

# WHY OUR WORK MATTERS

An Overview of our Impact



Kids On Track is a community-building organization that provides hope, direction, and ongoing support for children, youth, and their parents.

Since 1992, we have been working with underserved populations to address some of the most pressing social issues facing children and families today.

Educational, social, spiritual, and recreational elements are combined to deliver well-rounded programs. We cultivate relationships, encouraging participants in faith, character and leadership development, social skills, and a healthy lifestyle. We strive to support families experiencing limited opportunities due to various socioeconomic challenges.

Kids On Track has always relied on the support of the community to continue its important work. For over 30 years, we have been dedicated to serving underserved populations and improving the lives of children and families in our community. We understand that it takes a village to raise a child, and we couldn't do it without the support of our partners, donors, and volunteers. Their contributions have helped us to provide mentoring, support services, and programs that have made a real difference in the lives of those we serve.

We are grateful for the ongoing support and look forward to continuing to make a positive impact in our community for many years to come. We know that our work matters, and that our history shows that when the community rallies around a cause, our whole city benefits.

We believe that every member of every one of our families holds intrinsic value, and we're working hard to support them as they tackle the challenges our world offers them.

Thanks for taking the time to read this document and for taking interest in our work at Kids On Track.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in orange ink that reads 'Josh Dewling'.

Josh Dewling  
Executive Director





## OUR WORLD NEEDS HELP - THE ACES STUDY

Our work addresses many of the social issues facing children and families today, including the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The ACEs study, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Kaiser Permanente, found that traumatic experiences in childhood can have long-term negative effects on health and well-being in adulthood.

The ACEs study identified ten types of experiences that can have a detrimental effect on a child's development and well-being. These include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect, exposure to domestic violence, mental illness in the household, substance abuse in the household, incarceration of a household member, and loss of a parent through separation, divorce, or other means. It's important to note that these experiences can have a cumulative effect, meaning that the more ACEs a child experiences, the greater the risk of negative outcomes in adulthood.

**61% of adults in this study had at least one ACE and 16% had 4 or more types of ACEs. It's clear that our community needs help!** The CDC estimates that by preventing ACEs, up to 1.9 million heart disease cases and 21 million depression cases could have been avoided. They also recognize that ACEs are costly. The economic and social costs to families, communities, and society totals hundreds of billions of dollars each year. A 10% reduction in ACEs in North America could equate to an annual savings of \$56 billion.

It's clear that we must respond! Many of the families in our programs fall into the 16% experiencing 4 or more types of ACEs.

We work hard to create a positive and supportive environment for kids and youth, while also providing resources and support for their parents. By providing mentoring, education, and recreational programs, we aim to give children and youth the skills and opportunities they need to succeed in life and mitigate the impact of ACEs in their lives. It's through the efforts of our team and the support of our donors and volunteers that we're able to build long-term positive relationships with families, giving them a leg to stand on when crisis comes and they need support. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of families in our community.





## HOW WE DO IT - PROGRAM DESIGN

Our programs are designed to promote healthy development and well-being by incorporating the 40 Developmental Assets identified by the Search Institute. These assets represent the positive experiences, relationships, and personal qualities that help young people develop into competent, confident, and caring individuals.

The 40 Developmental Assets are grouped into eight categories: supportive relationships, positive values, social competencies, positive identity, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, and positive community values. Our programs aim to provide experiences that foster the development of these assets and help young people build resilience and thrive.

**When we look at these assets, we're able to identify that Kids On Track programs help to support at least 30 different assets. We're proud of our well-rounded and strategically developed programs that give kids and youth the best chance of growing up healthy, caring, and responsible.**

For example, our programs provide opportunities for youth to form supportive relationships with mentors, peers, and other caring adults. These relationships help young people feel valued and connected, a key component of the “supportive relationships” category of developmental assets. Additionally, our programs promote positive values like honesty, responsibility, and fairness, and encourage young people to develop healthy habits that contribute to a healthy lifestyle.

We also focus on helping young people develop social competencies, such as effective communication and conflict resolution skills, which are critical for success in life. Our programs promote a positive identity by providing opportunities for youth to learn about their interests, strengths, and personal goals.

Our programs have a central element in physical activity. We utilize a wide variety of activities in our programs as a foundation for connection and relationship building. Specifically, our kids programs are intentional in having elements for physical literacy. As stated by Dr. Karyn Purvis, “Scientists have recently determined that it takes approximately 400 repetitions to create a new synapse in the brain-unless it is done with play, in which case, it takes between 10 and 20 repetitions.” We utilize “games with a purpose” in our programs; Kids and youth learn by doing, not just by listening or watching. Therefore, all of our programs have design elements that are hands-on and movement based.

Our work matters. We want to continue to provide young people with the positive experiences, relationships, and personal qualities that will help them grow into healthy, resilient, and successful adults. We need your support.





## SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

One of the key benefits of our work is its ability to generate a high social return on investment (SROI). **Studies have shown that community-building organizations can generate a social return on investment of between 3:1 and 12:1.** This means that for every dollar invested in our organization, we are able to generate up to twelve dollars in social value. By investing in our programs and services, our supporters are not only helping to improve the lives of children and families in our community, but they are also seeing a significant return on their investment for the common good.

The benefits of our work extend beyond monetary return, as it also improves life skills and mental health, increases community engagement, promotes active lifestyles, and addresses Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and physical literacy shortfalls, ultimately having a long-term positive impact on the community. Investing in our organization is not just a charitable act, but also a wise investment in the future of our community.

## WHAT ABOUT PUBLIC BENEFIT?

Furthermore, our work can also help to reduce health disparities among underserved and marginalized communities. Community-based participatory research has been shown to be effective in addressing health disparities and improving health outcomes. By working with families and communities, we can help to create more access for our highest-needs communities. **Our programs and services provide children and families with access to healthy food, strong community, and physical activity, all of which are essential for good health and wellbeing.**

Our program design focuses on outcomes that lead to critical skills such as drug resistance, crime reduction, and overall resiliency when it comes to school and home challenges. Additionally, our work can also help to prevent future ACEs. Communities with high levels of social capital have been shown to have lower rates of child maltreatment. By fostering connections and relationships, we can help to create a safer and more nurturing environment for children and families. Our organization provides parenting education and support, as well as mentoring programs, which can help to reduce the risk of child maltreatment and promote healthy child development.





## HERE'S THE MAIN POINT...

The work of Kids On Track is imperative. It addresses some of the most important social issues facing children and families today. Our programs and services provide children and families with the skills and resources they need to succeed in life. By investing in our organization, supporters are helping to improve the lives of children and families in our community.

Additionally, our work helps to provide hope, direction, and ongoing support for families, all of which contribute to a healthier, more connected community. Our longevity in the community speaks to the commitment we have to our local families and demonstrates the responsibility we feel to our continued work. We have the experience and knowledge to help our participants be more effective. We are proud of the work we do and are committed to continuing to make a positive impact in the lives of children and families in our community.

As we continue to grow and reach more families in the community, we'd ask that you'd consider joining the cause as a volunteer, donor, or supporter. We know the work Kids On Track is doing is vital, and we hope that you will join the KOT Family.





## REFERENCES

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