

BPRO TRAINING

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

AGENDA AND OVERVIEW

This session will provide an overview of advances and changes that have taken place for the Child Care Subsidy Program over the past year and take a glance at what to expect in the upcoming year.

- Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP) Overview
 - Program structure and growth
 - Recent policy changes
 - Opportunities for continuous improvement
- Discussion and Questions

WELCOME! – “ROLE CALL”

Room Poll- How do you define your current role?

- Benefit Program Specialist/Supervisor
- Family Service Specialist/Supervisor
- Self-Sufficiency Specialist/Supervisor
- Senior Worker
- Benefit/Family Service/Self-Sufficiency Program Managers
- LDSS Director

WELCOME! - “FIST TO FIVE”

Room Poll- On a scale of 0-5, how would you rate your knowledge of the following concepts?

- a) The Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP), in general
- b) Recent CCSP policy changes
- c) The vendor management process
- d) Vendor payments
- e) The vendor portal
- f) Manual attendance

Section 1:

Virginia's Unified ECCE System



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES



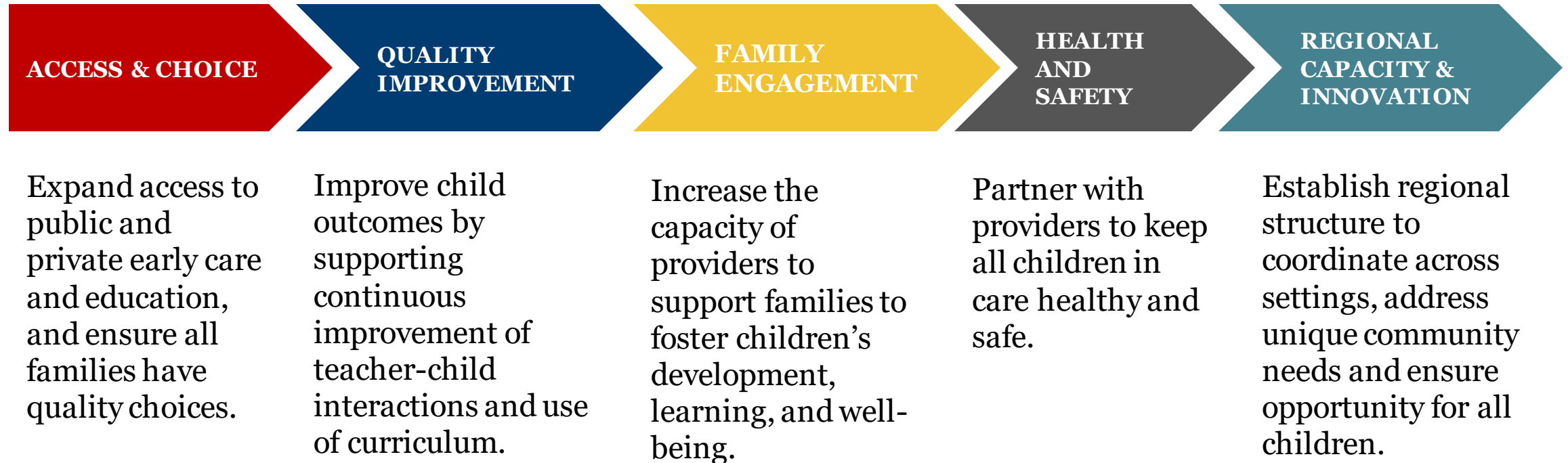
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

OUR SHARED VISION

Four out of ten Virginia children enter school without the key literacy, math, and social-emotional skills needed to succeed. We envision a Virginia where all children have the opportunity to enter school ready.

- All families have affordable access to and support to choose the option that meets their unique needs.
- All early childhood programs that take public funds benefit from measurement and supports for improvement through VQB5, ensuring quality choices are available for all families.
- Programs are rewarded for continual improvement and educators are competitively compensated.
- Overall, Virginia's early childhood system is unified, data-driven, and resource-effective so families can work, go to school, or pursue employment and children have every opportunity to be successful.

VIRGINIA'S UNIFIED EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM



COMPETITIVE EDUCATOR COMPENSATION IS ESSENTIAL TO EACH OF THESE AREAS

KEY PUBLICLY-FUNDED PROGRAMS IN VIRGINIA

The five key publicly-funded early childhood programs are:

- Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI)
- Mixed Delivery Preschool Grant Program
- Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP or “Subsidy”)
- Head Start and Early Head Start
- Early Childhood Special Education (IDEA Part B, Section 619)

**Children with special needs can, and should, be enrolled in all publicly funded ECCE programs*

OVERVIEW OF KEY PUBLIC PROGRAMS IN FY24

Program	Target population	Setting	Service levels	Cost to family?	Children served in FY24*
Virginia Preschool Initiative	3- and 4-year-olds with low household incomes (<=250% FPG) or other identified risk factor	Primarily public schools; some licensed child care	School-day, school-year	None	23,034 (90% are four-year-olds)
Mixed Delivery Program	Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with low household incomes (<=250% FPG) or other identified risk factor	Licensed child care centers and family day homes	Full-day, full-year	None	2,570 (79% are preschoolers)
Child Care Subsidy Program	Children ages 6 months-12 years with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household income up to 85% of state median income Parents that are working, in school, or looking for work 	Licensed and regulated child care centers and family day homes	Up to full-day, full-year, based on parent schedule	Yes, ranges from \$0-180 per child per month based on family income	41,779 (59% are under age 5)
Head Start/Early Head Start	Infants and toddlers (EHS) and preschoolers (HS) with income up to 130% FPG	Schools, licensed child care centers, and licensed family day homes	Typically school-day, school-year, but varies by recipient agency	None	13,766 (80% are 3- and 4-year-olds)

*Enrollment data as of January 2024

Recent Policy Changes in the Subsidy Program: Overview and Impact

2021 to Present

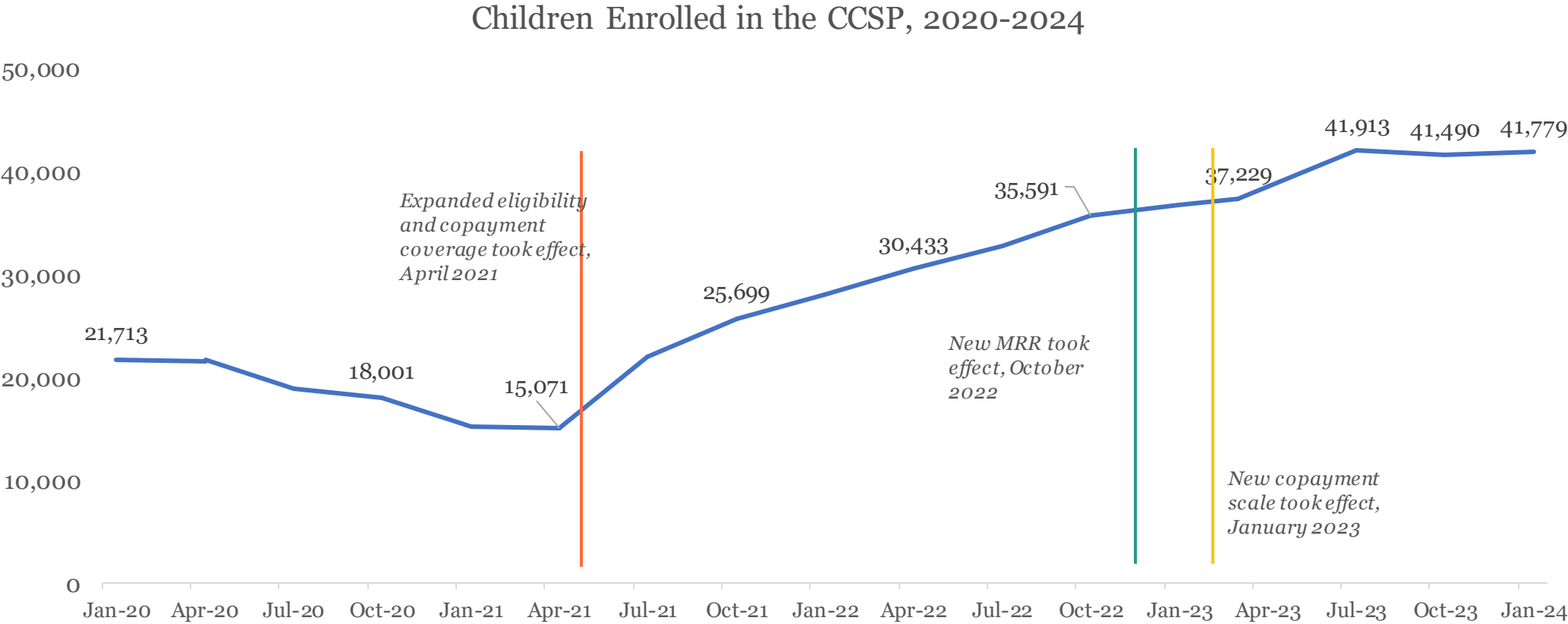
RECENT CCSP POLICY CHANGES

Changes to CCSP policy and process since 2021 have focused on providing more choices for more families through changes to eligibility, copayments, and provider payment rates.

- Increased income eligibility limits for families with young children
- Added job search as a qualifying activity
- Removed the 72-month limit on service receipt
- Eliminated the requirement for parents to cooperate with child support enforcement
- Revised copayment scale to a low, flat monthly fee per-child
- Established reimbursement rates based on cost of care (and adjusted policy so providers can receive MRR regardless of private tuition)
- Introduced a two-year-old rate to align with licensing age groups
- Offered additional paid days of closure (now 15 total) for all providers and (3) sick days for FDH Providers.
- Increased paid absence days from 36 to 60

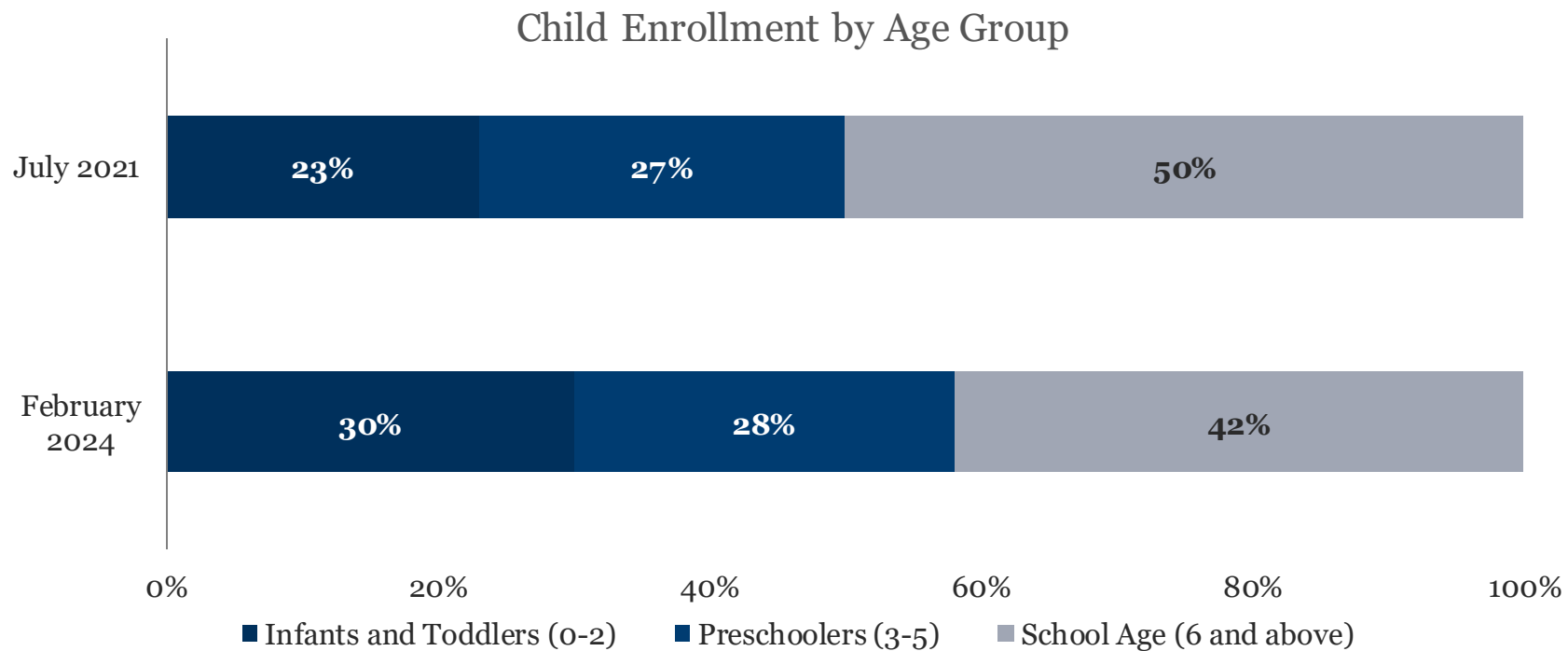
HISTORIC GROWTH IN ENROLLMENT

Policy changes have facilitated significant growth in the Child Care Subsidy Program. As of January 2024, over 41,700 children are enrolled.



SHIFTS IN AGES OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN THE CCSP SINCE JULY 2021

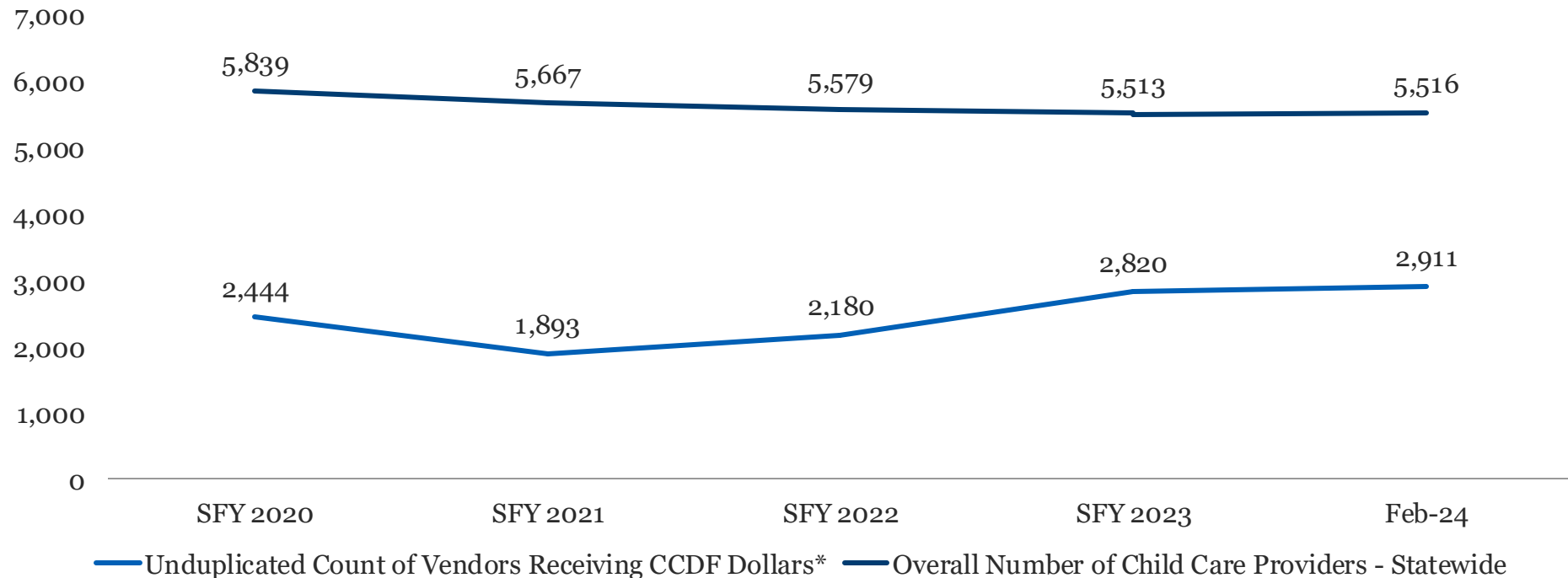
As of February 2024, nearly 60% of the children served in the CCSP are young children (under the age of 6).



VENDOR GROWTH TO MATCH CHILD ENROLLMENT INCREASES

Policy changes have also focused on facilitating significant growth in the vendor “supply” in the Child Care Subsidy Program. As of February 2024, over 2,900 vendors are participating, a growth of 54% since 2021.

Subsidy Vendors and Total Providers Statewide, 2020-2024



*Reflects total number of active subsidy vendors, may not be currently serving CCSP authorized children

VENDOR PARTICIPATION BY PROGRAM TYPE AND REGION

Vendors by Region

	Feb 2022	Feb 2023	Feb 2024	Percent Change Feb (23-24)
Central	344	385	412	7%
Eastern	563	566	581	3%
Northern	1,355	1402	1471	5%
Piedmont	277	293	299	2%
Western	109	104	110	6%
Total	2,648	2,750	2,873	4%

Section 2: Upcoming Changes and Priorities for FY25



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

KEY PRIORITIES FOR FY25

- Building Blocks for Virginia Families
- Initiating waitlists for the first time since 2022
- Implementing recommendations from Guidehouse Consultants
- Developing and implementing the new attendance tracking system
 - Engagement sessions with stakeholders
 - 2025
- Improving communications and resources

Building Blocks for Virginia Families

KEY PRINCIPLES (1/2)

- **Recognizing parents are children's first and most important educators, Virginia prioritizes parent choice.** Parents can choose from home-based providers, child care, Head Start, public, private and parochial schools and community partnerships.
 - Two-thirds of Virginia families are now choosing public-private options.
- Virginia's **highest-need working families** are striving to build a better future for themselves and their children.
 - They should be able to choose an early learning option that also addresses work-related child care needs.
- **Quality matters.** Virginia is leading the nation with VQB5, its statewide measurement and data system that measures quality in every classroom or setting receiving public funds.

KEY PRINCIPLES (2/2)

- Virginia is focused on **child outcomes**.
 - VKRP is a nationally-recognized school readiness assessment of early literacy, math, and social skills.
- Virginia is recognized nationally for its **effective use of public dollars**.
 - A recent Vanderbilt study showed that investments in child care pay for themselves in less than a year; families work and earn more, stimulating the Virginia economy and increasing overall tax revenues.
- Virginia prioritizes both **keeping children safe** and **reducing administrative burden**.

GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET

In the next biennium, Governor Youngkin proposed a state general fund investment of over **\$448 million annually** in early childhood care and education.

These investments and reforms, which are known as *Building Blocks for Virginia Families* would:

- Help advance Virginia's best-in-class early learning system;
- Serve as a response to the upcoming loss of one-time federal funding by building a viable approach for the future; and
- Help ensure the Commonwealth is the best place to live, work, learn, and raise a family.

WHAT'S IN THE BUDGET FOR ECCE?

- The House and Senate conference budget similarly prioritizes retaining existing slots in FY25-26 at the estimated cost of quality based on VDOE's cost estimation model.
- While final negotiations remain underway, we will likely see some policy shifts for ECCE programs beginning in FY25, including:
 - Introduction of family copayments in Mixed Delivery
 - Prioritization of services for families with parents that are working, in school, or looking for work for CCSP and Mixed Delivery
 - Emphasis on regular attendance in all programs

MEASURING FAMILY DEMAND

State leaders have given VDOE and VDSS a clear directive for 2025-2026: to accurately measure—and report on—family demand.

- Between 2021-2024, Virginia used a significant amount of COVID relief funding to support the recovery of the ECCE sector and respond to increasing family demand for services, particularly in community-based settings.
- As federal relief funding expires, we anticipate that demand will exceed available supply in the years ahead. We will be working with partners in every corner of the state to ensure that we are prepared to implement wait lists for publicly-funded services.
- ECCE sites can support this effort by encouraging families that are interested in the Virginia Preschool Initiative, Mixed Delivery, and/or the Child Care Subsidy Program to put their names on the wait list for services.

Initiating Wait lists in the CCSP

WHY A WAIT LIST?

- The biennial FY23-24 budget included language directing VDOE to use all available funds to eliminate wait lists in the CCSP. This language expires on June 30, 2024.
- VDOE/VDSS anticipates that program demand will exceed available funding beginning in FY25.
 - Localities may begin administering wait lists for Fee and Head Start budget lines when demand exceeds available targets starting July 1, 2024.
- Maintaining an accurate, up-to-date waitlist accomplishes two goals:
 - VDOE, VDSS, and local departments can understand unmet parental demand for services, improving projected funding needed for services in the future.
 - Allows local departments to effectively maximize slots as they become available for eligible, unserved families.

PREPARING FOR WAITLISTS

- VDOE/VDSS are implementing necessary system changes to initiate wait lists, including:
 - Ensuring recent changes to eligibility are reflected in waitlist screening questions and workflow.
 - Updating priority groups
- **Wait list training webinars** will be held on **June 11th at 10:00 a.m.** and **June 12th at 2:00 p.m.**
 - Webinars will be converted to e-learnings and be posted to the COVLC site.
 - Registration links will be posted via broadcast by the third week of May.
- VDOE and VDSS are continuing to accept requests for additional child targets on a rolling basis through the end of FY24. Requests will be reviewed closely and may not be fulfilled in their entirety.

WAIT LIST PRIORITY GROUPS

Tier 1: Families with at least one child ages 0-5, not yet in kindergarten

- Families in this category should be placed at the top of the wait list
- Within the group families should be ordered based on application/screening date

Tier 2: Families that do not fall in Tier 1 but meet any of the following categories

- Tier 2 families are placed on the wait list following families in Tier 1 based on the application screening date.
- Tier 2 families include:
 - A family unit which includes a child who has special needs for whom services are requested;
 - Family with a child experiencing homelessness;
 - Family involved in CPS or Foster Care Prevention;
 - Family that includes a minor parent under the age of 18 and in high school, whose child will be receiving subsidy services.
 - Emancipated teen parent younger than 18 and in high school; and
 - Case discontinued due to lack of funds

WAIT LISTS AND CHILD TARGETS

- Child targets—the maximum number of children a locality is approved to enroll through CCSP—serve as the basis for initiating a wait list and adding families to/transitioning families off the wait list.
- Head Start Wraparound and Fee families should be placed on the wait list when the locality has met their approved child target on or after July 1, 2024.
 - Localities may submit requests for additional child targets on an ad hoc basis via the Allocation Request feature if they meet ALL of the following criteria:
 - They have met their established child target;
 - They are running a wait list for services;
 - There is estimated to be sufficient funding in their budget to serve one or more children for the remainder of the fiscal year.
- Child targets will otherwise be reviewed and reallocated as appropriate based on family demand on a quarterly basis, or as needed if additional funding becomes available.

Gathering Recommendations from Guidehouse Consulting Project

PROJECT PURPOSE & OVERVIEW

- 1 Recent increases in demand for subsidized child care and CCSP program enrollment provide a unique opportunity to further optimize the value of the program.
- 2 The CCSP consulting project's goals are to support the program's objectives; to evaluate CCSP's current structure, processes, and systems; and to identify leading practices.
- 3 The CCSP consulting project is aiming to identify ways to (1) promote easy program access, (2) efficiently manage case workloads, (3) elevate program successes, and (4) foster continuous improvement.
- 4 Between October 2023 and March 2024, the project team engaged LDSS staff via on-site or virtual interviews and through the implementation of a statewide survey. LDSS staff shared challenges and best practices for implementing the CCSP.
- 5 The project team has analyzed LDSS feedback for key findings that they will use to co-develop recommendations and a plan for implementing any agreed upon changes to the program.

LEARNING FROM STAFF FEEDBACK

Local: In Phase 1 of the project, engagement with LDSS staff was prioritized to obtain insights into local challenges and successes.

Staff Survey

- 668 CCSP staff (case workers, self sufficiency workers, clerical workers, supervisors, and directors) were invited to the survey
- 413 responses received; a response rate of 62%
- 119 Local DSS offices represented

Interviews and Office Visits

- The team conducted visits with 27 local offices; all regions were included*

Central: In addition to local engagement, Phase 1 of the project included guidance reviews and interviews with leadership and program staff.

Home Office Interviews

- Conducted 19 interviews with state agency staff (VDSS and VDOE)

Guidance Review and Research

- Reviewed 100+ reports, guidance, materials, presentations, past communications and other documents
- Analyzed 7+ datasets to assess application processing time, enrollment, and other key measures

*LDSSs engaged for interviews were intentionally selected to meet various criteria (i.e. demonstrated CCSP need, geographic diversity, RPC recommendation)

NEXT STEPS

1. The Project Team is currently reporting out initial findings to VDSS and VDOE program leadership and regional staff.
2. Additional discussions to share findings with local departments will be scheduled throughout this spring/summer.
3. The project team is conducting additional analyses and will develop recommendations for next steps. Plans will include a communications strategy and an implementation roadmap to help address the challenges identified by LDSS staff. VDSS and VDOE leadership also will seek to gather feedback from local staff on the path for implementing solutions.

Improving Vendor Communications, Support, and Supply Building

VENDOR SUPPORTS

1. Home office (VDSS and VDOE) –
 1. Policy guidance (e.g. vendor handbook)
 2. Vendor application / Hyland
 3. Attendance troubleshooting? / When to contact VR?
2. Ready Regions
 1. VQB5
 2. Coordinated Enrollment and Family Engagement
3. Early Childhood Navigators
 1. Supply-building (Support, Recruit, Retain... become licensed, become CCSP vendor)
4. Child Care Aware of Virginia
 1. Training, CCSP recruitment / app support

VENDOR HANDBOOK

- **Purpose:** To provide a comprehensive, easy-to-understand resource and guide for vendors participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP).
- **Why a handbook?**
 - Information about the CCSP for vendors is spread across multiple resources and websites.
 - These resources are not always designed with vendors as the audience.
 - Some processes impacting vendors have never been put in writing publicly.
 - Putting all program terms and requirements in the vendor agreement is administratively challenging when changes are necessary.

READY REGIONS

Since their launch in July 2022, Ready Regions have brought community and regional stakeholders together to develop strategies to increase access to quality early childhood care and education.

- **VQB5 Quality Measurement and Improvement**
 - All programs that participate in VQB5 receive individualized feedback and supports, access to trainings, public recognition, and are eligible for financial recognition for eligible educators.
 - Coaching is prioritized for programs that need support the most to improve teacher-child interactions, as measured by the CLASS.
 - Ready Regions lead agencies coordinate coaching supports.
- **Coordinated Enrollment and Family Engagement**
 - Ready Regions craft annual coordinated enrollment priorities based on community and region-level coordinated enrollment self-assessments and plans.



READY REGIONS

Region	Lead Organizations
1 - Southwest	Endless Opportunity
2 - West	United Way Roanoke Valley
3 - Southside	The Center for Early Success
4 - Central	Thrive Birth to Five
5 - Southeastern	EVMS Minus 9 to 5
6 - Chesapeake Bay	First Spark
7 - Capital Area	Fairfax County Neighborhood & Community Services
8 - North Central	Foundation First
9 - Blue Ridge	United Way of Greater Charlottesville



VDOE EARLY CHILDHOOD NAVIGATORS

Purpose

- Navigators seek to increase the supply of publicly-funded child care by working with prospective and existing child care centers and family day homes.

Navigators focus on engaging with providers in three main ways:

- Support new providers to open and participate in public programs,
- Recruit existing providers to accept public funds, and
- Retain current publicly-funded providers.

Relationships and collaboration are essential

- While supporting providers, Navigators collaborate closely with key state, regional, and local partners to address barriers and connect providers to additional supports.
- During this pilot period, Navigator supports are currently available in Ready Regions Central, Capital, Southwest, and West.

WHERE ARE EARLY CHILDHOOD NAVIGATORS LOCATED?

Jensen Mellnick
RR West



Maria Soto
RR Capital Area

Danielle Booher
RR Southwest



Kandra Brown
RR Central



SUBSIDY VENDOR RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

VDOE contracts with Child Care Aware of Virginia to provide technical assistance for:

- **Learning about the Child Care Subsidy Program**
 - Recruitment: informational online webinar for providers considering becoming CCSP vendors
 - Subsidy Orientation: support vendors' onboarding into the CCSP
 - Steps to Success Training and On-Demand Modules addressing: Vendor Portal, POSOs and Attendance, Payments, Status Changes, and Taxes and Fraud
 - Child Care Aware also provides vendor application support
- **Meeting health and safety requirements associated with licensure and/or CCSP**
 - First Aid/CPR, Emergency Preparedness, Intruder Response, Safety Spotlight, Trauma-Informed Practice, Car Safety
 - Health and Safety Requirements for Unlicensed Subsidy Vendors (*new*)
- **General program and business supports**
 - Strengthening Business Practices training

More information can be found:

- Online <https://vachildcare.com/> or by calling 1-866-KIDS-TLC
- Training calendar <https://stage.worklivesystems.com/training/25>



Developing a Modernized Attendance Tracking System

ATTENDANCE TRACKING SYSTEM

VDOE is in the process of procuring a modernized, cloud-based attendance tracking system to replace VaECC that will:

- Make the process of logging and monitoring attendance less burdensome for families and providers.
- Minimize the manual submission of attendance, thus reducing errors in provider attendance submissions, minimizing the wait time and increasing the accuracy for providers to receive payments.
- Improve access to and quality of attendance data and allow for connections with other administrative data sources.

PRIORITIES FOR SYSTEM FEATURES

Priorities for the system include the ability for:

- Providers OR parents to record attendance, with ability for either party to dispute attendance recorded
- Attendance to be recorded via a cloud-based app on tablets or cell phones
- Providers to enter operating schedules, including planned days of closure, and select which 15 days they wish to be paid for closure
- Automatic alerts when attendance has not been recorded or when there have been extensive absences
- Providers to use attendance recording functionality for ALL families, with the state only receiving data for publicly-funded children
- Providers using other compatible program management systems to automatically transmit attendance data for CCSP-participating children

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

Once the contract with the vendor has been finalized, VDOE and VDSS will be hosting a series of demos for key stakeholders, including parents, providers, and local departments of social services.

- Locals have unique insights into major challenges with attendance records in VaECC.
- We want to learn from those experiences and reduce the extent to which local caseworkers are troubleshooting attendance and payment-related issues in the future.
- Virtual demos and feedback sessions will be announced via a broadcast once they are scheduled.

DISCUSSION

Small group conversation (10 – 15 minutes)

- For families in your locality...
- For vendors in your locality...
- For your agency / local staff...

Strengths: What is going well? Where are you seeing positive impact?

Opportunities: What barriers or challenges remain?

Solutions: What can VDOE and VDSS do to support you?

Whole group share-out (5 minutes)

Closing Reflections

QUESTIONS?

Clifton Wise

Child Care Operations Coordinator
VDOE

clifton.wise@doe.virginia.gov

Amanda Kay

Child Care Subsidy Program Manager
VDSS

amanda.kay@dss.virginia.gov



Appendix