



Fairfax County Office for Children Five Year Data Capacity Plan

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Fairfax County is committed to ensuring a successful future for all its residents, built on the pillars of a strong educational system, a thriving economy, and ongoing equitable opportunity for its diverse community. The path forward begins with a countywide, shared commitment to the school readiness of all children in Fairfax County, regardless of economic, cultural or ethnic background. As Fairfax County's demographics shift—with poverty and a growing number of people who are economically disadvantaged on the rise, especially within communities of color—ensuring children's school readiness requires enhanced solutions, including increased commitment to equity, greater coordination across sectors, and data-driven policymaking linked directly to family needs.

In December 2017, Fairfax County released an Equitable School Readiness Strategic Plan – a five-year roadmap for county stakeholders' work to ensure that all infants and young children have access to high-quality early learning and developmental experiences so that they enter kindergarten ready for a lifetime of success, happiness and achievement. This Data Capacity Plan expands on the original strategic planning work by laying out how Fairfax County will implement three of its core actions from 2018 through 2023.

The Equitable School Readiness Strategic Plan was created by a group of more than 30 stakeholders representing the public school system, program and service providers, faith-based organizations, higher education institutions, policy and advocacy organizations, parent leaders, and various Fairfax County government offices. The plan's vision, mission, strategies and actions address findings from a countywide school readiness landscape review, which sought to uncover strengths and challenges of the county's current system of supports for infants, young children, and their families, particularly those who need them most. The review, informed by a broad group of stakeholders with a focus on family perspectives, included several findings related to our current data systems – what we know and don't know about our young children's early learning and developmental experiences, what kinds of experiences families want for their children, where more supports or opportunities are needed and what kind, and whether and how opportunities and supports are contributing to children's school readiness. These included:

- The county can estimate the supply of regulated care from its records, however, data limitations make it difficult to get a clear picture of how many licensed and permitted spaces are utilized by families with young children because early childhood educators serve both preschool and school-

age children and the data do not readily distinguish enrollment by age.

- County data do not include information about the many families, friends, or neighbors (FFN) who are caring for young children in less formal settings.
- County data show a growing demand for subsidized early development and learning opportunities, though determining the demand for various types of subsidized programs and services is challenging, as is assessing whether and how the county's many early childhood programs and services are contributing to school readiness. Further, there are indications that some Fairfax County families who qualify for subsidized programs are not participating, including immigrant families without documentation who might be wary of interacting with public agencies.
- There is a reported shortage of infant and early childhood mental health providers and a need to ensure equitable access to existing providers.
- Based on information collected by FCPS on school entry, it appears that most incoming kindergartners —between 80-89 percent—have had a formal preschool experience, although what, where and how long those experiences were is unknown.
- Little is known about where the majority of the county's infants and toddlers are and what experiences they are having during a critical developmental period.
- While a mechanism exists for transferring information about young children to teachers at school entry, transition forms are not reliably used or received.

Accordingly, the strategic planning team developed a strategy and set of actions in the plan dedicated to building a more robust data system that supports equity-focused planning, decision-making, and shared accountability.

1. Create a comprehensive plan for a county-wide school readiness data system informed by parents and other stakeholders that uses data related to early childhood programs and services including:
 - Supply and demand.
 - Program quality.
 - Population-level child and family outcomes.
2. Create a dashboard and communication strategy to regularly share data and communicate progress and results across all partners and stakeholders to:

- Inform key stakeholders, including the public, about existing and needed school readiness supports.
 - Validate the data.
 - Empower community members and leaders to make decisions based on data.
 - Allow for increased transparency.
 - Report on progress and results.
3. Develop an early childhood data profile for public and private programs to support children's successful kindergarten transitions, to best meet each child's needs, and to inform and strengthen the school readiness system of supports.

Since the time of the plan's release, county stakeholders have taken several preliminary steps to shore up its data capacity, including by:

- Securing funds for and working towards the implementation of the Early Development Instrument (EDI) with support from the UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities. The plan is to administer EDI to kindergarten students in one-third of county schools in school year 2018-19, another third in 2019-20, and the remaining schools in 2020-21. Resulting data and analytics would provide stakeholders with population-level data on five school readiness domains:
 - Physical health and well-being
 - Social competence
 - Emotional maturity
 - Language and cognitive skills
 - Communication skills and general knowledge
- Participating in a "no wrong door" service integration initiative with the county's Health and Human Services department to connect county government data systems in an effort to better link eligible residents with a suite of county services, including those for young children and their families.
- Taking steps to review options to replace the ChildPlus database to allow for easier and more robust Head Start/PreK data collection and sharing between county schools and early childhood programs.

The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation data capacity-building grant has allowed Fairfax County stakeholders to begin to map out implementation for each of the data-focused actions in their Equitable School Readiness Strategic Plan. The community profile and data inventory developed with support from

the grant will also allow stakeholders to begin implementation with a deep understanding of what data are currently available and where gaps exist.

VISION

In Fairfax County, equity-focused planning and decision making, as well as shared accountability, are enabled through the use of data.

OUTCOME

A cohesive system of school readiness supports is accessible, equitable, data driven and directly linked to family needs, as measured by:

- Increased completion rates of Ages and Stages Questionnaires (to also include the social emotional assessment). *Note: Baseline data must be identified and collected for this measure.*
- Increased rates of kindergarten students meeting benchmarks on Fairfax County Public Schools' universal screener.
- Increased number of children with a pre-kindergarten experience.
- Lower rates of children who are identified as developmentally vulnerable based on EDI measures.

ACTIONS

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Action 1: Create a comprehensive plan for a county-wide school readiness data system informed by parents and other stakeholders that uses data related to early childhood programs and services including:

- Supply and demand.
- Program quality.
- Population-level child and family outcomes.

This data system is foundational to Fairfax County’s two additional core data actions (i.e., creating a dashboard and developing early childhood data profiles).

Involves: Data identification, Data access, Data collection, Data management

Who – lead agency/ies	What – tasks to be completed	When – target completion date	Why – intended outcome
Data collection, organization, analysis			
OFC	Complete EC data inventory and community profile	June 2018	Understand what public data are currently available related to young children, their families and community
OFC	Develop and conduct a survey of EC providers to gather anecdotal data about the ages of children served, number of staff, use of program quality standards, etc.	Develop Fall 2018 and update annually Conduct Spring 2019	Establish baseline information related to data gaps identified in the Fairfax County school readiness needs assessment
FCPS School Readiness Personnel/OFC	Review and refine Fairfax County Public Schools’ Pre-Kindergarten Experience form to capture more nuanced information about young children’s learning and care prior to kindergarten	Summer 2018 and refined annually	Establish baseline information related to data gaps identified in the Fairfax County school readiness needs assessment
OFC/FCPS School Readiness Personnel	Identify and secure funding for external support (e.g., researchers or consultants) to support Fairfax County stakeholders in designing the data system	Fall 2018	Ensure that research questions and related data reflect best practice and benefit from external expertise
OFC/FCPS FC Offices of the County Executive, Housing & Community Development, Health, Neighborhood & Community Services Head Start Policy Council	Work with the strategic planning work group and possibly consultants/researchers to develop a set of priority questions that county partners want to be able to answer using data related to program supply and demand, quality, and population-level child and family outcomes	Winter 2018/2019	Set the requirements for the school readiness data system, ensuring that it will inform the work and decisions of county partners, stakeholders and leaders

<p>School Readiness Community Collaborative Council Child Care Advisory Council NVAEYC, NVCC Provider and faith-based leaders Infant-Toddler Connection Fairfax County Public Library Fairfax Futures</p>			
<p>OFC/SCYPT FC Office of Neighborhood & Community Services Parent leaders Provider leaders</p>	<p>Vet question list with the Fairfax County Successful Children and Youth Policy Team, families and providers and make adjustments</p>	<p>Winter 2018/2019</p>	<p>Establish buy in from essential stakeholders and validate/update requirements</p>
<p>UCLA reps Researchers/consultants (TBD) OFC/FCPS FC Offices of the County Executive, Housing & Community Development, Health, Neighborhood & Community Services Head Start Policy Council School Readiness Community Collaborative Council Child Care Advisory Council NVAEYC, NVCC Provider and faith-based leaders Infant-Toddler Connection Fairfax County Public Library Fairfax Futures</p>	<p>Work with researchers, UCLA representatives and the strategic planning group to review currently available data, as well as data that will be captured through the EDI; identify which data can be used to answer the priority questions and existing gaps</p>	<p>Winter 2018</p>	<p>Determine which data are already available to populate the system</p>
<p>FCPS UCLA OFC</p>	<p>Implement EDI in neighborhoods throughout Fairfax County</p>	<p>Starting Fall 2019</p>	<p>To gather population level data on five school readiness domains (physical health and well-being; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills; and communication skills and general knowledge)</p>

OFC/FCPS	Develop a strategy for filling data gaps (e.g., collecting data on infants and young children in FFN settings); similarly, vet a potential strategy with policymakers, families, and providers	Winter 2018/2019	Ensure that the system captures and uses all types of necessary data
Creation of data platform			
OFC	Present concept for Early Childhood information system to Fairfax County the IT Governance Board	Fall 2019	Ensure that funding is secured
OFC	Conduct a scan to understand how states and communities have built early childhood information data systems and their operational requirements (e.g., technology requirements, data sharing agreements, staffing requirements, security requirements of hardware and software, etc.)	Spring 2019	Learn from others' experiences to ensure that Fairfax County's system is high-quality, useful, accessible, and understand fully what it will take to create a system that meets those goals
OFC	Issue an RFI to understand scope, cost and timeline for developing an integrated early childhood data system in Fairfax County	Spring 2019	Understand the resources and level of effort required for developing the system
OFC/FCPS	Seek and secure public and private funding opportunities for establishing, maintaining, and supporting the use of a countywide early childhood data system	FY2020	Be able to fund and otherwise support system development, implementation, and ongoing use
	Implementation tasks for data platform (TBD)	Beginning July 2020	

<p>Action 2: Create a dashboard and communication strategy to regularly share data and communicate progress and results across all partners and stakeholders to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform key stakeholders, including the public, about existing and needed school readiness supports. • Validate the data. • Empower community members and leaders to make decisions based on data. • Allow for increased transparency. • Report on progress and results. 			
<p>Involves: Data analysis, data use, data messaging</p>			
Who – lead agency/ies	What – tasks to be completed	When – target completion date	Why – intended outcome
OFC	Conduct a scan of states and communities that have implemented EC dashboards, visually depicting data in clear, compelling and nuanced ways	Summer 2019	Identify elements from existing dashboards that Fairfax County can consider for its own; learn from other municipalities that have undertaken similar work
OFC/FCPS FC Offices of the County Executive, Housing & Community Development, Health, Neighborhood & Community Services Head Start Policy Council School Readiness Community Collaborative Council Child Care Advisory Council NVAEYC, NVCC Provider and faith-based leaders Infant-Toddler Connection Fairfax County Public Library Fairfax Futures	Gather input from various stakeholders (strategic plan workgroup, family members, business community members, etc.) on the features of existing models – what do they like? What other information would they like to see (pertaining to the questions identified in Activity 1)?	Fall 2020	Determine requirements for the Fairfax County school readiness dashboard; garner stakeholder buy-in and support
OFC/FCPS	Use information gathered in vetting process to determine a set of requirements for the dashboard.	Fall 2020	Formalize dashboard requirements

OFC	Identify – through an RFI or other means – the scope of building a dashboard that reflects stakeholder-identified priorities.	Winter 2020/2021	Understand the resources and level of effort required for developing the dashboard
OFC FCPS FC IT FC Offices of Health and Neighborhood & Community Services	Assess capacity for Fairfax County government and its partners to contribute staff or financial resources to support dashboard development and related analytics and upkeep.	Winter 2020/2021	Determine which resources (financial and human) are already available to develop and maintain the dashboard, and where additional needs exist
OFC/FCPS	Seek and secure public and private funding for establishing and maintaining the dashboard if required.	FY 2022	Fully fund and support dashboard development and maintenance
OFC/FCPS	Identify and secure local contracted to support to create a communications strategy for the dashboard to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target audiences • Messaging tailored to each audience • Outreach strategy • Execution timeline and milestone • Methods to assess reach and effectiveness of communications and routines for using data to adjust communications strategies 	Winter 2021/2022	Ensure that the dashboard is widely known about and used by stakeholders and residents
OFC/FCPS FC Offices of the County Executive, Housing & Community Development, Health, Neighborhood & Community Services Head Start Policy Council School Readiness Community Collaborative Council Child Care Advisory Council NVAEYC, NVCC Provider and faith-based leaders Infant-Toddler Connection Fairfax County Public Library Fairfax Futures	Implement the communications plan with consultative support, as needed.	Spring 2022+	Same as above
OFC/FCPS/IT/Other Partners (TBD)	Develop and launch the dashboard.	Summer 2022-Spring 2023	Implement this strategy

Action 3: Develop an early childhood data profile for public and private programs to support children’s successful kindergarten transitions, to best meet each child’s needs, and to inform and strengthen the school readiness system of supports.			
Involves: Data identification, data access, data collection, data management, data use			
Who – lead agency/ies	What – tasks to be completed	When – target completion date	Why – intended outcome
OFC Management Analyst	Research mechanisms other communities have used to share and use information about individual children between early childhood educators, families, health providers, and others involved in supporting school readiness.	Summer 2019	Learn from others’ experiences to ensure that Fairfax County’s “readiness keys” are comprehensive, useful, and accessible, and to understand considerations related to sharing individual child information
OFC Senior Management/FCPS School Readiness Personnel	Work with legal counsel and data experts to identify privacy considerations related to sharing information about individual children and process/system implications, drawing from lessons learned by other Smart Beginnings sites	Summer 2019	Ensure that readiness keys are legally compliant with FERPA, HIPAA, and other requirements related to child privacy and parental consent
OFC	Convene a stakeholder workgroup of early childhood educators, including elementary school staff, and family members to identify potential inputs for a “child school readiness key” (e.g., data from any screeners or assessments conducted in early care environments, notes on specific child behaviors and interests, health background, information about a child’s family and community, etc.)	Summer 2019	Determine requirements for the Fairfax County school readiness keys; garner stakeholder buy-in and support
OFC/FCPS	Vet potential “key” inputs with strategic planning workgroup and other stakeholders, as needed, and incorporate feedback	Fall 2019	Validate and update requirements based on input from key stakeholders
OFC Senior Management/FCPS School Readiness Personnel and County/FCPS IT	Explore technology systems, platforms and processes for inputting and sharing information, as well as resource implications (staff and financial). Consider and apply lessons from HHS initiative to link county data systems to ensure supports for county residents.	Winter 2019	Understand the systems, resources and level of effort required for developing the readiness keys
OFC Senior Management/FCPS School Readiness Personnel	Establish required privacy agreements	Winter 2019	Ensure legal compliance with FERPA, HIPAA, and other

			requirements related to child privacy and parental consent
OFC/FCPS Senior Staff	Seek and secure funding for development of technology systems, as needed.	FY2020	Fully fund and support key development, use, and maintenance
OFC/FCPS	Develop a roll-out strategy for the new profiles to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An awareness campaign for families, informed and led by parent leaders Intensive, ongoing support and training for early childhood educators and program directors/principals in public and private settings 	Spring 2022	Ensure that the keys are is widely known about and fully embraced/used
OFC/FCPS/IT	Launch profiles.	Fall 2022	Implement this strategy
OFC	Leverage Neighborhood School Readiness Teams to understand the impact of the profiles and encourage a dialogue between schools, providers and families about how to use the information to strengthen school readiness supports for young children throughout the county.	School year 2022-2023	Evaluate the impact of the keys; identify additional training and support needs among users