INCREASING ACCESS TO PUBLICLY-FUNDED EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH

Head Start Annual Conference
October 25, 2023

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

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SESSION OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand the multiple points of entry for families into Virginia's Early Childhood System.
- Identify similarities and differences between the publicly funded programs.
- Understand the systemic approach Virginia has taken to promote access and quality simultaneously and unify expectations across programs.
- Gain key concepts needed to support increased access in your communities.

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WELCOME! – "ROLL CALL"

In Room Poll- How do you define your current role?

- ❑ Teacher
- ❑ Director
- ❑ Administrator
- ❑ Coach / Professional Development Support

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WELCOME! - "FIST TO FIVE"

In Room Poll- On a scale of 0-5, how would you rate your knowledge of the following publicly-funded early childhood programs?

a) Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP or "Subsidy")

b) Early Childhood Special Education (IDEA Part B, Section 619)

c) Head Start and Early Head Start

d) Mixed Delivery Preschool Grant Program

e) Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI)

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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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GOALS OF THE UNIFIED SYSTEM

ACCESS & CHOICE	QUALITY IMPROVEMENT	FAMILY ENGAGEMENT	HEALTH & SAFETY	REGIONAL CAPACITY & INNOVATION
Expand access to public and private early care and education, and ensure all families have quality choices.	Improve child outcomes by supporting continuous improvement of teacher-child interactions and use of curriculum.	Increase the capacity of providers to support families to foster children's development, learning, and well-being.	Partner with providers to keep all children in care healthy and safe.	Establish regional structure to coordinate across settings, address unique community needs, and ensure opportunity for all children.

COMPETITIVE EDUCATOR COMPENSATION IS ESSENTIAL TO EACH AREA

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KEY PUBLICLY-FUNDED PROGRAMS IN VIRGINIA

The five key publicly-funded early childhood programs are:

- Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI)
- Mixed Delivery Preschool Grant Program
- Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP or "Subsidy")
- Head Start and Early Head Start
- Early Childhood Special Education (IDEA Part B, Section 619)
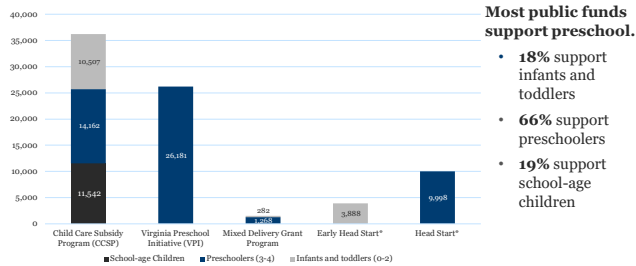   - *Children with special needs can, and should, be enrolled in all publicly funded ECCE programs*

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WHO DO PUBLIC FUNDS PRIMARILY SUPPORT?

Most public funds support preschool.

- **18%** support infants and toddlers
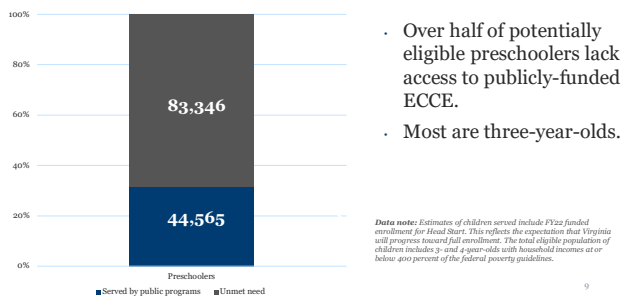- **66%** support preschoolers
- **19%** support school-age children

Chart values: Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP): 11,542 / 14,162 / 10,507; Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI): 26,181; Mixed Delivery Grant Program: 282 / 1,262; Early Head Start*: 3,888; Head Start*: 9,998.

Legend: School-age Children, Preschoolers (3-4), Infants and toddlers (0-2)

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UNMET NEED IN PRESCHOOL

Chart values: 83,346 / 44,565 — Preschoolers

Legend: Served by public programs, Unmet need

- Over half of potentially eligible preschoolers lack access to publicly-funded ECCE.
- Most are three-year-olds.

Data note: *Estimates of children served include FY22 funded enrollment for Head Start. This reflects the expectation that Virginia will progress toward full enrollment. The total eligible population of children includes 3- and 4-year-olds with household incomes at or below 400 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.*

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Virginia's Publicly-Funded Programs

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CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Fund source	Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)
Ages served	Children ages 6 weeks through 12 years old
Family eligibility characteristics	Families must meet income requirements: • 85% state median income for families with young children • Between 150-250% FPG for families with school-age children only, depending on locality Parents or guardians must be working, looking for work, or in school or job training
Settings	Child care centers and family day homes
Duration	Families are approved for care based on parents' school or work schedule • Care may be full-day/full-year or wrap around another program
How families enroll	Families can apply online or at their local department of social services

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MIXED DELIVERY

Fund source	State General Fund and Federal ARPA Funds
Ages served	Children ages 3- and 4-years-old • FY23 pilot for infants and toddlers, continuing for FY24
Family eligibility characteristics	• Under 200% FPL • Experiencing Homelessness • Parents did not complete High School • Student with a disability • Up to 15% enrolled slots can be filled by local criteria eligibility
Settings	Child care centers and family day homes
Duration	Full day (at least 10 hours), Full year (at least 240 days)
How families enroll	Apply directly with participating local providers

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The date is at top right.

VIRGINA PRESCHOOL INITIATIVE

Fund source	State General Fund • Per pupil funding is split into a state share and local match • Local Match is based on Local Composit Index (LCI) but is capped at 50%
Ages served	Children ages 3- and 4-years-old • limited exceptions for 5-year-olds
Family eligibility characteristics	• Under 200% FPL • Experiencing Homelessness • Parents did not complete High School • Student with a disability • Up to 15% enrolled slots can be filled by local criteria eligibility
Settings	Primarily public schools, with some students served in Community Provider settings
Duration	School day (5.5 hours full day, 3.5 hours half day), School year (180 days)
How families enroll	Apply with local school division

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HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START

Fund source	Federal Head Start Grants *Note Head Start is federal-to-local program, meaning federal grants are awarded directly to recipient agencies*
Ages served	• Head Start: 3- and 4-years-old • Early Head Start: birth to 3-years-old
Family eligibility characteristics	• Under 130% FPL • Selection criteria to identify students for categorical eligibility (families receiving SNAP, TANF, SSI, homeless, or in foster care) and to identify children with disabilities
Settings	• Recipients may be local school divisions, community-based organizations or private agencies • Services are delivered in public schools, childcare centers, family day homes, or home-based
Duration	Variable
How families enroll	Apply with local Head Start Recipient Agency

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EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION

Fund source	Federal Funds – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 619 (School divisions use other funds as well)
Ages served	Children ages 2-5 years-old • IDEA requires states to serve children ages 3-5; Virginia Regulations add 2-year-olds
Family eligibility characteristics	• Child has a disability that causes an adverse educational impact • Child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP)
Settings	• School Divisions • May be served anywhere; special education is a service, not a place (VPI, Head Start, Title 1, Mixed Delivery, community-based)
Duration	School day (varies based on the services written in the IEP) Services are typically provided for the school year Some children may be eligible for extended school year
How families enroll	Child is evaluated for a disability and need for specially designed instruction; if found eligible, receives ECSE services

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FALL 2022 ENROLLMENT

Program	Infants and toddlers	% Increase from 2021	Preschoolers	% Increase from 2021
VPI	N/A	N/A	21,640 *(19,866 4-year-olds)*	9%
Mixed Delivery*	200	N/A	1,814	32%
Child Care Subsidy Program*	10,498	31%	13,955**	27%
Head Start***	3,243	N/A	8,530	N/A

Enrollment as of November 1, 2022
**May include some 5-year-olds enrolled in Kindergarten receiving part-day child care services
***Enrollment for 2021-2022 school year; 2022-2023 is currently being finalized

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Coordination Amongst Programs

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MAXIMIZING FUNDS TO MEET FAMILY NEEDS AND PREFERENCES

Many parents and caregivers need full-day, full-year care in order to work and support their families.
- Publicly-funded programs can work together to meet that need while honoring families' preferences.
- Here is what Virginia is doing...
  - Coordinating/expanding eligibility
  - Increasing per-child rates
  - Wraparound models in Mixed Delivery and Subsidy
  - Provider-friendly policies in Subsidy (e.g., paid closure days)

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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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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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COORDINATED ENROLLMENT

Coordinated Enrollment is the process where all early childhood programs in a community work together to enroll families. Benefits of this process are:

Families	Providers
- Single point of entry. - Families are given information on all programs they qualify for, allowing them to make an educated care decision.	- Workload of enrollment is shared by all providers. - Programs can reach more families to improve overall enrollment.

Coordinated enrollment has the potential to serve more kids while also reducing burden and stress on families and birth-five providers.

With Ready Regions operating statewide, every locality in Virginia should be participating in Coordinated Enrollment planning in 2023/24.

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MAXIMIZING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENROLLMENT

Virginia communities should coordinate enrollment strategies 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 leverage funding opportunities across all programs.
- Coordinating across Head Start, Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), and Mixed Delivery options is critical to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to start school ready.

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OPPORTUNITIES TO BLEND AND BRAID FUNDS

- Communities may have all, some, or none of these programs
- Title 1 funds can be used to supplement VPI programs rather than explicitly fund students
- Community based programs can accept VPI, Mixed Delivery, Head Start and Subsidy.
  - No one student can be fully funded by more than one program
    - Subsidy or Mixed Delivery can be used to provide wrap-around for VPI
    - Students with differing funding sources can be in the same classroom
- All school divisions must serve preschool children with IEPs
- Children with IEPs can be served in any classroom, including community-based programs
  - VPI has a 10% target
  - Head Start has a 10% requirement

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Closing Reflections

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QUESTIONS?

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WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

Questions to ask:
- What families are we not reaching?
- What other partners should we be collaborating with?
- How could publicly-funded programs help us reach additional families?

Actions to take:
- Become involved in your Ready Region
- Engage with other programs not as competitors but as partners
- Sign up for Readiness Connections to stay up to date on statewide information.

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Appendix

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VQB5 Improvement Resources

The following list includes resources to support program leaders and teachers with quality improvement activities related to interactions and curriculum.

- ECE Resource Hub - New video and updated PD resources for birth to five program leaders and teachers
- AEII PD Toolkit - Toolkit for Strengthening Quality: Resource Roundup for Birth to Five Leaders
- Virginia Infant & Toddler Specialist Network- Coaching Partner offering support aligned with VQB5

If there are any questions, contact
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