

Kanwaljeet J. S. Anand, MBBS, D.Phil., FAAP, FCCM, FRCPCH
Professor of Pediatrics, Anesthesiology, Perioperative & Pain Medicine

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To the Promoters of Youth Wellbeing

Children in many parts of the world are facing extraordinary levels of stress. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), living through armed conflict, displacement & mass migration, or other forms of trauma can cause lasting dysregulation of stress physiology (HPA axis) & emotional instability. Early life trauma adversely affects lifelong physical, mental and cognitive health, and shortens the lifespan.

As a Professor of Pediatrics and Director of the Child Wellness Lab in the Maternal & Child Health Research Institute at Stanford University School of Medicine, I have been investigating the lifelong impact of stress and trauma on child development, as well as promising interventions that might reverse HPA axis dysregulation. Such strategies hold potential for reversing the impact of trauma on children and youth, thus allowing them to thrive.

In this context, my colleagues and I studied the impact of the SKY Schools program on youth ACEs, due to its comprehensive approach. The SKY Schools' innovative curriculum goes beyond standard psychosocial mental health strategies, by providing students with evidence-based breathwork to calm the hyper-stimulated stress response found in individuals undergoing duress, and to promote wellbeing. Our research on the SKY Schools program has produced promising results both physiologically and psychologically.

We discovered that students enrolled in SKY Schools demonstrated a positive physiological shift away from HPA axis dysregulation toward healthy adaptive stress physiology. In parallel, they experienced reductions in anxiety and suicidality, as well as improvements in mental health, emotional regulation, and even satisfaction with academic performance. It is noteworthy that the Adverse Childhood Experiences did not change; what changed was the ability of these youth to employ SKY program-based coping skills and become more resilient.

In times of mass disaster it is essential to provide youth with evidence-based coping strategies that can be rapidly provided to large groups of youth at a time. SKY Schools is one such approach that is highly scalable and cost effective. As such it may reduce the burden on existing health care systems, while self-empowering our youth.

I applaud this SKY Schools initiative to provide this evidence-based program to our world's most vulnerable youth, and offer my support for this worthy project.

Most respectfully,



Kanwaljeet J. S. Anand, MBBS, D.Phil., FAAP, FCCM, FRCPCH
Professor of Pediatrics, Anesthesiology, Perioperative & Pain Medicine
Director, Stanford Child Wellness Lab (<https://childwellness.stanford.edu/>)
Director, Jackson Vaughan Critical Care Research Fund
Department of Pediatrics, Stanford University School of Medicine
Editor-in-Chief, **Awareness** (<https://awarenessjournals.com>)