

ACEs Aware Initiative: Overview



This fact sheet explains Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), the impact of ACEs and toxic stress on health, and steps for providers to screen for ACEs and receive Medi-Cal payment.

The term Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) comes from the landmark 1998 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Kaiser Permanente. It describes 10 categories of adversities in three domains experienced by age 18 years: abuse, neglect, and/or household dysfunction (Figure 1).¹

Data show that 62% of California residents have experienced at least one ACE and 16% have experienced four or more ACEs.²

Figure 1: 10 Categories of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Abuse: physical, emotional, and sexual abuse

Neglect: physical and emotional neglect

Household dysfunction: parental incarceration, mental illness, substance use, parental separation or divorce, and intimate partner violence

ACEs cross ethnic, socioeconomic, gender, and geographic lines. Children are uniquely vulnerable to the effects of an overactive stress response due to ACEs because their brains and bodies are still developing.

A consensus of scientific research demonstrates that cumulative adversity, especially when experienced during critical and sensitive periods of development, is a root cause to some of the most harmful, persistent, and expensive health challenges facing our state and nation, including at least 9 of the 10 leading causes of death in the United States.

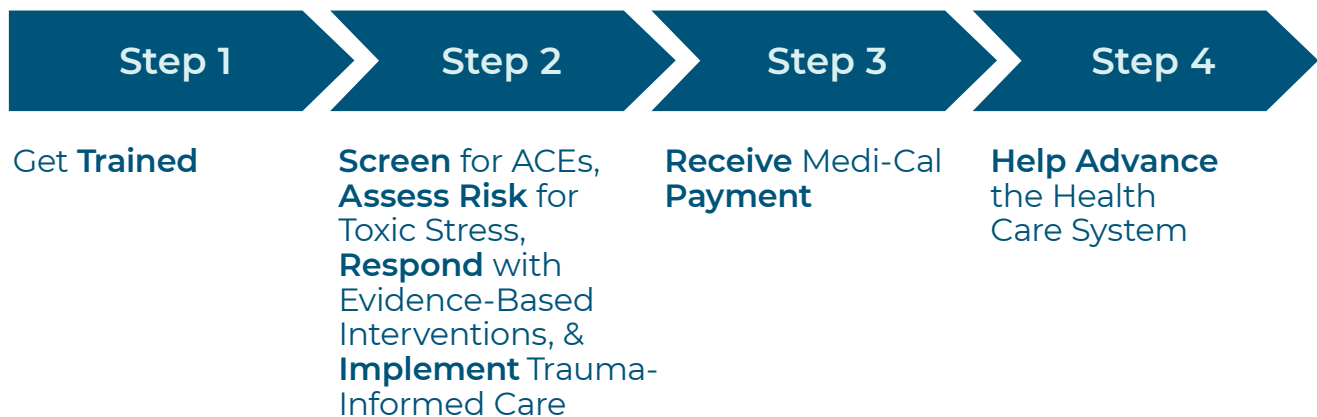
ACEs Aware in California

The ACEs Aware initiative offers Medi-Cal providers training, screening tools, clinical protocols, and payment for screening children and adults for ACEs. Screening for ACEs, assessing for toxic stress, and responding with evidence-based interventions can significantly improve the health and well-being of individuals and families.

- Effective January 1, 2020, qualified Medi-Cal providers are eligible for a **\$29 payment** for screening patients up to age 65 with full-scope Medi-Cal using a qualified screening tool.
- Beginning July 1, 2020, to receive payment, providers must have **completed a certified training and self-attested** to completing it.

Steps for Providers

Providers should follow these steps to receive Medi-Cal payment for conducting ACE screenings:



For more information, visit the [ACEs Aware website](https://www.acesaware.org) at [ACEsAware.org](https://www.acesaware.org).

References

- 1 Felitti VJ, Anda RF, Nordenberg D, et al. Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. Am J Prev Med 1998; 14: 245–58.
- 2 California Department of Public Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Branch (CDPH/IVPB), University of California, Davis, Violence Prevention Research Program, California Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 2011-2017.

Visit [ACEsAware.org](https://www.acesaware.org) and join us as we launch a movement — led by the Office of the California Surgeon General and the California Department of Health Care Services — to ensure everyone is ACEs Aware.