

Smart Beginnings-Thomas Jefferson (SBTJ) Profile

The Need

In the proposed service area of Charlottesville/Albemarle, 15% of City and 14% of County children arrive at kindergarten already behind their peers. The Early Education Task Force has identified a school readiness strategy of high quality pre-k that is a future-oriented, sustainable approach that is simultaneously focused on today as it seeks to address inequities in school readiness by serving those low-income children who currently do not have access with a mixed-delivery system, a target gap of 150 children.

Project Goals

The Charlottesville-Albemarle Early Education Task Force (EETF) Mixed Delivery Project has identified the following project goals:

- Expand existing pre-k services and increase the number of children receiving high-quality pre-k to include all children with identified risk factors.
- Increase the number of pre-k programs participating in VQ or having achieved a similar accreditation/quality rating.
- Identify, develop and leverage resources to meet the ongoing annual costs of providing high quality pre-k to all identified 4-year-olds.

Project Plan

Through this project, SBTJA and the EETF will focus on solutions to the barriers we have identified:

- Elevating the quality of pre-k throughout the community by increasing the number of high-quality private provider partners by understanding the challenges to implementing quality in their settings and incentivizing participation in a meaningful way.
- Identifying and enrolling more at-risk children by understanding families' challenges in accessing pre-k and utilizing private partner providers to extend public pre-k capacity.
- Assessing information from fiscal map to develop funding models and identify additional private funding.

Evaluation Plan

- EETF will use the ECERS and the Pre-K CLASS to measure quality. Additionally, Pre-K PALS student data will be collected in a pre- and post- manner
- EETF will conduct focus groups with providers to discuss challenges and barriers to quality improvement and have actionable information to inform recruitment and incentivizing
- EETF will assess the private provider's implementation of Virginia Quality curriculum
- EETF will use parent focus groups from our most vulnerable neighborhoods to understand barriers to accessing pre-k and use the information to inform education and enrollment plans
- EETF will work with Vision Keeps to determine viability of funding models