WHO WE ARE

Over 30 regional and national social sector and philanthropic clients since 2008

Specializes in research and evaluation, community and strategic planning

- Saphira M. Baker
  Principal
- Alison Mendoza-Walters
  Research Director
- Casey Cox
  Senior Policy Analyst
AGENDA

SCHOOL READINESS COMMITTEE

- Introductions
- Update on Research and Strategic Plan
  - Family and educator voices
  - System coordination
  - Children and programs
- Principles
- Goals
- Strategies
- Next Steps
NEEDS ASSESSMENT
OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

- To what extent are Virginia’s publicly funded ECCE programs serving families in Virginia with children ages 0 to 5?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of Virginia’s infrastructure supporting publicly-funded ECCE programs?

SEE RESEARCH DESIGN HANDOUT
What actions would enable Virginia’s publicly-funded ECCE programs to better prepare all Virginia’s children, especially those from under-resourced communities, for kindergarten?

What changes to ECCE infrastructure would better enable all of Virginia’s children ages 0 to 5, especially those from under-resourced communities, to access publicly-funded ECCE programs that help prepare children for kindergarten?
UPDATE

SCHOOL READINESS COMMITTEE

COMPLETE

- Needs Assessment
  - Data scan
  - Review of Virginia reports, 2014-2019
  - Focus groups of educators
  - Interviews with families and community leaders
  - Research on facilities and financing
  - First draft of needs assessment

- Strategic Plan
  - Mixed delivery focus group
  - Environmental scans
  - Synopsis of Smart Beginnings plans
  - Statewide stakeholder interviews
  - Three meetings of the Impact Work Group

UNDERWAY

- Writing the needs assessment report and strategic plan
Prior VA studies have underscored the importance of investing in the early years for a child’s healthy development and learning.

Since 2014, more than 15 statewide reports, commissions, and councils have examined:
- the environment
- the capacity of state and local agencies to serve young children in need
- available data on child outcomes
- the extent of collaboration and accountability at the state and local levels

Reports call for:
- improving quality
- more integrated data systems
- unified leadership
- greater investments for increased access to quality and affordable care and education
SYNOPSIS OF VIRGINIA REPORTS

ON EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION
FINDINGS AND THEMES

FAMILY, EDUCATOR, AND COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES
Intent: Gather diverse perspectives on experiences with early childhood care and education

Topics Addressed
- Personal and community strengths
- Arrangements for children, 0-5
  - Access points
  - Strengths and weaknesses
- Broader family supports
- Perceptions of quality of care

Limitations
- Convenience sample and potential biases
- Small sample size
PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION

SELF-REPORTED DEMOGRAPHICS

- 26 Families Interviewed
  - 9 Head Start
  - 3 VPI
  - 6 Other programs (family, private, nonprofit)
  - 8 no formal program
- Child’s Race/Ethnicity
  - 9 White/Caucasian
  - 11 Black/African-American
  - 3 Biracial
  - 1 Hispanic *
  - 2 Unknown
- Geography
  - 17 Urban
  - 9 Rural
ACCESS POINTS

Findings and Themes

- All but one family heard about ECCE or other public programs from a peer (e.g., friend or family member)
- A large majority were also linked to public programs/services via departments of health or social services
- Less than half accessed services through nonprofit organizations, such as the United Way or Partnership for Families
- A number of community leaders spoke about how their organizations disseminate information to connect people to services
FINDINGS AND THEMES

ECCE PROGRAM STRENGTHS

- Families enrolled in ECCE programs generally spoke positively about them
  - Dedicated, caring teachers
  - Creative or enriching activities
  - Academic and cognitive learning
  - Seeing tangible results in their children
IMPORTANT FACTORS FOR “QUALITY”

FINDINGS AND THEMES

For Center Directors
- Curriculum & facilitating learning
- Quality teachers and good teacher/child interactions
- Balanced schedule and routine
- Clean environment with safe and accessible equipment, materials
- Encouragement of positive behaviors (age-appropriate)
- Understanding of children’s health and mental health needs

For Teachers
- Providing opportunity for children to develop and grow
  - Formal and ongoing training, plus learning through experience
  - Developmentally appropriate materials and activities
- Positive, trusting relationships between teachers and children

For Family Day Home Providers
- Love for children
- One-on-one care and attention
- Comfortable, clean, safe environment
- Healthy meals
SUPPORTS TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE “QUALITY”

FINDINGS AND THEMES

For Center Directors
- Training and technical assistance (Smart Beginnings)
- Community Partnerships
- Peers
- Virginia Quality

For Teachers
- Dedicated, committed administrators and classroom staff
- Classroom materials
- Trainings

For Family Day Home Providers
- Little discussion
CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

FINDINGS AND THEMES

Provider Entry Points
- Peer or colleague
- DSS

Family Access Points
- DSS
- Child care provider
- Peers

Strengths
- Helps families
- Business opportunity for providers
- Allows providers to access trainings and resources

Weaknesses
- Administrative burden for providers
- Payment and reimbursement issues for providers
- Child support requirement a barrier for families to participate
- Lack of awareness of program among families
BARRIERS TO QUALITY ECCE

FINDINGS AND THEMES

- Cost
- Funding (slots, staff, materials)
- Availability
  - Infant/Toddler Care and After Care
  - Lack of Slots, Waitlist
- Getting to and from
  - Transportation
  - Convenience
  - Schedule
- Need for Broader Support
- Family Engagement (including language barriers)
- Staffing Challenges (turnover, unprepared)
FINDINGS AND THEMES

SYSTEM COORDINATION
System change is “fundamental change in policies, processes, relationships, and power structures, as well as deeply held values and norms.”

“[System change] could be shifts in funding flows, changes in policies, interdisciplinary collaborations, and improvements in professional practices.”

States pursue system change out of a desire for adequate and sustainable funding for young children and accountability for funds and programs.
VIRGINIA’S ECCE SYSTEM

- Encompasses quality measures, financing, governance, and data sharing
- Currently a diffuse system with shared accountability
- Rated 37th out of 50 states relative to other states in “creating a coordinated, integrated early care and education system” by the Bipartisan Policy Center
GOVERNANCE

VIRGINIA EARLY CHILDHOOD GOVERNANCE DIAGRAM

U.S. Dept. of Education
- Title I, VPI+, Part B
- Part C Early Intervention

Virginia Dept. of Education
- Accreditation
- Local School Divisions

VA Board of Education

Governor

VA Board of Social Services

Virginia Dept. of Social Services
- Licensing & Subsidy
- Virginia Early Childhood Foundation

Local DSS

Virginia Dept. of Health
- Health Visiting Programs

Virginia Dept. of Health (& Sponsor Orgs)
- CACFP

Virginia Dept. of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services
- Accreditation
- Part C Early Intervention (can also support programs)

VA Council on Private Education

U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services
- CCDF, TANF
- Head Start

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture
- CACFP

Local Lead Agencies

VPI
- Title I Pre-K

VPI+
- Early Childhood Special Education

Licensed & Voluntarily Registered Family Day Homes
Voluntary Registered Religious-Exempt Programs
Head Start & EHS Programs* (Grantees)
Licensed Centers**

Home Visiting Programs

*School-based HS/EHS not always through DSS
**Can have VPI Classrooms

Virginia Quality
Smart Beginnings

END USERS: CHILDREN, FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES
COORDINATION TIMELINE

- 2005 Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, Smart Beginnings Network
- 2006 Home Visiting Consortium (now Early Impact Virginia)
- 2014 Children's Cabinet
- 2015 Joint Subcommittee on VPI, Mixed Delivery Fund Grants
- 2016 School Readiness Committee
- 2017 JLARC Report
- 2018 - Children’s Cabinet Reestablished
  - New legislative investments in ECCE
- 2019
  - Early Childhood Success Act Developed
  - VKRP school readiness assessment statewide
BARRIERS

- Institutional, regulatory, and policy barriers to creating a more efficient system:
  - Accountability and measurement
  - Interagency coordination and communication
  - Distinct federal policy purposes
  - Financial structures and constraints
FINANCING AND RESOURCES

EXISTING APPROACH

- Lack a cohesive funding structure
- Funds inadequate to support high quality ECCE for all vulnerable children
- Programs targeted to older children, narrow and variable eligibility, limited schedules
- Reimbursement rates and approach not generally reflective of total costs of care
Policy makers don’t have all the data they need to analyze child outcomes and determine the effectiveness of ECCE policies and programs.

Efforts in Virginia

- Focus largely on outputs
- Have limited use in tracking long-term progress related to improved school readiness
- Are working to integrate data across agencies for population-level studies

Barriers

- Privacy concerns
- Complex data agreements
- Sizable standalone data systems
FINDINGS AND THEMES

PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY AND QUALITY
EARLY CHILDHOOD SNAPSHOT

WHERE VIRGINIA’S CHILDREN LIVE


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>192,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tidewater</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>109,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>71,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>41,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>29,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Neck</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>21,688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>10,963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southside</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 509,922
EARLY CHILDHOOD SNAPSHOT

Race/Ethnicity of Children under Age 5 (2017)

- White: 55%
- Black: 22%
- Hispanic: 15%
- Asian: 8%

RACE/ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN UNDER 5
**Virginia’s Childcare Capacity, by Sector and Region (2019)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total Estimated Capacity</th>
<th>Public Enrollment</th>
<th>Head Start Capacity</th>
<th>Private Capacity</th>
<th>Seats per 100 Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>139,119</td>
<td>9,806 (7%)</td>
<td>2,915 (2%)</td>
<td>126,398 (91%)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tidewater</td>
<td>79,896</td>
<td>8,858 (11%)</td>
<td>2,617 (3%)</td>
<td>68,421 (86%)</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>65,418</td>
<td>4,374 (7%)</td>
<td>1,736 (3%)</td>
<td>59,308 (91%)</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley</td>
<td>26,239</td>
<td>3,178 (12%)</td>
<td>1,442 (5%)</td>
<td>21,619 (82%)</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>25,255</td>
<td>2,993 (12%)</td>
<td>1,721 (7%)</td>
<td>20,541 (81%)</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Neck</td>
<td>19,373</td>
<td>1,785 (9%)</td>
<td>951 (3%)</td>
<td>16,637 (86%)</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>11,968</td>
<td>2,286 (19%)</td>
<td>2,039 (17%)</td>
<td>7,643 (64%)</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southside</td>
<td>5,526</td>
<td>1,372 (25%)</td>
<td>577 (10%)</td>
<td>3,577 (65%)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Total</td>
<td>372,794</td>
<td>34,652 (9%)</td>
<td>15,168 (4%)</td>
<td>324,144 (87%)</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Public Programs: Head Start, VPI, VPI+, ECSE, Title I, Local Programs
Private Programs: Center Day Care, Religious Exempt Programs, Licensed Family Day Homes, Unlicensed Home-Based CCSP Providers

(seats exceed regional sum due to reporting differences)
### ECCE LANDSCAPE

#### STATEWIDE CAPACITY

**Virginia’s Childcare Capacity, by Sector and Region (2019)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Public ECCE</th>
<th>Private ECCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-rural</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Public ECCE</th>
<th>Private ECCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lowest poverty quintile</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest poverty quintile</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Whole-Locality Child Care Deserts (2019)**

- Bath County*
- Bedford County
- Bland County*
- Buckingham County^
- Charlotte County**
- Highland County*
- Louisa County*
- Lunenburg County**
- Page County*
- Pittsylvania County*
- Rockbridge County*

* Rural
^ No quality-rated programs
Percentage of Children in Quality-Rated Programs, by Age (2019)

In Virginia Quality:
- 67% of Head Start and 48% of VPI programs
- 11% of family day homes and 4% of religious exempt centers
WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

AVERAGE WAGES FOR ECCE TEACHERS

- Low compensation, high turnover
- Wage and training disparities between program types
- Barriers to accessing professional development
- Limited state policies to address workforce challenges

Average Hourly Wages for Lead Teachers

- Kindergarten teacher: $37.18
- Public preschool: $20.95
- Head Start/Early Head Start: $16.14
- Private center: $12.83
- Family day home: $11.67

$14.17 Living Wage for 1 Adult in Virginia

$0.00 $10.00 $20.00 $30.00 $40.00
Head Start

Policies
- Teacher child ratios
- Inclusive classrooms
- Outcomes-based learning standards

Program Practices and Characteristics
- Appropriate curriculum
- Professional development
- Continuous quality improvement
- Family engagement

Enabling Conditions
- Strong leadership
- Additional funding
- Operating at scale
QUALITY SUPPORTS

LESSEONS FROM VPI+

VPI+

- Developmentally appropriate classrooms
  - 9:1 child to adult ratio, limited class size
  - Evidence-based curricula
  - 5.5 hour day (full day)

- Well-trained and compensated teachers
  - Salaries commensurate with kindergarten teachers’

- Ongoing observation and feedback
  - Regular training and coaching
  - CLASS observations every other year

- Supports for children beyond the classroom
  - On site adult education and health screening
  - Referrals to community services
PRINCIPLES, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES
COMMUNITAS PROCESS

- Review and synthesize Impact Work Group Small Group Recommendations (3/19, 4/17, 5/22)
- Validate/refine/revisit in light of:
  - Focus group and interviews
  - Environmental scans
  - Stakeholder interviews
  - Secondary reports
  - Documented needs and capacity
  - National principles
- Draft vision, goals, strategies
- Refine on May 22
- Discuss June 7
STRATEGIC PLAN FORMAT

- **Vision & Principles**
- **3-5 goals**
- **2-5 strategies for each goal**
  - action steps
  - outcomes
  - leads
  - dates
We envision a Commonwealth where all children, ages 0-5, thrive because they have access to quality early care and education that is affordable and delivered by a skilled and diverse workforce in safe and nurturing environments, and their families have the information and resources to support their healthy development and readiness for school.
DRAFT PRINCIPLES
SUCCESS IN 2023 (JULY 2020-2023)

Virginia’s early childhood care and education system will be:

1. **Equitable.** Families have access to the schools, centers, and homes that provide the care and education they need, regardless of their children’s age, income, ethnicity, race, zip code, or ability.
2. **Family Focused.** Families are engaged in guiding the policies and practices of early care and education.
3. **Accountable.** Families, programs and policy makers are accountable for children’s success guided by meaningful shared information and data.
4. **Quality.** Children are supported in their development and learning in safe, quality, and positive environments with a skilled workforce receiving competitive wages.
5. **Strategic.** Funding, policies, and standards are coordinated among state, local, and community programs and departments to better serve children and their families.
6. **Sustainable.** Financing reflects the true costs of care, incentivizes quality, and supports children’s access regardless of family income or work status.
7. **Innovative.** Incubation, testing, and scaling of successful strategies and policies are supported and result in effective practices.
Virginia’s Early Childhood Care and Education System

- Which two principles do you feel are fundamental to Virginia’s early childhood care and education system, and why?

- Within your group, what two words in the vision best reflect your group’s aspiration for a bold change in the early childhood care and education system, and why?

- Report Out: Share your group’s top principles, words, and gaps.
GOALS AND STRATEGIES

1. ACCESS & AVAILABILITY
2. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT
3. QUALITY & ECCE WORKFORCE
4. STATE ACCOUNTABILITY
5. LOCAL CAPACITY & INNOVATION
**ACCESS AND AVAILABILITY**

**GOAL ONE**

1. Expand the accessibility and availability of quality early childhood care and education to reach all vulnerable children.

   - Provide accurate, updated information on the supply, enrollment, and availability of publicly-funded 0-5 care and education options for families, professionals, and policy makers.
   
   - Increase funding for and launch innovative financing incentives so all underserved communities have high quality, accessible early childhood care and education options.
   
   - Expand the availability of affordable, flexible, quality after care and infant/toddler care to meet the needs of working parents.
   
   - Target allocation and increase flexibility of public resources to maximize and increase the supply of quality early childhood education and care options in “child care deserts.”
   
   - Increase timely identification, enrollment, and retention of children with special needs who would benefit from early assistance in publicly-supported programs.
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

GOAL TWO

Provide increased support to families to more easily access affordable early childhood care and education and support their children’s healthy development, learning, and well-being.

- Increase awareness about early childhood care and education options to eligible families and coordinate local processes to make it easier and more affordable for families to enroll.
- Ensure families can easily access resources that help them understand and support their children’s learning, development, and readiness for school.
- Increase engagement of families in guiding early childhood care and education policies and practices at the program, community, and state levels.
- Increase the capacity of early childhood care and education providers to connect families to a coordinated system of community resources and support services.
Quality and ECCE Workforce

Goal 3

Reward continuous improvements in the quality of publicly-funded early childhood care and education to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment, with a skilled workforce, that prepares all children to arrive at kindergarten ready to learn.

- Establish a uniform, statewide classroom quality measurement and improvement system for all publicly-funded programs, incorporating lessons learned from current approaches, and phasing in gradually to avoid any reduction in access.
- Create incentives for programs, leaders, and teachers to achieve higher levels of quality while ensuring stable operations and competitive wages and providing technical assistance to meet expectations.
- Adopt statewide indicators that assess multiple dimensions of children’s development.
- Align preparation and professional development opportunities with statewide quality measures, create flexible and achievable pathways, and decrease costs and financial barriers for ECCE professionals to advance.
- Employ performance-based contracts to centers and homes that support sustainable operations, reward quality care, and ensure adequate workplace benefits and conditions for early childhood personnel.
GOAL FOUR

Align and unify state-level oversight and accountability to increase efficiency, maximize public resources, better support local efforts and improve school readiness outcomes for young children.

- Streamline and align eligibility criteria for families, and health, safety, and quality expectations and funding requirements for providers to increase efficiency of public early care and education funding.
- Increase and simplify access points for parents, guardians, and providers to understand and take advantage of ECCE opportunities for children ages birth to five.
- Establish state measures and data collection to assess and track progress over time of Virginia’s children in early childhood care and education, including access, quality, and readiness outcomes.
- Increase public will and commitment to investing in quality early childhood education and care at the state and local levels.
Support and replicate effective local public and private efforts to unify and strengthen early childhood care and education systems to improve school readiness outcomes.

- Develop and implement collaborative, community-specific approaches to improve quality and access across ECCE programs in alignment with consistent statewide measures.
- Demonstrate and build capacity for local and regional agencies to establish unified governance, integrate funding, make allocation decisions, and maximize 0-5 resources to meet quality standards.
- Inform and support local efforts to engage families and support transitions from early childhood education and care to elementary school.
GOAL FLIPCHART EXERCISE

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Visit each flipchart goal
2. With a pen:
   - **underline** the words/ phosphrases that resonate strongly
   - **- put a minus sign** near disagreeable words/ phosphrases
   - **? put a question mark** for those that are unclear
   - **write comments** on sticky notes as desired
In small groups

1. Each participant *briefly* states two things:
   - Strategies that are right on target
   - Strategies that need clarifying or change
2. Discuss areas of consensus, remaining questions, and areas where there were different perspectives.
3. If time, suggest action steps to consider for achieving each strategy.
4. For SRC members, prepare a 60 second report out for large group discussion.
5. For all, hand in worksheets
NEXT IMMEDIATE STEPS

- Complete evaluation of today
- Finalize needs assessment report
- Finalize goals and strategies
- Prepare strategic plan
- Submit needs assessment report and strategic plan for federal review
- Establish metrics and targets
- Impact Work Group Fall 2019 meeting
THANK YOU

www.communitasconsulting.com