

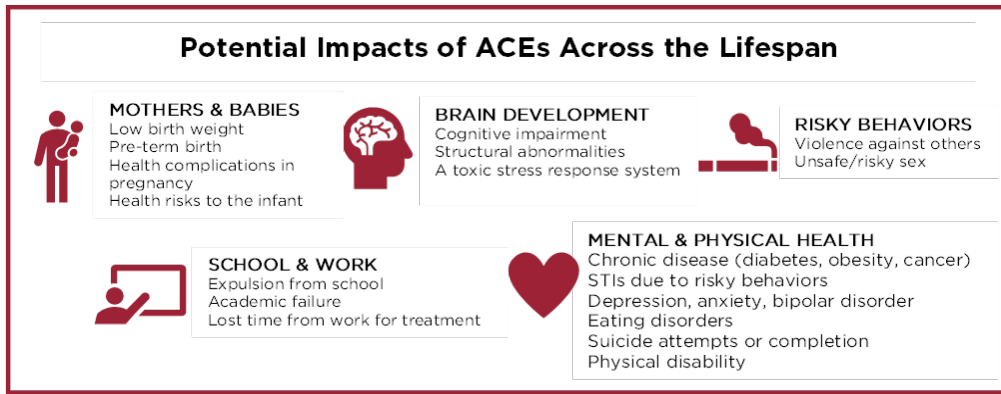


# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Early experiences create the foundation for healthy development; however, severe and chronic adversity can disrupt development and compromise a healthy future. Preventing ACEs can reduce healthcare costs, improve economic productivity, reduce crime, and boost educational achievement. Today’s children will build the Texas of tomorrow. Let’s stop asking them to pay for problems we have the power to prevent.

## The Effects of ACEs

ACEs are traumatic events like **child abuse/neglect** or having a caregiver with substance use, mental health, family violence, or incarceration challenges. These events can disrupt neurodevelopment and increase the likelihood of negative health, behavioral, educational, and economic outcomes including chronic disease.

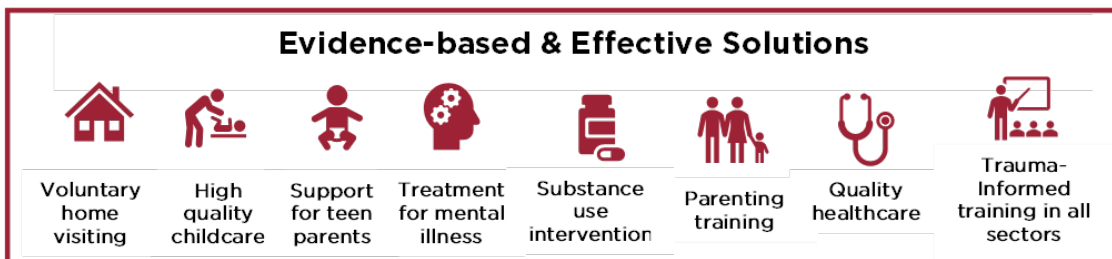


## The True Cost of ACEs

- ❖ Over 24% of Texas children will experience two or more ACEs before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday with potential consequences on biology, behavior, and health.
- ❖ In 2020, child maltreatment and neglect alone cost Texas an estimated \$1.75 billion in CPS expenditures, not including the additional cost associated with substance use and mental health treatment, incarceration, and domestic violence.
- ❖ Texas lacks a strategic, cross-agency and coordinated approach to preventing and mitigating the effects of childhood adversity. As a result, state investments may be ineffective, inefficient, and fail to address the root causes in a transformative way.

ACEs do not have to dictate the future of a child.

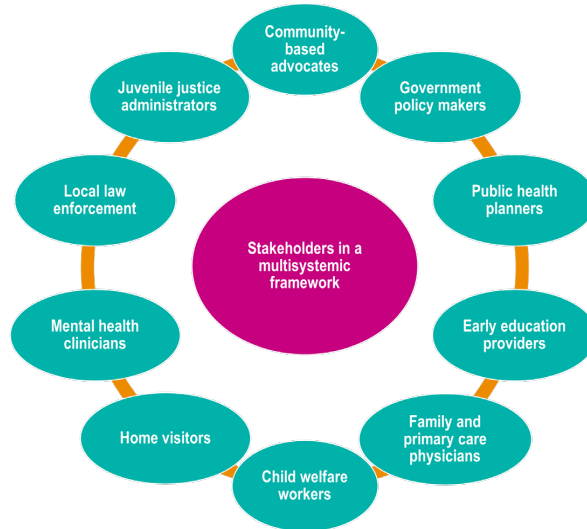
Prevention strategies can reduce the prevalence and impact of ACEs and increase a child’s opportunity for cognitive and emotional development, health, productivity, and economic wellbeing.



## Connect Texas Systems to Empower Safe Families

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the stress on families and children and isolated many from their support systems, which help ensure safe children and strong families. This stress and isolation have resulted in increased risk for child abuse neglect and rising rates of mental health challenges, substance use, and family violence.

A better Texas tomorrow will demand innovative solutions and strategic alignment across the multiple systems and stakeholders working in communities to ensure we are doing more of what works and less of what doesn't.



### Recommendations

Develop and implement statewide **strategies** to effectively and efficiently prevent **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**.



1. Support [HB3493](#) (Rep. Parker) and [SB1528](#) (Sen. Paxton) to bring together state agencies and stakeholders to assess current investments and strategies, define prevention needs and best practices, and identify strategies to increase the effectiveness of state investments.

### For More Information

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