What is “Ready Regions”?  
A sturdy regional network capable of supporting increased access to quality early childhood opportunities across the Commonwealth. For more information, go to: https://vecf.org/ready-regions/.

What are Ready Regions doing?  
Ready Regions bring public and private partners together to ensure Virginia’s early childhood system prepares children for success. They are responsible for coordination and integration of critical services and resources starting with early childhood care and education (ECCE). Ready Regions serve as the entry point for ECCE participation in VQB5, build better processes to help ECCE providers connect with families, and engage families in designing a system that works for them.

What is the Virginia Department of Education’s role in Ready Regions?  
In 2020, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation directing the Board of Education (BOE) to establish a unified public-private system for early care and education. The VDOE administers the unified public-private early childhood system and VQB5, as established by the BOE and State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and works with the University of Virginia to build and maintain the LinkB5 data system. The VDOE provides resources to support Ready Regions coordination of the work within each region.

What is Virginia Early Childhood Foundation’s role in Ready Regions?  
The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) oversees the Ready Regions network, coordinates technical assistance, and leverages additional public-private funding opportunities to support some core functions of Ready Regions. While VECF provides some funding support, it is necessary for Ready Regions lead organizations to facilitate the public-private partnerships and commitments necessary to ensure sustainability and diversification beyond the initial or any one single source of funding.

What is VQB5?  
VQB5 stands for the unified Virginia Quality Birth to Five System. VQB5 focuses on the quality of all publicly-funded birth-five classrooms and supports families to choose quality programming across different program types. VQB5 sets shared expectations for measuring quality and supporting teachers for all birth to five programs. Through VQB5, teachers and leaders will receive the feedback and support they need to help young children learn. The first practice year (2021-2022) was led by PDG Community Leads in approximately 85% of localities across Virginia. The second practice year (2022-2023) is led by Ready Regions covering 100% of Virginia’s localities. By fall 2023, all publicly-funded programs will be required to participate in VQB5, with ratings shared publicly in fall 2024. For the definition of publicly-

---

1 LinkB5 is a data system built and maintained by the University of Virginia to capture ECCE program-, classroom-, and teacher-level data. It houses all VQB5 data.
Will Ready Regions become the structure for coordinating all ECCE initiatives in Virginia, such as VQB5, Mixed Delivery, RecognizeB5, VA Infant Toddler Specialist Network, or other publicly funded early childhood initiatives?

Ready Regions is built on the strong foundation of Virginia’s federal Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG). As of July 2022, Ready Regions support the ongoing activities and strategies of VQB5 and play a key role in helping to coordinate enrollment and expand regional capacity in order to increase access via multiple state and federal funding sources (e.g., child care subsidy, Mixed Delivery). In 2024, we anticipate Ready Regions will begin oversight of VECF’s Mixed Delivery Program.

Ready Regions are expected to engage school divisions, social and human services, health districts, quality improvement networks (such as the VA Infant Toddler Specialist Network), ECCE programs, and other related organizations in their work. To continue to unify the early childhood system and improve school readiness outcomes, Virginia will look to integrate other key public investments while complying with all state rules for procurement. Ready Regions are encouraged to compete for public and private funds that can help further their efforts to build partnerships, increase access, improve quality, and engage families.

How were the Ready Regions Lead Organizations determined?

Ready Regions lead organizations were determined through a competitive grant process open to all interested organizations in 2021. Successful applicants had to demonstrate their ability to engage and work collaboratively with a variety of relevant constituents including: 1) state-level entities responsible for setting policy and investing public funds; 2) state-level entities serving as intermediaries and advocates; 3) local partners providing direct services to children and families, including but not limited to child care centers, family day homes, Head Start, and schools; and 4) families engaged in informing the design of a system that meets their needs and preferences.

What is VECF’s Mixed Delivery Program?

VECF’s Mixed Delivery Program increases access to ECCE for children who have been previously un- or under-served by other publicly-funded options. This program offers families the ability to choose a private setting that meets their needs and preferences. Participating sites meet Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) quality guidelines and receive contract-based public funding to serve children who meet VPI eligibility criteria. To learn more, go to: https://vecf.org/mixed-delivery-grants/

What is RecognizeB5?

RecognizeB5, formerly known as the PDG B5 Teacher Recognition Program, provides direct financial incentives to eligible teachers that are participating in VQB5. The program is a strategy for supporting, retaining, and rewarding talented yet undercompensated early educators in publicly funded early learning settings, as part of Virginia’s effort to increase access to high quality early childhood care and education experiences for historically marginalized children, families and communities. The program is open to lead and assistant teachers working directly with children 0-5 (not yet in kindergarten) in a classroom setting at a publicly-funded childcare and family day home programs (including Family Day Homes that are subsidy vendors) for at least 30 hours per week. Eligible teachers MUST have registered for participation in VQB5 through LinkB5 each year to be considered for eligibility in the recognition program. Of note, in order to utilize available resources to support teachers in private settings where wages are persistently low, teachers employed by public school divisions in the Commonwealth are not...
eligible for the program incentive. Teachers working in programs, including Head Start, whose site is co-located in a public-school building are eligible if they are not employed by the public school system.

**What is the difference between Ready Regions and Smart Beginnings?**
Ready Regions is an organic evolution of Smart Beginnings. Local Smart Beginnings have brought public and private leaders together to collaborate on priorities for their youngest citizens since 2005. Ready Regions will be built from lessons learned from the Smart Beginnings network in order to ensure equitable coverage for all of Virginia’s children and families. This evolution will allow Virginia’s public-private network to continue to be responsive to early childhood needs for decades to come.

**What is the difference between Ready Regions and PDG?**
The Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG) was a competitive multi-year federal grant awarded to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) in 2019 and supported by a partnership among the VDOE, University of Virginia, and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF). One of the accomplishments from the PDG has been to lay the foundation for Virginia’s new uniform measurement and improvement system (VQB5). A primary function of Ready Regions will be to provide the ongoing on-the-ground support system for VQB5.

**What is the difference between Ready Regions and Virginia Quality?**
Virginia Quality (VQ) is Virginia’s voluntary quality rating and improvement system. VQ ratings will remain the Commonwealth’s public quality ratings until the first public ratings of the new VQB5 system are published in fall 2024. During the 2022-2023 year, VQ partners are collaborating with Ready Regions to help ECCE programs prepare for VQB5. See VQ Transition Plan for additional details.

**How can I get involved with Ready Regions?**
Interested stakeholders, including local government, business leaders, childcare centers, family day homes, Head Start, Mixed Delivery Programs, and schools, can become involved by reaching out to the Ready Region Lead for their locality. To find your Ready Region Lead, visit: https://vecf.org/ready-regions/.

**What are the common terms and abbreviations used by Ready Regions?**
Ready Regions use the terms and abbreviations listed below. A list of common terms and abbreviations is also included in Appendix E of the Guidelines for Practice Year 2 of the Early Childhood Unified Measurement and Improvement System approved by the Virginia Board of Education in June 2022.

AEII: Advancing Effective Interactions & Instruction
CASTL: Center for Advanced Study of Teaching & Learning
CACFP: Child & Adult Care Food Program
CCA: Child Care Aware of Virginia
CCAoA: Child Care Aware of America
CCDBG: Child Care and Development Block Grant
CDA: Child Development Associate National Credential
CE: Coordinated Enrollment
CLASS: Classroom Assessment Scoring System
DLL: Dual Language Learners
ECAC: Early Childhood Advisory Committee
ECCE: Early Childhood Care & Education
ECMHC: Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation