

Early Childhood State of the State

Summer 2025

July 15, 2025



Objectives and Agenda

Today we will:

- 1) Review key accomplishments for early childhood in 2024-2025
- 2) Learn more about what's ahead for 2025-2026

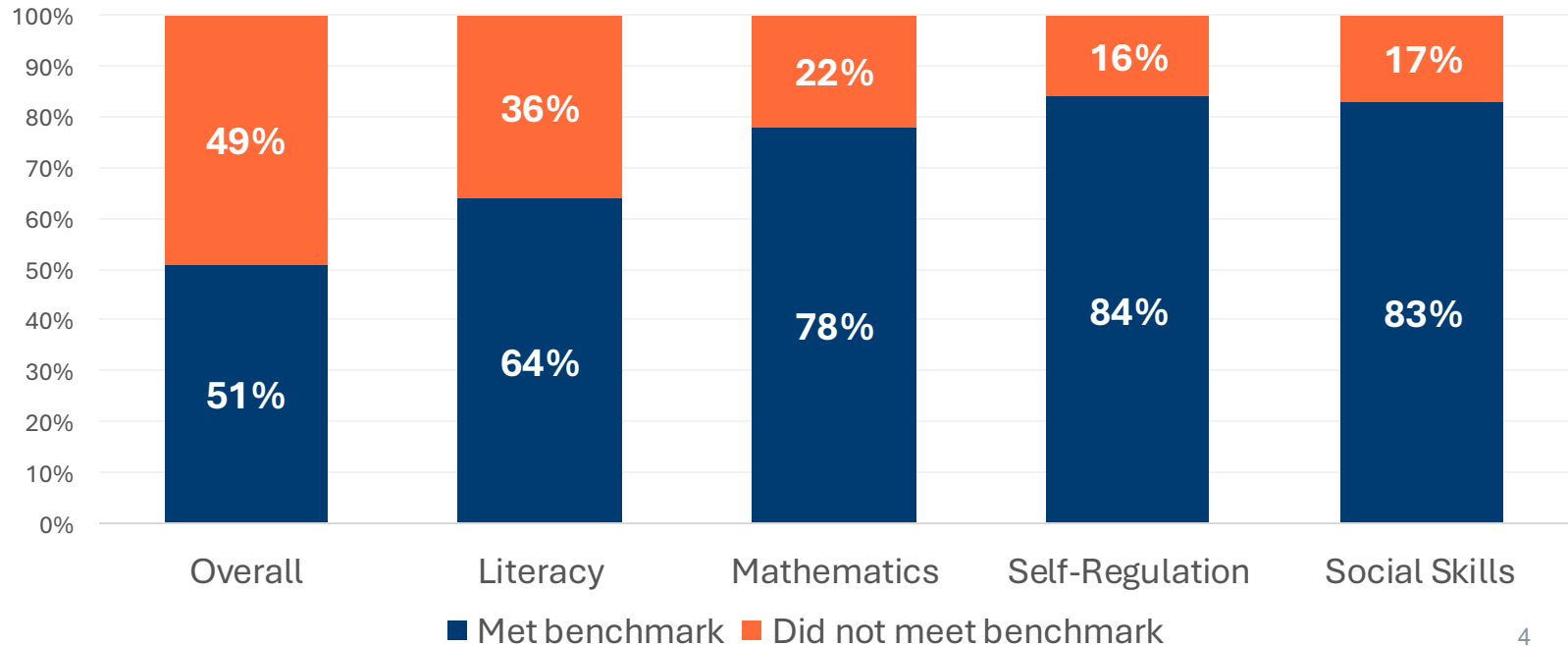
Agenda:

- Virginia's Shared Challenges and Vision for the Future
- Reflection: Progress Across Administrations
- Key Accomplishments and What's Ahead
 - Access, Choice and Parent Demand
 - Quality Improvement
 - Family Engagement
 - Health and Safety
 - Regional Capacity and Innovation
- Next Steps

Shared Challenges

School Readiness in Virginia

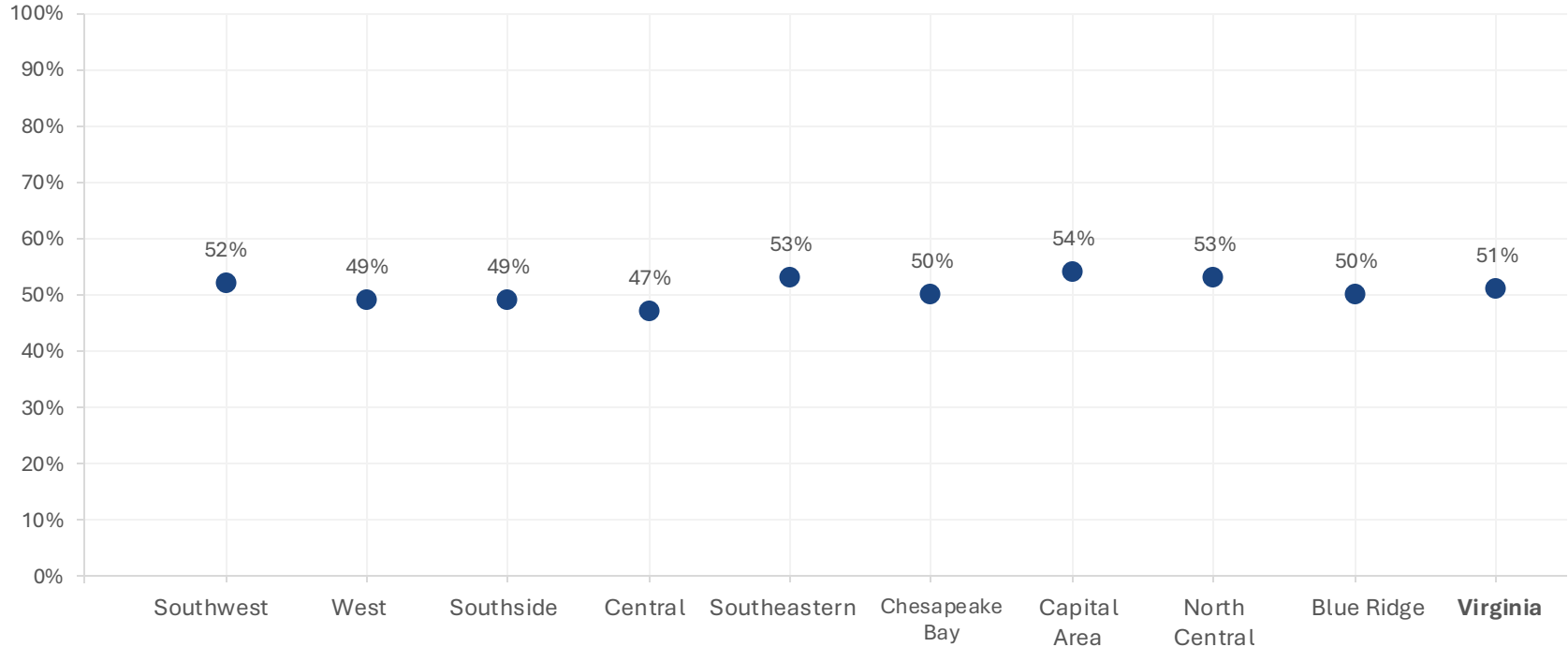
 **49%** of Virginia's kindergarteners began 2024-2025 needing to build skills in Literacy, Mathematics, Self-Regulation, and/or Social Skills.*



NOTE: Students with complete data on each individual measure were included to obtain these estimates.

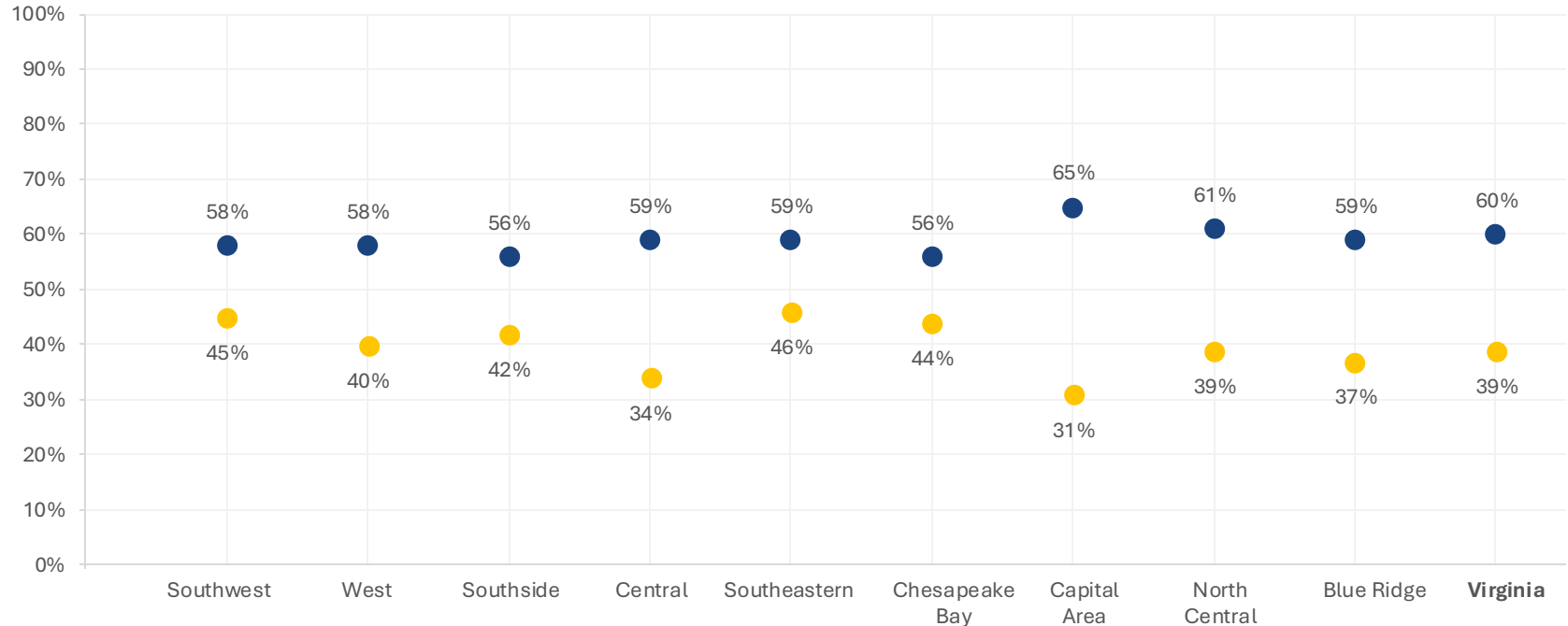
Slight Regional Variation in Readiness

Readiness varies slightly by region as compared to statewide average of 51%.



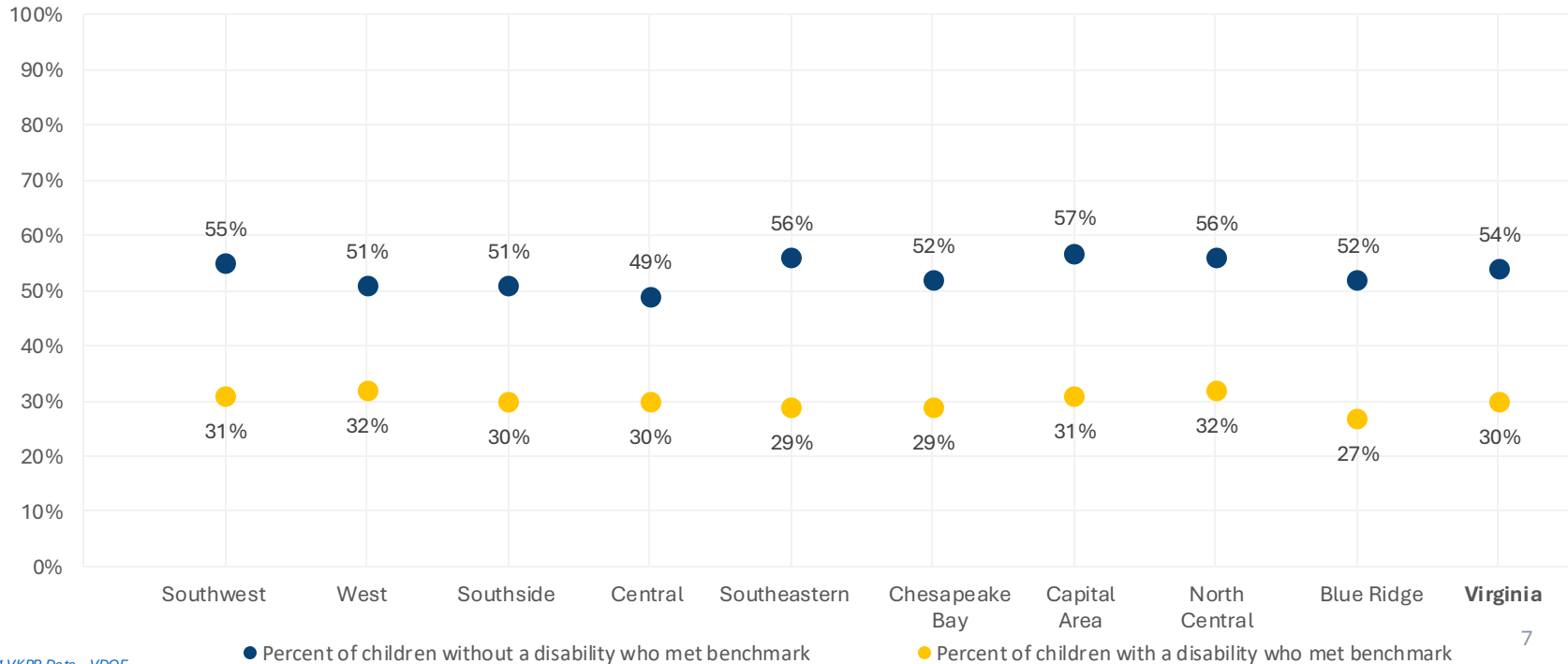
Household Income Predicts Readiness

Children from low-income families are less likely to enter kindergarten ready.



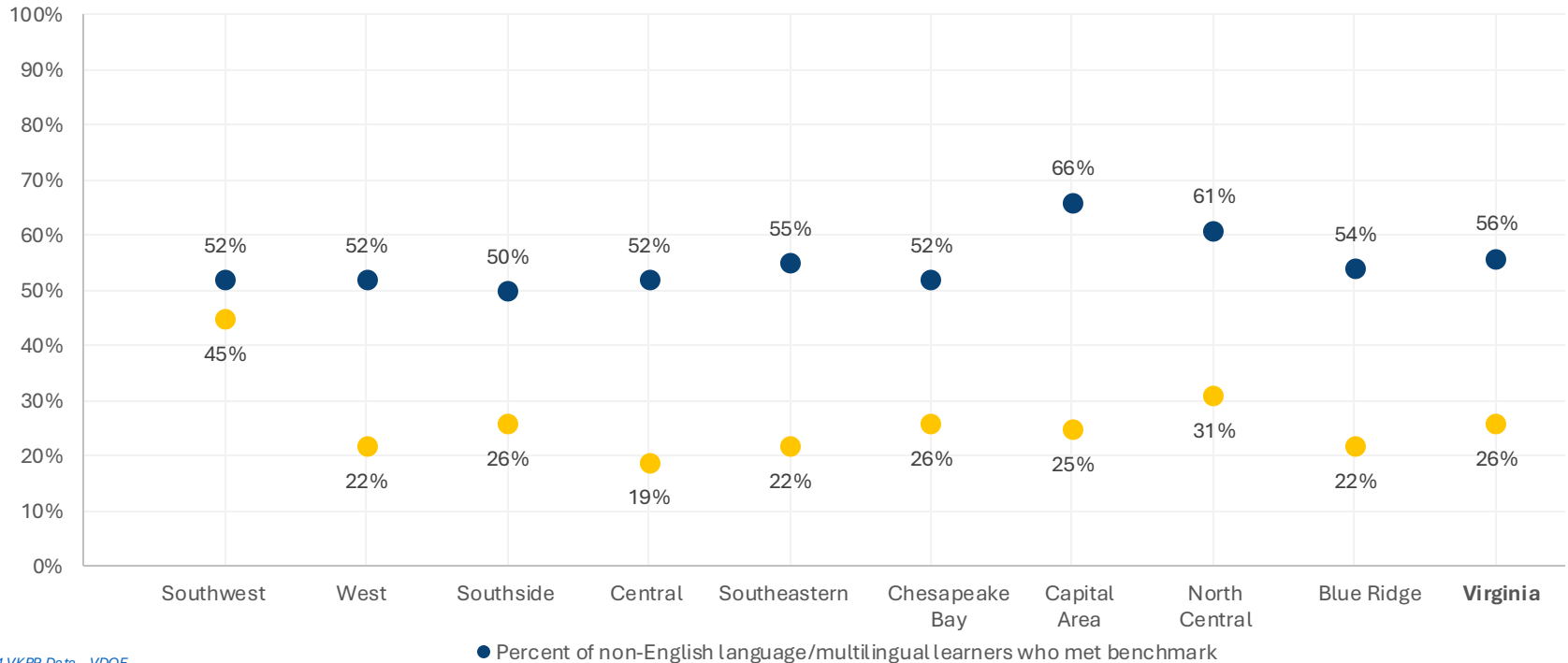
Disability Status Predicts Readiness

Children with disabilities or developmental delays are much less likely to enter kindergarten ready.



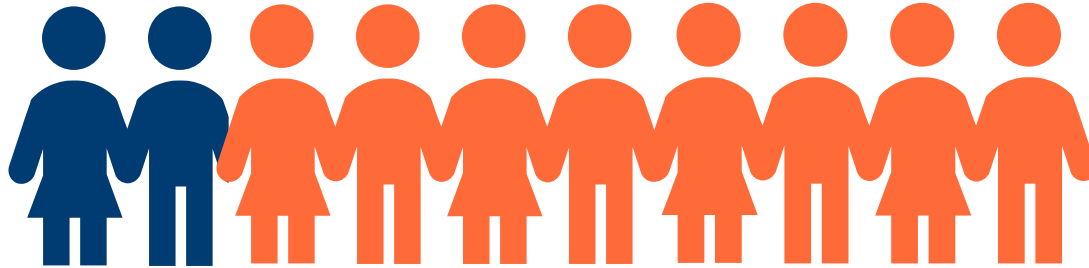
English Learner Status Predicts Readiness

Children who are English Language Learners are significantly less likely to enter kindergarten ready.



Early Childhood Matters for Readiness

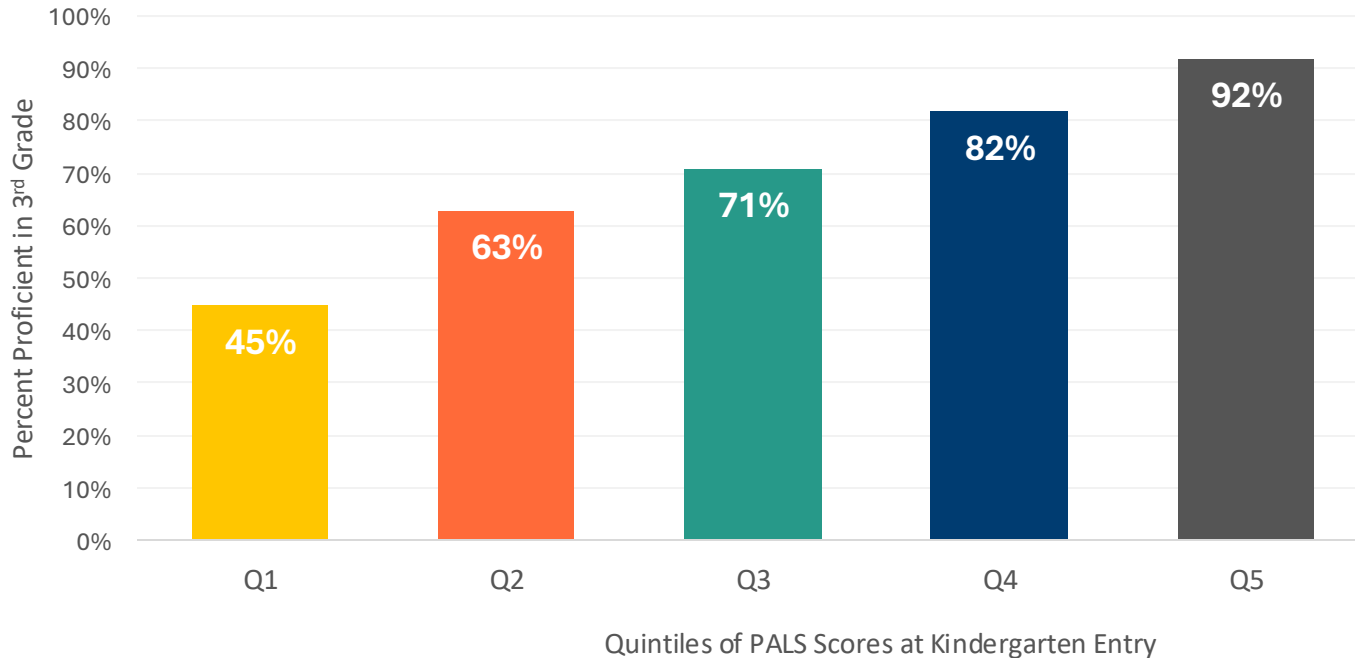
Early childhood significantly improves school readiness for Virginia students from low-income backgrounds. Research shows this is true for different public and private early childhood experiences.



Only about **2** out of **10** students in low-income households *with no preschool experience* enter school ready.

Readiness Predicts Third Grade Reading

Virginia children who enter kindergarten ready are more likely to read on level in 3rd grade.

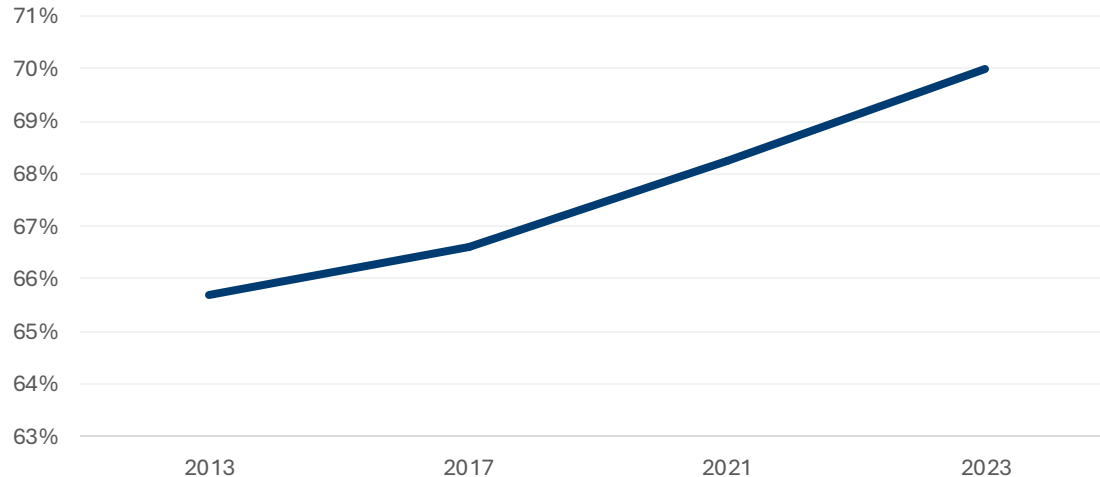


Source: *Probability of Proficiency on Third-Grade SOL by Kindergarten PALS Quintile (All Children)* – Bassok, Herring, McGinty, Miller, & Wycoff, 2019

Working Families Rely on Early Childhood

Parents are children's first and most important teachers, but now more Virginia families depend on early childhood care and education.

Percent of Virginia Children Under Age 6 With All Available Parents in the Workforce

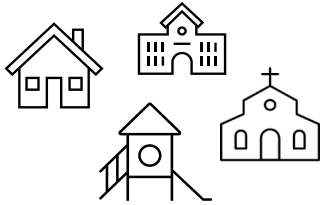


SEVEN OUT OF TEN
Virginia children under
the age of 6 have all
available parents in the
WORKFORCE

Shared Vision for the Future

Our Shared Vision

We envision a Virginia where *all* children have the opportunity to enter school ready.



Families have a variety of affordable, high-quality, public-private early learning options.

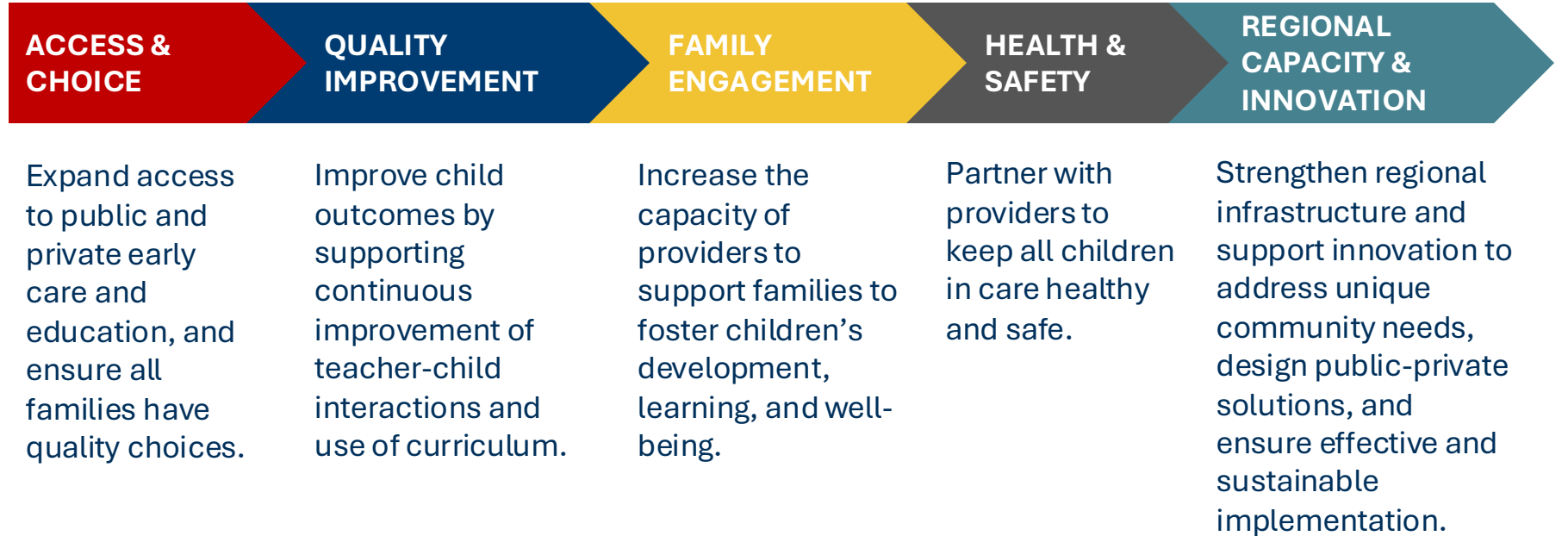


Programs are measured, supported to improve, and rewarded for continuous improvement.



Parents can work or go to school and meet their family's needs.

Shared Goals of Public-Private System



**VIRGINIA PROVIDERS, EDUCATORS, AND FAMILIES ARE ESSENTIAL TO EACH STRATEGY.
READY REGIONS, LED BY VIRGINIA EARLY CHILDHOOD FOUNDATION, ENSURE IMPLEMENTATION.**

Reflection: Progress Across Administrations

Virginia Has Made Significant Gains Since 2018

With bipartisan support, Virginia has unified its public-private birth-to-five early childhood care and education system to:

- increase parent choice and access,
- improve quality,
- measure outcomes and
- build lasting regional infrastructure

while continually promoting innovation and excellence.

As a result, more Virginia children are entering kindergarten with quality early childhood experiences that helped prepare them to be successful in school and beyond.

2018 vs. 2025 – Snapshot of Success

In 2018	In 2025
<p>36,975 children were served with public funds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17,924 in Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) • 18,801 in Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP) • 250 in Mixed Delivery 	<p>69,814 children were served with public funds (89% increase)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23,526 in Virginia Preschool Initiative (31% increase) • 43,550 in Child Care Subsidy Program (132% increase) • 2,738 in Mixed Delivery (995% increase) <p><i>Most of this increase is driving by demand for public-private settings from working families.</i></p>
<p>\$97,997,348 in state general funds were invested to serve children</p>	<p>\$390,175,115 in state general funds were invested to serve children (~300% increase)</p>
<p>2,572 private providers participated in CCSP</p>	<p>3,107 private providers participated in CCSP (21% increase)</p>
<p>1,462 child care providers participate in VQ</p>	<p>3,401 child care providers participate in VQB5 (133% increase)</p>
<p>165 CLASS observations completed via VQ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13,200 minutes of insight 	<p>31,258 CLASS observations completed via VQB5 (18,844% increase)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.2 million minutes of insight
<p>31,091 children in VKRP</p>	<p>132,112 children in VKRP (325% increase)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VKRP for K: 86,661 • Preschool VKRP: 43,451
<p>No data system connecting VQ, VALLS and VKRP</p>	<p>VAConnects will link data systems for 32,500+ birth-8th grade classrooms, 80,000+ users and 558,000+ children.</p>

Access and Choice

Accomplishments and Next Steps

All Funds Were Used for Slots in FY25

Virginia was able to maximize *Building Blocks*, a historic \$1.2 billion state and federal investment in FY25 to serve more children with public funds than ever before. No early childhood funds were left unused unlike prior years.

- Mixed Delivery served 2,738 children in FY25, a 6% increase from the previous year.
- Enrollment in the Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP) reached a historic high, with 43,550 children in May 2025 compared to ~40,700 in May 2024 (7% increase). One-third of children enrolled in CCSP are school-age children.
- Two-thirds of families prefer private settings, especially working parents who need full-day, full-year options.
- VPI served 23,526 children in FY25, a 5% increase from the previous year. Unused VPI funds were used to add CCSP slots in response to new state law.
- All partners worked with Head Start to maximize all federal resources, helping to offer access to comprehensive two-generation services for our most vulnerable families.

Public-Private Parent Choice System

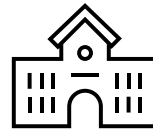
Virginia's early childhood system consists of multiple public and private providers that offer birth-to-five care and education across multiple settings.



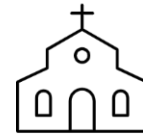
Over **2,000**
family child
care homes



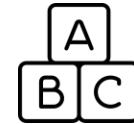
Over **3,000**
licensed
child care
centers



954 public
schools



Over **880**
religiously-
exempt child
care centers



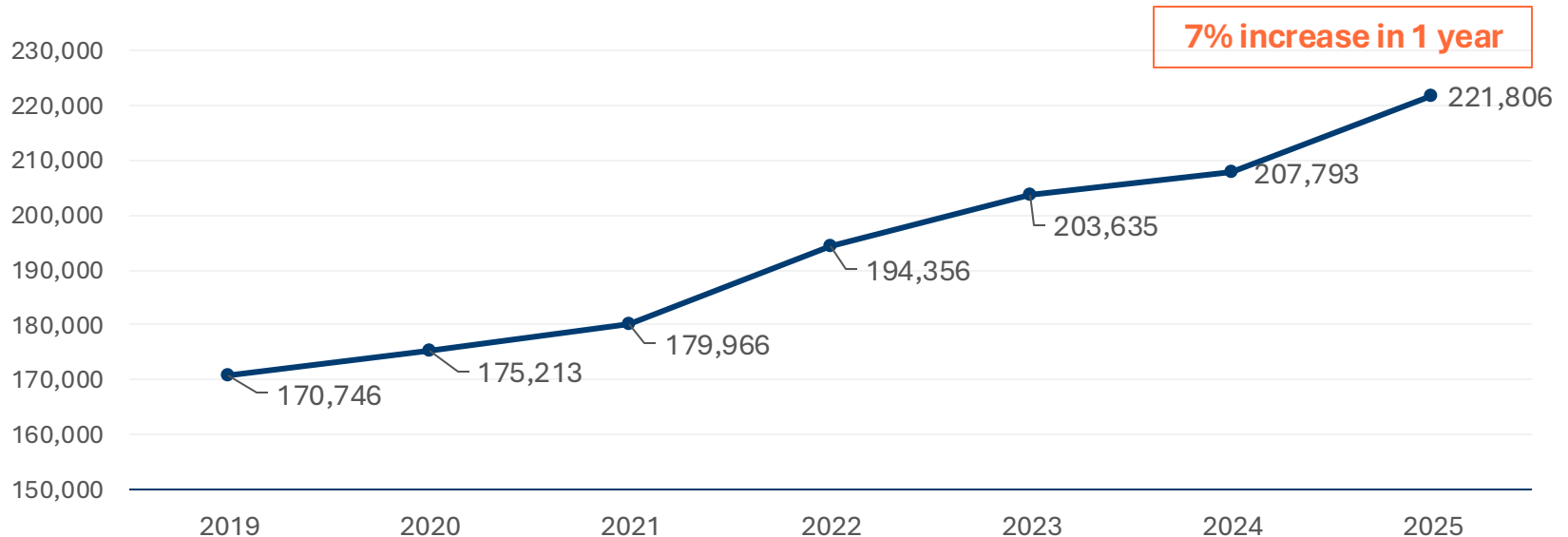
46 Head Start
and Early
Head Start
grantees
(across 360+ sites)

Note: Site totals are not mutually exclusive and should not be summed. Additional site types include certified preschools, local government approved centers, and short-term child day centers (generally summer camps).

More Private Providers Take Public Funds

More private providers are choosing to take public funds with maximum capacity increasing by 30% since 2019.

Capacity to Serve Publicly-Funded Children in Private Settings in Virginia, 2019-2025



Coordinated Enrollment in Ready Regions

All Ready Regions lead local partners to coordinate enrollment by:

- Informing families about early childhood care and education options,
- Streamlining applications and enrollment into publicly-funded programs, and
- Maximizing enrollment by helping families find programs that meet their needs.

Ready Regions, with support from VECF, are also implementing new technology:

- Five regions are piloting the VA Ready to Find Child Care online marketplace which:
 - Makes it easier for families to search and apply for early childhood programs
 - Enables families to conduct 13,600+ searches and submit 9,000+ applications this year



Strengthening Supports for Private Providers

Virginia has transitioned functions to better support private providers with a focus on attracting and retaining CCSP providers.

- VDOE has launched a new Office of Early Childhood Public-Private Provider Services at VDOE that includes prior Office of Vendor Relations from VDSS.
- Provider Services will build on partnerships with 3,000+ privately-operated, publicly-funded providers to:
 - Process applications and facilitate provider management for the CCSP.
 - Establish and maintain clear, consistent expectations for participation in state-administered publicly-funded programs.
 - Offer one-on-one assistance to providers that need support to apply for or participate in publicly-funded programs via regionalized navigator team.

Going Forward: A New High in Access

Biennial State Budget made historic investments for ECCE via *Building Blocks* — ~\$1.2 billion in funding over the biennium, two-thirds of which is state funding.

- FY26 budget dedicates \$593 million towards ECCE, including the largest ever single year state investment in early childhood of \$462 million.
- Copayment levels (5%) largely determine how many new slots can be provided.
- FY26 funding will support up to ~5,200 additional slots beyond FY25 enrollment.
- New state law ensures that dollars more closely follow parent choice.

More children will have access to publicly-funded slots in FY26 than ever before.

Program	Slots Available for FY26	Change from FY25 Slots Used	Change from 2018	Percent Increase from 2018
Total	74,793	+5,187	+37,818	102%
Child Care Subsidy Program	47,676	+ 4,126	+28,875	153%
Virginia Preschool Initiative	24,487	+ 961	+6,563	37%
Mixed Delivery Program	2,630	+ 100*	+2,380	952%

Continuing to Address Waitlists

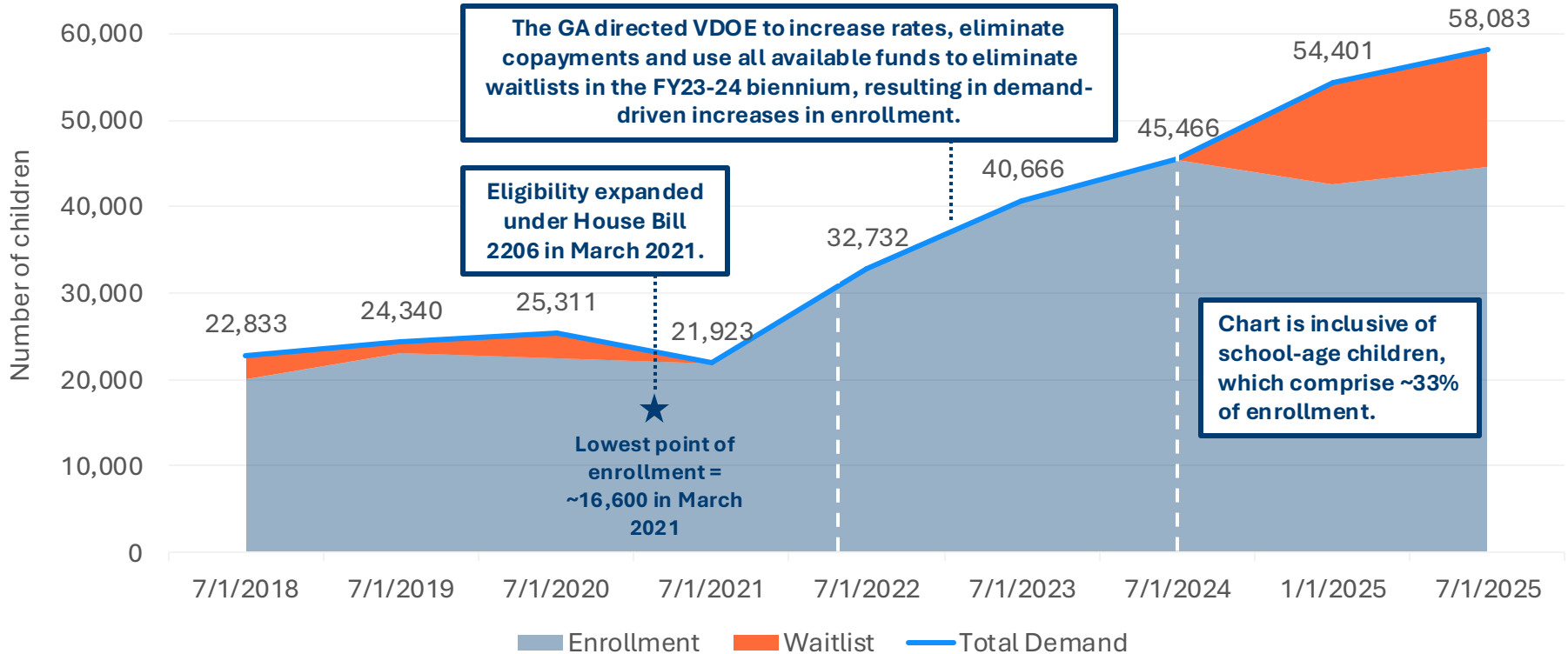
For every 5 slots in CCSP and Mixed Delivery, 1 child is on a waitlist.

- Historic state investments in FY25-26 biennial budget ensured that no children would lose services following the end of pandemic funding.
- However, there has been ongoing growth in parental demand from working families, including households of school-age children. As a result, waitlists in CCSP and Mixed Delivery grew steadily during FY25.
 - Currently, ~13,500 children are on CCSP waitlists – 60% of which are birth-5.
 - Currently, ~2,000 children are on Mixed Delivery waitlists.

	Children on CCSP Waitlist (7/1/25)		Children on MD Waitlist (6/18/25)	
	Number	As % of Waitlist	Number	As % of Waitlist
Infants/Toddlers	4,568	34%	1,381	71%
Preschool (3-5 yrs)	3,533	26%	572	29%
School-Age (6+)	5,385	40%	-	
Total	13,486		1,953	

Working Families Drive Growing Demand

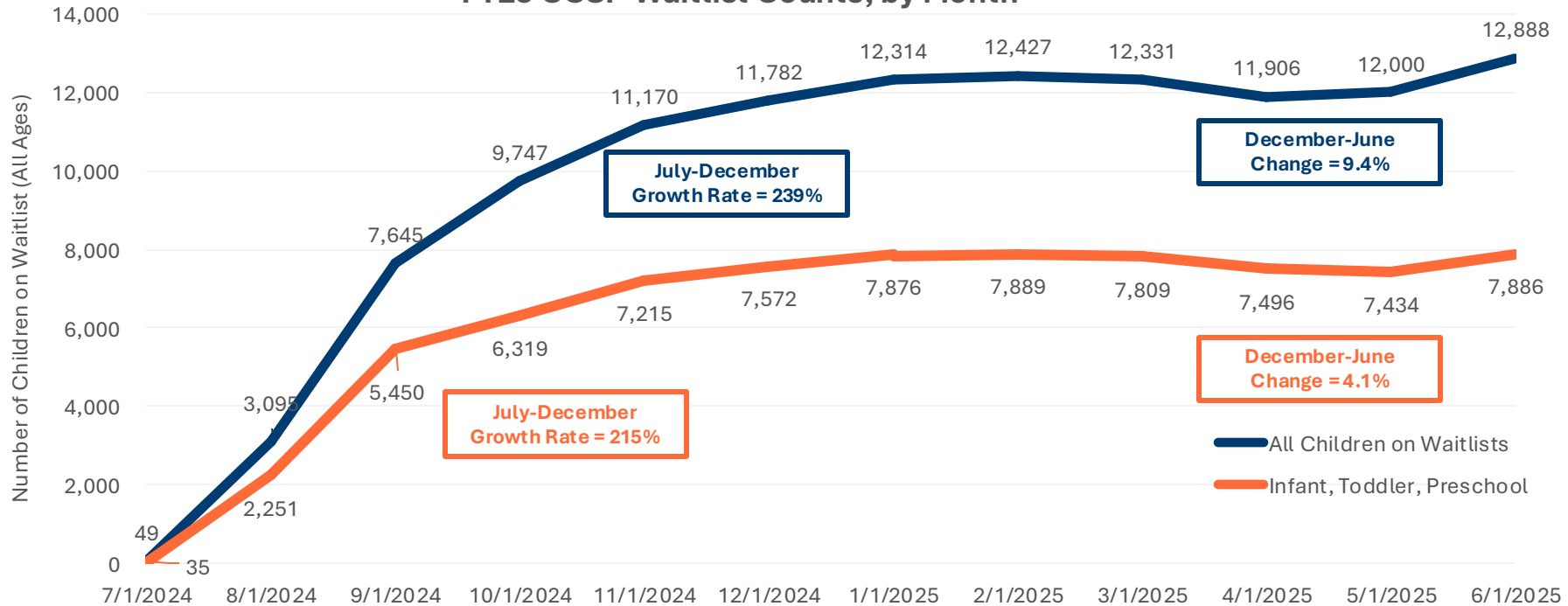
Demand for CCSP has increased consistently year over year since 2021.



Child Care Waitlists Continue to Grow

Rate of growth of waitlists has slowed as working families face difficult choices.

FY25 CCSP Waitlist Counts, by Month



What's Next for Access and Choice?

- **Implement Policy Shifts to Maximize State Dollars**
 - Work with state and local partners to implement new family copayments and job search rules that will allow for an additional ~5,200 children to be served off waitlists.
 - Explore opportunities to right-size school-age funding to prioritize CCSP for birth-to-five.
- **Demonstrate the Impact of Unmet Demand and Explore Financing Strategies**
 - Support Commission on Early Childhood Care and Education as they analyze unmet demand and make recommendations on future financing.
 - Use research-to-policy partnerships to understand impact of waitlists on parental employment and family economic wellbeing.
- **Improve Customer Service and Build on Partnerships with 3,000+ ECCE Sites**
 - Improve supports for all providers who currently or want to participate in CCSP.
- **Implement a New, Modernized Attendance Tracking System for the CCSP**
 - Launch new app-based, mobile-friendly system in December 2025.

Quality Improvement

Accomplishments and Next Steps

VQB5 Completes Second Year

VQB5 completed a second successful year, meaning more Virginia children are benefiting from quality experiences. 2024-2025 results will be published this fall.

During the 2024-2025 year:

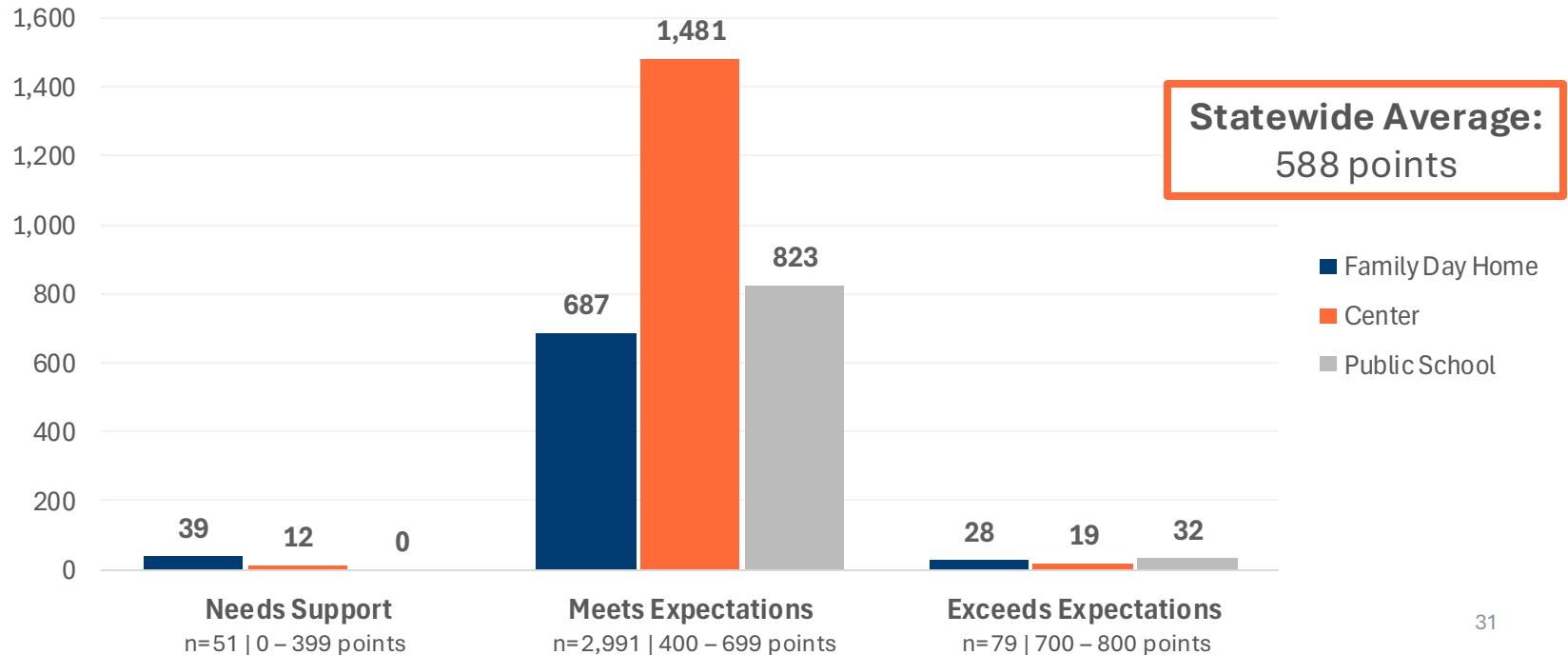
- The first public VQB5 quality ratings results (2023-2024) for 3,121 sites were released in October 2024 via [EarlyChildhoodQuality.doe.virginia.gov](https://www.earlychildhoodquality.doe.virginia.gov).
- 100% of publicly-funded programs that serve children ages birth-to-five participated in VQB5.
- Nearly 3,400 sites participated, which is nearly 300 more sites than the previous year.
- VQB5 measured and supported improvement in 11,300+ classrooms in child care centers, family day homes, Head Start and public schools.



VQB5 is Virginia's system for measuring and supporting quality in early childhood programs so that children enter kindergarten ready to learn.

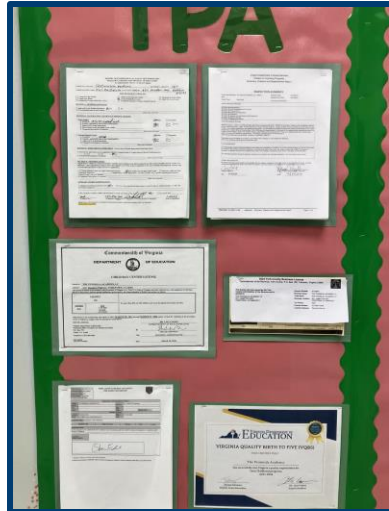
VQB5 Results Shared for First Time

In Fall 2024, Virginia shared that 98% of 3,121 sites met or exceed the state's quality expectations in 2023-2024 year.



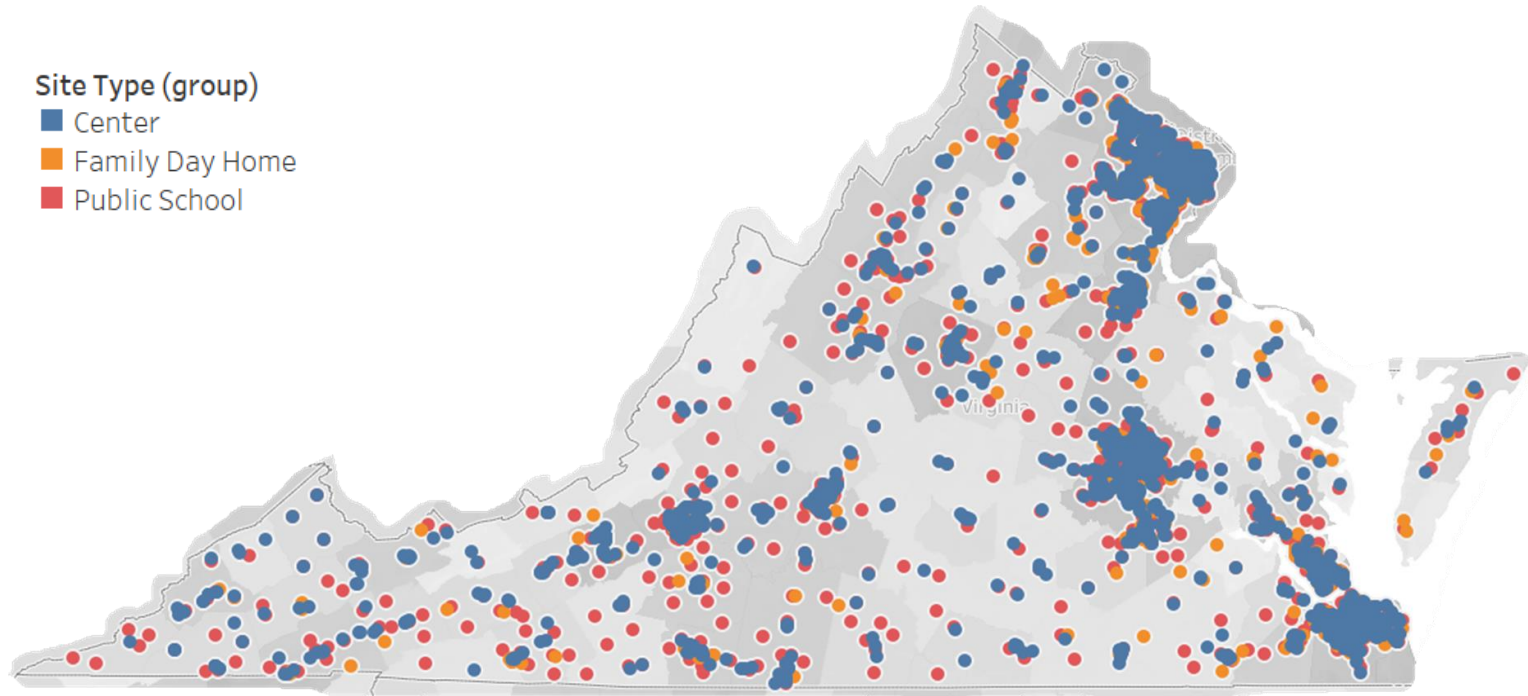
Sites Promote VQB5 Quality Ratings

Sites have been [promoting their quality rating](#) and participation in VQB5 to their families and local communities.



VQB5 Continues to Grow

This past year, ~3,400 sites participated in VQB5, with sites in every city and county in Virginia. That's ~300 more sites than the previous year.



Summary of 2024-2025 Successes

VQB5's second year of implementation continued to be a success.

Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100% of publicly-funded programs in Virginia participated in VQB5.• Over 15,900 educators received financial support through RecognizeB5.• 90% of classrooms successfully completed classroom lists, which included informing families about their VQB5 participation.
Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 99.9% of VQB5 classrooms completed fall and spring local CLASS observations through Ready Regions.• 81% of sites reported using an approved quality curriculum in at least one classroom.
Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 31,000+ fall and spring local and external CLASS observations are being used to identify strengths, support improvement and measure growth.• 70+ curricula are approved, including choices for all program types.• Needs Support sites received intensive site improvement and coaching support.

More Feedback Than Ever Before

VQB5 primarily relies on local observations and local feedback to produce site quality ratings and drive quality improvement.

- At the same time, Virginia continues to ensure consistency, reliability, and accuracy across thousands of local observers.

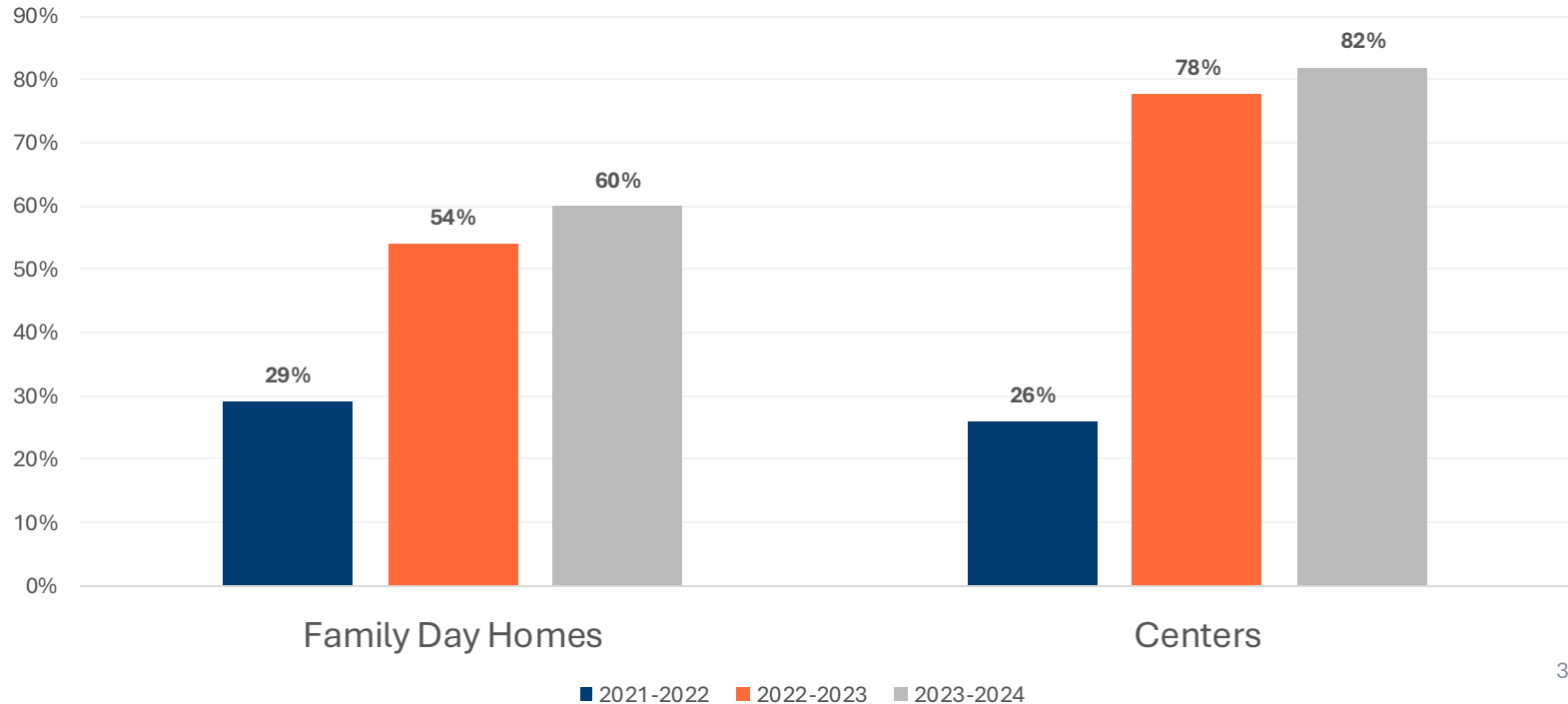
2024-2025	Fall Completed	Spring Completed	Total
Local Observations	11,313	11,312	22,625
External Observations	3,381	5,252	8,633
TOTAL	14,694	16,564	31,258

This represents 2.2 million minutes of insight into children's experiences.

**Local and External observations based on number of VQB5 eligible classrooms in LinkB5 as of June 3, 2025. External observations are to be completed in approximately 75% of all VQB5 eligible classrooms during the 2024-2025 year.*

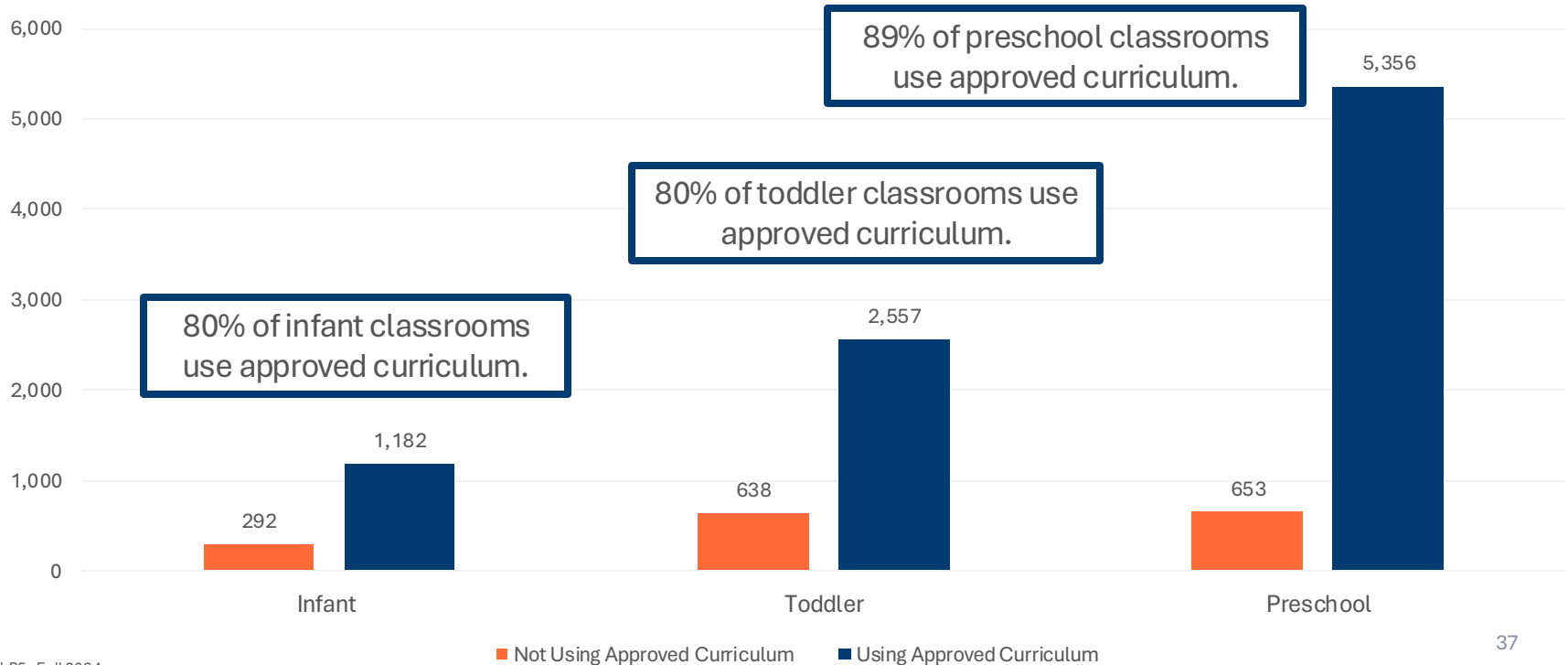
More Children Benefit from Quality Curriculum

Use of approved curriculum in family day home and center-based classrooms has grown significantly over time.



Quality Curriculum Used Across Birth-5

81% of sites are using an approved curriculum in at least one classroom.



Supporting Sites in Greatest Need

Sites (51) that received Needs Support in 2023-2024 were required to participate in Site Quality Improvement Planning in 2024-2025.

- VDOE Quality Consultants help sites create plans, provide technical assistance, make referrals, and monitor progress throughout the year.
- [Virginia Early Childhood Consultation \(VECC\)](#) provide intensive support to help Needs Support sites better understand CLASS, teacher-child interaction, and social-emotional environments that includes:
 - Coaching (family day home- focused, leader-focused, and classroom-focused), professional development, and technical assistance.

VECC also provides free [resources](#) and [quarterly webinars](#) to all VQB5 programs statewide on CLASS and support continuous quality improvement.

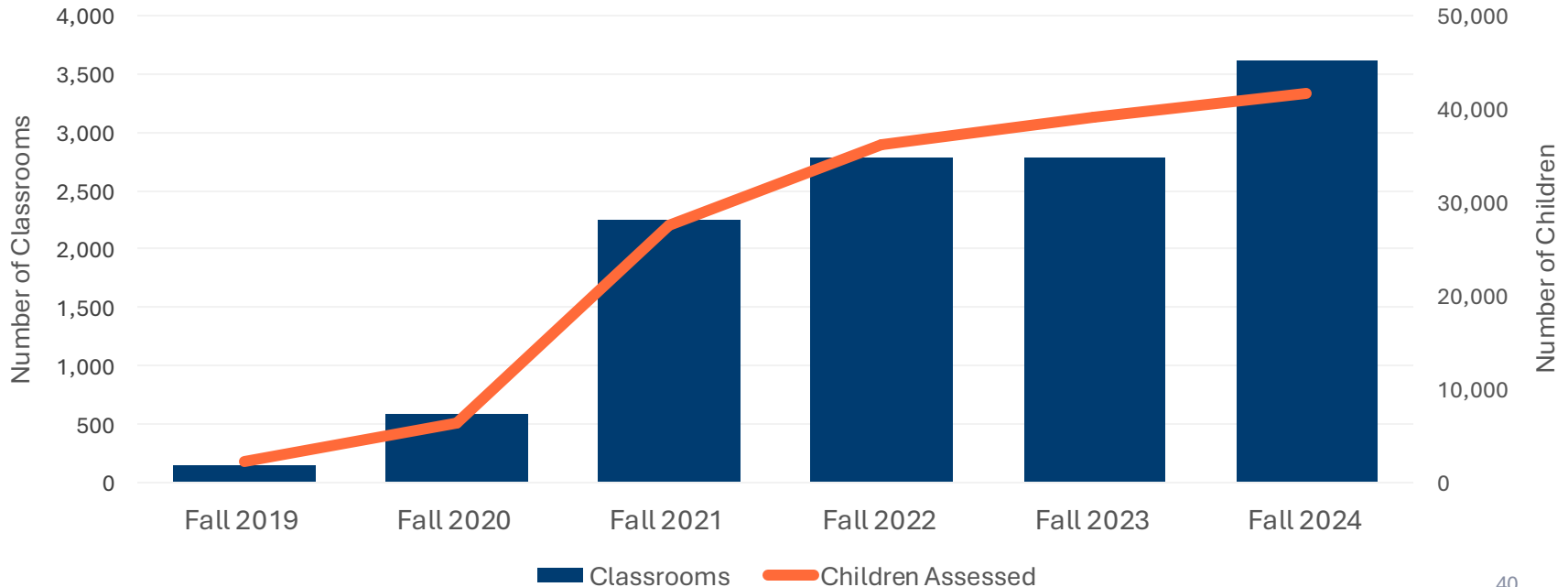
Investments in Improvement for All

Virginia continues to increase resources for all educators based on their needs.

Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providers can choose from 70+ approved curriculum options including 4 no-cost options. All approved options are considered quality.• 3,300+ new educators used online STREAMin3 portal.• New What is Early Childhood Curriculum? explains benefits of quality curriculum.
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• VKRP and VALLS: Pre-K Reports give information to support classroom and home learning.• 687 preschool classrooms opted-in to the VKRP mid-year screening.
Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 475 new learners signed-up for the ELDS micro-credential.• ELDS Exploration Webinar Series helps educators learn the ELDS Core Areas and explore related ECE Resource Hub activities.• New Infant, Toddler, and Pre-K CLASS and ELDS Crosswalks connect CLASS with the ELDS.

Using Preschool VKRP with More Kids

More preschool educators are using VKRP and VALLS: Pre-K to inform instruction and partner with families.



Changes to RecognizeB5

There are no funds available to continue RecognizeB5 in 2025-2026.

- Virginia began providing financial incentives to eligible early childhood educators through RecognizeB5 in 2019.
 - \$105 million was distributed via VECF to child care and family day home educators over 6 years.
 - Number of educators increased from 2,023 in 2019-2020 to 16,030 in 2024-2025.
- RecognizeB5 relied heavily on pandemic federal funding, which ended in September 2024.
 - As a bridge, General Assembly made a one-time \$20 million state investment for 2024-2025.
 - However, there are no state or federal funds available for RecognizeB5 for 2025-2026.
- RecognizeB5 has been an important program with demonstrated effectiveness in reducing turnover. Virginia will continue to explore strategies to support child care educator workforce.
- There are no changes to VQB5 participation expectations as a result of this shift.

What's Next For Quality Improvement?

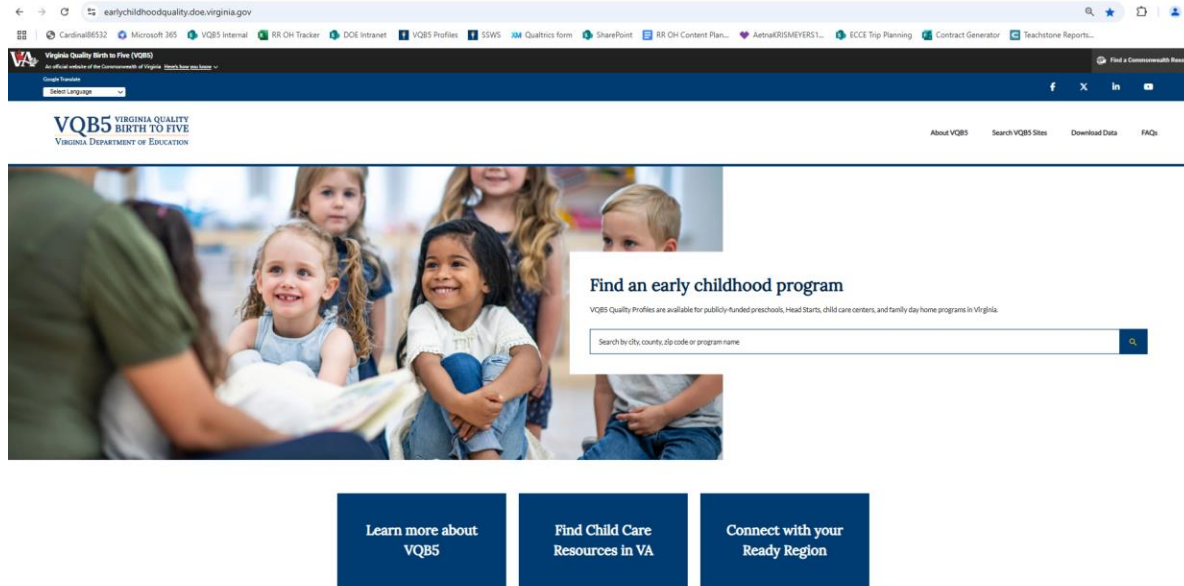
- **Use Specific VQB5 Data to Support Improvement in Every Classroom.**
 - Increase use and understanding of data with all sites and partners.
- **Focus Improvement Supports on Sites and Teachers that Need Them Most.**
 - Support Needs Support sites to improve and ensure that other sites do not become Needs Support sites.
 - Increase strategies for supporting new teachers to be successful.
- **Prepare for Curriculum Change in Points Calculation, Effective in 2026-2027.**
 - Support sites that choose to use curriculum to use it in all classrooms.
 - Beginning in 2026-2027, sites will receive only curriculum points for VQB5 if they use in all classrooms.
- **Support the Early Childhood Workforce.**
 - Communicate the RecognizeB5 change and continue to work with state partners on strategies to achieve sustainable competitive compensation.

Family Engagement

Accomplishments and Next Steps

Families are Using One-Stop Portal

VQB5 Quality Profile Website has had 90,000+ views since launching in October and serves as a one stop portal for information about quality, health, and safety. (www.EarlyChildhoodQuality.doe.virginia.gov)




The screenshot displays the website interface for Virginia Quality Birth to Five (VQB5). At the top, there is a navigation bar with the VQB5 logo and the text "VIRGINIA QUALITY BIRTH TO FIVE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION". Below this is a search bar with the text "Find an early childhood program" and a subtext "VQB5 Quality Profiles are available for publicly-funded preschools, Head Starts, child care centers, and family day home programs in Virginia." A search input field is provided with the placeholder text "Search by city, county, zip code or program name". At the bottom of the page, there are three blue buttons: "Learn more about VQB5", "Find Child Care Resources in VA", and "Connect with your Ready Region".


Supporting Families to Understand VQB5

More families are learning about VQB5 and why it matters for their children.

- All VQB5 sites are required to inform families about their participation in VQB5.
- VDOE has developed several resources for site leaders to support family engagement in VQB5.
 - VQB5 for Families Handout ([English/Spanish](#))
 - [PowerPoint](#) for VQB5 Info Session for Families
 - [Tips for Promoting Your VQB5 Quality Rating](#)
 - [Student/Child List Toolkit](#) with talking points and letter templates for parent communication
 - [FAQs for Parents](#) on the VQB5 Quality Profile website



VQB5
for Families



To prepare all children for kindergarten, and in response to state law, Virginia has developed the Unified Virginia Quality Birth to Five System (VQB5) to measure and improve the quality of all publicly-funded birth-to-five classrooms and support families to choose quality programming across all types of programs.


What is the Purpose of VQB5?
VQB5 is Virginia's system for measuring and supporting quality in early childhood programs so that children enter kindergarten ready to learn. VQB5 is used in child care centers, family day homes, public school preschools, and Head Start all across the state.

What does this mean if my child is enrolled in a VQB5 site?
VQB5 sites are focused on providing quality learning experiences for your child. This means your child's teacher is receiving feedback and support multiple times a year. Your site is also likely using a quality curriculum.

How does VQB5 work?
There are two parts to VQB5:
1. Trained observers look at all classrooms, using a nationally-regarded early childhood observation tool called CLASS. This observation focuses on the interactions between teachers and children.
2. VQB5 also looks at whether classrooms are using a quality curriculum that has been approved by the state. Curriculum is always optional, and programs have lots of choices.


Where can I find VQB5 Quality Ratings information?
VQB5 quality ratings are available at earlychildhood.virginia.gov

Who takes part in VQB5?
Birth-to-five early childhood programs who receive government funding are required to take part in VQB5. Programs that do not receive any government funding can choose to take part.



VQB5 Information Session for Families

NAME OF SITE or READY REGION



October 2024



Family Councils and Family Engagement

Virginia continues to engage families through local and regional structures and use their feedback to inform statewide supports.

- Ready Regions, with VECF support, engage families and act as a source for information, updates, and opportunities to be involved.
- Each Ready Region regularly convenes a Family Council, a formal mechanism to help build regional systems and advise on state-initiatives.
 - In 2025, 196 families participated with average of 22 families per region.
 - Family councils helped inform Mixed Delivery, Coordinated Enrollment, VKRP Family Resources, VQB5 Quality Profile Website, and VQB5 resources.
- [Virginia Promise Partnership](#) Parent Advisory Group provides family perspectives and guidance to regional and state early childhood initiatives.

Parent representatives on Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) and Commission on Early Childhood Care and Education also help inform statewide efforts.

What's Next for Family Engagement?

- **Continue to Increase Understanding of Family Perspectives**
 - Engage more families through Ready Region Family Councils and expand the online early childhood marketplace.
 - Complete and review a survey focused on understanding the experience of families on CCSP waitlists to inform future planning.
 - Ensure family perspectives inform statewide policy and practices.
- **Improve Family-Friendly Website for VQB5**
 - Promote the VQB5 Quality Profile website, make it more mobile-friendly and work to help increase parental understanding of how quality is measured and why it matters.
- **Expand Family Tools and Resources**
 - Develop new resources and reports in response to family feedback based on VACconnects system that will include information on [VQB5](#), [VKRP](#), and [early learning resources](#).

Health and Safety

Accomplishments and Next Steps

Key Updates for Health and Safety

Virginia partners with child care providers to keep children in care healthy and safe.

In 2024-2025, VDOE has strengthened supports for the field by:

- Updating subsidy orientation training for unlicensed centers/homes with Child Care Aware.
- Revising the exemption to licensure forms to streamline information collected.
- Offering free daily health observation and reporting child abuse and neglect training with the Community College Workforce Alliance in English and Spanish.

In 2024-2025, Virginia helped keep young children safe by completing:

- 15,000+ inspections at child day programs (2,000 more than last year);
- 1,100+ complaint investigations (almost exactly the same as last year); and
- 140+ allegation investigations of unlicensed activity (down slightly from last year).
- Virginia also had to increase the number of follow-up actions by 25% to 111.

Note that the number of licensed/regulated programs remain the same as last year.

Using Engagement and Feedback To Improve

Virginia has revised policies, laws and support to increase flexibility and respond to feedback.

- Final version of *General Procedures and Information for Licensure*, and *Background Checks for Child Day Programs and Family Day Systems*, have been approved by the Board and are heading to the Governor's Office for review.
- New proposed *Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers* have been approved by the Board and are under review by the Office of the Attorney General.
- As a result of Senate Bill 1084, a new exemption to license went into effect on July 1, 2025 for certain out-of-school-time (OST) programs.
- Changes to the "Pre-Service" training for staff in a licensed child day program and staff in a subsidy program is scheduled for January of 2026.
 - Training will be tailored to the ages staff work with as well as to the type of program within which they work (e.g., center based, home based).

What's Next for Health and Safety?

- **Making Revised Regulations Available for Public Comment**
 - Proposed child day center standards will become available for a 60-day public comment period after approval by the Office of the Attorney General and Governor.
 - Upon final approval, new standards will be implemented after training and technical assistance are made available.
- **Build New Technology Platform for Licensing**
 - Procure new technology to make it easier to apply/renew, receive an inspection and track information over time.
- **Strengthening Training, Support and Partnership**
 - Continue to revise and improve training and supports including preservice training.

Regional Capacity and Innovation

Accomplishments and Next Steps

Innovation Highlights

In partnership with VECF, Ready Regions and others, Virginia is designing and implementing public-private innovations.

- *Improving Data Systems:* Virginia has built an integrated data system to better support children's learning from birth through 8th grade.
- *Supporting Access in High-Need Areas:* Southwest VA is piloting a tri-share model where employers, families, and the state all help pay.
- *Pilot New Approaches to Support the Workforce:* FastTrack continues to explore how to best attract, prepare, and retain educators.
- *Engage Business Partners to Identify Solutions:* Business leaders are identifying strategies to increase investment in the ECCE system.
- *Expanding Payment Options for Families and Donors:* New Digital Wallet will make it easier for all families to support quality early childhood care and education.



Ready Regions as Local Leaders

Ready Regions, led by VECF, lead system coordination with a focus on VQB5 implementation, accountability, and family engagement.

- In 2024-2025, VECF led triennial recompetition process to identify Ready Regions for 2025-2028.
 - Nine entities were selected as lead agencies.
- Ready Regions engage 100% of Virginia's publicly-funded sites and have met all performance expectations related to:
 - Building relationships with leaders, educators and community partners as "on the ground" leads.
 - Measuring and supporting quality through VQB5.
 - Increasing access and coordinating enrollment.
 - Engaging families through regional councils.



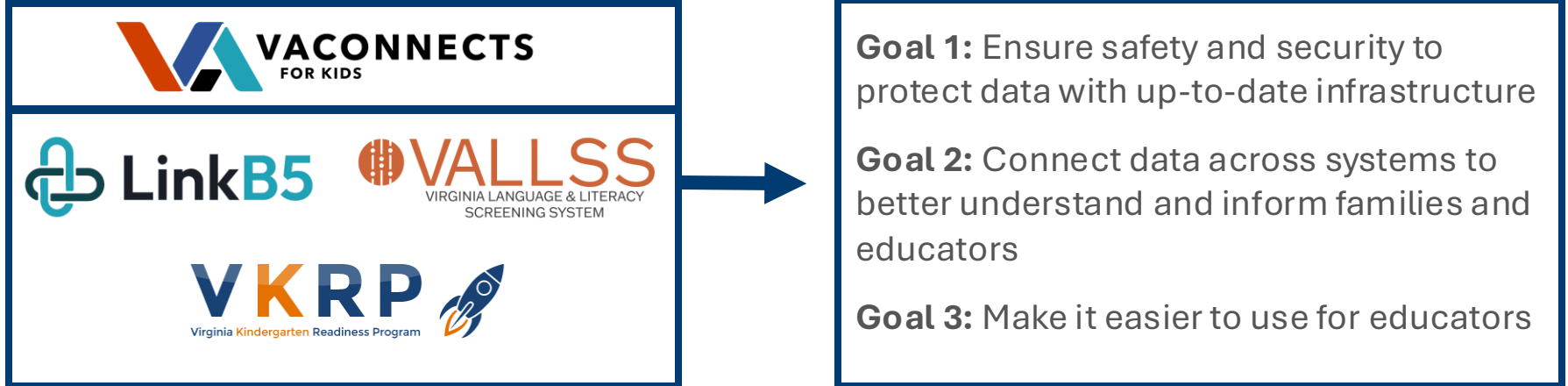
[Ready Regions Website](#)

READY
REGIONS

VACONNECTS Links Birth – 8th Grade

Virginia Connects for Kids (VACONNECTS) is a new integrated data system that links three state data systems to improve coordination and usability.

- 80,000+ users will log into VACONNECTS to access LinkB5, VALLSS, and/or VKRP, and experience an upgraded and more streamlined system this summer.

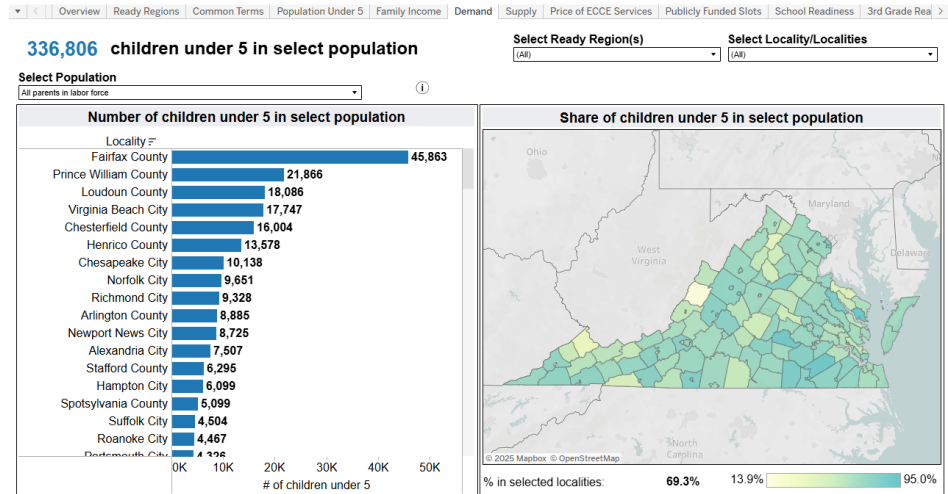


Supply-Demand Tool Supports Investment

VECF developed [data resources](#) to support Ready Regions and stakeholders to target investments and make decisions to ensure school-ready children, work-ready parents, and thriving communities.

Dashboard uses multiple sources of data to provide information on:

- Demand for ECCE in Virginia;
- Supply of ECCE, including publicly-funded slots; and
- Child and family outcomes.



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates, 2023 5-Year American Community Survey, 2023 1-Year American Community Survey microdata

VECF 2025 Ready Regions ECCE Supply/Demand Dashboard

Business Leaders Are More Engaged

VECF launched [Virginia Business Roundtable for Early Education](#) (VBREE) to engage business leaders and support investment and innovation.

- VBREE members represent regional business, employers, and economic development sectors.
- In 2024, VBREE formed [Shovel Ready Task Force](#) to convene top executives to support a collective effort to build the supply of high-quality ECCE and support the workforce.
- Shovel Ready Task Force has explored strategies to strengthen ECCE educator workforce, build supply, and increase family access to affordable child care.
- In June 2025, Shovel Ready Task Force produced recommendations, including a new regional initiative that will be implemented through VBREE.



Launching an Early Childhood Digital Wallet

Virginia is leading on a new innovation to make it easier for family members, businesses and others to pay for quality ECCE. Virginia's digital wallet can benefit all families who are seeking quality child care.

- Virginia received pilot funding to design and implement a digital wallet.
- New digital wallet will include:
 - **Family Portal:** Families can open a “wallet” to receive funds and then direct funds to early childhood providers;
 - **Donation Portal:** Donors (e.g., employers, family members, philanthropy) can donate towards children's wallets; and
 - **Provider Portal:** ECCE providers can register and receive payments.
- VDOE released Request for Proposals in May 2025.

What's Next for Regional Capacity and Innovation?

- **Support Regional and Local Leaders to Use New Data**
 - Use VAConnects to build analytic capacity at every level.
 - Continue to produce data tools to empower Ready Regions to help increase understanding, support improvement and drive investment.
- **Attract New Early Childhood Providers**
 - Increase number of publicly-funded options, especially in child care deserts.
 - Increase public-private support of associations to strengthen provider voice.
- **Increase Engagement of the Business Community**
 - Build out regional business engagement infrastructure statewide.
 - Launch innovations like digital wallet to enable businesses to contribute in new and different ways.
 - Support awareness and use of new federal ECCE tax credit opportunities.

Next Steps

Ways To Engage in 2025-2026

- 1. Sign Up for [Readiness Connections Updates](#)**
 - Weekly updates are shared with over 17,000+ subscribers.
- 2. Connect to your [Ready Region](#)**
 - Ready Regions are the key regional source for information.
- 3. Prepare for 2025-2026 year of [VQB5](#)**
 - Registration for VQB5 will be from August 15-October 1 in LinkB5 via VAConnects and is required for all publicly-funded programs.
 - Programs that do not receive any public funding can opt in.
- 4. Dig Into the Data**
 - Explore [VQB5 Quality Profiles](#), [workforce characteristics](#), [turnover rates](#), and [supply/demand data](#) to learn more.



THANK YOU!

Earlychildhood@doe.virginia.gov

Ready Regions Lead Agencies

Southwest	EO (Endless Opportunities)
West	United Way of Virginia's Blue Ridge
Southside	Center for Early Success
Central	Thrive Birth to Five
Southeastern	Minus 9 to 5, Virginia's Health Sciences at Old Dominion University
Chesapeake Bay	FirstSpark
Capital Area	Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, Early Childhood Programs and Services
North Central	Foundation First
Blue Ridge	United Way of Greater Charlottesville

**See [Ready Regions Contact List](#) for County/City Breakdown and contact information

Three State-Administered Public-Private Models

Program	Program Structure	Target population	Setting	Duration	Cost to family?
Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI)	Public preschool overseen by VDOE and administered at local level by school divisions	3- and 4-year-olds with low household incomes ($\leq 200\%$ FPG) or other identified risk factor	Primarily public schools; some licensed child care	School-day, school-year	None
Mixed Delivery Program (VPI)	VDOE works with VECF and Ready Regions to contract with private community-based sites for specific number of slots	Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with low household incomes ($\leq 200\%$ FPG) or other identified risk factor	Licensed child care centers and family day homes	Full-day, full-year	Yes, per child fee based on family income up to 5% of income
Child Care Subsidy Program	Parent-driven voucher program that is administered by VDOE via local social services offices (funding follows family to any approved site)	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, per child fee based on family income up to 5% of income