

Prenatal Home-Visitation for Resilient Iowa

ACEs:

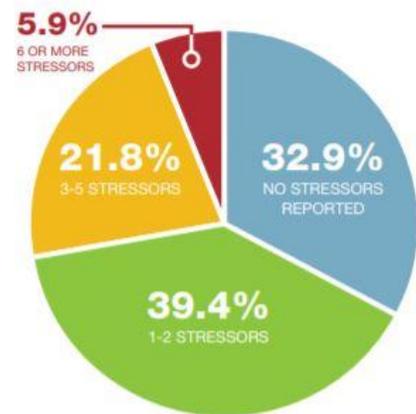
Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events that can dramatically upset a child's sense of safety and well-being.

STARTING AT THE BEGINNING: PRENATAL FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs, are defined as incidents that dramatically upset a child's ability to thrive. In Iowa, 56% of adults report experiencing at least one the following before age 18: physical, sexual and emotional abuse and household stressors such as divorce, mental illness, substance abuse, incarceration and domestic violence. The long-term impact on health and well-being of Iowa adults mirrors national research, finding a dose-response relationship between the number of ACEs and increase risk for a variety of negative health, social and life outcomes. For example, Iowa adults with 4 or more ACEs are 6 times as likely to have depression and more than twice as likely to have a heart attack as those who report no ACEs.

The intergenerational impact of this trauma is well documented. Recent and emerging research studies show that not only are individuals' lives impacted by early experiences of adversity, this effect can span across generations. "Parent ACEs have been associated with low birth weight and shorter gestational age, maladaptive socioemotional symptoms at age 6 months, and poor physical and emotional health at 18 months." Our experiences may be woven into our children's, and even our grandchildren's, genetic code, as evidenced in the study of epigenetics.

Total stressors reported by Iowa mothers in the 12 months before giving birth



67%

of new mothers reported **at least one stressor** in the 12 months before giving birth

If we are going to reduce trauma we need to start at the beginning. The VERY beginning.

LEGISLATIVE REQUESTS

- Continue state investment into home-visiting programs as a primary prevention and early intervention strategy for childhood trauma and family stress.
- Increase access to prenatal and maternal health home-visiting programs.





Supporting Expecting Families is Critical

- Children from birth to one year old are **twice as likely** to suffer abuse than any other one-year age cohort.
- **Sixty-seven percent of Iowa mothers** reported at least one stressor in the 12 months before giving birth.
- **Twenty-seven percent of Iowa mothers** reported sometimes, often or always feeling depressed since the giving birth.
- **Parent ACEs have been associated with low birth weight and shorter gestational age**, maladaptive socioemotional symptoms at age 6 months, and poor physical and emotional health at 18 months
- Home-visiting programs **reduce the risk** of child abuse or neglect, substance abuse, and interpersonal violence and increase community and social supports for families.
- Iowa has strong and effective home-visitation programs, with **88% of families having improved or maintained family functioning**.
- Approximately 33% of Iowa families involved in home-visitation were enrolled prenatally.

References

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- Scott Advocacy Consulting. *Reducing ACEs through Prenatal Strategies*. 2018
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For more information, please visit www.IowaAces360.org

