

What are ACEs?

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful or potentially traumatic experiences that happen to us before we turn 18. Although ACEs can cause lasting wear and tear on our bodies and brains, Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) can counteract the effects of ACEs. PCEs can include: being part of nurturing relationships, learning skills for coping with challenges, and participating in cultural traditions. PCEs can be life-changing for a young person. It's never too late to begin healing.

How can I create Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) for youth in my life?

Here are little day-to-day things you can do that go a long way.

- **Promote safe, stable, and supportive relationships** within the family, with other children and teens, and with adults in the community.
- **Encourage activities that interest them.** Try a local YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, animal shelter, or a youth group at your place of worship.
- **Create space to talk** about feelings. Listen without judgement.
- **Spend time together.** Walk, listen to music, prepare a meal, read, play a game, watch a movie, be silly! It doesn't have to be a big activity, but try to make time for regular positive interactions.
- **Participate in cultural traditions** at home or in the community.
- **Practice coping strategies together,** such as deep breathing or grounding techniques.
- **Make them feel that they matter** by giving them responsibility — like helping out a neighbor, planning a meal or activity at home, or joining a club at school.

Learn more at livebeyondCA.org and visit the stories page to hear tips from parents, caregivers, and youth across California.

Remember: You're doing the best you can. It's never too late to begin healing, for yourself or a child in your care.



It takes a community to heal and live beyond ACEs

You don't have to do this alone! There's a village of people at schools and in the community who can be your allies in helping create PCEs for your child or teen. Here are a few options to check out:



Boys & Girls Clubs ↩

Provides after-school programs and activities for young people.

Find a local chapter at [bgclubsca.com](https://www.bgclubsca.com)

Mirror app

A secure, private journaling space for teens to write freely, explore their emotions, and develop self-awareness without fear of external judgment or criticism.

Free and confidential. [mirrorjournal.com](https://www.mirrorjournal.com)



YMCA ~

Provides after-school activities, sports, camps, and other youth development activities for children and teens.

To learn more and find your local YMCA go to [ymca.org/what-we-do/youth-development](https://www.ymca.org/what-we-do/youth-development)

Soluna app ↩

Built for 13- to 25-year-olds in California, Soluna provides 1-on-1 chatting with professional coaches. Plus: free-writing journals, de-stressing tools, and forums where young people can get and give advice (or vent).

Free and confidential. [solunaapp.com](https://www.solunaapp.com)

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America *

Makes meaningful and monitored matches between adult volunteers and children ages 5 through young adulthood.

Enroll a child or become a mentor at [bbbs.org](https://www.bbbs.org)

! BrightLife app

For a parent, caregiver, or kid (up to age 12) in California, provides coaching and mental health support. English and Spanish coaches.

Video or chat. Free and confidential. [hellobrightline.com/brightlifekids](https://www.hellobrightline.com/brightlifekids)