthcare, including inpatient, intensive outpatient and outpatient program services.

Get resources (<https://www.choc.org/programs-services/mental-health/>)

## Get 24/7 advice from CHOC

Call our free nurse helpline at 1-844-GET-CHOC (tel:18444382462)

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✓ **The guidance on this page has been clinically reviewed by CHOC pediatric experts.**

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