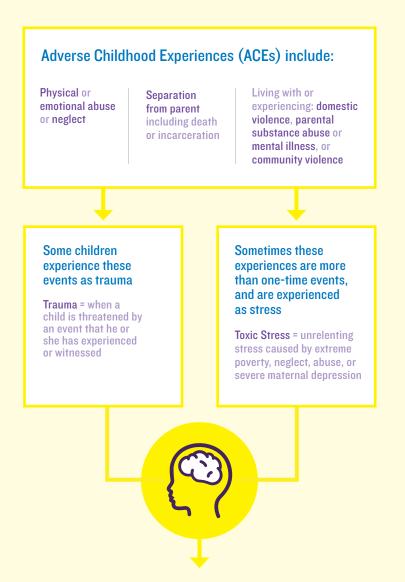
## Virginia can build strong brains by addressing childhood trauma

With appropriate supports, children can be resilient

#### SOME CHILDREN EXPERIENCE ADVERSITY THAT IMPACTS HEALTHY BRAIN DEVELOPMENT



### THIS IMPACT ON THE BRAIN CAN LEAD TO CHANGES In Physical, Emotional, and Behavioral Health

ACEs can negatively impact:

- Brain development
- Cognitive development
- Social-emotional development
- Ability to form secure
  emotional attachments
- Physical health



#### RESEARCH HAS DEMONSTRATED LONG-TERM AND DEVASTATING IMPACTS OF ACEs

Children who experience toxic stress or trauma are more likely to have chronic health conditions as adults

# If a child experiences three or more **ACE**s, as an adult they are...

4x7xI2xMORE LIKELYMORE LIKELYMORE LIKELYTO REPORT HAVING<br/>POOR HEALTHTO BE AN<br/>ALCOHOLICTO DIE BY<br/>SUICIDE

# CHILDREN ARE RESILIENT AND CAN THRIVE DESPITE TRAUMA IN THEIR LIVES

Research shows us how to counteract those experiences:

- Promote positive relationships with parents and other caregivers.
- Design our systems to better serve kids. Our systems from schools, to child welfare, to mental health – need to understand how to recognize kids who've experienced trauma and how to help them become resilient.
- Support interventions that provide the social and emotional support necessary for children who experience trauma.
- Change our view of children: ask "what has happened to you?" instead of "what is wrong with you?"

\* All sources available at vakids.org/kidscount-data/virginia-data Research shows that chronic, severe stressors in childhood can cause toxic, traumatic biological responses to the developing brain, often with long-term consequences for health and wellness. Yet this research also tells us that responsive relationships with caregivers and strong community supports can buffer the effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), allowing children to develop to their potential.

ACEs are potentially traumatic events that can have negative, lasting effects on health and well-being. These experiences range from physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, to parental divorce or the incarceration of a parent or guardian. A growing body of research, based on the ground-breaking 1998 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Kaiser Permanente study, has sought to quantify the prevalence of ACEs and illuminate their connection with negative behavioral and health outcomes, such as obesity, depression, and other chronic health conditions later in life.

#### ACEs do not have to dictate the future of the child. Children can thrive despite trauma in their lives.

A child's first five years of life are the most critical period for brain development. Despite trauma, children are resilient and can thrive if the right supports are in place in their family and their community.

# Voices for Virginia's Children offers these recommendations to the General Assembly and the Northam Administration:

- 1. **Create an Interagency Trauma-Informed Care Workgroup:** This proposal for budget language and \$150,000 to provide staffing and technical expertise would establish an inter-agency workgroup to define trauma-informed practices, align practices across agencies, and identify unmet needs. This workgroup represents a first step at better defining trauma-informed practice and policy and aligning efforts across many children's services. Item 128#1h (Patron: Peace) Item 128#1s (Patron: Carrico)
- 2. Additional Resources for Family and Children's Trust Fund Grants: This request of \$250,000 will provide additional grants through the Family and Children's Trust Fund (FACT) to support innovative practices to prevent childhood trauma at the local level. These funds will focus on prevention and early intervention with an emphasis on interventions for families with young children. FACT is encouraged to seek additional private resources as matching funds. Item 334#2h (Patron: Peace) Item 334#2s (Patron: Carrico)
- Fund Tools for Alternatives to Suspension and Expulsion: Additional funds are needed to support legislative efforts to reduce suspension and expulsion in early grades. Several budget amendments were introduced to increase funding for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) as well as the continuation of the Virginia Tiered System of Support (VTSS) targeted to Title I schools. VTSS: Item 129#4h (Patron: Peace) Item 128#1s (Patron: Favola) and PBIS: Item135#16h (Patron: Bourne) Item 135#6s (Patron: McClellan)
- 4. **Continue the Children's Cabinet:** We will seek support from the Northam Administration to continue the Governor's Children's Cabinet. We hope this will build on the good model established under the McAuliffe Administration by reviewing child outcomes, identifying existing resources, and facilitating coordination on issues such as childhood trauma.