



2023 HAMPTON ROADS EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY AGENDA

There are nearly 96,000 young children and their families across the Southeastern region of Virginia. [EVMS Minus 9 to 5](#), as the Ready Region Southeastern lead, works with community partners to ensure these families have what they need to raise children who are healthy, thriving, and ready to learn. The early years (minus 9 to age 5) are foundational for healthy brain development, yet for many families, the challenges they encounter during these years impact their child's readiness for school.

Families with stable housing, access to nutritious food, economic security, and physical and mental health are better equipped to meet the needs of their child's growth and development.

City, state, federal leaders and policymakers all have a role to play in this important work.

EVMS, Minus 9 to 5 secured over \$6 million in regional funding for early childhood in FY 2023 alone. While Virginia has made significant strides in funding and policy, we still have work to do to ensure all of the region's children have opportunities for success, now and throughout their lifetimes.

This policy agenda illustrates many of the challenges that families with young children encounter in their daily lives. Minus 9 to 5, Ready Region Southeastern, along with over 200 diverse, regional stakeholders and organizations, collectively advocate for these programs, services and policies that will make the Southeastern region and Virginia a place where children thrive—ready for school, the workforce and life.

EVMS
MINUS 9 TO 5
Preparing families from
conception to kindergarten

**READY
REGION**
Southeastern



STABLE AND SUPPORTED FAMILIES

Increase access to resources and programs that meet basic needs

PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN

Address disparities caused by systemic and structural barriers

ACCESS & AVAILABILITY OF HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Stabilize and strengthen business practices

TAX CREDITS FOR FAMILIES

- Expand Federal [Earned Income Tax](#)
- Increase [Virginia Child Tax Credit](#) (CTC)

EVICITION PREVENTION

- Coordinate between agencies on eviction prevention services (rent assistance; landlord mediation; tenant/landlord rights education)
- Share local and state-level data to strengthen outcomes and maximize funding

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Promote funding and legislation for affordable housing retention and new development

CHILDHOOD NUTRITION

- Expand access to [Community Eligibility Provision\(CEP\)](#) for no-cost meals to all students
- Extend permanent summer EBT and Grab-and-Go meals
- Expand [SNAP](#) benefits

PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Continue services such as Medicaid coverage and reimbursement, [regional home visiting services](#) and [doula care](#).
- Improve coordination of existing regional home visiting services
- Encourage families to seek timely well visits with a pediatrician, including on-time immunizations

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- Expand statewide [early childhood mental health consultation](#) model to support early childhood educators

HEALTH DISPARITIES

- Reduce structural and systemic barriers in the healthcare setting (access and affordability)
- Implement universal prenatal and at-birth screenings to address social vulnerabilities for children, pregnant and parenting people

READY REGIONS AND VIRGINIA QUALITY BIRTH TO 5 (VQBS)

- Continue investments in [Unified Measurement System](#) and quality improvement resources
- Expand [mixed delivery](#) funding to include infants, toddlers, as well as preschoolers
- Promote [RecognizeB5](#) incentive for ECE teachers
- Expand alignment of our regional child care network through coordinated enrollment
- Engage families to understand and make choices about child care settings- [Child Care Aware](#)

CHILD CARE

- Expand access to quality, [affordable early learning](#)
- Increase income eligibility for child care subsidy qualification
- Increase child care subsidy spaces

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION BUSINESS MODELS

- Address the child care workforce crisis
- Increase wages and benefits
- Expand [Hampton Roads Shared Services Alliance](#)

REGIONAL BUSINESSES

- Support child care needs of employees
- Implement family friendly practices [M9T5 Family-Friendly Business Toolkit](#)

Please visit our website to learn more and how to become a changemaker.
minus9to5.org

