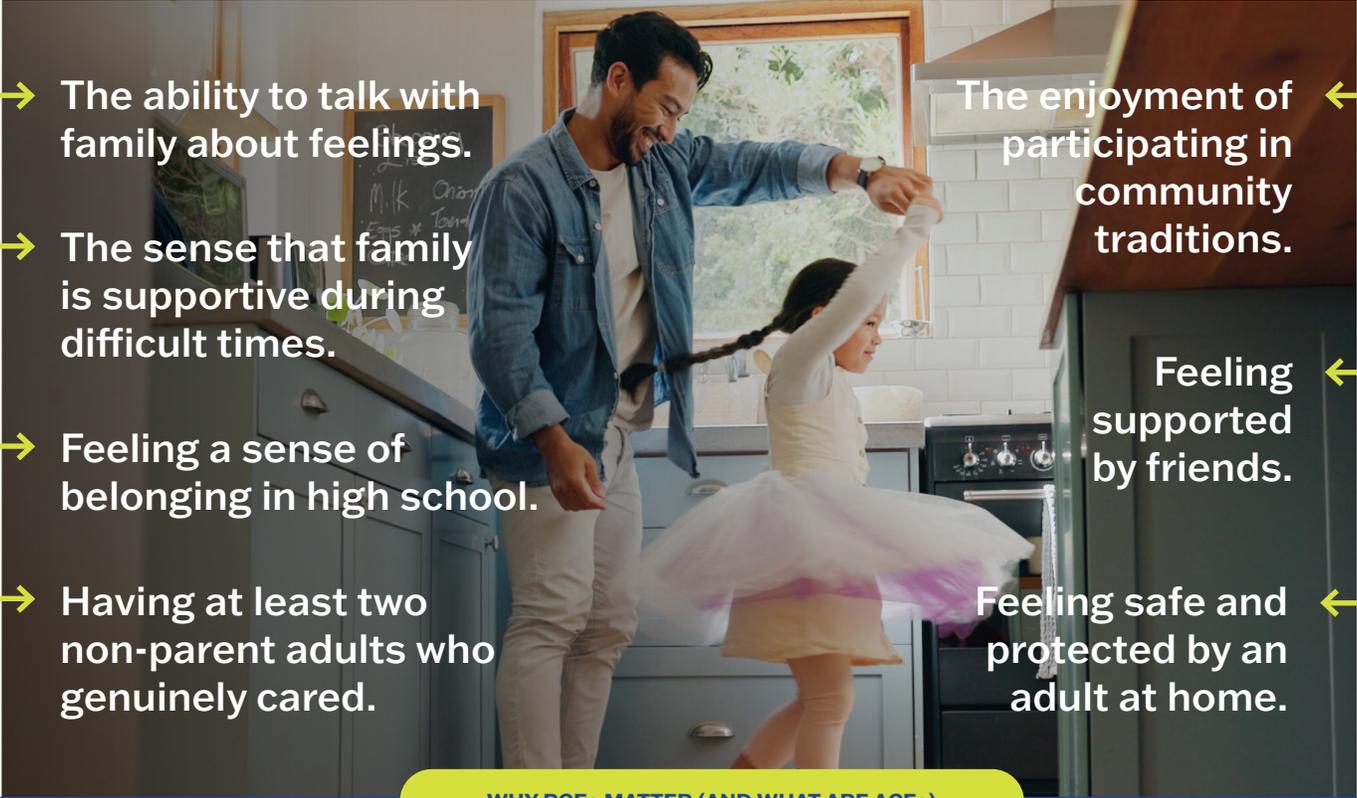


ESSENTIALS FOR CHILDHOOD RESOURCE – POSITIVE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

# Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs): A Foundation for Lifelong Health and Well-being

## What Are Positive Childhood Experiences<sup>1</sup>?

Positive Childhood Experiences are supportive, safe, and nurturing relationships and environments that help children thrive—even in the face of adversity. They include\*...

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- The ability to talk with family about feelings.
  - The sense that family is supportive during difficult times.
  - Feeling a sense of belonging in high school.
  - Having at least two non-parent adults who genuinely cared.
- ← The enjoyment of participating in community traditions.
  - ← Feeling supported by friends.
  - ← Feeling safe and protected by an adult at home.

### WHY PCEs MATTER (AND WHAT ARE ACEs)

- Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years), such as child abuse and neglect. ACEs can have lasting effects on health and well-being in childhood and well into adulthood.<sup>2</sup>
- PCEs buffer the negative effects of ACEs and contribute to better lifelong outcomes.<sup>3</sup>
- High PCEs are associated with marked decreases in chronic disease, and they promote education and employment.<sup>4</sup>
- Implementing programs and services that promote PCEs, like the Essentials for Childhood Framework, will support the health and well-being of children.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bethell C, Jones J, Gombojav N, Linkenbach J, Sege R. Positive Childhood Experiences and Adult Mental and Relational Health in a Statewide Sample: Associations Across Adverse Childhood Experiences Levels. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2019;173(11):e193007. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.3007

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2024). About adverse childhood experiences. <https://www.cdc.gov/aces/about/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> Sege R, Swedo EA, Burstein D, et al. Prevalence of Positive Childhood Experiences Among Adults — Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Four States, 2015–2021. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2024;73:399–404. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7317a3>.

<sup>4</sup> Sege RD, Aslam MV, Peterson C, et al. Positive Childhood Experiences and Adult Health and Opportunity Outcomes in 4 US States. *JAMA Netw Open.* 2025;8(7):e2524435. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.24435

<sup>5</sup> Bethell C, Jones J, Gombojav N, Linkenbach J, Sege R. Positive Childhood Experiences and Adult Mental and Relational Health in a Statewide Sample: Associations Across Adverse Childhood Experiences Levels. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2019;173(11):e193007. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.3007

\*These seven PCEs were selected from the Child and Youth Resilience Measure and included in the WI Behavioral Risk Factor Survey in 2014.