

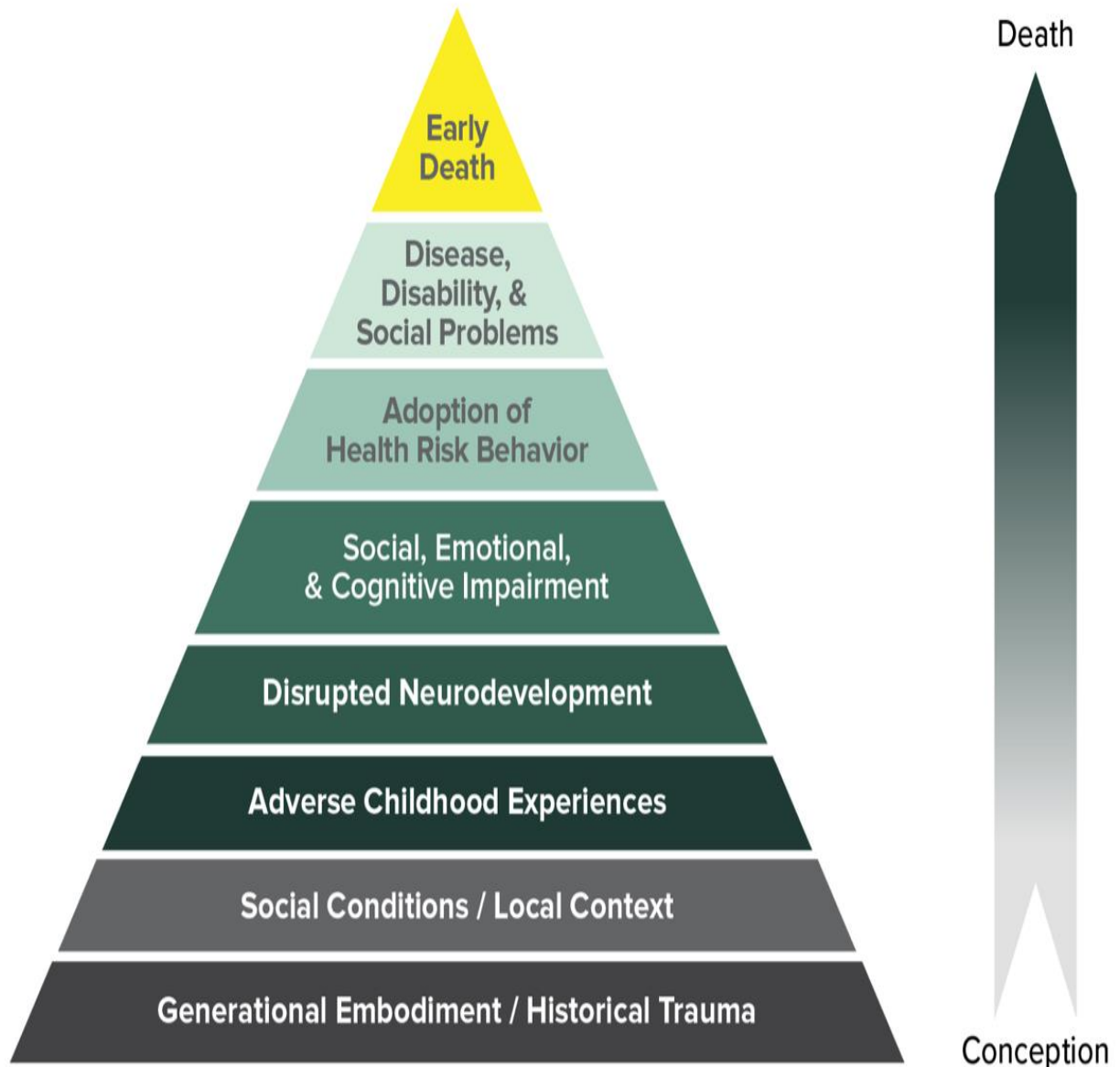
# About the CDC-Kaiser ACE Study

The CDC-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study is one of the largest investigations of childhood abuse and neglect and household challenges and later-life health and well-being.

The original ACE Study was conducted at Kaiser Permanente from 1995 to 1997 with two waves of data collection. Over 17,000 Health Maintenance Organization members from Southern California receiving physical exams completed confidential surveys regarding their childhood experiences and current health status and behaviors.

A link to the CDC website for the study:

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/about.html>



**Mechanism by which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan**

- The ACE Pyramid represents the conceptual framework for the ACE Study. The ACE Study has uncovered how ACEs are strongly related to development of risk factors for disease, and well-being throughout the life course

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are categorized into three groups: abuse, neglect, and household challenges. Each category is further divided into multiple subcategories. Participant demographic information is available by gender, race, age, and education. The prevalence of ACEs is organized by category.

## ACEs Definitions

All ACE questions refer to the respondent's first 18 years of life.

- Abuse
  - **Emotional abuse:** A parent, stepparent, or adult living in your home swore at you, insulted you, put you down, or acted in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt.
  - **Physical abuse:** A parent, stepparent, or adult living in your home pushed, grabbed, slapped, threw something at you, or hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured.
  - **Sexual abuse:** An adult, relative, family friend, or stranger who was at least 5 years older than you ever touched or fondled your body in a sexual way, made you touch his/her body in a sexual way, attempted to have any type of sexual intercourse with you.
- Household Challenges
  - **Mother treated violently:** Your mother or stepmother was pushed, grabbed, slapped, had something thrown at her, kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, hit with something hard, repeatedly hit for over at least a few minutes, or ever threatened or hurt by a knife or gun by your father (or stepfather) or mother's boyfriend.
  - **Substance abuse in the household:** A household member was a problem drinker or alcoholic or a household member used street drugs.
  - **Mental illness in the household:** A household member was depressed or mentally ill or a household member attempted suicide.
  - **Parental separation or divorce:** Your parents were ever separated or divorced.
  - **Incarcerated household member:** A household member went to prison.
- Neglect<sup>1</sup>
  - **Emotional neglect:** Someone in your family helped you feel important or special, you felt loved, people in your family looked out for each other and felt close to each other, and your family was a source of strength and support.<sup>2</sup>
  - **Physical neglect:** There was someone to take care of you, protect you, and take you to the doctor if you needed it<sup>2</sup>, you didn't have enough to eat, your parents were too drunk or too high to take care of you, and you had to wear dirty clothes.

<sup>1</sup>Collected during Wave 2 only.

<sup>2</sup> Items were reverse-scored to reflect the framing of the question.

## Major Findings of the ACE study:

ACEs are common across all populations. Almost two-thirds of study participants reported at least one ACE, and more than one in five reported three or more ACEs.

Some populations are more vulnerable to experiencing ACEs because of the social and economic conditions in which they live, learn, work and play.

The ACE score is the total sum of the different categories of ACEs reported by participants. Study findings show a graded dose-response relationship between ACEs and negative health and well-being outcomes. In other words, as the number of ACEs increases so does the risk for negative outcomes. For an exhaustive list of outcomes see [selected journal publications](#).

