



Adverse and Positive Childhood Experiences by Gender in Maryland Students

What are Adverse and Positive Childhood Experiences?

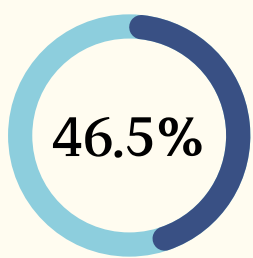
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs):

ACEs are potentially traumatic events that happen during childhood such as abuse (physical, emotional, and sexual), neglect (physical and emotional), and household challenges (i.e., divorce, domestic violence).

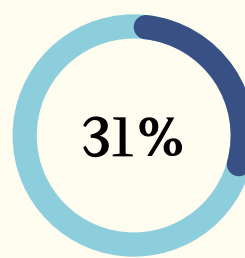
Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs):

Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) are experiences that can promote healthy development and resilience and counterbalance the negative effects of ACEs.

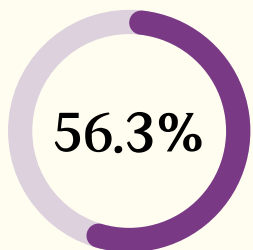
Rates of ACEs among Middle and High School Males and Females



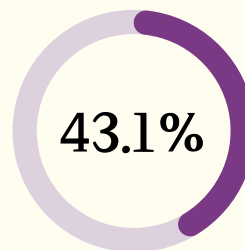
46.5% of **Middle School Girls** have experienced 1 or more ACEs



31% of **Middle School Boys** have experienced 1 or more ACEs



56.3% of **High School Girls** have experienced 1 or more ACEs



43.1% of **High School Boys** have experienced 1 or more ACEs

Gender Differences in the Impacts of ACEs

Although a higher proportion of girls experience ACEs, the risk for behavioral health and substance use impacts vary.

For example, **among middle school students** who have experienced **emotional abuse...**

Girls have 8.9x increased risk and **Boys have 3.5 x** increased risk of **mental health challenges.**



And among **high school students** who have experienced **household domestic violence...**

Girls are 5x more likely and **Boys are 9.5x more likely** to experience **mental health and substance use challenges.**

The good news is...

Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) can help decrease the risk of experiencing ACEs and **up to 90% of students have experienced at least one PCE!**

Having food security is an especially impactful Positive Childhood Experience.

Among Middle School Students, **food security** is associated with a **decreased risk of witnessing community violence** by **64%** for both girls and boys.



Among High School Students, **food security** is associated with **decreased risk of household domestic violence** by **88%** for girls and **81%** for boys.

Additional research is needed to determine the cause of why certain positive childhood experiences decrease the risk of experiencing adverse childhood experiences.

However, we know that Positive Childhood Experiences have a dose-response relationship with better adult mental health and improved social and emotional support in adulthood.