

Virginia's Family Child Care Toolkit
Addendum: Quality Supports for Family Child Care Providers

1. Child Care Aware of Virginia

Child Care Aware of Virginia helps child care providers build and enhance their programs through free consultation and business support services, training and professional development. They work with families, child care professionals and communities at-large to increase the accessibility, availability and quality of child care in Virginia.



Child Care Aware of Virginia is an important resource for the professional growth of child care providers across the state. Our network is made up of five Child Care Resource Centers that assist providers with their training and business needs. We work to improve the quality of child care services by supporting child care providers and encouraging qualified individuals to join the child care workforce. Our agencies support child care providers in many ways:

- A listing in our child care referral database
- Ongoing professional training and development opportunities
- Assistance and resources for business, child care and regulatory needs
- Advocacy through contact with state policymakers and legislators to urge support for children's issues and enhance the child care and education profession

Connect to your local Child Care Resource Center and learn more by visiting <http://va.childcareaware.org/>

Training and Resources

Child Care Aware of Virginia provides in-person training through their local Child Care Resource Centers and also provides distance learning opportunities via their website such as independent book self-studies. An online Training Academy also offers several options for family child care providers pursuing a Child Development Associate (CDA) or professional development hours. For more information, please visit: <http://va.childcareaware.org/child-care-providers/professional-development/>

Family child care providers receive training through their local Child Care Resource Centers on topics such as:

- First Aid/CPR
- Trauma-informed Care
- Emergency Preparedness
- Childhood Development, Care and Education
- Health and Safety

Opportunities for earning Continuing Education Units (CEU) and CDAs are available.

Family child care providers can receive materials and resources such as:

- Newsletters with information about child development, nutrition, safety, state events, and training opportunities
- Membership opportunities with local and statewide groups

- Accreditation information
 - Networking opportunities
- Some Child Care Resource Centers have libraries that lend toys and educational equipment.
- Some Child Care Resource Centers approve Voluntary Registration and administer the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Technical Assistance

Family child care providers may request one-on-one technical assistance for their professional needs, on topics such as:

- Business Supports
- Regulation Assistance
- Health and Safety
- Emergency Preparation & Response
- Child Development
- VDSS Subsidy Program Supports
- Curriculum/Program Development

For more information, please contact your local Child Care Resource Center:

<http://va.childcareaware.org/about-us/child-care-aware-of-va-resource-centers/>

Virginia Shared Services Network

Child Care Aware of Virginia coordinates the Virginia Shared Services Network, which allows child care providers to leverage resources and receive discounted services at a group price. The Shared Services Network is an easy-to-use website offering many tools and services to help child care providers manage their programs more cost effectively and efficiently. The website features exclusive discounts on items used daily and contains resources related to budgeting, marketing, handbooks, newsletters, and licensing regulations. Providers join as members of the Network to access cost and time savings, resources, templates, and supports in human resources and marketing.

For additional information and Frequently Asked Questions about the Shared Services Network, please visit: <http://va.childcareaware.org/child-care-providers/virginia-shared-services-network-2/>

Annual Child Care and Early Childhood Education Business Summit

Child Care Aware of Virginia hosts an annual Child Care and Early Childhood Education Business Summit for professional development and networking related to child care providers as business owners, including family child care home providers. Presentations and keynote sessions cover topics such as:

- Parent Engagement
- Strategic Budgeting
- Human Resources
- Emergency Preparedness
- Marketing
- Managing Challenging Behavior

For more information, please visit <http://va.childcareaware.org/ccav-events/>

2. Virginia Infant & Toddler Specialist Network

The Virginia Infant & Toddler Specialist Network (VA ITSN) strives to achieve excellence in early care by increasing the knowledge level and skills of those who care for infants and toddlers in family day homes and child care centers. It also serves to link existing community resources that support healthy, safe and nurturing care for children, birth-36 months. Services consist of on-site consultation, which includes mentoring and coaching, training and technical assistance and are provided free of charge to caregivers, teachers, and directors. Visit www.va-itsnetwork.org for more information or to contact the Infant and Toddler Specialist in your region.



Infant and Toddler Specialists provide three levels of service designed to strengthen the capacity of family child care providers to deliver high quality services:

- Level 1: On-site consultation services including mentoring and support using quality improvement plans
- Level 2: Training and technical assistance to groups of caregivers/teachers and directors
- Level 3: Resources and linkages that support healthy, safe, and nurturing care for infants and toddlers

The Network offers creative ideas and support for improving the quality of infant and toddler programs, including family child care providers. Practical training and resources are offered at no cost to infant and toddler programs and providers. State approved training hours are offered after completion of training.

Level 1 On-site Services

Nineteen highly qualified Infant and Toddler Specialists work in nine regional offices across the state that subcontract with Child Development Resources. The specialists provide three levels of professional development opportunities designed to strengthen the capacity of early care and education programs to deliver high quality services, including on-site observation, assessment and individualized coaching.

It is well-known that the quality of care infants and toddlers receive is directly related to the training, experience, and skills of their care providers. The Virginia Infant & Toddler Specialist Network uses an innovative program improvement process that includes on-site consultation and training to improve the quality of early care. Even programs of the highest quality benefit from technical assistance that can help them respond to changes in best practice and knowledge of infant and toddler development.

- **Observation and Assessment:** Prior to beginning training and technical assistance (T/TA) services, infant and toddler specialists complete an assessment of each program using the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS-R). This measure of program quality before technical assistance helps to identify goals to be included in the program's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).
- **Quality Improvement Plan:** Infant and Toddler Specialists work with family child care providers to determine goals and priorities for program improvement. In addition to goals, QIPs include expected outcomes, T/TA services to be provided, timelines, and persons responsible in order to ensure commitment to implementation. QIPs are monitored over time and revised as needed.
- **Individualized Services:** Individualized T/TA services, based on program strengths and needs, include consultation, targeted training, focused mentoring and feedback to support application of new knowledge and practice of new skills, modeling, reflective practice, and resources. Each program receiving on-site services receives resources, materials, and other supports.

Level 2 Trainings

Group trainings are offered regionally on topics such as Group Care, Health and Safety, Inclusion, and Development.

Following training provided by the Virginia Infant & Toddler Specialist Network, you may request follow-up support from staff members. Support may include services such as phone calls for clarifying questions, one-on-one mentoring, or on-site coaching. Contact Mary at marys@cdr.org or 757-378-3172.

Infant and Toddler Mental Health Consultation

The Infant and Toddler Mental Health Consultant program will increase the use of strategies and practices by caregivers, teachers, directors, and families to promote the social emotional development of infants and toddlers and help prevent challenging behaviors. The consultants work with child care providers who serve infants and toddlers from birth to 36 months and parents who have infants and toddlers from birth to 36 months who attend child care.

Consultants provide three levels of service: promotion, prevention and intervention. Consultants promote social emotional development by supporting the well-being of the child. They educate parents and caregivers about the role they play in creating responsive and nurturing environments for young children. They provide coaching on identifying, managing, and screening for social emotional problems. Consultants work to help prevent social emotional problems and challenging behaviors by assessing the quality of the social emotional environment and identifying strengths as well as areas for improvement. Consultants conduct assessments and coaching on implementing strategies for promoting the social emotional development of infants and toddlers.

In addition, consultants can create an individualized plan with targeted strategies to address a specific child's behavior or social emotional needs when intervention services are needed to help maintain the child's placement in the home. All services are provided free of charge. For referrals, please call (877) 236-8821 or email information to dawnw@cdr.org.

Celebrating Babies and Tots Conference

Each year, the VA ITSN offers Celebrating Babies and Tots institutes throughout the state which are full-day professional development training opportunities for caregivers/teachers and directors that increase skills, strategies, and ideas for providing high quality services for infants and toddlers. Participants receive state approved training hours and/or continuing education units (CEUs).

Webinars

VA ITSN conducts regular webinars for the professional development of providers who work with infants and toddlers. There is no cost to participate, and recordings of the webinars are posted on the website for you to view at any time, along with handouts and additional resources. For more information, please visit <http://va.gapitc.org/audio-conferences-registration/>

Back To School Incentives

VA ITSN supports family child care providers in their professional development by offering an incentive program for infant and toddler caregivers who successfully complete courses during the current grant period and satisfy incentive requirements toward obtaining an endorsement or credential.

Incentives are available for the following educational options:

- Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Infant Toddler Endorsement
- Child Development Associate (CDA) Infant Toddler, Family Child Care Credential
- Virginia Community College System (VCCS) Infant Toddler Career Studies Certificate

If you would like more information on professional development, contact Mary Sheldon at marys@cdr.org or 757-378-3172.

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3. Virginia Quality

Virginia Quality is the state's voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). There is no fee to participate in Virginia Quality. This voluntary system awards quality levels to child care and preschool programs (including family childcare homes) based on nationally recognized quality standards and best practices.



The Virginia Quality Levels are a framework for program quality improvement. Each level builds on the one before it, and prepares programs for the level that comes next. Programs progress through the levels at their own pace, based on their current level of quality, and which aspects of quality they are ready to demonstrate next.

Virginia Quality Standards

Virginia's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) awards quality levels to child care and preschool programs based on these four nationally recognized quality standards and best practices.

EDUCATION & QUALIFICATIONS	CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT	ENVIRONMENT	INTERACTIONS
<p>A teacher's formal education in child development or early childhood education has an impact on children's school readiness. When teachers have some formal education, such as a Child Development Associate (CDA), professional certificate, or child-related college credits, they are more prepared to intentionally support children's learning through high quality interactions. This standard measures the education and qualifications of program staff.</p>	<p>Intentional teaching has an impact on children's school readiness. This standard does not require programs to use a purchased curriculum. Instead, this standard measures how programs intentionally promote children's learning and development. Virginia has developed the Milestones of Child Development and the Foundation Blocks for Early Learning to guide early childhood educators in promoting school readiness, and this standard considers how the program aligns with Virginia's early learning guidelines.</p>	<p>Children engaged in meaningful learning and play, guided by qualified caregivers in an enriched educational environment, has an impact on school readiness. This standard measures the types of materials available to the children and the types of activities they are involved in throughout the day.</p>	<p>Interactions between teachers and children form the foundation for all social and cognitive learning, significantly impacting school readiness. In addition to exposure to high quality materials and intentional teaching, children benefit most when they experience high quality interactions. At your program, do teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• support children's social and emotional growth?• have a positive attitude towards the children?• use constructive behavior management techniques?• encourage children to learn and be creative? <p>This standard measures the quality of interactions.</p>

View or download the quality standards document at https://www.virginiaquality.com/sites/default/files/VA_Quality_Standards_0.pdf

Benefits

Family day home providers engaged in Virginia Quality:

- Learn about and incorporate best practices in early education and care.
- Receive recognition for existing quality work with children and families.
- Develop practical goals and strategies to guide program improvement.
- Access professional development, technical assistance, and grants linked to achieving and maintaining quality.
- Communicate to families the good work they do every day and their work to continually improve quality.

Virginia Quality is administered locally, so in addition to the resources listed in this guide, each region offers training and supports customized to the needs of regional participants. There is no fee to participate in Virginia Quality.

For more information, or to request to be contacted by your regional coordinator, visit www.virginiaquality.com

Online Training Modules

Virginia Quality developed a series of online training modules which are offered at no cost on the LearnPoint platform at <https://virginiaquality.learnpointlms.com/>. This online learning series was developed to provide professionals who work at or with programs participating in Virginia Quality with free and easy access to interactive and engaging online professional development related to Virginia's QRIS standards. Providers are able to participate in the online professional development series when they are a Virginia Quality participant. Providers can print certificates to verify their participation in each module session, as well as a transcript documenting the modules you have completed. Each module is accompanied by course materials and additional resources for further study, which are available within the LearnPoint site. In order to register with LearnPoint, you will need to enter the code provided to you by a Virginia Quality regional coordinator.

In addition to the Education criteria at Level 2, Virginia Quality also requires the completion of the following 9 training modules to establish a foundation of knowledge and best practices:

- Orientation to Virginia's QRIS
- Resources for School Readiness
- Intentional Teaching
- High Quality Interactions
- Play-Based Learning Environments
- Including Children with Special Needs
- Kindergarten Transition
- Resources for Working with Families
- Cultural Competence
- Orienting New Employees and Creating Professional Development Plans

To progress to Level 3 in Virginia Quality, Virginia Quality programs will participate in two modules in addition to the other Criteria required to achieve Level 3:

- Introduction to the Curriculum Checklist
- Introduction to the Self Study Process

Technical Assistance Specialists

Highly trained Technical Assistance Specialists are available in each region to assist family child care providers in their quality improvement goals. Specialists provide training and technical assistance to help providers establish developmentally appropriate learning environments, interactions and curriculum, and to serve children with special needs. Certain aspects of technical assistance vary by region, while other aspects remain consistent across the state for all communities implementing Virginia Quality. Across the state, TA Specialists provide technical assistance to programs as they prioritize areas for improvement and help family child care providers develop a deeper understanding of the standards and tools used by Virginia Quality to identify quality child care settings for young children. Specialists typically have expertise in one or more of the following three standard areas:

- **Curriculum Specialists:** these individuals have expert-level knowledge of the Milestones of Child Development, intentional teaching, and/or the QRIS Level 3 Curriculum Checklist. These Specialists have a deep understanding of how to help family providers understand the importance of intentional teaching and improve their services in this area of quality. They understand how to support family providers who are engaging in quality improvement in curriculum or assessment, and can assist programs with the completion of the QRIS Level 3 Curriculum Checklist, either by facilitating learning communities, fielding individual TA phone calls, or providing individual TA to programs on-site if needed.
- **CLASS™ (Classroom Assessment Scoring System™) Specialists:** these individuals have expertise in the CLASS™ framework (PreK, Toddler, and/or Infant CLASS™). They understand the importance of interactions for child development and have expert-level knowledge on the tools (they are certified observers). Additionally, these Specialists have knowledge of how interactions (within the CLASS™ framework) impact child development (social-emotional, language, cognitive, etc.) so that family providers understand WHY improving quality in this way is important for children's development and school readiness. These Specialists may conduct training on CLASS™, facilitate learning communities for family providers completing CLASS™ self-study/assessments, or provide individual TA to family providers on-site.
- **ERS (Environment Rating Scale) Specialists:** these individuals have expertise in the ERS framework including the Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale (FCCERS). They understand the importance of play-based environments for child development and have expert-level knowledge on the tools (many are trained observers). Additionally, these Specialists have knowledge of how play-based environments (within the ERS framework) impact child development (social-emotional, language, cognitive, etc.) so that providers understand WHY improving quality in this way is important for children's development and school readiness. These Specialists may conduct training on ERS, facilitate learning communities for family providers completing ERS self-study/assessments, or provide individual TA to family providers on-site.

Technical Assistance Specialists are responsible for assisting early care and education programs in developing quality improvement plans and working with family child care

providers to implement changes, and connecting programs with community resources. This process may involve assisting providers in drafting a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) with improvement objectives and manageable action steps, holding regular meetings with providers, and submitting monthly progress reports to regional coordinators.

Peer Learning Opportunities

Regions typically offer several peer-to-peer professional development opportunities, to foster the development of relationship-based learning and support communities among colleagues in similar roles. Peer-to-peer technical assistance (TA) is based on the idea that a significant expert knowledge base exists in the field and that peers who have solved challenges on the ground have developed tools and strategies that can be shared with their colleagues. In Virginia Quality, this type of TA is also referred to as "Learning Communities."

Learning Communities are convened when there are several providers in the same stage in Virginia Quality who would benefit from gathering together regularly to complete quality improvement activities related to progressing through the Quality Levels. For example, a region may convene a Learning Community for several family child care providers who are completing the Curriculum Checklist or preparing for an on-site observation visit of their interactions and environments. Learning Communities are typically facilitated by a TA Specialist with expertise in the topic area, so that providers have easy access to resources and supports.

Self Study Process

The Virginia Quality Self Study in Interactions and/or Environments is integrated into the requirements to achieve Level 3. Providers will complete one self study form in Interactions and one self study form in Environments. Participation in Self Study requires family child care providers to reflect meaningfully on the quality of their interactions and environments and learn more about the observation frameworks used in the on-site visit required to progress to Levels 4 and 5.

A specific form for Self Study is available on the Virginia Quality website and is available for programs working on the Level 3 requirements. Supports for completing Self Study include a LearnPoint module introducing the form, key terms, and instructions and tips for completion. In addition, many regions convene Learning Communities for programs and providers who are in the process of Self Study at the same time, under the facilitation of a TA Specialist with expertise in either Interactions or Environments. Contact your regional coordinator for more information about these options.

Additional Regional Resources

Each region offers additional supports for quality improvement at their discretion and based on available funding. These individualized regional supports may include:

- In-person training workshops
- Local professional conferences
- Financial incentives linked to achievement of quality improvement goals
- Funding for quality improvements

For more information or to request to be contacted by your regional coordinator, visit www.virginiaquality.com.

4. Other resources

IMPACT Registry

IMPACT is Virginia's early childhood professional development registry. This free, voluntary tool documents and recognizes the professional achievements of practitioners and trainers who work in the early childhood education and school-age care profession within the Commonwealth of Virginia. To learn more, visit <http://childcareva.com>, click on "Training & Professional Development" and scroll down to the bottom.

Virginia Child Care Provider Scholarship Program (VCCPSP)

The VCCPSP is a scholarship program through the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS), that makes funds available for early childhood professionals to take courses at one of Virginia's accredited colleges. Eligible courses are those required for a certificate or degree in the early childhood education field. For more information on guidelines and application forms, please visit: https://dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/professionals_resources.cgi

Project Pathfinders

Project Pathfinders is a scholarship program through the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, to refer child care practitioners to additional resources for help with earning child development college degrees and certificates. Project Pathfinders may be able to assist with needed courses that cannot be funded by the VDSS Child Care Provider Scholarship Program, other mandatory fees, and book costs AFTER students first apply to the Virginia Child Care Provider Scholarship Program. Visit www.vecf.org/project-pathfinders/ for additional details.

Small Business Loans

The Virginia Small Business Child Care Financing Program (CCFP) is designed to assist Virginia child care providers, including family day home providers, in obtaining financing for fixed asset needs and educational materials. For more information, click here https://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/division/cc/provider_training_development/intro_page/guidance_procedures/financial/CCFP_InfoSheet_7-7017.pdf

Additional Online Information

The VDSS website and consumer website provide various other quality supports for child care providers such as VDSS online training courses, the TIPS (Training Information for Provider Success) calendar, and the child care financing program. Visit http://dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/professionals_resources.cgi and www.childcareva.com (this website also includes information for families and the community).