Preconference Opening Remarks

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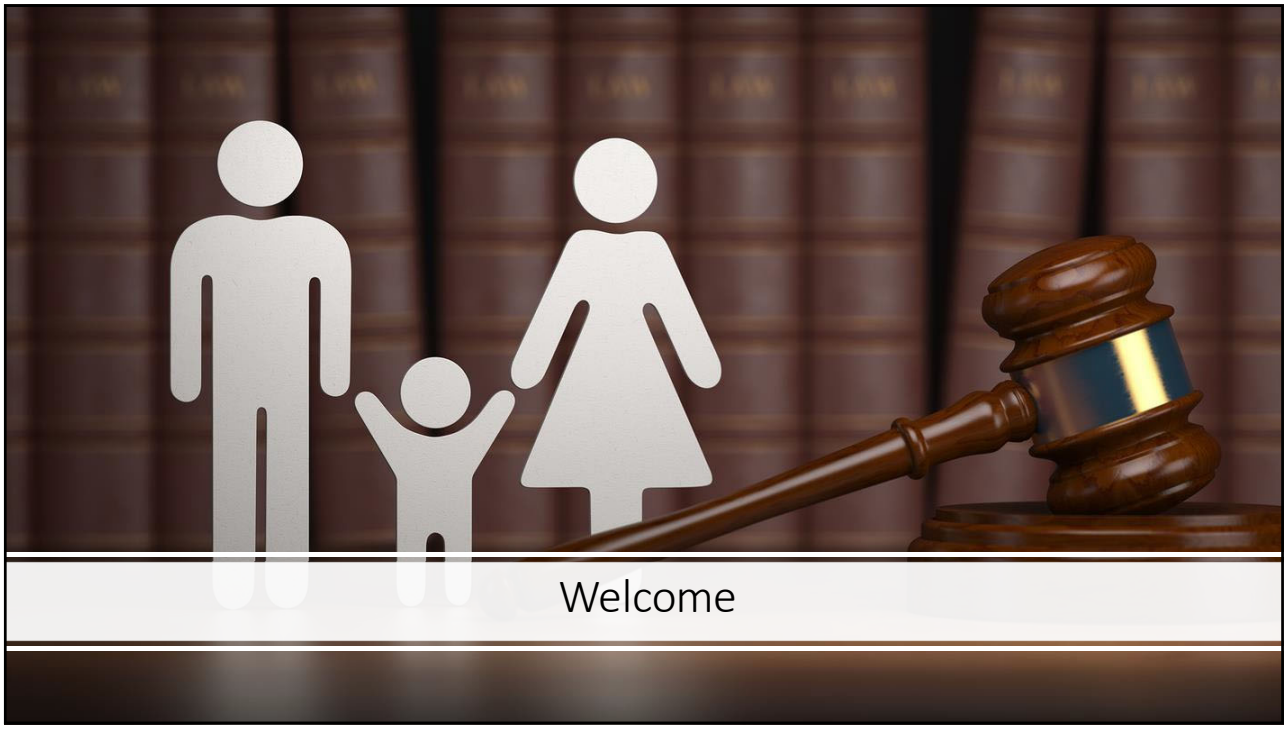
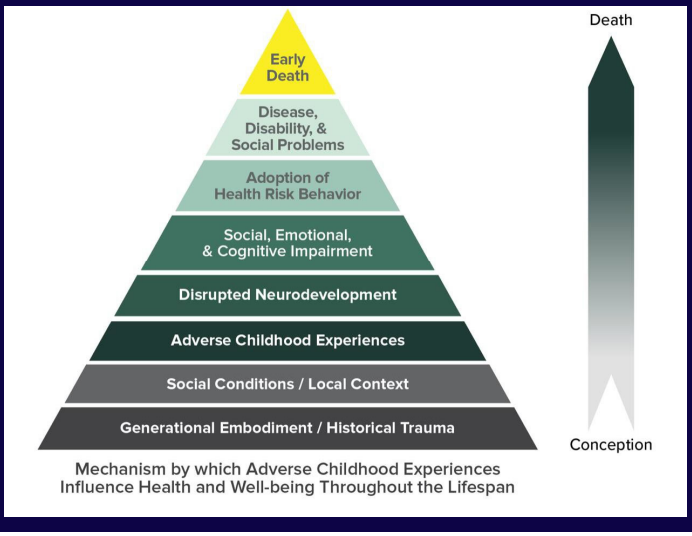


Foundations for Understanding Trauma

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)
  - CDC | Kaiser Permanente Study from 1995 to 1997



Mechanism by which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan

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Content source: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention

Original Ten ACEs Questions

- Emotional Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Neglect
- Physical Neglect
- Household Violence
- Household Substance Use Disorders
- Household Mental Illness
- Parental Separation or Divorce
- Incarcerated Household Member

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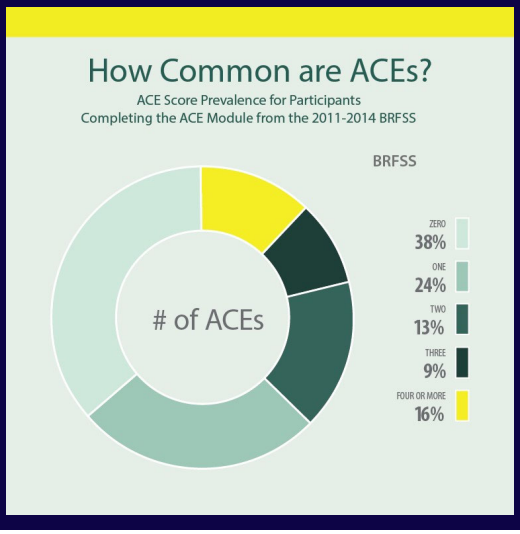
Prevalence in Child Welfare



- Children in the child welfare system are far more likely to have experienced at least **FOUR** ACEs

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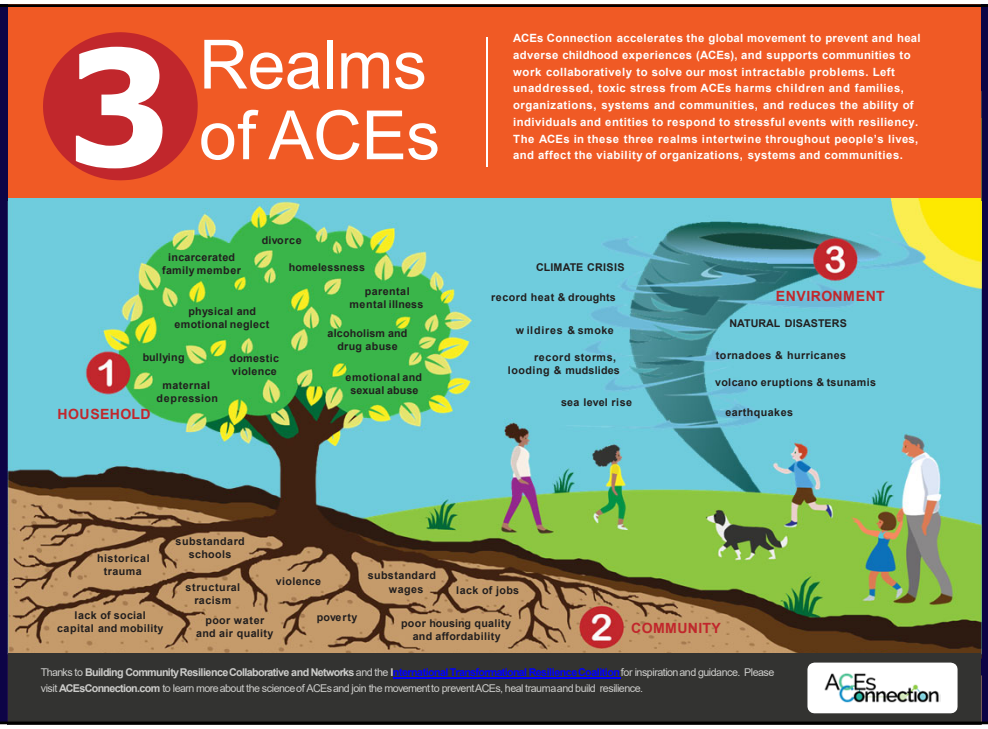
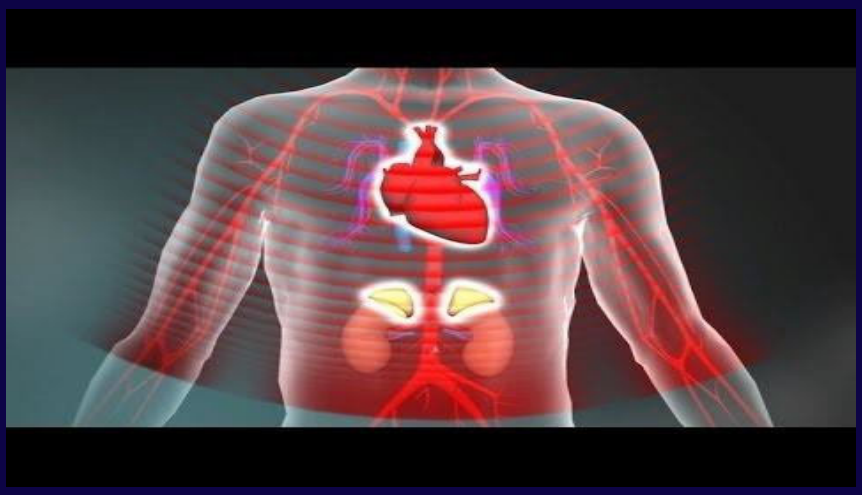


Toxic Stress



https://youtu.be/rVwFkcOZHJw

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Building Resilience

- Supportive Adult
- Building Sense of Self-Efficacy
- Opportunities to strengthen adaptive skills
- Mobilizing sources of faith, hope & cultural traditions

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Using What We Know to Change Practices

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Preconference

Placement to Permanency: One and Done

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Goals for Today

- Understand placement changes in the context of traumatic experiences
- Understand DFPS policy for placement decisions
- Review tools for addressing placement breakdowns and reducing unnecessary changes

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Placement Changes as Traumatic Events

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Statutory & Policy Considerations

Placement Stability

In selecting a placement for a child, the department shall consider whether the placement is in the child's best interest. In determining whether a placement is in a child's best interest, the department shall consider whether the placement:

1. is the least restrictive setting for the child;
2. is the closest in geographic proximity to the child's home;
3. is the most able to meet the identified needs of the child; and
4. satisfies any expressed interests of the child relating to placement, when developmentally appropriate.

Texas Family Code Section 264.107(c)

Placement Stability, cont.

In making placement decisions, the department shall:

- except when making an emergency placement that does not allow time for the required consultation, consult with the child's caseworker, attorney ad litem, and guardian ad litem and with any court appointed volunteer advocate for the child.

Texas Family Code Section 264.107(e)

Educational Stability

The department shall develop, in accordance with 42 U.S.C. Section 675, a plan to ensure the educational stability of a foster child.

Texas Family Code Section 264.1072

Required Factors for Placement Consideration

- Placement with a noncustodial parent if there are no concerns of abuse or neglect
- Placement with siblings
- Placement with relatives and other connections
- The child's education needs, including the need to maintain education stability

CPS Handbook 4114

Required Factors for Placement Consideration, cont.

- Placement in the least restrictive setting
- Proximity of placement to the child's home
- Child's individual needs and preferences
- Biological parents' recommendations
- Substitute caregiver's circumstances

CPS Handbook 4114

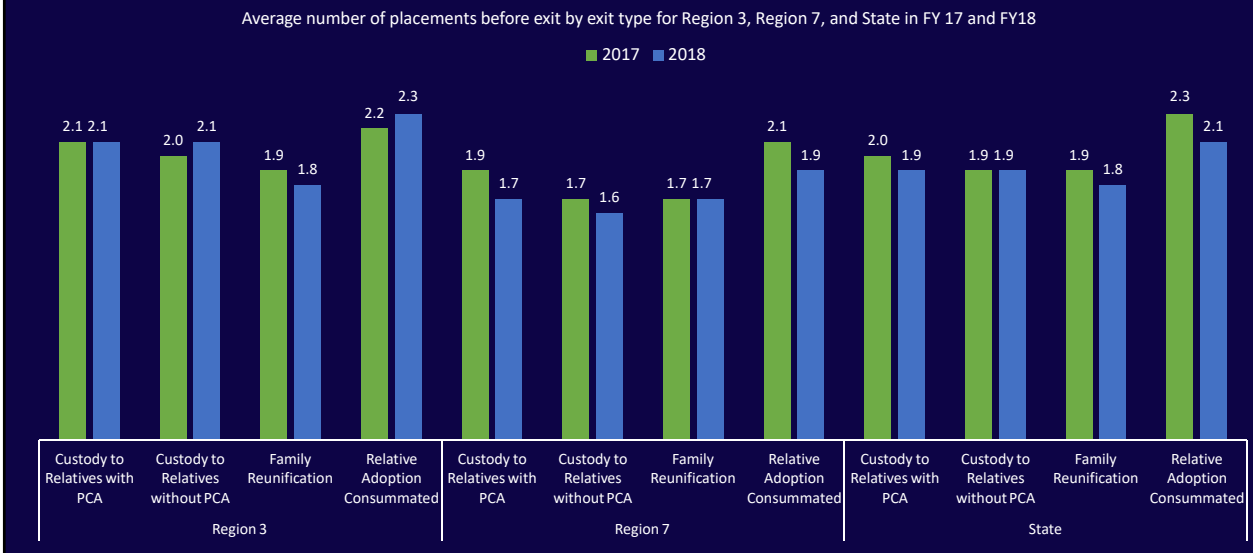
Additional DFPS Policies

- ICPC
  - Consider possibly ordering 30-day visits, returning to Texas for a weekend, and then going back out of state again another 30 days until the ICPC is done
  - When school is out the child can stay all summer for a "visit."

Other Resources

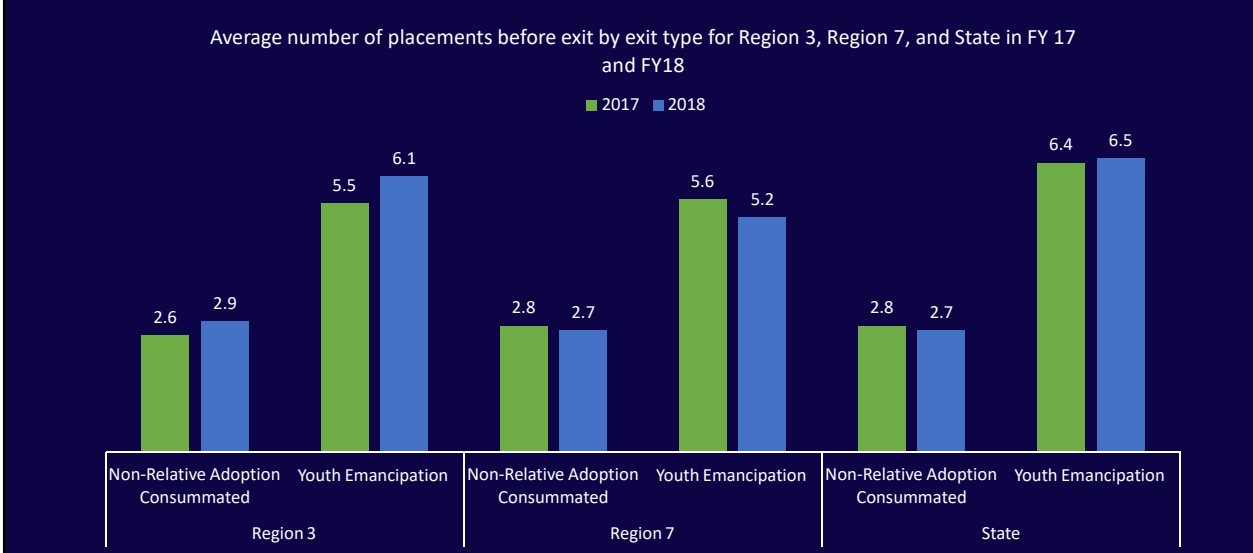
- Building a Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System: A Blueprint
- Bench Book & Bench Cards
- NCJFCJ Enhanced Guidelines

Children and youth who exit from care to family or to relatives when identified average fewer placements.



Data Source: DFPS Data Book FY18

When children and youth exit care to a non-relative or emancipate they average more placement changes.



Data Source: DFPS Data Book FY18

Tools from the Bench

Stabilizing Placements & Reducing Transitions

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Monitoring Placement Changes

- Establish Standing Orders on Placement Changes
- Increase Frequency of Permanency Hearings
- Request Full Placement Details in CPS' Affidavits
- Require more Show Cause Hearings instead of *Ex Parte* Removals

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Court Appointed Special Advocates

- Texas CASA and CASA of Travis County's Family Finding work
  - Kevin Campbell

Non-Family Placements as Last Resort

- Even as last resort, consider how to navigate these to be best for the child.
- Order individualized contracts to secure appropriate RTC or other placement.
- Encourage the mindset of foster parents as partners.
- Remember ACEs: there are sobering implications when you consider the relationship severance that can happen with placement outside the family.

Normalcy as Placement Stability Tool

- Afterschool activities
- Part-time job for older youth
- Summer activities

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Mentors

- A relationship with one healthy adult can be a key to healing when dealing with 4+ ACEs.
  - Often recommended in CANS assessment
  - Often hard to fulfill

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Returns & Monitors

- Support Families through Transition Planning
  - From RTCs to Home
  - Medically Fragile Children
  - STAR Health Services

Dually Involved Youth

- Joint Case Planning
- Braided services
- More placement options from two systems

Thank You