

Turning the Tide *for* Traumatized Children

Almost half of U.S. children — about 35 million — have suffered one or more types of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and our youngest children are at especially high risk.

Over 1 in 4

of all confirmed cases of child abuse and neglect involve children under age three, and victimization is most common for children under a year.



Common types of ACEs experienced by young children



- Accidental injuries: drowning, falls, choking and poisoning
- Natural disasters
- Violence/Dramatic loss
- Discrimination/Forced displacement

ACEs make a devastating impact because *developing brains* are highly susceptible to toxic stress.



The more ACEs a child suffers the more devastating the impact:



- 12x** More likely to attempt suicide
- 7x** More likely to become an alcoholic
- 5x** More likely to be poor
- 3x** More likely to become pregnant as a teen
- 3x** More likely to be expelled from school
- 2x** More likely to be at risk of heart disease and cancer

Examples of challenging behaviors that result from toxic stress:

- Suffer anxiety in unfamiliar situations
- Difficult to soothe
- Aggressive or impulsive
- Prone to bedwetting
- Become withdrawn
- Tend to lose recently acquired skills



For a traumatized child to bounce back, they need *at least one adult* who gives them affection, a sense of belonging and support.



Children who attend quality early learning programs are

75% less likely to...

- Drop out of high school
- Be arrested for violent crimes
- Become teen parents
- Be unemployed compared to their peers who did not attend preschool

In a quality early learning program, children...



Feel safe and secure



Build strong bonds with the early educator



Receive positive attention and guidance

Consider these tips when working with traumatized children:



Establish a Daily Routine

A daily routine provides predictability, that can be calming.



Lead with Empathy

Put yourself in a child's shoes and try not to judge the trauma.



Concentrate on Support

You don't need to know exactly what caused the trauma to be able to help.



Provide Encouragement

Help children feel they're good at something and can influence the world.



Help Build Self-Regulation

Schedule regular brain breaks to help children stay focused.



See What You Can Do To Help

Ask children directly what you can do to help them make it through the day.

Early educators who create caring environments can make *a concrete difference* in the lives of the young children they serve.

