



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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July 1, 2025

The Honorable Glenn Youngkin
Governor of Virginia
Patrick Henry Building, Third Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable Sam Rasoul
Chair, House Education Committee
General Assembly Building, Room, 901
201 North 9th Street
Richmond, VA 23219

The Honorable Ghazala F. Hashimi
Chair, Senate Education and Health Committee
General Assembly Building, Room 305
P. O. Box 396
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Governor Youngkin, Senator Hashimi, and Delegate Rasoul:

I am pleased to submit the enclosed copy of the Efficacy of the Mixed Delivery Program Report as required by [Item 125.10 C.1.i](#) (Chapter 725, 2025 Acts of Assembly).

The report includes a summary of the Mixed Delivery Program, including a review of the program's history and evolution, and the current role of the program as a critical part of Virginia's public-private early childhood care and education landscape. The report details program utilization and outcomes, reviewing information from recent statewide reporting and evaluative studies.

Please direct questions to Jenna Conway, Deputy Superintendent of Early Childhood Care and Education at jenna.conway@doe.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Anne Gullickson".

Emily Anne Gullickson, M.Ed. J.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

EAG/JC/EC

c: The Honorable Aimee Rogstad Guidera
Secretary of Education

EFFICACY OF THE MIXED DELIVERY PROGRAM

Appropriation Act- Item 125.10.C.1.i (Ch 725, 2025 Regular Session)



EFFICACY OF THE MIXED DELIVERY PROGRAM

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mixed Delivery program is a publicly-funded initiative that provides high-quality early childhood care and education (ECCE) services to young children across Virginia. Mixed Delivery is administered by the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) via the nine Ready Regions established in statute, and it is delivered in private, licensed ECCE sites across the state.

Mixed Delivery is a key component of Virginia’s early childhood public-private landscape, with over 2,500 birth-to-five slots serving low-income working families across all regions of the Commonwealth. This statewide footprint has evolved over time, with Mixed Delivery beginning in 2016 as an innovative pilot to support and supplement quality improvement initiatives within programs and reduce barriers to eligible families’ access to quality child care. Through the nine operational years of Mixed Delivery, the program has not only grown significantly but also serves as the innovation hub for early childhood care and education in Virginia, piloting various approaches to supporting program evaluation and quality and increasing options for low-income working families seeking care in private child care and family day home settings. Mixed Delivery serves as an important program for Virginia, with over 65% of families selecting to enroll their infant, toddler or preschooler in a private setting such as those that may participate in Mixed Delivery.

Mixed Delivery consistently fills every available slot with eligible children, ensures children receive quality learning and care experiences in private child care and family day home settings, and provides the maximum amount of service possible with allocated funding. Routine internal and external evaluations of the program are part of the Mixed Delivery model. These evaluations have highlighted the unique innovations within the program, as well as demonstrated the program’s success in supporting positive learning experiences for children and meeting the increased quality expectations for Mixed Delivery.

In addition to these evaluations, the most recent results from Virginia’s quality rating and improvement system, VQB5, demonstrate that 100% of Mixed Delivery sites are meeting or exceeding the expectations for quality established by the Virginia Board of Education.

I. HISTORY OF MIXED DELIVERY

The Mixed Delivery program began in 2016 as a pilot initiative of the General Assembly and VECF to “promote public-private delivery of pre-kindergarten services to high-risk children and communities.”¹ Designed as a “sister” program to the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), Mixed Delivery was intended to provide families with more and different options besides school-based preschool by bolstering public-private partnerships across the state.

Through the initial years of Mixed Delivery, the program was able to pilot several iterations of strategies in private ECCE sites, each of which focused on increasing quality in private child care

¹ Chapter 780, 2016 Acts of the General Assembly.

settings and expanding the use of innovative funding approaches. In state fiscal year (SFY) 2021 and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mixed Delivery shifted to focus on directly facilitating access by awarding contracts to community-based partners to secure blocks of slots in licensed child care sites for eligible children in working families. The program has since expanded significantly in geographic reach, now covering every region of Virginia, as well as in fiscal investment and the total number of slots served, expanding from 250 in SFY 2020 to over 2,600 in SFY 2025. Over time and with additional state investment, the Mixed Delivery model has become more comprehensive, with a sustained focus on expanding access, prioritizing working families and serving as a catalyst for innovative approaches to ECCE service delivery.

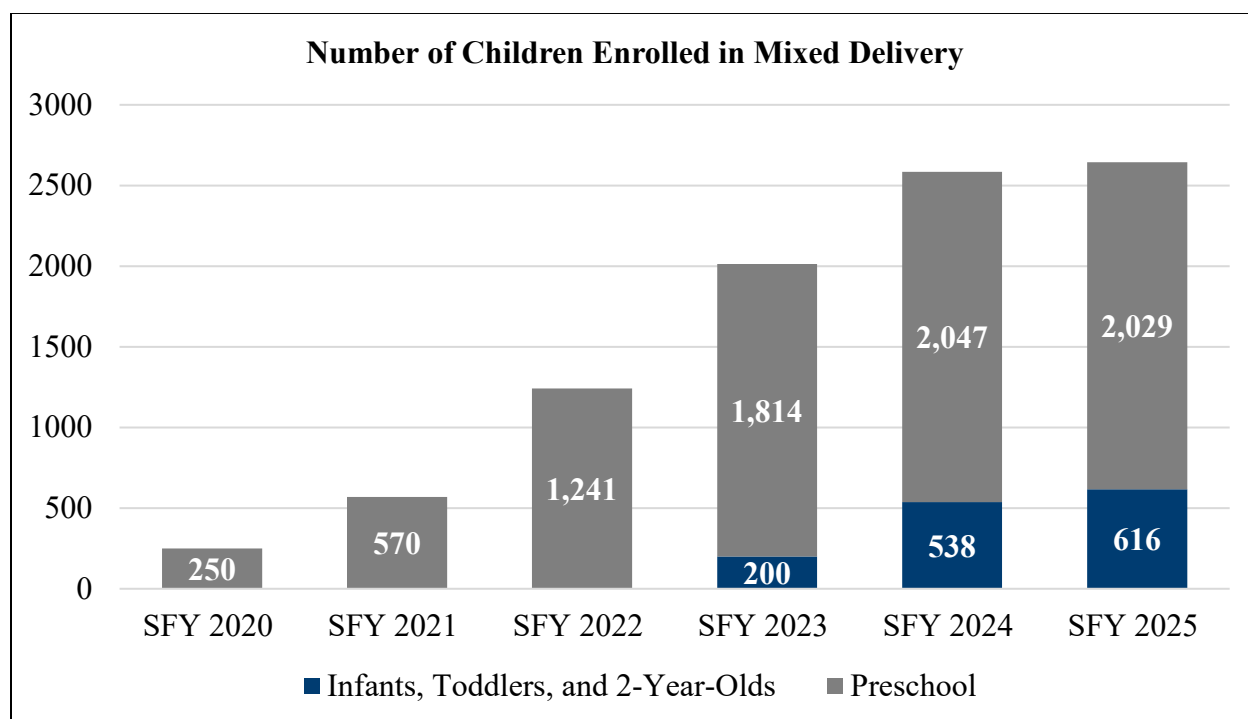
A complete summary of the history of the Mixed Delivery Program can be found in Appendix A.

Mixed Delivery Annual Enrollment

Enrollment in Mixed Delivery has increased as the program has expanded to better address unmet parental demand. Graph 1 highlights the impact of the expansion of the program on the number of children enrolled, with Mixed Delivery increasing by more than 100% between SFY 2020 and SFY 2021, and again in SFY 2021 to SFY 2022 due to the investment of COVID 19 relief funding and the demonstrated need from working families in the field.

Since then, the program has expanded and is now available in every region of the Commonwealth, with a statewide capacity of just over 2,600 children in SFY 2025. It is anticipated that this enrollment level will continue for SFY 2026 based on committed State General Funds and consistent parental demand for these options.

Graph 1: Enrollment in Mixed Delivery



II. ROLE OF MIXED DELIVERY IN VIRGINIA’S EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEM

Each program in Virginia’s unified ECCE system plays a unique role in meeting the needs and preferences of families across the Commonwealth. Throughout its lifespan, Mixed Delivery has always played the distinct role as a hub for testing innovative approaches to expanding access to families in need across the state. In its current form, Mixed Delivery maintains similar programmatic expectations with its original sister program, VPI, while offering full-day, full-year child care services targeted to working families of birth-to-five children like the CCSP.

Overview of Mixed Delivery in SFY 2025-2026

Requirements for Mixed Delivery—including expectations for regional (Ready Regions) lead agencies, ECCE sites, and families—are outlined in the Virginia State Budget (Chapter 725, 2025 Regular Session, Item 125.C). The Mixed Delivery Guidelines, published by VECF on an annual basis, further elaborate upon the expectations laid out in the budget.

Expectations for Ready Regions

Ready Region lead agencies are required to submit a proposal to VECF each year by May 15, a process that mirrors expectations for localities in VPI. Within those applications, Ready Regions lead agencies are expected to include:

- The number of eligible children that can be served based on established eligibility criteria for the program (see below), parent demand, and ECCE site capacity
- Evidence that family and other stakeholder input contributed to the design of the region’s proposed Mixed Delivery program for the coming year
- Strategies for ongoing collaboration with families and other stakeholders in the community during the upcoming implementation period

In addition, Ready Regions are required to follow all the requirements laid out in the Mixed Delivery Guidelines handbook, updated annually. Some key requirements include:

- A commitment to inclusive practices for children with special needs,
- A commitment to promote sustainability of Mixed Delivery services
- A mechanism for annually measuring and reporting unmet parental demand and preferences.
- A plan for how they will support ECCE sites in using Mixed Delivery funds to provide higher compensation for early educators in Mixed Delivery classrooms (encouraged but not required).
- A plan for ensuring that recruitment prioritizes eligible children, families, communities, and populations that are unserved and/or underserved, and who need and/or prefer and intend to use full-day, year-round ECCE services.

Expectations for Mixed Delivery Sites and Classrooms

All ECCE sites participating in Mixed Delivery are required to:

- Complete an evaluation of preschool students in Mixed Delivery in the fall and the spring through the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP).
- Use a VDOE-approved comprehensive curriculum; and
- Participate in the statewide measurement and improvement system, VQB5, which provides information on the quality of teacher-child interactions for all participating classrooms.

Expectations for Families

Families are eligible for services in Mixed Delivery if they meet one of the following criteria:

- Family income is at or below 200 percent of federal poverty guidelines;
- Family is experiencing homelessness;
- Child's parents or guardians did not complete high school;
- Child has an identified disability, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), an Individualized Education Program (IEP), or may later be identified as a child with a disability requiring special education and/or related services; or
- Other regionally-established criteria (for up to 15 percent of slots).

In addition to meeting the above eligibility criteria, all parents or guardians in a Mixed Delivery family are required to be working, in school, or searching for work, in alignment with expectations for the CCSP.

Lastly, Mixed Delivery families are required to make a copayment or contribute toward the cost of ECCE services each month in alignment with the CCSP.

Additional Requirements in Mixed Delivery

The state budget lays out additional expectations for Mixed Delivery participants:

- Children must be assigned student identification numbers (also known as student testing identifiers), which will enable longitudinal tracking of child outcomes through their K-12 experience and beyond.

Comparison of State-Administered ECCE Programs in Virginia

Each state-administered ECCE program has similarities and differences that tie back to the program purpose and target populations for services. This section compares Mixed Delivery with VPI and the CCSP.

Program Enrollment, Eligibility, and Services

Table 1 summarizes basic information for each program, including the ages, eligibility criteria, and number of children served, settings where services are offered, and the availability of the program across the state. Mixed Delivery shares categorical eligibility categories with VPI and mirrors parental activity requirements in CCSP.

Table 1. Basic Program Information

	Mixed Delivery	Child Care Subsidy Program	Virginia Preschool Initiative
SFY25 total enrollment	2,645 (77% are preschoolers)	42,688 (56% are under age 5)	24,405 (88% are four-year-olds)
Ages served	Birth to 5, not yet in kindergarten	6 weeks to 12 years (up to 18 years for certain children with disabilities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can only cover before-, after- or summer care for school-age children (cannot be used for school) 	4-year-olds; 3-year-olds in select localities; limited exceptions for 5-year-olds
Child eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family income at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines Family experiencing homelessness Child has a disability Parents did not complete high school Regionally-determined eligibility criteria for up to 15% of students (or more with a waiver) Parents or guardians must be working, looking for work, or in school or job training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For families with at least one child ages 5 and younger, not yet in kindergarten, 85% of the state median income (~\$97,000 for a family of 4)* Parents or guardians must be working, looking for work, or in school or job training <p><i>*Eligibility differs for families with school-age children only</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family income at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines Family experiencing homelessness Child has a disability Parents did not complete high school Locally-determined eligibility criteria for up to 15% of students (or more with a waiver)
Family payment obligation as of SFY 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flat per-child fee based on family income for up to 3 children Copays do not exceed 7% of income for any family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flat per-child fee based on family income for up to 3 children Copays do not exceed 7% of income for any family 	None
Setting	Licensed child care centers and family day homes	Licensed and regulated child care centers and family day homes	Local public schools; licensed child care centers or family day homes in select localities
Duration/schedule	Full-day/full-year (at least 2,400 hours per year beginning in SFY24)	Up to full-day, full-year based on parent/caregiver work or school schedule, not to exceed 60 hours per week	School day/year (typically August/September—May/June); some slots are offered half-day
Geographic availability	Every Ready Region, available in 69 localities	Every locality is eligible to be allocated slots	Every school division is eligible to be allocated slots

Funding

Mixed Delivery is fully state funded as of SFY 2025, while the CCSP and VPI are supported by multiple funding streams. Per-child costs in all programs are based on estimations of the cost to meet health, safety, and quality expectations for a given program and setting.

Table 2. Program Administration and Funding

	Mixed Delivery	Child Care Subsidy Program	Virginia Preschool Initiative
Funding source*			
State General Funds	X	X	X
Federal Funds		Child Care and Development Block Grant	
Local Funds			Local Match
Total state appropriation in SFY25	\$38,837,720	\$400,743,250	\$152,482,084
Total per child cost in SFY25	\$15,125 (average weighted cost of full-day, full-year services)	\$12,700 (average weighted cost of full-day, full-year services for children < 5 years)	\$10,184 (including state share and local match)
Average hourly-per cost costs	\$5.82 (based on 2,600 hours and total costs) \$5.61 (after deducting est. FY25 copayment contributions)	\$4.88 (based on 2,600 hours and total costs) \$4.63 (after deducting est. FY25 copayments)	\$9.29 (based on 900 hours and total cost) \$7.02 (based on state share only)
Basis for per-child funding	Cost of Quality cost estimation model (100% of modeled costs)	Cost of Quality cost estimation model (75% of modeled costs for centers, 100% for FDH)	Based on the Virginia Standards of Quality (SOQ); re-benchmarked every 2 years
Payment tied to attendance	No, paid by enrollment	Yes, for up to 60 days	No, paid by enrollment
Parental contributions required	Yes, average annual copayment of \$516 per child in FY25	Yes, average annual copayment of \$650 per child in FY25	No

**Note: Appropriations reflected here do not include other sources of funding that contribute to total per-child costs/payment rates, such as parental copayments (for Mixed Delivery and CCSP) and employer contributions (for the Ready Together pilot).*

Programmatic Requirements

Mixed Delivery's programmatic requirements are most similar to VPI, with limited exceptions to account for services being delivered in community-based settings.

Table 3. Programmatic Requirements

Program	Mixed Delivery	Child Care Subsidy Program	Virginia Preschool Initiative
Teacher requirements	Lead teachers must be at least 18 years of age, have a high school diploma or equivalent, and have an approved combination of education, experience, and/or training under applicable child care health and safety regulations	Lead teachers must be at least 18 years of age, have a high school diploma or equivalent, and have an approved combination of education, experience, and/or training under applicable child care health and safety regulations	Teachers supported by VPI funding must have a Board of Education issued teacher's license per Code of Virginia (22.1-299). Compensation for non-licensed VPI teachers can be paid from private funding sources. VPI programs operating in a community-based setting are exempt from teacher licensure requirements.
Participate in VQB5	Yes	Yes	Yes
Use of Approved Curriculum	Yes	No	Yes
Participate in Child Assessments (VKRP)	Yes, preschool only	No	Yes
Assigned Student Identifiers/Student Testing Identifiers	Yes	No	Yes

Mixed Delivery Innovations and Pilots

Throughout its history, Mixed Delivery has piloted several innovations and evaluated these for impact. These innovations have been central to the successful execution of the initial goals for the program and have provided valuable insights into the broader ECCE landscape of Virginia ECCE programs.

Assigning Student Testing Identifiers in Private Sites

As part of the ongoing efforts to systematically measure and report on the impact of Mixed Delivery, the VDOE and VECF partnered to build a secure and sustainable process for assigning State Testing Identifiers to Mixed Delivery students. A State Testing Identifier or STI is a unique number linked to a specific individual student within Virginia's public educational system. STIs support the longitudinal tracking of student outcomes across their educational career and are key to understanding how program participation at one point in time may impact critical outcomes later in a child's life.

VECF and VDOE began partnering to assign STIs to children in Mixed Delivery in SFY 2022, though the processes have taken several years of piloting and refinement to improve their utility. As of SFY 2024, all children in the program are either assigned an STI or identified as already

having one from a prior ECCE experience and are now able to have their experience in Mixed Delivery associated with their educational experience. This accomplishment will enable future evaluations of Mixed Delivery to connect each child to their pre-kindergarten readiness assessments and K-12 outcomes, providing critical information on how Mixed Delivery prepares children for school success and ensuring ongoing accountability and quality assurance of the program. Additionally, through the addition of STIs, data from Mixed Delivery will be able to contribute to Virginia's Longitudinal Data System (VLDS), enabling research on the outcomes of children in Mixed Delivery over time.

Contracted Slots Model through the Child Care Stabilization Pilot

The Virginia General Assembly passed Senate Bill 1316 (Chapter 251, 2021 Special Session I), which directed the VDOE to establish a pilot program for the purpose of stabilizing and improving the quality of services provided in the Commonwealth's private child care industry. The pilot program described a model referred to as contracted slots, which provides a fixed sum of public funds to certain private child care providers to provide child care services based on enrollment that meet specific quality expectations. Contracts of a sufficient size allow child care providers to invest in the quality of their programs, including being able to increase compensation of their workforce, thus attracting and retaining talented teachers. The VDOE operated this pilot in close partnership with VECF and Virginia's Ready Regions through the expansion of the existing Mixed Delivery program.

Through the Child Care Stabilization Pilot, Mixed Delivery continued the expansion of the existing program, with the specific goal of incentivizing providers in areas of the Commonwealth that have the greatest need for child care services and have the greatest demand for full-day, full-year services to better meet the needs of low-income working families. As part of the SFY 2022 expansion of Mixed Delivery, over 1,000 new slots were added using COVID relief funding. In SFY 2023, slots were increased further, including the addition of an infant, toddler, and 2-year-old pilot, also using COVID-19 pandemic relief funding.

Mixed Delivery was essential to the Commonwealth's ability to pilot strategies for meeting the needs and demands of the child care industry in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through an ability to operate flexibly and support rapid and targeted expansions, Virginia was able to both accomplish the goals set in state law as well as utilize pandemic relief funding to support the stabilization of the sector and expansion of private care options for low-income working families.

Expanding Access through Mini-Grants

As demand from working families for Mixed Delivery increased, it became apparent that ECCE sites needed support to expand the number of slots offered to children. A major barrier cited by ECCE leaders was having appropriate resources for minor renovations, purchasing supplies, and personnel costs. In response, VECF partnered with VDOE and Ready Regions to offer mini Mixed Delivery Site Expansion Grants funded with a total of \$1.1 million in American Rescue Plan Act Child Care Stabilization Funding through a competitive process. Awardees used funding in amounts of \$25,000 to \$100,000 for minor renovations, purchase of supplies and materials, personnel costs, and other costs. The purpose of these grants was to allow these sites to increase their enrollment capacity and commit to increasing or adding Mixed Delivery

enrollment at their site. VECF received 158 applications with requests to increase capacity by 2,473 Mixed Delivery slots. With available funding, 319 slots were awarded across 19 sites for FY24. The average one-time cost of creating each new slot was \$3,448.

Supporting the Workforce through Competitive Compensation and Business Supports

Mixed Delivery sites have been continuously encouraged to develop and pilot innovative strategies to promote competitive compensation and recruitment approaches, with the goal of providing stability for the workforce and for enrolled working families. A recent example of this has been Mixed Delivery's participation in the Early Educator Fast Track Initiative, which was a piloted program that supported ECCE sites and Ready Regions to welcome new talent into the early education workforce by addressing teacher recruitment, compensation, introductory training, retention, and ongoing professional development. Twenty-four Mixed Delivery providers used Fast Track to help them identify new classroom teachers—hiring 87 total assistant teachers through the program and ultimately enrolling more children as a result.

To further support competitive compensation, in 2024 VECF convened an ECCE Finance and Compensation Task Force. This group of experienced early childhood site leaders, all Mixed Delivery providers, engaged in an ECCE Business Academy through which they were trained on financing and budgeting strategies to support increased compensation for early educators, including Mixed Delivery sites. Informed by this work, VECF supported the development of an ECCE Business Academy Toolkit and made this toolkit available to all Mixed Delivery site leaders in 2024.

Employer Cost-Sharing Pilot through Ready Together

Within the Mixed Delivery program, VECF has been collaborating with Ready Region Southwest (RRSW) to pilot Ready Together, an innovative public-private cost sharing model. This pilot is in its first year of operation in SFY 2025. Ready Together allows Virginia to test a new access and financing strategy within Mixed Delivery that maximizes state funding by leveraging reasonable contributions from employers and families. This model mutually benefits employers and families by ensuring employees have access to affordable, high-quality child care in the community, reducing the extent to which child care poses a barrier to stable employment.

In its initial pilot year, RRSW budgeted a portion of their Mixed Delivery tuition funding to support 23 infant, four toddler, 14 two-year-old, and 16 preschool Ready Together slots for a total of 57 slots. Three ECCE sites are participating: Ballad Health Centers for Early Learning in Abingdon, Lebanon, and Norton. RRSW is partnering with Ballad Health, a prominent employer in their region. Ballad Health has identified employees who have children who are eligible for Mixed Delivery and are interested in receiving subsidized child care at one of the three sites. Table 4 demonstrates slot rate shares for participating payors based on one participating child per family for the Ready Together pilot. Each family contributes \$2,000 in annual copayments which is seven percent or less of their household income in line with the federal expectations on affordability. The employer contributes \$5,000 annually toward the employee's/family's cost for each Ready Together slot which is affordable to the employer, consistent and does not vary based on family income, helping to ensure that employers are equally incited to serve all eligible employees. State general funds cover the balance of the Mixed Delivery cost-of-quality

reimbursement amount for each slot. The family and employer contributions are a flat rate regardless of the number of children participating in each family.

Table 4. Ready Together Payor Slot Shares

	Infants and Toddlers			Preschool
Age Range	Infants	Toddlers	2-year-olds	3- and 4-year-olds
Employer Share per Slot	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Employee/Family Share per Slot	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
State Share per Slot	\$14,840	\$11,980	\$7,820	\$6,260
Total Per Slot Shares	\$21,840	\$18,980	\$14,820	\$13,260

As a three-payor model, Ready Together enables Virginia to reach more children and families with the allocated state funding by supporting the cost of each slot through family and employer shares. VECF and VDOE estimate that this mixed model allowed the pilot sites to serve 18 additional children through Ready Together and Mixed Delivery compared to if the sites received Mixed Delivery alone.

This first year of piloting at a small scale is a critical step towards understanding the supports and systems that are needed to implement a cost-share model in additional localities. VECF has worked closely with both the Ready Region and employer partner in this pilot to gather lessons learned for future applications of this innovative funding model.

III. PROGRAM UTILIZATION AND OUTCOMES

Mixed Delivery Regularly Utilizes All Available Slots

Throughout its history, Mixed Delivery has fully enrolled all allotted Mixed Delivery slots. When a child leaves the program, and a slot becomes vacant, Mixed Delivery program guidelines require that the slot is filled within 30 days of the vacancy. In addition, every year the demand for Mixed Delivery slots has far outpaced the number of slots available.

Table 5. Mixed Delivery Slots Requested, Awarded, and Utilized

	SFY2022	SFY2023	SFY2024	SFY2025
<i>Slots Requested vs. Budgeted</i>				
Slots Requested by Ready Region Lead Agencies*	1,241	2,324	5,378	4,227
Slots in State Budget	1,241	2,050	2,500	2,530
<i>Slots Awarded, Filled, and Utilized</i>				
Slots Awarded as of December 31	1,241	2,014	2,518	2,653
Slots Filled as of December 31	1,237	2,014	2,504	2,639
Utilization Rate as of December 31*	99.7%	100%	99.4%	99.5%

*Prior to SFY 2024, Mixed Delivery was administered by community organizations (some of which became Ready Region lead agencies in FY23).

Evaluations of Mixed Delivery Show Positive Outcomes for Families and Sites

From the first years of the Mixed Delivery program, VECF has completed multiple external evaluations to assess the program's effectiveness and the extent to which it meets its stated goals. For example, a 2019 evaluation of the program in its pilot state found positive outcomes on children's learning and development, program quality, and local systems-building efforts. According to the evaluation, the majority of children in Mixed Delivery classrooms had language, literacy, and math scores that met or exceeded typical scores for their age group in the spring of their preschool year. These findings were critical to expanding funding for and the scope of Mixed Delivery beginning in SFY 2021 and providing policy insights for other publicly funded ECCE in the Commonwealth.

The most recent programmatic evaluation took place using SFY 2023 Mixed Delivery data. VECF began this evaluation process by contracting with an external evaluator to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of Mixed Delivery, with a specific focus on analyzing the impact of the contract model on overall financial stability of participating private providers. The VDOE collaborated with VECF on the programmatic evaluation design, both in the planning stages for the evaluation and in the execution.

The SFY 2023 program evaluation was published in June 2024 with the following key findings:

- Mixed Delivery increased access to ECCE services, particularly for children from low-income families, that met most family needs and preferences.
- Participation in Mixed Delivery supported ECCE program financial stability leading to increased investments in quality improvements, including modest increases in teacher compensation.

Quality Outcomes for Mixed Delivery within Virginia’s Unified ECCE System

In order to improve school readiness outcomes and support the ongoing evaluation of Virginia’s early childhood programs, the Virginia General Assembly charged the Board of Education with establishing a unified quality measurement and improvement system that is required for all programs that receive public funds (Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-289.03). Virginia Quality Birth to Five, known as [VQB5](#), was established in 2021, with several years of piloting proceeding the first full year of required statewide implementation in 2023-2024. As of Fall 2023, all publicly-funded birth-to-five programs (school-based preschool, Mixed Delivery Programs, Head Start/Early Head Start, and child care subsidy participating child care and family day home) are required to participate in VQB5.

In October 2024, the VDOE fulfilled the requirement for public reporting of quality information through the release of the first ever VQB5 Quality Profiles. This included quality rating information collected for 3,121 publicly funded early childhood programs from the 2023-2024 VQB5 measurement year; 140 of these sites were participating in Mixed Delivery.

VQB5 ratings are based on results from interactions and curriculum measurements gathered from every eligible birth to five classroom across the Commonwealth. These two measures are predictive of school readiness; research suggests that children in early childhood classrooms that score higher will likely learn more.

- **Interactions** – The first component of VQB5 is a measure of the quality of teacher-child interactions and instruction across all classrooms in a developmentally-appropriate way, as measured by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®). All children benefit socially and academically from being in classrooms with high-quality teacher-child interactions, including children from diverse settings, dual language learners (DLLs), and children with special needs.
- **Curriculum** – The second component of VQB5 is a measure of use of a VDOE-approved comprehensive curriculum in alignment with Virginia’s early learning and development standards to ensure that all areas of learning and development are being covered in developmentally-appropriate ways. The VDOE has approved 70+ comprehensive curricula that providers can select from, each meeting unique needs of specific age groups (infant, toddler, preschool curricula) and settings (child care, family day home, etc.). While curriculum is optional, creating an incentive to use quality curriculum also helps ensure that early childhood programs are supported to provide guidance on how to individualize instruction based on needs, including children with disabilities, suspected delays, or other special needs.

VQB5 ratings factor in the measurement data collected from classroom observations for each classroom (using the CLASS tool) and the use of a high-quality, approved curriculum. VQB5 programs receive one of three ratings and a numerical score that ranges from 100-800 points: Exceeds Expectations (700-800 points), Meets Expectations (400-699 points), and Needs Support (100-399 points). Programs determined to be Needs Support are required to participate in VDOE-directed improvement planning, which includes the assignment of a dedicated Quality Consultant and the required participation in the intensive Virginia Early Childhood Consultation model for a year of responsive, program-wide coaching.

Mixed Delivery programs were required to participate in the piloting years of VQB5 in both 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 ahead of the statement requirement, providing more experience with the quality measurements and supports related to VQB5. Since the initial adoption of the VQB5 measurements, 100% of Mixed Delivery programs have been successful in meeting the participation expectations set forth by VQB5.

Analysis of VQB5 Results

Table 6 displays the overall ratings and associated points for Mixed Delivery funded programs, CCSP funded programs, and VPI funded programs in 2023-2024. It should be noted that programs that serve school age children through CCSP are not required to participate in VQB5 or any quality measurement and improvement system. As a result, there is no statewide quality information on these programs. It should also be noted that none of these funding sources are exclusive, meaning many sites, including Mixed Delivery sites, are funded through multiple public funding sources that require participation in VQB5.

The analysis below demonstrates that 100% of Mixed Delivery programs met or exceeded performance expectations in VQB5 in 2023-2024. None of the Mixed Delivery programs have been required to participate in site improvement planning for low performing sites (see Table 7).

Table 6. VQB5 Rating by Program Funding Source(s), 2023-2024

	Number of Sites by Rating				Points	
	Needs Support	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Total	Avg. Points	Median Points
Mixed Delivery Funding*	0 (0%)	134 (96%)	5 (4%)	140	618	619
CCSP Funding, No MD	40 (2%)	1,534 (96%)	30 (2%)	1,604	566	575
VPI Funding, No MD	0 (0%)	699 (96%)	29 (4%)	728	627	630
All Sites in Virginia	51 (2%)	2,991 (95%)	79 (3%)	3,121	588	600

**Most Mixed Delivery sites (94%) also report other funding sources to serve children, such as CCSP or Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood (MCCYN).*

Mixed Delivery sites on average scored a 5.18 out of 7.00 on the CLASS tool in the 2023-2024 program year, demonstrating strong performance in measures of teacher-child interactions (see Table 7). All sites reported using one of the 70+ VDOE-approved comprehensive curricula in their infant, toddler, and pre-k classrooms (see Table 8).

Table 7. Average Final CLASS Scores by Program Funding Source(s), 2023-2024

	Avg. Score	Median Score
Mixed Delivery Funding*	5.18	5.19
CCSP Funding, No MD	4.89	4.92
VPI Funding, No MD	5.27	5.30
All Sites in Virginia	5.10	5.07

**Most Mixed Delivery sites (94%) also report other funding sources to serve children, such as CCSP or Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood (MCCYN).*

Table 8. Use of Curriculum in VQB5 by Program Funding Source(s), 2023-2024

	Using Approved Curriculum	Not Using Approved Curriculum	Total
Mixed Delivery Funding*	140 (100%)	0 (0%)	140
CCSP Funding, No MD	1,240 (77%)	364 (23%)	1,604
VPI Funding, No MD	726 (99.7%)	2 (0.3%)	728
All Sites in Virginia	2,610 (84%)	511 (16%)	3,121

**Most Mixed Delivery sites (94%) also report other funding sources to serve children, such as CCSP or Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood (MCCYN).*

Looking Forward at Measuring Quality Outcomes for Mixed Delivery

The October 2024 release of the VQB5 Quality Profiles marked an important milestone in the measurement and public availability of information related to quality outcomes and experiences of birth-to-five children in Mixed Delivery and other ECCE programs. Since then, there have been more than 80,000 views of the VQB5 website. Through VQB5, all publicly-funded early childhood programs in Virginia will continue to have information shared with parents and other interested stakeholders on an annual basis to support family choice and program improvement, with the next release of VQB5 Quality Profiles expected in fall 2025.

Beginning in school year 2025-2026, Virginia’s ECCE programs will be able to utilize additional reporting features through a new data system called Virginia Connects for Kids (VAConnects). VAConnects is a modern, secure integrated data system that brings together three state data collection systems: LinkB5 (the data system for VQB5), Virginia Language & Literacy Screening System (VALLSS), and the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP). Once launched, VAConnects will provide users with an integrated data entry system that will include all three initiatives in one platform.

The VAConnects system aims to both improve the educator user experience through upgraded technology as well as support the integration of data across systems that ultimately support increased insights into children’s development. This is important for users of multiple systems such as Mixed Delivery participants as they use LinkB5, VALLSS and VKRP. Not only will this integrated system increase ease of use, but VAConnects will provide Virginia educators, leaders, and researchers with new insights into the impact of early childhood experiences on children’s learning experiences over time. In time this will provide new metrics for understanding the outcomes and impact of all ECCE programs, including Mixed Delivery.

APPENDIX A: HISTORY OF THE MIXED DELIVERY PROGRAM

SFY 2017-2020: Pilot Initiative

Between state fiscal year (SFY) 2017 and SFY 2020, Mixed Delivery operated as a small, competitive grants program. Funds were awarded to well-known, trusted community organizations across the state who then partnered with private ECCE sites to expand the availability of services to at-risk four-year-olds to address unmet parental demand. Some grantees also partnered with other organizations in the community to promote quality improvement supports.

During this period, Mixed Delivery tested several strategies to increase access, improve quality, and promote participation in private sites:

- All Mixed Delivery sites were required to participate in Virginia Quality, the state quality measurement and improvement system at that time.
- Mixed Delivery sites were issued a waiver from the VPI requirement that lead teachers hold a bachelor's degree and teaching license for educators in private centers and homes, enabling more flexibility for hiring in these private settings.
- Mixed Delivery programs were encouraged to pilot strategies to blend and braid multiple funding sources to achieve full-day, full-year coverage for eligible children.

SFY 2021-2022: Shift to Access Model and Expanded Requirements

Recognizing the positive outcomes associated with the Mixed Delivery pilot, the Governor and General Assembly made significant investments in and further refined the Mixed Delivery model beginning in SFY 2021 to pilot the feasibility and effectiveness of contracted slots to address unmet demand from working families.

In the summer of 2020, Virginia was grappling with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. School divisions were largely preparing for fully virtual instruction in the 2020-2021 school year and enrollment in school-based preschool programs was suffering as a result. Meanwhile, child care centers and family day homes remained open and stepped up to serve families of essential workers and meet children's ongoing learning and developmental needs.

Accordingly, the Mixed Delivery model shifted to focus on directly facilitating access by awarding contracts to community-based partners to secure blocks of slots in licensed child care sites for eligible children in working families. Services were expanded to explicitly cover three-year-olds.

Investments further increased in SFY 2022, with additional policy shifts to help support and monitor programs to meet health, safety, and quality expectations:

- Per-child payment rates were increased to more fully cover the costs of delivering high-quality ECCE services.
- All classrooms were required to implement a state-approved curriculum, conduct child-level assessments, and participate in observational measures of quality.
- Student testing identifiers were assigned to all children enrolled in Mixed Delivery to ensure that child outcomes could be tracked over time.

- The Mixed Delivery Data Portal was launched to further strengthen accountability.

SFY 2023-2024: Fully Implemented Contract Model and Statewide Coverage

In SFY 2023 and 2024, Mixed Delivery fully implemented the contract model approach to service delivery; expanded services to infants, toddlers, and 2-year-olds at the direction of the General Assembly based on unmet parental demand; and expanded coverage to every Ready Region in the state.

Additionally, the Mixed Delivery model further evolved to:

- More significantly incorporate family engagement strategies and expectations into the program design;
- Implement per-child payment rates at 100% of the estimated cost of quality using VDOE's federally-approved alternative methodology; and
- Require full-day (at least 10 hours/day), full-year (240 days per year) services at Mixed Delivery sites to better support working families and encourage work.

Collectively, the policy shifts leading up to SFY 2024 reflected ongoing lessons learned from various stakeholders regarding the needs and realities of families, ECCE providers, employers, and communities at large. At every step, Mixed Delivery proved to be a highly nimble, flexible program through which innovations can be piloted and scaled.

SFY 2025: Maximizing Funding for the Mixed Delivery Program

In SFY 2025, Mixed Delivery underwent several key shifts in funding and enrollment requirements, all working towards the goal of sustaining funding, maximizing enrollment, ensuring funding follows the child and aligning Mixed Delivery with the Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP) where appropriate.

The initial rapid expansion of Mixed Delivery enrollment in SFY 2023 and 2024 was supported by COVID-19 temporary federal relief funding, enabling the timely expansion of the program at a time when access to child care was critical for families across the Commonwealth. This funding expired in September 2024, leaving a potential gap of coverage without additional funding sources. Based on the documented demand and need for Mixed Delivery, the General Assembly approved an expansion of State General Funds to support and sustain enrollment in Mixed Delivery as part of the SFY 2025-2026 Virginia State Budget. This included the allocation of \$38.8 million to support Mixed Delivery birth-to-five slots in each year of the biennium.

In addition to the significant financial investment in Mixed Delivery, the SFY 2025-2026 Virginia State Budget included additional requirements to maximize the available funding and promote alignment with CCSP, including:

- Establishing a copayment scale based on the sliding fee scale in the CCSP;

- Requiring all available parents in an eligible family to be participating in an approved activity consistent with the CCSP, generally meaning they are working, in school, or looking for work;
- Directing regional lead agencies to establish and manage waitlists for Mixed Delivery; and
- Establishing attendance expectations for participating children.

Additionally, Ready Together, an innovative public-private cost sharing model was launched as a pilot in Southwest Virginia in SFY 2025. More information on Ready Together can be found in Section II.