

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Research over the last two decades in the evolving fields of neuroscience, molecular biology, public health, genomics, and epigenetics reveals that experiences in the first few years of life build changes into the biology of the human body that, in turn, influence the person's physical and mental health over his or her lifetime; and

WHEREAS, Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic experiences that occur during childhood, including physical, emotional or sexual abuse, physical and emotional neglect, household dysfunction, including substance abuse, untreated mental illness or incarceration of a household member, domestic violence, or separation or divorce involving household members, that can have a profound effect on a child's developing brain and body and can result in poor health during the person's adulthood; and

WHEREAS, the discovery of ACEs offers each of us an opportunity to see a person with new eyes: instead of asking "what's wrong with that child or adult", we should ask "what happened to that person"; and

WHEREAS, the original 1998 ACEs Study, which surveyed approximately 17,000 adult Californians, found that two-thirds of participants had at least one adverse childhood experience and one in six participants had four or more adverse childhood experiences; and

WHEREAS, The ACEs Study also found a strong correlation between the number of adverse childhood experiences and a person's risk for disease and negative health behaviors; and

WHEREAS, Researchers found that a person with four or more adverse childhood experiences was 2.4 times more likely to have a stroke, 2.2 times more likely to have ischemic heart disease, 2 times more likely to have chronic pulmonary obstructive disease, 171.9 times more likely to have a type of cancer, and 1.6 times more likely to have diabetes; and

WHEREAS, Researchers found that a person with four or more adverse childhood experiences was 12.2 times more likely to attempt suicide, 10.3 times more likely to use injection drugs, and 227.4 times more likely to be an alcoholic; and

WHEREAS, these early adverse experiences literally shape the physical architecture of a child's developing brain and establish either a sturdy or a fragile foundation for all the learning, health, and behavior that follow; and

WHEREAS, Strong, frequent, or prolonged stress in childhood caused by adverse childhood experiences can become toxic stress, impacting the development of a child's fundamental brain architecture and stress response systems; and

WHEREAS, Early childhood offers a unique window of opportunity to prevent and heal the impacts of adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress on a child's brain and body; and

WHEREAS, the emerging science and research on toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences evidence a growing public health crisis for the state with implications for the state's educational, juvenile justice, criminal justice, and public health systems; and

WHEREAS, A child with four or more ACEs is 46 times more likely to have learning or emotional problems and more likely to be involved with the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, A critical factor in buffering children from the effects of toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences is the existence of supportive, stable relationships between children and their families, caregivers, and other important adults in their lives.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED That we, the members of the Durham County Board of County Commissioners, do hereby urge the entire Durham Community – neighborhoods, faith communities, organizations, & businesses - to become ACEs informed and supportive of strategies that strengthen individual, family and community buffers that can prevent or alleviate the effects of adverse childhood experiences and adverse community environments.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution are shared broadly throughout the community along with notices of upcoming screenings of the movie, *Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope* or the opportunity for community partners to host a screening; and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED That the Durham County Board of County Commissioners endorses the development of an ACEs Community Resilience Plan and development of appropriate supports for children and families.

This the 26th day of November 2018

Wendy Jacobs, Chair

James Hill, Vice-Chair

Heidi Carter

Brenda Howerton

Ellen Reckhow