COORDINATED
PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT
VAHSA Annual Training Conference
October 24, 2023

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

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SESSION OBJECTIVES

Participants will :

- Have a shared understanding of coordinated preschool enrollment strategies and approaches.
- Identify additional supports for full-day, full-year services.
- How to utilize the Memorandum of Understanding to support coordinated preschool enrollment.
- Understand the role of Ready Regions through state coordinated efforts.

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OUR SHARED VISION

We envision a Virginia where *all* children have the opportunity to enter school ready.

- All families have affordable access to and support to choose the option that meets their unique needs.
- All early childhood programs that take public funds benefit from measurement and supports for improvement, ensuring quality choices are available for all families.
- Programs are rewarded for continual improvement and educators are adequately compensated.
- Overall Virginia's early childhood system is unified, data-driven, and resource-effective so families can work, go to school, or pursue employment and children have every opportunity to be successful.

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POLL: WHO IS IN THE ROOM?

How do you define your current role in your program?

- ❑ Teacher
- ❑ Director/Administrator
- ❑ Coach / Professional Development Support
- ❑ Family Advocate
- ❑ ERSEA Coordinator

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Increasing Access and Choice

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INCREASING ACCESS AND CHOICE

Four out of ten Virginia children enter school without the key literacy, math, and social-emotional skills needed.

- ●Children, especially those from low-income backgrounds, are more likely to enter school ready if they participate in quality early childhood programming. Virginia's communities should maximize enrollment across all early childhood programs, enabling families to access the early childhood option of their choice and help prepare their children for school.
- ●State law charges local communities with implementing coordinated approaches to enroll children and leveraging funding opportunities across all programs.
- ●Coordinating across Head Start, Virginia Preschool Initiative, Mixed Delivery and child care subsidy options is critical to ensuring that more children have the opportunity to start school ready.

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Coordination Strategies in Law

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COORDINATION STRATEGIES IN LAW

All communities are expected to coordinate across preschool programs to make decisions regarding enrollment and assessing the local need for preschool programming.

- As required by law, the VPI slot allocation formula accounts for the number of four-year-old children served by Head Start. Specifically, the language states:

  "It is the intent of the General Assembly that [VPI funding]…shall be disbursed by the Department of Education to schools and community-based organizations to provide quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds who are residents of Virginia and unserved by Head Start program funding." ([Virginia State Budget](#))

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COORDINATION STRATEGIES

The Virginia State Budget requires coordination for the successful delivery of comprehensive services, includes childcare providers, local social services agency, Head Start, local health departments, and other groups.

Strategy	What does this mean for Head Start and VPI Partners?
Establish/update Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)	MOUs between Head Start and VPI articulate the expectations for both entities. This includes strategies to maximize funding from federal, state, and local sources. All MOUs are required to be updated on an annual basis.
Prioritize Head Start Slots	Coordinated efforts between Head Start and VPI can ensure that Head Start slots are certified and filled first by Head Start eligible families.
Follow VPI Guidelines	VPI Guidelines require the establishment of steering committees to support the implementation of the program, coordinate services and resources for families, and maximize funding.

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HEAD START PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) clearly state that Head Start recipient agencies must take an active role in promoting coordinated systems of comprehensive services to low income children and families in their community:

1302.53 Community partnerships and coordination with other early childhood and education programs.

"Memorandum of understanding- To support coordination between Head Start and publicly funded preschool programs, a program must enter a memorandum of understanding with the appropriate local entity responsible for managing publicly funded preschool programs in the service area of the program, as described in section 642(e)(5) of the Act." (45CFR 1302.53(b)(1))

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EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

Federal guidance outlining coordination requirements is provided in the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* across key areas:

- Data reporting and sharing processes
- Services for children identified with a disability
- Aligned standards and curriculum
- Professional development
- PreK to Kindergarten transitions
- Family engagement
- Schools operating under a Title I model

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Prioritization of Head Start slots

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IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

To ensure that early childhood education programs are adhering to the coordination language included in the Virginia State Budget, programs should implement strategies to certify the Head Start slots are prioritized.

Certification Form	Create a certification form to assist in prioritizing and certifying the filling of HS slots for VPI and HS programs.
VPI Steering Committee	Utilize local VPI Steering Committees that are required and are charged with preserving existing slots
Shared Enrollment Data	Create a shared enrollment sheet that can be accessed by members of the VPI Steering Committee.
VPI Local Eligibility Criteria	Maximize the use of VPI local eligibility criteria.
Memorandum of Understanding	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to detail the process for prioritizing and certifying HS slots.

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STRATEGY: CERTIFICATION FORM

Create a certification form to assist in prioritizing and certifying filling of HS slots across VPI and HS programs that is incorporated into the Memorandum of Understanding process.

- Members of the VPI Steering Committee, that is inclusive of HS leaders can create an agreed upon form to use by HS and VPI program leaders for certifying that HS slots have been filled by HS eligible families.
- Establish an agreed upon process to communicate filling of slots and a timeline for completion of certification form.
- Localities may consider including the percent of HS slots filled on the certification form. The form could be shared at each VPI Steering Committee Meeting. Strategies could be discussed and implemented to allow for VPI programs to enroll families that are not HS eligible while working to also fill HS slots.

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STRATEGY: VPI STEERING COMMITTEE

Utilize local VPI Steering Committees that are required and are charged with preserving existing slots for 3- and 4-year-olds already being implemented in the community (supplementing, not supplanting, and increasing access for more at-risk children).

- Hold VPI Steering Committee Meetings monthly during key recruitment and enrollment periods (spring & summer) for the purpose of planning recruitment strategies, coordinating of enrollment by program eligibility and family choice, and by sharing ongoing enrollment data.
- Keep minutes specific to enrollment data at each Steering Committee Meeting. Include how VPI programs can focus on enrolling families above the 130% FPL threshold that are not HS eligible and have members sign to certify efforts for prioritizing filling Head Start Slots.

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STRATEGY: SHARED ENROLLMENT DATA

To increase coordinated enrollment efforts, create a shared enrollment form that can be accessed by members of the VPI Steering Committee.

- EC program leaders complete and submit weekly enrollment numbers for their programs during spring and summer.
- Program leaders should review community enrollment numbers weekly that tracks the current enrollment for each program.
- Joint applications and shared waitlists fosters dialogue between programs to discuss questions, concerns, and provide helpful advice for filling of HS slots with eligible families as a priority.
- Data from weekly enrollment sheet is used for planning ongoing recruitment and enrollment strategies at each VPI Steering Committee Meeting.

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STRATEGY: VPI LOCAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To expand access to more at-risk children and to assist with filling HS slots, maximize the use of VPI local eligibility criteria.

- Local Criteria are determined by each locality and can be a wide range of risk factors families might be experiencing in the area.
- VPI localities that can demonstrate more than 15 percent of slots are needed to meet the needs of at-risk children in their community may apply for a waiver to increase local eligibility criteria.
- By seeking a local eligibility waiver localities can increase the number of at-risk children who are eligible for VPI. This may result in VPI avoiding filling slots with children from families that meet HS income eligibility. VPI programs can serve children from families with other at-risk factors.

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STRATEGY: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

Utilize a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to detail the process for prioritizing and certifying HS slots.

- According to the Head Start Program Performance Standard 45CFR1302.53(b), a program must enter into a memorandum of understanding with the appropriate local entity responsible for managing publicly funded preschool programs in the service area of the program, as described in section 642(e)(5) of the Head Start Act.
- Provide language in the MOU for how programs will work together to ensure that all HS eligible families have the opportunity to enroll children in HS to obtain comprehensive services, and VPI programs can enroll families through their expanded criteria. This will maximize the use of federal, state, and local funding sources.

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Coordinating Wrap-Around Services

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CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM AS WRAP-AROUND

Families who qualify may also be able to receive full day, full year care through the Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP).

In order to support this, divisions can:
- Coordinate with local DSS agencies to support families in registering for child care subsidy.
- Most families who qualify for VPI will qualify for subsidy
- Depending on the families situation they can be approved for hours outside the school day/year to support wrap-around services
- Work with local childcare providers who accept subsidy to provide transportation to/from the VPI site during the school year.
- Provide families with local providers who accept subsidy

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MIXED DELIVERY WRAP-AROUND FOR VPI AND HEAD START

New this year, VECF Mixed Delivery can provide "wrap-around" funding for VPI slots and Head Start slots served in community provider settings.

- This enables a VPI student served *in a community provider setting* to receive continuous care and learning, full day and full year.
- Wrap-around services make up the difference between full day, full year care (2400 hours) and the hours provided by VPI (990 hours)
- Mixed Delivery programs will receive partial Mixed Delivery funding is available for wrap-around services
  - Full Rate - (VPI Rate + Community Provider Add On)
- Wrap-around Mixed Delivery would include at least:
  - 3.5 hours of additional care on school days
  - 10 hours of care on non-school days
  - 240 total days a year

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Monitoring and Oversight

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VPI MONITORING RUBRIC

The Virginia Department of Education will review all existing MOUs to increase understanding of current practices and provide better supports and resources in the future.

2023-2024 Program Year Expectations:
- VPI programs will be required to submit their MOUs during VPI Fall Verification via the Single Sign-On Web System (SSWS) no later than November 10, 2023.
- MOUs will be reviewed using a standardized rubric and feedback will be given to divisions by March 1, 2024.

Reminder:
For 2023-2024, there will be no individualized reporting of locality level findings.
- Locality level findings and ratings will not be shared with any external federal entity.

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STRUCTURED PARTNER MEETINGS

VPI and Head Start partners should establish regular meetings to ensure successful implementation of the MOUs.

Recommendations to consider:
- VPI Steering Committees must have Head Start representation.
- Head Start should include VPI leaders as a member of their policy council.
- Partners should review enrollment data as detailed in the MOU.
- Meetings should highlight collaborative approaches to increasing access and family choice.
- Meetings provide an opportunity for partners to address challenges or barriers to coordinated efforts.

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Role of Ready Regions

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READY REGIONS KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Ready Regions works to increase coordination, accountability, and family engagement for all early childhood education programs in every community across the Commonwealth.

Ready Regions have four key areas of responsibility:

1. **Build relationships** through collaborative public and private partnerships
2. **Strengthen quality** to ensure high-impact learning experiences and outcomes for children
3. **Increase access** by championing equitable early childhood opportunities through coordinated enrollment strategies
4. **Engage families** in informing the design of early childhood systems, policies, and services

Ready Regions will support improved local enrollment systems as part of their work to increase access and engage families.

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COORDINATED ENROLLMENT AND READY REGIONS

To support coordinated enrollment, Ready Regions works with local and regional early childhood partners to develop targeted approaches around these key components with the integration of family voice throughout to help drive the work:

- Relationship building
- Informational resources and campaigns
- Eligibility determination and family voice
- Application processes
- Waitlists

For more information about Ready Regions strategies to increase access and choice, please review the _Coordinated Enrollment Guide._

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COORDINATED ENROLLMENT EFFORTS

Ready Regions engages early childhood partners in Coordinated Enrollment activities to better serve families and support full enrollment.

Coordinated Enrollment efforts continues to include:

1. **CE Self Assessment**: Annual community assessment of existing coordination
2. **CE Annual Plan**: Community-driven plan for goals to better coordinate enrollment
3. **Feedback and TA**: Ongoing feedback and TA from the VDOE and VECF

Additional CE efforts:

- Dedicated staff: Full time employee (or equivalent) in every region to support CE
- Expanded focus on technology: Technology solutions that help support regional coordinated enrollment being developed and piloted in three regions in the upcoming year.
- Community of Practice: Convening of Ready Regions staff leading coordinated enrollment activities to build practices.

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POLL: WHO IS IN THE ROOM?

Which Ready Region is your agency or program located?

- ❑ RR 1- Southwest
- ❑ RR 2- West
- ❑ RR 3- Southside
- ❑ RR 4- Central
- ❑ RR 5- Southeastern
- ❑ RR 6- Chesapeake Bay
- ❑ RR 7- Capital Area
- ❑ RR 8- North Central
- ❑ RR 9- Blue Ridge

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Questions?

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