

Study Examines Rural-Urban Differences in Positive Childhood Experiences Across a National Sample

Research led by [Elizabeth Crouch](#), assistant professor of [Health Services Policy and Management](#), and deputy director of the [Rural and Minority Health Research Center](#) (University of South Carolina, [Arnold School of Public Health](#)), and research assistant professors [Elizabeth Radcliff](#) and [Melinda Merrell](#) has examined the rural-urban differences in positive childhood experiences across the United States. University of South Carolina School of Medicine researcher Kevin Bennett also contributed to the study, which was published in the [Journal of Rural Health](#).

With this project, the researchers examined the prevalence of positive childhood experiences and adverse childhood experiences of nearly 20,000 children from the 2017-2018 National Survey of Children's Health in 31 states and Washington, D.C. to estimate the differences between rural and urban children. After adjusting for other variables in their analyses, the authors found no significant differences in positive experiences between rural and urban children in after-school activities. They also found that rural children were more likely to volunteer in the community, school or church and had greater odds of having a mentor for advice/guidance compared to urban children.

"An examination of both positive childhood experiences and adverse childhood experiences provides policy makers, program developers, and other stakeholders the opportunity to determine needs of rural children and where to target interventions," Dr. Crouch says. "Furthering the understanding of these experiences is important to bring individuals, families, and communities together to both address childhood adversity and utilize existing family and community-level assets."