

To: Members of the President's Council on UVA-Community Partnerships
Members of the Early Childhood Education Working Group

From: The Early Childhood Education Implementation Group
President Jim Ryan

Subject: Response and Next Steps re: the Early Childhood Education Working Group Report

Thank you for your diligent work and commitment to addressing the critical issues facing early childhood education in our community. The recommendations outlined by the working group are insightful and provide a clear direction and some cursory direction for action. We agree with and endorse the three overarching recommendations from the working group:

1. Expand access to placement and retention of qualified, trained, and supported early childhood educators in the local community.
2. Appropriately compensate early childhood educators so there is equitable access to highly qualified teachers who stay in the field.
3. Increase effective, high-quality educational experiences for children with special needs, Dual Language Learners, and Black and Brown children from low-income backgrounds.

UVA is fully committed to collaborating with the community to tackle the early childhood education crisis. In response to the recommendations, we have convened an Early Childhood Education Implementation Group comprising key stakeholders from the University and the community. This group includes representatives from various departments and community organizations, as well as staff from The Equity Center.

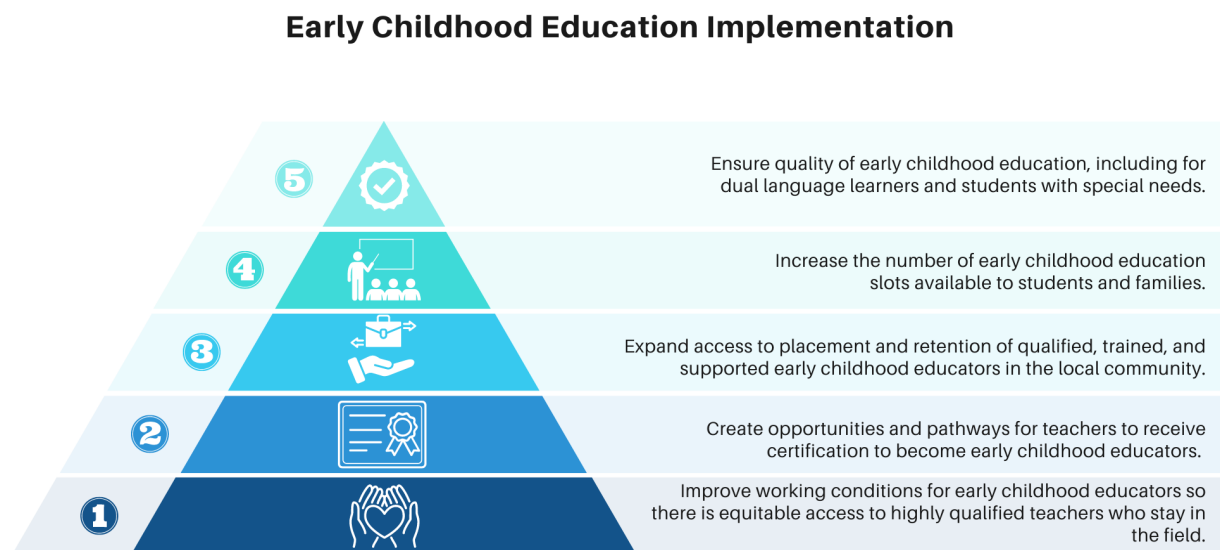
Implementation group members include:

Leigh Keniston, Dean of Humanities, Fine Arts and Social Sciences at PVCC
Jillian McGraw, Director of Teacher Education, School of ED UVA
Corey Borgman, Director of Education and Outreach, Montessori Science Program, UVA
Mike Chinn, Virginia Early Childhood Foundation
Barbara Hutchinson, Chief Strategy Officer United Way
Emily Solari, Coordinator and Professor in the Virginia Literacy Partnerships
Rebecca Berlin, Albemarle School Board
Sarah McLean, Adiuvars Foundation
Stephen Levine, Associate Dean for Academic Programs UVA SCPS
Nic Miceli, Program Lead, Family Services, UVA

To date, the group has worked to understand the current landscape of early childhood education in the region, where the gaps exist in access to slots, and avenues for addressing each tier of

support needed to support educators and students. This group remains committed to fostering city, county, and University partnerships with the goal of best supporting our whole community.

We recognize the urgency of expanding access to qualified, trained, and supported early childhood educators in our community. To this end, the implementation group is focusing on five key areas, as outlined in the graphic below. Tier 5 is where the work begins, with Tier 1 being what will ultimately be achieved.



Tiered Approach to Early Childhood Education in the Charlottesville/Albemarle Region

Tier 1: Improve Working Conditions for Early Childhood Educators

- Enhance working conditions to attract and retain highly qualified teachers.
- Ensure equitable access to supportive environments and resources.
- Implement policies and practices that prioritize the well-being and professional development of educators.

Tier 2: Create Opportunities and Pathways for Certification and Leadership

- Develop programs and initiatives to facilitate certification for aspiring early childhood educators.
- Provide pathways for career advancement and leadership roles within the field (See Appendix A).

- Offer mentorship and support to individuals pursuing careers in early childhood education.

Tier 3: Expand Access to Placement and Retention of Qualified Educators

- Increase opportunities for placement and retention of qualified early childhood educators.
- Establish partnerships with local organizations and institutions to recruit and support educators.
- Provide ongoing training and professional development to enhance educator skills and effectiveness.

Tier 4: Increase Availability of Early Childhood Education Slots

- Expand the number of early childhood education slots available to families.
- Invest in infrastructure and resources to accommodate the growing demand for early childhood education services.
- Prioritize equitable distribution of slots to ensure access for all children, with special attention to those who have historically obtained the greatest benefit from early childhood education.

Tier 5: Ensure Quality of Early Childhood Education

- Assist with the monitoring and reporting of adherence to standards for high-quality early childhood education programs for all.
- Provide specialized support and resources for children with special needs and dual language learners to ensure inclusive and effective education experiences.

The implementation group is committed to putting these recommendations into action within the broader context of the educator recruitment and retention crisis. By addressing the foundational issues identified, they aim to build a stronger and more resilient early childhood education system that serves the needs of all children in our community.

UVA-Specific Actions

The University has already taken steps to understand how it can be part of the solution to the early childhood education problem in the Charlottesville/Albemarle region. This began with a survey to better understand the scope of the issue. The results showed the following:

Current Childcare Landscape at UVA

1. Four childcare centers with 500 spots collectively.
2. Varying hours, management styles, and waitlists.

3. Three out of four centers are under family services.
4. The needs assessment revealed demand for 400 additional spots if available.
 - Efforts to provide onsite sick childcare encountered challenges post-pandemic.

To make positive changes that will have an impact on the area of Early Childhood Education, UVA has worked to increase accessibility, as follows.

Accessibility Initiatives:


1. All childcare centers now accept childcare subsidies, billing UVA directly.
 - Earhart, Copley, and Malcolm Cole centers moving to accept subsidies.
2. Financial Support for Families:
 - Collaboration with VCU and PVCC for best practices in grant utilization.
3. Consolidate Waitlist:
 - Working to streamline the waitlist process for families seeking childcare, as part of the new RFP process.
 - The fee to join the waitlist has also been removed, as it was a significant barrier for a large part of the UVA population.
4. Planning for Expansion:
 - Board of Visitors approved the proposal for planning and design of expansion at Copley. While this approval does not guarantee implementation, the proposal as written would create another 173 spots.
 - The UVA Childcare Center Working Group is looking for other potential places to expand.

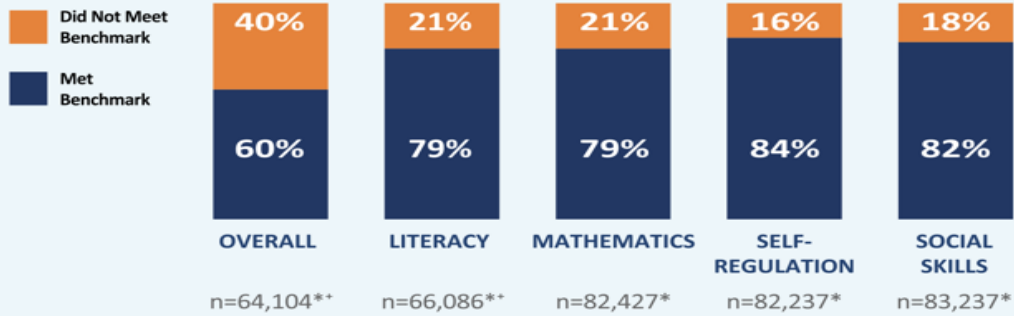
In order to better understand the need for early childhood educators in the city, county, and throughout District 10, an [Early Childhood Education Implementation Group Report: Projecting Childcare Need for Planning District 10](#), was written, and can be found on the President's Council website.

The President's Council metrics committee will work with the [Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program](#) to assess overall progress related to the following key areas: literacy, mathematics, self-regulation, and social skills, as well as overall readiness in the City of Charlottesville, Albemarle County, and District 10. The image below is a readiness snapshot for Virginia kindergarten as of Fall 2023.

STATEWIDE KINDERGARTEN DATA - FALL 2023

The fall overall benchmark is based on the expected skill levels of a kindergarten student **at the beginning** of the academic year.

 **40%** of Virginia's kindergarteners began the 2023-2024 school year still needing to build skills in Literacy, Mathematics, Self-regulation, and/or Social Skills.*[†]



*Students with complete data on each individual measure were included to obtain these estimates.

[†]These data represent 115 divisions who used the PALS-K measure in fall 2023. They do not include the 17 school divisions who piloted the Virginia Language and Literacy Screener: Kindergarten.

Source: <https://vkrponline.org/>

Further progress on the [recommendations of the Early Childhood Education Working Group](#) will be guided by the community-wide implementation group, which will continue to meet and work towards community solutions, guided by its [charter](#).

Appendix A: Early Childhood Education Career Paths

Early Childhood Education Career Paths

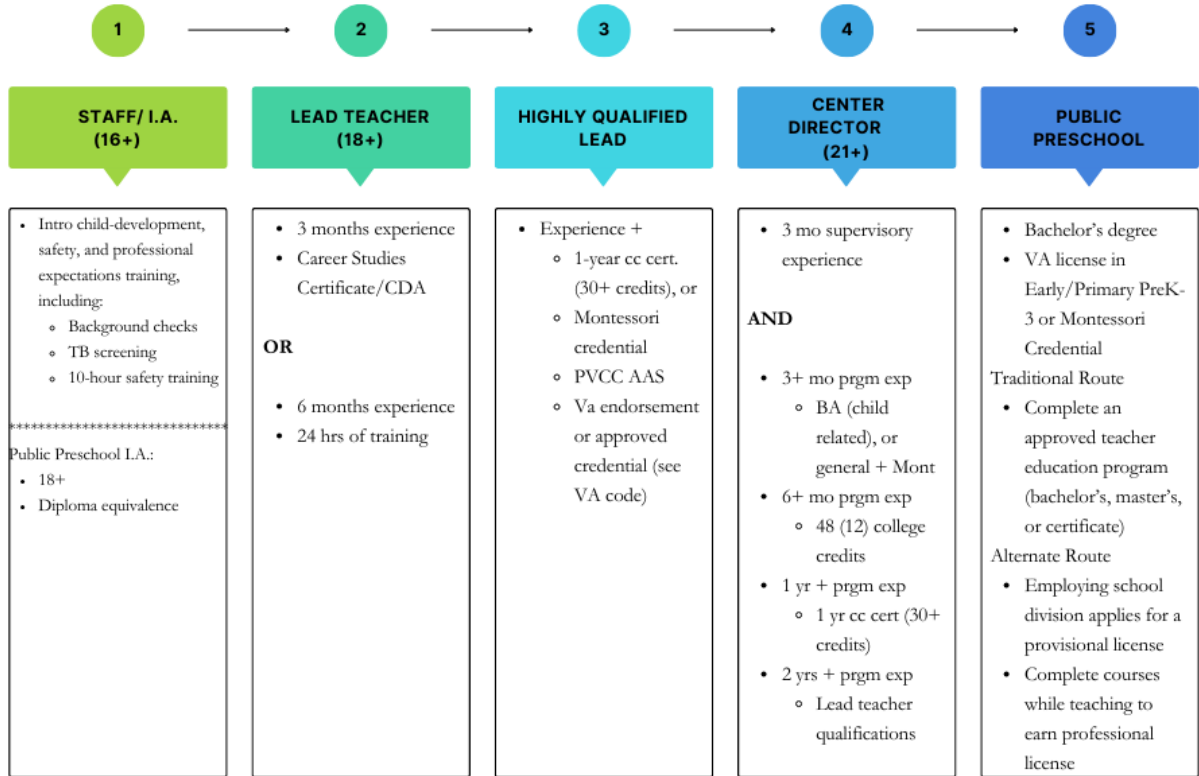


Image: Approaches to licensing and pathways to career mobility. Created by Early Childhood Education Implementation Group.