



PRESS RELEASE

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Virginia Promise Partnership Poll Shows Overwhelming Support for Early Childhood Education

Gaps in Child Care Access are Hurting Virginia's Workforce and Economy

Richmond – Gaps in access to quality, affordable child care remains a top concern for Virginia voters leading up to the 2023 General Assembly session. In a newly released poll from the Virginia Promise Partnership, 79 percent of Virginia voters – including 72 percent of Republicans and 91 percent of Democrats – say it is extremely or very important for state and local elected officials to take action to ensure child care is more affordable and accessible to Virginia families.

Widespread lack of access to child care is hurting Virginia's workforce and economy. In responding to the survey, nearly half (48%) of parents said their job is *currently* being negatively impacted by a lack of access to child care, resulting in having to take time off of work (23%), reduce or change hours (18%), or quit their job (11%).

These results align with an August 2022 employer survey conducted by the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, and the Virginia Chamber of Commerce. Seventy-six percent of employers surveyed stated that childcare availability impacted employee recruitment and retention, and 78 percent reported that employees frequently or occasionally miss work due to childcare issues.

The December 2022 poll found that 79 percent of those parents whose job (or family member's job) was impacted say they would fully rejoin the workforce if their household had access to quality, affordable child care. Moreover, 82 percent of respondents agreed that access to high-quality, affordable childcare enables more parents to join the workforce and support their families.

"Without access to quality, affordable child care, parents are forced to reduce or change their hours or drop out of the workforce altogether. As a result of child care challenges faced by their workforce, employers across the state are suffering from lost earnings, productivity, and revenue. To support our businesses – and get Virginians back to work – we need robust investments in our child care sector," said Delegate Carrie Coyner (R-Chesterfield County).

Calls for action come as Virginia parents continue to struggle finding child care. More than half (52%) of parents polled say they or someone in their household has struggled to access quality, affordable child care, with 83 percent citing high costs as the primary reason for their struggle. Virginia parents paid an average price of \$15,000 per year for center-based infant care in 2021 according to Child Care Aware of Virginia, exceeding the average cost of in-state college tuition.

“Virginia parents are struggling to find and afford child care that meets their needs and preferences. Without access to quality early education, young children across the state aren’t gaining the academic and social-emotional skills they need to thrive,” said Senator George Barker (D-Fairfax County). “With 44 percent of Virginia’s kindergarteners having ended the 2021-2022 school year without these foundational skills, more must be done to ensure our families have access to high-quality early education.”

The statewide survey of 600 Virginia voters, plus an additional oversample of 200 parents of young children, was conducted December 6 to 13, 2022 by The Tarrance Group on behalf of the Virginia Promise Partnership. The margin of error associated with a sample of this size is +/- 4.1%, and among all parents of children under 13 (base and oversample) is +/- 5.3%.

The [Virginia Promise Partnership](#) is a coalition of 30 leading organizations working together with a growing network of child care advocates to achieve our bold goal of ensuring all Virginia families have access to affordable, quality child care by 2030.

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