

Project Abstract

Project Title	PDG B-5 ACES Initiative				
Applicant Name	Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE)				
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Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are a health epidemic in Arkansas affecting our B-5 population at an alarming rate. In Arkansas, 1 in 7 children experience 3 or more ACEs compared to the national average of 1 and 10. This is a crucial time in a child's life and the importance of high quality early childhood care can change the trajectory of a child's life benefiting them well beyond childhood and ultimately be an indicator for their overall life expectancy. Our state is driven by to act. We must protect our most vulnerable population early to prevent the further generational perpetuation of adverse childhood experiences in Arkansas.

Through this grant we will work to educate individuals at the professional and community level on understanding trauma including the long-term health outcomes of those who experience prolonged toxic stress. Our focus will be to streamline the ACEs work in Arkansas by gaining buy-in with stakeholders, collaborating with partners, and examining existing programs to ensure children have the best start in life. The DCCECE is committed through to maximizing parental choice and knowledge, sharing best practices, and improving overall quality as it relates to ACEs and trauma informed care in early childhood. We will accomplish the following activities:

Activity 1 (Needs Assessment): Update existing needs assessment and identify research gaps on trauma and ACEs in Arkansas. Conduct further research to fill gaps and create a comprehensive B-5 needs assessment.

Activity 2 (Strategic Plan): Update existing strategic plan based on; needs assessment, collaboration partners, and identifying stakeholders/key decision makers

Activity 3 (Maximize Parental Choice and Knowledge):

- Embed trauma informed education into previously established family engagement activities
- Dissemination of information at established family engagement activities
- Creation and management of social media accounts to engage parents on accessible platforms
- Creation of evaluation tools to examine family engagement practices

Activity 4 (Sharing Best Practices):

- Conduct train-the-trainer activities with internal staff, partners, and providers on evidence based trauma informed practices
- Host a stakeholder, partner, and provider joint symposium on trauma in conjunction with the previously established ACEs Summit
- Develop infographics in ACEs and trauma

Activity 5 (Improving Overall Quality):

- Create higher levels of Arkansas Better Beginnings which include trauma informed care practices
- Create pilot program models for trauma informed care
- Implement Family Engagement Specialists/Family Support Staff