

2013–2014 RESULTS

Regional Plan for Children's School Readiness



*Creating Smart Beginnings
for Children from Birth to 5*



Dear Greater Richmond and Petersburg Region:

It's a global truth. We can do more when we work together. And working together, or collaborating, is at the core of our Regional Plan for Children's School Readiness (the Plan) which is in its fourth year of implementation.

When we launched the Plan in 2010, we knew that no single organization alone could have region-wide impact. Many public and private community partners realized the importance of early childhood development on the economic and civic vitality of our community and created the Plan. As a result of our coalition's strong relationships, stakeholders in early childhood are working together, realizing increased efficiencies, carrying a shared message to decision makers, and getting recognized in major ways. For example, in 2013, Smart Beginnings Greater Richmond was honored by the Valentine Richmond History Center with a History Makers award for encouraging regional collaboration.

Our history making efforts are just one part of a larger movement that is gaining momentum at the state level. The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) supports a statewide network of Smart Beginnings collaborative partnerships, like ours, that convene community leaders to build the capacity of local communities to create optimal environments for children's growth and development. VECF and its Smart Beginnings partners, as business-led, public/private partnerships, are working side-by-side with the Virginia Chamber of Commerce (as we are with the Greater Richmond Chamber) to ensure that children start school ready to succeed and on track for workforce success. As a result, early childhood education was highlighted as a critical investment priority to help ensure a competitive workforce in the Virginia Chamber's Blueprint Virginia.

Strengthening our partnerships both locally and at the state level is critical to achieving our goal that every child from birth to age five in the Greater Richmond and Petersburg region is healthy, well-cared for, and ready to succeed in school, work, and in life. So, please join us in promoting early childhood development and help every child have a smart beginning.

Steve Clementi
Chair, Smart Beginnings Greater Richmond Leadership Council

READY FAMILIES + READY SERVICES + READY SCHOOLS + READY COMMUNITY

READY CHILDREN

Ultimate Outcome

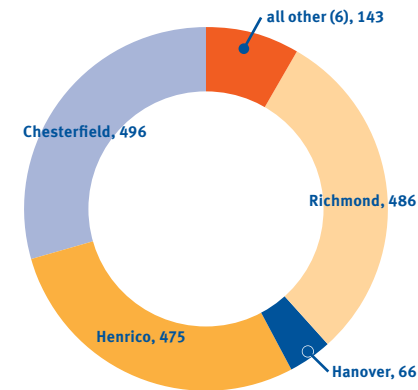
Ready Children are prepared socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually to enter kindergarten ready to succeed. Ready Children live in nurturing families, have high-quality early care and health care services, are supported by an enriching and caring community, and enter ready schools.

869 children from the third grade class of 2013–2014 were held back at some point before they reached third grade. The average grade retention cost in Virginia is \$10,793 per child, so these retentions cost taxpayers \$9.4 million in our region alone.

(Source: Virginia Early Childhood Foundation)

Our goal is for all of our region's children to enter kindergarten ready to succeed. Smart Beginnings Greater Richmond supports a rich and vibrant network of people and organizations that help us to reach that goal. There has been continued improvement in the reading readiness of our region's kindergartners, evidenced by the PALS-K basic literacy benchmark. In 2013, 87% of kindergartners met the benchmark in the fall, up from 80% in 2002. However, this meant that 1,666 children still needed extra help learning to read. The majority of those children who were not ready to read reside in Chesterfield, Henrico, and Richmond.

Kindergartners Not Meeting PALS-K Benchmark



Of the 1,666 students who did not meet the fall PALS benchmark in kindergarten, most reside in Chesterfield, Henrico, and Richmond.

Goal 1

Ready Families ensure safe and stable environments, promote the health of their children, identify themselves as their children's first teacher, and provide steady and supportive relationships.

Priority Strategies: Provide evidence-based home visiting services to all eligible families. Develop a system of coordinated, accessible, and effective parenting education services.

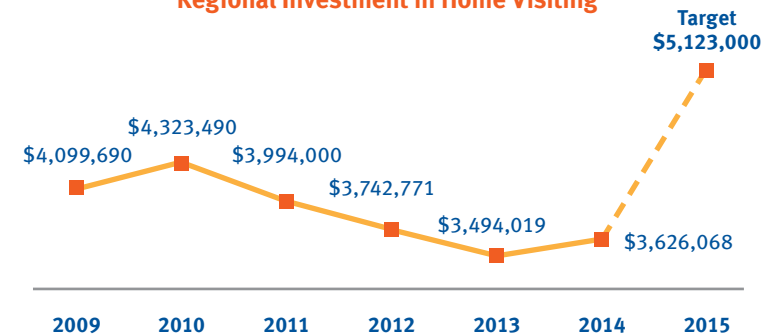
Results:

- The number of reported home visiting slots available to serve families at a given time in the region was 955. This capacity was down from numbers reported in 2012 and 2013. The primary reasons for this decline were decreases in public funding for CHIP and Healthy Families programs in 2013 and staff vacancies at several organizations. Because of these challenges, at least 24 eligible families were turned away and another 20 were put on a wait-list for services.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: A grant through the Virginia Department of Health, and managed by United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg, allowed Family Lifeline to hire two new clinical social workers to provide much-needed behavioral health services to families enrolled in their home visiting programs in Petersburg and Richmond.

Regional investment in home visiting was down in 2013, reflecting decreases in program funding at the state level from prior years.

Regional Investment in Home Visiting



2015 goal of increasing capacity by 25% to 1,304 slots will take an investment of \$5,123,000

(Source: Regional Home Visiting Providers)

Goal 2

Ready Early Care and Education services are affordable and accessible, providing high-quality learning environments for young children, including children with unique developmental and special needs.

There are more than 700 child care programs in our region that are eligible to participate in the Virginia Star Quality Initiative. Only 44 are currently participating.

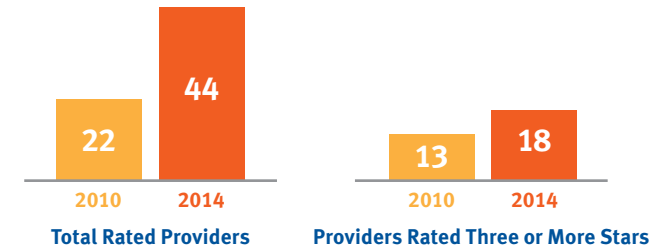
Priority Strategies: Build a strong quality enhancement and professional development system to serve early care and education programs. Expand the Virginia Star Quality Initiative (VSQI) for early care and education programs.

Results:

- More than 1,300 hours of training and professional development were provided through VSQI to participating child care programs. Of programs with eligible ratings, 58% were rated at three or more stars.
- Child care programs here and across the state participated in an analysis of VSQI to develop revisions that will strengthen and stabilize the quality rating system.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: ChildSavers was awarded a contract from the Virginia Department of Social Services in July 2013 to administer VSQI in the Central Region. The new contract increased the catchment area from 10 to 34 localities in Central and Southside Virginia. ChildSavers now manages VSQI in partnership with four regional Smart Beginnings coalitions.

Regional Participation in Virginia Star Quality Initiative



More providers are enrolled in the quality rating system, and there has been an increase in the number of high-quality providers

(Source: ChildSavers)

Goal 3

Ready Health services are affordable and accessible, providing high-quality preventive and intervention care to meet the physical, dental, and behavioral health needs of all young children.

Twenty-nine child care programs were trained to implement a developmental screening process and help increase early identification of children with developmental delays. Three programs began screenings before the end of the school year.

Priority Strategies: Maximize the use of early prevention and intervention services. Promote positive social and emotional health for children, ages zero to six, and their parents.

Results:

- Through a new partnership with Smart Beginnings Hopewell-Prince George, four pediatric offices in Chester, Colonial Heights, Petersburg, and Hopewell were trained to implement a developmental screening process for children they serve. They performed more than 1,600 screenings on children from ages two months to four years old. 164 children under age four were referred for early intervention.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, in partnership with Child Care Aware of Virginia, the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth, Virginia Department of Health, and Virginia Department of Social Services, launched an early childhood obesity prevention learning collaborative that supported many child care programs in the Richmond region. After completing the project, these programs were able to create a healthier environment for more than 1,000 children in our region.

Regional Implementation of Developmental Screenings



Increasing the number of organizations that implement a developmental screening tool will help identify infants and toddlers with potential delays and get them referred to services sooner.

(Source: Smart Beginnings Hopewell-Prince George, Regional Child Care Providers)

Goal 4

Ready Schools provide a seamless transition to high-quality learning environments that are led by highly qualified teachers who recognize children's strengths and are sensitive to cultural values and individual differences.

A parent survey during kindergarten registration showed that 96% of parents felt better prepared to register their child for kindergarten because of information they saw or heard from the public awareness campaign.

Priority Strategies: Promote the enrollment of incoming kindergartners before the first day of school. Develop a regional definition of a child's school readiness that can be used by families and professionals.

Results:

- Three Richmond elementary schools in high-poverty neighborhoods that promoted registration with backpacks, signage, and door-to-door outreach increased registration by 105%, compared to an increase of 35% at similar schools.
- A parent survey revealed that almost 2,000 students would not have registered on time without the public awareness campaign.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: It takes a variety of partners to spread the word about school readiness and kindergarten registration. For example, Maya Smart served as our celebrity "spokesmom" for the second year in a row. Barry Moore of Haley Buick GMC sponsored a five-minute interview segment on WRIC TV8. The Martin Agency and United Way Women's Leadership Council donated materials and time to assemble school readiness kits. The Martin Agency also purchased special signs and installed them at targeted schools to promote registration.



Thank you to everyone in the community who helped get the word out about school readiness and kindergarten registration!

Goal 5

Ready Communities work effectively across all sectors to support families, recognize the importance of early childhood development, and act to support policies and investments to help children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

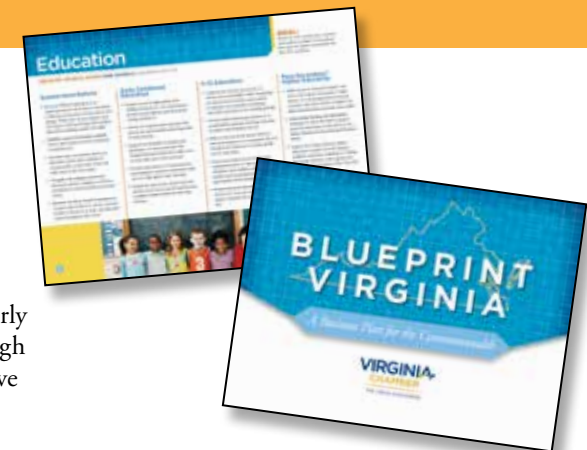
The kindergarten registration campaign is actually a school readiness campaign. We target our whole community—parents, relatives, friends, and neighbors—with the message that learning begins at birth, and parents are their child's first and most important teacher.

Priority Strategies: Conduct regional/local social marketing campaigns focused on the importance of early childhood development. Foster community participation in early learning opportunities. Increase the diversity, support, and sustainability of funding for effective programs to implement the School Readiness Plan. Strengthen and sustain regional and local coalitions to address early childhood system-wide issues and interagency collaborations.

Results:

- Smart Beginnings Greater Richmond was recognized as a thought leader and content expert in early childhood, and served on the City of Richmond's Early Childhood Task Force coordinated through the Office of Community Wealth Building. This group is tasked with developing a strategy to serve all at-risk children from birth to age five and making budget recommendations.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: Working with the Richmond Region Planning District Commission, Smart Beginnings developed regional maps for each school division that included all of the licensed child care and after school programs in each elementary attendance zone. These maps were used to inform community outreach, recruitment strategies, and planning for professional development.



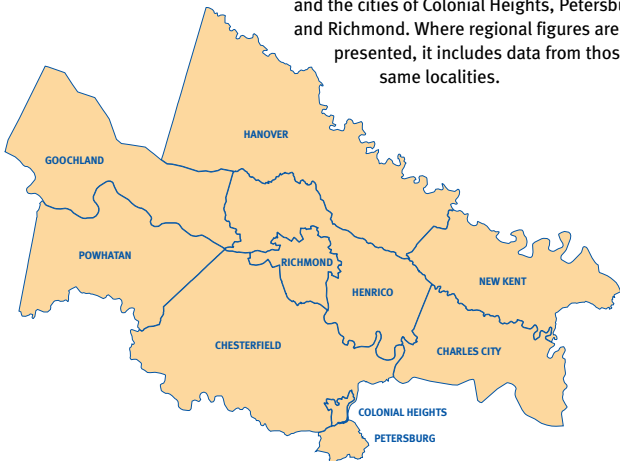
The Virginia Chamber of Commerce recognized early childhood education as a key determinant of academic success and long-range economic vitality in their Blueprint Virginia plan.

SMART BEGINNINGS GREATER RICHMOND

Smart Beginnings Greater Richmond (Smart Beginnings), led by the Greater Richmond Chamber (the Chamber) and United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg (United Way), is a coalition of public and private organizations, businesses, and citizens working together to ensure that the region's children enter school healthy, well-cared for, and ready to succeed in school and in life. Hundreds of organizations and individuals work together to identify service needs and solutions, network and coordinate services, and advocate for policy and funding opportunities. Staff from United Way and the Chamber coordinate the work of the coalition, set and monitor performance measures, conduct research and analysis, and build awareness and ownership of the Regional Plan for Children's School Readiness (the Plan). For more information, contact: Jacqueline D. Hale, Director of Early Childhood Initiatives and Smart Beginnings Greater Richmond, 804-771-5873 or halej@yourunitedway.org.



Smart Beginnings represents the counties of Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, and Powhatan and the cities of Colonial Heights, Petersburg, and Richmond. Where regional figures are presented, it includes data from those same localities.



LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

The Plan is overseen by the Smart Beginnings Leadership Council (the Leadership Council). This group of high-level private sector, public, and nonprofit leaders, convened by the presidents of the Chamber and United Way, leads the region's early childhood efforts and is accountable for the Plan. The Leadership Council monitors progress against the Plan and endorses recommendations regarding strategy, policy, and program direction. Implementation of the Plan is coordinated through a network of coalition partners that engage in sub-committees of the Leadership Council as well as Action Teams. These groups include director-level and program representatives from regional nonprofit, public, and private organizations. A full listing of the organizations involved directly in our coalition's work is included below.

MEMBERS INCLUDE:

- MS. HEIDI W. ABBOTT, HUNTON & WILLIAMS L.L.P.
- MR. L. BRADFORD "BRAD" ARMSTRONG, THE MARTIN AGENCY
- MR. EDWARD T. "ED" BLAIR, BLAIR & ASSOCIATE CPA'S, PLC
- MS. KATHERINE E. BUSSER, VIRGINIA CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL ALLIANCE
- MR. THOMAS R. "TOM" BYRD, RETIRED EXECUTIVE & COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER
- MS. JANA D. CARTER, CHESTERFIELD COUNTY
- MR. STEPHAN F. "STEVE" CLEMENTI, SFC CONSULTING, LLC
- MS. JANE D. CRAWLEY, HENRICO COUNTY
- MS. SUSANNE B. CRUMP, RETIRED NON-PROFIT LEADER & COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER
- DR. ROBERT D. "BOB" HOLSWORTH, DECIDE SMART, LLC
- MS. GAIL W. JOHNSON, RAINBOW STATION, INC.
- MR. TIM "TJ" JOYCE, YMCA OF GREATER RICHMOND
- MS. JILL M. KENNEDY, BON SECOURS MEMORIAL REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER
- MR. PAUL D. KOONCE, DOMINION VIRGINIA POWER
- DR. JACK O. LANIER, RICHMOND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
- MS. ANN BATTLE MACHERAS, FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF RICHMOND
- DR. JAMES L. "JIM" NARDUZZI, UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
- DR. MARCUS J. NEWSOME, CHESTERFIELD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- MS. LYNN H. PHARR, UNITED WAY OF GREATER RICHMOND & PETERSBURG
- MR. KIM K. SCHEELER, GREATER RICHMOND CHAMBER
- MS. MARSHA S. SHULER, RETIRED EXECUTIVE & COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER
- MS. JACKIE STEWART, RICHMOND REGIONAL PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION
- MR. BARRY M. TAYLOR, RETIRED NON-PROFIT LEADER & COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER
- MR. JAMES P. TAYLOR, HANOVER COUNTY
- MR. C. THOMAS TILLER, JR., NEW KENT COUNTY
- MS. STEPHANIE GAILLARD WHITE, MEADWESTVACO CORPORATION

ACTION TEAMS

Three Action Teams lead the implementation of goals and local planning efforts. Action Teams provide guidance and direction to partners to accomplish each goal, help identify resources, and share progress and system needs with the coalition and each other.

READY FAMILIES ACTION TEAM

REPRESENTATION FROM:

- CHESTERFIELD/COLONIAL HEIGHTS FAMILIES FIRST
- CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF RICHMOND AT VCU
- CITY OF RICHMOND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE
- CITY OF RICHMOND HEALTHY FAMILIES PROGRAM
- CITY OF RICHMOND RESOURCE MOTHERS PROGRAM
- FAMILY LIFELINE
- GREATER RICHMOND SCAN
- HENRICO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
- INFANT & TODDLER CONNECTION OF HENRICO COUNTY
- JORDAN'S QUEST
- PARTNERSHIP FOR FAMILIES
- QUIN RIVERS HEALTHY FAMILIES
- RICHMOND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
- RICHMOND'S HEALTHY START INITIATIVE
- VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION-HENRICO COUNTY OFFICE

READY EARLY CARE & EDUCATION ACTION TEAM

REPRESENTATION FROM:

- CHILDSAVERS
- CITY OF RICHMOND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE
- COMMUNITY IDEA STATIONS
- FRIENDS ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDREN
- RAINBOW STATION
- RICHMOND PUBLIC LIBRARY
- ST. JAMES' CHILDRENS' CENTER
- VCU HEALTH SYSTEM CHILD CARE AT NORTHSIDE
- VCU T/TAC
- VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
- VIRGINIA INFANT & TODDLER SPECIALIST NETWORK
- WINGSPAN
- YWCA OF RICHMOND

READY SCHOOLS ACTION TEAM

REPRESENTATION FROM:

- CHESTERFIELD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- CHARLES CITY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- COLONIAL HEIGHTS CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- GOOCHLAND COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- HANOVER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- HENRICO COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- KING WILLIAM COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- NEW KENT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- PETERSBURG CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- POWHATAN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- RICHMOND CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS