

## Module 3: Guided Questions

# Adverse Childhood Experiences: What Happens Early Can Change Lives

### Overview

Promotion of optimal early brain and child development is essential for the health and well-being of children. This online learning module is designed to take about 30 minutes. Options for additional learning activities are provided.

### Guided Questions

These guided questions are designed to expand on the content provided in module one and to encourage learners to think about how the core early brain and child development information can be used in their practice and/or training.

These questions can be used in either large group decisions and in small break-out groups by giving each group a question(s) and asking them to report back to the larger group.

Please note: These questions are provided to serve as a starting point for your teaching and presentation use. You are encouraged to adapt these questions to meet your learner's needs and/or add your own. Sample responses are provided. However, the responses provided should not be viewed as the only way to answer the questions.

**1. Evidence from the ACE study and the report, *Balancing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) with HOPE (Health Outcomes of Positive Experience)*, suggest that chronic diseases in adults are often determined by experiences during childhood. What is the role of the pediatrician or public health professional in helping prevent chronic diseases in adulthood?**

- Apply an ecobiodevelopmental framework and recognize that adverse psychosocial factors (poverty, domestic violence, parental mental illness or substance abuse) are no less biological than lead poisoning or poor nutrition.
- Conduct developmental monitoring and screening to identify children at risk for developmental delays and refer them early intervention or preschool special education providers for further evaluation and intervention.
- Collaborate with families and partners to connect children to community resources that mitigate or diminish the effects of adverse experiences.
- Connect families to high quality early care and education settings that offer comprehensive services to promote school readiness. This could include Head Start, Early Head Start, or state preschool initiatives for low-income families. Use

the [Child Care Resource and Referral Agency Search](#) and [Head Start locator](#) to find local resources.

- Assist families in finding positive parenting supports that include a two-generation approach to intervention. More will be available about this during module 4.
- Promote a public health approach to address toxic stress, including:
  - “common messaging” to prevent or minimize toxic stress (campaigns to discourage corporal punishment and to encourage early literacy),
  - screening families and children for common precipitants of toxic stress (poverty, domestic violence, parental mental illness or substance abuse), and
  - collaborating with local resources to address the consequences of toxic stress.

**2. The ACE study suggest that health issues such as depression or obesity are statistically possible consequences of adverse childhood experiences. Additionally, the report, Balancing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) with HOPE, cites opportunities to positively impact children with adverse childhood experiences. How might you approach treatment and provision of services to mitigate these potential health issues?**

- Use the child’s family history as an opportunity to understand the social determinants of health and potential adverse experiences in a child and family’s life.
- Connect and build alliances with mental health service providers a seamless connection to addressing the ACE-related underpinnings of the primary issue.
- Plan behavioral health treatment components in therapy for these types of issues, not just “medical management.”

**3. When thinking about possible adverse experiences a child in your community faces, what kinds of resources might be most useful in the community? Keep in mind that current research includes adverse childhood experiences such as racism, bullying and immigration/refugee issues.**

- Mental health resources
- Early care and education programs
- Cultural and religious organizations
- Social services agencies that support nutrition, housing, and additional family needs
- Non-profit organizations that offer social emotional support such as big brothers/big sisters, YMCA, etc.

Source: Many of the answers to the questions above were adapted from materials and information on the AAP Early Brain and Child Development web site at [www.aap.org/ebcd](http://www.aap.org/ebcd).