Governor Northam’s proposed budget includes a historic investment in early childhood care and education. A total of $94.8 million in new funding has the potential to transform the Commonwealth’s early childhood education system. The majority of the proposed funds will increase access to preschool for three and four-year-old children who are economically disadvantaged or have identified disabilities through the expansion of the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) beginning in the 2020-2021 school year.

Division superintendents will receive a letter this week which will provide a detailed description of the early childhood access needs within each locality, as well as suggested steps for 2020-2021 expansion. Superintendents are encouraged to review these letters carefully and pass on the relevant information to interested parties.

The proposed expansions and enhancements to VPI include several strategies to increase the number of children served in both public and private settings and the amount of funding provided. To assist early childhood leaders with understanding VPI expansion opportunities and to encourage leaders to take immediate action for implementation, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), Office of Early Childhood, has established an ongoing series of VPI Expansions & Enhancements – Questions & Answers Webinars.

Each webinar will highlight a key enhancement or expansion effort for VPI and will end with an open question and answer period. In addition, the webinars will cover the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation Mixed Delivery program. Specific details regarding the action steps will also be shared. At minimum, local VPI, Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Coordinators and budget directors should attend the webinar or listen to the recording. Staff are also encouraged to invite partners such as Head Start and private child care as they learn more and plan for 2020-2021. Specific information about webinar topics will be provided as the date approaches. All webinars will be recorded.
**Webinar Dates:**
Thursday, February 6, 2020 at 11 a.m.
Friday, February 21, 2020 at 11 a.m.
Thursday, March 5, 2020 at 11 a.m.
Friday, March 20, 2020 at 11 a.m.
Thursday, April 2, 2020 at 11 a.m.
Friday, April 17, 2020 at 11 a.m.
Friday, May 1, 2020 at 11 a.m.

**Link to Join:**
[VPI Expansions & Enhancements – Questions & Answers Webinars](#)

If you have additional questions regarding the webinars, please contact Dr. Mark Allan, Early Childhood Project Manager by phone at (804) 225-3665 or by email at [Mark.Allan@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Mark.Allan@doe.virginia.gov).

JFL/MRA/lh