

CAMPAIGN PARTNER TOOLKIT

CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

Actions 4 ACEs is a statewide initiative to build awareness about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and the role adults can play in reducing the impact of trauma and helping children to heal. ACEs are stressful or traumatic experiences that occur before the age of 18. ACEs bear an economic and social cost to families, communities, and society that totals hundreds of billions of dollars each year.

This initiative was formed by the NJ ACEs Collaborative to bring awareness to this statewide issue and educate people working closely with children on the positive impact they can make. The resources available in this toolkit and on the Actions 4 ACEs website are available to organizations at no cost for the purpose of increasing the public's awareness about ACEs and their impact and, through training, increasing the amount of caring adults ready to respond to children experiencing adversity.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS IMPORTANT

Nationally, 2 out of 3 children have experienced at least one ACE.¹ By working together, sharing resources, and encouraging training through professional association partners, 3 out of 3 caring, competent adults can help reduce the impact of ACEs, while making New Jersey a more trauma-informed and healing-centered state.

- By raising awareness and creating understanding among adults about ACEs, we can reduce the short-term and long-term impact of ACEs on children, families, and communities.
- The NJ ACEs Collaborative's 2021 benchmark awareness survey showed that 73% of its respondents - law enforcement professionals and educators - were familiar with ACEs and were able to recognize its different types. However, less than half knew how to find resources or had participated in trainings related to ACEs, and only 14% felt "very equipped" to address ACEs.
- Compared to educators, law enforcement professionals were less likely to report being extremely familiar with ACEs as a concept or familiar with different types of ACEs, as well as less likely to know how to find resources or participate in trainings related to ACEs.

THE ROLE OF PARTNERS

Actions 4 ACEs has built an eco-system of partnerships across New Jersey and beyond working to help children thrive. Each of these partners offer invaluable resources and materials to better inform, educate, and activate the educator and law enforcement communities to deepen their awareness of ACEs and simple actions for frequent and positive interactions. Join us in making the Actions 4 ACEs campaign a

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2021, June 10). *Understanding Child Trauma*. <https://www.samhsa.gov/child-trauma/understanding-child-trauma>.

success by using this toolkit towards increasing awareness of ACEs and their impact.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide resources that enable partners and stakeholders to support campaign outreach efforts in their professional organizations, within communities and on social media, targeting audiences to raise awareness around ACEs and the actions they can take. Brief descriptions of the resources are included and how each can be used. Some easy ways to get started with this toolkit include:

- Publish a newsletter article or blog post about the campaign within your organization.
- Download and share Actions 4 ACEs campaign materials within your organization (e.g., share posters and fact sheets on staff bulletin boards; post content on digital channels, such as your organization's intranet pages and internal newsletters).
- Share Actions 4 ACEs resources through your social media channels using the sample posts, graphics, and hashtag.
- Dedicate promotional space to Actions 4 ACEs on your organization's website.
- Organize an ACEs presentation (in-person or webinar) to educate your members or staff about ACEs and share campaign resources.
- Customize content for use in newsletters, blogs, or other platforms.
- Share with the campaign stories or videos of how you incorporated Actions 4 ACEs in your community by sending them to info@Actions4ACEs.com.

New Jersey is a leader across the nation in identifying ACEs as a public health crisis in need of attention and intervention. It's only through awareness that we can begin to heal and build resilience in our communities. I'm thankful for the breadth of partners we have committed to the hard, heart work ahead of us.

— Dave Ellis, Executive Director

Office of Resilience, New Jersey Department of Children and Families

UNDERSTANDING ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACEs)

ACEs are stressful or traumatic events that occur before the age of 18. Unfortunately, they are common and can include experiences such as parental separation, experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect; growing up in a home that has mental health problems or substance use issues. ACEs can also include adverse community events such as poverty, poor housing quality, discrimination, and systemic racism.

In the absence of support, ACEs can cause long-lasting harm and impact. In fact, a landmark study found the higher the number of ACEs, the more likely one can experience negative health effects like heart disease, diabetes, stroke, depression, anxiety, and asthma. And the economic cost of ACEs in North America alone is estimated to be over \$700 billion annually.²

ACEs can have a lasting, negative impact – even into adulthood – on children’s well-being and ability to thrive. But ACEs aren’t our destiny. Learn more about what the science tells us.

- **ACEs change our brains and bodies.**

From brain development and hormonal systems to immune systems and even DNA, ACEs can alter children’s brains and bodies. These changes can cause behavior problems, learning difficulties and physical health issues.
- **Early trauma can have a lifelong impact.**

When faced with early adversity and trauma, children are at a higher risk of developing chronic illness as an adult or experiencing an earlier death. As adults, they can have an increased risk of developing chronic diseases, such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease.³
- **Caring and competent adults can help children heal from the impact of ACEs.**

There are many ways to build a child’s resiliency and reduce the impact of trauma: positive relationships with caring and competent adults, helping a child build a sense of belonging, and increasing connections to community, culture and spirituality.

To learn more about the science of ACEs, check out this TED Talk presentation featuring Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, [How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime](#).

² Bellis, M.A., Hughes, K., Ford, K., Ramos Rodriguez, G., Sethi, D., and Passmore, J. (2019). Life Course Health Consequences and Associated Annual Costs of Adverse Childhood Experiences across Europe and North America: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *Lancet Public Health* 4(10), e517-e528. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31492648/>

³ NJ ACEs Collaborative (2019). Adverse Childhood Experiences: Opportunities to Prevent, Protect Against, and Heal from the Effects of ACEs in New Jersey. <http://aces-report.burkefoundation.org/>

NEW JERSEY TAKES ACTION FOR ACEs

In New Jersey, many diverse agencies are already addressing ACEs, often through partnerships, to help prevent, protect against, and heal from the harmful effects of ACEs. The list below links to key initiatives.

- **NJ ACEs Statewide Action Plan** - In February 2021, the New Jersey Department of Children and Families released the NJ ACEs Statewide Action Plan detailing a path toward making New Jersey a more trauma-informed, healing-centered state.
- **The NJ Resiliency Coalition** - The NJ Resiliency Coalition is building an online community for people living and working in New Jersey to come together and prevent ACEs.
- **Handle With Care Program** - The statewide Handle With Care program created by the Office of the Attorney General in 2020 promotes partnership between schools and law enforcement to provide additional support and care to a child who has recently faced a traumatic event.
- **Healing-Centered Schools** - The Healing-Centered schools pilot, organized by the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association/Foundation for Educational Administration (NJPSA/FEA), NJEA and the Mental Health Association in New Jersey, has partnered with more than 100 education and community leaders across the state to design a school framework that addresses ACEs through a Health-Centered Engagement Model.

STATEWIDE RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT



The New Jersey ACEs Collaborative issued the **Adverse Childhood Experiences: Opportunities to Prevent, Protect Against, and Heal from the Effects of ACEs in New Jersey** report in July 2019. The report details the challenges New Jersey faces in addressing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and calls for a coordinated statewide response to mitigate their effects on children's health and well-being.

BUILDING COMPETENCY IN ACEs

Consider sharing or offering training on ACEs to help members of your organization or community learn how early adversity can impact adult health and identify steps to take to address trauma and create safe environments for children affected by ACEs.

- **Customized ACE Interface Training**

The NJ Office of Resilience has relationships with a network of more than 150 cross-sector presenters working across the state and can help your organization or community organize an [ACE Interface](#) presentation in English or Spanish at no cost. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) may be available for professionals who complete the training.

For the community at-large, the NJ Office of Resilience will offer free monthly ACEs presentations online beginning in June 2021 on a first come, first served basis. Attendance for each of these events will be limited to 100 people.

To learn more, contact Angela Medrano-Sanchez at Angela.Medrano-Sanchez@dcf.nj.gov.

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ACEs Training**

Through its Veto Violence program, the CDC provides free introductory training modules and more advanced provider-specific training modules online on ACEs prevention. Continuing education credits are available. To learn more, visit <https://vetoviolenecdc.gov/>.

HELP SPREAD THE WORD: ACTIONS 4 ACEs RESOURCES

The purpose of the Actions 4 ACEs campaign is to educate educators and law enforcement officers about adverse childhood experiences, to help reduce their impact on New Jersey children and help them heal and thrive. One caring adult can make all the difference for a child experiencing trauma.

The campaign has a collection of downloadable, print-ready resources for use in promoting the campaign as well as a suite of digital materials.

PRINT MATERIALS

The Actions 4 ACEs campaign has a collection of print materials you can use to spread the word about ACEs and the role educators and law enforcement can play in helping children affected by ACEs build resilience. These materials can be placed around your community or distributed to community partners and others working closely with children who may have experienced trauma. Consider placing these posters at local coffee shops, libraries, or other spaces with a community board space.

- **Poster for Law Enforcement** – Download and share this 11" x 17" poster with law enforcement professionals to help increase their awareness of ACEs.

- **Poster for Educators** – Download and share this 11” x 17” poster with education professionals to help increase their awareness of ACEs.
- **Handle With Care Program Poster** – Download and share this 11” x 17” poster to help increase awareness of New Jersey’s Handle With Care Program and how law enforcement and education professionals are partnering to create a safe environment for children experiencing trauma.
- **Fact Sheet: Understanding ACEs** – Download and share this 8.5” x 11” fact sheet to provide an overview of ACEs.
- **Fact Sheet: Actions 4 ACEs** – Download and share this 8.5” x 11” fact sheet to promote simple connections that can be made towards building a strong relationship with children experiencing trauma.
- **Flyer / Print Ad for Law Enforcement** – Download and share this 8.5” x 11” flyer with law enforcement professionals to help increase their awareness of ACEs. This can also be used as a print ad for placement in publications.
- **Flyer / Print Ad for Educators** – Download and share this 8.5” x 11” flyer with education professionals to help increase their awareness of ACEs. This can also be used as a print ad for placement in publications.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

- **Social Media Toolkit** - The social media toolkit includes suggested posts and graphics that can be shared to your organization’s social media pages. Sample posts are available for Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter with additional tips on how to maximize post engagement. Consider using these along with the **#Actions4ACEs** hashtag.
- **Digital Display Ad/Banner** - Place the Actions 4 ACEs digital banner on your organization’s website, partner websites, or websites relevant to educators and law enforcement to increase awareness.
- **Campaign Video** – We are developing a 30-second promotional campaign video to help raise awareness about the campaign. Stay tuned for an update on its availability.

MEDIA

- **Sample Blurbs for Newsletters or Websites** - Share these sample blurbs in your next e-newsletter or post on your website.

Sample Blurb 1: About Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can have lifelong effects. Connections with caring, supportive adults can make a difference and help reduce the impact of ACEs. To learn more, visit Actions4ACEs.com.

Sample Blurb 2: Actions 4 ACEs Campaign

The *Actions4ACEs* campaign is a statewide initiative to build awareness about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and the role adults can play in reducing the impact of trauma and helping children heal. Visit Actions4ACEs.com to learn about ACEs and find out how New Jersey is working to become a healing-centered state.

Sample Blurb 3: Together, We Can Reduce the Impact of ACEs

Nationwide, 2 out of 3 children have faced at least one type of adverse childhood experience (ACE). By working together, sharing resources, and completing professional training, we can all help reduce the impact of ACEs. To learn more, visit Actions4ACEs.com.

Sample Blurb 4: Handle With Care

The New Jersey Handle With Care Program promotes partnerships between law enforcement and schools to provide safe and supportive academic environments for children who face adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). To learn more, visit Actions4ACEs.com.

- **Radio Public Service Announcement (PSA) Scripts** – The following PSA scripts are intended for use as live-read scripts that can be shared with local radio stations to see if they have available airtime to donate. You can also take these scripts and record them for distribution to local stations or placement on your website.

PSA SCRIPT: Adverse Childhood Experiences

Timing: 30-Seconds

Have you ever heard of adverse childhood experiences, also known as ACEs?

They are traumatic events that happen to children, and they can have lasting negative effects on their health and well-being.

By building safe, nurturing relationships with children, adults can help children build resilience and thrive.

Learn more at: [Actions 4 ACEs dot com](http://Actions4ACEs.com). That's Actions - the number 4 – A-C-E-S dot com.

Brought to you by the New Jersey ACEs Collaborative.

PSA SCRIPT: Adverse Childhood Experiences

Timing: 60-Seconds

Have you ever heard of adverse childhood experiences, also known as ACEs?

They are traumatic events that happen to children, and they can have lasting negative effects on their health and well-being.

Events like divorce, abuse, neglect, and witnessing violence can all cause a lasting impact on a child.

Adverse community events such as poverty and systemic racism can even further compound the effects of ACEs.

However, ACEs can be prevented. By building safe, nurturing relationships with children, adults can help children affected by ACEs build resilience and thrive.

Simple actions may not seem like much, but to a child who is dealing with a traumatic event, they can provide a bright spot to help anchor their self-worth.

Learn more at: [Actions 4 ACEs dot com](http://Actions4ACEs.com). That's Actions - the number 4 – A-C-E-S dot com.

Brought to you by the New Jersey ACEs Collaborative.

- **Campaign ‘Roadshow’ Presentation** - Use the campaign [presentation](#) in its entirety or pull slides as needed when presenting at conferences, community events, or other meetings.
- **Community Perspectives Articles** – We are creating a series of news articles focusing on effective measures for addressing ACEs. Stay tuned for an update on their availability.

SHARE YOUR EFFORTS WITH US

The NJ ACEs Collaborative would love to hear about the great work you are doing to increase awareness about ACEs using this toolkit. Send us your stories and videos of how you have used the Actions 4 ACEs toolkit to educate members of your organization or community. We may follow-up with a request to feature your work to show other partners and stakeholders what’s happening across the state.

SUMMARY

This toolkit was written by the NJ ACEs Collaborative. The information is meant to be useful for organizations that want to use Actions 4 ACEs as part of their member or public education and outreach efforts. The Collaborative thanks you for becoming a partner of Actions 4 ACEs, and for working with us to bring much needed awareness to this statewide issue. Together, we can reduce the impact of ACEs among New Jersey’s children.

QUESTIONS

If you have questions about the campaign and its resources, please contact info@Actions4ACEs.com.