

Talking Points

Start the conversation now! Here are some resources and ideas to get the ball rolling:

Resources

- Review VECF’s links to messaging and advocacy resources: <https://www.vecf.org/communication-materials/>
- State by state information: <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/report/ece-administration-state-by-state/>
- Read the VA State Fact Sheet: <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Virginia-State-Fact-Sheet.pdf>
- Get involved in early care and education advocacy: <http://cqrcengage.com/earlylearningpolicygroup/Virginia?0>
- Download the Child Care Matters pdf: <https://vachildcare.com/you-can-help/>
- Visit the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program for Fall 2019 community-level assessment results: <http://www.vkrponline.org/>
- Explore Voices for Virginia’s Children: Tools for Advocates: <https://vakids.org/take-action/tools-for-advocates>
- Pull Regional Infographics: <https://vakids.org/kids-count-data/virginia-data>
- Review Building a Strong Foundation from the Beginning through Early Childhood Education from Blueprint Virginia 2025: A Business Plan for the Commonwealth: <https://www.vachamber.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Blueprint-Virginia-2025.pdf> (page 10 Workforce Development)

Did You Know

- Research shows that investing early is one of the most fiscally responsible investments we can make. It is also our best opportunity to level the playing field for at-risk children right from the start.
- Only 60% of Virginia’s kindergarteners start school with the key literacy, math and social-emotional skills needed to be successful in school. Only half of children from economically disadvantaged families enter school fully ready to learn.
- Nearly 70% of Virginia’s children live in families in which all parents work, making child care a necessary work support and a key school readiness opportunity.
- Decades of research indicate that high-quality early care and education have substantial impacts on children’s academic achievement and success later in life.
- The way parents and caregivers interact with children impacts their brain growth and development—for better or for worse.
- Positive early childhood care and education help children avoid school failure and dropping out, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, incarceration and physical and mental health issues.
- Investment in early care and education is an investment in equity, our economy, our community and our future.
- The learning and development children experience in their early years form the foundation for their future. Education, work, contributions to society—all of these are influenced by a child’s early growth.
- The greatest opportunity to impact a child’s development is in their first five years. Investing early is far more cost-effective than interventions later in childhood and into adulthood.
- Providing high quality early care and learning experiences provides two generations of benefits. Parents can grow their skills, education and income, while children grow smarter.
- For every Virginia student in afterschool, two more would participate if a program were available.

Share This!

Knowing and sharing the results of a best practice program can be helpful in your conversations and communications. Learn about the **Abecedarian Project** and the research-based lifetime benefits from investments in high-quality early childhood education: <https://abc.fpg.unc.edu/groundbreaking-follow-studies>. Outcomes include increased productivity, higher income, better health, more family investment, upward mobility and reduced social costs.

Results through age 15:

- Higher I.Q. scores
- Higher achievement scores in math and reading
- Lower levels of grade retention
- Fewer placements in special education classes

• Policymakers who invest in high-quality early learning programs from birth can permanently boost IQ and social-emotional skills that create productive, independent adults. *Center for the Economics of Human Development*

Results through age 21:

- Statistically significant advantages in both intellectual test performance and on academic tests of reading and math
- Attained more years of education
- More likely to attend a 4-year college or university
- More likely to be in school or have a skilled job, or both
- Less likely to be teen parents
- Less likely to smoke marijuana
- Less likely to report depressive symptoms

At age 30, the treated group was more likely to hold a bachelor's degree, hold a job, and delay parenthood, among other positive differences from their peers. **Age 35** brought blockbuster findings about health (more on this below).

The Abecedarian Project also brought unmistakable advantages for the teenage mothers with children in the study. By the time their children were 4½ years old, these mothers were more likely to have finished high school and undergone post-secondary training, more likely to be self-supporting, and less likely to have more children. Additional training, employment experience, and education led to increased earnings and decreased reliance on social assistance, all of which were important factors when independent economists calculated cost-benefit ratios for the project.

The economic benefit was clear. For every dollar spent on the program, taxpayers saved \$2.50 as a result of higher incomes, less need for educational and government services, and reduced health care costs. In short, the project has demonstrated that high-quality, enriched early education environments can help children surmount some of the disadvantages of poverty. Not only can the effects be far-reaching as children progress through adulthood, but the longterm savings to society also can be considerable.



<https://abc.fpg.unc.edu/groundbreaking-follow-studies>

Benefits of Investing in Early Childhood Development

Long-term controlled studies on early childhood development programs have shown that:

Children who participate in high-quality programs tend to have:	In the long run, these children are also more likely to:	Mothers of participants:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher scores on math and reading achievement tests • greater language abilities • less grade repetition • less need for special education and other remedial work • lower dropout rates • higher high school graduation rates • higher levels of schooling attainment • improved nutrition and health • experienced less child abuse and neglect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have higher employment and earnings as adults • pay more taxes • depend less on welfare • experience lower rates of alcohol and other drug use • engage in fewer criminal acts both as juveniles and as adults • have lower incarceration rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have fewer additional births • have better nutrition and smoke less during pregnancy • are less likely to abuse or neglect their children • complete more years of schooling • have higher high school graduation rates • are more likely to be employed • have higher earnings • engage in fewer criminal acts • have lower alcohol and other drug abuse • are less likely to use welfare



Wow! See the 2017-2020 Regional Plan for School Readiness, Smart Beginnings Greater Richmond, for more information and inspiration!

<https://smartbeginningsrva.org/regional-plan/>

Chart adapted from https://www.wested.org/online_pps/pp-05-02.pdf.

Let's Talk About...

How do you want to structure your message? Modify the following to meet your needs.

- The benefits of a **strong early education system** in our region/community/town:
- The ways you can **position your company** behind early education:
- The number of children in **our locality** not ready to begin Kindergarten: _____, based on Phonological Awareness and Literacy Screening (PALS) scores provided by School Division.
- **Our locality's** passage rate for third grade Reading Standards of Learning (SOL): _____ (get data at <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#VA>)
- **Our project outcomes** include community-level indicators such as:

# of new programs	# of programs participating in Child Care Subsidy
# of new child care slots	# of programs participating in VA Quality
# of programs licensed	# of providers trained

Call to Action

- Invest early! When we invest in children during early childhood they are ready to succeed upon entering school.
- Here are a few ways you can help:
- Please share this message with your family, friends and neighbors.
- Please share this message with the Mayor / City Manager / City Council Members / other elected officials / business leaders by calling, texting, emailing, visiting, attending the meeting.
- Join our email list. Come to our next meeting. Bring a friend.
- Advocate for early care and education by:

Notes & Ideas