

Unifying Early Childhood In Virginia

VALHSO Presentation – February 1, 2019



Define the Opportunity

All Virginia children, regardless of background or zip code, are capable of and deserve to enter kindergarten ready.

Yet only 60% of Virginia children enter school fully ready with the literacy, math, self-regulation and social skills needed to thrive in school.

- 70% of disadvantaged children birth to five lack access to an affordable early childhood care and education option.
- 30% of eligible children are served by publicly-funded programs - PreK, Head Start and Child Care Assistance - but quality varies greatly across programs.
- Programs have to navigate different regulations, rating systems and monitoring processes.
- Changing demographics mean more vulnerable children – from very low income families, with special needs and Dual Language Learners - who are less likely to access a quality program that prepares them for kindergarten.

Virginia by the Numbers

The numbers demonstrate the need to unify the system, increase access, and improve quality.

100 children are born in Virginia each year.

- 14 are born to poor families and another 26 just above the poverty level.
- Yet only...
 - 10 children will benefit from Home Visiting.
 - 1 child gets an Early Head Start slot.
 - 8 children get a Head Start slot.
 - 22 will get a public preK slot (VPI, VPI+ or Title I).
- 67 children have all parents in the workforce. Yet only 1 will access child care subsidy as an infant, 4 as toddlers and 5 as preschoolers.
 - Only 1 in 6 receiving subsidy will be in a quality-rated program.
- Only 1 English Language Learner (ELL) will be counted in preK while 15 first graders will be identified as ELLs.
- Less than 10 will receive special education services before age 5 yet 15 will be classified as disabled in the 9th grade.

Only 60 will enter kindergarten fully ready.

By 2022: What Success Looks Like

By 2022, more Virginia children will enter kindergarten ready.

More Virginia families have **affordable access** to early childhood care and education that supports learning across the **birth through 3rd grade** continuum and **meets their unique needs**.

With a **shared** definition of **school readiness**, Virginia families and early childhood programs work together to **ensure children thrive, developing the skills** needed for kindergarten and beyond.

Virginia has **unified quality standards** for all publicly-funded early childhood programs that are **indicative of child outcomes**. Virginia **measures and rewards** programs for performance, ensuring leaders and teachers are **well compensated** for their achievement.

Overall Virginia's early childhood system will be **more unified, transparent, data-driven and resource-effective**, with no funding "left on the table."



Current Priorities

The Chief School Readiness Officer is working across agencies and with the field to help unify early childhood.

The Chief School Readiness Officer is:

- Coordinating initiatives to increase access and improve quality, including implementing instructional tools, measuring classroom interactions and supporting data-driven improvement and, in turn, for meeting higher expectations, integrating and increasing funding to programs that promote children's learning and development;
- Applying for and implementing federal grants such as the Preschool Development Grant – Birth to Five to achieve shared goals and bring additional resources to the Commonwealth; and
- Working closely with the School Readiness Committee and Children's Cabinet to inform public-private efforts to strengthen early childhood development and school readiness.

Preschool Development Grant – Birth to Five (PDG B-5) Opportunity

Virginia will receive \$9.9 million in new federal funding in 2019 to help unify and strengthen early childhood care and education system with communities leading the way.

- Virginia received 70% of what it applied for but will still be able to complete all key activities.
- Virginia will use existing state-funded activities to meet the required 30% match.
- Nearly \$6 million will go to up to 10 early adopter communities, including almost \$4 million to provide incentives to leaders and teachers with focus on publicly-funded programs.
- Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) and University of Virginia (UVA) will also be key partners in addition to communities.
- Funding starts immediately and must be expended in calendar year 2019.
- This is only one year grant, but renewal grants may become available.

Three Key Activities

Virginia will seek to achieve the following in 2019:

1. A statewide vision, needs assessment and strategic plan

Process and materials will be a catalyst for strengthening the birth to five early childhood care and education system that will improve outcomes including kindergarten readiness.

2. Community models ready to scale

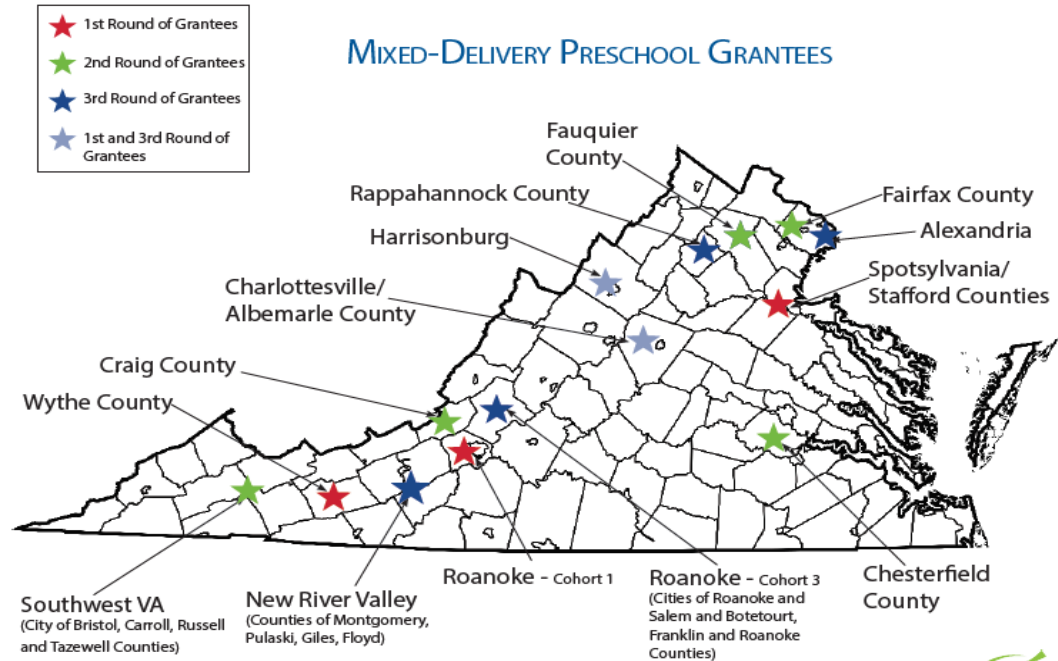
Ten early adopter communities, representing Virginia's diversity, will demonstrate proof of concept with extensive funding and support from state.

3. A stronger foundation at the state level

The Commonwealth will be well positioned to scale the efforts statewide, having built the necessary capacity and infrastructure through the grant.

Potential Early Adopters

Virginia communities that have applied for and received mixed-delivery funding are eligible to participate in 2019.



What's Next

Virginia can seize on momentum to strengthen birth to five early childhood care and education system in 2019.

In 2019, Virginia will focus on:

- Implementing the Preschool Development Grant, 2018 Legislative investments, additional CCDF dollars and any other funded initiatives;
- Sustaining 1,500 VPI+ slots across 13 communities;
- Expanding the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) to all kindergarten classrooms;
- Continuing to unify and strengthen efforts across agencies and program types (child care, Head Start, schools) through innovative efforts such as the Preschool Development Grant – Mixed Delivery pilots; and
- Connecting home visiting, early intervention and other health and home-based early childhood services.

