



Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Promoting Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)

Child Abuse Prevention Month Webinar

Wednesday, April 1, 2026

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Learning Objectives

- **Describe the California Department of Public Health child adversity prevention efforts**
- **Support efforts to confidently navigate KidsData dashboards**

Webinar Presenters



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Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

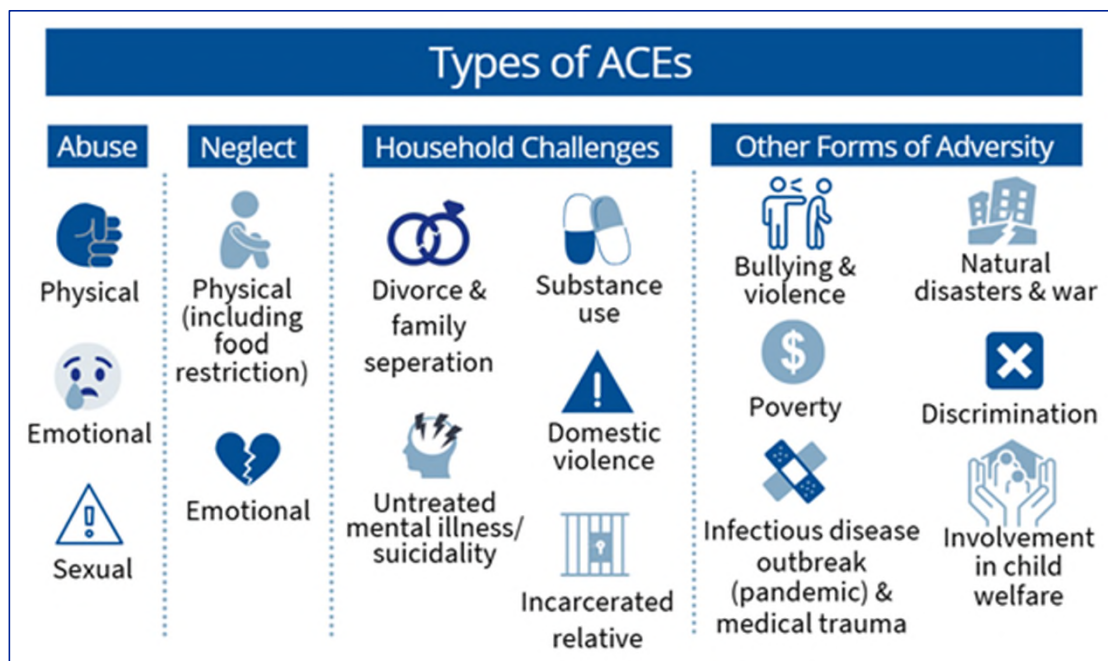


Figure 1: Types of ACEs and ACE categories. Image adapted from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9}

Other forms of Adversity:

- Witnessing violence
- Experiencing discrimination
- Systemic racism
- Feeling unsafe outside the home
- Being bullied
- Experiences living in poverty
- Experiencing contact/involvement with the Child Welfare system

Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)

PCEs are experiences that engage the child, a caregiver, and the child-caregiver relationship. PCEs are critical for fostering resilience and better health outcomes^{10,11,12,13}

- Felt able to talk to family about feelings
- Felt their family stood by them during difficult times
- Enjoyed participating in community traditions
- Felt a sense of belonging in high school
- Felt supported by friends
- Had at least two non-parent adults who took genuine interest in them
- Felt safe and protected by an adult in their home

Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)

The Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences (HOPE) Framework:^{10,11}

Describing the four key types of PCEs as The Four Building Blocks of HOPE^{10,11}

- Relationships
- Environments
- Engagement
- Emotional Growth



Figure 1: The Four Building Blocks of the HOPE Framework.^{10,11}

Strategies that Prevent and Reduce ACEs

ACE Prevention Strategies

- Implement existing state laws that prevent and reduce firearm violence (e.g., gun violence restraining orders)^{14,15,16,17}
- Implement existing state laws that support and/or enforce the safe storage of firearms and medication^{18,19,20}
- Expand access to school-based behavioral health professionals, culturally responsive care services, and mobile crisis teams to ensure reliable connections for youth to trusted adults and behavioral health services^{21,22}
- Implement existing state laws that strengthen economic support for children and families (e.g., access to VITA sites, CalEITC, YCTC, CTC paid family leave)^{23,24}

Strategies that Promoting PCEs

PCE Promotion Strategies

- Establishing Youth Coalitions and create leadership opportunities^{25,26}
- Social-Emotional Learning and School Climate Improvement Programs^{27,28,29}
- Strengthen collaboration between schools, families, and community-based organizations that build opportunities for youth engagement, youth mentorship, and linkage to trusted adults to help foster a sense of connection, belonging, and support across settings³⁰
- Community investment in safe and inclusive spaces such as youth centers, parks, libraries, and after-school programs that encourage exploration, connection, and consistent adult support^{31,32,33}

Child Adversity Prevention Programs

All Children Thrive, California (ACT)

California Child Fatality Surveillance System
(CCFSS)

Essentials for Childhood (EfC) Initiative

Child Adversity Prevention Programs

Local Approach – All Children Thrive, California (ACT)

Engages communities to:

- Build community coalitions
- Identify problems and solutions to transform policy and systems that shape child wellbeing
- Bring together residents, youth, city officials, and community leaders who know their cities best to co-design solutions to create policy, system, and environmental change that prevents childhood adversity
 - ACT 2.0 funded 18 coalitions across California
 - ACT 3.0 funded 13 coalitions across California



Child Adversity Prevention Programs

Statewide approach – California Child Fatality Surveillance System (CCFSS)

- Tracks data on child fatalities that occur in California. CDPH/IVPB offers limited reimbursement to counties that voluntarily submit child fatality data into the CCFSS
- Data collected via the CCFSS *could* guide and inform prevention strategies to reduce and prevent child fatality in California
- Data collected by the CCFSS includes, but is not limited to:
 - Child information
 - Parent/Primary caregiver information
 - Official Manner & Primary Cause of Death
 - Case Investigation Details and Findings
 - Services Provided to Family and Community

Child Adversity Prevention Programs

Statewide approach – California Essentials for Childhood (EfC) Initiative

- Led in partnership by the CDPH/IVPB, CDSS/OCAP, and the EfC Initiative Steering Committee
- The EfC Initiative Steering Committee, comprised of PACEs subject matter experts, individuals who work on behalf of priority populations, and/or those with lived experiences, guides the EfC Initiative to:
 - Address ACEs as a public health issue
 - Raise awareness and commitment to promoting safe, stable, nurturing relationships, environments, and PCEs
 - Inform the implementation of primary prevention strategies to promote social norms that protect against violence and adversity
 - Build and strengthen data infrastructure to create policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) change across California

KidsData

Partnership with EfC Initiative

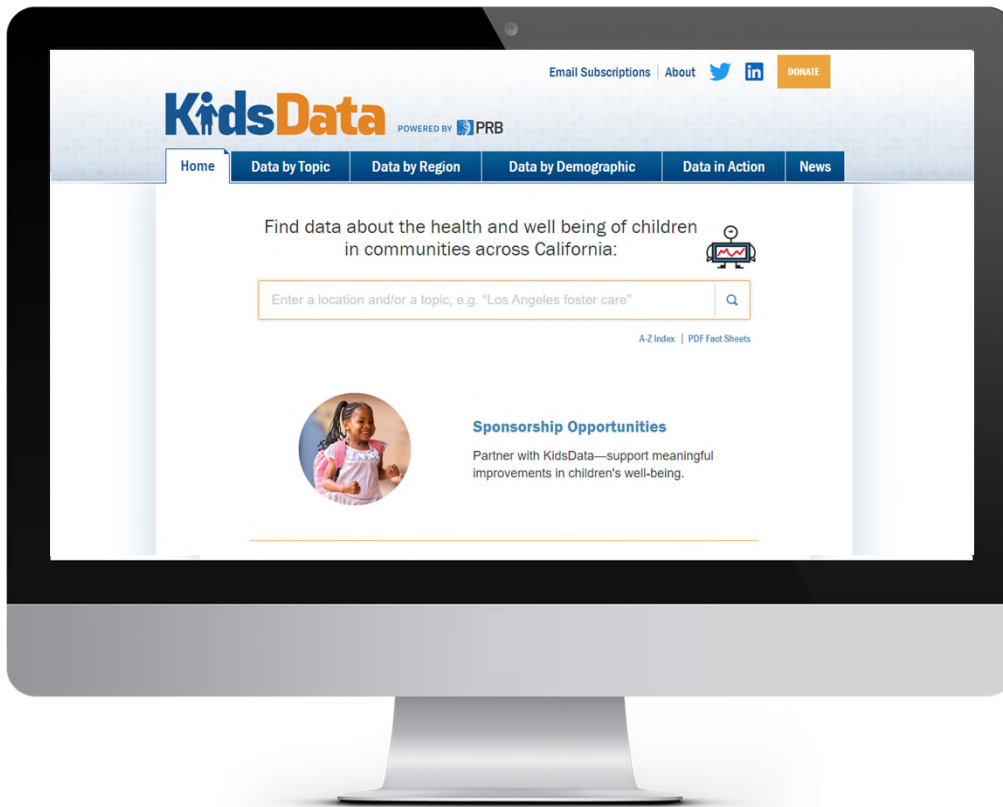
What Is KidsData?

What is KidsData.org?



KidsData.org, a program of Population Reference Bureau (PRB), promotes the health and well-being of children in California by providing a **free** and **easy-to-use** resource that offers **high quality**, wide ranging, **local** data to those who work on behalf of children.

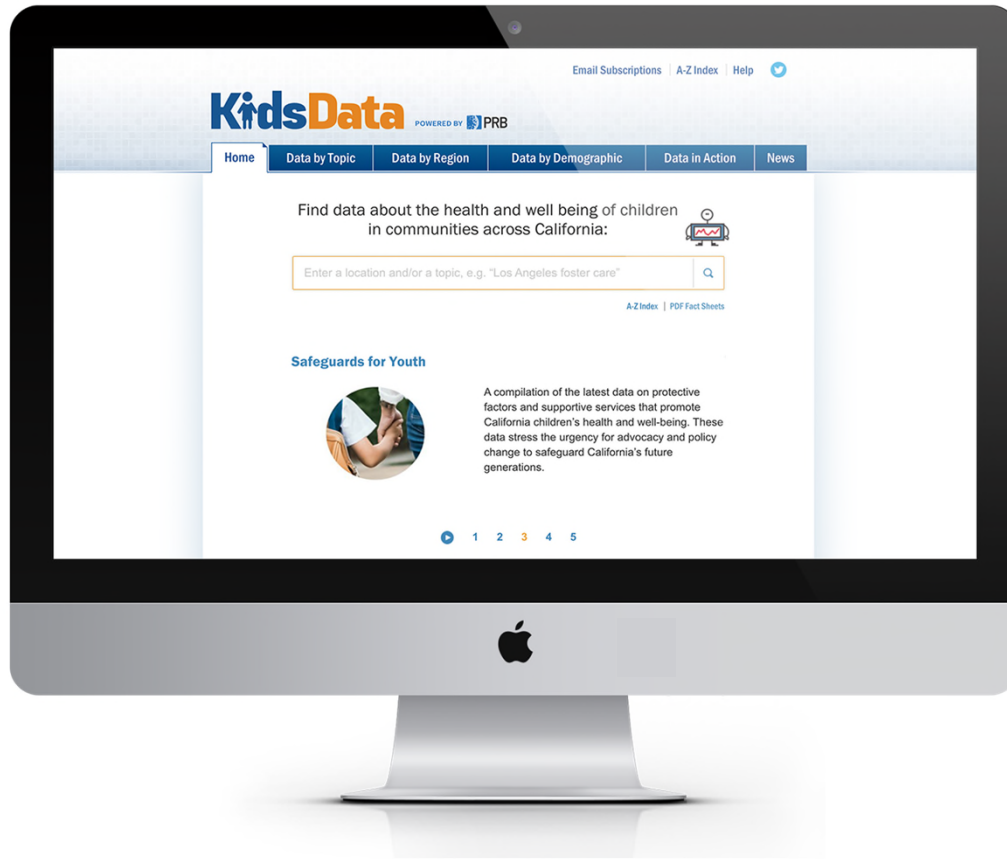
What is KidsData.org?



Easily find, customize, and use data on more than 1,000 measures of well-being.

- Geography: Counties, cities, school districts, legislative districts.
- Disaggregation: Age, gender, income, race/ethnicity, special health care needs status, sexual orientation, and more.

Accessing Data on KidsData.org: Live Demonstration



Where can you get the data?
KidsData.org

PACE Resources

AUGUST 2022

Reimagining Child Wellbeing: Local Policy Strategies to Prevent and Reduce Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in California's Communities





The Impact of Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) on Behavioral Health Outcomes



Purpose

The Impact of Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) on Behavioral Health Outcomes is a resource developed to support and educate violence prevention partners, and those who work within child-serving systems, about community-led efforts to adopt and implement evidence-based strategies that can prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), promote PCEs, and improve the lives of California's children, families, and communities.

Background

ACEs are potentially traumatic events, such as abuse, neglect, or household dysfunction.¹ ACEs have been shown to put children at risk for delays in social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development lasting into adulthood.¹ PCEs, such as supportive relationships and safe environments, have been shown to enhance resilience and mental well-being, helping to buffer the negative effects of ACEs.^{2,3}

ACEs and PCEs shape emotional regulation, brain development, and health outcomes. Experiencing four or more ACEs increases the risk of mental health challenges in adulthood, while PCEs are critical for fostering resilience and better behavioral health outcomes.^{4,5} There are four types of PCEs that support lifelong psychological well-being and encourage children to thrive and grow into resilient adults. The Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences (HOPE) Framework describes these four key types of PCEs - Relationships, Environments, Engagement, and Emotional Growth - as the Four Building Blocks of HOPE. (Figure 1).^{4,6} The Four Building Blocks of HOPE can be used by organizations, communities, and individuals as an accessible and actionable framework when undertaking policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) change efforts.⁷



Figure 1: The Four Building Blocks of the HOPE Framework^{4,7}

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Thank you!

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