Virginia's Early Intervention and Public Preschool Programs

2021

Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF)

VECF does not provide direct services to children but acts as Virginia's non-partisan steward and capacity-builder for advancing school readiness in the Commonwealth by spearheading Virginia's roadmap to school readiness: informing policy and budget decisions, providing research-based expertise, and nurturing innovation.

For more information:
Visit Virginia Early Childhood Foundation; or call (804) 358-8323

Early Intervention Programs
The Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia

The Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia provides early intervention supports and services to **infants and toddlers** from **birth through age two** who are not developing as expected or who have a medical condition that can delay normal development. These supports and services focus on increasing the child's participation in family and community activities that are important to the family. In addition, supports and services focus on helping parents and other caregivers learn how to help the child learn during everyday activities. These supports and services are available for all eligible children and their families regardless of the family's ability to pay.

For more information:

Visit Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia and click on the "For Families" link; or
Call the Virginia statewide central directory at (800) 234-1448.

Office of Early Childhood
Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)

The Office of Early Childhood helps prepare all children for kindergarten by supporting birth to five programming, including the Virginia Preschool Initiative, Head Start, and Early Childhood Special Education. Information for parents of young children can be found at: Virginia Department of Education

Public Preschool Programs

Research consistently demonstrates that high-quality early education programs designed to support the full range of children's development have long-term positive effects on later school success. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, preschool programs for at-risk children have been funded for many years by both state and federal grants. With the exception of Head Start programs, which are funded directly to the local Head Start/Early Head Start grantee, the programs are administered by the Virginia Department of Education.

Virginia Public Preschool Programs		
Administered by Virginia Department of Education		**Administered by Federal Office of Head Start**
State-funded Programs	**Federally-funded Programs**	**Federally-funded Programs**
• Virginia Preschool Initiative (pg. 3)	• Title I Preschool Programs (pg. 4) • Early Childhood Special Education (pg. 5)	• Head Start Programs (pg. 6)

Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI)

The Virginia General Assembly uses General Funds to support VPI.

Program Purpose and Description of Services

VPI distributes state funds to schools and community-based organizations to provide quality preschool programs for at-risk three and four-year olds unserved by Head Start. Local communities apply for the funds.

Who is eligible?

Children must be age three by September 30th of the school year and meet the eligibility criteria established by the General Assembly and locality based on family income levels and identified at-risk factors. Additionally, local VPI programs can fill 15% (or move based on a waiver) of their slots with local eligibility criteria. Children experiencing homelessness are eligible to participate.

For more information:

Visit:
Virginia Department of Education

Title I Preschool Programs

The legislative authority for Title I Preschool Programs is Title I, Part A, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, P.L. 114-95.

Program Purpose and Description of Services

The overriding goal of the Title I program is to improve the teaching and learning of children in high poverty schools and to enable children to meet challenging academic content and performance standards. The Title I, Part A, funds are primarily intended to provide funding for elementary and secondary education. Although there is no specific designated funding source for preschool services within Title I, Part A, these funds may be used for preschool services for at-risk children within Title I-funded schools and school divisions, at the discretion of the school or school division.

Who is eligible?

Children are eligible for Title I preschool programs if they live in Title I attendance areas and are below the age or grade level at which a local school division provides free education. Children are screened for academic risk factors. Those most in need are served in rank order.

For more information:

Shyla Vesitis, Title I Coordinator
Telephone: 804-225-3711; Shyla.Vesitis@doe.virginia.gov

Early Childhood Special Education

Special Education and Related Services are provided through your child's public school division at no cost to the family for children with identified disabilities from ages two through twenty-one. Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services address the needs of preschoolers. This includes children ages two (whose birthday falls on or before September 30 of the current school year) through five. These services are provided through the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA).

Program Purpose and Description of Services

Early Childhood Special Education provides specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. Special education is provided to ensure the child can meet the educational standards that apply to all children.

Who is eligible?

Preschool-aged children with a disability may be eligible for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services. To be eligible, a child must have an identified disability and need specialized instruction.
Delays in development may occur in the following areas:

- Speech/language
- Motor and Physical
- Emotional and Social
- Cognitive
- Hearing, Vision and/or Health

To learn whether or not a child is eligible for these services, it will be necessary for the school division to complete an evaluation. The evaluation is completed at no cost to the family. The impact of the suspected delays on the child's ability to perform activities typical for their age group will be considered.

For more information:

Visit Virginia Department of Education

Head Start Programs

Head Start is a national child development program for children from birth to age 5, which provides services to promote academic, social and emotional development for income-eligible families.

Head Start is the longest-running, successful national school readiness program in the United States. It is a direct federal to local program serving low-income children. The program promotes comprehensive education, health, nutrition, dental, mental health, social services and family engagement opportunities.

Many Head Start programs also offer services to pregnant women, and infants and toddlers through Early Head Start. Head Start is a recognized leader in providing services to children with special needs, children of migrant workers and Native American families.

Who is eligible?

Children who are experiencing homelessness are automatically eligible to participate in Head Start. At least ten percent of enrollment must be children with special needs. To be eligible for Head Start services, a child must be at least three years old by the date used to determine eligibility for public school in the state in which the Head Start program is located. Early Head Start Programs serve pregnant women and children birth to 36 months.

For more information:

Visit Administration for Children and Families Office of Head Start
Visit State Web
Visit Virginia Head Start Association Web

Programs At-a-Glance

Program	Who is eligible
Early Intervention	Infants and toddlers from birth through age two who are not developing as expected or who have a medical condition that can delay normal development
Early Head Start	Children 0-36 months **Homelessness meets eligibility*** if in the age range
Head Start	Children not in kindergarten and at least 3 years old **Homelessness meets eligibility*** if in the age range
Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI)	Children age three by September 30th of the school year **Homelessness meets eligibility*** if in the age range
Title I Preschool	Children who reside within a Title I attendance area and are under 6 years of age (in school operating a schoolwide program) or are not yet at a grade level for which the school division provides free public education (in schools operating a targeted assistance program) **Homelessness meets eligibility*** if in the age range
Early Childhood Special Education	Children ages two (who turn two by September 30th of the current school year) through five and have a disability that requires special education.

*Young children experiencing homelessness are prioritized for available slots

Project HOPE VIRGINIA
EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS
Virginia Department of Education
Coordinated by the William & Mary School of Education