



**American Academy of Nursing**  
*transforming health care policy and practice through nursing knowledge*

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## **American Academy of Nursing Convenes Critical Conversation on “Toxic Stress in Children Living in Poverty”**

*Health Professionals, Child Advocates and Business Community to Discuss Innovative Strategies to Reduce Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences on At-Risk Children*

**Washington, D.C. (October 26, 2017)** – With approximately 25 percent of the nation’s children living below the federal poverty level, and an additional 20 percent living in low-income families struggling to meet basic needs, increasingly large numbers of vulnerable children are at-risk of being exposed to toxic stress. The American Academy of Nursing will convene a critical conversation, “Toxic Stress in Children Living in Poverty” on October 27<sup>th</sup> to identify innovative preventive strategies concerning this important public health issue.

Located at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., the event will be held from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and will feature two panels of experts and an audience of health professionals, child advocates and key stakeholders including the business community. The American Academy of Nursing champions the reduction of toxic stress associated with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) as a top priority for improving the health of the nation. ACEs include experiences such as child abuse and neglect, parental mental illness and substance use, domestic and neighborhood violence, and poverty. Toxic stress adversely alters the developing brain and can impair mental, physical and emotional health throughout the lifespan. However, research suggests that appropriate and timely interventions may decrease toxic stress in at-risk children.

“As nursing’s leading voice to improve health through policy, the American Academy of Nursing is voicing the urgent need of those who cannot speak for themselves: low-income children experiencing toxic stress,” said Academy President **Karen Cox**, an Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at Children’s Mercy Kansas City. “We believe this critical conversation will spur a team of cross-sector partners who working together can identify and implement promising practices to prevent toxic stress in at-risk children.”

Panelists include: **Joe Reardon**, President & CEO, Kansas City Chamber of Commerce and former Mayor, Kansas City, Kansas; **Julie Willems Van Dijk**, Culture of Health Leader, Associate Scientist & Director of the County Health Rankings and Roadmap Program; **Sandee McClowry**, INSIGHTS Into Children’s Temperament & Professor of Applied Psychology/Teaching and Learning, New York University; **Andrew Racine**, Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Albert Einstein College of Medicine; **Deborah Gross**, The Chicago Parent Program & Professor in Mental Health and Psychiatric Nursing, Johns Hopkins University; **James Anderst**, Division Director of Child Abuse and Neglect, Professor of Pediatrics, University of Missouri; **Cara Baldari**, Senior Policy Director for Family Economics and Legal Counsel, First Focus;

and **Anne Turner-Henson**, Professor, University of Alabama at Birmingham, School of Nursing.

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