



January
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Educational Advocacy for CASA Kids



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Staff

Our children are educationally fragile

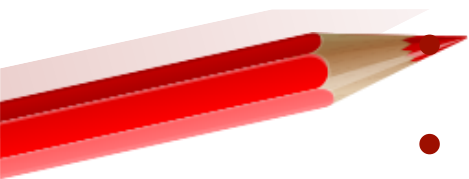
LAYERED vulnerabilities



Our children are educationally fragile

Physically/Biologically:

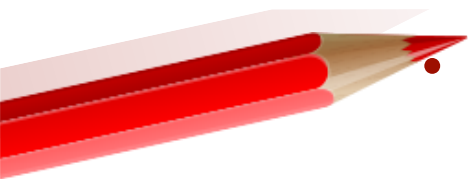
- Possible abuse or neglect
- Possible substance exposure (in utero or since; possibly known, possibly not)
- Possible chaotic prenatal experiences
- Developmental trauma
- Poverty



Our children are educationally fragile

Experientially:

- Possible abuse or neglect
- Poverty
- Transience, with corresponding school changes
- Truancy/high absenteeism
- Perhaps poor follow-through or disruption in services
- Weaken(ed)/(ing) link to school community due to transience/absenteeism or exclusionary discipline



Our children are educationally fragile



Types of Trauma:



Acute



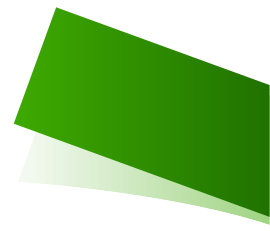
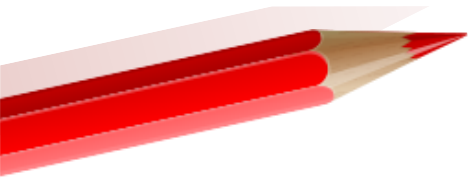
Chronic



Complex



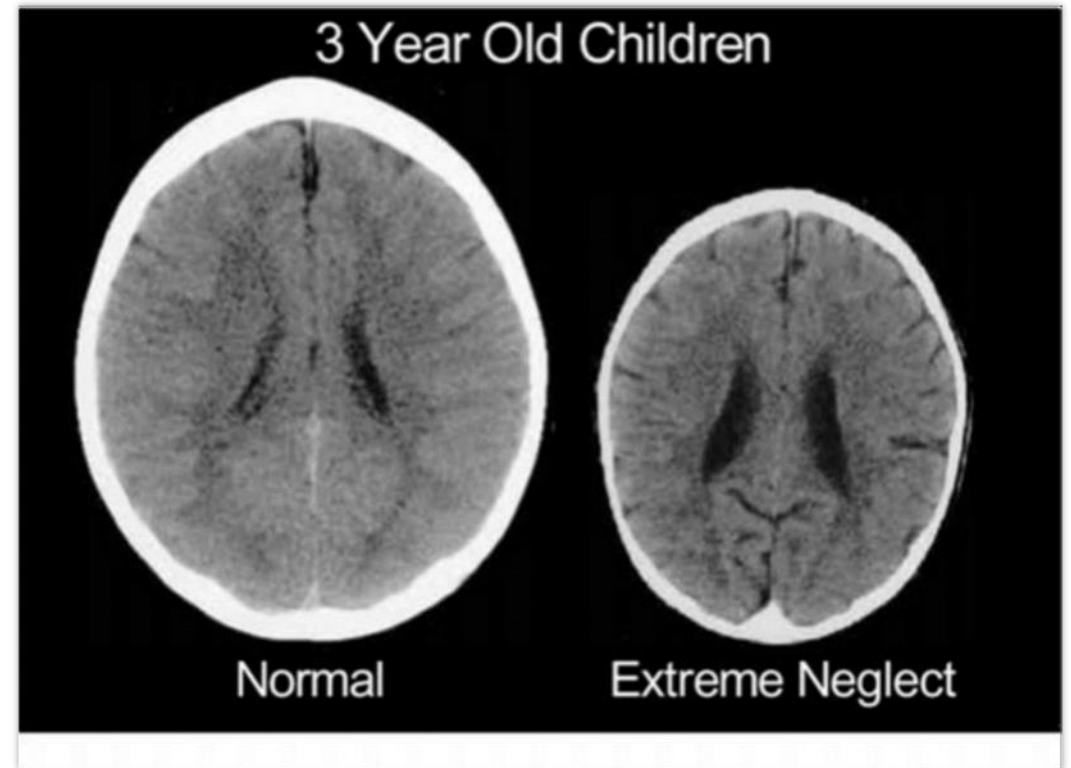
Historical



Our children are educationally fragile

Physically/Biologically:

Neglect counts too!



Our children are educationally fragile

Impact of Trauma:

- Language & Communication Skills
- Ability to organize narrative material in linear fashion
- Ability to understand cause & effect relationships
- Executive Functioning
 - Perspective-taking/empathy
 - Attentiveness to classroom tasks
 - Ability to self-regulate
- Potential mistrust of authority
- Deep sense of unsafety when not the one in control
- Appropriately reading social cues
- Internalized shame
- Lack of agency or sense of efficacy/sense of self
- Balance, & Sensory Issues
- Ability to store & retrieve memory



Our children are educationally fragile

Demographically:

- May have **disability** (un)diagnosed?/managed well?
 - Overrepresentation in foster care of **children of color & children of poverty**

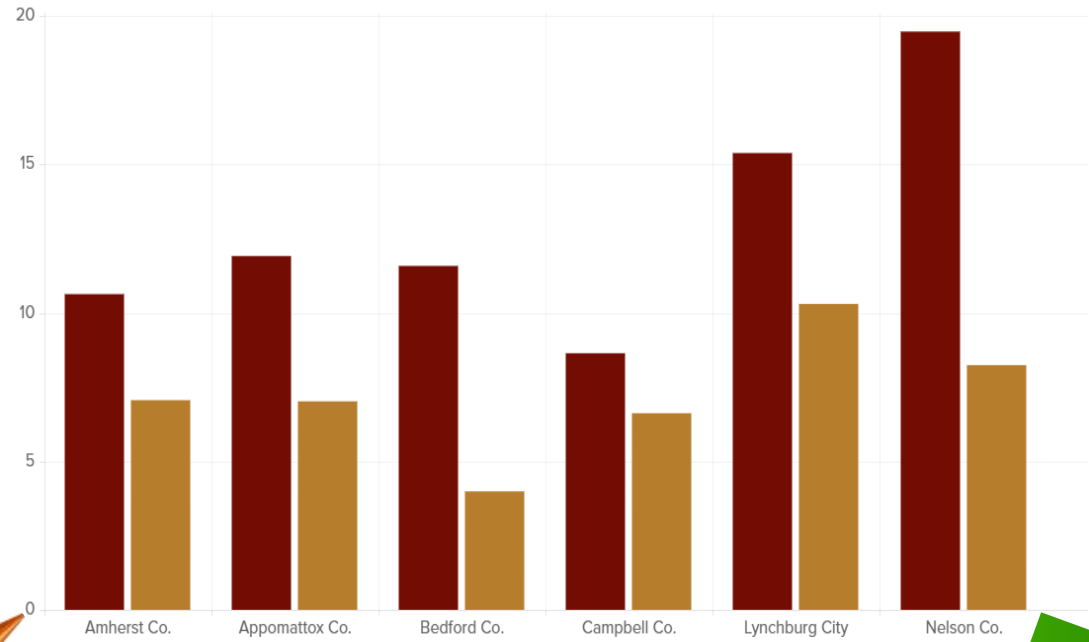
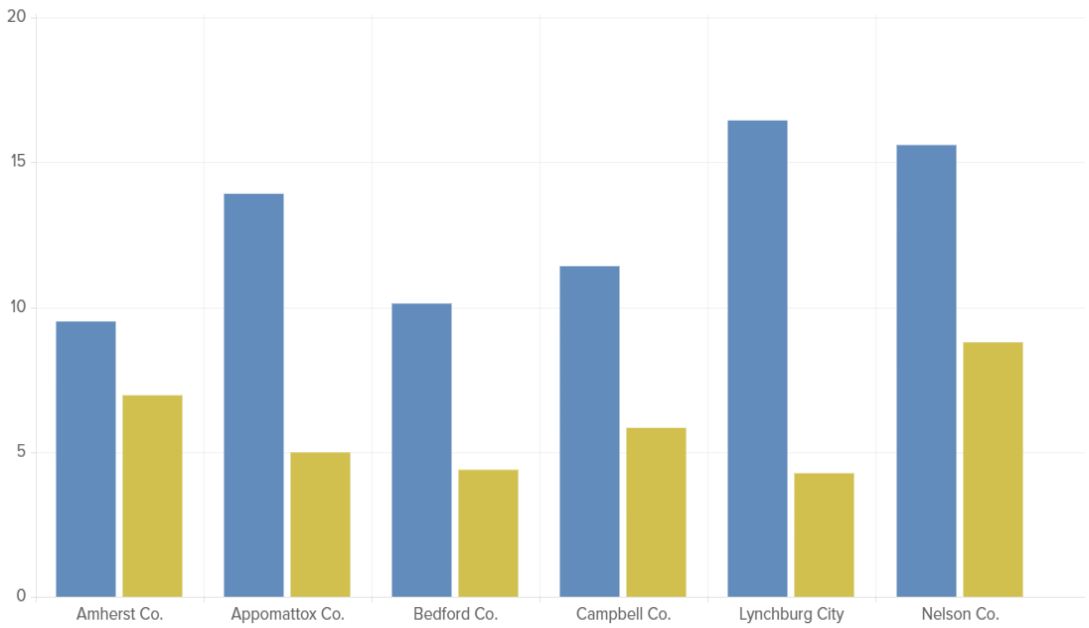


Suspensions in VA Schools in 2016

LAYERED VULNERABILITIES
(What student group do you think is MOST vulnerable to suspension?)

Local Racial Disparities in Student Suspension Rate

Local Suspension Rates Based on Disability



Suspensions in VA Schools in 2016

Impacts of Trauma:

- Potential mistrust of authority
- Deep sense of unsafety when not the one in control
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Elementary schools continued to issue most suspensions for relatively minor, non-violent offenses

Presentation last saved: Just now

57% of all short-term suspensions and 18% of all long-term suspensions were issued for the ten relatively minor, non-violent offenses in the table below.

Table 1. Suspensions for minor offenses.

Offense	Short-Term Suspensions		Long-Term Suspensions	
	Issued	Students	Issued	Students
Attendance	664	521	*	*
Cellular Telephones	2,087	1,699	*	*
Classroom or Campus Disruption	14,573	11,056	115	115
Defiance of Authority/Insubordination	18,398	12,768	105	104
Disrespect/Walking Away	7,729	6,373	35	35
Disruptive Demonstrations	15,392	11,093	217	214
Electronic Devices	144	143	*	*
Inappropriate Personal Property (food/beverage, clothing, toys, etc.)	389	370	*	*
Minor Insubordination	3,921	2,984	14	14
Using Obscene/Inappropriate Language/Gestures	8,952	7,540	42	41
Total	72,249	54,547	528	523

* VDOE suppresses data points between one and ten; therefore, these figures cannot be calculated.

What Can the Advocate Accomplish?

(Remember:
build positive
relationships!



GET Information

From the school file:

- ALWAYS review the physical school file!
- What can be learned?



GET Information

From school personnel:

- Who should we talk to?
- What can be learned?



SPOT Patterns

See the BIG PICTURE:

- Understand the patterns
- Understand the story
- Understand the child



ESTABLISH Follow-Through

Establish yourself as a consistent, engaged presence:

- Get the child on staff radar (if not already there)
 - Follow up on staff concerns
- Ensure school staff know you want to be invited to educational meetings



ENSURE Success

“Is this meeting the child’s needs?”

- Right tool?
- Tool being implemented with fidelity?
- Can tool be tweaked?
 - New tool needed?



ENSURE Success

“Is this meeting the child’s needs?”

Non IEP/504 Services Can Include:

- Title I Reading Support
- Day treatment (just for Medicaid kids)
- Hallway walks or social groups with guidance
- Etc.!



Why 504 or IEP?

504s & IEPs
both function as LEGAL
CONTRACTS,
codifying what the school will
provide to the child!

Child Find: Affirmative Duty

“Each local school division shall locate, identify and evaluate children with disabilities” (VDOE Regulations)



IEP

504

Definition:

-”Individualized Education Plan”
Customized plan for a child’s specialized educational program at school
-SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTION/SERVICES

-Removes barriers to general ed curriculum
ACCOMMODATIONS

Who is Eligible:

-Distinct eligibility categories
-Disability has to substantially impact them educationally

-Disability has to affect a major life function

Eligibility Process

Comprehensive Assessment by School

Documentation of disability, & evidence of impact at school

Goes up to:

-Can get IEP services thru 12th grade graduation, even if incarcerated/over 18

-Can follow you to college!

Disciplinary Protections:

-No more than 10 days suspension without assessing if behavior is tied to disability

-No more than 10 days suspension without assessing if behavior is tied to disability

VA IEP Eligibility Categories:

- Autism
- Specific learning disability
- Deafness/deaf-blindness
- Developmental delay (aged 2-6)
 - Emotional disability
 - Hearing impaired
 - Intellectual disability
 - Orthopedic impairment
- Other health impairment (e.g. ADHD)

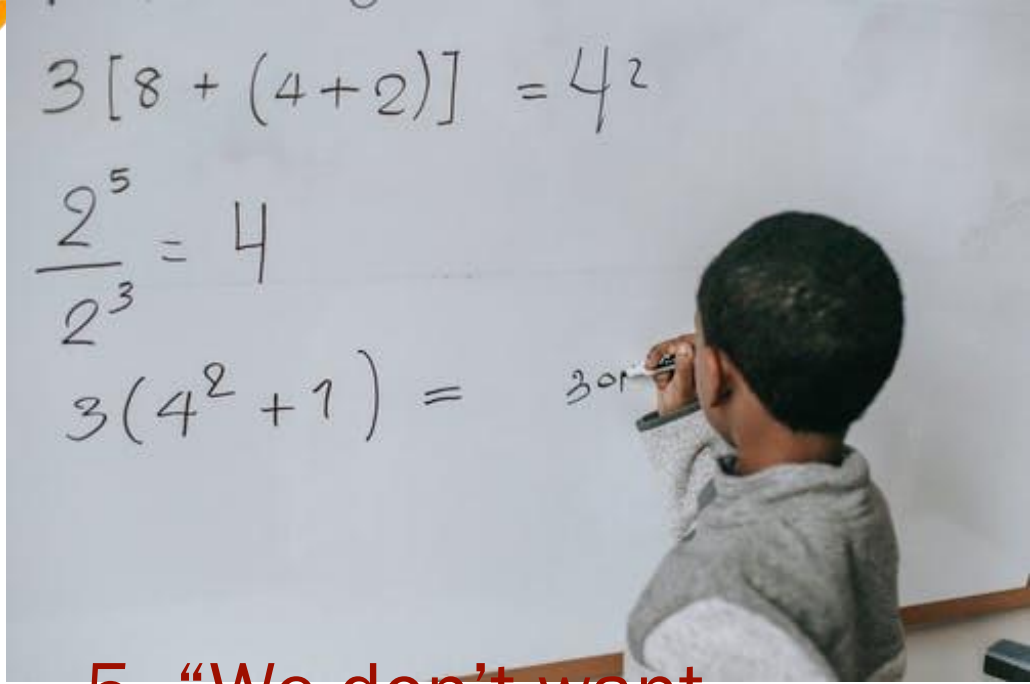
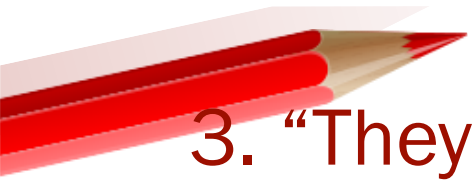


Why NOT test for an IEP?

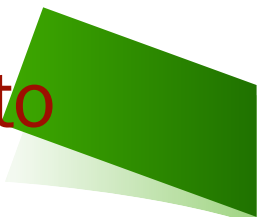


Common Objections:

1. "We don't know them well enough/have enough data yet."
2. "Let's try this strategy first, see if it works before assessing for an IEP . . ."
3. "They're already getting everything they would in an IEP, anyway!"
4. "There's nothing else we could offer them!"

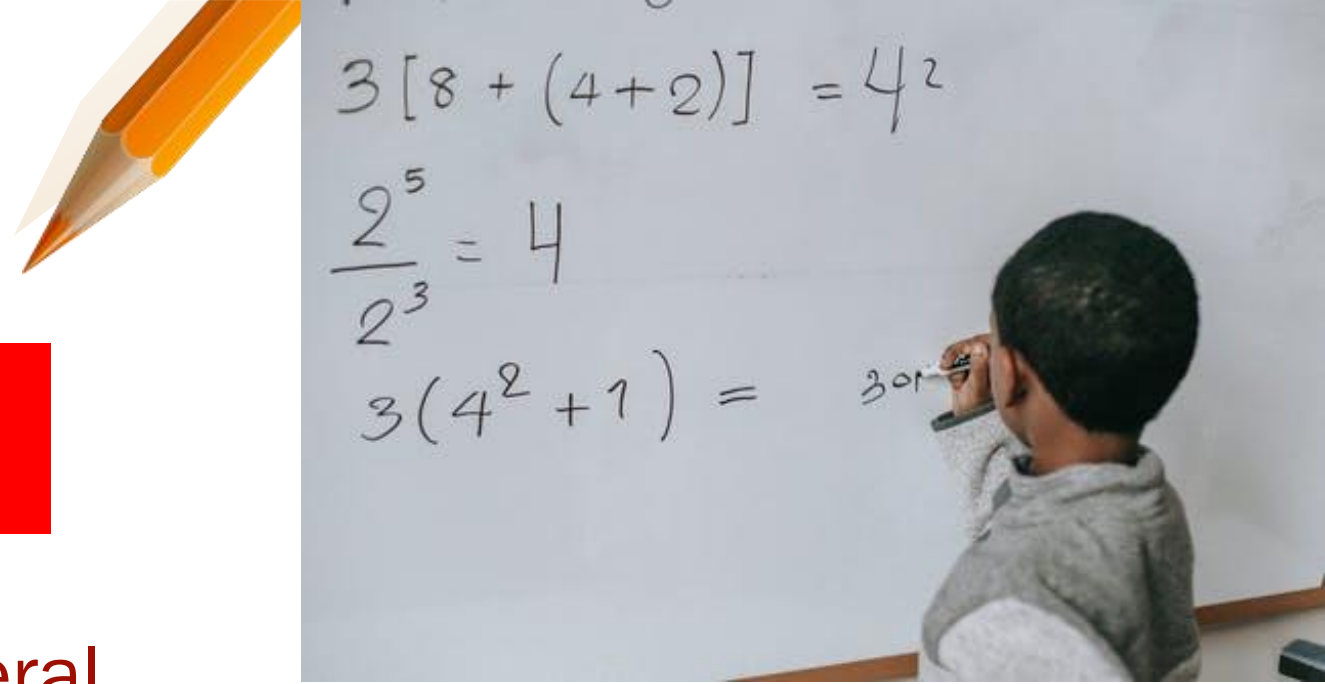


5. "We don't want them to have a label or be stigmatized!"
6. "Let's ask the child if they want an IEP (they may not want to be stigmatized)!"



A Powerful Protection

School Stability:



- The McKinney-Vento Act (federal legislation) protects a foster child's right to school stability.
- In Virginia, the joint **VDSS-VDOE** "Fostering Connections to Success" policy outlines the specifics of HOW we protect a foster child's stability of school placement.

A Powerful Protection

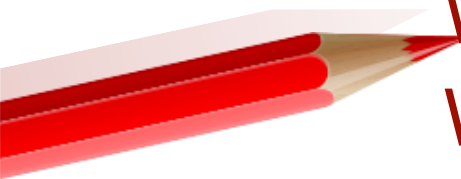
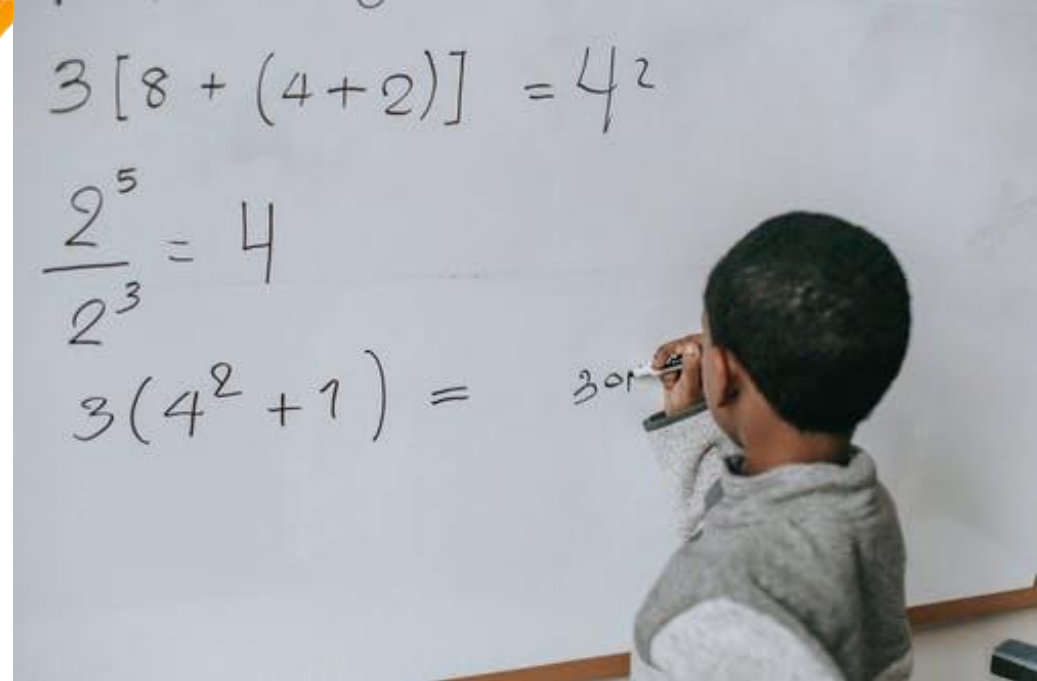
How to Advocate Around School Stability:

What happens in a BID?

Who participates?

What if school placement at risk outside of right when child comes into care—how does the volunteer advocate around that?

DON'T FORGET TRANSPORT!!!



Bringing the Parent to the Table

Why?



Bringing the Parent to the Table

Why?



Bringing the Parent to the Table

- Under federal law, schools must notify the parent if parental rights not terminated

(Although, under VA law, foster parent can sign as the parent)



Bringing the Parent to the Table

- They can provide key historical information about the child!
- We can see patterns emerge with more complete info



Bringing the Parent to the Table

- Model collaborative problem-solving & persistent advocacy
- Build the family's understanding of the child's functioning
- Build the family's own advocacy skills



Remember: We don't have to teach parents to want good things for their children!

Bringing the Parent to the Table

- Heal trauma with a positive experience at the table & by helping their voice matter
- A positive experience at this table . . . means they might just come to the next table you set.



Remember: parents bring their own experiences of the school system, & possibly even generational trauma with them to the child's school experience