



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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January 8, 2025

The Honorable L. Louise Lucas
Chair, Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee
General Assembly Building, Room 1404
P. O. Box 396
Richmond, VA 23218

The Honorable Luke E. Torian
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
General Assembly Building, Room 1223
201 North 9th Street
Richmond, VA 23219

The Honorable Ghazala F. Hashmi
Chair, Senate Education and Health Committee
General Assembly Building, Room 616
PO Box 396
Richmond, VA 23218

The Honorable Sam Rasoul
Chair, House Education Committee
General Assembly Building, Room 910
201 North 9th Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Delegates Torian and Rasoul, Senators Lucas and Hashmi:

I am pleased to submit the enclosed Comprehensive Early Childhood Reporting Update, submitted in response to the following language in House Bill 6001 Chapter 2, Item 125.10 D.9.e:

e.) The Department shall develop a plan for comprehensive public reporting on early childhood expenditures, outcomes, and program quality to replace this reporting requirement. Such plan and subsequent reports shall consider the components included in this reporting requirement and include all publicly funded providers as defined in Chapter 860 and Chapter 861, 2020 Acts of Assembly. The plan shall identify any fiscal, legislative, or regulatory barriers to implementing such public reporting, and shall consider integration with the Department's School Quality Profiles. The Department of Education shall submit an update on implementation of the plan to the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees by December 1 each year. Once fully implemented, the Department of Education shall update and submit the report by December 1 of each year.

Please direct questions to Jenna Conway, Deputy Superintendent of Early Childhood at Jenna.Conway@doe.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,

Lisa Coons

LC/JC/em

COMPREHENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD REPORTING UPDATE

Appropriation Act- Item 125.10.D.9 (Special Session I, 2024)



COMPREHENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD REPORTING UPDATE

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I. INTRODUCTION

House Bill 6001 (Chapter 2) of the 2024 Special Session I, Item 125.10 D.9.e, directs the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to provide a comprehensive public report on publicly-funded early childhood providers. The specific language of the mandate is as follows:

e.) The Department shall develop a plan for comprehensive public reporting on early childhood expenditures, outcomes, and program quality to replace this reporting requirement. Such plan and subsequent reports shall consider the components included in this reporting requirement, and include all publicly-funded providers as defined in Chapter 860 and Chapter 861, 2020 Acts of Assembly. The plan shall identify any fiscal, legislative, or regulatory barriers to implementing such public reporting, and shall consider integration with the Department's School Quality Profiles. The Department of Education shall submit an update on implementation of the plan to the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees by December 1 each year. Once fully implemented, the Department of Education shall update and submit the report by December 1 of each year.

This report fulfills the requirements to implement the plan for comprehensive early childhood reporting. This report follows four years of prior reports that described the VDOE's plan for creating a comprehensive annual report while the VDOE implemented required policy and reporting requirements. This comprehensive report is now possible due to the full implementation of Virginia Quality Birth to Five (VQB5). Note, however, that more time is needed for tracking child-specific outcomes as this can only occur as children progress through Virginia's K-12 education system. Considering 2023-2024 was the first full year of VQB5, outcome measurements such as the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) will be available after the completion of the 2024-2025 school year.

II. VIRGINIA'S COMPREHENSIVE REPORTING ON PUBLICLY-FUNDED PROGRAMS – STATE FISCAL YEAR 2024

Virginia serves at-risk birth-to-five year old children across the Commonwealth through a variety of out-of-the-home Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programs. These programs differ in many respects, including their eligibility criteria for public funds, how they are funded, and how they collect and report data, as outlined in this section. There were several notable accomplishments and milestones that have impacted program enrollment and program quality measurement in state fiscal year (FY) 2024:

- As for FY2024, Virginia's publicly-funded programs served more families than ever before, with the majority of enrollment increases taking place in private child care or family day home settings.
- Governor Glenn Youngkin's proposed biennial budget for state fiscal years (FY) 2025 and 2026 included a commitment to sustain and support Virginia's ECCE system. Through his initiative, *Building Blocks for Virginia Families*, Governor Youngkin began the 2024 Legislative Session with a proposed state budget that reflected a commitment to

sustain access to care for families by using state general funds (SGF) to address the expiring federal COVID relief funding. The Governor’s proposal also included several innovative workforce proposals, including capital incentives, a digital wallet, and an investment in the RecognizeB5 program.

- The final FY2025-2026 Virginia Biennial Budget (Virginia Appropriation Act, 2024 Special Session I) includes \$1.2 billion in investments in ECCE slots for low- to moderate-income families over the biennium. This included 42,719 slots for CCSP, 2,530 slots for MD and 24,842 slots for VPI.
- Recognizing the Biennial Budget sustained all existing slots, Virginia then established waitlists for CCSP and MD as of July 1, 2024. These waitlists have grown significantly to more than 12,000 children as of November 1, 2024. This includes more than more than 8,200 birth-to-five children and 4,000 school-age children (6- to 13-year-olds).
- Virginia Quality Birth to Five (VQB5) was implemented statewide in 2023-2024, with 100% of publicly-funded programs participating. FY 2024 marked the first year of required participation for any program serving birth-to-five aged children that takes public funds. In October 2024, the VDOE launched a new parent portal that included health, safety and quality ratings and information for 3,121 child care centers, family day homes, Head Starts, and public schools that completed the VQB5 requirements in 2023-2024.

The following sections will detail early childhood enrollment and public expenditures as well as provide detailed information on the program quality and experiences of children attending publicly-funded early childhood care and education programs in FY 2024.

Early Childhood Program Enrollment and Expenditures

Virginia’s public-private parent choice system is comprised of various programs that receive federal, state, or local funding to provide quality early learning experiences for birth-to-five children. The variety of choices in public early childhood programs in Virginia allows families to choose the program that best meets their needs and preferences. Table 1 includes a summary of the publicly-funded programs available for families with birth-to-five children in Fiscal Year 2024.

Table 1. Out-of-the-home ECCE Program Summaries for Fiscal Year 2024

Program Choice	Target Population	Number of Children Served (FY24)	State & Federal Expenditures (FY24)
Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI)	At-risk three- and four-year-olds unserved by other programs	23,038	\$121,827,986 (State General Funds)
Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP)*	Children under age thirteen with low household incomes whose parents are working, in school, or looking for work	45,127 (includes 6-13 year olds) (30,868 ages 5 and younger)	\$22,583,643 (State General Funds) \$386,186,182.00 (Federal Funds,

			including COVID Relief Funds)
Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)**	Children ages two to five identified as having a disability	13,379	\$7,536,945 (Federal IDEA Funds)
Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS)*	Children under age five from low-income families (mostly three and four)	13,714 total served (14,696 Total Funded Enrollment)	\$173,923,933 (Federal Head Start/Early Head Start Funds)
Mixed Delivery Program	At-risk infants, toddlers, and three- and four-year-old children in selected communities	2,575	\$9,736,015 (State General Funds) \$32,002,474 (American Rescue Plan Act)
<p>*CCSP and HS/EHS reported on federal fiscal year; other programs reported on state fiscal year.</p> <p>**Includes children funded through IDEA Part B, Section 619 funds who attend at least half-day programs.</p>			

More details on each of these programs can be found in Appendix A.

Early Childhood Program Quality

Section 22.1-289.03 of the Code of Virginia directed the Virginia Board of Education to establish a unified quality rating and improvement system for all publicly-funded birth-to-five providers in order to improve school readiness outcomes. Further, Chapter 446 of the Virginia Acts of the Assembly 2021 Special Session I requires the following:

11. That, notwithstanding the provisions of the third enactment of this act, the establishment and implementation of the quality rating and improvement system described in § 22.1-289.05 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act, shall occur as follows: (i) the Board of Education shall establish such quality rating and improvement system no later than July 1, 2021, (ii) publicly-funded providers may participate in the quality rating and improvement system beginning in the 2021–2022 school year and shall participate in the quality rating and improvement system beginning in the 2022–2023 school year, and (iii) the initial quality ratings shall be published in the fall of 2024.

In June 2021, the Board fulfilled these timebound requirements by establishing Guidelines for VQB5 Practice Year 1 (approved in June 2021), Guidelines for VQB5 Practice Year 2 (approved in June 2022), and VQB5 Guidelines for 2023-2024 (approved in June 2023). As of Fall 2023, all publicly-funded birth-to-five program (school-based preschool, Head Start/Early Head Start, and child care subsidy participating child care and family day home) are required to participate in VQB5, Virginia's Unified Measurement and Improvement System. It should be noted that programs that serve school age children through the Child Care Subsidy Program 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 or the outcomes that they have.

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.

VQB5 quality 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 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 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. 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.

Quality Performance Results

Through VQB5, all publicly-funded early childhood programs receive measurement and improvement guidance for every classroom multiple times a year. Based on the measurement data collected, each program receives a quality rating. VQB5 Quality Ratings are awarded on an annual basis and are valid for one year. The information below summarizes statewide performance and participation information for the VQB5 2023-2024 program year.

Overall Quality Ratings 2023-2024

VQB5 Quality Profiles provide each program with an overall rating that factors 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. During the 2023-2024, 98% of 3,121 sites met or exceeded the state’s quality expectations, with an overall average rating of 588 points.

Table 2. Statewide Results for VQB5 Programs

Quality Rating	# of Sites	% of Sites
Exceeds Expectations (700-800 points)	79	3%
Meets Expectations (400-699 points)	2,991	95%
Needs Support (100-399 points)	51	2%

All publicly funded programs that serve children ages birth-to-five are required to participate in VQB5. The 2023-2024 program measurement results demonstrate that there is a range of performance in all site types, categorized as public schools, family day homes, and child care. Every site type has examples of programs that received the rating of Exceeds Expectations.

Table 3. Quality Ratings by Site Type

Site Type	# of Sites	# Exceeds Expectations	# Meets Expectations	# Needs Support
Public Schools*	855	32 (4%)	823 (96%)	0 (0%)
Family Day Homes	754	28 (4%)	687 (91%)	39 (5%)
Child Care Centers*	1,414	19 (1%)	1,481 (98%)	12 (1%)

*Includes Head Start grantees

It should be noted that all program types had sites that exceeded expectations including the highest performing site in Virginia in 2023-2024 which was a family day home in Northern Virginia. This data point helps demonstrate that high quality experiences may be found in all types and settings in Virginia.

In addition to establishing a required uniform rating system, the Code of Virginia (§ 22.1-289.05) directs the Virginia Board of Education to establish a set of regional entities that are responsible for coordinating early childhood care and education services, guiding quality improvement of such services and coordinated access to such services for families, and implementing the uniform measurement and improvement system. In 2021, the VDOE worked closely with the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) to competitively select and launch nine regional entities, now called Ready Regions, which provide full geographic coverage of the Commonwealth. *More information on the localities within each Ready Region can be found in Appendix B.*

The VDOE annually funds the Ready Regions to ensure the regional implementation of VQB5 and support coordination for every birth-to-five provider in the Commonwealth. Ready Regions support the completion of the classroom observations and collection of curriculum information that contribute to VQB5 Quality Ratings. While there is significant variation in the number of early childhood sites within each region, there quality ratings for each Ready Region are relatively consistent.

Table 4. VQB5 Quality Ratings by Ready Region

Ready Region	# of Sites	# Exceeds Expectations (%)	# Meets Expectations (%)	# Needs Support (%)
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1 - Southwest	215	7 (3%)	208 (97%)	0 (0%)
2 - West	179	2 (1%)	175 (98%)	2 (1%)
3 - Southside	151	8 (5%)	143 (95%)	0 (0%)
4 - Central	414	6 (1%)	402 (97%)	6 (1%)
5 - Southeastern	465	7 (2%)	452 (97%)	6 (1%)
6 - Chesapeake Bay	222	0 (0%)	219 (99%)	3 (1%)
7 - Capital Area	796	34 (4%)	729 (92%)	31 (4%)
8 - North Central	467	10 (2%)	455 (97%)	2 (0%)
9 - Blue Ridge	214	5 (2%)	208 (97%)	1 (0%)

NOTE: Percentages in this table may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

VQB5 Quality Profile Website

In October 2024, the VDOE launched the [VQB5 Quality Profile Website](#) to share quality information with families and the general public. The VQB5 Quality Profile website includes information on the 3,121 sites that participated in VQB5 in FY24, including public school preschool, Head Start, child care and family day home programs. The website allows parents to easily find out if a program has chosen a quality curriculum and view quality rating and performance information. Families can search by programs' names, address, city, or zip code to better understand the options available to them.

In addition to the family-friendly search features, the website allows for data downloads for publicly available information. The VQB5 Quality Profile Website will be updated annually each fall to display the most up-to-date information for participating programs. The profiles also facilitate connections to two other critical sources of information for parents to consider when searching for early childhood care and education:

- *Connection to School Quality Profiles for Public Schools* - Public schools with VQB5 Quality Profiles display a link to the [VDOE School Quality Profile](#). This enables parents to review the most up-to-date information on the school's overall performance, including information on other elementary school grades. School Quality Profiles include a "School Readiness" tab which includes additional information on the school's public preschool experiences and kindergarten literacy benchmarks.
- *Connection to Health and Safety Information for Licensed Facilities* – The VQB5 Quality Profiles for child care and family day home sites will display a link to the site's health and safety information, hosted on the [ChildCareVA website](#). The health and safety profile displays information about the site, including details about the license type the site has been issued, and a detailed record of health and safety inspections for the site.

The VDOE will continue to seek opportunities to support continued and increased integration across parent-oriented profiles as any additional updates are made to either the School Quality Profile system or the Child Care Health and Safety systems.

Data and Technology Systems for Quality Measurement

To implement VQB5 across the Commonwealth, Virginia has developed a data strategy and uniform data system (LinkB5) for collecting and analyzing measurement and improvement data across early childhood programs. The use of LinkB5 is a requirement for all publicly-funded sites as part of VQB5. All VQB5 participants are required to use LinkB5 to provide information about their sites, classrooms, and teachers through the completion of various profiles. Participants are also asked to provide information about children enrolled in publicly-funded sites to better understand the impact of public investments and ensure the growth and improvement of child outcomes at the classroom level. This enables the VDOE to link early childhood data with K-12 longitudinal data and track longer-term outcomes.

The VDOE is in the process of developing and launching a new integrated data system called VAConnects for Kids (VAConnects). This system will be fully operational by the 2025-2026 academic year and will align the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP), Virginia Literacy Screener (VALLSS), and LinkB5 data systems.

Once in place, VAConnects will allow Virginia to leverage data to inform policy and practice as a result of Virginia's investment in its youngest learners and provide additional information to families on the experiences children are having in their early learning sites. The VDOE will work closely with the VAConnects development partners at the University of Virginia through the 2024-2025 year to develop the systems and user supports needed to support the use of the new system for VQB5 data collection beginning in August 2025.

III. CONCLUSION

Through the sustaining investments of state and federal funds and the increase in publicly-available performance information, Virginia is more effectively supporting parent choice than ever before. State Fiscal Year 2024 marked a year of significant progress and accomplishments for the over 3,000 publicly-funded providers that serve Virginia's youngest learners. In future years, Virginia will continue to build on available public reporting through the ongoing commitment to measurement and quality through VQB5. Virginia will use its comprehensive data infrastructure to connect children's specific experiences to outcomes, including growth over time, school readiness and Standards of Learning (SOL) assessment performance.

- In 2024-2025, Virginia will analyze quality improvement across 11,000+ classrooms and connect ECCE experiences with VKRP results at the beginning and end of kindergarten. This includes exploring the relationship between teacher education, credentialing, and turnover and classroom performance. Virginia will also analyze high performing sites and classrooms to better understand what factors are driving their success and seeking to replicate these factors statewide.
- In 2025-2026, Virginia will use the VAConnects system statewide and will analyze multi-year growth, including exploring the relationship between teacher characteristics and the use of quality curriculum and classroom quality performance and growth. Virginia will also work to build the data and analytical capacity of the nine Ready

Regions, ensuring that there are regional staff who can lead efforts to use data to strengthen quality and improve child outcomes.

- In 2026-2027, Virginia will continue to analyze multi-year growth, VKRP results, and explore the connection between ECCE experiences and elementary school characteristics, including attendance, school readiness, and literacy screener performance over time.
- In 2027-2028, Virginia will connect ECCE experiences with SOL outcomes for children who were in preschool or pre-kindergarten in 2023-2024, the first full year of VQB5. At this point, Virginia will have five full years of data for thousands of classrooms and children at scale across its public-private, birth-to-five parent choice system. Having this data at scale over a multi-year timeline will also enable Virginia to analyze and quantify return-on-investment of public dollars and how quality and quality improvement support

These examples provide a snapshot of what analysis and insights are possible through Virginia's comprehensive ECCE data system. With VQB5, VAConnects, and Ready Regions, Virginia is poised to use data in new and innovative ways to improve outcomes, increase parent choice and serve as national model.

Appendix A: Detailed Program Profiles for Virginia’s Publicly Funded Programs

Child Care Subsidy Program

Fund source	Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and State General Fund
Ages served	Children ages 6 weeks to 13 years old (18 years with a disability) Note: Children aged 6 to 13 years old are only eligible for before- and after-school and summer programming; vouchers cannot be used for school.
Family eligibility characteristics	Families must meet income requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Mixed Delivery System

Fund source	State General Fund and Federal CCDF Funds
Ages served	Children ages birth – kindergarten (Mostly 3- and 4-years-old; added infants and toddlers in FY23)
Family eligibility characteristics	Very similar to VPI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Virginia Preschool Initiative

Fund source	State General Fund
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Per pupil funding is split into a state share and local match • Local Match is based on Local Composite Index (LCI) but is capped at 50%
Ages served	Children ages 3- and 4-years-old <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited exceptions for 5-year-olds
Family eligibility characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 200% FPL • Experiencing Homelessness • Parents did not complete High School • Student with a disability (Individualized Education Program) • Up to 15% enrolled slots can be filled by local criteria eligibility
Settings	Primarily public schools, with some 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

Head Start/Early Head Start

Fund source	Federal Head Start Grants <i>*Note Head Start is federal-to-local, meaning federal grants are awarded directly to grant recipients</i>
Ages served	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Start: 3- and 4-years-old • Early Head Start: birth to 3-years-old
Family eligibility characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 130% FPL • Selection criteria to identify students with a disability
Settings	Grant recipients may be local school divisions, community-based organizations, or government agencies, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services are delivered in public schools, childcare centers, family day homes, and home-based settings
Duration	Variable
How families enroll	Apply with local Head Start grant recipient

Appendix B: Virginia's Ready Regions

Ready Region	Localities
Southwest	Bland, Bristol, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Floyd, Galax, Giles, Grayson, Lee, Montgomery, Norton, Pulaski, Radford, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, Wythe
West	Alleghany, Bath, Botetourt, Buena Vista, Covington, Craig, Franklin, Henry, Highland, Lexington, Martinsville, Patrick, Roanoke Ci, Roanoke Co, Rockbridge, Salem
Southside	Amelia, Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Brunswick, Campbell, Charlotte, Cumberland, Danville, Halifax, Lunenburg, Lynchburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Pittsylvania, Prince Edward
Central	Charles City, Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, Dinwiddie, Emporia, Goochland, Greensville, Hanover, Henrico, Hopewell, New Kent, Petersburg, Powhatan, Prince George, Richmond Ci, Surry, Sussex
Southeastern	Accomack, Chesapeake, Franklin, Isle of Wight, Norfolk, Northampton, Portsmouth, Southampton, Suffolk, Virginia Beach
Chesapeake Bay	Essex, Gloucester, Hampton, James City, King and Queen, King William, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, Newport News, Northumberland, Poquoson, Richmond Co, Westmoreland, Williamsburg, York
Capital Area	Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Falls Church
North Central	Caroline, Culpeper, Fauquier, Fredericksburg, King George, Loudoun, Manassas, Manassas Park, Prince William, Spotsylvania, Stafford
Blue Ridge	Albemarle, Augusta, Buckingham, Charlottesville, Clarke, Fluvanna, Frederick, Greene, Harrisonburg, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, Orange, Page, Rappahannock, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Staunton, Warren, Waynesboro, Winchester