WHY DOES QUALITY MATTER?

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

ACEs are stressful or traumatic experiences that affect the neurobiological and psychosocial capacity of children. ACEs cover a range of experiences that occur up to 18:

- **Abuse**: Physical, Emotional, Neglect
- **Neglect**: Physical, Emotional
- **Household Dysfunction**: Mental illness, Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse, Incarcerated Relative, Divorce or Separation.

ACES IN NEBRASKA

Prevalence estimates of ACE count in 1.37 million Nebraska adults, 2010 and 2011

Prevalence of ACE count in 2010 and 2011

0.00 1-2 3-4 5+ ACE Count

Proportion of persons reporting ACE

% 2010 % 2011


ACES IN NEBRASKA

Prevalence estimates of individual ACEs in 1.37 million Nebraska adults, 2010 and 2011

Prevalence of individual ACEs by year

Individual ACE

% 2010 % 2011


ACES LEAD TO POOR OUTCOMES.....

The Original 1995-1997 ACE Study found ACEs have a direct relationship to adult health. Certain ACEs are significant risk factors for:

- Adolescent or Unintended Pregnancy
- Alcohol Abuse
- Chronic Diseases
- Depression
- Early Initiation of Smoking or Sexual Activity
- Fetal death
- Health related quality
- Homelessness
- Illicit drug use
- Liver Disease
- Obesity
- Poverty
- Risk of sexual assault or intimate Partner Violence
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Youth school dropout
- Incarceration

..BUT THEY DON’T HAVE TO
Research indicates that: supportive, responsive relationships with caring adults as early in life as possible can prevent or reverse the damaging effects of the toxic stress response associated with ACEs.

WITH WHOM ARE CHILDREN SPENDING TIME?

QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT GIVES DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN A HEALTHIER FUTURE

“This tells us that adversity matters and it does affect adult health. But it also shows us that we can do something about it.”

James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in Economics, on finding that quality early childhood development substantially improves long-term health outcomes for disadvantaged children.
THE FIRST 5 YEARS

HOW DO I KNOW IT WHEN I SEE IT?

3 BASIC NEEDS OF ALL CHILDREN

• A quality program for children must provide for the three basic needs of all children:
  – Protection of health & safety
  – Positive relationships
    • Staff-child interactions, supervision, encouraging children to communicate and use language
  – Opportunities for stimulation and learning from experience:
    • Setting up the environment, room arrangement, access to materials, learning centers
WE KNOW WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

"The active ingredient in the environment that’s having an influence on development is the quality of the relationships that children have with the important people in their lives. That’s what it’s all about."
—Jack P. Shonkoff, M.D.
Center on the Developing Child Harvard University

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR COURT-INVOLVED CHILDREN?
CONSISTENCY & QUALITY ARE KEY

• If at all possible and if the environment is quality, child care should be consistent.

• Keeping a child in the same child care setting
  – helps decrease caregiver transition and loss,
  – allows for some consistency in the child’s life,
  – gives the child’s day predictability,
  – allows for historians of the child’s behavior, and
  – maintains a secure place for the child to build relationships.

QUESTIONS TO ASK?

• Does the caregiver handle conflicts without losing patience, shaming, or displaying anger?
• Is the environment sanitary and safe?
• Is the setting appealing with comfortable lighting and an acceptable noise level?
• Is their a daily schedule that uses visuals?
• Are the toys and materials organized?
• Does the caregiver know about the effects of trauma and stress on behavior?

SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION

• Take the child to visit the new child care program & spend some time with the new teacher if possible
• Talk to the child in advance about switching to a new program.
• Ask the child’s current teacher to call and talk with the child’s new teacher.
• Give the child a transitional object or picture to take with them from one setting to the next.
• Make a social story about the routine of the new child care.
COLLABORATION IS ESSENTIAL

• For some children, their child care setting was the most stimulating and appropriate care they have ever received.
• Child care providers can be part of the team that assists parents in understanding children’s needs and helping them to create a stable environment.
• The child care setting can help parents learn about appropriate development and stimulation for their child. They may not have any other way of learning these skills.

COLLABORATION IS ESSENTIAL

• Communicate clearly with child care providers about the trauma/loss that the child has or may be currently experiencing.
• Help the provider to understand the needs of this child and how they are different from the needs of a child who has been in consistent, safe, and nurturing care.
• Encourage childcare providers to ask for help with understanding a child’s behavior and/or mental health consultation to avoid expulsion of the child.

UNDERSTANDING SPECIAL ISSUES

• Transition for children from childcare to parenting time and back (may cause emotional dysregulation and challenging behaviors).
• Increased likelihood of developmental delays.
• Medical or developmental issues related to exposure to drugs/alcohol and/or toxic stress.
RESOURCES

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

• Answers 4 Families: The Right Place Childcare Finder
  → https://nrrs.ne.gov/therightplace/
• Nebraska Step up to Quality
  → http://www.education.ne.gov/StepUpToQuality/
• Nebraska Association for Infant Mental Health (NAIMH)
  → https://www.nebraskainsfantenmentalhealth.org/
• Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children (NeAEYC)
  → http://www.nebraskaeayc.org/
• Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood (NDE)
  → http://www.education.ne.gov/oec/elc.html
• DHHS, Child Care Licensing
  → http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/pages/crlChildCareLicensingIndex.aspx

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