

New Bipartisan Poll Demonstrates Virginians View Quality Early Childhood Options as Critical to The State’s Economic Success
Policies to Increase Access to Child Care Earn Support from Nearly 9 in 10 Voters Across the Political Spectrum in Virginia

Candidates in Upcoming Races This Fall Have a Unique Opportunity to Make Child Care a Focal Point of Their Campaign

Richmond, Virginia – Ahead of upcoming statewide elections this fall, the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF), a nonpartisan organization dedicated to ensuring early childhood success in Virginia, recently conducted new survey research, unpacking timely voter preferences tailored to the unique dynamics of this year’s election season.

Conducted in tandem with research firms Global Strategy Group and GS Strategy Group, the survey of 600 adults who plan to vote in the upcoming November gubernatorial election in the Commonwealth of Virginia offers newly focused research detailing widespread support across the political spectrum for policies that increase access to early childhood care and education.

"Voters consistently demonstrate that child care policies resonate strongly with them, regardless of age, gender, or demographic," said **Angie Kuefler of Global Strategy Group**. "It's clear that child care is an issue that transcends party lines, with strong support from Democrats, Independents, and Republicans alike. This poll not only shows overwhelming support for policies that increase access to affordable, quality child care – an issue that garners nearly 9 in 10 voters' approval – it shows measurable electoral lift for candidates who advocate for this issue."

"Importantly, when child care policies are part of a candidate’s platform, voters are more likely to perceive the candidate as trustworthy and focused on the right issue areas, and genuinely looking out for the needs of Virginians. Our research underscores that making child care a top priority is essential for candidates seeking to build meaningful connections with voters and earn their trust this election season," said **Robert Jones of GS Strategy Group**.

Key findings from the poll include:

- **Policies that support increased access to child care are widely popular across party lines.** Nearly 9 in 10 voters (88%) support policies that increase access to quality, affordable options for child care for working parents, with over half (54%) who strongly support such policies.
- **This issue achieves majority support among swing voters** – those who are not yet firmly solidified behind either candidate or party in the gubernatorial race (88% support, 51% strongly) and across partisan lines: 97% of Democrats support, 83% of Independents, and 81% of Republicans.

- **Voters believe a candidate who advocates for affordable child care better embodies the traits that are most important to them in a governor, such as working to improve the economy and looking out for middle-class families.** Half of respondents in the survey were shown a profile of a hypothetical candidate for Governor that included child care policies as part of the candidate's campaign platform, while the other half were shown the same profile without mention of these policies. Voters were more likely to see the candidate as honest and trustworthy, putting the people of Virginia before party, having the right priorities, and a host of other positive characteristics when child care was central to the candidate's introduction. Further, voters are more likely to vote for the candidate when affordable child care is included in their platform (30% very likely) than when it is not (25% very likely).
- **These policies are widely popular across genders, ethnicities, education levels, and across different regions of the state.** 92 percent of women and 85 percent of men support policies to increase access to child care. 87 percent of white voters and 98 percent of black voters support these policies, including 87 percent of black voters who strongly support them. Meanwhile, 86 percent of college educated voters and 91 percent of non-college educated voters support these policies. In addition, these policies receive widespread support across different regions of the state, including 91 percent support in the Washington, D.C. DMA (both metro area and surrounding suburbs), 88 percent support in the Norfolk DMA, and 95 percent support in the Roanoke DMA and other outer markets.
- **Voters recognize affordable child care as key to keeping up with the rising cost of living and improving Virginia's economy.** By a 40+ point margin, voters' belief that affordable child care will help families make ends meet and incentivize parents to raise their kids in Virginia and grow our economy outweighs any concerns they have about increased government spending.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online, by phone, and text within the Commonwealth of Virginia from February 11-16, 2025, among 600 likely 2025 voters by Global Strategy Group and GS Strategy Group. The sampling margin of error of this poll is plus or minus 4.0 percentage points overall at 95% confidence level. The margin of error on sub-samples is greater.

About Virginia Early Childhood Foundation

VECF is the non-partisan steward of Virginia's promise for early childhood success, working in tandem with stakeholders to ensure opportunities for all families with young children to thrive.