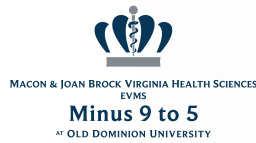


# Early Childhood Policy Agenda

## 2025 Southeastern Virginia



**READY**  
**REGION**  
*Southeastern*

The early years of a child's life are crucial, laying the foundation for their future development, mental health, and overall well-being. The role of families and communities in providing access to quality healthcare, education, and stable, supportive environments is essential for ensuring lifelong success. **Investing in high-quality childcare not only nurtures our youngest generations but also empowers parents to engage fully in the workforce, enhancing economic stability in our region.**

In Southeastern Virginia, it is imperative that we collectively commit to creating opportunities for all young children and their families to reach their full potential. These investments represent some of the most impactful choices we can make for the future of our community, fostering both individual growth and regional prosperity.



**Virginia has demonstrated strong support for young children and their families, through historic investments in early care and education and supports for families in 2024.**

- ✓ Over \$1.1 billion in funding for child care slots in 2025 and 2026
- ✓ Over \$3 million for [Families Forward](#) to expand supports for low-income families and their children

**BUT THERE IS STILL WORK TO BE DONE TO PROMOTE HEALTHY CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY IN SOUTHEASTERN VIRGINIA**

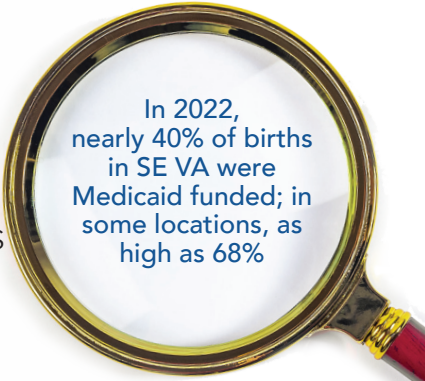





# Collectively, we advocate for:

## MATERNAL/CHILD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- Stabilize funding, increase awareness, and enhance local coordination for [maternal/child home visiting services](#) while leveraging Medicaid funding to expand the capacity of all evidence-based models
- Support funding to certify CHIP of Virginia's home visiting model as evidenced-based
- Implement continuous eligibility until age 6 for children enrolled in Medicaid and FAMIS
- Increase universal prenatal and at-birth screenings to address social vulnerabilities for children, pregnant and parenting families
- Support efforts for children to receive timely pediatric well visits and on-time immunizations



In 2022, nearly 40% of births in SE VA were Medicaid funded; in some locations, as high as 68%



In December 2024, over 1200 children in SE VA were waitlisted for childcare subsidy

## STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE CHILD CARE SYSTEMS

- Ensure stable financing to sustain an early childhood care and education system that meets demand and improves access for the 10,000 children eligible for publicly funded child care services (currently on a waitlist), including child care subsidies and mixed delivery options
- Establish a dedicated fund to safeguard and maximize child care investments
- Create a predictable funding formula that anticipates fluctuation in parent demand
- Expand statewide early childhood mental health consultation model to support early childhood educators, including [promotion of Medicaid reimbursement for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health services](#)
- Prioritize solutions to address the child care workforce crisis including increased child care provider wages and benefits
- Improve child care access for active-duty service members
- Incentivize private sector innovations that increase the overall supply and availability of child care services through additional contributors and revenue streams, such as tri-share cost models, tax incentives, zoning changes, and capital funds

## STABLE AND FINANCIALLY SECURE FAMILIES

- Combat poverty and social injustices to create equal access to credit, employment and housing
- Streamline the application process for families applying for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by removing barriers that they encounter when using these programs
- Continue ongoing funding for summer meals through the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT), now called [SUN BUCKS](#)
- Establish a state-level Child Tax Credit ([Commonwealth Kids Credit](#)) and expand the refundable state [Earned Income Tax Credit](#) (EITC) to 20% of the federal credit
- Establish a state-administered [Paid Family and Medical Leave](#) program for all employees across the Commonwealth



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Visit our Policy & Advocacy LinkTree site to learn more about the various initiatives and policy highlighted here on our 2025 Policy Agenda.

