



MEETING ONE KEY TAKEAWAYS

Introductions: The Task Force chairs have experience with and passion for seizing opportunity for reform within crisis for policy/budget implication related to workforce development. Child care/early childhood education (ECE) is an essential workforce and economic development engine. The future of economic development in Virginia is all about human capital development, beginning in early childhood.

Priorities and Charge: The Task Force will develop recommendations for each of 4 stakeholder groups who have a stake in and can influence child care reform in VA: business/employers, government, philanthropy, communities.

Problems to Solve: 1) **Lack of shared common understanding and messaging/education about the value and essential nature of child care and its dual purpose (work/life support for parents + early education for children) and 2) Inertia that keeps us as a society from tackling the complex job of creating the structures and financing mechanisms needed for this public good.** Areas for focus with problems and potential solutions include financing, governance, user experience, and lessons from other states.

Three Horizons: While the Task Force will necessarily explore issues in the current (pandemic) era, we will focus on future state in terms of identifying solutions for a reformed system for child care. **We don't want to lose the immediate opportunity of some stakeholders' (especially employer/business) heightened interest/concern about child care for successful workplace and economic recovery.**

Tensions for Navigation: Past inertia has detracted from ability to push forward on needed changes and address equity and stability of the sector. In a pinched economic environment, we need to consider tradeoffs to identify appropriate level of funding for ECE (e.g., bold notion of shifting from investment in senior year of high school to preschool). If we invest earlier, we may require less investment for later remediation.

We have a marketing opportunity to amplify the dual value of child care/early childhood education. The pandemic has heightened the need to communicate that child care and ECE are the same thing while employers are feeling pain, because post-crisis, people may fall back to inertia. The "child care" part of early childhood education is less well articulated in the economics literature for the return on investment vs. "early childhood education."

Let's put some dollars to this – can COVID-related funding be directed to early education/quality child care? It's not just money, but the policies around this funding is important.

With telecommuting, a whole new way of working may impact child care. Employers understand the need for quality early education – do parents have this same recognition? Parents and others have shifted in perception and discourse about the need/value of a 4-year degree; what perceptions do they have about child care in this environment?

Employer Perspective: Pre-pandemic, some employers focused on quality of child care for investment; now the focus is on supply. Employers are grappling with the excused categories per pandemic unemployment supplement, teleworking, and with parental fear of safety of child care. How do we convince moms and dads that it's safe to send kids to providers so they can come back to work? Future state --- we'd be remiss if we don't take advantage of this crisis. Nationally, this is a big issue with momentum and pace among stakeholders interested in potential child care solutions.

What else do we need to know? What kind of funding do we need and where will it come from (government, local community, employers)? How can we leverage financing? What do elected officials know about this topic (how much of a bridge will we need to build)? Filler-Corn/Saslaw said this week that this is an issue that must be addressed. Tim Kaine is focused on this issue at congressional level. Black Caucus asked Gov. Northam to NOT move the state into Phase I, with one of the issues being child care. Could employers consider opening onsite centers to help working parents be more comfortable? Or could an employer reach out to a closed center and see if a partnership could be made to serve employees as business gets back to work?

Adjourn: With the composition and purpose of the Task Force, Virginia is positioned to see significant, impactful results.