Science explains the impact of adversity on the developing brain.

"Adversity doesn’t just happen to children, it happens inside them."
-Pamela Cantor, M.D., President and CEO

- The primary brain structures for learning – the **prefrontal cortex, hippocampus** and **amygdala** – are highly sensitive to the chemical cortisol.

- The experience of growing up in poverty can produce a stress response that releases two key biochemicals in the brain: cytokines and cortisol.

- The effect of these biochemicals on the brain can make it difficult for a child to pay attention, remember details or organize thoughts.

- Over time, the buildup of these biochemicals can affect the physical structure and function of brain centers that are important for performance in school.

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