

# Adverse Family Experiences

## THE VERMONT STORY

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### CHAPTER 1

Created in partnership by Vermont Care Partners  
and the Department of Mental Health



# What Are Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Adverse Family Experiences (AFEs)?

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## **ACES**

- ❖ **10 types of abuse, neglect and other trauma that an adult experienced in childhood**
- ❖ ACE questions are asked of an adult about his or her own childhood

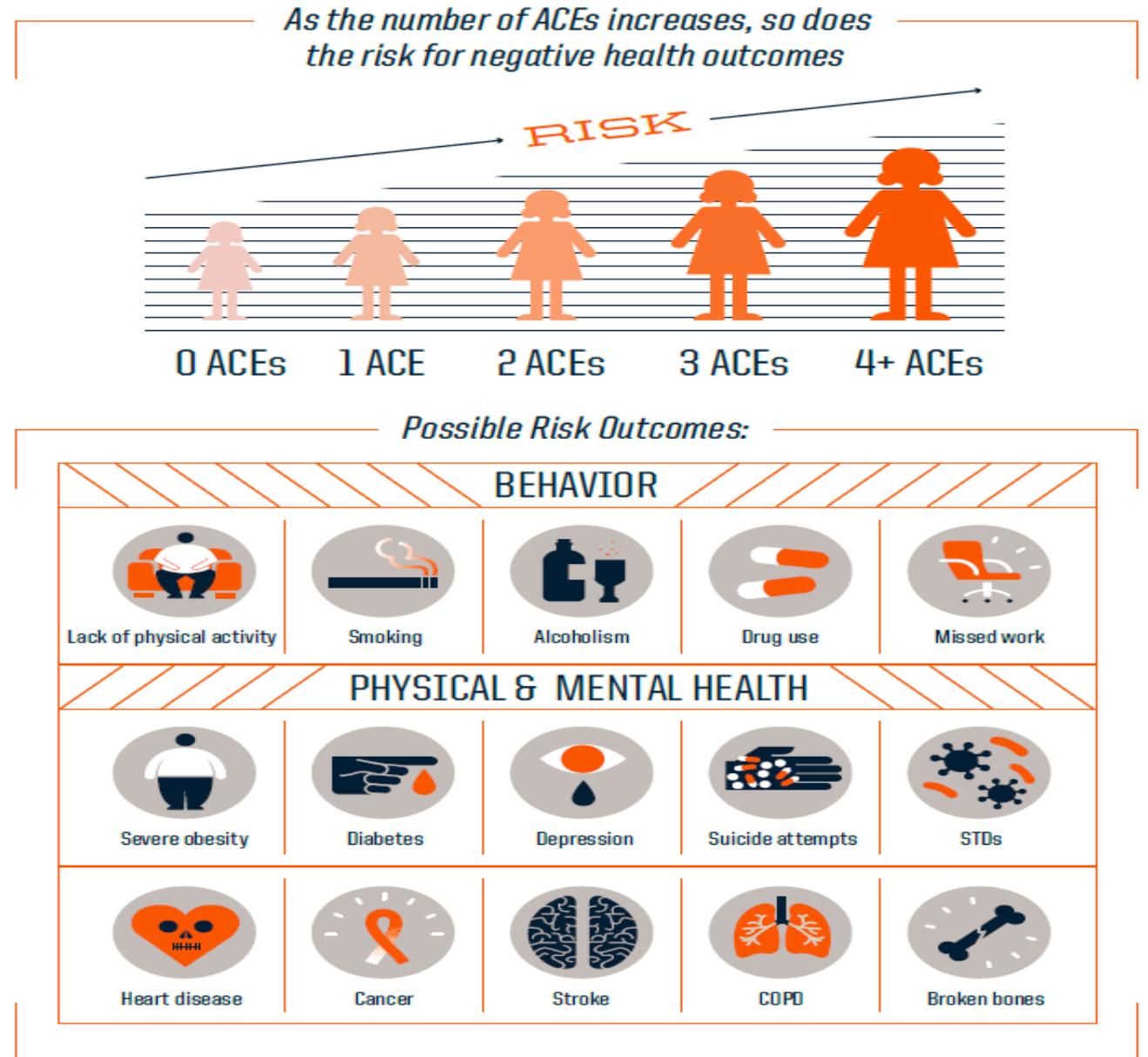
## **AFES**

- ❖ **9 types of neglect and trauma that a child may experience in his or her home or neighborhood**
- ❖ AFE questions are asked of a parent / guardian about his or her child (except questions about physical or psychological abuse)

# Why Do ACEs Matter?

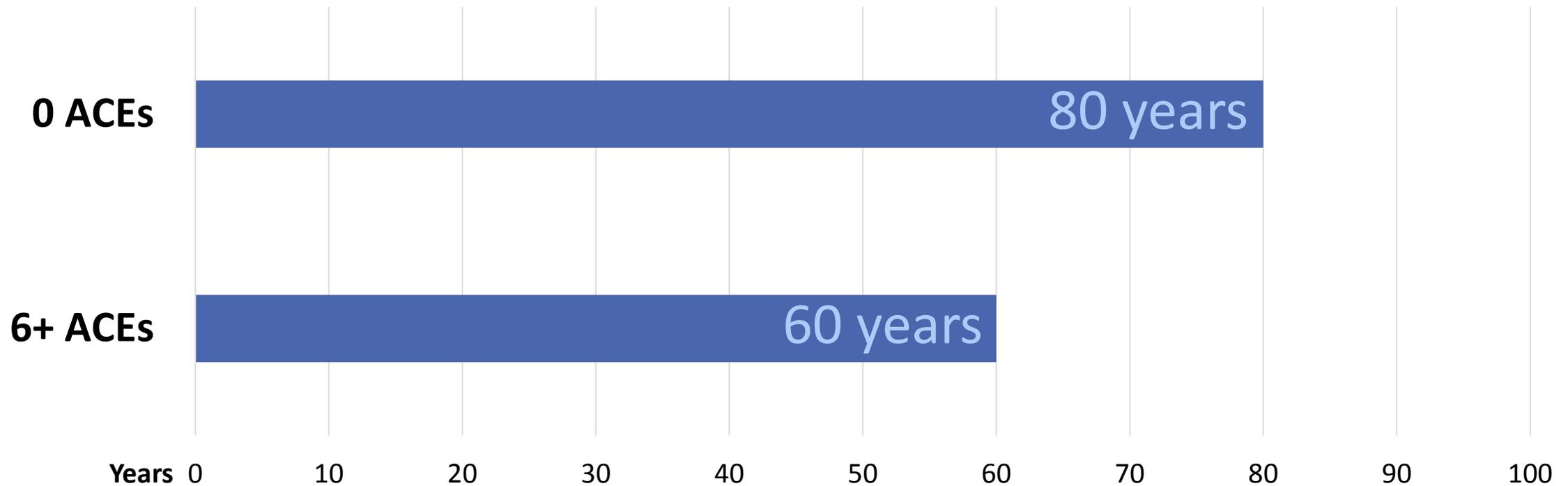
1 type of experience =  
1 ACE or AFE

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) studies show the link between early childhood experiences and physical, mental, and behavioral health outcomes in adulthood.



# Life Expectancy Decreases as ACEs Increase

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# Adverse Family Experiences Are Things Like:

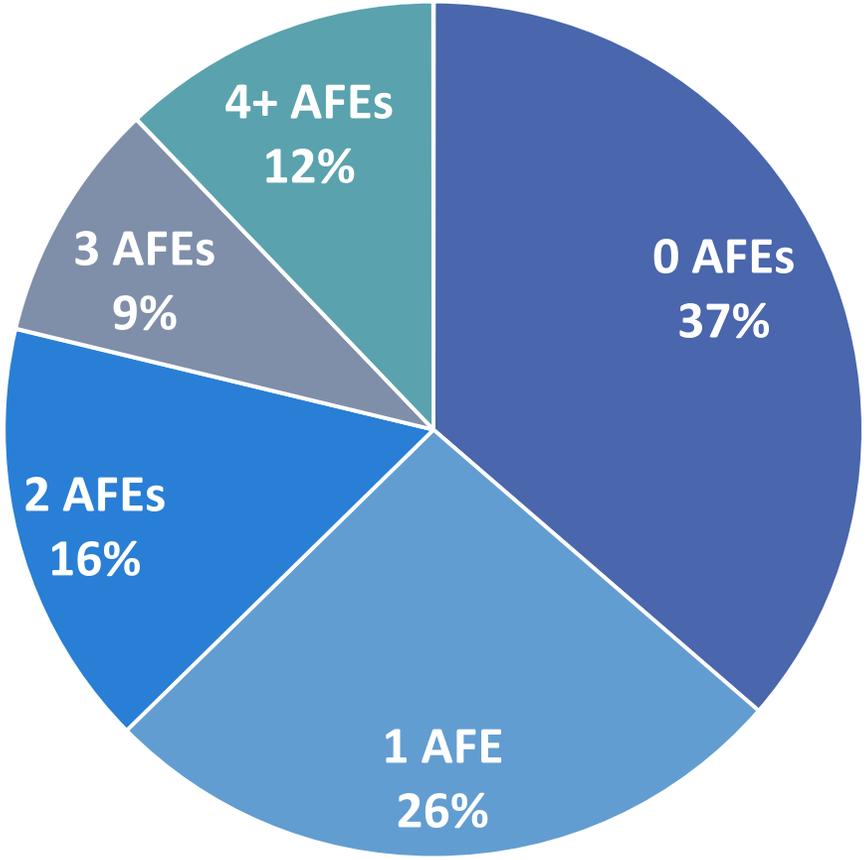
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- ❖ Not having enough to eat
- ❖ Not having stable housing
- ❖ Having parents who are divorced or separated
- ❖ Having a parent who died or went to jail
- ❖ Seeing or hearing physical violence between adults in the home
- ❖ Being a victim of neighborhood violence
- ❖ Living with an adult who was mentally ill or suicidal
- ❖ Living with an adult who has alcohol or drug problems

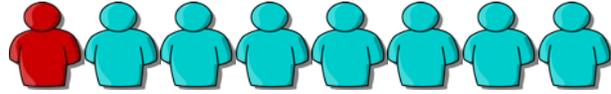
**Shifting our focus to Adverse Family Experiences (AFE) of children gives us the opportunity to intervene early, *before* health outcomes play out.**

# How Common Are AFEs Among Vermont Children?

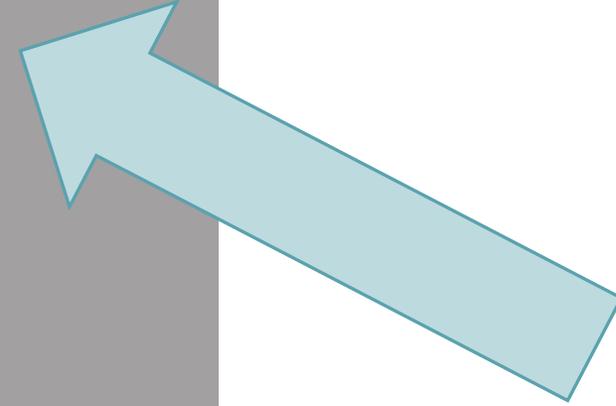
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As few as 3 AFEs can affect how well children do in school, how well they get along with others, and their health



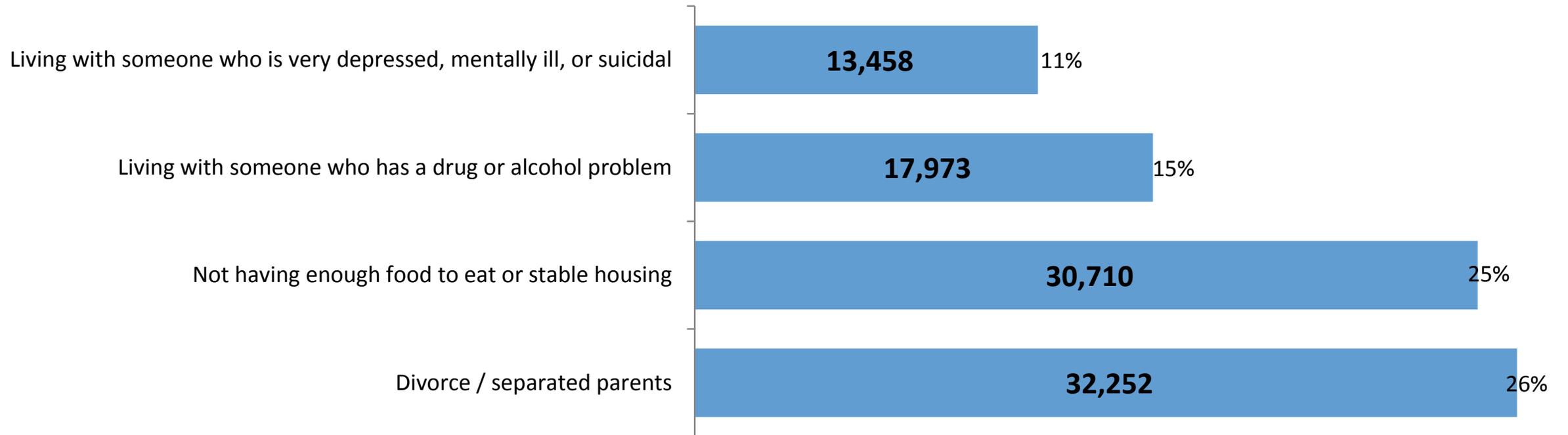
1 in 8 children  
in Vermont have  
experienced **3**  
**or more** types  
of adverse  
family  
experiences



How many  
children is  
this? It is  
about **800**  
classrooms of  
20 children!

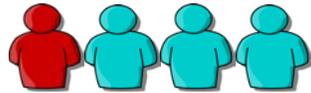
# Most Common AFEs in Vermont

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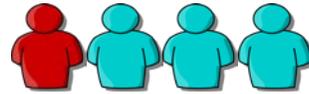


These 4 AFEs also are more common in Vermont than in the nation

# Asthma is a common health condition, but in Vermont, you are more likely to know a child with an Adverse Family Experience



**1 out of 4 children live with divorced or separated parents**



**1 out of 4 children live in a home with income hardship**



**1 out of 7 children live with someone with substance use problems**



**1 out of 9 children live with someone who is mentally ill, suicidal, or severely depressed**

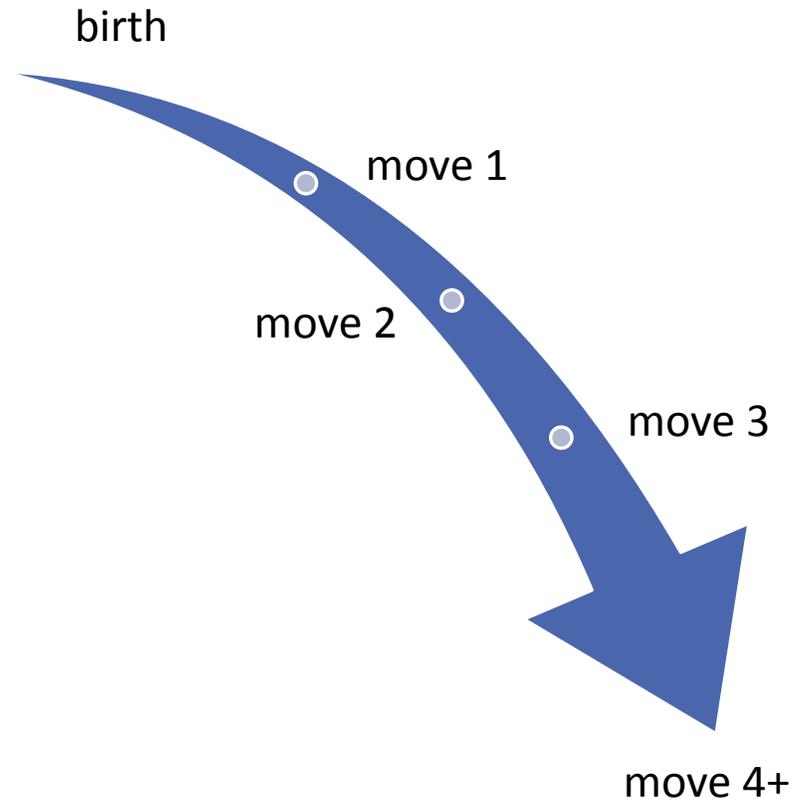


**1 out of 12 children in Vermont have Asthma, a leading chronic health condition**

# Vermont Data Shows:

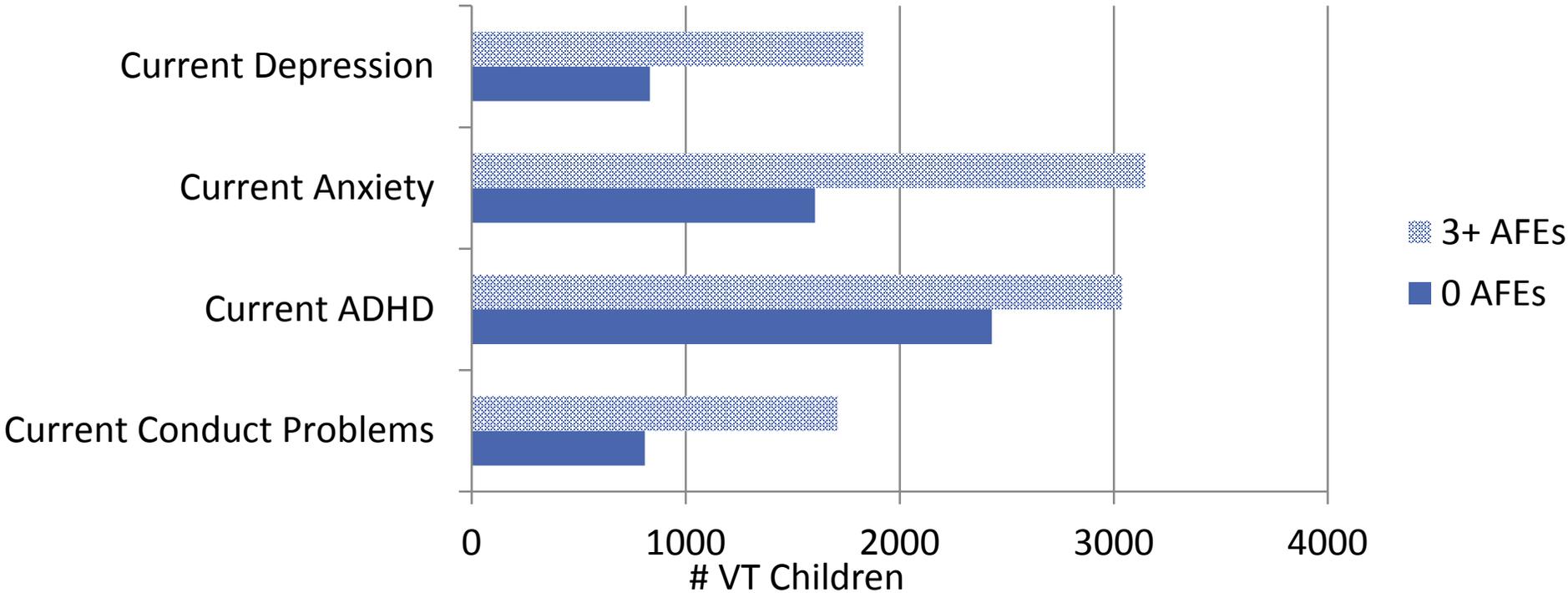
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- ❖ That moving may be a stressful experience for children and may be related to negative outcomes similar to AFEs
- ❖ In Vermont, 14% (17,535) of children have moved 4 or more times since birth
- ❖ 1 in 3 of these 17,535 children had 3 or more AFEs



# Vermont Children With 3+ AFEs Compared to Children Without AFEs:

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# Why Should We Care?

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Carrying a burden of adverse family experiences:

- ❖ Increases risky behaviors by teens
- ❖ Impacts school success
- ❖ Impacts long-term health outcomes
- ❖ Contributes to costs in health care, jails, special education and child welfare, just to name a few . . .

# Why Should We Care?: Resilience & AFEs

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6 mos. –  
5 y.o.



3 or  
more  
AFEs



Increases the odds that a child will not

- Show affection
- Be curious
- Smile or laugh a lot
- Bounce back quickly when things don't go his or her way

as easily as their peers who have fewer AFEs

# Why Should We Care?: Resilience & AFEs



6-17  
y.o.



3 or  
more  
AFEs

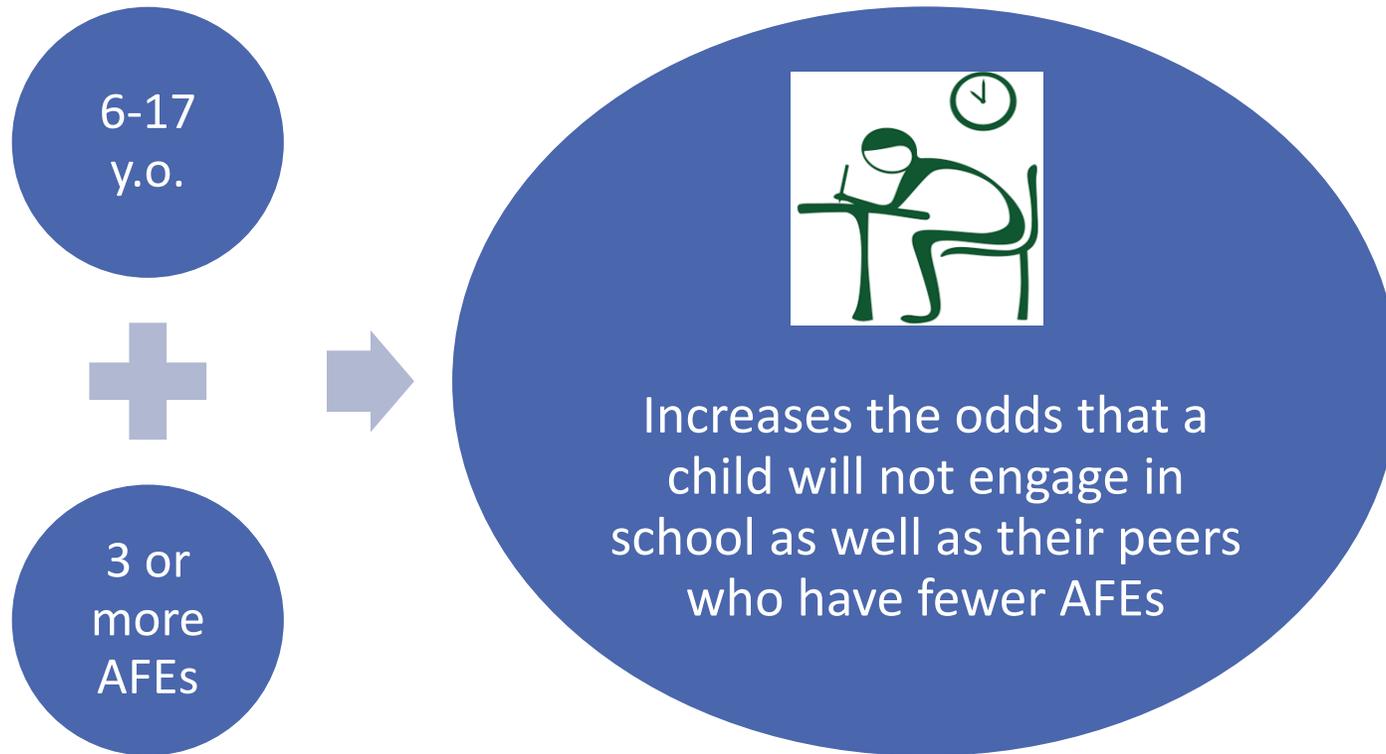


Increases the odds that  
a child will not be able  
to stay calm or in  
control when faced with  
a challenge as well as  
their peers who have  
fewer AFEs



# Why Should We Care?: School Engagement & AFEs

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# National Economic Lifetime Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences

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\$124B Lifetime costs due to child maltreatment

\$83B productivity loss

\$25B health care costs

\$4.6B special  
education

\$4.4B child  
welfare

\$3.6B criminal  
justice



Holistic  
Approach

Supports  
for Parents

Food



Earlier  
supports

What Can  
We Do?

Housing



Safe  
community

Jobs



Treatment

Health  
Promotion



# References

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- Adverse Childhood Experiences [Study](#) and Data  
The ACE Study is ongoing collaborative research between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, GA, and Kaiser Permanente in San Diego, CA.. The Co-principal Investigators of The Study were Robert F. Anda, MD, MS, with the CDC; and Vincent J. Felitti, MD, with Kaiser Permanente.
- Laurin Kasehagen, MA, PhD  
Vermont Department of Health  
Health Surveillance  
Senior MCH Epidemiologist / CDC Assignee to VDH & VDMH  
Adverse Family Experiences Survey- National Survey of Children's Health 2011-2012
- State of Iowa's [ACE Connection Network](#)

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VERMONT



Look for Chapter 2 Coming Soon -

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**What Can We Do About the Effects of  
Adverse Family Experiences?**