

# VIRGINIANS NEED A STRONG PUBLIC-PRIVATE CHILD CARE SYSTEM THAT CAN SERVE MORE CHILDREN, WITH MORE CHOICES FOR FAMILIES



Virginia's children, families, and businesses can't thrive in the ongoing child care crisis. Without access to affordable child care options, parents are being forced to reduce or change hours, take time off, or leave the workforce altogether to cope with childcare needs while their children miss out on key early education opportunities.

**In fact, 1 in 3 Virginia preschoolers lacks access to publicly-funded early childhood education.**<sup>1</sup> Those families who are able to find programs pay an average of over \$23,000 per year on child care for two children.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, childcare providers shoulder the high cost of providing quality care and education and juggle notoriously thin margins, all while navigating reduced capacity and increased operating costs amid the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, many providers are unable to adequately support and retain their teachers and staff, leading to high turnover rates and widespread staffing shortages.

## WITHOUT A STRONG CHILDCARE SYSTEM:

### Parents can't work <sup>3</sup>

68% of working parents in Virginia say someone in their household's job is currently being impacted by lack of access to child care

### Children can't learn <sup>4</sup>

42% of Virginia's kindergarteners started the 2021 school year without foundational skills, with approximately 1 in every 4 students below the benchmark in early literacy and/or mathematics skills

### Child care providers can't operate <sup>5</sup>

74% of Virginia child care centers reported experiencing staffing shortages last year

## ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP



The Virginia Promise Partnership is a coalition of leading organizations committed to advocating for long-term policies and resources to secure access to quality, affordable child care programs for families across the Commonwealth.

Partnership members are working together toward our goal of ensuring all Virginia families have access to quality, affordable child care by 2030, regardless of income.

**For more information, please visit:**  
[vapromisepartnership.com](http://vapromisepartnership.com)

## LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS

Several important pieces of legislation have been introduced for consideration during the 2022 General Assembly session that aim to **increase child care access and affordability** as well as **stabilize the child care sector**. Virginia Promise Partnership:

- **SUPPORTS H.B. 389** (Bulova) to fine tune and strengthen Virginia's early education system through more robust public-private regional infrastructure and improvements to the Child Care Subsidy Program
- **SUPPORTS H.B. 994** (Brewer) / **S.B. 529** (Reeves) to permit all members of the Armed Forces to apply for the Child Care Subsidy Program.
- **SUPPORTS S.B. 574** (Mason) to improve and streamline the background check process in an effort to address ongoing child care staffing shortages while upholding the safety of Virginia's children.
- **SUPPORTS H.B. 879** (Rasoul) to require the Virginia Board of Education to include at least one representative each with experience or expertise in: early education, local government, and career and technical education.
- **SUPPORTS S.B. 69** (Favola) to prohibit rental agreements from containing provisions prohibiting the operation of properly licensed and authorized child care services on the rental property.

## BUDGET POSITIONS

Virginia Promise Partnership supports over \$225 million in new state general fund (SGF) and non-general fund (NGF) investments in the introduced budget.

The introduced budget includes provisions that would **increase child care access and affordability** by:

- **Serving more children and improving family choice through expansion of the Mixed Delivery Program**
- **Temporarily (through 2024) extending flexibilities and improvements to the child care subsidy program**
- **Serving more at-risk children through expansion of the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI)**

Furthermore, the introduced budget includes provisions that would **stabilize the child care sector** by:

- **Reimbursing early education programs at rates and in formats that support the costs of quality care**
- **Establishing supports that address the unique needs of family day homes**
- **Attracting new educators and reducing child care staff turnover by expanding teacher incentives and supporting early childhood education professional development**

### IN ADDITION TO IMPORTANT PROVISIONS OUTLINED IN THE INTRODUCED BUDGET, VIRGINIA PROMISE PARTNERSHIP:

- **SUPPORTS** extending (through 2024) expanded child care subsidy eligibility to families earning up to 85% of the state median income. ([Favola, Item 129 #1s](#); [Robinson, Item 129 #12h](#); [Willett, Item 129 #1h](#))
- **SUPPORTS** improving and streamlining the background check process in an effort to address ongoing child care staffing shortages while upholding the safety of Virginia's children. ([Mason, Items 129 #19s](#) and [137 #1s](#); [Brewer, Items 129 #13h](#) and [137 #1h](#))
- **SUPPORTS** allocating funding to extend Child Care Subsidy Program eligibility to all members of the Armed Forces. ([Reeves, Item 129 #7s](#); [Brewer, Item 129 #6h](#))
- **SUPPORTS** allocating funding to the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program to support afterschool, before-school, and summer learning programs for school-age children. ([McClellan, Item 136 #11s](#); [Robinson, Item 136 #18h](#))
- **SUPPORTS** allocating funding under the American Rescue Plan Act to increase childcare capacity in southwest Virginia. ([Pillion, Item 486 #15s](#); [Kilgore, Item 486 #11h](#))
- **SUPPORTS** directing existing navigator services to assist child care providers and workers with enrollment in the State Based Health Exchange at no cost to the state. ([Favola, Item 493 #2s](#); [Sickles, Item 493 #4h](#))

1. [Virginia Department of Education presentation to the Early Childhood Advisory Committee](#), November 10, 2021

2. [Child Care Aware State Fact Sheet](#), 2020

3. [Virginia Promise in Action Poll](#), December 2021

4. [Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program Data](#), Fall 2021

5. [NAEYC Survey](#), June 2021