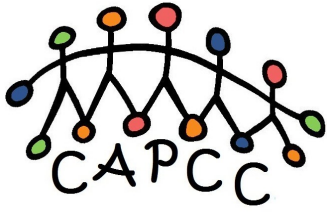


Spring 2021

Volume 21



An Ounce of Prevention

Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Council of Humboldt County

www.capcchumboldt.org

P.O. Box 854, Eureka, CA 95502

Caring for Yourself and Your Children

“Kids are resilient”

We hear that message a lot: “Kids are resilient.” We usually hear it when hard things have happened — divorce, violence in the community, death of a loved one, and the list goes on. These events can cause a lot of stress for some children, and when kids don’t have the right amount of support, the events can cause damage. As we learn more about how children’s



brains develop, we understand that ongoing stressful experiences can cause real damage to the brain and to children’s overall physical and mental health and well-being— even into adulthood. The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE Study)

(www.cdc.gov/ace), shows us

that diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, substance abuse, and others are much more common in adults who experienced serious adversity when they were children. The greater number of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), the more likely adults will develop poor health outcomes. There are a number of different factors that play a role in how children will respond to the stress.

Parents were kids once too!

What happened to parents when they were children can affect their health now as adults. Parents’ memories of how they were raised can shape the way they raise their own children. Sometimes parents who have experienced ACEs have trouble when stressful situations occur. They might lose their temper more quickly or have more health problems,

or they may struggle with depression. Many people, including parents, may use unhealthy ways to help calm down—yelling at partners or children, smoking, drinking alcohol, or using drugs. Parents can instead learn healthy ways to cope. Mental health treatment, physical



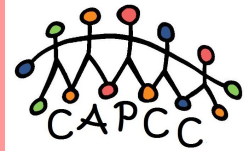
exercise, exercises to help improve self-regulation and keep a positive mental attitude, meditation, and talking to peers can help parents protect their children from also having ACEs.



An Ounce of Prevention

Spring 2021

Volume 21



Local News- Pinwheels in Humboldt County

This just in – Pinwheels have been sighted popping up around Humboldt County during the month of April. In at least one instance down on the College of the Redwoods campus, a parade seemed to form as children planted pinwheels in the grass near the roundabout. It seems this display was organized by The College of the



Redwoods Child Development Center as part of their Annual Pinwheels for Prevention Display.

Other displays were held by: Big Brothers Big Sisters of the North Coast, The Jefferson Community Center, Changing Tides, McKinleyville Family Resource Center, Marshall Family Resource Center, First 5 Humboldt and Eureka City Schools.

All participants, old and young, seemed to be enjoying themselves, laughing and having fun even

while wearing masks and maintaining a proper social distance. This reporter believes it must have something to do with the magic of the pinwheels themselves, as well as being outside in the springtime.

So remember, if you see a pinwheel, give your child a hug and tell them how wonderful they are!

Signing off – Christine Driscoll

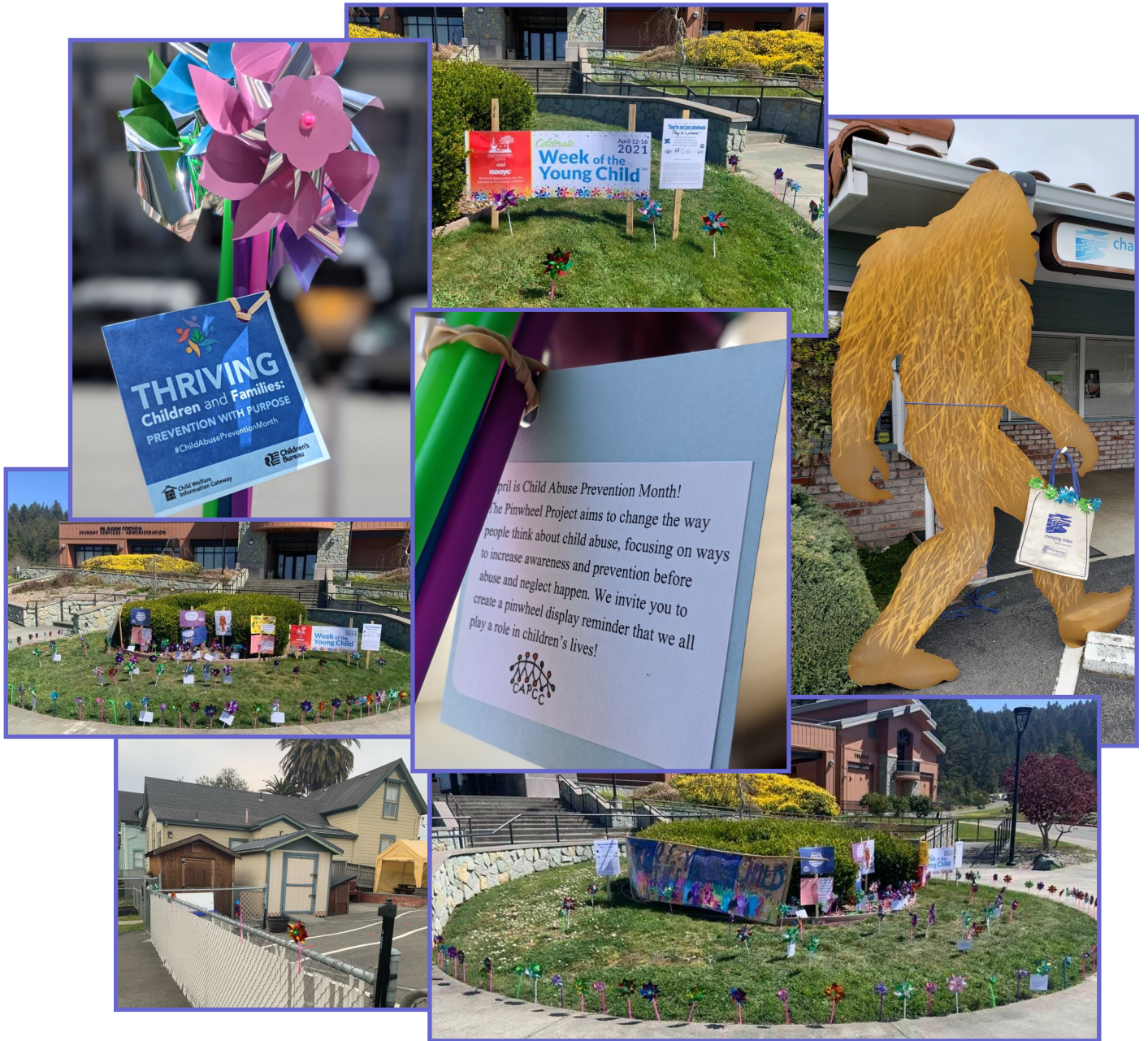
Stress and the Body

The human body is designed to handle some stress. Some stress, like the first day of kindergarten or working on a big school project, can actually be positive and help kids develop resilience. Resilience means being able to adapt and cope with stress in a way that helps you get better at handling stressful situations in the future.

Sometimes children’s stress responses can be very harmful, especially without the presence of caring and supportive adults in their lives. When children experience a very stressful situation once or are exposed to a chronically stressful

environment, the body’s natural way of dealing with stress (the fight, flight, or freeze response) can become harmful. When this happens, it results in something we call toxic stress—which can lead to behavior challenges, sickness, and mental health issues. Children can be protected from this toxic stress through the loving and supportive adults around them, especially parents or caregivers, who can reassure them and help them heal after they have experienced something traumatic. Safe, stable, nurturing relationships counteract the effects of toxic stress.



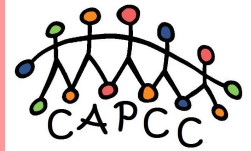


Reducing the Effects of ACEs and Toxic Stress

ACEs may increase a child's risk of health problems, but consistent care and support help to protect children's health. Relationships with loving and supportive adults can reduce children's stress levels. Even simple activities like playing with bubbles, bear hugs, lullabies, listening to music together, and coloring can make a difference. What's the best way to respond to a child's ACEs?

If possible, prevention of ACEs is best. In addition, you can:

- Tune in and learn your child's signals. Soothe your child, and teach ways to calm down when you sense that she is stressed or scared.
- Talk and play with your child. Babies like to be rocked, cuddled, and massaged. Toddlers thrive on hugs, shared stories and songs, and daily routines. These actions can help children feel seen, heard, and understood.
- Focus on managing your own stress. This can help you better adjust the way these feelings impact how you respond to your child. Having a calm parent will help your child when they're stressed.
- Take your child to regular medical visits. Your medical provider can help you understand when your child's health may be at risk.



Good Sleep Habits

Getting a good night’s sleep plays a big role in children’s mental health, physical health, and overall well-being. In fact, sleep is just as important to children’s development as nutrition and physical activity!

Research shows that children who get the

right amount of sleep are sick less frequently, focus and behave better in school, and manage stress more easily.

Here are some ideas to help your children get enough sleep:

- Keep regular routines.
- Keep bedtimes and wake-up times consistent.

- Stay active during the day.
- Limit screen usage, especially in the evenings.
- Pay attention to the bedtime environment.
- Seek support from a health care provider.

For the full article, visit: [Good Sleep Habits \(acesaware.org\)](https://www.acesaware.org/good-sleep-habits)

Tips for Nutrition

Exposure to stress can make a person more likely to have unhealthy eating habits. This can happen partly because lasting stress increases levels of the hormone cortisol in the body which serves to increase appetite. In addition, our bodies are likelier to crave sugars and fats during times of stress, and engage in other unhealthy lifestyle behaviors, like exercising less. The good news is that knowing and doing a few simple things about good nutrition can help bodies and brains operate at their very best.

Consistent, healthy routines can help children

feel safe and trusting of the world around them—and mealtime is one of a family’s most important daily routines. Here are some ways to encourage healthy eating habits:

- Eat together as a family.
- Eat a healthy breakfast every day.
- Serve lots of colorful vegetables and fruits.
- Offer whole grains
- Serve healthy protein
- Drink water with each meal and snack.
- Get your kids involved.

For the full article, visit: [Tips for Good Nutrition \(acesaware.org\)](https://www.acesaware.org/tips-for-good-nutrition)

Using Mindfulness

Mindfulness is paying attention to the present moment. It is the process of being aware of the thoughts, feelings, and sensations happening inside you, and tuning in to what is happening around you.

It is easier to be mindful in your everyday life when you practice regularly and

you can practice *anytime!* The more you do, the faster it will be a habit, and the more easily your stress response calms down!

Children who have experienced ACEs may have difficulty getting themselves back to a relaxed state once they become stressed.

Prompt your child to try breathing deeply when she feels stressed or worried. Set a good example by doing it yourself, and model how to take deep breaths when *you* are stressed.

For the full article, visit: [Using Mindfulness \(acesaware.org\)](https://www.acesaware.org/using-mindfulness)



Helping Kids: Strong and Healthy Parents

Parents and other loving adults are important in helping children practice resiliency. Parents need to take care of themselves before they will be able to help their children, similar to the instructions heard on an airplane— “Put on your own oxygen mask before assisting others.” What does this mean?

- ◇ Identify your circle of support. Parenting is hard, especially when families have experienced difficult times. No one should try to do it alone. Who do you turn to for advice or help or just to talk about what’s going on in your parenting? Seek support from counselors, physicians, family and friends, faith communities, and others who can help you see what you are doing well and to connect you with more support when needed.



- ◇ Take care of yourself physically. Eat healthy, get enough sleep, practice an exercise routine, take care of your medical needs, and give yourself some child-free time to relax.
- ◇ Identify things you love to do and make time for them.
- ◇ Identify ways that help you calm down or handle stress when it happens. Take a walk, practice deep breathing, talk to friends, or meditate or pray.
- ◇ Take time to think about what happened in your own childhood and how it could be affecting you now. If this is difficult or painful, consider getting support from a counselor or ask someone you trust for help.

Once parents have found ways to stay healthy even in stressful times, they can provide support to their children. What does this support look like?

- ◇ Be a positive influence in your children’s lives. Your children need to know that you love them and believe in them. Ordinary things like playing together and spending time together can help.
- ◇ Learn about what you can and can’t expect from your children at different ages. Use this knowledge to plan your activities. For example, a 2-year-old is not going to be able to sit still for long. When you need to bring your children to the grocery store, involve them: “Do you see anything red?” “Please help me put the cans into the cart.” Or, if possible, consider going to the grocery store on your own, without your children, or going with a friend who can help.
- ◇ Model good behavior for your children. They look up to you and will try to do what you do.
- ◇ A good parenting practice is to stay as positive as possible. For example, give your children praise; try to notice the good things you see them doing each day.
- ◇ Be aware of what ACEs and other hard times can do to your children’s brain development and overall health. If something traumatic happens to your children or family, share that information with your pediatrician. Medical professionals can help you and your children get the support you need. The earlier you get support for your children, the easier it will be for them to heal quickly and continue living healthy and less stressful lives.



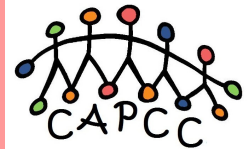
Taken from the American Academy of Pediatrics. Please see the AAP Web site for additional information at www.aap.org/traumaguide.



An Ounce of Prevention

Spring 2021

Volume 21



Newsletter Edited by:
Kathryn Walkley
Christine Driscoll
Marian Strong

For feedback or questions contact Christine at cdriscoll@rcaa.org
707-269-2016

The Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Council of Humboldt County is a broad-based non profit advocacy organization that works to eliminate child abuse and neglect in our community through (1) striving to assure coordinated services and policies for the prevention, intervention and treatment of child abuse among agencies and organizations, (2) actively promoting and supporting high-quality programs that successfully reduce child abuse and neglect and (3) increasing public awareness of resources to help prevent child abuse and decrease family stress.

Get the whole family fit in 15 minutes a day

No time? Several fitness experts explained that even quick workouts can be beneficial, and there are many free online resources and expert-recommended gear to help everyone from time-strapped adults to seniors and kids crush their home fitness goals.



15 minutes can help form healthy habits

Trying to squeeze in a long exercise session into your schedule can be overwhelming, especially when you are crunched for time, don't have a dedicated space or can't seem to stay motivated.

But can you spare 15 minutes? Even that can help a lot. The

key: Just do it. "For those of us who are time-strapped, it's important to know that even 15 minutes of exercise will benefit you, so get rid of that all-or-nothing attitude," says Claire Gray, a certified pre- and post-natal trainer. She notes that exercise can reduce feelings of anxiety and depression, improve mood and increase energy and alertness.

Short workouts have benefits for all ages

"Fifteen minutes of focused and thoughtful exercise could be the very thing between that person and a better mood, improved mental clarity, a reduction in stress, a sense of accomplishment and maintenance of good habits," according to Cody Hill, a National Academy of Sports Medicine-certified personal trainer. Eric the Trainer also notes that self-isolation puts a major damper on kids' active lifestyles. Exercising even briefly "can provide a constructive

Check out our website:

<http://capcchumboldt.org/>

or on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/CAPCCHumboldt>

platform for parent/child

interaction, something that has been threatened by the one-two punch of adolescence plus the rise of the digital age," he said.

Amie Hoff, a certified personal trainer and wellness and fitness professional, agrees that a fun-focused regimen of brief exercise can benefit kids.

"Fifteen minutes of activity is just enough time for them to think of it as a game and not exercise," she says. "Get the whole family involved and developing a routine of adding exercise to your day."



For more information and a list of fast free workout programs, visit <https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/16/cnn-underscored/family-workouts-in-15-minutes/index.html>