

EQUITY FOR ALL KIDS



To: The Honorable Chair, Senator Delores G. Kelley, and members of the Finance Committee
From: Melissa S. Rock, Birth to Three Strategic Initiative Director
Re.: **SB 918: Human Services—Trauma-Informed Care—Commission and Training**
Date: March 6, 2020
Position: **SUPPORT**

ACEs, or Adverse Childhood Experiences, are a category of early life traumas which negatively impact long-term health, prosperity, and social mobility outcomes.ⁱ ACEs encompass traumatic experiences at all levels of severity and include: emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, emotional and physical neglect, domestic and intimate partner violence, illicit substance use in the home, untreated mental illness in the home, the incarceration of a household member, and the separation and/or divorce of adult caregivers.ⁱⁱ ACEs have the potential to hinder an individual's neurological, socio-behavioral, and emotional development, all of which have repercussions for students' well-being and their ultimate academic success.

ACEs don't target individuals based on race, gender, ability status, sexuality, nationality, socio-economic status, or any of the identity markers we typically use when disaggregating data. The groundbreaking 1998 study found that ACEs are relatively common--**about 67% of survey participants had at least one ACE.**ⁱⁱⁱ Unfortunately, the study also demonstrated that when an individual had more ACEs, the odds of them experiencing negative outcomes like alcohol and substance abuse, depression, adolescent parenthood, and many other issues also increased. Having 3 or more ACEs is typically the threshold for these negative outcomes. More than 40% of Maryland children have at least one ACE—**15.4% have had two or more.**^{iv}

Trauma informed services for individuals who are experiencing or have experienced ACEs can help mitigate the negative outcomes associated with ACEs. SB 918's Trauma Informed Commission ensures that our state provide trauma informed services in a coordinated way to Maryland's children and families. It will be incredibly valuable for Commission members to receive ongoing training on trauma, as well, and ACY hopes that education will trickle down to service providers across the State. **ACY urges this committee to issue a favorable report on SB 918 to help improve outcomes for Marylanders who have experiences trauma.**

ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fviolenceprevention%2Facestudy%2Findex.html

ⁱⁱ Id.

ⁱⁱⁱ Id.

^{iv} Baltimore Sun. *More than 40 percent of Maryland children experience traumatic events.* October 19, 2017.