



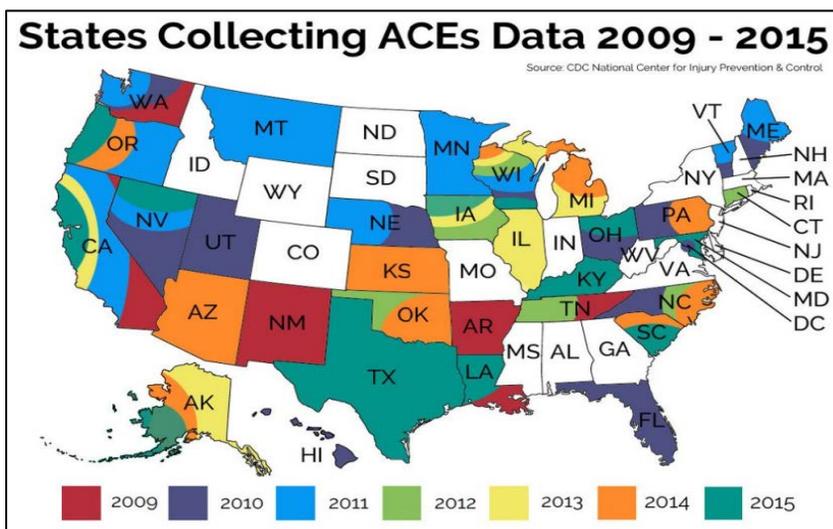
Adverse Childhood Experiences Overcoming ACEs in Alaska

What are Adverse Childhood Experiences - Adults

Adverse childhood experiences are events prior to age eighteen which have been shown to impose sometimes damaging levels of stress on children’s development. Changes in the brain structure and therefore functioning caused by the highest levels of stress are linked with an increase in the likelihood of many poor social, emotional and health outcomes long into adulthood.

Alaska is one of more than 30 states which has collected ACE data through an annual health survey (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey) conducted every year in all the states. Adults were asked about the events listed below which may have occurred prior to their 18th birthday.

- **Physical abuse**
- **Emotional abuse**
- **Sexual abuse**
- **Substance abuse in the household**
- **Incarcerated household member**
- **Mental illness in the household**
- **Witnessed domestic violence**
- **Parental separation/divorce**



**Deal the cards
to learn the facts**



Learn more at:
dhss.alaska.gov/abada/ace-ak/Pages/default.aspx





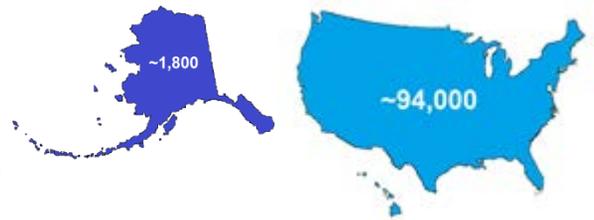
Adverse Childhood Experiences Overcoming ACEs in Alaska

What are Adverse Childhood Experiences - Children

Adverse childhood experiences are events prior to age eighteen which have been shown to impose sometimes damaging levels of stress on children's development. Changes in the brain structure and therefore functioning caused by the highest levels of stress are linked with an increase in the likelihood of many poor social, emotional and health outcomes beginning in childhood and lasting long into adulthood.

In 2011/2012 parents and guardians of more than 94,000 American children were asked about what a child in their household had experienced so far in their lives through the National Survey of Children's Health. The experiences listed below of children and youth from birth through age 17 were recorded. Included in this survey are the results for approximately 1,800 Alaskans.

- **Socioeconomic hardship**
- **Divorce/separation of parent**
- **Death of parent**
- **Parent served time in jail**
- **Witness to domestic violence**
- **Victim of neighborhood violence**
- **Lived with someone who was mentally ill or suicidal**
- **Lived with someone with alcohol/drug problem**
- **Treated or judged unfairly due to race/ethnicity**



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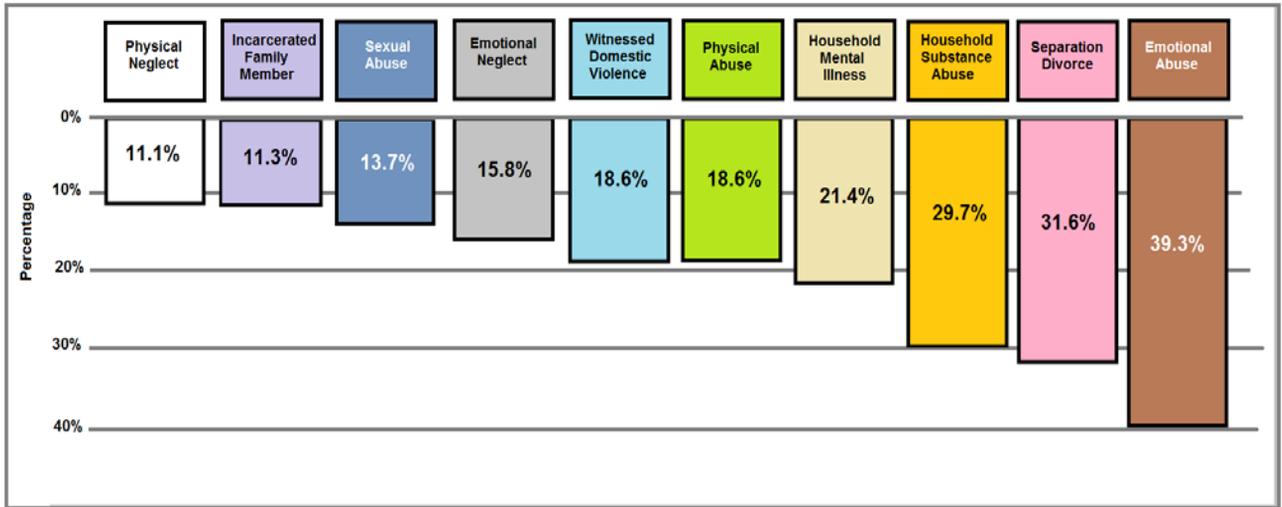
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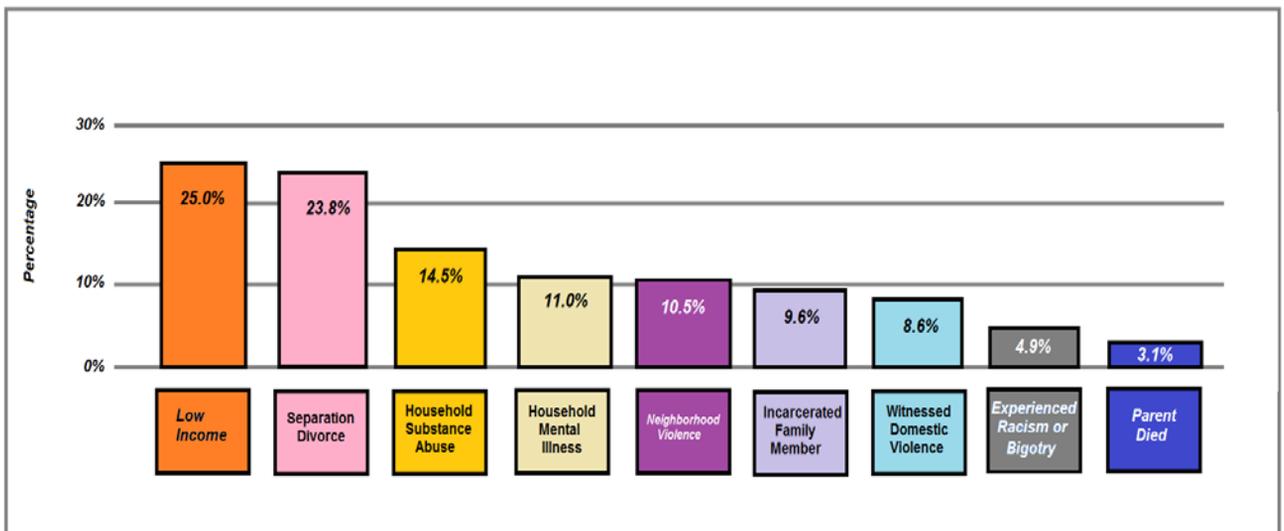
Adverse Childhood Experiences Overcoming ACEs in Alaska

Percentage of Alaskan Adults who Reported Adverse Childhood Experiences*



ACEs are Common Childhood Stressors

Percentage of Alaskan Children who Experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences**

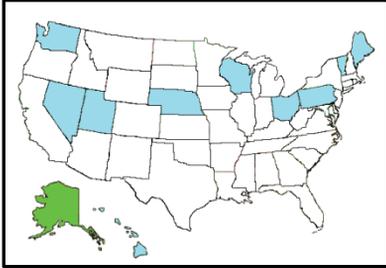


*Source: Alaska 2013-2015 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey, Division of Public Health, Section of Chronic Disease Prevention

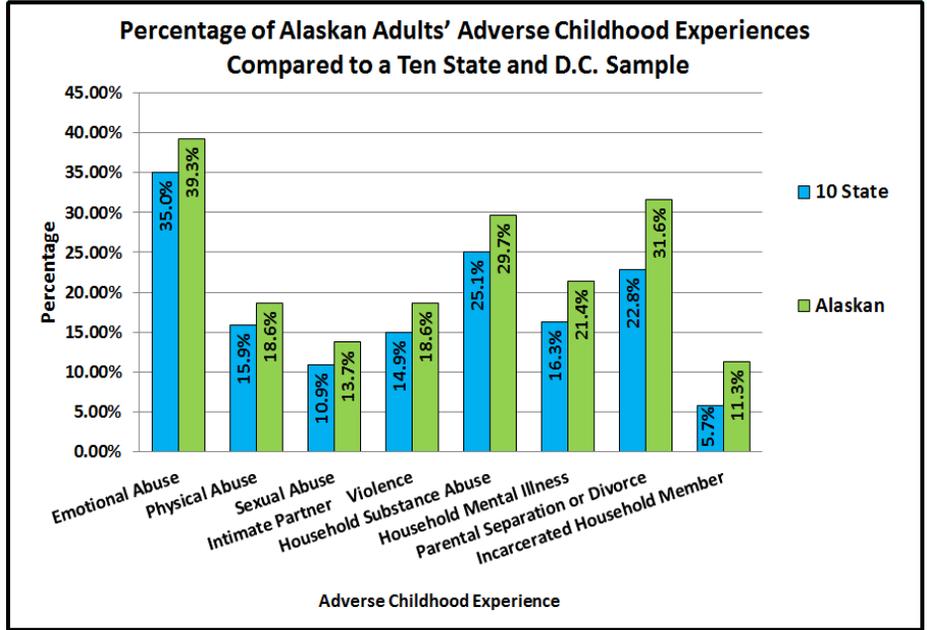
**Source: National Survey of Children's Health 2011/2012



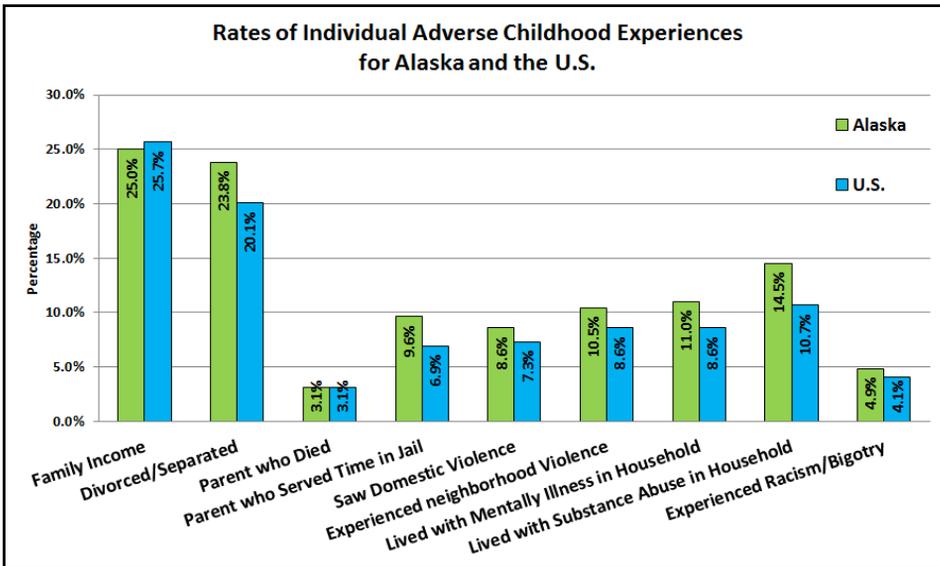
How Does Alaska Compare



There are no national rates of ACEs for adults but ten states and D.C represent the largest sample to which we can compare Alaska's results



Sources: 2013-2015 Alaska BRFSS, Section of Chronic Disease and Prevention, Alaska Division of Public Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey ACE Module Data, 2010*



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Source: Child and Adolescent Health Management Initiative (2012). "2011-2012 National Survey of Children's Health (2012), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration.

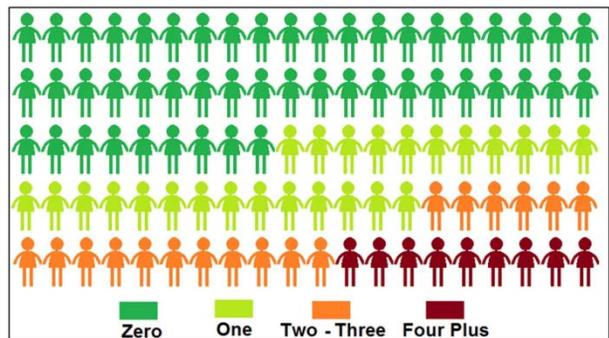




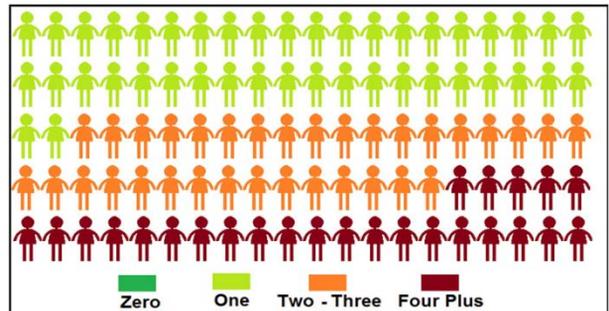
ACEs Often Occur in Groups

If an Alaskan child or youth has one ACE there is a very good chance that they will have another one too. Below are representative samples of 100 Alaskan children and youth by ACE score and samples of those who have experienced one particular ACE and their ACE scores.

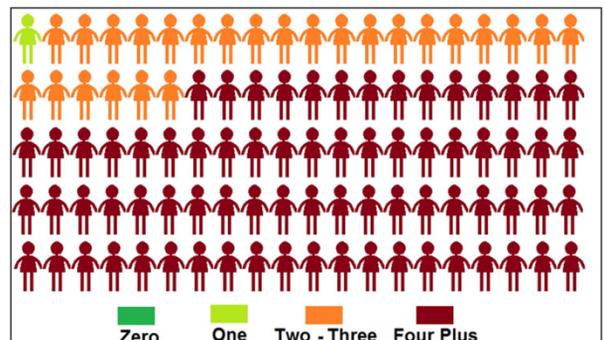
Alaska Children and Youth ACEs in the General Population



Alaskan Children and Youth ACEs for those who Experienced Low Income



Alaskan Children and Youth ACEs for those who Experienced Witnessing Domestic Violence



Source: Child and Adolescent Health Management Initiative (2012). "2011-2012 National Survey of Children's Health (2012), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration.





Most ACEs Occur - Early in Childhood

It is estimated that Alaskan 17 year olds, had on average, 1.3 ACEs as they were set to enter adulthood. **The age at which half of that ACE load was present was age three.**

This has deep significance when considering when and how to intervene and prevent ACEs.

Source: Child and Adolescent Health Management Initiative (2012). "2011-2012 National Survey of Children's Health (2012), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration. AMHB/ABADA analysis



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ACEs are Expensive

It is estimated that 40.6% of Alaskan Adults receiving Medicaid, do so, as a result of ACEs. **That represents nearly \$350,000,000 in annual costs.**

Source: Economic Costs of Adverse Childhood Experiences in Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Board and Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

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What Can be Done About ACEs?

Increase Awareness: In the last dozen years many Alaskans have learned about ACEs. Hundreds of presentations have been done around the state. Still, the majority of Alaskans have very little or no understanding of the profound social and financial cost ACEs cause. Many groups in Alaska are continuing to spread the word. Every week **new champions for this work** are taking it upon themselves to educate themselves and others about childhood trauma.

Treat Those Who Experienced ACEs: Alaska is fortunate to have the **Alaska Child Trauma Center** housed at Anchorage Community Mental Health, Inc. This world class center generously shares its expertise and partners with others around the state who work closely with adults, children and families who are struggling with trauma. It is important that we have a well qualified workforce which is trained in the latest methods of Trauma Informed Care and accessible to Alaskans. At present the demand outpaces the supply. The **Division of Behavioral Health** has been working to close that gap.

Continue to Monitor Important Data: Alaska is becoming smarter in its use of the wealth of data available to its policy makers. ACE data is important but so are child abuse and neglect statistics, school readiness reports and dozens of other key measures being captured. Policy makers need to improve their use of this information and data analyst need to improve everyone's access to quality information. The Division of Public Health's **AK-IBIS** link is making great strides toward making data available to all.



What Can be Done About ACEs?

Prevent ACEs: Prevention of ACEs is essential to avoid costly interventions after the fact. **Support for young families including pregnant women** has been shown to be very cost effective. ACEs are a **multigenerational problem** so treatment and awareness are long-term prevention models too.

Trauma Informed: The predominance of ACEs in Alaskans' lives and the day to day impact those experiences bring into the places where we live work, and play make being trauma informed essential. Whether it be in the workplace or schoolhouse **being trauma informed pays.**

Self-Regulation: Research shows that even if someone has experienced trauma, if they have the ability to stay **calm and focused** when facing a challenge, **follow through** with plans, and remain **curious** about the world - these skills are protective when combating the impacts associated with toxic levels of stress in childhood. These abilities are fostered through **supportive relationships** and are key to overcoming ACEs.

Self-Regulation



Curious

Reliable

Focused

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