



## Future Directions for the Virginia Early Childhood Cross-sector Professional Development Leadership Team (VCPD)

### Purpose of the VCPD

Members of the Professional Development Leadership Team (VCPD) are committed to working together to build a unified cross-sector professional development (PD) system to support all families and their children (prenatal to age 5) in Virginia. This includes but is not limited to children at-risk for school failure, English language learners, economic disadvantages, cultural and linguistic differences, and infants, toddler and preschoolers with disabilities and special health needs. The VCPD Leadership Team promotes cross-sector planning, development, implementation and evaluation of PD in order to ensure communication and collaboration across systems. The VCPD is committed to the development of a coordinated system incorporating the following characteristics:

- **Compensation Parity:** Fair wages/professional development incentives to reflect high standards of credentialing and licensure;
- **Seamless PD across sector:** Collaborative planning and service integration across traditional boundaries of child care, education, health, and social services;
- **Access and Outreach:** Current and prospective workers know how the system works, what is available, where to go, how to get financial aid, and other pertinent information;
- **Qualifications and Credentials:** a set of qualifications and credentials for various roles included in the system that promotes and recognizes quality through licensing, regulation and agreements or systems that connect institutions of higher education to each other and to community-based or non-credit training;
- **Quality Assurance:** Mechanisms and processes in place to ensure accountability (trainers/training content);
- **Core Knowledge:** Range of knowledge exists to ensure adults working with young children need to facilitate child learning and development. Agreements (i.e., memorandum of understanding/agreement, contracts, grants, etc.) support qualification requirements for all sectors;
- **Stabilization of workforce:** Meaningful opportunities for career advancement to ensure a well-qualified and stable workforce;

- **Reduce gaps and duplication:** Involvement of all players - providers, practitioners, parents, and community leaders from both public and private sectors;
- **Adequate funding:** Funding requirements include delivery of professional development, access for participants/students, and administration of the system.

Members of the VCPD represent state agencies and initiatives that fund and plan early childhood PD birth to 5 (see attached list of members). Current key areas of focus are:

- development of a state-wide network of early childhood PD providers
- coordination of registry type activities
- coordination of PD needs assessment efforts
- development of a unified birth to five licensure

### **Definition of Professional Development**

The following definition of PD and key related components guide the work of the VCPD:

Facilitated teaching and learning experiences that are designed to support the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills and the application of this knowledge into practice. PD incorporates multiple modalities and methods, is interest-based and grounded in evidence-based practices.

Key components of early childhood PD include:

(a) **The “who”** of PD (the characteristics and contexts of the learner, the children and families they serve and the PD providers);

(b) **The “what”** of PD (what professionals should know and be able to do; generally defined by professional competencies, standards, and credentials); and

(c) **The “how”** of PD (the approaches, models, or methods used to support self-directed, experientially-oriented learning that is highly relevant to practice). Practices include face-to-face instruction in a group setting, self-study, Web- or e-based learning, blended learning (i.e., a combination of face to face and Web-based seminars), coaching, mentoring and technical assistance.

### **Future Directions in the development of a network of state early childhood PD providers**

- Utilizing the definition and key components identified above, the VCPD solicited input from key stakeholders on the current status of early childhood PD activities in Virginia to identify gaps in opportunities for collaboration and coordination. As a result of this comprehensive analysis, the VCPD has become a strong state infrastructure that supports a regional network of early childhood PD providers by:

- **Providing oversight** to ensure consistency/accountability among five regional PD Consortia with the intent to create a statewide system of cross-sector PD;
- Ensuring that the PD Consortia are kept abreast of cross-region resources, coordinate needs assessment and registry efforts and develop a common calendar;
- **Seeking continued funding** to support state and regional cross-sector PD efforts.

The PD Consortia are coordinated out of the Northern, Central, Piedmont, Western and Eastern regions.

The Consortia will be led by an organization or agency to be identified by each Consortium and could differ in each region. Team members include key leaders and decision-makers involved in early childhood PD starting with at members/PD Providers from at least 6 of the following:

- Childcare Aware of Virginia (formerly VACCRRN)
- Early Head Start and Head Start
- Early Childhood Mental Health (Center for Social and Emotional
- Early Intervention-Part C
- Foundations for Early Learning)
- Department of Education: Early Childhood special education and Kindergarten
- Department of Health
- Department of Social Services
- Higher Education (2 & 4 year institutions)
- Home Visiting Consortium
- Infant Mental Health Endorsement
- Infant Toddler Specialists
- Smart Beginnings
- Special Quest
- Training & Technical Assistance Centers (T/TACs)
- Virginia Preschool Initiative
- Virginia Co-operative Extension

Each Consortium will be responsible for ensuring the use and coordination of existing PD resources within that region and to provide a forum for communication of the early childhood PD providers in their region. In addition, the Consortia will collaborate to promote cross-sector distance learning opportunities with other regions to maximize use of resources and expertise across regions.

Consortia will be encouraged to collaborate with existing early childhood cross-sector initiatives to coordinate activities within their region (i.e. Smart Beginnings Coalitions, Head Start, Child Care Resource & Referral, and Local Interagency Coordinating Councils).