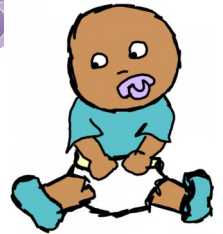


1000 Critical Days and ACEs



In 2019 the parliamentary cross-party Health and Social Care Committee published a report on the first 1000 days of life.

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmhealth/1496/1496.pdf>

The first 1000 days covers the time in a child's development from conception to their second birthday, a time during which the greatest growth and development of the brain occurs, with over a million new brain connections being formed every second.

This time is of significant importance and the care, nutrition and environment of the mother and baby sets the foundation for emotional, intellectual and physical health in later life. Adversity during this period can have lasting consequences.

The committee is asking the Government to set a strategy to tackle adverse childhood experiences (see below), improve readiness for school, and reduce infant mortality and child poverty. Then, working with the health service and other professionals, and with communities and the voluntary sector, including churches, to improve the level of support available to new families .

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/health-select-committee-first-1000-days/>

<https://www.nct.org.uk/about-us/first-1000-days>



Breastfeeding can be an emotive issue and it is not always possible for new mothers to breastfeed their babies, so it should never be a question of making a new mother feel guilty. But, as breastmilk provides nutrition and antibodies which help provide a good start in life, and is free, it is important to make it as easy as possible for parents to make this choice and to ensure that they are well informed about the benefits and ways to encourage the baby to suckle. Churches can help by allowing their premises to be used by NCT and health visitors to run clinics and, even more importantly, to reassure new mothers that they are welcome to feed their babies in church.

Two schemes promoting a welcome for breastfeeding:

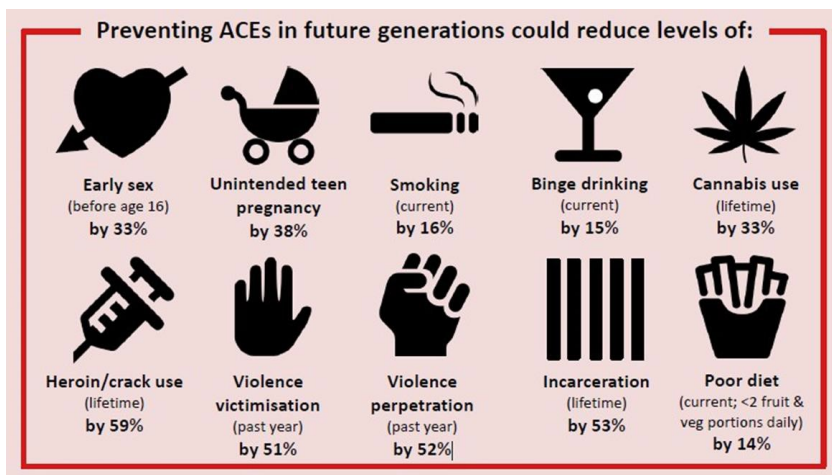
Could your church display a sticker or poster by registering with one of these two groups?

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/bfn-breastfeeding-friendly-scheme/>

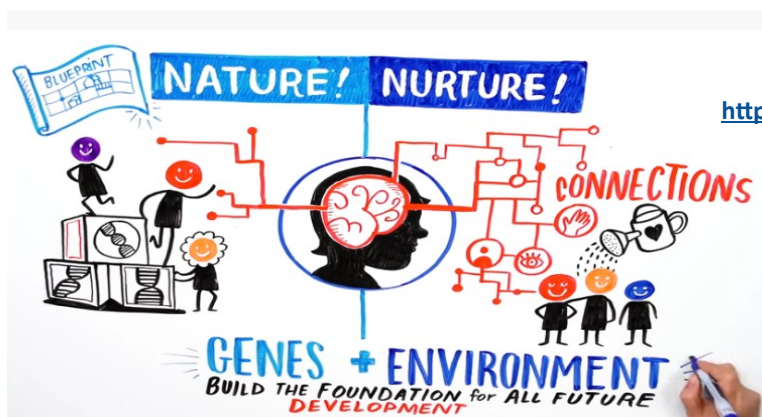
<https://www.breastfeedingwelcomescheme.org.uk/>

'ACES' is the acronym for ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES. Recent research has shown that exposure to adverse childhood experiences can have lasting effect into later years—the more of these a child experiencing having multiple and cumulative effects on their life chances.

ACEs include a family history of (not exclusively): Maternal depression, emotional and physical neglect, divorce, mental illness, incarceration, homelessness, domestic violence, substance abuse, emotional and sexual abuse . They may be exacerbated by discrimination, poverty, lack of opportunity, poor housing, community disruption etc.



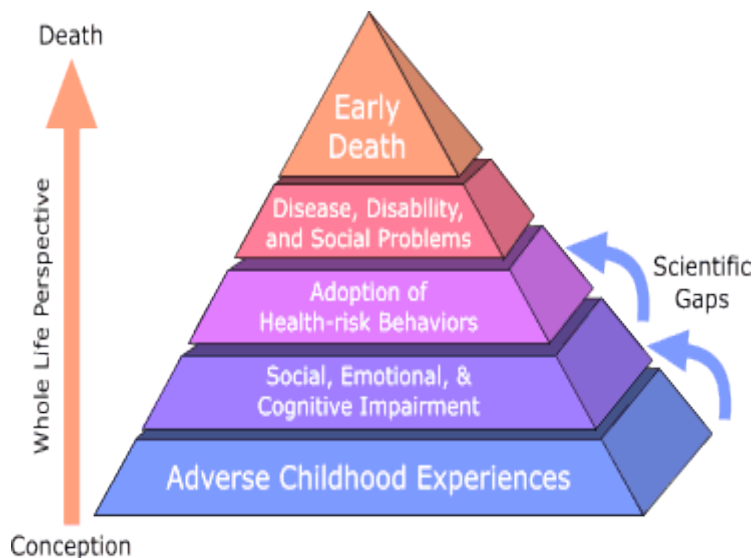
You can find out more about the impact of ACEs on brain and physical development in this six minute video:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-8jTTIsJ7Q>

A six minute video which explains how ACEs can impact upon the future life of a child and the reasons why this happens.





Around half of all adults living in England today have experienced at least one of these forms of adversity in their childhood or adolescence.

- 23% of children and young people have experienced one ACE,
- 16% have experienced two to three ACEs
- 9% have experienced four ACEs.

This means that some of the children and young people associated with your church will undoubtedly fall into these categories.

Kids Matter is a programme that engages with families and young children before crisis point – it strengthens families by giving mums and dads the tools to be competent, confident parents or caregivers. To get involved, as a volunteer or by financially supporting our programme, please contact us at info@kidsmatter.org.uk

<https://www.kidsmatter.org.uk/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces-and-how-kids-matter-can-help/>



Kids Matter is a charity that works with churches to support family oriented mission.

Understanding about ACEs and the impact these can have is very important for all working with children and families.

Churches can support through:

Awareness raising

Supporting groups like baby banks

Making breast-feeding welcome

Running Bumps and Babies groups or Toddler Groups

Building strong relationships

Encouraging children and young people to have a purpose and a passion and a sense that they are valued

Praying for children and families

Praying for health visitors, social workers and others working with children and families at risk of toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences

Signposting people to counselling and other help

Safeguarding (see Good Practice documents on URC website)