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**New Poll Shows Support of Increased Funding for Early Childhood Education as Governor Proposes Child Care Investments in Biennial Budget**  
Voters Believe General Assembly Should Prioritize Access to Affordable Child Care

**Richmond** – Gaps in access to quality, affordable child care remain a top concern for Virginia voters leading up to the 2024 General Assembly session. In a newly released poll from the Virginia Promise Partnership, 86 percent of survey respondents – including 76 percent of Republicans and 98 percent of Democrats – believe it is important for the General Assembly to prioritize access to affordable early childhood education.

The poll found that two-thirds (66 percent) of individuals polled support an increase in state funding through the General Assembly to expand access to affordable child care for low-income and other eligible families.

Calls for action come as temporary federal relief dollars leveraged to expand child care access and choice in the Commonwealth are set to end in the coming months. Without further action, child care funding in Virginia would drop by nearly \$300M from Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 to FY 2025, and more than 35,600 children could lose access to child care services.

Yesterday, Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin presented his proposed FY 2025 and FY 2026 **biennial budget** to the General Assembly's Joint Money Committee. The Governor's proposal includes significant child care investments to address this impending child care crisis, as outlined under the **Building Blocks for Virginia Families** initiative. The plan allocates over \$440M – including \$185M in new funding – each year to support quality early childhood care and education services for the most at-risk families.

"I'm so grateful that my kids had the opportunity to attend incredible early learning programs in Staunton. Having my kids in a quality early learning program allowed my wife and I to remain in the workforce and support our family financially. We had confidence in our child care provider to help our children develop the skills they needed to succeed in school and life. Unfortunately, thousands of families who were able to access similar services in recent years will lose child care if our lawmakers don't take action," said **Nicholas Palacio, Chair of the Virginia Promise Partnership Parent Advisory**. "Stable child care investments from the General Assembly are critical to supporting Virginia's economy, working families like mine, and – most importantly – our children."

In responding to the survey, 79 percent of Virginians polled agree that increased access to early childhood education would equip students to be more prepared for success in K-12 schools and higher education.

The findings are supported by a September 2023 [report](#) from Vanderbilt University's Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact report, which found that Virginia's additional \$309M in child care investments in FY 2023 alone using temporary federal funds will yield \$397.8M in economic benefit from increased high school graduation. Over their life course, the 11,151 children under age 5 who received high-quality early education services as a result of the additional FY 2023 investments are expected to be more likely to graduate college and have higher income as adults.

"Study after study has proven that access to enriching learning environments through high-quality child care programs bolsters healthy development from birth to age five and sets children up for improved school readiness and lifelong success," said **Jennifer Parish, Executive Director of the Peake Childhood Center and Chair of the Virginia Promise Partnership Provider Advisory**. "It's time that the General Assembly invests stable, long-term funding in Virginia's early learning system to support children across the Commonwealth."

The statewide survey of 1,307 likely general election voters using mobile text responses was conducted October 16-23, 2023 by co/efficient on behalf of the Virginia Promise Partnership. The survey is balanced by the age, gender, education level, race, and location of the true voting population and has a margin of error of +/- 3.03%. Read more on the survey [here](#).

*The Virginia Promise Partnership is a coalition of parents, providers, and advocates from across the Commonwealth working together with a diverse group of leading organizations to achieve our bold goal of ensuring all Virginia families have access to affordable, quality child care by 2030.*

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