



Roanoke Regional Mixed Delivery Preschool Pilot United Way of the Roanoke Valley, VA

*Thank you Vivien McMahon, Director of
Early Learning Strategies, UWRV, and
Taryn McCoy, Director of Small Steps
Learning Academy, for sharing your story!*



Tell us about the project and partnership. We received a Mixed Delivery Preschool grant to improve child care quality and create a coordinated enrollment system. Our goal is to serve more children, more efficiently, in high-quality programs. We created an engagement chart and spreadsheet of potential partners who might be interested in working with us to enhance quality. We charted who is in Virginia Quality, using PALS, etc., so we knew where programs were and what supports would be helpful.

How did you identify the need? We have three jurisdictions with Virginia Preschool Initiative waitlists and a private care and preschool program that already serves children from all three jurisdictions, is a subsidy vendor, and serves children eligible for VPI and Head Start already, but did not receive public funding.

What solutions did you brainstorm? How to identify eligible children, transportation solutions, services (IEP and family needs), data collection of outcomes. How to deliver professional and family supports, along with administrative and municipal supports, and integrated/braided funding.

Who are your partners? Roanoke City, Roanoke County, Salem City, Small Steps Learning Academy, Dept. of Social Services; Roanoke Valley Speech and Hearing, VA Western Community College (and others).

What were the steps you followed?

We analyzed data regarding poverty levels for children ages 0-4, demographics and population growth, and education performance indicators (% of KG-3rd graders repeaters, % failing PALS in fall of KG, % failing 3rd grade reading SOL test, % failing 3rd grade math SOL test, % of LG-9th graders repeaters). We created the Quality Assessment Wheel which includes a tiered set of indicators corresponding to strategies related to Ready Early Educators, Ready Families and Ready Communities.

What have the outcomes been so far?

Additional partnerships formed, additional children identified, a coordinated enrollment system, development of a local early childhood integrated data system, a huge list of big and small wins overall – including expansion of a private provider who has now opened an infant academy and is exploring more opportunities for expansion and growth. We can provide additional services and validation for private providers—more opportunities and resources for centers.

Can you give us a specific example?

The Small Steps Learning Academy has grown immensely through new opportunities for private providers, focused on sustainability, resources, and funding streams. Due to the increased quality of the program, enrollment has skyrocketed, from 60% enrollment to full classrooms! The Mixed Delivery support for preschool classrooms has enabled the program to use existing resources, materials, furnishings for infant and toddler rooms. By managing and maximizing resources, Small Steps went from serving eight infants and 10 toddlers to 28 infants and 20 toddlers! We can provide pay increases, free child care for employees, and other incentives.

Roanoke Regional Mixed Delivery Preschool Pilot United Way of the Roanoke Valley, VA

What are the greatest benefits for early care and learning programs?

1. Education, coaching, and incentives for completing training and quality levels—we have teachers enrolled at the local community college. It is really validating for a PreK teacher in a private setting to be visited weekly by a public preschool teacher to share insights, ideas, curriculum, and specific issues.
2. Funding streams—at Small Steps, we went from four to eight funding streams. This is a great benefit for the site, and has enabled us to open a second center and expand infant and toddler care.
3. Supplies and materials received have been amazing! Teachers and Directors are able to move materials around to increase quality in different rooms and for different ages as needed.

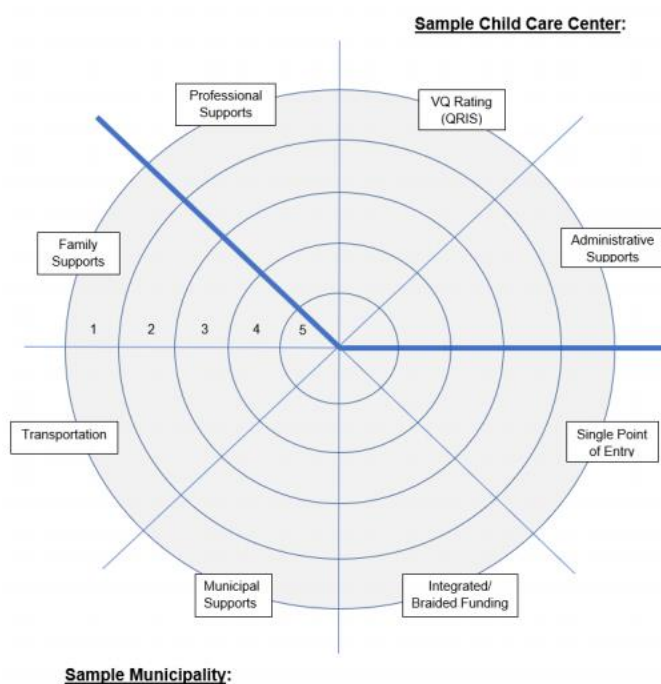
Also enrollment, for example, previously if a program had five open Prek spots, those would stay open for a year. Now, if are slots are not full come Sept. 30th, we look at the unfilled slots and fill them.

Next steps? We will continue to use the Quality Wheel and Engagement Chart as a guide in our partnership; the data will tell us what next steps are. Working on getting more businesses involved—2/3 of parents are in the workforce, why is child care important for businesses, think about snow days, think about planning for now and the future. We will continue conversations and relationships beyond silos.

Best piece of advice? Governance and ownership – it has to be shared! No one organization, agency, or business can be “in control”. Have the right people at the table and in the conversation—private providers. Develop trust and ask How can we be helpful to you? Listen to providers and be responsive. Develop partnerships based on where a provider is now, and where do they want to go.

Learn more about the Roanoke Regional Mixed Delivery Preschool Pilot at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uuNymsDLYhA>.



Quality Assessment Wheel Template (seen at left) and Engagement Chart available online.

Click:

<https://www.dss.virginia.gov/cc/community/index.html?pageID=14>.