

**\*\*EMBARGOED UNTIL TUESDAY, JULY 11 AT 7AM\*\***

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**California Campaign to Combat Childhood Adversity (4CA) Organizes**

**Policymaker Education Day to Buffer Impact of Toxic Stress on Communities**

Representatives From More than 100 Organizations to Meet with Senator Holly Mitchell

and Other Lawmakers to Discuss Creation of ‘Trauma-Informed’ Bills

Sacramento—Representatives from more than 100 organizations—members of the California Campaign to Combat Childhood Adversity (4CA)—will meet with California policymakers today to discuss ways to stop the widespread and long-term effects of childhood adversity on the state’s families, communities, and economy. The organizations will also discuss with lawmakers how upcoming and current legislation can be more “trauma-informed” to consider the needs of children affected by adverse childhood experiences (or ACEs), which can lead to a life- and health-altering condition called toxic stress.

The policymaker education day is the newest effort of the 4CA, a statewide campaign to develop policies that prevent and minimize the effects of childhood adversity and toxic stress on communities across California. State Senator Holly J. Mitchell, (D-Los Angeles) will join several policymakers in the Capitol Building to formally address the event’s participants before the groups disperse to meet with their local elected officials. Participants will share research information about childhood adversity with the policymakers, and walk them through the 4CA’s recommendations for developing trauma-informed bills.

Over the last 20 years, research has revealed how toxic stress resulting from childhood adversity is at the root of most major chronic physical and mental health problems for individuals, and has a major impact on the economic and social health of communities. Research has also found evidence that if we want to address and improve unhealthy, criminal and unwanted behaviors in society, we must begin with childhood adversity.

“Childhood adversity leads to alarmingly high rates of obesity and addiction among our families and communities,” Mitchell said. “If we want to secure a vibrant and healthy future for all California’s children, we must take action to prevent toxic stress by crafting legislation that can ensure positive interventions for our most vulnerable population.”

"There is no pediatric medical practice in the United States that is not seeing children who are being exposed to ACEs," said Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, founder and CEO of the Center for Youth Wellness. "It is time for our pediatricians, primary care clinicians, community advocates and policymakers to sound the alarm about the links between early adversity and adverse health outcomes for individuals and communities. This is a health issue that affects us all, and we need structural changes now that will support and help the children and families experiencing early adversity."

"California's children are in trouble: more than 1.5 million have had two or more adverse childhood experiences, which can lead to severe physical, emotional and educational problems for them down the road, and exact a heavy price on our communities and our economy," said Children Now president Ted Lempert. "The good news is that our policymakers can take steps right now to create better policies and build better systems that support these young people, their families, and our state."

In 1998, the groundbreaking [CDC-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences Study](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/) (ACE Study) measured 10 types of childhood adversity and discovered that:

* ACEs are surprisingly common (most of us have experienced at least one);
* ACEs lead to chronic diseases, depression and other mental illnesses, and violence;
* The higher the ACE score, the worse the outcomes:
  + An ACE score of 4 increases the risk of alcoholism seven times and attempted suicide 12 times; it also doubles the risk of heart disease and cancer.
  + People with high ACE scores have higher rates of divorce, unwanted pregnancies, prescription drug abuse, broken bones, and obesity.
  + Without positive intervention, those with six or more ACEs have shorter lifespans by up to 20 years;
* Any four ACEs cause as much damage as any other. In other words, if we want to eradicate obesity, addiction, smoking, and violence, we must address all types of childhood adversity.

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**About 4CA**

After the Center for Youth Wellness hosted its first conference on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in 2014, a group of participants from various sectors continued to work together on policies to prevent and mitigate the effects of childhood adversity and toxic stress. They formed the California Campaign to Counter Childhood Adversity, 4CA, after they developed a statewide policy agenda, the [Action Plan to Address Childhood Adversity in California](https://www.4cakids.org/overview/). The 4CA Action Plan was presented at the ACEs Policy Convening in San Diego, and it guides the Campaign's advocacy efforts for three years, through 2018.

Sectors represented in 4CA include child welfare, early childhood, education, health, and youth justice. The Campaign is guided by the Steering Committee and campaign membership, with support from the [Center for Youth Wellness](http://www.centerforyouthwellness.org/) and [Children Now](https://www.childrennow.org/). For more information visit [www.4CAKids.org](http://www.4CAKids.org), or email us at 4CAkids@centerforyouthwellness.org.