

# VECF and Quality in Early Learning

*Commission on Youth  
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*Kathy Glazer*

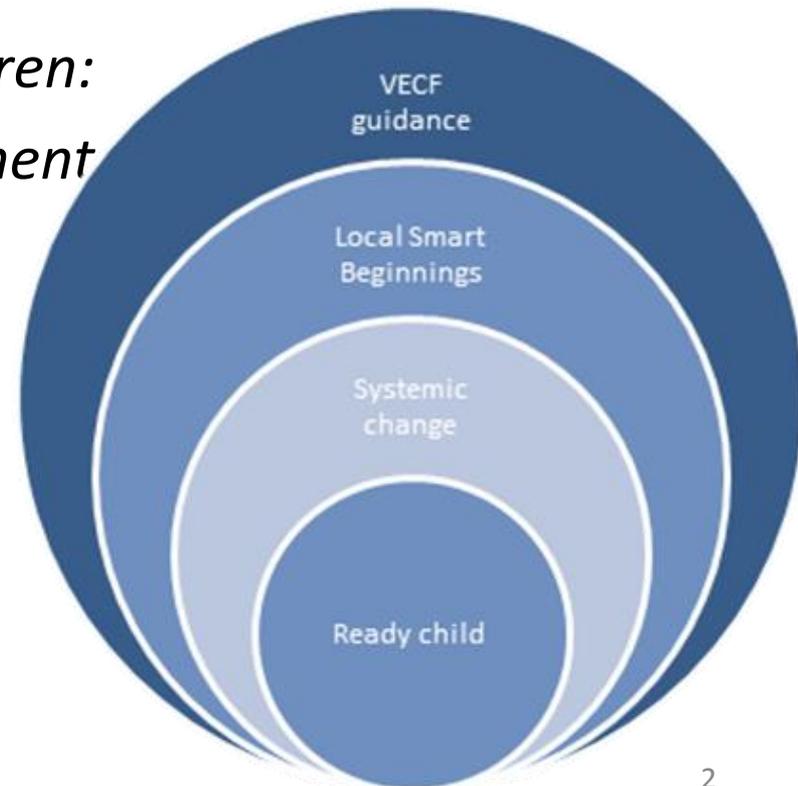


# ***What does it take, Virginia?***

*What does it take to build healthy, educated individuals who perform well throughout school and become productive members of society and the workforce?*

*It starts with **smart beginnings** for children:*

- A healthy birth and healthy development*
- Supported and supportive families*
- Enriching early learning experiences*



# *Considerations*

- School readiness happens locally; to ensure it requires community capacity and expertise
- There is great variation across communities – not “one size fits all”
- More than \$.5 billion in public financing that communities must knit efficiently
- Joint public/private responsibility
- Two-way communication state/local
- Data driven-decision making



# ***Where is the biggest bang for the “quality buck”?***

- Most relevant existing funding sources
- *What are the most likely channels for impacting quality?*
  
- Most effective investment strategy
- *What is the most effective lever to improve quality?*
  
- Broadest and deepest possible impact
- *Where are the children? the highest risk children?*

# *Virginia's Young Children*

Approx. 500,000 children birth to age 5 in Virginia

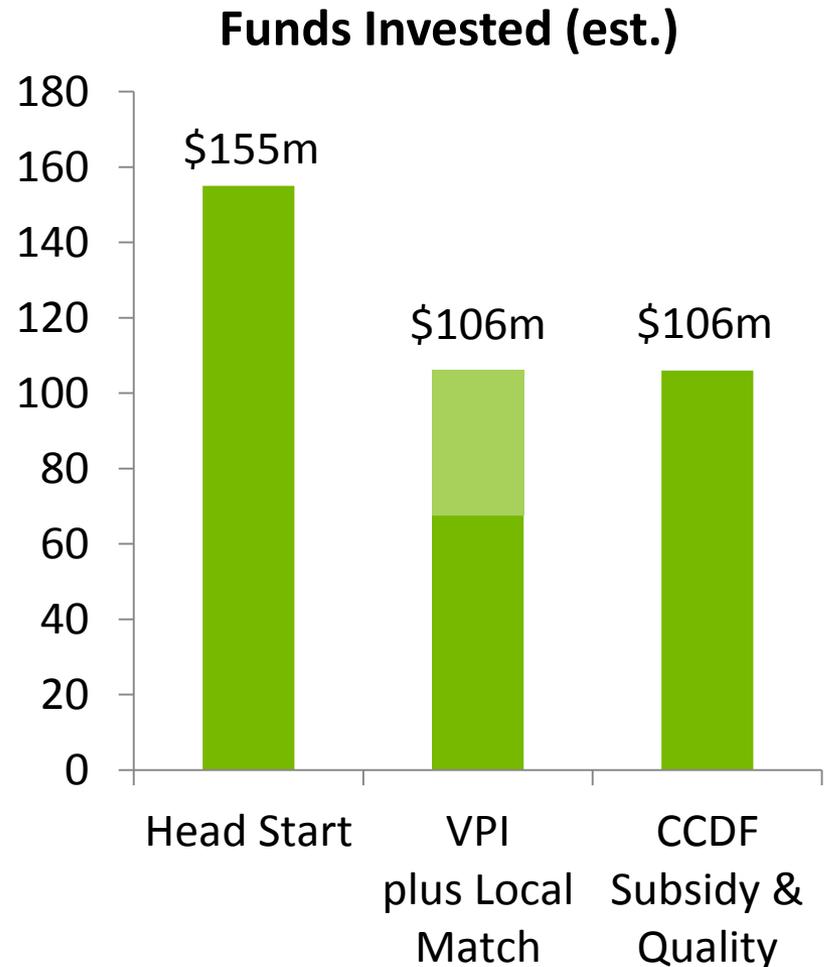
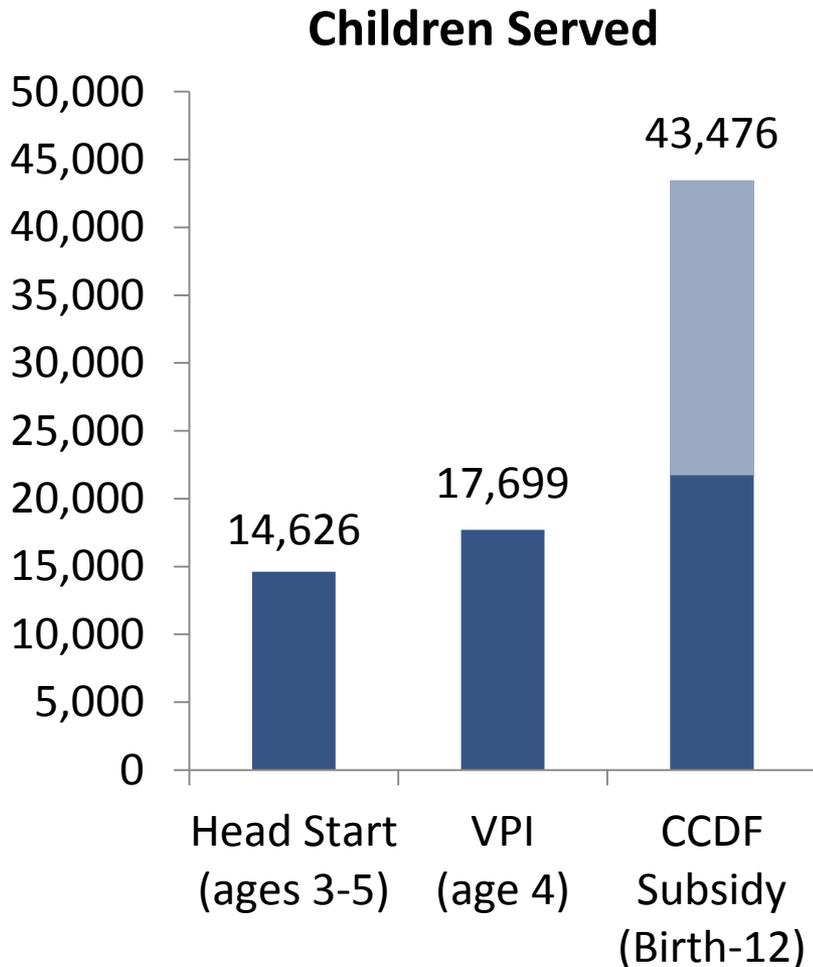
- approx. 100,000 in each age cohort

66% live in households where all parents work,  
which means that

- 330,000 children need child care/preschool arrangements

75,000 have more than 2 risk factors

# Where are the resources? And Where are the (highest risk) children?



# *VECF's Quality Focus*

- Effective Adults:
  - Strategic Professional Development
- Within Effective EL Settings:
  - QRIS

# *Virginia's QRIS: Star Quality Initiative*

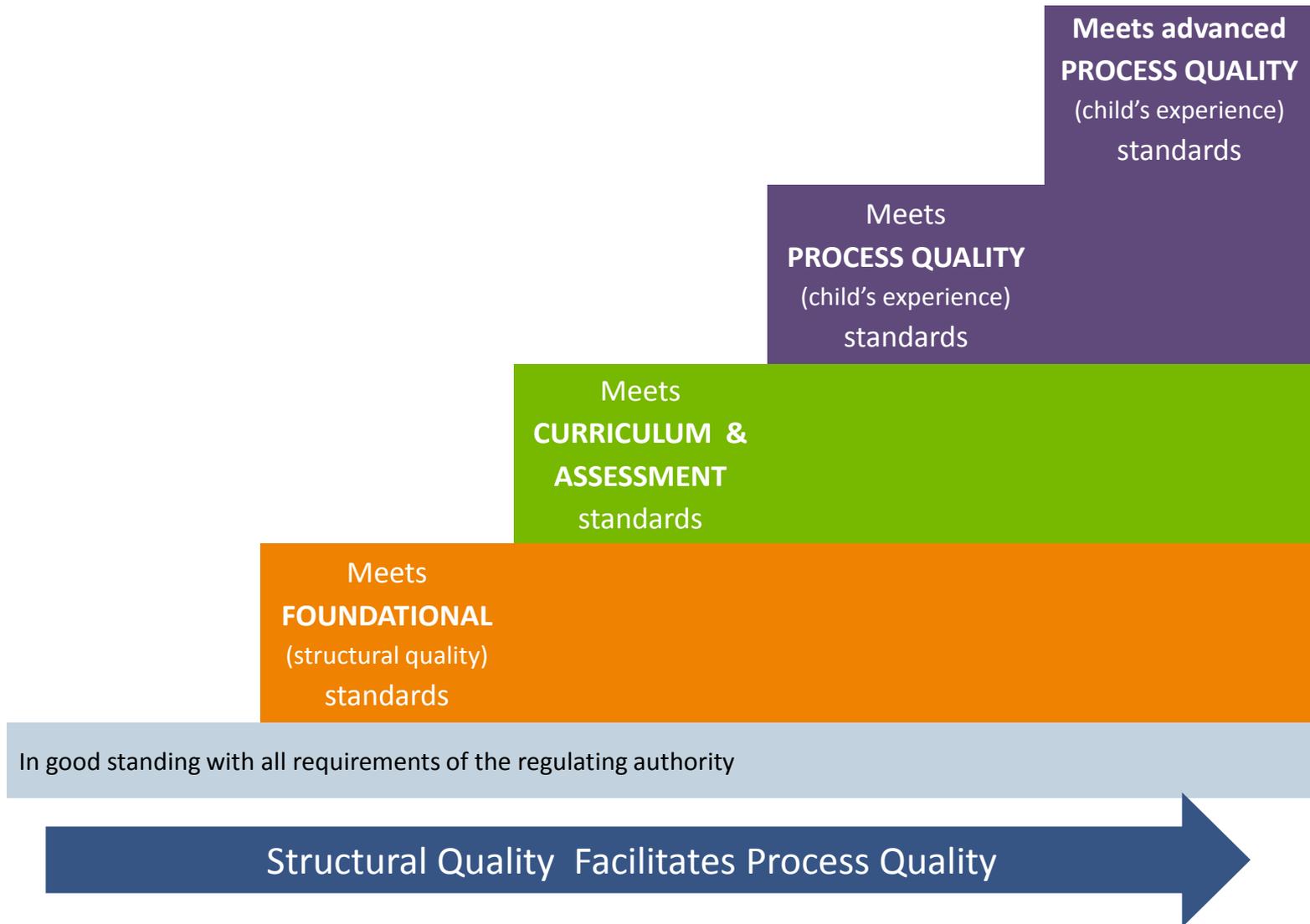
- The Virginia Star Quality Initiative is Virginia's **Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)**
- Administered through a **public-private partnership** between VDSS and VECF
- Participation is **voluntary**

Partnered with over **500 early learning programs** to improve the services they provide to more than **18,800 children**

# *Virginia's QRIS is unique*

- Implementing through a public-private partnership
  - Federal, local, and private funding supports the initiative
- Including teacher-child interactions as a measurement standard AND a mechanism for improvement
  - CLASS shows strong links to child outcomes, academic and social
  - Many states have joined Virginia in using teacher-child interactions in some way
  - Provides a framework for giving high quality feedback and improvement supports to participating programs and families

# Revised Framework



# *Commitment to Quality*

- Virginia's star ratings use the most rigorous quality measurement tools
- Research basis and objective observations
- Specific teacher behaviors are related to children's academic and social outcomes
- Virginia's commitment to high quality information and feedback for providers and families





# *Estimated Timeline for Growth*

**2017**

1,600 (33%) early learning programs participating in VA's QRIS serving 75,200 children

**2016**

800 (16%) early learning programs participating in VA's QRIS serving 37,600 children

**2015**

Revisions Roll Out & Public Awareness Campaign

**2014**

400 (8%) early learning programs participating in VA's QRIS serving 18,800 children

**Increase annual investment from \$5 to \$7 million**

# *Professional Development Linkages*

- Online Course on Effective Classroom Interactions
  - Partnership with the University of Virginia to bring a high quality web-based professional development course to child care and preschool teachers participating in VA's QRIS
- Proposed Teacher Quality/Workforce Development Initiative
  - Working with the Community College System to strengthen the capacity of child care and preschool teachers to promote optimal learning and development in their classrooms, supporting literacy, STEM, and executive function skills for young children

# ***Opportunities: School Readiness in Virginia***

- School readiness is no longer a partisan, “soft” issue
- Recognition of importance to the workforce and economy
- Business engagement; VA Chamber of Commerce
- Legislative leadership
- Virginia has many assets to leverage

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