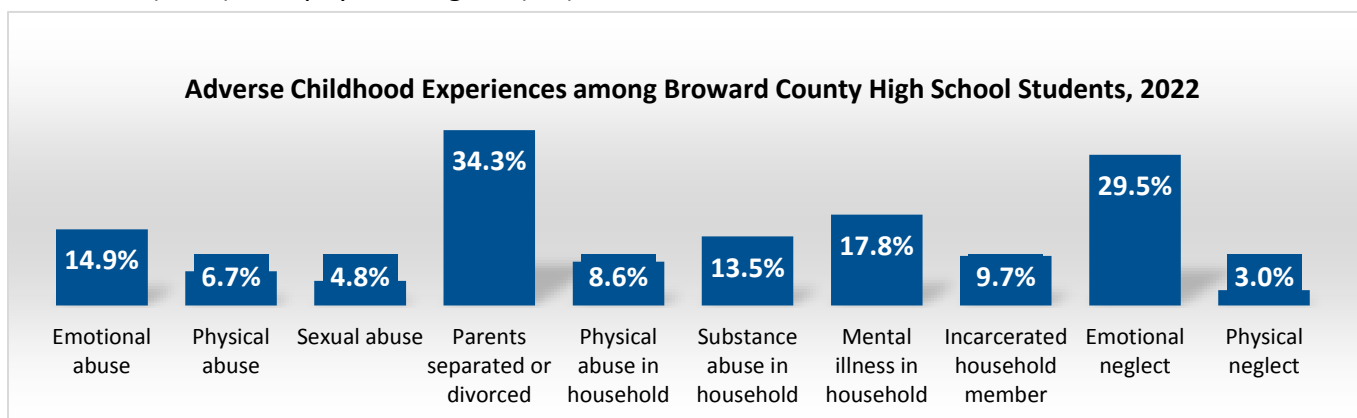


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Adverse Childhood Experiences among Broward County Students

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events which occur in children age 17 and younger. Such events include abuse, neglect, the presence of substance or mental health problems in the household, as well as having parents who are divorced or separated or incarcerated household members. Though not always, many ACEs may have negative consequences that last a lifetime, and children who experience four or more ACEs are at greater risk of developing physical and mental health problems in adulthood. Moreover, children who experience ACEs are more likely to have mental health or substance use problems. According to a survey conducted in 25 states, 61% of adults reported experiencing at least one ACE and approximately 17% reported experiencing four or more ACEs.

The chart below shows ACEs reported by Broward County high school students in 2022. Having parents who are separated or divorced was most frequently reported (34.3%), followed by emotional neglect (29.5%), mental illness in the household (17.8%), emotional abuse (14.9%), substance abuse in the household (13.5%), an incarcerated household member (9.7%), physical abuse in the household (8.6%), sexual abuse (4.8%), physical abuse (6.7%), and physical neglect (3.0%).



Because ACEs are linked to substance use and mental health problems, it is important to think about prevention. Some prevention strategies include creating stronger connections to youth, enhancing social and economic community support, and promoting social norms against violence. Prevention of ACEs and timely intervention can mitigate future problems and enhance a child’s opportunity to thrive.

Source: Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey, <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/samh/prevention/fysas/>; CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/fastfact.html#:~:text=Adverse%20childhood%20experiences%2C%20or%20ACEs,in%20the%20home%20or%20community>

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