



Business Executives Explore Essential Role of Early Childhood Care & Education to Support Virginia's Economic Infrastructure and Development

Richmond, VA (Nov. 14, 2025) – The Virginia Chamber Foundation and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) hosted an Executive Briefing on “The Economics of Early Childhood” for statewide business, economic development, education and legislative leaders.

The 12th annual Executive Briefing on Nov. 14, 2025, which drew approximately 150 attendees from across the Commonwealth, provided an opportunity to reinforce that a strong early childhood care and education (ECCE) system in Virginia is not only linked to a stable, talented future workforce but is essential to support and strengthen the state's infrastructure and economic development efforts.

This year's event marked VECF's 20th year of service as the non-partisan steward of Virginia's promise for early childhood success, harnessing private sector leadership and results-oriented partnerships to ensure that young children are healthy and prepared for school, life and the workforce.

The Executive Briefing featured keynote remarks by two distinguished leaders:

- **Mike Petters**, Retired Executive Vice Chairman, President and CEO, Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII)
- **Christopher D. Lloyd**, Senior Vice President and Director, Infrastructure & Economic Development, McGuireWoods Consulting LLC

Gary Thomson, VECF Board Chair and Managing Partner of Thomson Consulting, noted, “It's very exciting to see business leaders and community partners throughout the state working collaboratively to create a more sustainable early childhood education system that will benefit the families, children, and economy of Virginia. The time has come for child care to be treated as essential infrastructure that is foundational to a functioning economy.”

“This event aligns with *Blueprint Virginia 2035*, the next comprehensive business plan for the Commonwealth that is currently underway and will be unveiled on December 5 at our 2025 Economic Summit and Forum on International Trade,” said Keith Martin, Interim President and CEO of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce. “The *Blueprint* will reinforce the importance of a strong start in the early years in order to have long-term economic success for Virginia. Early childhood education is everyone's business, and Virginia must continue to build an innovative, best-in-class early childhood care and education system that can be a key differentiator in site selection as well as talent attraction and retention.”

Kathy Glazer, President of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, added, “The visionary leadership of business executives helped launch VECF in 2005 to serve as a trusted intermediary, incubator of innovation and steward of accountability for Virginia's early childhood system. For 20 years and counting, these core commitments remain our priority in driving the systemic structures needed to advance early childhood success and achieve the triple bottom line of school-ready children, work-ready families and business-ready communities.”

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About the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation: VECF is the non-partisan steward of Virginia's promise for early childhood success, working in tandem with diverse stakeholders to ensure opportunities for all families with young children to thrive. To learn more about VECF, visit www.vecf.org.

About the Virginia Chamber Foundation: The Virginia Chamber Foundation tracks Virginia's economic competitiveness, conducts research and analysis, and hosts programs connected to the priorities of *Blueprint Virginia*. In December 2025, the Chamber will release its new statewide strategic economic development plan, *Blueprint Virginia 2035*, which will engage over 7,000 business, economic development, workforce, education, housing, and other community leaders to lay out a plan to ensure Virginia remains at the top of national business climate rankings. Learn more at www.blueprintvirginia.org.

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