Our Mission

Center for Child Counseling is building the foundation for playful, healthful, and hopeful living for children, families, and communities.

We envision healthy, resilient children and families through ACEs-aware and trauma-informed communities. Our values are born from love, family, opportunity, and ingenuity.

We Believe In:

**A Way of Being with Children**
The open and trusting nature of children is precious, calling us to nurture and respond to their needs through informed and thoughtful choice of our actions and words.

**A Trauma-Informed Focus**
We work to understand, prevent, and heal the impact of trauma on children’s health and relationships, building communities of awareness, equity, and action to address adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma.

**Fighting on the Frontline**
We pledge to support children in their most vulnerable moments as trusted first responders to family and community crisis.

**Healing and Resilience**
We exist to bring healing to children and family generations, building their resilience and strength to end cycles of suffering; likewise, we promise to care for our healers in their dedication and service to others.

**Modeling Success**
Our goal is to deliver success to our community and others through teaching, training, and replication of a proven approach to ending ACEs and trauma.

**Relentless Initiative**
Center for Child Counseling is shaping the field by encouraging forward-thinking and out-front leaders who transform our practice with intelligence, heart, and integrity.

Learn more about our mission: [www.centerforchildcounseling.org/mission](http://www.centerforchildcounseling.org/mission)
Center for Child Counseling:
Building Trauma-Informed Communities

**OUR GOAL:** Create trauma-aware adults within our homes, schools, and community service centers who recognize and stop childhood trauma and abuse in its tracks, are part of the healing process, and ensure children grow healthy in mind and body.

The foundation for health throughout the lifespan is built in childhood. In Palm Beach County, thousands of children live with daily, chronic and toxic stress related to violence, abuse, poverty, and other adverse experiences. In the absence of healthy or 'buffering' relationships, this stress impacts physical and mental health, continuing the cycle of abuse, violence, and illness for generations.

At Center for Child Counseling, our overall goal is to build resilience in the most vulnerable children. Our areas of expertise include Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health and childhood trauma, in addition to the general mental health services we provide for an array of behavioral concerns. A large part of our focus as an agency is on babies and young children because this period of life (prenatal to age 6) provides the foundation for health and learning throughout the lifespan.
Our programs and expertise, spanning from prenatal to age 18, is grounded in research about early brain development and the impact of adversity and trauma on development, family systems, and generations. Violence and abuse in the earliest years of life are forms of “toxic stress” that can fundamentally change the developing brain, impacting wellness in adolescence and throughout the lifespan.

Relational health and connection matter. Secure, stable, supportive relationships between children and caring adults in the family and community contribute significantly to children’s healthy brain development, social-emotional wellness, and mental health.

Center for Child Counseling has been recognized for excellence in programming, including being the recipient of the following awards and recognition

- 2005 National Easter Seals Award of Excellence.
- 2008 Florida Blue Foundation's Sapphire Award.
- 2018 Nonprofits First "Hats Off" Award Nonprofit of the Year.
- 2018 Palm Beach County Medical Society "Heroes in Medicine" Award: Best Community Organization.
- 2018 4 programs included in 'A Showcase of Florida's Cutting Edge Trauma Initiatives' published by Florida State University's Center for Prevention and Early Intervention.
- 2019 Published "A Public Health Approach to Fighting ACEs in Palm Beach County"
- Platinum-level GuideStar Exchange recipient and a Top Rated Nonprofit through Great Nonprofits each year since 2012, showing our commitment to transparency and excellence as an organization

Learn more about us: www.centerforchildcounseling.org
"Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are the single greatest unaddressed public health threat facing our nation today." Dr. Robert Block, former President, American Academy of Pediatrics.

Unaddressed, unbuffered adversity and trauma in childhood can have a devastating impact on the minds and bodies of children. Research over the past twenty years confirms that children carry the effects of childhood experiences well into adulthood and throughout the lifespan. Exposure to toxic stress and ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) put children at higher risk for learning difficulties, emotional problems, developmental issues, and long-term, chronic health problems. Preventing these lifelong challenges is at the foundation of Fighting ACEs.

Research provides direct links between number of ACEs and health outcomes. A person with 4 or more ACEs is 2.2 times as likely to have ischemic heart disease, 2.4 times as likely to have a stroke, 1.9 times as likely to have cancer, 1.6 times as likely to have diabetes, 12.2 times as likely to attempt suicide, 10.3 times as likely to use injection drugs, and 7.4 times as likely to be an alcoholic. Research also shows that ACEs are not destiny and there are pathways to healing and wellness through buffering relationships and effective, early intervention.

Fighting ACEs aims to increase awareness of the impact of ACEs on health and wellness at the child, family, and community level; promote a trauma-informed workforce with demonstrated knowledge and skills; provide evidence-based screening to identify ACEs in childcare, school, and pediatric settings; and build the capacity of Palm Beach County to buffer the effects of ACEs through appropriate, trauma-informed prevention and early intervention efforts. Research shows that comprehensively addressing ACEs in communities through this type of innovative approach can improve long-term health and wellness outcomes.

Through an array of prevention, early intervention, and treatment strategies, our overall goal is that young children attain social-emotional wellness, allowing them to reach their full potential at home, school, and in society. This foundation positively impacts lifelong emotional and physical health, helping to break the cycle of abuse and promote healthy relationships. Research shows that this approach leads to long-term improvements in physical health, decreases in troubling behaviors and mental illness, decreases in violence and victimization, and an overall improvement in the health and wellness of the entire community.

Join in the conversation on social media using the hashtag #FightingACEs.

Learn more at: www.centerforchildcounseling.org/fightingACEs
Board Chair, Eugenia Millender, Ph.D. is a psychiatric nurse practitioner who is currently an Associate Professor and Graduate Coordinator within the Psychiatric Mental Health NP Certificate Program at Florida State University College of Nursing. Work with vulnerable populations has taken Dr. Millender to Haiti, Panama, and Peru where she and others provided comprehensive health care for individuals and communities. Her areas of expertise include stress, trauma, and diabetes that is often expressed among minority groups and under-served populations in the United States.

Renée E. Layman, MS, LMHC, President & Chief Executive Officer brings over twenty-seven years of experience in mental health. In her various leadership roles, Renée has been a passionate advocate for child and family health, racial equity, and bringing high quality prevention and trauma-informed services and solutions for some of the most pressing issues facing vulnerable children, families, and communities. In recognition of her work, Renée received the Hats Off Nonprofit Executive of the Year Award in 2017, the 2021 Women in Leadership Award (WILA) from Executive Women of the Palm Beaches, and Leadership Palm Beach County’s 2021 President’s Award.

Stephanie De La Cruz, LMHC, RPT-S, Senior Clinical Director, Clinical Services is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology at Boston University, and then completed her Master of Science degree in Counseling Psychology at Northeastern University in Boston, MA. Stephanie has been working in the mental health field since 2008, and has experience working with both adults and children in various settings. She has provided individual, group, and family therapy in both English and in Spanish.

Dominika Nolan, MS, LMHC, RPT, NCC, CCMHC, LPHA, EMDR Certified Therapist Director, Education and Prevention Services is a licensed mental health counselor, registered play therapist, national certified counselor and certified clinical mental health counselor. Dominika is an EMDR Certified Therapist and she is a Registered Circle of Security Parenting facilitator. She received a Bachelor’s Degree in Arts with a major in Psychology from Dublin Business School in Ireland in 2012. She organized various charity events for non-profit organizations in Ireland and moved to Florida with her family in 2014. In 2016, she graduated with a Master’s Degree in Science, with a focus in Counseling Psychology from Lynn University.

Learn more: www.centerforchildcounseling.org
Clarissa DeWitt, MS, LMHC, RPT-S, Infant Mental Health Specialist, Senior Clinical Director, Child First Program is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Registered Play Therapist, and Certified Circle of Security therapist who has worked with children and families since 2006, after graduating from Nova Southeastern University with a Master’s Degree in Mental Health Counseling. She has training in a wide variety of best practice and evidence-based treatment models including Play Therapy, Filial Therapy, Triple P Parenting Program, Infant Mental Health, Child-Parent Psychotherapy, Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and EMDR.

Amber Payne, MSW, MPH, Strategic Initiatives has over a decade of experience working with foundations, governmental agencies, non-profits, and community organizations in South Carolina, Georgia, Iowa, and Florida. She is a Cum Laude graduate of Clemson University in Organizational Communications and Sociology. She obtained a dual Masters in Social Work and Public Health from the University of South Carolina. Amber has earned the International Certificate of Prevention Specialists for work in Substance Abuse Prevention.

Anne-Marie Brown, LCSW, MSW, MCAP, CIP, ICADC, Director, Education and Trauma Services has worked in the field of mental health for over 15 years. She is an EMDRIA Certified Therapist, a TF-CBT Certified Therapist, an EMDR Consultant in Training, a Registered Circle of Security Parenting Facilitator, and a Qualified Supervisor for addiction professional candidates. Anne-Marie has experience working with children, adults, and families who have experienced significant trauma, adolescents and adults struggling with substance use disorders, and individuals with co-occurring disorders.

Darla Mullenix, MS, LMHC, Director, School and Community Services has received her Bachelor’s Degrees from the University of Central Florida in 2006, with a double major in Psychology and Interpersonal Communications and her Masters of Science Degree from Troy University in 2009 in Counseling and Psychology/Clinical Mental Health. Darla joined the team in 2019 as a Therapist for the CCSEW Program and worked as a Senior Therapist within our Education and Prevention Services. Darla has been working with children and families for over 10 years in various capacities.

Dr. Anne Holland-Brown, Psychologist, Education & Prevention Services is a licensed psychologist with a Ph. D. in psychology from the University of Pennsylvania. She has over 26 years of mental health experience working with economically, racially, and ethnically diverse children who have experienced maltreatment and other types of trauma. Prior to relocating to South Florida, Dr. Holland-Brown lived and worked in Philadelphia serving in the following professional roles: clinician, psychological and forensic evaluator, program developer/director, clinical supervisor, researcher, and victim/community activist.
Nida Paul, LMHC, Supervisor, Education and Prevention Services is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and National Certified Counselor who has worked with children and families since 2010, with a primary focus on working with young children and their parents, caregivers, and families. Nida received her Master’s of Science Degree in Mental Health Counseling from Nova Southeastern University and has training in Child-Centered Play Therapy (CCPT), Group Play Therapy, Infant Mental Health, Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP), Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), and Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Nida has been instrumental in enhancing CFCC’s CCSEW Program and ‘A Way of Being with Children’ manual and virtual curriculum.

Nida is passionate about working with children and families who experienced trauma and helping them heal from these adverse experiences. She provides individual, group, dyadic, and family therapy and focuses on providing Child-Parent Psychotherapy to children and parents who suffer from post-traumatic stress and attachment issues. Nida has been a qualified supervisor with the state of Florida since 2017. She provides workshops and mental health consultation for caregivers and providers on an array of topics and interventions.

Learn more: www.centerforchildcounseling.org
Board Vice Chair, Eddie Stephens is a Board Certified Marital and Family Attorney at Stephens & Stevens, PLLC. With offices in West Palm Beach, the firm serves clients throughout the Palm Beaches. With 25 years of litigation experience, Eddie specializes in high-conflict matrimonial law. He has earned the AV Preeminent™ Peer Review Rating by Martindale-Hubbell, a professional rating indicating the highest ethical standards and professional ability, and has been selected for inclusion in Best Lawyers in America, a peer-review publication recognizing the top 4% of attorneys in the country.

In addition to practicing family law, Eddie is an author, lecturer, and community leader who supports a number of local civic and charitable organizations. Eddie has developed a successful family law practice focused on highly disputed divorces. He is a popular and engaging motivational speaker. He has presented to community leaders at Center for Child Counseling’s Lead the Fight event and oversees the organization's CLE series for family law attorneys. His personal motto is “Do Something that Matters,” and in that spirit, he brings a passion for inspiring others along with his own personal childhood experiences overcoming adversity to his work at Center for Child Counseling.

Learn more: www.centerforchildcounseling.org
Jane Robinson, LMHC, Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor, Infant Mental Health Specialist, Founder and Volunteer Consultant founded the Center for Child Counseling in 1999 as All ‘Bout Children. Jane retired in May 2013 but continues to work as a consultant to the CEO and volunteers her time providing training through our Institute for Clinical Training, supervising interns, as well as providing clinical services and education in local childcare centers.

Jane founded the organization with the vision of providing free mental health services to the youngest and most vulnerable children in our community. As a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor, and certified Infant Mental Health Specialist through The Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy at Florida State University, she has been an strong advocate for young children in our community for the past 16 years. In her leadership role in the area of early childhood mental health, Jane collaborated with the local community colleges and universities in training students, teachers, and graduate level mental health counselor/social worker interns in Play Therapy for the young child (ages birth-5).

Medical Consultant, Shannon Fox-Levine, MD has been a pediatrician in Palm Beach County since 2003 at Palm Beach Pediatrics, where she is a managing partner. Dr. Fox-Levine received her medical degree from the University of Maryland at Baltimore and trained in Pediatrics at NYU/Bellevue Hospital in Manhattan. She has always had a special interest in development and behavior in children.

As the current President of the Palm Beach County Pediatric Society, one of her long-term goals is to bridge the gap in the continuity of care of children with mental health issues between therapists and the county's pediatricians. She is also involved in improving the screening process of children for mental health issues by pediatricians, serving as a leader in this effort.
Step 1 in Building a Trauma-Informed School, Organization, or Community is through ACEs awareness and Trauma-Informed Care Training.

We will work with you to individualize our training options to meet the needs of your school, organization, or community.

Training

The following pages include some of our training options. Please feel free to reach out to us at 561-244-9499 ext. 12 or info@centerforchildcounseling.org if you would like to discuss the specific training needs for your school, organization, or community.
About the ACE study, including outcomes and findings;
Definition of toxic stress and its impact on the developing brain in early childhood and throughout the lifespan;
Impact of early adversity on lifelong health, mental and physical;
About the ACEs and Resilience Surveys; and
The importance of creating trauma-informed and resilience-building practices based on the findings of the ACEs research.

Training Options:

Level 1

ACEs, Trauma, and Toxic Stress
1.5 Hours for $450

Learning Objectives

Participants will learn...
- About the ACE study, including outcomes and findings;
- Definition of toxic stress and its impact on the developing brain in early childhood and throughout the lifespan;
- Impact of early adversity on lifelong health, mental and physical;
- About the ACEs and Resilience Surveys; and
- The importance of creating trauma-informed and resilience-building practices based on the findings of the ACEs research.

www.centerforchildcounseling.org
PACESs and Trauma-Informed Care Training

Training Options:

Level 2

ACEs, Trauma to Resilience
4 Hours for $1,200

Learning Objectives

Participants will learn:

- About the ACE study, including the ACE pyramid which provides the conceptual framework for the study;
- Outcomes and findings of the ACE study;
- Team building exercise with the Brain Architecture Game;
- Definition of toxic Stress and its Impact on the developing brain in early childhood and throughout the lifespan;
- Impact of early adversity on lifelong health, mental and physical;
- About the ACEs and Resilience Surveys, including participants’ own scores;
- How resilience trumps ACEs;
- The importance of creating trauma-informed and resilience-building practices based on the findings of the ACEs research;
- Role plays practicing effective communication strategies, including reflective statements; and
- Shifting thinking and practice to become trauma-Informed.
Types of trauma, including individual and community levels;
Brain development and neuroscience;
About the stress response system, and the impact of toxic stress;
An in-depth look at positive and adverse childhood experiences and its impact on the individual;
ACEs in the community, including an overview of epigenetics and historical trauma and toxic stress;
A look at the impact of trauma and toxic stress on the mother and on the baby;
The antidote to ACEs, Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs); and
About resilience, with early intervention strategies.

*Participants must have completed level 1 and/or 2 prior to completing level 3.
PACEs and Trauma-Informed Care Training

Training Options:

Level 4

PACES, Trauma and Toxic Stress: Train the Trainer
8 Hours for $5,000
(plus learning materials, toolkit, and travel costs)
Limited to 12 Participants

Learning Objectives:

In this day-long intensive, participants will learn...

- About the ACE study, including the ACE Pyramid which provides the conceptual framework for the study;
- Outcomes and findings of the ACE study;
- Definition of toxic stress and its impact on the developing brain in early childhood and throughout the Lifespan;
- Impact of early adversity on lifelong health, mental and physical;
- About the ACEs and resilience Surveys, including reflecting on their own scores;
- How resilience trumps ACEs;
- The importance of creating trauma-informed and resilience-building practices based on the findings of the ACEs research;
- Role plays practicing effective communication strategies, including reflective statements;
- About the antidote to ACEs, Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs); and
- About resilience, with targeted early intervention strategies; and
- Shifting thinking and practice to become trauma-informed

*Participants must have completed level 1 and/or 2 and level 3 prior to completing level 4.

Additional Requirements

Participants are required to...

- Complete and sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA), and
- Demonstrate ability to facilitate a basic Introduction to ACEs workshop, with sample visuals and video due on a specified date to receive a certificate for the course.

www.centerforchildcounseling.org
Fighting ACEs includes advocacy, outreach, and awareness using a public health approach to mitigate the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences, Adverse Community Environments, and trauma, which can impact health throughout the lifespan.

A vital part of this initiative is sharing information with our community. Please connect with us on social media and help us drive this important work forward!

Social Media

www.facebook.com/centerforchildcounseling
www.twitter.com/childcounslpbc
www.instagram.com/childcounselpbc
www.youtube.com/c/centerforchildcounseling
www.pinterest.com/cfccplay
www.linkedin.com/company/centerforchildcounseling
PACEs Connection
www.pacesconnection.com

PACEs (Positive and Adverse Childhood Experiences) Connection is supporting communities to accelerate the use of PACEs science...to solve our most intractable problems.

PACEs Science
The science of PACEs refers to the research about the stunning effects of positive and adverse childhood experiences (PACEs) and how they work together to affect our lives, as well as our organizations, systems and communities.

Learn more at www.pacesconnection.com/blog/aces-101-faqs

PACEs is free to join and includes:

- **PACEs Connection Resource Center** - PACEs science presentations, surveys, videos, webinars, training...and more. Including our Anti-Racism Resources and COVID-19 Resource Lists.
- **PACEs Connection Speakers & Trainers Bureau** - a service that provides PACEs Connection members a database of PACEs speakers and trainers.
- **How-Tos** - Directions on how to post a blog, calendar event, comment, etc.
- **Growing Resilient Communities** - Launching or growing a local PACEs initiative? They have tools & guidelines.
- **PACEs 101** - The five parts of PACEs science, plus links to articles, books & videos.
- **What ACEs and PCEs do you have?** - Do the ACEs & resilience questionnaires. Learn about other ACEs.

Learn more...
www.pacesconnection.com

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University
www.developingchild.harvard.edu

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces
www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/aces

ACEs Too High
www.acestoohigh.com/got-your-ace-score

Center for Child Counseling
www.centerforchildcounseling.org/ACEsToolkit
At Center for Child Counseling, the foundation of our mission is working with our partners to build healthier, safer, more nurturing families and communities — *where all children have the opportunity to thrive*. To truly achieve this mission, we must acknowledge and address the trauma related to racism.

Center for Child Counseling is committed to using a trauma-informed equity lens in all aspects of our work and services, endorsing the Diversity-Informed Tenets developed by the Irving Harris Foundation.

The infographic above represents the next level of integrating practices and policies based on the science of positive and adverse childhood experiences (PACES). PACES Connection has a wealth of anti-racism resources on the impact of structural racism and trauma on individuals, families, and communities.

**PACEs Resources**: www.pacesconnection.com/g/aces-and-african-americans/blog/anti-racism-resources-list

**Talking to Kids About Race**: www.centerforchildcounseling.org/resources/parentresources
info@centerforchildcounseling.org
Telephone: 561-244-9499

www.centerforchildcounseling.org