

When ACEs Are Held By More Than One Generation, The Outcomes Are Concerning

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The role that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) play in the physical and mental health of individuals as they age has been well described.

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The role that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) play in the physical and mental health of individuals as they age has been well described. What has been less understood is what effect ACEs in a parent might have in their children—until Le-Scherban et al. ([10.1542/peds.2017-4274](#)) decided to study that question in a new study being released this month in our journal. The authors used linked data between parents living in the Philadelphia area and their past exposure to ACEs with their

child's own health using information obtained in cross-sectional telephone surveys. 350 parent-child dyads were entered into this study and sadly, parent ACEs were found to be highly associated with higher odds of poor child overall health status, with the greater the parental ACEs, the higher the odds of poorer health in their children.

To add to the intergenerational impact of ACEs, we are also releasing a study by Wall-Wieler et al. ([10.1542/peds.2017-3119](#)) that looked at whether adolescent pregnant mothers who were in the care of child protection services when they gave birth are more likely to have their child also taken into child protective custody before their second birthday when compared to teen mothers who were not in child protective services when they gave birth. The authors used a population-based cohort of teen mothers in Manitoba Canada, and sadly found that those mothers in child protective care had higher odds of having their children taken into similar care than the control group, again supporting an intergenerational role for ACEs that goes beyond a child's own ACEs that encumber them in infancy and early childhood. These two studies are concerning to say the least—and to further illustrate why they are important for us to know about, we asked child abuse prevention experts Drs. Rachel Berger, Kristine Campbell and Erin Dalton to provide an accompanying commentary ([10.1542/peds.2018-0577](#)). They make an important point regarding how important it is to know the context under which a pregnant teen is placed in foster care—and that such placement may be beneficial to the teen rather than increase her risk of accumulating additional ACEs, making this second intergenerational study we are releasing this week, raise more questions than answers.

To better understand what these studies and commentary mean for children in your practice, as well as what we might do to prevent the intergenerational transmission of ACEs, check out both these studies and commentary and learn more.

- [Maternal Adverse Childhood Experiences and Infant Development](#)
- [Home Foreclosure and Child Protective Services Involvement](#)
- [Parental Adverse Childhood Experiences and Resilience on Coping After Discharge](#)
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