

# IS IT GOOD 4 KIDS RVA? ELECTION TOOL-KIT



Use these facts and questions when speaking to candidates for Mayor, City Council or School Board to learn more about how they will support children and families, especially those in poverty, if they are elected. Use this handout when you attend public forums, attend meet, and greet events or when candidates come knocking on your door.



## CHILD POVERTY RATE 2014

<b>RICHMOND</b>	<b>38.9%</b>
Petersburg	37.5%
Philadelphia	36.9%
Baltimore	32.2%
Norfolk	31.7%
Washington, DC	27.5%

**RICHMOND CITY HAS THE HIGHEST CHILD POVERTY RATE OF ANY OF THESE PEER CITIES.**

Source: vakids.org

## IN THE MOST RECENT YEAR 498 RICHMOND CITY CHILDREN WERE IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM



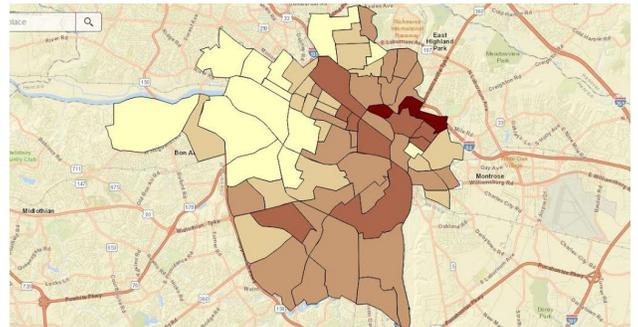
**compared to 320 in Fairfax County, City and Falls Church combined**

Source: vakids.org



**A FAMILY OF 3 LIVES IN POVERTY IF THEY HAVE A MONTHLY INCOME LESS THAN \$1,649.**

Source: Federal Register



**CHILD POVERTY BY CENSUS TRACT; DARKEST RED ARE AREAS OF >60% CHILD POVERTY**

Source: Census.gov

**At least 64% of residents have experienced 1 or more adverse childhood experience (ACE).**

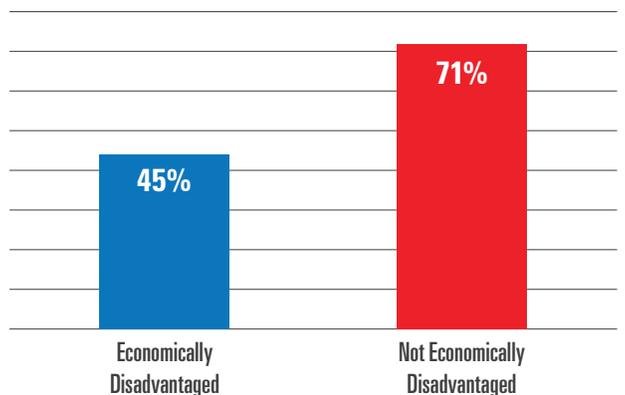
Studies show that the more ACEs a person has, the greater the risk for chronic disease, mental illness, violence and being a victim of violence.

**Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) include:**

physical or mental abuse or neglect; a family member with depression or other mental illness; an addicted family member; an incarcerated family member; witnessing abuse or neglect; or losing a parent to divorce or death.

Source: acesconnection.com

## RPS 3rd Grade Reading Pass Rate



Source: vakids.org





## QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:



1. The child poverty rate in Richmond is 39%, twice the state average. Brain research demonstrates that growing up in poverty can create “toxic stress,” negatively impacting educational and health outcomes long-term. However, the experiences of toxic stress can be buffered by positive relationships with parents and caregivers. **What initiatives would you champion to support children and their families to mitigate the effects of toxic stress?**



2. The City of Richmond’s Office of Community Wealth Building has set a goal of reducing child poverty by 50% in Richmond by 2030. **Do you support this goal, and if so, what concrete policies and investments will you support to achieve it?**



3. The average cost of infant child care in Virginia is more than \$10,000 per year, about the same as college tuition. Only about 1 out of every 6 families that need financial assistance for child care so that they can work receive it. **What solutions would you propose to improve access to child care for low-income families?**



4. Parental resilience has been identified as the most important factor in mitigating the impact of poverty on children. Yet families in poverty face hardship and challenges in virtually every aspect of life from stable housing, reliable transportation, to safe neighborhoods. **What would you do to address these hardships and how would you promote parental resilience?**



5. Often the challenges of living in poverty manifest as health or mental health challenges for children and families. **What efforts should be championed by city leaders to address the mental and physical challenges of living in poverty?**



6. Children of color from Richmond are disproportionately represented in both the foster care system and juvenile justice system. **What efforts would you make to address the school-to-prison pipeline and to strengthen social services in Richmond?**



7. Children can learn valuable life skills both inside and outside of the classroom. **How do you envision supporting the work of schools to link to out of school time and enhanced learning opportunities?**



8. Many candidates have expressed support for providing additional resources for Richmond Public Schools. In particular, children in poverty, children experiencing mental and behavioral challenges, and English language learners need additional support to succeed in school. **What efforts would you champion to help children from all backgrounds succeed in school?**



9. City leadership will be focused on employment opportunities for all Richmond residents. Young people 16-24 are the most likely age group to be unemployed. **What would you do to ensure young people are connected to employment opportunities and are workforce ready?**



Is It Good For Kids RVA Coalition Members: ChildSavers, Family Lifeline, Greater Richmond SCAN, NextUp RVA, Peter Paul Development Center, Richmond Education Association, Richmond Forward, Robins Foundation, The Commonwealth Institute, United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg, and Voices for Virginia’s Children