



## ACEs Aware Self-Care Tool for Pediatrics

When a child or teen has experienced significant Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), their body may make more or less hormones than is healthy. This can lead to problems with a child’s physical and/or mental health, such as asthma, poor growth, depression, or behavior problems. Safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments where children feel safe emotionally and physically can protect children’s brains and bodies from the harmful effects of stress. You can help your child be healthier by managing your own stress response and helping your child do the same. Healthy nutrition, regular exercise, restful sleep, practicing mindfulness, building social connections, and getting mental health support can help to decrease stress hormones and prevent health problems. Here are some goals your family can set together to support your child’s health. *[Check the goals that you are picking for yourself and your family!]*

**Healthy relationships.** We’ve set a goal of...

- Using respectful communication even when we are upset or angry
- Spending more high-quality time together as a family, such as:
  - Having regular family meals together
  - Having regular “no electronics” time for us to talk and/or play together
  - Talking, reading, and/or singing together every day
- Making time to see friends to create a healthy support system for myself and our family
- Connecting regularly with members of our community to build social connections
- Asking for help if a relationship or environment feels physically or emotionally unsafe
  - The National Domestic Violence hotline is **800-799-SAFE (7233)**
  - The National Sexual Assault hotline is **800-656-HOPE (4673)**
  - To reach a crisis text line, **text HOME to 741-741**
- Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise.** We’ve set a goal of...

- Limiting screen time to less than one hour per day
- Walking at least 20 minutes every day
- Finding a type of exercise that we enjoy and doing it together as a family
- Getting my child involved in a sport, dance class, or other form of regular exercise
- Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_



- Nutrition.** We've set a goal of...
  - Eating a healthy breakfast daily (with protein, whole grains, and/or fruit)
  - Drinking water instead of juice or soda
  - Eating at least 5 vegetables and/or fruits every day
  - Choosing whole wheat bread and brown rice instead of white bread or rice
  - Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Sleep.** We've set a goal of...
  - Turning off screens 30 minutes before bedtime
  - Helping my child go to bed at the same time every night
  - Making a routine of reading a book to my child before bed (or, if older, letting my child read to me)
  - Creating a calm place for sleep
  - Using mindfulness or other stress reduction tools if worry is keeping my child up at night
  - Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Mindfulness.** We've set a goal of...
  - Taking moments throughout the day to notice how we're feeling, both physically and emotionally
  - Finding at least one thing to be thankful for each day
  - Practicing mindful breathing or other calming technique(s) during stressful situations
  - Creating a regular routine of prayer, meditation, and/or yoga
  - Downloading a mindfulness app and doing a mindfulness activity every day
  - Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Mental health.** We've set a goal of...
  - Having a conversation as a family about emotional and mental health
  - Learning more about mental health treatment options (e.g., counseling, therapy, psychiatric services)
  - Identifying a local mental health professional



- Scheduling an appointment with a mental health professional or keeping regular appointments
- If I am feeling like I or my child is in crisis, I will get help
  - The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is **800-273-TALK (8255)**
  - To reach a crisis text line, **text HOME to 741-741**
- Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Remember, the most important ingredient for healthy kids is a healthy caregiver. Here are some other goals that you can set for yourself to help your whole family be healthier.

- Self-Care.** I've set a goal of...
  - Making a plan for what to do when I'm feeling stressed out, angry, or overwhelmed
  - Planning with my partner, friends, or family to get the support I need
  - Seeking help if I am not emotionally or physically safe
  - Making regular appointments with my medical provider(s), including for preventive care
  - Getting my ACE score and talking to my medical provider about how to improve my health
  - Identifying my strengths and learning more about building resilience
  - Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_

**For more information, please visit:**

From **First 5 California**: <http://www.first5california.com/>

From the **American Academy of Pediatrics**: <https://www.healthychildren.org/>

From **ACEs Aware**: <https://www.acesaware.org/heal/resources/>

**Mental Health:**

- **The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**: <https://www.nami.org/help>
  - 1-800-950-NAMI (6264); Crisis Text Line – **Text NAMI to 741-741**