



FAMILY PROFILE

Willie Brown
Cuyahoga County



“I had been traumatized real bad. ...I had blamed myself for many, many years for something somebody else had done to me,” says Willie.



WILLIE'S STORY



Willie Brown was adopted when he was five months old. His troubled mother wasn't able to care for him, and his father didn't want anything to do with him.

Poor, Black, and growing up in Alabama, he was relentlessly bullied in school. He also had a speech impediment and wore a hearing aid—conspicuous because it was meant for a white child—and his family were Jehovah's Witnesses.

"My response to the bullying was, 'If you can't beat them, join them,'" Willie says. "I wanted friends so bad that I would do things that I knew weren't right, but at least it would make people leave me alone."

At 15, his adoptive mother died, and things became even more difficult at home when his adoptive father quickly re-married.

Soon Willie started drinking. By college, he had graduated to drugs. His desperate hunt for cocaine took him to places "I didn't intend to go," ultimately resulting in ongoing sexual trauma.

By 37, Willie had three drug-related felonies and had been in and out of treatment 16 times.

On the 17th try, Willie says, "I told them how I felt. It just started pouring out of me. The counselors and social worker that I was standing in front of, God bless them, because they helped me to learn what was wrong with me—that I had been traumatized real bad. ...I had blamed myself for many, many years for something somebody else had done to me."

Willie, 46, is now more than eight years sober. A father of two with another child on the way, he works as a chemical dependency counselor in Cleveland, living with his partner a stone's throw from where he once did drugs.

"I'm still a part of the community that I was in when I was using drugs and alcohol," he says, "But now I sit on the other side of the table."

"I can go around a...homeless drug addict who hasn't taken a bath in three weeks...and ask them, 'What do you need?'"

**Watch
Willie's Video**



-> youtu.be/5bG2TfIZDbA



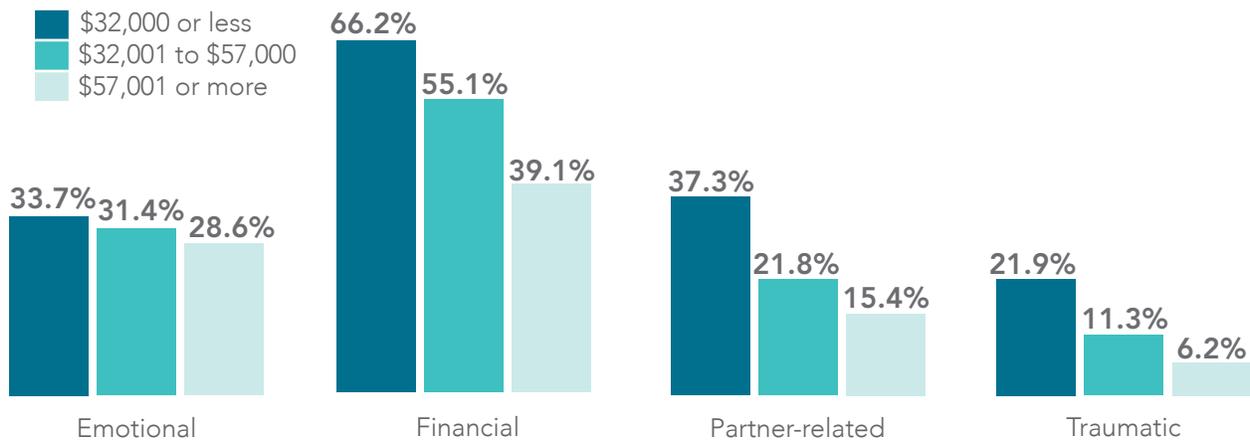


Ohio must ensure that young children can grow, learn, and play in environments that protect them from the harmful effects of stress, trauma, and adversity. Children who are in unsafe situations and children who lack nurturing relationships are more likely to be exposed to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). **Exposure to ACEs** can lead to immediate and long-term negative health outcomes, but positive and supportive environments can serve as a buffer against the harms of childhood adversity and trauma.

Family well-being and resilience: What does the data tell us?

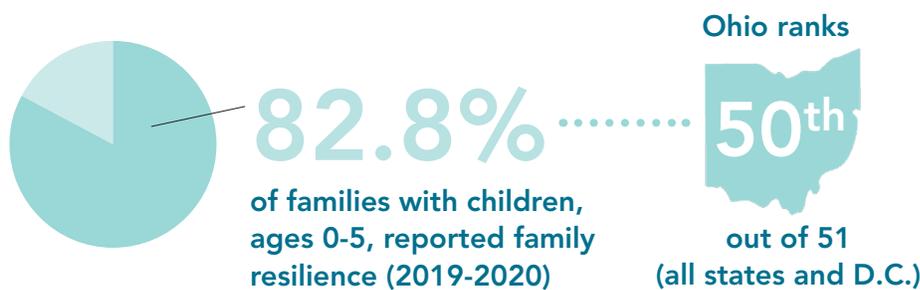
Women with low incomes are more likely to **experience stressful life events** while they're pregnant.

Percent of women with a live birth who reported stressful life events or experiences during pregnancy by household income (2020)



Source: Ohio Pregnancy Assessment Survey (2020)

Most Ohio parents with young children report that their families are resilient. Still, Ohio ranks 50th in the nation on family resiliency. While Ohio families are strong, policies, programs, and systems must do a better job **supporting the families who need it most.**



Note: Family resiliency is defined as “talking together about what to do, working together to solve problems, knowing we have strengths to draw on, and staying hopeful even in difficult times”
Source: National Survey of Children’s Health (2019-2020)



Ohio's performance

	Most recent	Trend	Ohio compared to U.S.
Family well-being and resilience			
Family resilience. Percent of families with children, ages 0-5, who reported family resilience	82.8% (2019-2020)	No change	Same
Daily songs or stories, caregiver. Percent of children, ages 0-5, whose caregiver sang songs or told stories to them every day	52.7% (2019-2020)	No change	Same
◆ Stressful life events or experiences during pregnancy. Percent of women with a live birth who reported stressful life events or experiences during pregnancy			
Emotional events	31.0% (2020)	No change	N/A
Financial events	52.4% (2020)	No change	N/A
Partner-related events	25.5% (2020)	Improved	N/A
Traumatic events	13.5% (2020)	Worsened	N/A

For additional information on the data and analysis, see the data appendix.

◆ = disaggregated data is available. All stressful life events are disaggregated by race, income, and rural/urban county typology and can be found in the data appendix.

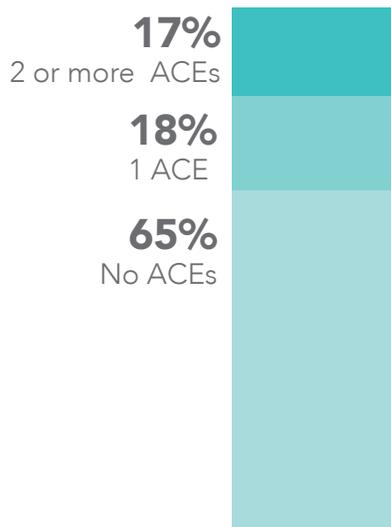
Stressful life events are categorized into:

- **Emotional:** close family member was sick and/or someone very close to mother died.
- **Partner-related:** argued with partner more than usual, partner said pregnancy was unwanted, apart from partner due to military deployment or work travel, and/or separation/divorce.
- **Financial:** had problems paying bills, partner lost job, cut in work hours or pay, and/or mother lost job.
- **Traumatic:** someone very close had a problem with drinking/drugs, partner or self went to jail, and/or homeless.



Trauma, toxic stress, and household problems: What does the data tell us?

Nearly 1 in 5 Ohio children, ages 0-5, have been **exposed to two or more adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)**.



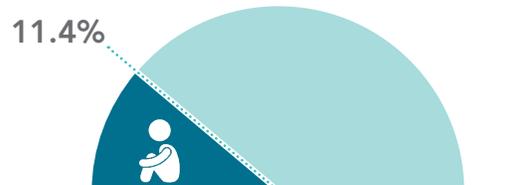
Source: Ohio Medicaid Assessment Survey (2019)

ACEs are potentially traumatic events that occur during childhood. These events can be grouped into three categories⁹:

- Abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse.
- Household challenges, such as substance use, mental illness, or incarceration of a household member.
- Neglect, including emotional and physical neglect.

Having an incarcerated parent is an adverse childhood experience with significant health consequences. In 2019, 11.4% of children, ages 0-5, had a **parent or guardian who had served time in jail**.

Percent of children, ages 0-5, with a parent or guardian who served time in jail, 2019



Source: Ohio Medicaid Assessment Survey (2019)

Analysis from the Health Policy Institute of Ohio identified the adverse childhood experience with the most significant health impacts. This analysis identified living in a household with a person who was incarcerated as one of these significant ACEs, along with emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and living with a household member with a mental illness or substance use disorder.



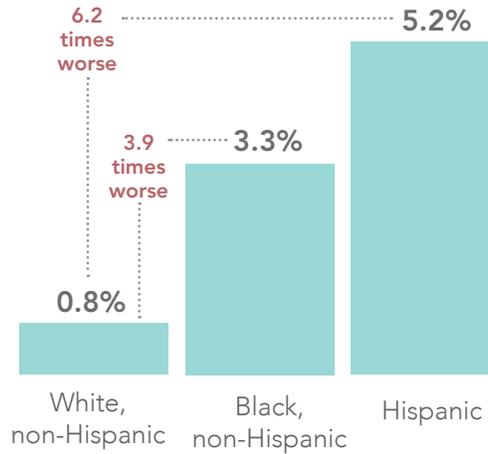
Young children of color have **increased risk for experiencing adversity and trauma**, including racism, as compared to white children, ages 0-5.

Nearly one in five Black and Hispanic/Latino children, ages 0-5, were exposed to two or more ACEs, compared to one in six white children.



Source: Ohio Medicaid Assessment Survey (2019)

Ohio parents are also more likely to report that their children were **treated or judged unfairly due to their race or ethnicity** if their children were Black or Hispanic.



Source: Ohio Medicaid Assessment Survey (2019)

Ohio's performance

	Most recent	Trend	Ohio compared to U.S.
Trauma and toxic stress			
◆ Experiences of racism. Percent of children, ages 0-5, whose parents reported that they were treated or judged unfairly because of race or ethnicity	1.9% (2019)	N/A	N/A
Black, non-Hispanic children	Large disparity (most-recent year)		
Hispanic children	Large disparity (most-recent year)		
◆ Preschool suspension. Number of public preschool students receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions, per 1,000 children enrolled	1.1% (2017-2018)	N/A	Better
Black or African American students	Large disparity (most-recent year)		
◆ Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Percent of young children, ages 0-5, who were exposed to ACEs	35.1% (2019)	N/A	N/A
2 or more ACEs	17.0% (2019)	N/A	N/A
Black, non-Hispanic children	Moderate disparity (most-recent year)		
Hispanic children	Moderate disparity (most-recent year)		
Children in families below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)	Large disparity (most-recent year)		
Children in families between 101-200% of the FPL	Moderate disparity (most-recent year)		

For additional information on the data and analysis, see the data appendix.

◆ = disaggregated data is available. Only groups with moderate or large disparities are displayed (see data appendix for all disaggregated data)



Ohio's performance

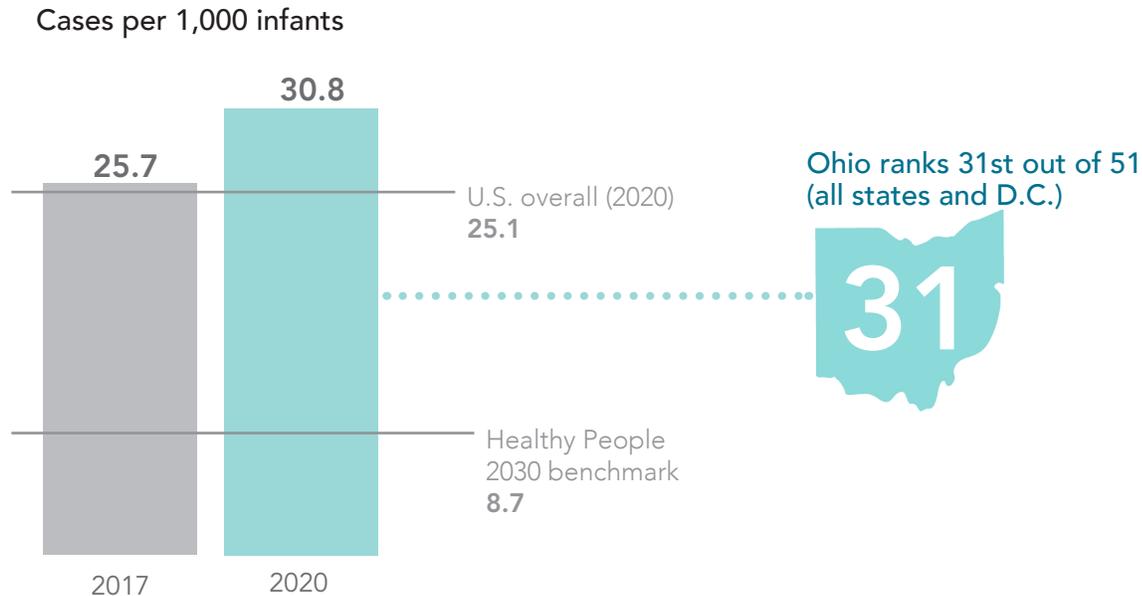
	Most recent	Trend	Ohio compared to U.S.
Household challenges			
Mental illness or substance use in the household. Percent of children, ages 0-5, who lived with someone with a mental illness or substance use disorder	18.4% (2019)	N/A	N/A
Parental incarceration. Percent of children, ages 0-5, with a parent or guardian who served time in jail	11.4% (2019)	N/A	N/A
Domestic violence. Percent of children, ages 0-5, who witnessed domestic violence	5.4% (2019)	N/A	N/A
Unsafe neighborhoods. Percent of children, ages 0-5, whose parent reported that they lived in an unsafe neighborhood	37.9% (2019-2020)	No change	Same

For additional information on the data and analysis, see the data appendix.



Adoption and child protective services: What does the data tell us?

The rate of child abuse and neglect (maltreatment) for Ohio infants increased by 20% from 2017 to 2020. More young children **experience maltreatment** in Ohio than in most other states.



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (2017, 2020)

Ohio's performance

	Most recent	Trend	Ohio compared to U.S.
Adoption and child protective services			
Maltreatment, infants. Number of infants who experienced maltreatment (child abuse and/or neglect), per 1,000 infants under age 1	30.8 (2020)	Worsened	Worse
Protective custody. Rate of children who are in Public Children Service Agency (PCSA) custody, per 1,000 population, ages 0-5	5.6 (January 2022)	N/A	N/A
Permanency after foster care. Percent of children, ages 0-5, who exited foster care and were in a permanent placement for at least 12 months	75.4% (2021)	N/A	N/A

For additional information on the data and analysis, see the data appendix.

 = data provided by a state agency (Ohio only)