Press Releases
2021
2020
2019
2018
2017
2016
2015
2014
2013
2012
2011
2010
Publications
Reports and Newsletters
Testimony

February 4, 2021 - Governor Murphy Launches New Jersey's First Adverse Childhood Experiences Action Plan to Prevent and Reduce Childhood Trauma and Adversity

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy, Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver, First Lady Tammy Murphy, and New Jersey Department of Children and Families Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer today launched New Jersey's first Adverse Childhood Experiences Action Plan, a comprehensive statewide strategy to prevent and reduce childhood trauma and adversity. The action plan outlines several initiatives to identify, coordinate, and advance programs and services across state government to reduce and prevent adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) that negatively impact the developing brain and lead to lifelong social, physical, emotional, and economic challenges.

The ACEs Action Plan was shaped in partnership with New Jersey families, community and legislative leaders, health care professionals, and the NJ ACEs Collaborative, which includes the Department of Children and Families, Burke Foundation, The Nicholson Foundation, and Turrell Fund, with support from the Center for Health Care Strategies. The Office of Resilience within the Department of Children and Families will lead the State's work in raising awareness and engaging communities in ACEs education.

"Building a stronger and fairer New Jersey for our families has been a top priority of my Administration," **said Governor Murphy.** "This statewide strategy creates groundbreaking solutions to deal with issues that plague our children, such as the compounded effects of adverse childhood experiences. With this plan, New Jersey will become a leader in tackling adverse childhood experiences and break the cycle of trauma before it manifests into negative health outcomes."

"The socio-economic fallout of this pandemic is tremendous and will mean more adverse conditions for children that can sometimes lead to homelessness and ensuing trauma," **said Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, who serves as Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs.** "As Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs, we will be a partner in this Action Plan to help ensure that children and families live in good conditions with the supportive services they need – whether it be housing, healthcare, or behavioral."

"The toxic stress of adverse childhood experiences is inextricably linked to New Jersey's maternal and infant health crisis," **said First Lady Tammy Murphy.** "Soon-to-be mothers who have suffered from adverse childhood experiences are at greater risk of having children with reduced birth weight, shorter gestational age, developmental challenges, and socio-emotional problems. Further, the adversities that lead to these health outcomes disproportionately impact people of color. Together, the New Jersey Adverse Childhood Experience Action Plan and the Nurture NJ Maternal and Infant Health Strategic Plan will effect positive change that will ripple through the lives of New Jersey families for generations to come."

"Neutralizing childhood trauma is crucial to building strong families because we know from the research and the work we do that ACEs are a root cause for a lot of the physical, social, economic and familial health challenges we see when supporting New Jersey's children and families," **said New Jersey Department of Children and Families Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer.** "To prevent and reduce child abuse, neglect and other maltreatment, we first need to disrupt the cycle of trauma and help children and adults to heal from adversity."

"This Action Plan lays out a path of hard work and heart-work. We are more than our collective traumas; we are our potential for resilience and our capacity for strength," **said Dave Ellis, Executive Director of the Office of Resilience.** "The need to mitigate the impacts of ACEs is especially salient given our collective exposure to COVID-19, racial injustice, and social unrest. Learning about oneself can be a great awakening and catalyst for courage, compassion and clarity. I look forward to raising awareness and setting New Jersey on a course towards healing."

The New Jersey ACEs Action Plan sets forth a path toward making New Jersey a trauma-informed and healing-centered state. Adverse childhood experiences affect more than 40 percent of children in New Jersey across socioeconomic strata, and can have lifelong implications for physical, social, and psychological health. The Action Plan calls for a coordinated, cross-sector, and statewide response to prevent and mitigate the lasting effects of ACEs on children's health and well-being.

The New Jersey ACEs Action Plan's goals are to:

1. help children and families in New Jersey reach their full potential by growing and developing in relationships that are safe, healthy, and protective;
2. reduce ACE scores in future generations;
3. continually develop resource programs and services based on the research, rather than focusing on rigid metrics of success or failure;
4. and look at solutions based on community input that address root causes rather than symptoms.

The key elements to implementing New Jersey's ACEs Action Plan include:

1. gathering information about current efforts to address ACEs in the state;
2. meeting with non-governmental organizations to let them lead and contribute to the work;
3. expanding leadership to include communities directly impacted by ACEs into the design process;
4. collecting data on the project so people can engage with it;
5. and letting individuals impacted by ACEs know that an online community is available for them to share their own

thoughts, contributions, and opinions on the ongoing work.

"The Nicholson Foundation is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of at-risk populations in New Jersey through strategic planning with state and local agencies committed to residents' health and early childhood," **said Arturo Brito, MD, MPH, Executive Director of The Nicholson Foundation.** "As early adopters of ACEs-related training, we are proud contributors to the Action Plan and we are eager to see it realized for the positive impact its initiatives will have for families throughout the state."

"The Burke Foundation invests in transformative initiatives that benefit the health, well-being, and resilience of children and families in New Jersey," **said Atiya Weiss, MPH, Executive Director of the Burke Foundation.** "Since 2018, the NJ ACEs Collaborative has worked collectively to address the negative effects of childhood adversity, driven by our deep commitment to building a brighter future for children in New Jersey. The strategies in the Action Plan present a compelling vision to break down silos and build partnership across sectors to prevent and mitigate the lasting effects of ACEs."

"This Action Plan reflects years of work throughout the state, informed by best practices, research, and the voices of people directly impacted by childhood adversity," **said Curt Fields, MBA, President and CEO of The Turrell Fund.** "Our mission is to support, advocate for, and fund organizations that provide or foster high-quality developmental and educational services to at-risk children and their families. This Action Plan meets and exceeds the strong criteria we set for our projects."

"A full two years in the making, the NJ ACEs Action Plan represents the perspectives of many stakeholders across the state, from individual families to policymakers," **said Allison Hamblin, MSPH, President and CEO of the Center for Health Care Strategies.** "There is a role for every individual, every program, and every system to make New Jersey a place where children and families can live their lives without being limited by the effects of trauma."

While the Office of Resilience is leading the statewide implementation of the Action Plan, partners from all sectors — public, private, and philanthropic — are needed to bring it to fruition.

Interested individuals or organizations are encouraged to:

1. Join the NJ Resiliency Coalition.
2. Sign up via the "Call to Action" link.
3. Choose an area of interest and engagement.

To view the New Jersey Adverse Childhood Experiences Action Plan, click here, https://www.nj.gov/dcf/documents/NJ.ACEs.Action.Plan.2021.pdf.

Select Language ▼ Translator Disclaimers

Contact Us | Privacy Notice | Legal Statement & Disclaimers | Accessibility Statement

OPRA | Open Public Records Act

2-1-1 New Jersey | ENGAGING IN RACIAL EQUITY AT DCF | DCF SUPPORTS LGBTQI | NJ START ENROLL NOW | AMBER ALERT NJ AMBER Alert Plan — No activations at this time | NJ Children's Trust Fund Growing Strong Families

Department: DCF Home | Families | Women | Providers & Stakeholders | News | About DCF | Data | Contact Us | Divisions & Offices | Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect
Statewide: NJ Home | Services A to Z | Department/Agencies | FAQs

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 2021
Department of Children and Families
P.O. Box 729
Trenton, NJ 08625-0729
Phone: 1-855-INFO-DCF (1-855-463-6323)