## PORTLAND

**Scoliosis Awareness Month** Scoliosis Awareness Month Dravet Syndrome Awareness Month



Let's all have a great summer!



## Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

ACEs are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood. Some examples include emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, neglect, violence in the home, household substance abuse or mental illness and parental separation or divorce.

- Almost 50% of children nationwide have experienced some form of trauma.
- 60% of children who witness domestic violence are under the age of six.
- 76% of children exposed to five or more significant adverse experiences in the first three years of childhood face a likelihood of having delays in their language, emotional, or brain development.

Some stress is normal, but too much can become toxic. Children growing up with toxic stress may have difficulty forming healthy and stable relationships, and it can also affect brain development. A child who has experienced ACEs is more likely to have learning and behavioral issues. Attention deficits, emotional dysregulation, and oppositional behaviors may have their roots in early abuse or neglect. Things that happen to children during different stages of life will influence their health over the life span.

The presence of caring adults can help shift the narrative in a positive manner. Think of a child's behaviors as a set of clues to help you understand the child better. Adverse experiences are counterbalanced with protective factors. Research of resilience in children is ongoing, but we do know that several factors are positively related to this protection, including cognitive capacity, healthy relationships with parents and caregivers, and supportive environmental systems. Providing safe, secure, and nurturing relationships can help reset the body's stress system. Children learn from every personal encounter, especially primary caregivers. High-quality childcare can help to ensure a strong start for children.

## References

Adverse Childhood Experiences. (2020, April 30). Retrieved from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html Adverse Childhood Experiences and the Lifelong Consequences of Trauma. (2014). Retrieved from American Academy of Pediatrics : https://www.aap.org/en-us/documents/ttb\_aces\_consequences.pdf