About the Data – Adverse Childhood Experiences

Indicator Description

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) indicator is an estimate of the percentage of children aged 0 to 17 who had ever experienced one or more ACEs in the categories of child abuse, neglect, or household challenges.

Data Sources

Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. [The National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH)](), 2016-2020. Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

Data Analysis

The ACEs indicator is the estimated percentage of children aged 0-17 who, based on parental report, had ever experienced at least one of the following items:

- parent or guardian divorced or separated
- parent or guardian died
- parent or guardian served time in jail
- saw or heard parents or adults slap, hit, kick punch one another in the home
- was a victim of violence or witnessed violence in their neighborhood
- lived with anyone who was mentally ill, suicidal, or severely depressed
- lived with anyone who had a problem with alcohol or drugs
- treated or judged unfairly due to race/ethnicity
- lived in a household in which it was hard to cover basics on the family's income 'somewhat often' or 'very often'

The number of children who experienced ACEs is an estimate based on state-level data weighted to represent non-institutionalized children aged 0-17 years. These data were stratified by sex, age, household income, and family resilience using two-year aggregated data. The 95% confidence interval (CI) presented in the tooltips indicates there is a 95% chance that the range contains the true prevalence or rate in the population.

Denominators include the estimated number of all children aged 0-17 residing in California at the time of the survey. See Category and Subcategory Definitions below for additional inclusion/exclusion criteria.

Data Annotation and Suppression

Rates or percentages should be interpreted with caution if 1) the absolute CI width is greater than 20% of the magnitude of the estimate, 2) the relative CI width is greater than 120% (1.2 times the magnitude of the estimate), or 3) the CI is inestimable due to no sample variance (estimate is exactly 0% or 100%).

In accordance with NSCH guidelines, data are not shown if the unweighted denominator is less than 30.

Category and Subcategory Definitions

Age: Child's age reported by the parent or caregiver at the time of the survey.

Household income: Ratio of the total parent- or caregiver-reported annual family income to the family poverty threshold established by the U.S. Census Bureau. Poverty thresholds are based on the number and age of adults and the number of children under age 18 in a family unit. Individuals in a family whose annual combined income, before taxes, is less than the poverty threshold for the family's size and composition are defined as living in poverty. Missing values were imputed. Poverty ratios are grouped into the following categories: 0-99%, 100-199%, 200-399%, and 400% or more of poverty (or the family poverty threshold). More information is available from: How the U.S. Census Bureau measures poverty

Family resilience: Based on responses to four survey items: When your family faces problems, how often are you likely to do each of the following? 1) Talk together about what to do; 2) Work together to solve our problems; 3) Know we have strengths to draw on; 4) Stay hopeful even in difficult times. For a family to qualify as demonstrating resilience (resilient family), a response of either "all of the time" or "most of the time" on all four items is required.

Sex: Parent or caregiver was asked to indicate whether the child was male or female. Missing values were imputed.

Suggested Citation

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