
Early Childhood Behavioral Health: What's the latest?

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What is Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health?

- Developing capacity of the very young child to...
 - Experience, regulate (manage), and express emotions
 - Form close and secure interpersonal relationships
 - Explore and master the environment and learn
- All in the context of family, community and cultural expectations for young children



ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime

Early Childhood Mental Health

- **Too common** – with rates on the rise
- **Disparities in the US**
 - Boys > girls in early childhood
 - Over 1 in 5 children living in poverty
- **Diagnoses**
 - Anxiety (phobias, separation anxiety, social phobia) is most common
 - Behavioral disorders (ODD, ADHD) next most common

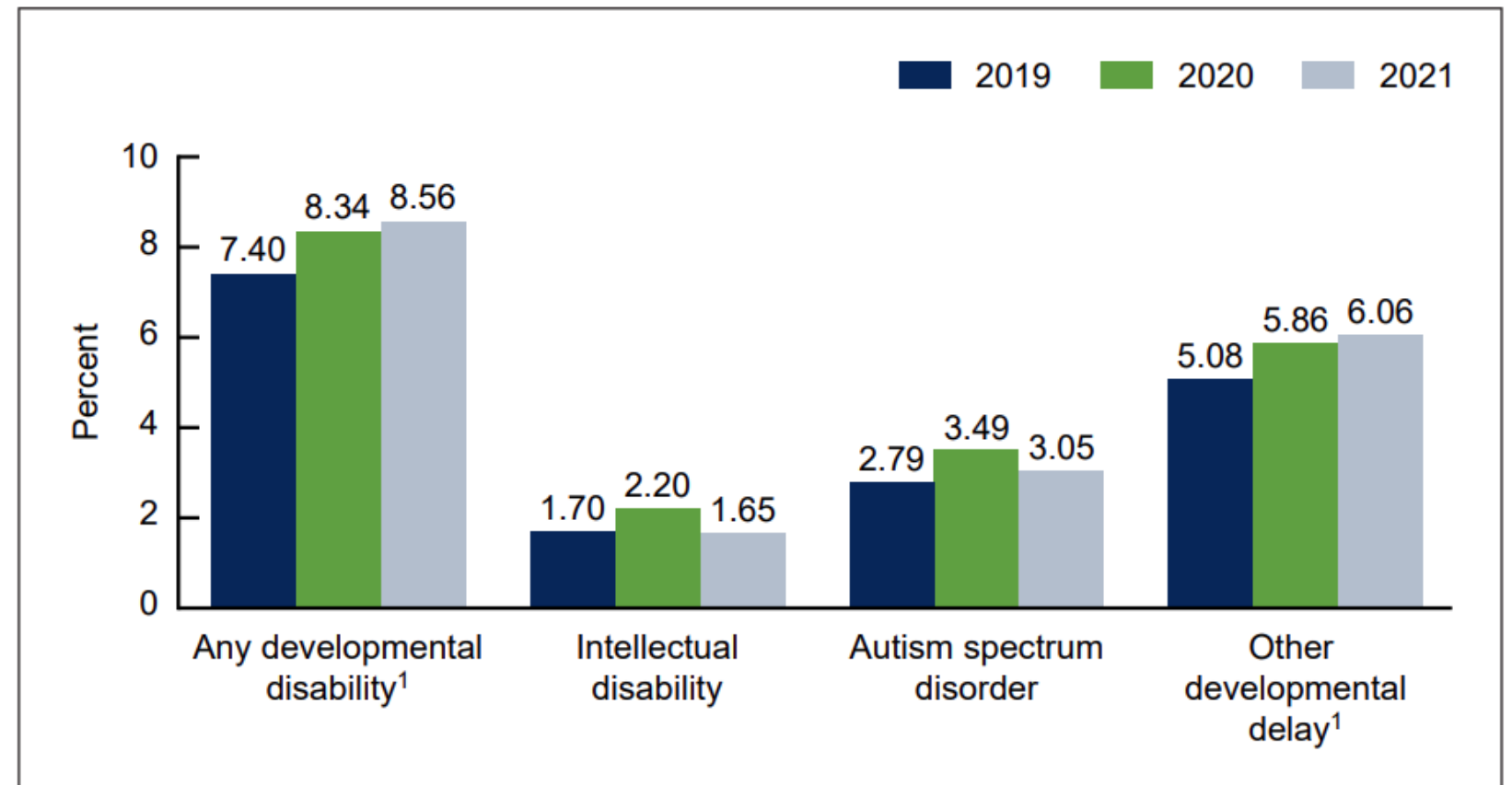


1 in 6 children aged 2-8 years has a mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder.

Prevalence of developmental disabilities in children

Figure 1. Prevalence of children aged 3–17 years ever diagnosed with selected developmental disabilities, by year: United States, 2019–2021

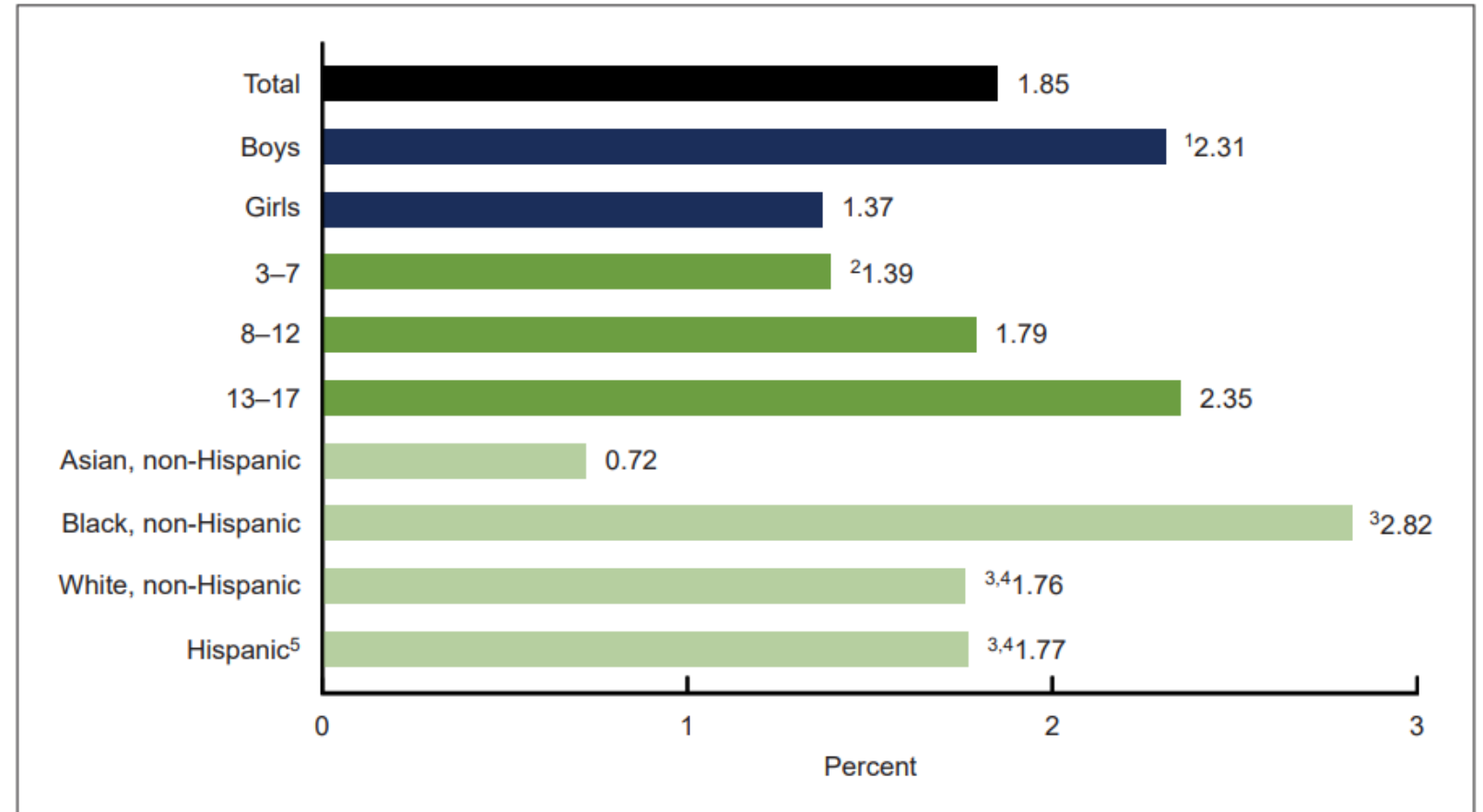
- Developmental disabilities are common children in the US – close to 1 in 10 children!
- Increased from 2019 to 2021



Prevalence of developmental disabilities in children

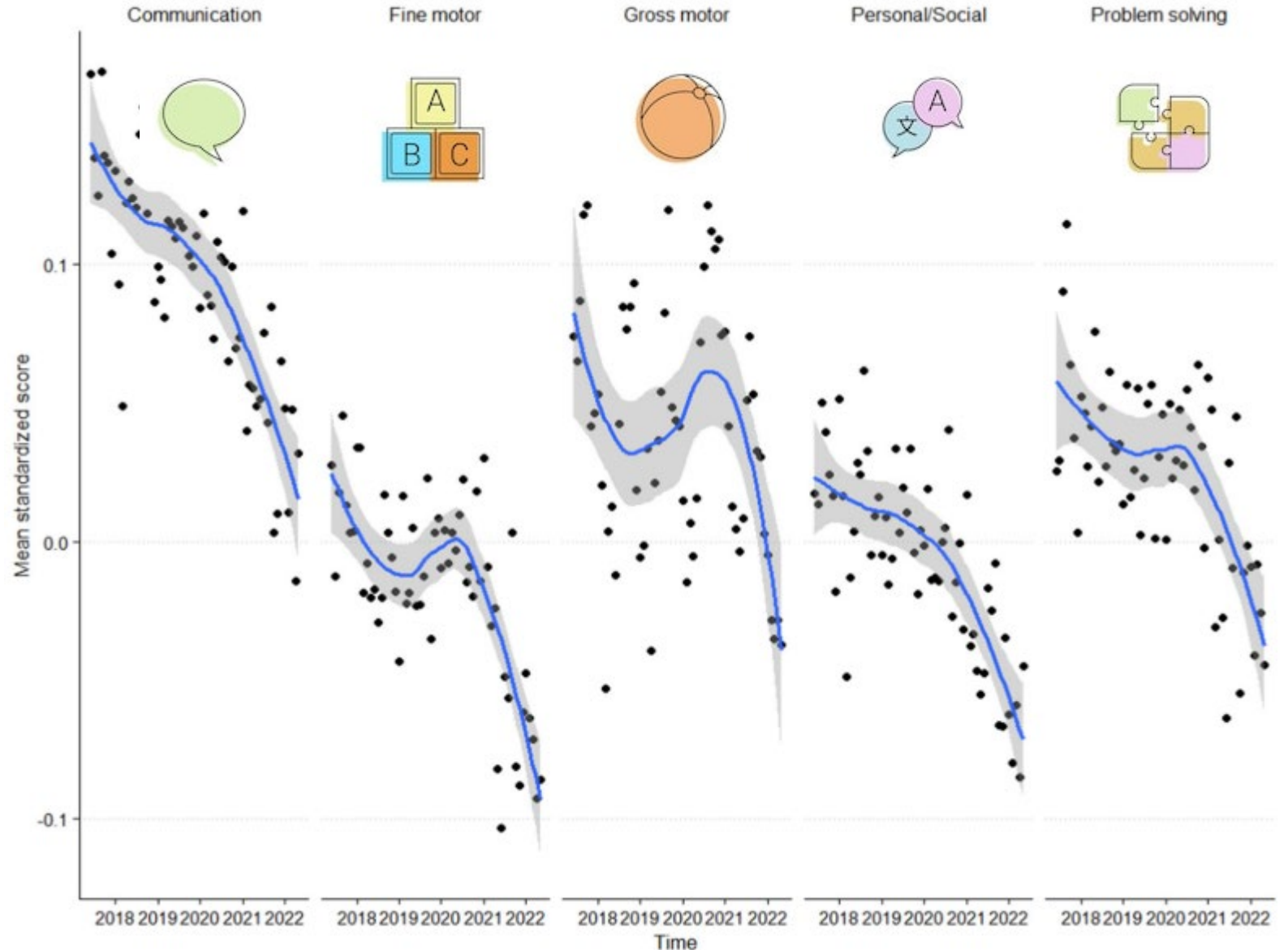
- Lowest rates in Asian, highest in Black children
- Boys (~5%) >3x likely than girls (~1.5%) to be diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder

Figure 3. Prevalence of children aged 3–17 years ever diagnosed with intellectual disability, by sex, age, and race and Hispanic origin: United States, 2019–2021



COVID Impacts

- Communication: ↓ 3%
- Personal-social: ↓ 2%
- Problem solving: ↓ 2%



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

HOUSEHOLD CHALLENGES



Mental Illness



Parent Treated Violently



Divorce

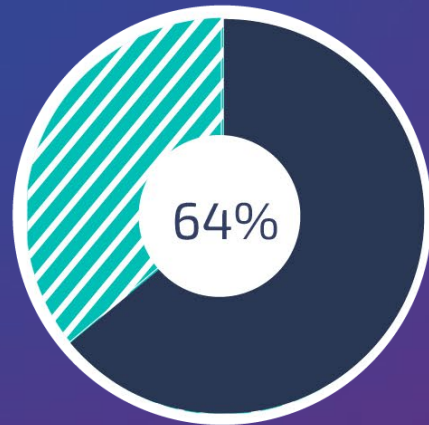


Incarcerated Relative

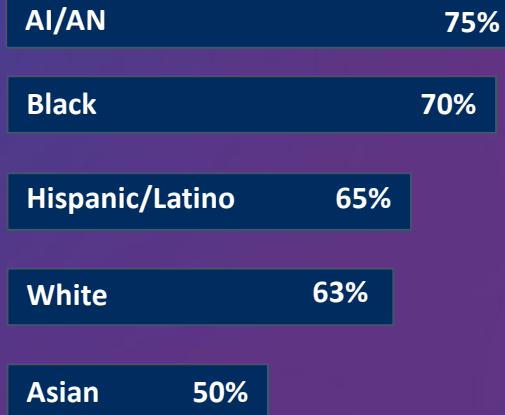


Substance Abuse

STATISTICS OF ACEs

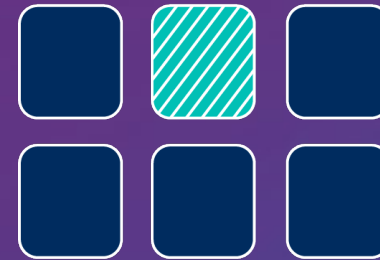


64% of adults have experienced at least one ACE.

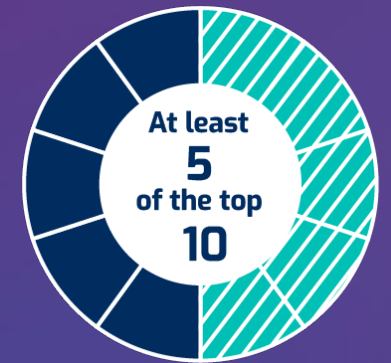


Reported experiencing 1 or more ACEs.

ACEs affect some racial/ethnic groups more than others.



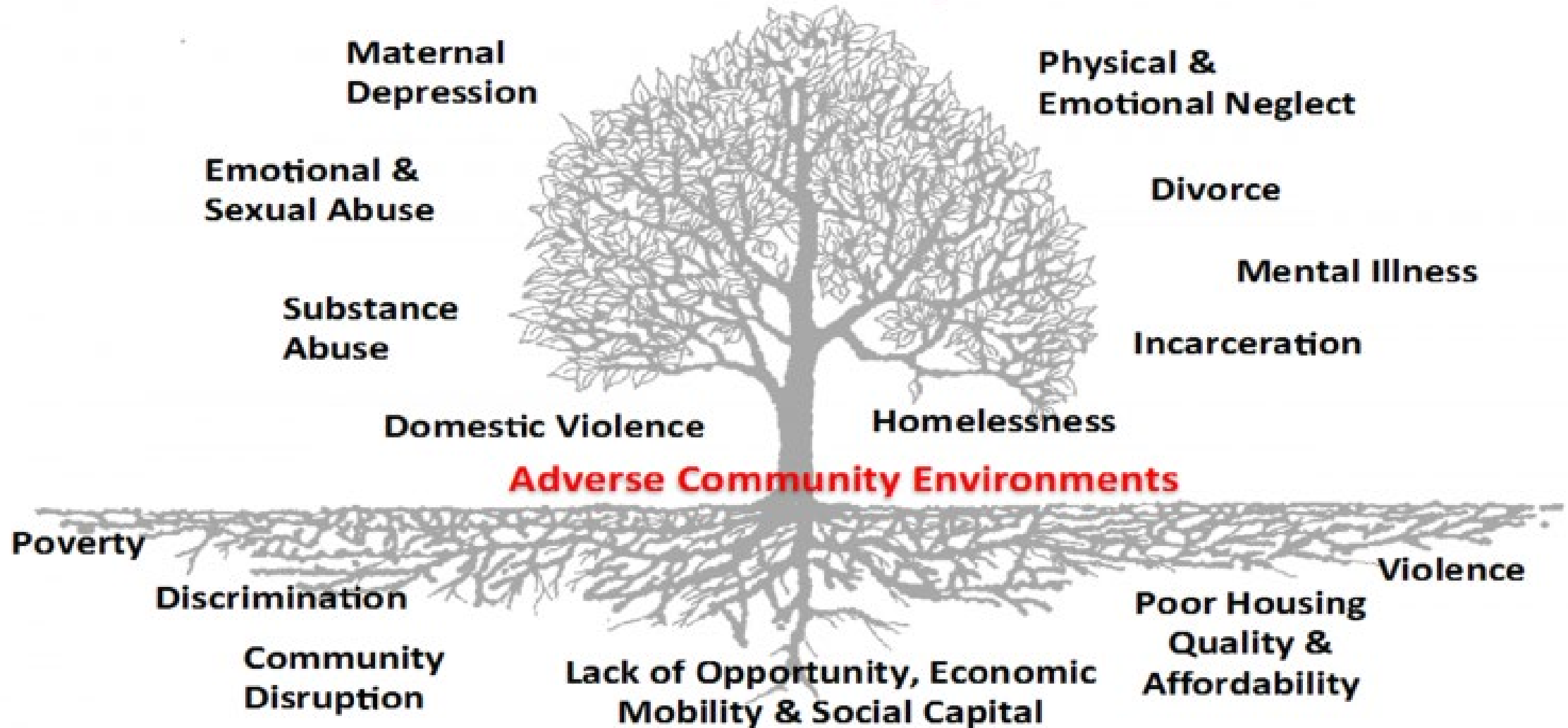
1 in 6 adults have experienced four or more types of ACEs.



At least 5 of the top 10 leading causes of death are associated with ACEs.

The Pair of ACEs

Adverse Childhood Experiences



Preventing ACEs could reduce a large number of health conditions.



UP TO

21 MILLION
CASES OF
DEPRESSION



UP TO

1.9 MILLION
CASES OF
HEART DISEASE



UP TO

2.5 MILLION
CASES OF
OVERWEIGHT/OBESITY

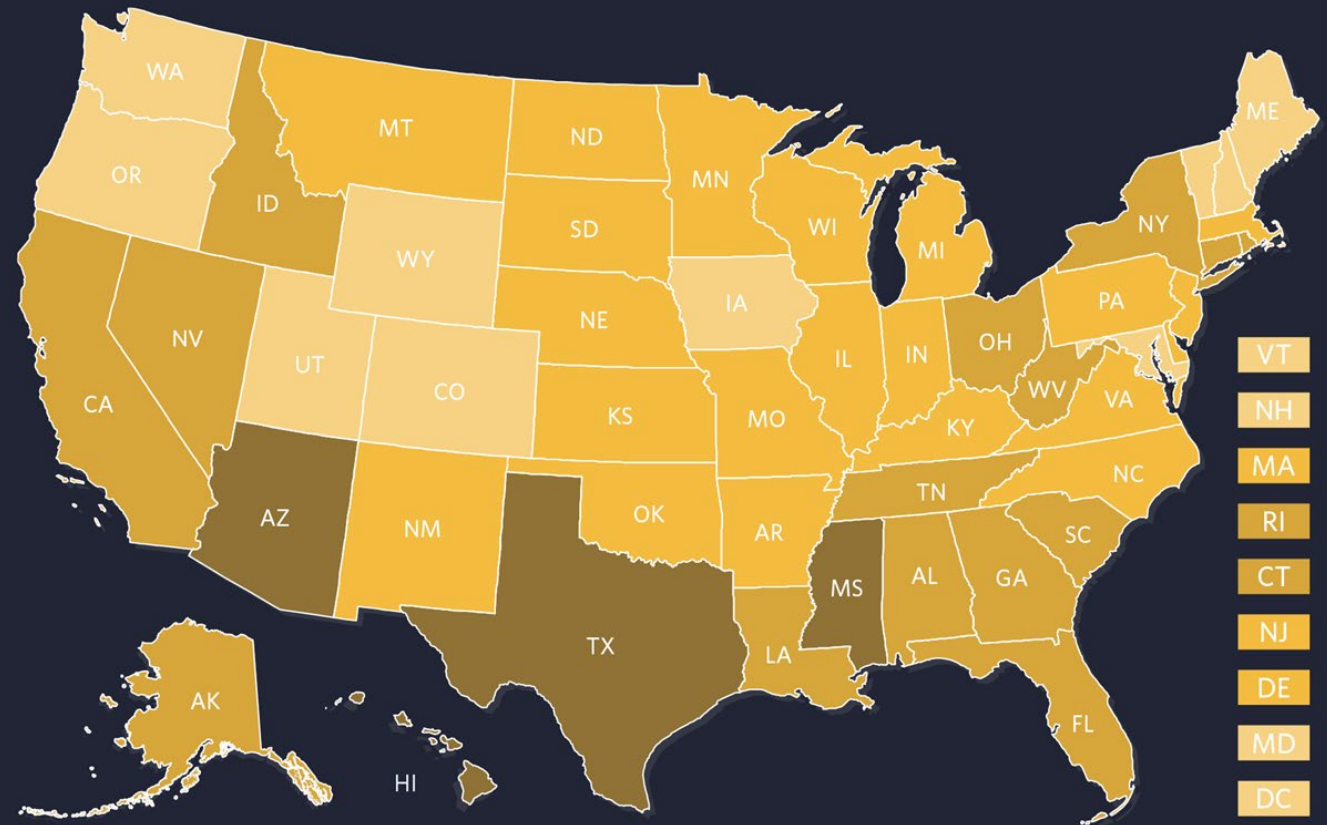
SOURCE: National Estimates based on 2017 BRFSS; Vital Signs, MMWR November 2019.

The Pediatric Behavioral Health Workforce

- 70% of counties in the US have no child and adolescent psychiatrists
- Workforce shortages are worse for early childhood behavioral health providers

Youth with Untreated Depression

Nationwide, more than 60% of children who experience a severe depressive episode do not receive treatment. Maine has the lowest prevalence of untreated youth depression; Texas has the highest.



Prevalence of untreated youth depression:

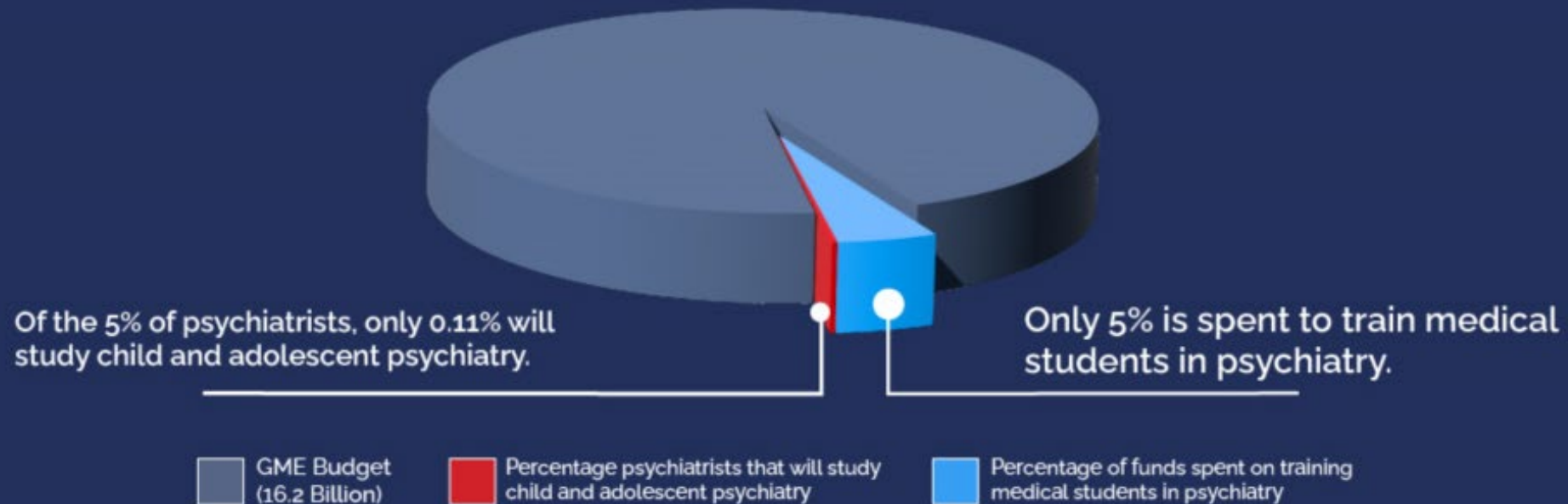
■ <50% ■ 50-59% ■ 60-69% ■ ≥70%

Source: Mental Health America

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The Pediatric Behavioral Health Workforce

FY 2020 Graduate Medical Education Budget



*Protecting Health,
Improving Lives*

Thank you!

Visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) to learn more.



We can make a difference together!

- **Parents and caregivers:** Praise children often
- **Health providers:** Explore ways to address challenges
- **Educators:** Foster school connectedness
- **Community members:** Ensure park & green spaces are safe



We Can Make a Difference Together

We all have a role to play in promoting positive childhood experiences.

All children deserve to have [positive childhood experiences](#). These experiences help children have safe, stable, nurturing relationships and [environments](#).

What parents and caregivers can do:

- **Praise children often.** Praise can build a child's self-esteem and reinforce positive behaviors and interactions.
- **Establish consistent routines and expectations.** Children feel secure and thrive when their environment is structured and predictable.
- **Make time for play or meaningful connection.** Building playful learning into everyday moments can help [young children](#) develop skills to solve hard problems, collaborate with others, and think critically. For [older children](#), take time to meaningfully connect and support their interests.

Spotlight: Playful Parenting

- Dedicate 10–15 minutes two to three times a week for child-led play or focused time with your child. Incorporate it in your household routine, for example after dinnertime.
- For younger children, name the special playtime after the child, e.g., “Roberto’s Time.”
- Play with toys your child chooses and can be enjoyed together without distraction from devices or phones.
- This can be adapted for older children by identifying an ongoing activity you can do together. Select an activity that aligns with your child’s interests, even if it’s something new or different for you!

What pediatric health care providers can do:

- **Explore ways to help families address challenges** when they or their children have experienced [trauma](#).
- **Model positive parenting skills**, such as PRIDE (Praise, Reflect, Imitate, Describe, Enthusiasm) during a clinical visit.
- **Share tips and use conversation guides with caregivers for promoting healthy mental development** in children, such as emotion coaching, playful parenting, relaxation techniques, and self-care.

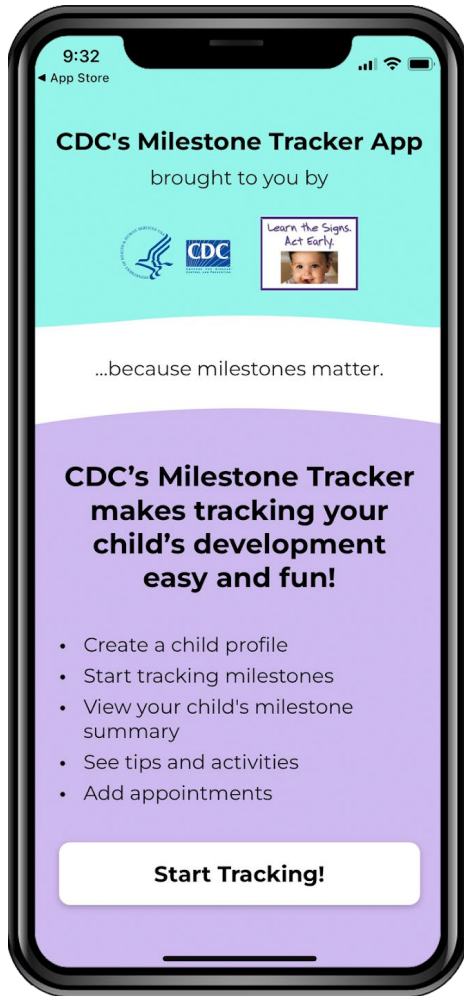
Spotlight: Relational Care

- [An approach](#) that fosters strong, trusted, respectful, and supportive relationships with patients and their caregivers.
- Examples include: “Tell me more about...” and “I can understand why you felt...”

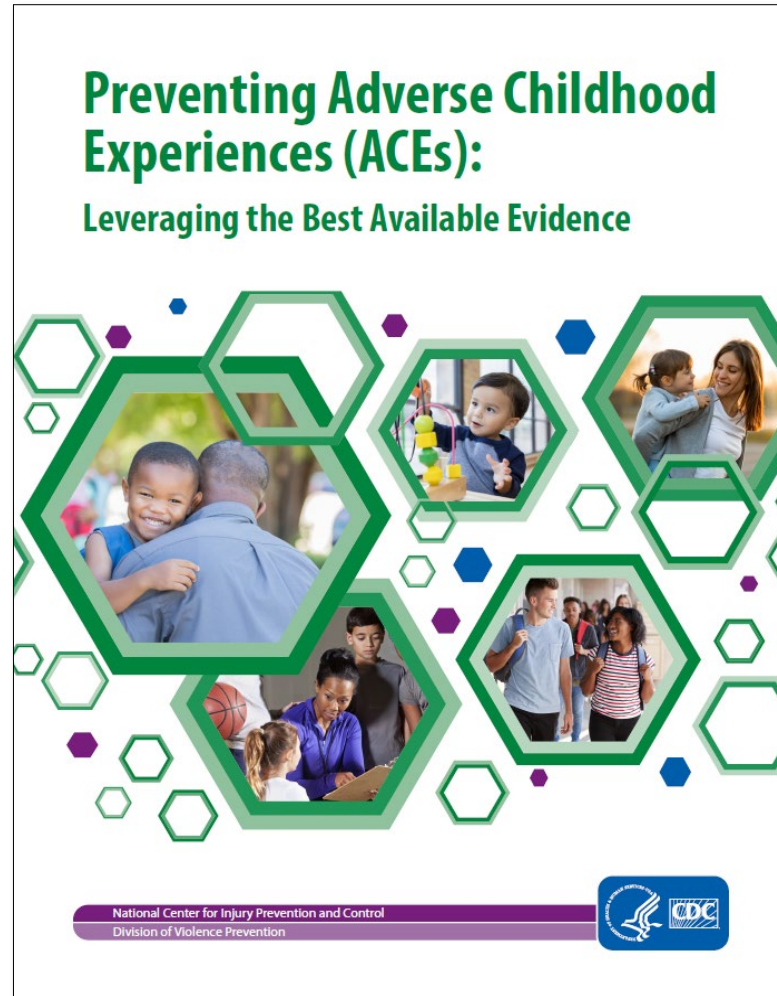


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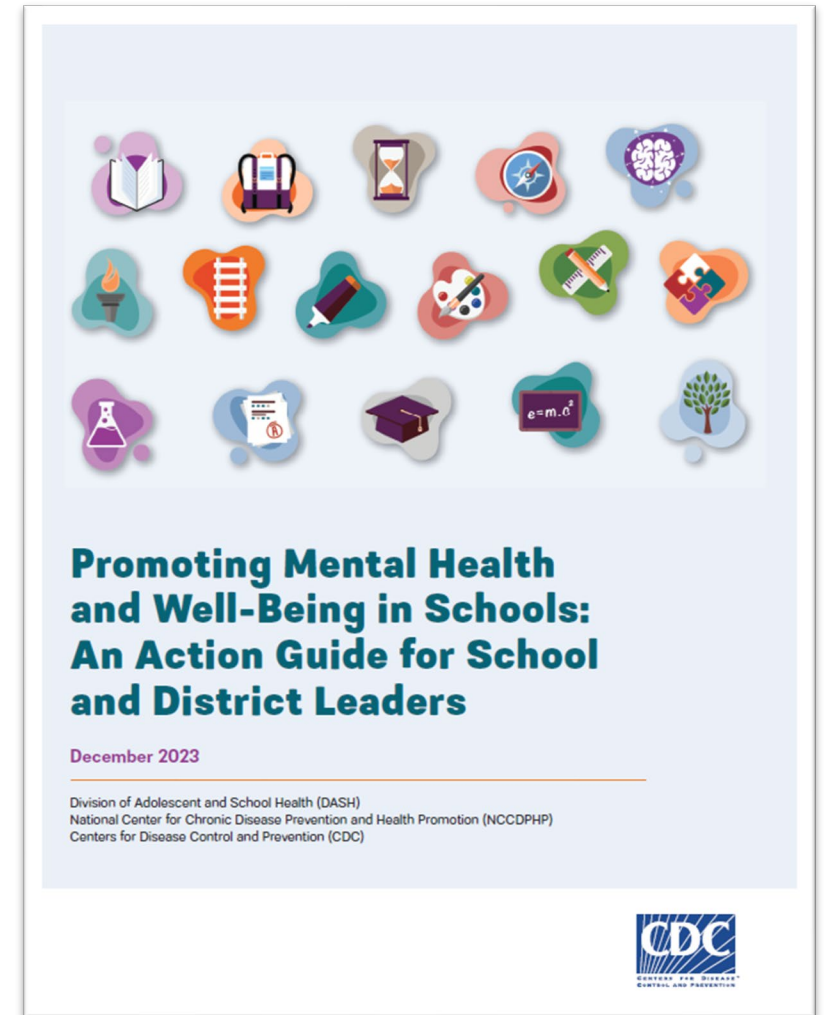
Key CDC Resources



<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones-app.html>



https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/aces-prevention-resource_508.pdf



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