

# ADDRESSING SDOH AS A CHILD HEALTH ADVOCATE

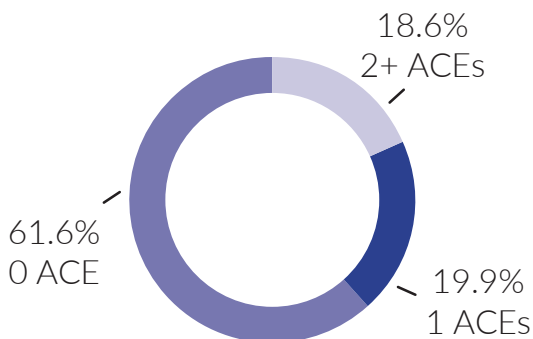
While it is not likely the impact of SDOH will diminish any time soon, school nurses can greatly affect a child's ability to thrive even in difficult circumstances. Advocacy is a critical role for school nurses and is done in school health offices every day.

Child advocacy is a learned skill and includes the ability to build relationships, develop effective communication, show kindness, be inclusive, support parent participation, and build trust. Advocacy also includes the ability to network and find resources to help students and families meet their needs. Whether advocating for treatment of a health condition or clothing needs for a student, school nurses have a unique ability to address SDOH.

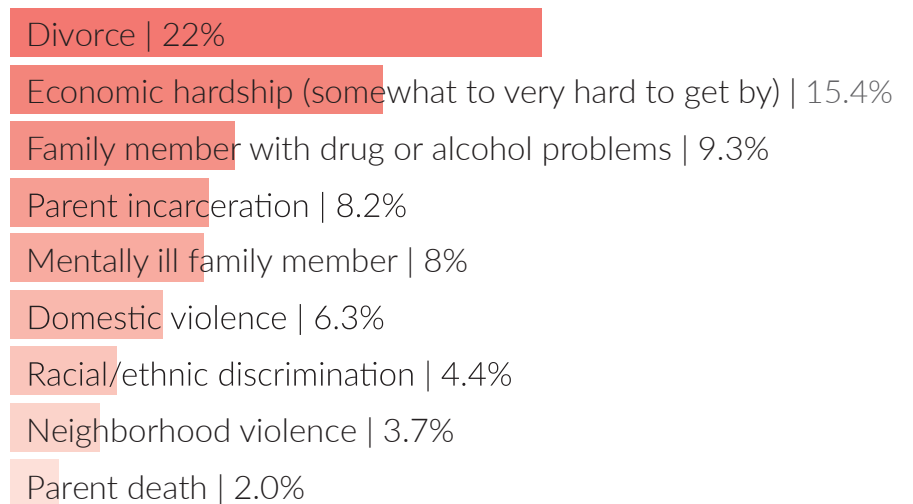
## DATA

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that can have negative, lasting effects on health and well-being. Experiencing multiple ACEs results in the compounding effects, and there is growing evidence that it is the general experience of multiple ACEs, rather than the specific individual impact of any one experience that matters. The experience of ACEs extends beyond the child and can cause consequences for the whole family and community.

NUMBER OF ACEs CHILDREN EXPERIENCE (2019)

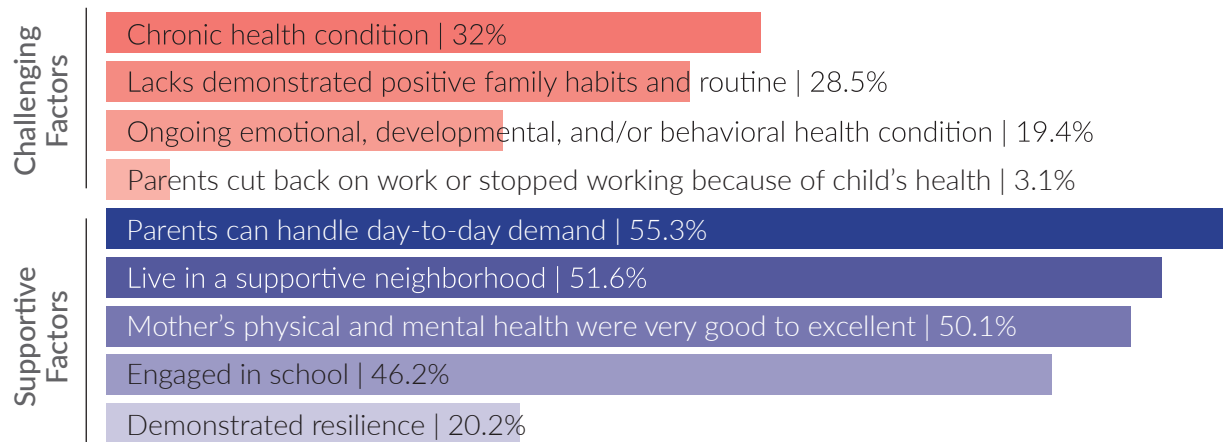


## TYPE OF ACE



Source: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019

## AMONG CHILDREN WITH ONE OR MORE ACE, THE FOLLOWING WERE DISPLAYED



Source: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019

## HEALTH OFFICE CONSIDERATIONS

Good rules to follow to ensure the students who come into your health office are getting the best support possible:

- Communicate with the student and ask questions
- Recognize students act differently at home and school
- Maximize parent teacher conference time and try to meet with parents of the students you are concerned about
- Do not delay getting support for the student
- Monitor the student's moods to watch for psychiatric and learning disorders

Source: Child Mind Institute, n.d.

When giving advice or recommendations to parents and families, remember:

- They can "take it or leave it"
- Remind them you are there to help
- Encourage adults without looking down on them or making them feel less-than
- Keep in mind – you do not always know the circumstances occurring in a student's household. Kindness and compassion for the family go a long way!

When working with students and families, consider these statement that can lessen the impact of trauma:

- "You are worthwhile and wanted"
- "You are safe"
- "You are capable"
- "I am available and won't reject you"
- "I am responsive and won't hurt you"
- "I will protect you from danger"
- "I will listen and understand"

When working with families, it is important to know that the top three reasons parent do not become more involved in school activities include:

1. Lack of time
2. Childcare needs
3. School staff seem so busy
4. Fear that their child will be viewed differently (negative perceptions of school staff)

## RESOURCES

### STATE

Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) resources:

- Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Model: [www.education.ne.gov/csss/whole-school-whole-community-whole-child](http://www.education.ne.gov/csss/whole-school-whole-community-whole-child)
- Family & Community Engagement: [www.education.ne.gov/family](http://www.education.ne.gov/family)
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers: [www.education.ne.gov/21stcclc](http://www.education.ne.gov/21stcclc)

PTI Nebraska (Parent Training and Information): [pti-nebraska.org/state-and-local-organizations](http://pti-nebraska.org/state-and-local-organizations)

Nebraska School Nurses Association (NSNA): [nebraskaschoolnurses.nursingnetwork.com](http://nebraskaschoolnurses.nursingnetwork.com)

### NATIONAL

National School Nurse Association: [www.nasn.org](http://www.nasn.org)

Attendance Works: [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)

*This material was developed as a compliment to the Project ECHO School Health series on Social Determinants of Health, Session 8: Addressing SDOH as a Child Health Advocate, presented by Paul Kraus and Kim Larson, on April 28, 2021. Additional resources can be found here: [www.childrensomaha.org/projectecho](http://www.childrensomaha.org/projectecho)*