

Guidance for Pediatricians Administering the ACEs Screener to Parents

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It is well established that the impacts of traumatic childhood events or circumstances can be lifelong and intergenerational. These events are referred to as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and include abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction. Research has found ACEs [or such adverse childhood experiences] to be common in Idaho. Adults who had traumatic childhoods may have poor physical, mental or behavioral health. Poor health may interfere with the person's parenting; it may reduce the parents'/caregivers' ability to provide a safe, stable and nurturing home that allows their children to be healthy and resilient.

Strengthening Families ACE's Learning Collaborative

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The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) believes multigenerational treatment is required to break the intergenerational cycle of ACEs. According to the AAP, pediatricians are ideally placed to help parents/caregivers improve their health and break the intergenerational cycle of ACEs. Screening parents/caregivers for their adverse childhood experiences is recommended. The screening and follow-up discussion with the pediatrician can have immediate benefits, and a variety of follow-up actions can improve the health of the parent/caregiver and child.

Despite the growing recognition that ACEs screening is valuable, only a small number of pediatricians routinely screen parents. While the research has found that the ACEs screening is acceptable to patients, providers continue to worry that their patients don't want to talk about their childhoods. The ACEs/Strengthening Families Learning Collaborative was conducted to provide guidance to Idaho pediatricians on how to respectfully conduct an ACEs screening and provide supportive follow-up.

The Guidance Report will be used to increase Idaho pediatricians' use of ACEs screening and improve parenting and health outcomes. Guidance was solicited from a diverse mix of Idaho parents and caregivers by holding eight focus groups. A Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

reviewed the information. They agreed on five high-priority recommendations for conducting ACEs screenings and created a list of recommended follow-up strategies.

High-priority Recommendations:

1. Parents/caregivers should be given written or verbal assurance their ACEs score and their specific ACEs won't be used to judge or test their parenting ability and that the information is confidential and won't be shared with anyone without permission.
2. Parents/caregiver should know there will be follow-up and the provider has helpful resources available before being asked to do the screening.
3. Parents/caregivers should be given information about ACEs before the screening.
4. The provider needs to be respectful and listen and be compassionate.
5. The provider needs to make it easy for the parent/ caregiver to do the screening by creating a calm, unrushed and private environment, and a flexible and respectful process.

You can read and download Guidance for Pediatricians Administering the ACEs Screener to Parents here: [https://idahochildrenstrustfun...ort_WEB_20211109.pdf](https://idahochildrenstrustfund.org/WEB_20211109.pdf)

The Idaho ACEs Learning Collaborative is seeking to connect with people who are screening parents or interested in this topic. Please contact Roger Sherman of the Idaho Children's Trust Fund, roger.sherman@ctf.idaho.gov.

For more about the awesome work being done in the Gem State, Idaho, visit <https://www.idahoresilienceproject.org/>