



Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) are traumatic events such as child abuse/neglect or having a caregiver experiencing substance use, mental health issues, family violence, or incarceration challenges. Research has shown severe and chronic adversity can disrupt a child’s neurodevelopment and increase the likelihood of negative health, behavioral, education, and economic outcomes.

The National Survey of Children’s Health, administered by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), offers the most comprehensive data available on the prevalence of ACEs in Texas; however, because their survey is based on parent self-report and does not include questions about child abuse and neglect, even these numbers likely underestimate the actual incidence of ACEs.

ACEs Prevalence in Texas, 2018-2019

Note: NSCH weighted percentages and population estimates to represent child population in the United States with a 95% confidence interval width.

| Children who have or have not experienced childhood adversity as defined by NSCH | Texas 2018-2019 | | | | | | National 2018-2019 | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|-----------|-------|-----------|----------------|-----------|--------------------|------------|-------|------------|----------------|------------|
| | No ACEs | | 1 ACE | | 2 or More ACEs | | No ACEs | | 1 ACE | | 2 or More ACEs | |
| | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est |
| | 59 | 4,254,547 | 21.6 | 1,555,182 | 19.4 | 1,396,772 | 60.2 | 43,113,655 | 21.6 | 15,474,860 | 18.2 | 13,068,094 |

| Questions Taken from the Original ACE Study | Texas | | | | National | | | |
|---|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | 2016 | | 2018-2019 | | 2016 | | 2018-2019 | |
| | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est |
| Parent of guardian divorced or separated | 27.2 | 1,856,745 | 25.8 | 1,809,973 | 25 | 17,668,667 | 23.4 | 16,437,944 |
| Parent or guardian served time in jail | 9.2 | 627,546 | 7.1 | 494,521 | 8.2 | 5,749,103 | 7.5 | 5,276,031 |
| Saw or heard parents or adults slap, hit, kick, punch one another in the home | 7.4 | 504,171 | 6.0 | 418,843 | 5.7 | 4,020,228 | 5.6 | 3,938,806 |
| Lived with anyone who was mentally ill, suicidal, or severely depressed | 6.9 | 470,878 | 9.8 | 684,685 | 7.8 | 5,487,519 | 8.1 | 5,698,333 |
| Lived with anyone who had a problem with alcohol or drugs | 11 | 747,387 | 8.4 | 582,042 | 9 | 6,358,004 | 8.5 | 5,918,411 |

| Additional ACEs Questions Identified by the National Survey of Children’s Health | Texas | | | | National | | | |
|--|-------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2016 | | 2018-2019 | | 2016 | | 2018-2019 | |
| | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est |
| Parent or guardian died | 3.7 | 252,293 | 3.2 | 228,544 | 3.3 | 2,351,057 | 3.1 | 2,144,532 |
| Was a victim of violence or witnessed violence in his or her neighborhood | 4 | 275,020 | 4.4 | 307,855 | 3.9 | 2,710,505 | 4.1 | 2,896,442 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|-----------|------|---------|-----|------------|------|-----------|
| Treated or judged unfairly because of his or her race or ethnic group | 4.7 | 318,541 | 5.0 | 347,730 | 3.7 | 2,604,679 | 4.3 | 3,006,716 |
| Parent or guardian has a tough time covering food and housing on the family's income (somewhat often) | 21.3 | 1,485,284 | 12.4 | 891,052 | 19 | 13,596,890 | 12.2 | 8,720,485 |
| Parent or guardian has a tough time covering food and housing on the family's income (very often) | 7.1 | 496,484 | 4.3 | 309,404 | 6.4 | 4,610,644 | 3.2 | 2,305,719 |

Source: Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative (2016; 2018-2019). Data resource center for child and adolescent health: NSCH interactive data query. Available from www.childhealthdata.org

ACEs Impact on Child Wellbeing in Texas, 2018-2019

Children are defined as ages 17 and under, unless otherwise noted. Percentages and population estimates are weighted to represent the child population in the United States with a 95% confidence interval width (in select cases, this may exceed 20 percentage points).

| Indicator | Texas | | | | | | National | | | | | |
|---|---------|-----------|-------|-----------|----------------|-----------|----------|------------|-------|------------|----------------|------------|
| | No ACEs | | 1 ACE | | 2 or More ACEs | | No ACEs | | 1 ACE | | 2 or More ACEs | |
| | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est |
| Children with or without an Adverse Childhood Experience¹ | 59 | 4,254,547 | 21.6 | 1,555,182 | 19.4 | 1,396,772 | 60.2 | 43,113,655 | 21.6 | 15,474,860 | 18.2 | 13,068,094 |
| Birth Outcomes | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Low birthweight (<2,500 grams) | 7.8 | 315,701 | 8.6 | 122,535 | 6.1 | 82,479 | 8.3 | 3,426,521 | 9.3 | 1,348,470 | 10.5 | 1,291,934 |
| Premature birth (>3 weeks before due date) | 14.0 | 585,129 | 7.9 | 121,080 | 9.7 | 130,717 | 10.5 | 4,470,059 | 11.4 | 1,722,670 | 12.8 | 1,622,570 |
| School-related Outcomes (ages 6-17 only) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Since starting kindergarten, child repeated a grade | 4.2 | 104,716 | 7.6 | 79,392 | 14.3 | 165,126 | 4.2 | 1,087,327 | 7.0 | 776,695 | 11.3 | 1,233,879 |
| Bullied, picked on, or excluded others within past 12 months | 13.8 | 2,548,068 | 13.9 | 147,822 | 31 | 357,323 | 16.6 | 4,324,631 | 18.7 | 2,094,450 | 29.4 | 3,215,522 |
| Was bullied, picked on, or excluded by others within past 12 mos. | 39.7 | 1,009,329 | 38.4 | 403,579 | 62.7 | 723,395 | 41.8 | 10,915,618 | 48 | 5,373,051 | 60.1 | 5,249,889 |
| Healthcare and Health Outcomes | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hospital emergency room visit (one) | 13.0 | 550,959 | 17.2 | 263,896 | 20.8 | 290,879 | 13.0 | 5,606,856 | 15.8 | 2,427,882 | 19.5 | 2,538,652 |
| Hospital emergency room visits (2 or more) | 3.8 | 162,319 | 9.3 | 143,454 | 5.8 | 80,773 | 3.0 | 1,293,882 | 5.8 | 889,858 | 7.9 | 1,025,182 |
| Does not have coordinated, ongoing, comprehensive care within a medical home | 48.2 | 2,050,838 | 63.0 | 979,227 | 58.4 | 816,267 | 46.9 | 20,218,162 | 57.3 | 8,863,925 | 62.4 | 8,149,757 |
| Currently receives special services to meet their development needs (speech/occupational therapy) | 3.8 | 158,639 | 4.3 | 65,589 | 9.7 | 134,206 | 5.3 | 2,263,176 | 8.5 | 1,300,808 | 12.3 | 1,583,445 |
| Currently has one lifelong health condition ² | 18.3 | 778,181 | 20.7 | 321,811 | 27.3 | 381,191 | 18.1 | 7,818,411 | 19.4 | 3,001,569 | 21.3 | 2,777,084 |
| Currently has two or more lifelong health conditions ² | 9.2 | 393,436 | 17.9 | 278,964 | 36.1 | 503,585 | 12.5 | 5,370,234 | 21.1 | 3,267,133 | 36.3 | 4,749,376 |
| Family Household Conditions | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lives below 0-99% of the poverty level | 20.9 | 887,178 | 25.3 | 393,762 | 29.9 | 417,620 | 14.2 | 6,121,857 | 22.6 | 3,490,281 | 31.4 | 4,106,324 |
| Lives below 100-199% of the poverty level | 15.4 | 655,597 | 26.6 | 413,474 | 32.5 | 454,214 | 17.9 | 7,718,309 | 25.3 | 3,919,503 | 29.3 | 3,825,084 |
| Someone smokes in the household | 9.4 | 397,304 | 11.6 | 179,805 | 34.1 | 474,416 | 9.2 | 3,915,913 | 16.1 | 2,447,298 | 29.8 | 3,866,218 |
| Parents/guardians have no emotional parenting support ³ | 29.9 | 1,265,109 | 40.5 | 626,181 | 22.7 | 317,323 | 23.2 | 9,936,579 | 27.1 | 4,167,548 | 25.4 | 3,293,576 |
| Family Resiliency | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Family has one or fewer qualities of resilience during difficult times | 4.3 | 184,389 | 7.9 | 122,334 | 12.7 | 177,178 | 4.1 | 1,782,963 | 8.1 | 1,242,058 | 13.1 | 1,708,089 |
| Family is sometimes/never likely to stay hopeful in difficult times | 3.2 | 135,894 | 6.9 | 106,517 | 8.5 | 119,264 | 3.8 | 1,619,792 | 7.5 | 1,153,443 | 12.0 | 1,563,580 |
| Family is sometimes/never likely to know they have strengths to draw on when facing a problem | 6.5 | 272,918 | 10.4 | 159,558 | 16.7 | 232,648 | 6.4 | 2,753,044 | 11.3 | 1,731,230 | 18.3 | 2,375,401 |

| Family Resiliency (continued) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|-----------|-------|---------|----------------|---------|----------|------------|-------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| Family sometimes/never works together to solve problems they are facing | 8.3 | 352,851 | 14.5 | 220,555 | 16.3 | 227,991 | 6.8 | 2,923,818 | 12.8 | 1,963,322 | 18.9 | 2,449,087 |
| Family sometimes/never talks together about what to do when facing a problem | 10.1 | 427,021 | 15.2 | 235,700 | 18.8 | 262,043 | 7.7 | 3,316,717 | 13.3 | 2,035,596 | 18.5 | 2,404,887 |
| Indicator | Texas | | | | | | National | | | | | |
| | No ACEs | | 1 ACE | | 2 or More ACEs | | No ACEs | | 1 ACE | | 2 or More ACEs | |
| | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est | % | Pop Est |
| Neighborhood Conditions | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lives in community with dilapidated housing | 10.3 | 433,654 | 13.1 | 203,623 | 23.5 | 328,463 | 9.7 | 4,137,595 | 15.0 | 2,302,259 | 23.2 | 3,012,582 |
| Somewhat or definitely disagrees that they live in a safe neighborhood | 4.7 | 196,809 | 3.7 | 57,984 | 12.1 | 168,627 | 3.2 | 1,356,597 | 4.8 | 743,484 | 11.1 | 1,444,560 |
| Does not live in a supportive neighborhood ⁴ | 40.9 | 1,682,921 | 45.7 | 708,142 | 58.1 | 810,300 | 38.8 | 16,402,438 | 49.2 | 7,475,284 | 60.4 | 7,808,722 |

¹NSCH ACEs measures include: a) divorce/separation of caregivers, b) caregiver death, c) caregiver served/serving time in jail/prison, d) witness intimate partner violence, e) victim/witness of neighborhood violence, f) lived with mentally ill person, g) lived with substance user, h) experienced racism, and i) family cannot afford basic needs on family's income. Child Abuse/Neglect is not an indicator in this study. All surveys reported by a parent/guardian of only one child's experiences living in the home.

²List of health conditions: a) allergies; b) arthritis; c) asthma; d) blood disorders; e) brain injury/concussion/head injury; f) cerebral palsy; g) cystic fibrosis; h) diabetes; i) Down Syndrome; j) epilepsy or seizure disorder; k) genetic or inherited condition; l) heart condition; m) frequent or severe headaches/migraines (age 3-17); n) Tourette Syndrome (age 3-17); o) anxiety problems (age 3-17); p) depression (age 3-17); q) behavioral and conduct problem (age 3-17); r) substance use disorder (age 6-17); s) developmental delay (age 3-17); t) intellectual disability (age 3-17); u) speech/other language disorder (age 3-17); v) learning disability (age 3-17); w) other mental health condition (age 3-17); x) Autism or Autism Spectrum Disorder (age 3-17); y) Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (age 3-17); z) hearing problems; and/or aa) vision problems.

³Emotional help includes: a) emotional support from a spouse, b) emotional support from other family members or close friends, c) emotional support from a health care provider, d) emotional support from a place of worship or religious leader, e) emotional support from advocacy or support group, f) emotional support from a peer support group, and/or g) emotional support from a counselor or other mental health professional.

⁴Supportive neighborhood is defined by whether a) people help each other out within the neighborhood/community, b) people watch out for each other's children in the neighborhood/community, and c) the family knows where to go for help when they encounter difficulties in the neighborhood/community.

Source: Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative (2018-2019). Data resource center for child and adolescent health: NSCH interactive data query. Available from www.childhealthdata.org

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