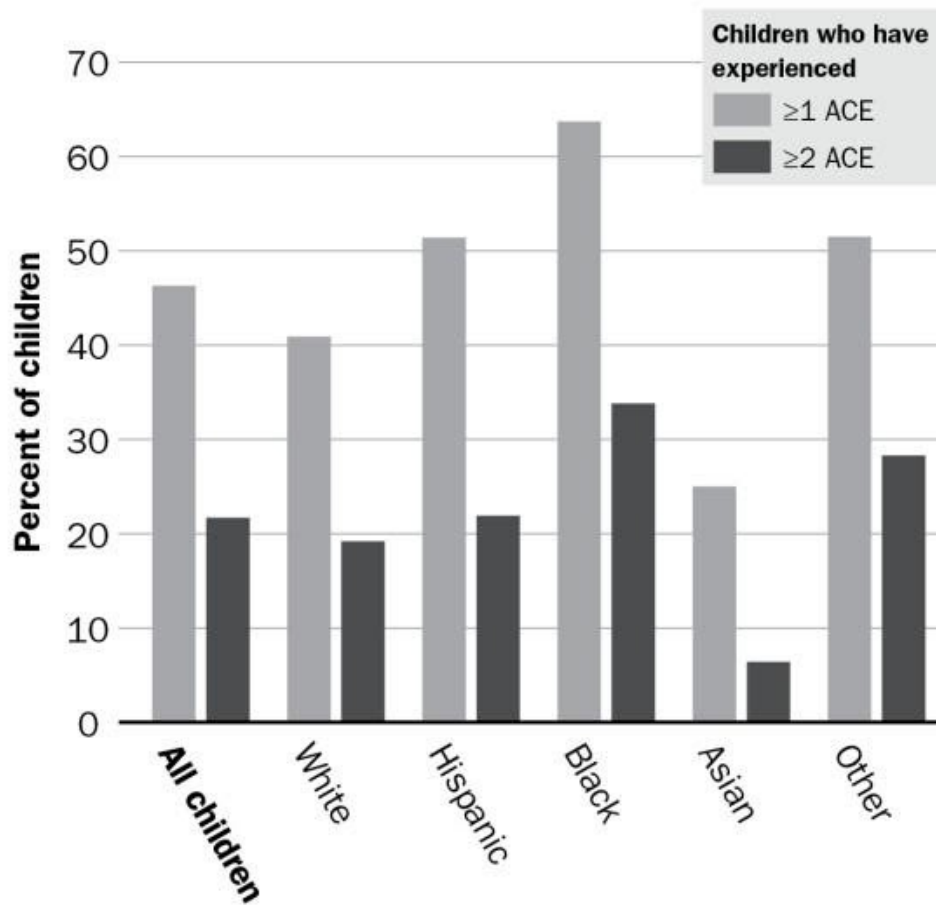


Equity Challenge Day 15: Adverse Childhood Experiences

In order for children to meet developmental milestones, learn, grow and lead productive lives, it is critical that they be healthy. Good social-emotional and mental health is a key component of children's healthy development. [Poverty, trauma, and inadequate treatment are three factors](#) that have been shown to have a sustained, negative impact on children's social, emotional and mental health. Unfortunately, racism is now recognized as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) - a toxic source of stress with the potential to disrupt a child's ability to learn, relate, grow, play, communicate, and problem-solve. [ACEs disproportionately impact children of color](#). This is a downstream impact of the toxic environments created by institutions and systems that shape our lived experience in Washtenaw County (e.g. the justice, education, and healthcare systems).

Adverse Childhood Experiences show race/ethnicity disparity

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) happen most frequently among black children, according to The Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative.



Source: THE CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH MEASUREMENT INITIATIVE ZECHANG FU/Missourian

Source: *Missourian*; Original Data from *The Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative*

Healthy school, community and home environments are critical to preventing children from experiencing ACEs and appropriately supporting students living with chronic stress, so that it does not get in the way of them achieving their aspirations. An increased focus on mental health and support is critical for helping our youth achieve their fullest potential. [Thrive Ottawa County](#) is a was created out of the Community Health Needs Assessment. It is a group of West Michigan organizations and individuals dedicated to informing our community about the importance of understanding the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), providing local ACEs data, and linking people to resilience resources.

Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag [#unitedforequity](#) and tag [@ottawaunitedway](#).

Today's Challenge

Option 1: Go deeper and assess your ACEs score to see how childhood trauma may be impacting your life. Then, assess your resilience score and explore resources on how to support yourself and others by building resilience.

Option 2: View this infographic that explains how ACEs affect our lives and society and summarizes findings from a landmark Kaiser study that looks at the link between ACEs and long-term well-being.

Option 3: Learn a few simple Everyday Gestures to help a child heal.

Option 4: On the TED stage, Pediatrician Nadine Burke Harris explains that the repeated stress of abuse, neglect and parents struggling with mental health or substance abuse issues has real, tangible effects on the development of the brain.