Positive Childhood Experiences, Prevention, & Protective Factors

The Positive Childhood Experiences Score includes:

- Felt able to talk to their family about their feelings
- Felt their family stood by them during difficult times
- Enjoyed participating in community traditions
- Felt a sense of belonging in high school
- Felt supported by friends
- Had at least 2 non-parent adults who took genuine interest in them
- Felt safe and protected by an adult in their home

In addition to the stable and supportive relationships that occur throughout positive childhood experiences, protective factors can include resources such as...

- After school programs
- Community events
- Faith-based connection
- Sports and other team activities
- Social emotional skill development
- Stable housing and food security

Sources:

Preventing ACEs:
Strategies to support children and caregivers to improve immediate outcomes and associated health effects across the lifespan.

The CDC suggests that these strategies may prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs):

- Strengthen economic supports for families
- Promote social norms that protect against violence and adversity
- Ensure a strong start for children and paving the way for them to reach their full potential
- Teach skills to help parents and youth handle stress, manage emotions, and to promote safe dating and healthy relationships
- Connect youth to caring adults and activities
- Intervene to lessen immediate and long-term harms

Protective Factors:
Individual, community, and societal level characteristics and resources help to reduce the impact of childhood adversities.
Positive Childhood Experiences (PCE) & Delaware Youth

PCEs can happen at home, school, in the community, and wherever children live, learn, love, and play.

Parents

3 out of 4 Delaware 5th, 8th, and 11th grade students report that their parents give them support and encouragement.

8th and 11th grade students who report usually getting along with, and being able to talk to, their parents most of the time are less likely to use substances or experience symptoms of depression or anxiety.

Home

4 out of 5 Delaware parents report their child lives in a home that demonstrate 4 qualities of resilience, such as talking about their problems and working together to solve them, knowing they have strengths to draw upon, and staying hopeful.

Schools

Half of Delaware 5th graders and 4 out of 5 8th and 11th graders believe their teachers are sources of support and encouragement.

Community

11th graders who report usually feeling safe in their neighborhoods are less likely to report using alcohol and marijuana, or feelings of anxiety and depression.

Delaware students who feel safe in school and who care about doing well in school are also less likely to use substances or experience mental health symptoms.

83% of Delaware parents report that they have at least 1 supportive adult outside of the home.

Sources:
School Survey Data: 2022 Delaware School Survey (DSS). The DSS is administered by University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies.
For more information on protective factors in Delaware, please review the Protective Factors module of the 2023 Delaware Epidemiological Profile.