

**EVMS**  
MINUS 9 TO 5

Preparing families from  
conception to kindergarten



**OUR COMMON AGENDA**

June 2021

# Our story

In 2019, 14,000 babies were born in Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk and Virginia Beach. Many of them start life with family and health challenges they may never overcome.

Looking down the road to when children enter school, as many as 16% of them will arrive not prepared for kindergarten. Studies show that kindergarteners who enter school without the skills to succeed likely will never catch up with their peers. Many area families, especially those living in poverty, have no access to programs and services to help them support healthy development of their children. Barriers to children's success create a strain on families and ultimately on an economy that needs a well-trained future workforce. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted families across the region, compounding many already existing challenges.

To address the complex needs of young children and their families, the Hampton Roads Community Foundation incubated a collective impact initiative. Using a collaborative approach, Minus 9 to 5 started in 2016. In 2018, Minus 9 to 5 moved to Eastern Virginia Medical School where it continues to encourage organizations and individuals to address complex needs for families from when they first conceive a child to the day he or she arrives at kindergarten.

Our region already has many programs that can help children and families. However, a lack of coordination, knowledge and access to services creates challenges for many families. EVMS Minus 9 to 5 aims to connect the dots to improve life for all area children and their families by:

- Fostering a stronger understanding of the early care system and what its different partners do.
- Building deeper connections between organizations serving children and their families through communication and collaboration.
- Facilitating the alignment of priorities and activities, while prioritizing community responsiveness to the challenges brought on by inequities, socio-economic conditions and other factors that impact our community.

Each year over **130** babies will not live to see their first birthday.

Up to **57%** of children live in poverty in households earning less than **200%** of the federal poverty level.

Each year nearly **10%** of babies are born with low birth weights that cause health complications.

**40%** of newborns will be raised by single women.

Nearly **50%** of children will spend their first five years in informal or unregulated childcare.

This initiative:

- Works with partners in the five Virginia cities: Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk and Virginia Beach.
- Creates an integrated system with opportunities for cross-city collaboration and learning with the goal of greater advocacy on behalf of children.
- Focuses on families and their children from prenatal to age 5.
- Targets economically disadvantaged families and the working poor while improving the entire early care and education system for all.
- Emphasizes outcomes, including children's health and development, both cognitive and socio-emotional.
- Supports families and the childcare provider community.

**...kindergarteners  
who enter school  
without the skills to  
succeed likely will  
never catch up...**

Central to our work is a community-focused approach with more than 160 stakeholders including parents, care givers, health professionals, nonprofit leaders, government officials, and educators. Together we identify and implement solutions to build a stronger system that promotes the success of all area children and families over the next 20 years and well beyond.



Ensure availability  
of and equal access to  
high quality programs  
and services for each  
child and family

Take a child and  
family-centered,  
solutions-oriented  
approach to meeting  
the needs of children  
and families

Is culturally-relevant,  
appreciating the  
uniqueness of each  
child and family

Is coordinated and  
seamless, reinforcing  
complementary  
strengths across  
the region

Strive for  
improved  
outcomes, sharing  
information and data  
transparently

# Our vision, goals and guiding principles

## OUR VISION

Based on input from our Steering Committee and feedback from community members, we have developed the following vision to guide our work over the coming years:

**Each family in Hampton Roads will be equipped and supported to raise children who are healthy, thriving, and ready to learn.**

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our work is guided by a set of guiding principles that underpin how we work collectively:

- We work to *identify and close racial, cultural and socio-economic disparities* within the education, health and work force sectors, to provide all children an equal opportunity to succeed.
- We strive to *foster a culture of collaboration and trust*, valuing and honoring the diverse perspectives of our stakeholders and encouraging dialogue and debate.
- We affirm that *supportive relationships are pivotal* in driving individual and social change.
- We believe *families must have a voice* in this process as we acknowledge their critical role in their children's lives.
- We *value and honor the cultural diversity and uniqueness of the individual families* and of the communities within our region.
- We commit to *long-term efforts* that achieve *measurable and sustainable results* to build a better system for the children and families of our region.

# Our strategies

Achieving our vision and creating an early care and education system that is accessible, family-centered, culturally-relevant, coordinated and outcomes-focused requires action on a number of fronts. Specifically, this initiative will develop strategies in six different areas — ensuring that each area focuses on a dedicated scope of work, while also ensuring that interconnections occur and dots are constantly being connected.



## WORKING GROUPS AND THEIR FOCUS AREAS

Equip families with the knowledge, resources and validation they need to develop their full potential as nurturing caregivers

**THRIVING  
FAMILIES**

Improve prenatal care, ensuring access to proven interventions for health and education and create a culture that welcomes and supports new parents

**HEALTHY HOMES –  
HEALTHY CHILDREN**

Improve the quality and economics of early learning environments through dedicated efforts to strengthen the access and ensure the impact of learning opportunities in the early years

**EARLY LEARNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT**

Coordinate and align services and providers across the region, to promote education, health and social services for young children and their families

**COMMUNITY  
CONNECTIONS**

Develop and share data for internal and external audiences on the progress that is being made and on best practices to adopt

**DATA AND  
KNOWLEDGE  
SHARING**

Mobilize supporters, build public will and identify and advocate for policies that improve early care and education

**POLICY AND  
ADVOCACY**

# Tracking our progress

In order to track our progress, we will measure and evaluate these four areas:

## 1. UNDERSTANDING OUR COMMUNITY CONTEXT...

- Demographics in Hampton Roads today and trends over time
- Socio-economic conditions and other factors
- Needs of children and families in our community

## 2. HOW WE'LL WORK TOGETHER DIFFERENTLY...

### Minus 9 to 5:

- Has a shared vision for change and is working together towards that vision
- Builds on previous work in our community
- Requires honest debate and dialogue in which cross-sector stakeholders collaborate and work toward a better system
- Ensures the voice of the community, including parents and families, is central to decision making
- Reflects constantly on its work, learning from the past and using data to inform the work
- Values and is responsive to the cultural diversity of the families within our community

## 3. SO THAT WE'LL HAVE A BETTER SYSTEM FOR FAMILIES...

- Increased public awareness of the importance of a child's prenatal and early years
- Better knowledge of early childhood resources available
- Better access and availability to navigate early childhood resources
  - prenatal and medical care
  - early learning environments
  - social supports for well-being
- Equitable access to high-quality early learning opportunities and environments
- Increased community support for early care and education
- Increased alignment and coordination between cities and within the region

## 4. WHICH WILL LEAD TO BETTER OUTCOMES FOR OUR CHILDREN.

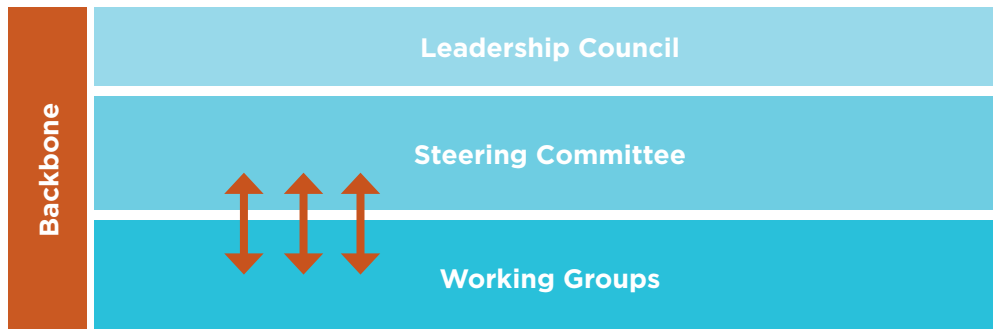
### Healthy and Thriving

- Increased participation in early prenatal care
- Healthier birth weights
- Lower infant-mortality rates
- Increased participation in home visiting services
- More on-time childhood immunizations
- More well-child screenings

### Ready to Learn

- Increased developmental screenings
- Increased kindergarten readiness
- Fewer kindergarten retentions

# Our organizational structure



This initiative is being carried out by several interconnected structures, collectively comprising dozens of individuals and organizations in our community.

**Steering Committee** Meets monthly to set the strategic direction and goals of the initiative, makes key decisions, gives feedback on and prioritizes implementation of ideas generated by Working Groups, and guides Backbone on strategic priorities.

**Working Groups** Meet monthly to develop and implement concrete ideas and action plans related to their six strategy areas; includes one or two Steering Committee members as co-chairs to ensure information flow.

**Leadership Council** (*launching in 2021/2022*) Meets a few times per year to serve as champion and advocate for the initiative, helping to ensure that strategies and ideas receive political support, resources and public backing.

**Backbone** Serves as the coordination entity for the entire initiative, with two full-time staff members managing interactions among and within all of the structures listed above, as well as being the public face of the initiative.





# Steering committee members

**Shawn Avery**

Hampton Roads Workforce Council,  
CEO & President

**Laura Baxter**

Armed Services YMCA Hampton Roads,  
Executive Director

**Barry Bishop**

Greater Norfolk Corporation,  
Executive Vice President

**Felicia Ford**

SDP Fellow, Harvard University  
Private Foundation,  
Executive Director

**Shikee Franklin**

Hampton Roads Community Action Program,  
Early Head Start/Head Start Director

**Dr. Noelle Gabriel**

Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters,  
Pediatrician  
Eastern Virginia Medical School,  
Assistant Professor of Pediatrics

**Dr. LaToya Harrison**

Chief Academic Officer,  
Chesapeake Public Schools

**Sharon Houston**

Gethsemane Baptist Church,  
Director of Outreach

**Andrea Long**

The Up Center,  
Chief Program Officer

**Brad Marino**

Children's Specialty Group, CHKD,  
Chief Executive Officer

**Thaler McCormick**

ForKids Inc.,  
Chief Executive Officer

**Trish O'Brien**

CHIP of South Hampton Roads,  
President & CEO

**Dr. Kerry Sullivan Ragno**

Tidewater Community College,  
Dean of the Division of Languages, Mathematics  
and Sciences

**Dr. Linda Rice**

Hampton Roads Community Foundation,  
Vice President for Grantmaking

**Mary Riley**

Program Administrator,  
Chesapeake Human Services

**Dr. Cynthia Romero**

Eastern Virginia Medical School,  
Director of the M. Foscue Brock Institute for  
Community & Global Health

**Jerry Stewart**

Early Education Business Consultants, LLC,  
Consultant

**Kevin Turpin**

President, Founder,  
Life Enrichment Center

**Dr. Nancy Welch**

City of Chesapeake,  
Director of Public Health

**Dr. Anita Wynn**

Portsmouth Public Schools,  
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and  
Instruction

To learn more about EVMS Minus 9 to 5 including how to get involved, please contact

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