



Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice
House Bill No. 2048
February 2, 2017

A landmark study known as the *Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Study* assessed the associations between childhood maltreatment and well-being outcomes later in life. ACEs include emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, physical violence, household substance abuse, mental illness in household, parental separation or divorce, an incarcerated family member, emotional neglect, and physical neglect. The results of the study showed that adverse experiences in childhood are major risk factors for illness and death, as well as a poor quality of life. Additional findings from the ACEs study identified important connections between ACEs and school performance. Students dealing with ACEs are two-and-one-half times more likely to fail a grade, score lower on standardized achievement test scores, have more receptive or expressive language difficulties, are suspended or expelled more often, and are designated to special education more frequently. A report compiled by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, the *2014 Kansas Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Adverse Childhood Experiences Among Kansas Adults*, concluded that slightly more than half of Kansas adults have experienced at least one ACE.

The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) and the Technical Assistance System Network (TASN) have been collaborating with several agencies, including those represented on the Governor's Behavioral Health Services Planning Council, Children's Subcommittee, to determine how to best address ACEs within a multi-tier system of support framework. *School Mental Health: A Resource for Kansas School Communities* (<https://ksdetasn.org/smhi/school-mental-health-a-resource-for-kansas-school-communities>) is an initial product of these collaborative efforts. Contained in this resource is additional explanation of the larger context in which ACEs are being addressed within education. Other efforts to address ACEs include the provision of *Youth Mental Health First Aid* trainings, regional trainings on *The Impact of Trauma on Learning and Teaching: Strategies to Help Students and Prevent Burnout*, resource development, and technical assistance to strengthen school mental health systems and supports.

KSDE and TASN fully recognize the importance of addressing ACEs and are actively working to support children impacted by ACEs through cross-system collaboration and comprehensive, multi-tier systems of supports.

Cherie Blanchat, LSCSW
KSDE TASN ATBS School Mental Health Initiative
Phone: 785.979.8326 Email: cherieb@tasnatbs.org