

2016 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION UNIFIED AGENDA

STARTING EARLY AND WORKING TOGETHER HELPS OUR ECONOMY WORK BETTER



In Virginia we have high aspirations—to have the best prepared workforce, the most successful students, and a thriving economy. We are doing well in each of these areas, but we know **we can do better**. We can do better to close the achievement gaps. We can do better to help parents obtain employment. We can do better to prepare students to succeed in school and the future workforce. To help our economy work better, we must invest in early childhood education. Investments in the early years, those experiences between birth and age eight that in large part shape the architecture of the brain, will lay shape the groundwork for all of our future investments.

There is no one intervention alone that can put a child on the path toward success. A strong foundation requires supportive families, high-quality early care, and prepared communities and schools. To help make our economy work better we must invest in each of these components. Our early childhood system works better when it **works together**.

STARTING EARLY AND WORKING TOGETHER WE CAN:



Close the achievement gap



Impact both the current and future workforce, a two-generation strategy



Target the most at-risk children, including those exposed to early trauma and toxic stress



Provide a return on investment, today and in the future

EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY NETWORK AGENDA PROPOSALS



Provide in-home parenting support and health education for more pregnant women and families with young children by expanding Virginia's home visiting network.

Scale-up the highly effective, two-generation approaches, such as CHIP of Virginia and Healthy Families Virginia, that currently reach only 8% of the statewide need. To help communities build infrastructure and to target approaches to local need, the Home Visiting Consortium should serve as the pass-through organization.



Adequately fund early interventions to promote the healthy development of babies and toddlers.

Meet the increased demand for services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities by increasing funding for Early Intervention (Part C) services.



Continue efforts to improve the safety of child care.

To build on the child care safety reforms implemented last year, fingerprint background checks must apply to all child care providers, and we must pursue penalties for providers operating without a license.



Promote continuous quality improvement initiatives in all early care settings.

Recognize that improving the quality of all early care—infant care, child care, and preschool relies on strengthening the skills of the workforce and promoting continuous quality improvement systems, such as Virginia Quality (QRIS). Quality improvement strategies should include a component to bring mentoring and coaching to educators where they can apply learning.



Ensure that all at-risk children can attend the Virginia Preschool Initiative. Support additional investments to ensure that the Virginia Preschool Initiative is the model for high quality early learning in Virginia.

Boost the quality and impact of the Virginia Preschool Initiative by increasing per pupil funding to account for the true cost, supporting additional monitoring and technical assistance capacity, and establishing eligibility criteria that is research-based and allows for local flexibility.



Support innovative models that enable communities and high-quality private child care settings to work as engaged partners to expand preschool for at-risk students.



The **Early Childhood Policy Network** represents the organizations who are giving Virginia's kids the opportunities they need to succeed: Child Care Aware Virginia • Child Development Resources • Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU • ChildSavers • CHIP of Virginia/Parents as Teachers State Office • Home Visiting Consortium • JustChildren/Legal Aid Justice Center • Northern Virginia Association for the Education of Young Children • Prevent Child Abuse Virginia/Healthy Families Virginia • The Children's Center • Virginia Alliance of YMCAs • Virginia Association of Community Services Boards • Virginia Association of Early Childhood Education (VAECE) • Virginia Association for Infant Mental Health • Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics • Virginia Education Association • Virginia First Cities • Virginia Head Start Association • Virginia Municipal League