Citizens of the Commonwealth

Virginia is facing serious business and workforce challenges in the years ahead, in the form of fierce competition that threatens Virginia’s standing as one of the best places in the world to do business. These challenges are coming from places like India and China, which are graduating more honor students each year than the United States has in total high school graduates. In these countries, high-performing graduates are receiving advanced degrees in mathematics, engineering, technology, and science. These nations are gaining a competitive edge that is already taking jobs overseas.

The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) serves as a public–private partner with state government and the business community to make certain that Virginia has a homegrown workforce that is capable of maintaining the Commonwealth’s competitive edge. We focus investments and strategies where they have the greatest positive impact—at the beginning of the workforce pipeline. It is proven that high quality activities which spark the curiosity of young minds will plant the seeds of lifelong learning, success, and innovation.

The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation believes that doing right by our children is what will build the foundation for Virginia’s continued economic prosperity. We invite your growing support to face the challenges and win the competitive edge—for our children, our families, our businesses, and our Commonwealth.

The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) serves as a conduit to support the next generation of working Virginians. Our purpose is to bring proven strategies, innovations, and efficiencies to the myriad of early childhood programs and services that span the Commonwealth. This is achieved through our partnership with state government, and through the network of local Smart Beginnings partners that we support across Virginia. Our partnerships are aligned with economic and workforce development initiatives, because investments in young children are human capital investments that build the infrastructure for tomorrow’s business success.

The VECF receives a modest annual appropriation from the General Assembly. With those funds as an anchor, additional resources are leveraged that are typically 3 - 4 times greater than public investments. These funds, along with technical assistance, are provided to Smart Beginnings partners. Together, we work to maximize investments in young children in ways that build their capacity to become bright, capable, and productive citizens who will strengthen our communities, businesses, and nation for years to come.

“Verizon has partnered with the VECF to engage business leaders across the Commonwealth around matters of school readiness. We do this because it is critical that Virginia has skilled and committed workers for the jobs of tomorrow. Verizon recognizes that today’s young children are tomorrow’s workforce.”

Thomas N. Chewning
Chairman of the Board

Scott L. Hippert
President

B. Keith Fulton
Vice President, Virginia
Verizon Communications, Inc.

2011 Progress Report

Readying The Next Generation of Working Virginians

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President

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Our Mission

To provide collaborative leadership to foster Smart Beginnings for all young children in Virginia, and through them, a vital future for the Commonwealth.

Our Vision

All children in Virginia enter kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed in school and life.
THE CASE FOR SCHOOL READINESS

A mounting body of evidence proves that early childhood experiences—those taking place between birth and age five—dramatically impact an individual’s ability to experience lifelong success.

The recently released Chicago Longitudinal Study tracked attendees of the Chicago Parent-Child Centers, a program designed to provide high quality experiences from pre-k through 3rd grade in the inner city’s public schools. Twenty-five years later, at age 28, these attendees achieved the following positive outcomes as opposed to those who did not receive similar experiences:

- **9% more** completed high school
- **19% more** carried some level of health insurance coverage
- **20% more** achieved moderate or higher level of socioeconomic status
- **28% fewer** had been incarcerated
- **28% fewer** abused drugs and alcohol

SOLUTIONS WITH HIGH RETURNS

In 2003, Art Rolnick and Rob Grunewald of the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank studied the data from the well-known HighScope Perry Preschool Program from an economic viewpoint. They determined that pre-k for at-risk children may yield a return of up to 16%. These findings clearly demonstrate a powerful financial incentive for increased investments in early childhood development.

RISING TO THE OCCASION

Over the course of 2010-11, the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation made great progress in moving Virginia’s youngest citizens towards workplace and life achievement. Despite the nation’s economic downturn, the VECF continued to leverage public and private resources and to invest in the capacity of our Smart Beginnings partners to improve the school readiness of young children in their communities.

RECOGNIZING THE OPPORTUNITY

American children are falling behind their peers at an alarming pace and the long-term consequences could be economically devastating. Through Smart Beginnings, the VECF is seizing a “once in a lifetime” opportunity to change the current trajectory, focusing the Commonwealth’s investments on human capital, at a time of life when there is the greatest potential.

Staggering statistics prove the need for increased school readiness:

- 1 in 7 children enters kindergarten without the basic skills needed to succeed in school;
- In a recent examination of 15-year-olds in 65 countries, the U.S. ranked 15th in reading, 23rd in science, and 31st in math;
- Approximately 10,000 K-3 students in Virginia repeat a grade each year, costing $80 million;

VIRGINIA: THE BEST PLACE TO DO BUSINESS


Our philosophy is simple: Maximize investments in the youngest Virginians so that businesses continue to make investments in Virginia.

- 75% of young Americans are ineligible for military service due to failure to graduate high school, a lack of physical or mental fitness, or a criminal conviction;
- If American students had experienced the same educational success of higher-performing nations during the 80’s and 90’s, the 2008 U.S. GDP could have been $1.3 – 2.3 trillion higher.

Smart Beginnings: Regional Efforts, Statewide Impact

Developing a future-ready child—much less an entire workforce—is not as simple as ABCs and 123s. That’s why the VECF works to increase access to transformative early childhood resources for families across Virginia. Local Smart Beginnings coalitions are the core of these efforts within a region. Key stakeholders in the regions’ future come together to support evidence-based practices that focus on strong parenting, high quality early childhood programs, increased literacy and the individual healthy development of young children, socially, emotionally and intellectually. These strategies help groom Virginia’s next generation of well-educated citizens and leaders.

SMART BEGINNINGS: INFRASTRUCTURE, RELATIONSHIPS, RESULTS

Through regional Smart Beginnings initiatives, the VECF is building a unified system of high quality school readiness delivery systems. The Foundation provides financial resources and technical assistance to Smart Beginnings as they progress towards self sustainability. With 5 new coalitions in 2010-11, this network covers 87% of Virginia’s population, with 28 coalitions serving 93 Commonwealth localities.

WAYS SMART BEGINNINGS IS WORKING TO PREPARE TOMORROW’S WORKFORCE:

Strong Region, Strong Economy: Smart Beginnings Greater Richmond partners with the Capital Region Collaborative in an innovative effort to build a stronger regional economy through future workforce development. The VECF is working with other Planning Districts across Virginia to build additional partnerships that focus on the cradle to career workforce pipeline.

Effective Parenting: Smart Beginnings Martinsville Henry County saw a 190% increase in the number of parents attending evidence-based parenting classes using the nationally recognized Triple P model. This program involves six regional partner organizations that share costs, coordination and outreach. The results include highly effective parents, healthy and literate children, and young learners ready to take on the challenges of education and future success.

Strengthening Small Business: Roanoke area childcare centers and classrooms that participated in the Virginia Star Quality Initiative (VSQI) saw an overwhelming 76% improvement rate in their learning environments. Child care businesses are among the largest number of small business in Virginia. The VSQI is helping them become better businesses, and produce greater results with young children.

Visit www.smartbeginnings.org to learn more about each coalition’s achievements and progress.
Collaboration: Partnering for Virginia’s Future

The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation is at the core of advancing Virginia’s early childhood development efforts. As a public-private partnership with strong ties to business, state government and the military, we utilize private sector solutions and efficiencies to ensure school readiness for Virginia’s youngest citizens. Our innovative collaborations evolved over the last year in ways that strengthen Virginia’s capacity to shape tomorrow’s job-ready workforce.

PARTNERING WITH GOVERNMENT FOR A MORE PROSPEROUS VIRGINIA

Operating as a public-private partnership with state government, and by appointment of the Governor, the VECF co-leads Virginia’s Early Childhood Advisory Council, a strategic alliance of government and private leaders, designed to move early childhood initiatives forward. Foundation President Scott Hippert, with Secretary of Education Gerard Robinson, brought leaders together for the Council’s first meetings.

The Foundation works with the Office of Early Childhood Development to co-lead the Virginia Star Quality Initiative (VSQI), the state’s quality ratings and improvement system. The VSQI improves the quality of classroom-based programs and family child care through rating, mentoring, and professional development. Expanding access to quality early care is a win for everyone—children, working parents, and businesses.

The VSQI grew significantly in 2010-11. Some impressive results include:

- Over 8,600 Virginia children are enrolled in childcare and preschool settings that are actively working to improve their quality;
- A total of 336 classroom-based programs have been rated, including 147 new programs rated this year—a 47% increase over 2009-10;
- An innovative pilot project to rate and improve the quality of family child care day homes has been completed, creating a promising new model. During 2010-11, 74 homes in 6 Virginia localities were rated and received mentoring during the pilot project;
- Strategic evaluation plans have been developed to build the infrastructure for a fully implemented VSQI.

The long-term result will be higher quality childcare and pre-k options for families across Virginia, resulting in many more young children prepared to succeed in school and beyond.

For more information on the benefits of VSQI and for locations of rated centers, visit www.smartbeginnings.org.

SCHOOL READINESS IMPACTS NATIONAL SECURITY

The fundamental link between school readiness and a future-ready military is clear. Over the past year, VECF has worked with Mission: Readiness, an organization comprised of military leaders who share a deep concern for the future of America’s military preparedness. Together, we have worked to connect the dots and spread our common message: enhanced school readiness efforts are critical to both a strong, capable military as well as a competitive, next-generation workforce.

“I believe that the American education system and the armed forces have an essential, but sometimes unrecognized, partnership… our national security in the year 2030 is absolutely dependent on what’s going on in pre-kindergarten today.”

Jamie Barnett, Rear Admiral, US Navy (Ret).
Mission: Readiness
Speaking at a Smart Beginnings Business Leader Summit
INVESTING IN THE COMMONWEALTH’S FUTURE WORKFORCE: THE ULTIMATE CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

Future workforce development is an absolute economic imperative— and at the heart of VECF efforts. The Foundation mobilized the business community in support of these efforts through the VA Job One initiative. With seed funding from the PEW Center for the States, VA Job One engaged more than 700 business leaders as champions of school readiness.

“Virginia businesses are critically concerned about maintaining a high quality workforce into the future. The Virginia Chamber of Commerce and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation are working together to ensure strategies that support the beginning stages of workforce development.

Developing the potential of young children maximizes Virginia’s investments in workforce capacity and strengthens businesses for decades into the future.”

Barry DuVal
President & CEO
Virginia Chamber of Commerce

REGIONAL MOMENTUM IS KEY TO SMART BEGINNINGS SUCCESS

As of this printing, the VECF is building a partnership with the Northern Virginia Regional Commission to help promote, grow and support Smart Beginnings throughout the region.

“The Northern Virginia Regional Commission works closely with the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation to make certain our region has a strong and capable workforce for the future. As we focus on economic and workforce development, it is critical that we invest in the very beginning of this pipeline. The NVRC and the VECF have a common objective— to maintain the economic engine of Northern Virginia.”

G. Mark Gibb
Executive Director
Northern Virginia Regional Commission

DANVILLE REGIONAL FOUNDATION INVESTS IN LOCAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE SOUTHSIDE

The VECF and United Way of Danville and Pittsylvania County worked closely with Smart Beginnings Danville Pittsylvania to secure an extraordinary $5.4 million investment from the Danville Regional Foundation.

This 5-year grant builds on investments from the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission to transform the region’s ability to have school-ready children for future world-class jobs. The ultimate goal is to replicate this remarkable success throughout Virginia. This initiative has worked hard to establish a successful model for rural communities that dramatically moves the school readiness needle.

PNC ADDS STEAM TO SMART BEGINNINGS IN NOVA

The economic engine of Northern Virginia will continue to be fueled by high functioning young children who will be tomorrow’s workforce. With generous support from the PNC Foundation, the VECF Board approved the addition of Smart Beginnings Prince William County at its annual meeting on June 15th. They join a growing Smart Beginnings effort in the region, that currently includes Fairfax, Alexandria/Arlington, and Rappahannock area.

DOMINION FOUNDATION BOOSTS SOUTHWEST SMART BEGINNINGS

Recognizing the link between the young children in their communities and the future prosperity of the whole of southwestern Virginia, the Dominion Foundation granted $100,000 to Smart Beginnings coalitions in the region.

“Dominion is pleased to help fund the outstanding efforts of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation.

The key to a robust future for the Commonwealth lies in the education our children are receiving today.”

Virginia M. Board,
President
Dominion Foundation
Multiple Sectors Require School Readiness

“Averett University and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation have a common purpose: To provide Virginia with intelligent and productive leaders for the future. Through the Smart Beginnings initiative, the VECF invests in children who become our future students. They not only provide seed funding to support this work, they provide for the seeds of lifelong learning. We appreciate the investments of the VECF in Southside Virginia.”

Dr. Tiffany Franks
President
Averett University

“Wells Fargo is committed to Virginia and the communities where we offer financial services. We can make no greater commitment than to our youngest children. They are the future of our communities and Virginia’s economic strength. Wells Fargo supports the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, and our local branches are increasingly active in Smart Beginnings. We believe that young children are serious business.”

Tim Butturini
Regional President
Wells Fargo

“Health is both a building block and an outcome of successful development. Good health is necessary for raising resilient students and citizens; toxic psychosocial stressors induce biochemical changes in DNA, which can be correlated to adverse health outcomes. The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation supports communities whose services mitigate the effects of toxic stress and improve the probability of a healthy, successful future for young children.”

Colleen A. Kraft, M.D., FAAP
Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and Research Institute Transitional Year Program Director, Carilion Clinic

“As one of Virginia’s largest corporations, Norfolk Southern is depending on a capable and talented workforce to grow our business into the future. But with so many young people not graduating, or performing below standards, we are concerned about the prospects of Virginia being able to deliver. We are grateful to the VECF for their work to strengthen young children, the future keys to business opportunity. We are pleased to support the work of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation and Smart Beginnings.”

Jim Hixon
Executive Vice President, Law and Corporate Relations
Norfolk Southern Corporation

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Jim Hixon
Executive Vice President, Law and Corporate Relations
Norfolk Southern Corporation
2010-11 Community Investments

Smart Beginnings successfully engaged communities throughout the Commonwealth this year to secure matching funds to maximize VECF’s investments. This generous support positively impacted young children and their families in all regions across Virginia. We are grateful to the following supporters for their commitment to advancing school readiness as the primary means of ensuring Virginia’s future economic vitality:

A Better World Foundation
Albemarle County Department of Social Services
Alexandria Department of Human Services
Alexandria Health Department
Alternatives, Inc.
Amherst County Department of Social Services
Appalachian Regional Commission
Apple Spice Junction
Appomattox County Schools
Appomattox Literacy Intervention Program
Arc of the Piedmont
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Bank of America
Bedford County Schools
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Bland County Public Schools
Blue Ridge Area Food Bank
Blue Ridge PBS
Cameron Foundation
Capital One
Carilion Clinic
Casa de Amistad at Basic United Methodist Church
Ceres Foundation
Chesterfield Department of Social Services
Chick-fil-A
Child and Family Connection
Child Development Resources
Childcare Connection
Children, Youth and Family Services, Inc. of Charlottesville, VA
Children’s Museum of Richmond
Children’s Trust
City of Charlottesville Community Development Block Grant
City of Franklin
City of Lynchburg Community Development Block Grant
City of Richmond
City of Roanoke Division of Human Services
Clinch Valley Community Action
Communications Consortium Media Center
Community Foundation of the New River Valley
Cox Charities
Danville Regional Foundation
Daughters of Penelope
Discovery Island Preschool
Dominion Power
Fairfax County
Ferrum College
First Bank and Trust
First Baptist Church of Ridgeway
First Book
Forest Hills Presbyterian Church
Foundation for Excellence, Inc.
Foundation for Roanoke Valley
Franklin County Schools
Franklin-Southampton Charities
GBCCC
Grace Episcopal Church
Greater Lynchburg Community Trust
Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce
Hampton Roads Community Foundation
Hampton Roads Community Foundation
Henry County Schools
HOPE, Inc.
Hopewell Public Schools
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James City County
James City County Department of Social Services
John Randolph Foundation
Kaiser Foundation
Kids Central Inc.
Kings Dominion
Kiwanis Club of Williamsburg
Kroger
Lacey Foundation
Landford Brothers Co.
LexisNexis
Lynchburg City Schools
Martinsville Henry County Coalition
for Health and Wellness
Max Meadows Head Start
Mount Rogers Community Services Board
National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition
New Kent Department of Social Services
New River Valley Chapter of the Society
for Human Resource Management
Norfolk Southern Foundation
Obici Healthcare Foundation
One Beacon
Panera
Patrick County Public Schools
Piedmont Community Services
Pizza Hut
PNC Bank
Preschool Partners of the Virginia Peninsula
Radio Disney
Rainbow Riders Childcare Center
Rappahannock Area YMCA, Inc.
Rappahannock United Way
Ready by 21
Roanoke City Department of Social Services
Roanoke County Department of Social Services
Roanoke Women’s Foundation
Robins Foundation
Shenandoah Community Foundation
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Southside Virginia Community College
Southwest Virginia Association for the Education of Young Children
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(QI Funds through The Childcare Network)
Stafford County Department of Social Services
(QI Funds through The Childcare Network)
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STEP, Inc.
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The Children’s Center
The Community Foundation serving Richmond & Central Virginia
The PNC Foundation
The Roanoke Times/ Landmark Foundation
United Way of Central Virginia
United Way of Danville-Pittsylvania County
United Way of Franklin County
United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg
United Way of Greater Williamsburg
United Way of Roanoke Valley
United Way Thomas Jefferson Area
Verizon
Verizon Foundation
Virginia Department of Education Region 5
Training and Technical Assistance Center
Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
Virginia Department of Social Services
Office of Early Childhood Development
Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth
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INVESTMENTS NEEDED!
The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation seeks corporations, foundations as well as individuals to invest in the Smart Beginnings strategy for Virginia’s future. Your contributions have the potential for a significant return on investment.

Online investments: www.smartbeginnings.org

Mail:
Virginia Early Childhood Foundation
8001 Franklin Farms Drive, Suite 116
Richmond, VA 23229
Phone: (804) 358-8323
The Impact of Leveraging

The VECF leverages the Commonwealth’s generous support and secures investments from the private sector. We are especially grateful to the Governor and the General Assembly for validating the impact of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation by restoring previous funding levels to our 2011-12 operating budget.

Sincere appreciation is extended to the following supporters for their 2010-11 contributions:

Government Support
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
Virginia Cooperative Extension
Virginia Department of Education
Virginia Department of Health
Virginia Department of Social Services
Virginia Early Childhood Advisory Council
Virginia General Assembly
Virginia Tobacco Indemnification & Community Revitalization Commission

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* Founder of Virginia KidsNow!

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