gotta have **CHILD CARE**

PRIORITIES

As Virginia looks toward strengthening the future of the Commonwealth, one thing is clear: **child care is essential**. Over 70 percent of Virginia children under age six have parents in the workforce, which means families rely on child care to go to work. The lack of access and high cost of child care are not just a challenge for Virginia's working parents but they present a significant constraint on our workforce, economy, quality of life, and democracy – impacting citizens in every neighborhood and locality in the Commonwealth.

School-Ready Children: All children have access to quality child care that provides them with a foundational education and prepares them to thrive in school.

Policy Solution: Virginia should increase the state reimbursement rates for child care subsidy to reflect a) 100% of cost of delivering services (up from current 75% reimbursement in CCSP), b) the VQB5 standards that put Virginia on track to lead the nation in quality, and c) the competitive educator wages that retain talent, promote quality, and keep classrooms open.

With higher rates for competitive wages that retain quality educators:

- ✔ Child care classrooms can stay open so that families can go to work
- ✔ Children can be ready to enter kindergarten
- ✔ Businesses and communities can thrive

Work-Ready Families: All families in Virginia have access to affordable, quality child care that allows them to work and live better.

Policy Solution: Virginia should ensure that all eligible families have access to child care. Currently, only 42% of eligible families are being served. Progress begins with protecting existing funding, eliminating the child care waitlist for the most vulnerable children, and then providing access to all eligible families, with an initial growth target of serving 50% of currently eligible families through sufficient and sustained funding in the FY 2027-28 Biennial Budget that enables continuous enrollment and avoids a future waitlist.

With access to affordable child care that meets family needs:

- ✔ Families save money, build economic self-sufficiency, and get ahead in life
- ✔ Hardworking families afford to remain in Virginia and go to work
- ✔ Virginia's businesses and economy remain strong

Business-Ready Communities: All communities have the child care infrastructure needed to ensure Virginians have access to economic opportunity where they live.

Policy Solution: Virginia should establish a new child care fund to incentivize public-private partners to contribute to building regional supply.

With public-private partners at the table:

- ✔ State dollars stretch farther
- ✔ Communities have increased investment in regionally specific child care solutions
- ✔ Local businesses stay open and tax dollars remain in regions

To ensure access to quality child care for all Virginians, a new **dedicated, robust, and permanent revenue source** must be identified. Sufficient and sustained investments are needed to strengthen Virginia across work-ready families, school-ready children, and business-ready communities – and increased funding will produce sustained public returns on investment.

August 2025