



PRESS RELEASE

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Virginia Promise Partnership Applauds Robust Child Care Provisions in Proposed Biennial Budget

Richmond – The Virginia Promise Partnership applauds the strong child care provisions outlined in Governor Northam’s proposed outgoing biennial budget. The budget includes important funding and policy improvements needed to strengthen Virginia’s child care system. Together, these provisions would enable children to gain the skills they need to succeed, parents to return to work, and communities and businesses to thrive.

“Families across the Commonwealth struggle to find quality, affordable child care options that fit their needs and choices. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened this crisis, forcing many parents to reduce working hours or leave the workforce altogether to care for their children,” said **Virginia Promise Partnership Director Krysta Jones**. “Provisions included in the proposed budget will help to address these issues and align with the core pillars of the Partnership’s efforts: **increasing access and affordability, improving quality, and stabilizing our child care sector.**”

“The impacts of the child care crisis go far beyond individual children and families, resulting in significant losses in earnings, productivity, and revenue for employers across the state. Proposals outlined in the budget will be key to supporting economic growth and getting Virginians back to work,” said **Virginia Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Barry DuVal**.

The Virginia Promise Partnership thanks the Northam Administration for their support and encourages members of the General Assembly to continue investing in Virginia’s school readiness beginning with support for and inclusion of these important provisions in the final budget.

“We look forward to working with all General Assembly Members and the incoming Youngkin Administration as we continue charting a path toward our bold goal of quality, affordable child care for all Virginia families by 2030,” said Jones.

Find outlined below a high-level overview of major child care provisions included in the Biennial Budget. Our in-depth analysis of the proposed budget remains ongoing as we identify priorities for the 2022 General Assembly session.

If adopted, provisions outlined in the Biennial Budget will enable Virginia to:

Increase Access & Affordability

- Serve more children in private community-based settings through expansion of the Mixed Delivery Grant Program by:
 - Increasing the number of three and four-year-olds served in the program
 - Piloting services for families' infants and toddlers in the program
- Serve more at-risk children through expansion of the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) by:
 - Permanently expanding the program to three-year-olds, as piloted in FY21
 - Expanding VPI eligibility to include all children with disabilities or delays, versus only those under a certain household income threshold
- Expand access to child care subsidies through temporary flexibilities

Improve Quality

- Improve oversight of all publicly-funded early education classrooms by:
 - Allocating funding for expanded classroom observations to oversee implementation of Virginia's new VQB5 quality standards
 - Expanding Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) assessments to all publicly-funded classrooms

Stabilize Child Care Sector

- Reimburse early education programs at rates and in formats that support the costs of quality service delivery
- Attract new educators and reduce staff turnover in early education classrooms by:
 - Increasing teacher incentives offered under the Early Childhood Educator Grant Program
 - Supporting early childhood education degree programs and professional development

The Virginia Promise Partnership is a coalition of 30+ leading organizations working together to achieve our bold goal of ensuring all Virginia families have access to affordable, quality child care by 2030, regardless of income.

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