

## Circles of Support Prenatal to 5: A Tarrant County ACEs Blueprint for Safe, Healthy, and School-Ready Children



In support of every family’s hopes that our children grow, play, and learn in a community of compassion, equity, cultural acceptance, and trust, Tarrant County endorses *Circles of Support Prenatal to 5: A Tarrant County Blueprint for Raising Safe, Healthy and School-Ready Children*. We cherish early childhood, knowing that how well we support pregnant women, young children and their caregivers has influence for generations to come. When families are raising young children through challenging times or serious adversities, often referred to as *adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)*, life can quickly become overwhelming and affect their child’s potential. *Circles of Support* highlights 25 priority actions to support families through difficult times in order to prevent or reduce trauma and protect well-being. Tarrant area leaders developed *Circles of Support* by combining decades of ACEs research, national recommendations, and local expertise. We value the many trauma-informed strategies taken every day. *Circles of Support* values family voice and provides leaders, service providers and neighbors with a starting place for how to best partner with families through hardship and trauma toward stability, healing and a bright future.

### To best support pregnant women, young children and their caregivers who are facing adversities, we strive to:

#### FIRST, PRIORITIZE ACCESS TO:

##### Basic needs services, including:

- Healthy food
- Quality, affordable, safe housing
- Health care, including preventive and post-partum care
- Mental health services, including children birth to age 5
- Substance use disorder treatment
- Affordable, accessible transportation
- High quality, affordable child care

##### Responsive service providers:

- Trained on ACEs, trauma-informed practice and cognitive bias
- Partnered with law enforcement, child welfare and court systems to facilitate families’ access to mental health, substance abuse or family violence intervention services
- Whose programs and policies demonstrate racial equity and equity for other populations facing significant disparities

##### Cross-systems approaches that:

- Destigmatize mental illness
- Conduct safe, responsive, trauma-informed and supportive universal screening for ACEs, social determinants of health and resiliency
- Conduct universal screening, referral and monitoring for child development and socioemotional well-being

#### ALSO, FACILITATE ACCESS TO:

##### Services that promote:

- Partnerships with the faith and non-profit communities that support families living with adversities
- Home visits for pregnant women and teens and infants living with adversities
- Community-based adversity-related resources

##### Service providers equipped with:

- Education for court officials on potential diversionary programs
- Empowerment-based caregiver education regarding the impact of adversity, trauma, and secure attachment on brain development

##### Cross-systems approaches, including:

- Community-wide ACEs awareness campaigns
- Placement of integrated health care, mental health, housing and first responder services within communities

#### AND PROMOTE:

##### Services that include:

- Access to community health workers
- Employment support and work-force development for caregivers
- Assistance with credit histories and arrest records

##### Service provider-readiness to:

- Include a family’s circle of support when providing support and education

##### Cross-systems approaches, including:

- Employer-support of caregivers who are facing adversities, in order to support a healthier workforce