



# Mixed Delivery Program Guidelines



## **Guidelines for the Mixed Delivery Program**

### **Title of Program:**

Mixed Delivery Program

### **Issued to:**

Identified lead agencies serving Commonwealth of Virginia localities

### **Issuing Agency:**

Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF)

1703 N. Parham Road, Suite 110

Richmond, VA 23229

### **Period of Funding:**

July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

### **Submission Deadline:**

By May 15, 2022

Grant proposal submission details can be found on the [VECF Mixed Delivery Program website](#).

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# Mixed Delivery Program

## Rationale

Quality early learning experiences are an essential element to preparing children to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. This impact is life-long—children who participate in high-quality early childhood care and education (ECCE) programs are more likely to finish college, get high-paying jobs, and be healthier and happier later in life. Yet access does not guarantee quality and quality does not happen by chance. If the quality of early childhood education experiences is not strong there may be diminished return on investment.

As Virginia recovers from COVID 19, quality early childhood care and education experiences are more important than ever. Fall 2021 VKRP data show the significant impact of COVID 19 on Virginia’s youngest learners. More than 21,000 Virginia kindergartners are at risk of starting school without the skills to meet benchmarks in reading. Statewide results show a significant drop in kindergarten literacy, a reality that is having disproportionate effects on children who are Black, Hispanic, low-income, Dual Language Learners, and children with special needs. These data reveal the importance of expanding access to quality early learning to address these challenges.

The Mixed Delivery Program provides publicly funded ECCE services in licensed, non-school-based and non-faith based private ECCE settings for children who have been identified as at-risk for entering kindergarten without the necessary social and academic skills for success. Mixed Delivery ECCE sites have many of the same quality features as the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI).

## Legislation and Funding

The Virginia General Assembly appropriates funds for the support of public-private delivery of ECCE services each year. In partnership with the Virginia Department of Education’s (VDOE) Division of Early Childhood Care and Education, the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) administers the [Mixed Delivery Program through a competitive selection of regional coordinating agencies](#).

VECF’s Mixed Delivery Program provides public funding to serve young children in private, community-based (non- school-based) preschool classrooms. The Mixed Delivery Program effectively addresses growing demand for publicly-funded ECCE that meets the needs of families. The program provides public funding that supports family choice in the type of private ECCE setting that best meets a child’s and family’s needs. In addition, the program allows private programs to receive predictable, stable revenue to support their ability to more fully draw down funds that approach the actual cost of providing early childhood care and education.

The Mixed Delivery Program serves as a complementary program to the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), meeting similar program guidelines set forth by the Virginia Department of Education, but with specific flexibility provided as stated in Virginia’s Appropriations Act.

*Notwithstanding any provisions of § 22.1-299, Code of Virginia, and in order to achieve the priorities of the Joint Subcommittee on Early Childhood Care and Education for exploring the feasibility of and barriers to mixed delivery preschool systems in Virginia, recipients of a Mixed-Delivery Preschool grant shall be provided maximum flexibility within their respective pilot initiative in order to fully implement the associated goals and objectives of the pilot. Recipients of a Mixed-Delivery Preschool grant and divisions participating in such grant pilot activities shall be exempted from all regulatory and statutory provisions related to teacher licensure requirements and qualifications when paid by public funds within the confines of the Mixed-Delivery Preschool pilot initiative.*

The following Mixed Delivery Program Guidelines serve as a guide for regional coordinators and coordinating organizations and outline the expectations for meeting the goals for ECCE sites, as provided in the state budget approved by the General Assembly. The guidelines outline the minimum expectations for communities offering the Mixed Delivery Program in 2022-2023.

# Section 1: Providing Impactful Early Childhood Care and Education

*To improve kindergarten readiness in Virginia, all children whose services are publicly funded need access to classroom environments and educators who can support growth and development. In Mixed Delivery classrooms, teachers should have access to the same quality improvement features as other publicly-funded classrooms, such as:*

- 1. Curriculum:** A state-approved, evidence-based curriculum that is aligned with state standards;
- 2. Assessment:** Training on the administration and use of classroom assessments to understand each child's development and implement the curriculum to meet the needs of their students; and,
- 3. Professional Development:** Take part in ongoing professional development, including but not limited to that which is required by child care licensing and participation in regular observation and feedback sessions through VQB5.

## 1. Curriculum

All ECCE sites must be using a state-approved curriculum in all Mixed Delivery classrooms. State-approved curricula are aligned with Virginia's Birth-to-Five Early Learning and Development Standards. A research-based curriculum, when fully implemented, ensures that teachers have the scaffolding and materials to plan and implement a full range of activities that support children's growth in social-emotional, physical, and cognitive domains.

### Choosing a Curriculum

ECCE sites may choose one of the currently-approved curricula for use in state preschool programs, or, they may choose to have a curriculum reviewed for approval. Effective July 2021 and as part of VQB5, VDOE fully coordinates curriculum reviews. Information on VDOE's new curriculum vetting process, including the baseline criteria for high-quality birth to five curriculum, curriculum pre-submission checklist and most up-to-date list of VDOE-approved curricula, can be found on the [Early Childhood Standards, Curriculum and Instruction webpage](#).

### [Virginia's Birth-to-Five Early Learning and Development Standards](#)

*Virginia's Birth-to-Five Early Learning and Development Standards* approved by the Virginia Board of Education in March 2021 replace the Foundation Blocks for Learning and the Virginia Department of Social Service (VDSS) document *Virginia Milestones of Early Childhood Development*.

*Virginia's Birth-to-Five Early Learning and Development Standards describe behavior indicators across five areas of development, Approaches to Play and Learning, Social and Emotional Development, Communication, Language and Literacy Development, Health and Physical Development, and Cognitive Development*, including science, social science, mathematics, and fine arts. For each domain of learning, these guidelines reflect typical development patterns for young children across six overlapping age bands. While not intended to be used in place of a curriculum, early learning guidelines are a helpful tool for supporting child development from birth to five.

**Mixed Delivery Infant and Toddler Pilot** - The Early Learning Development Standards requirements applies to all Mixed Delivery Classrooms for 2022-2023, including the Infant and Toddler Pilot classrooms.

### Supporting Effective Curriculum Implementation

Some ways that Mixed Delivery ECCE sites can support curriculum implementation include planning for and providing ongoing support to teachers and ensuring that they have access to the necessary materials to support implementation. ECCE sites can use Mixed Delivery funding to enhance their program's curriculum and associated supports by:

- Providing teachers with introductory training and ongoing support;
- Providing teachers with necessary materials to support implementation;
- Planning for and providing ongoing training and support.

**Mixed Delivery Infant and Toddler Pilot** - The Approved Curriculum requirement applies to all Mixed Delivery Classrooms for 2022-2023, including the Infant and Toddler Pilot.

## 2. Assessment

### Child Assessment with VKRP

A child's readiness for school includes both academic and social-emotional skills developed at home, school, and in their community. Currently, teachers in all Virginia public kindergarten classrooms assess children using the [Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program \(VKRP\)](#) each fall and spring. The VKRP is a suite of assessments that allows teachers and families to better understand and support a child's development in important social and academic domains.

In 2022-2023 school year VKRP will be available for use by all Mixed Delivery Programs. Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year VKRP will be available for both 3- and 4-year-old students.

Mixed Delivery grantees must identify a leader, or multiple leaders, to receive training on how to administer the VKRP assessment. These leaders receive ongoing support from staff at the University of Virginia (VKRP partners) and are tasked with ongoing training and support for classroom educators.

Mixed Delivery ECCE sites should make every effort to assess all 3- and 4-year-old students with the VKRP in 2022-2023. The VKRP is aligned with the new Early Learning and Development Standards and assesses children's development in mathematics, self-regulation, social skills, and literacy using the following tools:

- Early Mathematics Assessment System (EMAS)
- Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS Pre-K)
- Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS).

**Mixed Delivery Infant and Toddler Pilot** - The use of VKRP and PALS does **NOT APPLY** to infants and Toddler Pilot classrooms. Infant and Toddler classrooms are encouraged to use other self-selected tools that are aligned to the selected curriculum for monitoring learning progress and milestones for infants and toddlers.

## 3. Professional Development

### Providing Individualized Professional Development

Mixed Delivery ECCE sites must ensure that they follow the Virginia child care licensing requirements for professional development and provide professional development to support effective teacher-child interactions and supporting children's growth and development. The following links provide the regulations related to professional development for educators working in licensed Child Day Centers or Family Day Homes.

- [Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers](#)
  - » Educators at Licensed Child Day Centers must take part in required pre-service, health and safety training, and an additional 16 clock hours professional development annually.

- [Standards for Licensed Family Day Homes](#)

- » Licensed Family Day Home providers must take part in required pre-service, health and safety training, and an additional 16 clock hours of professional development annually.

**Mixed Delivery Infant and Toddler Pilot** - The professional development requirements applies to all Mixed Delivery Classrooms for 2022-2023, including the Infant and Toddler.

## VQB5

All Mixed Delivery ECCE sites are required to participate in VQB5. [VQB5](#) is a measurement and improvement system that focuses on the quality of all publicly-funded birth to five classrooms and supports families to choose quality programming across different program types. VQB5 sets shared expectations for measuring quality and supporting teachers for all birth to five ECCE sites. Through VQB5, teachers and leaders will receive the feedback and support they need to help young children learn.

**Mixed Delivery Infant and Toddler Pilot** - The VQB5 Participation requirement applies to all Mixed Delivery Classrooms for 2022-2023, including the Infant and Toddler Pilot.

## Other Ways to Support Professional Development

In addition to the required training, Mixed Delivery sites can use Mixed Delivery funding to support a more robust professional development plan that:

1. Includes both program-wide and individualized professional development that meets each teacher's needs;
2. Based upon the information from CLASS™ observations and child assessments to support teacher-child interactions and child growth and development;
3. Makes use of and accesses existing quality supports from quality improvement partners such as:
  - » VQB5;
  - » Infant-Toddler Specialist Network;
  - » Child Care Provider Scholarship;
  - » Project Pathfinders Scholarship; and
  - » other programs that are aligned with VQB5;

*By continuously engaging in curriculum implementation, child assessment, and ongoing professional development, Mixed Delivery ECCE sites can ensure that all children receive an impactful early childhood care and education experience that prepares them for school and life success.*

## Section 2: Family Engagement

*Families whose children are enrolled at Mixed Delivery sites should be included in every step of their child's early childhood care and education (ECCE) experience. A plan for intentional family engagement should include building relationships between ECCE site personnel and family members to support children's growth and development throughout their time at the ECCE site.*

Mixed Delivery ECCE sites should have an intentional plan for meaningful family engagement strategies in the areas of:

1. Building a community of respect that considers the various cultural, racial, and linguistic backgrounds of parents and caregivers;
2. Promoting parenting skills and supporting parents as their children's first teacher;
3. Listening to parents' feedback and building partnerships with them; and
4. Creating strategies for supporting kindergarten transition for children and families.

In addition, at the grantee level, Mixed Delivery lead community agency community agencies should plan for family engagement with their Mixed Delivery leadership teams to ensure that family engagement aligns with Ready Regions Family Councils.





## Section 3: Supporting All Children

*All children must be provided a high-quality learning experience. Mixed Delivery ECCE sites must ensure their practices and policies encourage inclusion and advancement of all children who qualify for the program. Inclusion has benefits for all children, their families, and the community.*

### **Inclusion of Students with Disabilities**

Funding to support Mixed Delivery ECCE sites is intended for all eligible children, including those who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or those who may later be identified as a child with a disability requiring special education and related services. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require that all early childhood programs make reasonable accommodations to provide access for children with disabilities or developmental delays. Research shows that inclusion supports children with disabilities in reaching their full potential and benefits all children, regardless of disability status, as well as families, and communities.

### **Support for Dual Language Learners**

Mixed Delivery ECCE sites are encouraged to support families with children who are learning more than one language in a way that shows respect for the primacy of a child and family's primary language while also supporting the child in their development of all language skills, including newly-emerging skills with the English language. Children who are Dual Language Learners (DLLs) are defined as those between the ages of 2.5 and 5.5 who are learning two (or more) languages at the same time, or who are learning a second language while continuing to develop their first language.

### **Exclusionary Discipline/Suspension/Expulsion**

Suspensions and expulsions of young children deprive them of enriching learning experiences and have a negative impact that extends into grade school and beyond. Yet, recent data show that suspension and expulsion occur regularly in early childhood settings serving children birth to age five.

The Virginia Board of Education's approved [Virginia Guidelines for the Prevention of Suspension and Expulsion of Young Children: Supporting Children with Challenging Behaviors in Early Childhood Settings](#) serve as the guide for VPI programs on preventing suspension and expulsion of young children. Mixed Delivery ECCE sites should receive and review this guidance document. The document provides guidance about policies and best practices in implementing developmentally appropriate experiences that can prevent suspension and expulsion. Recommended research-based practices promote collaboration between family and professionals and focus on effective classroom management and social-emotional skill development to support young children's healthy development.



## Section 4: Program Operations

### Child Eligibility

The Mixed Delivery Program follows the same student eligibility requirements as the Virginia Preschool Initiative. The VDOE has posted [Guidelines for Using Family Income Criteria in Determining Student Eligibility for the State-funded VPI and Best Practices for Implementing a Local Eligibility Process](#). This document helps with implementing and meeting the income-based and locally established at-risk student eligibility criteria and reporting requirements for the state-funded VPI and the Mixed Delivery Program by:

1. Providing General Assembly Appropriations Act language related to student eligibility for VPI;
2. Establishing a poverty level of income with which to apply the income eligibility criteria;
3. Establishing a definition of family income and what to include as family income;
4. Establishing processes for verification of family income based on source documents in qualifying students to attend state-funded VPI programs;
8. Using locally determined at-risk criteria; and
9. Providing best practices for implementing an eligibility process for VPI.

### Age Eligibility

Children eligible for participation in the Mixed Delivery Program must be at least 3 years old on or before September 30 and not yet age-eligible to attend kindergarten (children who are 5-years-of-age on or before September 30). However, kindergarten-eligible 5-year-olds who did not have access to a sufficient preschool experience, whose families request preschool as the most appropriate placement, and who meet eligibility criteria can participate in the Mixed Delivery Program. Mixed Delivery ECCE sites that have an applicant who is a kindergarten-eligible child or children must communicate this request to their local lead community agency, who will then inform VECF. Once the child is approved to be served in a Mixed Delivery classroom, the family must inform their local school division of the child's preschool attendance.

**Mixed Delivery Infant and Toddler Pilot** - Children eligible for the Infant/Toddler Pilot must be under three years of age as of 9/30.

### Eligibility Criteria

Children eligible for the Mixed Delivery Program are determined eligible based upon the following criteria:

- Child's family has an income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty line;
- Child's family is experiencing homelessness;
- Child's parents or guardians did not complete high school,
- Child has an identified disability or is receiving services through early intervention;
- Child is determined eligible by local eligibility criteria that are specific to the grantee's Mixed Delivery Program.

Up to 15 percent of a Mixed Delivery lead community agency's slots may be filled based on locally established eligibility criteria to meet the unique needs of children and families in the community. Localities that can demonstrate more than 15 percent of slots are needed to meet the needs in their community may apply for a waiver to increase local eligibility criteria. **Please contact Jenna Martin at [jenna@vecf.org](mailto:jenna@vecf.org) for information about waiver requests.**

When verifying eligibility of children for participation in the Mixed Delivery Program, it is critical to establish a clear systematic process, guide families through completion of the process, and annually train local staff to determine eligibility consistently. The [Guidelines for Using Family Income Criteria in Determining Student Eligibility for the State-funded VPI and Best Practices for Implementing a Local Eligibility Process](#) provides best practices for implementing a local eligibility process.

Mixed Delivery ECCE sites are required to report child-level information about eligibility determinations, child race, child ethnicity, dates of birth, and other demographic information. This information is reported to VECF through the Mixed Delivery Data Portal within one month of the child's enrollment in Mixed Delivery for both oversight and to help the state in assigning State Testing Identifiers for children participating in Mixed Delivery.

**Mixed Delivery Infant and Toddler Pilot** - Programs that are selected to participate in the Infant/Toddler pilot and are enrolling a designated number of children ages 0-36 months must follow the same eligibility requirements above.

## **Contract and Mixed Delivery Classroom Information**

### **Contract Size**

Mixed Delivery grantees must contract with ECCE providers in contracts of 10 or more slots per site.

Contracts between grantees and ECCE sites must be for a substantive portion of slots per Mixed Delivery classroom (ex: 10 Mixed Delivery slots in a 20-child classroom or 3 per family day home). This requirement is based upon the commitment of and opportunity for the Mixed Delivery program to test and promote sufficient, sustainable fiscal models for high-quality preschool services, including stabilizing strategies such as contract payments.

The contract size is designed to fully support a classroom (including increased teacher pay), based on assumptions about the average size of programs participating, and programs' ability to meet all the guidelines involved in the Mixed Delivery program for each participating classroom (for example, state-approved curriculum, child-level assessments, etc.)

If there are any ECCE sites that do not feel they can meet this requirement but can still meet the overall goals and objectives of Mixed Delivery, grantees may request a waiver of this requirement on behalf of their participating ECCE partner. To submit a waiver request, please provide full justification for your request in writing to VECF.

### **Staffing Ratio**

Mixed Delivery ECCE sites will follow all staffing standards required by the Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers of the Standards for Licensed Family Day Homes.

No Mixed Delivery ECCE site is required to operate at the maximum group size or teacher:child ratio.

### **Teacher Qualifications**

Teacher licensure and endorsement requirements for the Mixed Delivery Program differ from those of VPI programs. The state Appropriations Act provides the following language about Mixed Delivery teacher requirements established by the Virginia Board of Education.

*Notwithstanding any provisions of § 22.1-299, Code of Virginia, and in order to achieve the priorities of the Joint Subcommittee on Early Childhood Care and Education for exploring the feasibility of and barriers to mixed delivery preschool systems in Virginia, recipients of a Mixed-Delivery Preschool grant shall be provided maximum flexibility within their respective pilot initiative in order to fully implement the associated goals and objectives of the pilot. Recipients of a Mixed-Delivery Preschool grant and divisions participating in such grant pilot activities shall be exempted from all regulatory and*

*statutory provisions related to teacher licensure requirements and qualifications when paid by public funds within the confines of the Mixed-Delivery Preschool pilot initiative.*

Teachers working in Mixed Delivery classrooms are exempt from the regulatory requirements for teacher licensure, regardless of the public funds used.

### **Attendance and Other Reporting Requirements**

Children who have regular attendance will have an opportunity to fully benefit from the services offered. Mixed Delivery ECCE sites are required to track and record attendance as outlined in the Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers and the Standards for Licensed Family Day Home.

By collecting Mixed Delivery classroom attendance data, developing strategies for improving attendance, and reaching out to Mixed Delivery participating families, program leaders and teachers can improve attendance. Clear attendance and communication policies, along with collaboration with families, are crucial to improving attendance and outcomes for young children.

### **Data Collection**

Every child served through Mixed Delivery must have a State Testing Identification (STI) number assigned. The state Appropriations Act provides the following about the Mixed Delivery Program reporting requirements:

*G) Children served by the pilots shall be assigned student identification numbers as provided in § [22.1-287.03 B](#) of the Code of Virginia to evaluate pilot program outcomes and to permit comparison with Virginia Preschool Initiative outcomes.*

*H) Pilot providers shall provide information to the Department of Education as necessary to fulfill the reporting requirement established.*

VECF coordinates with VDOE to fulfill the requirement to provide a STI to all children served by Mixed Delivery. Mixed Delivery ECCE sites participate in regular, ongoing monthly data reporting to support this legislative requirement, in addition to ongoing program administration and future program evaluation.

At enrollment, and monthly thereafter, site leaders submit monthly reports to VECF via the Mixed Delivery Data Portal. Data collection includes program-, teacher-, and child-level information. Each month Mixed Delivery ECCE sites must update their information in the portal, including, but not limited to:

- Number of allocated slots filled;
- Number of eligible students on a waitlist;
- Ages of active, Mixed Delivery funded children; and
- Data for each enrolled child, including child's family's Federal Poverty Level bracket:
  - » At or below 130% FPL;
  - » 131-200% FPL;
  - » 201-350% FPL; and
  - » 351+% FPL.



The Mixed Delivery Data Portal holds real time information about Mixed Delivery classrooms, teachers, students enrolled, and student demographics. VECF provides training and technical assistance to ECCE sites and Mixed Delivery Coordinators as they begin using the Mixed Delivery Data Portal.

### **Record Retainment**

The Mixed Delivery Program shall retain all financial and programmatic records relative to the Mixed Delivery Program funding for five (5) years after final payment by VECF, or until audited by the Commonwealth of Virginia, whichever is sooner. The VDOE and VECF, its authorized agents, and/or state auditors shall have full access to and the right to examine any of said records during said period.





## Section 5: Additional Resources

Virginia Early Childhood Foundation creates and maintains a variety of additional resources for communities and ECCE sites to use as they plan and implement Mixed Delivery in their communities. If you have a question that is not answered within this guidebook, VECF is able to provide additional resources in the following areas:

[Mixed Delivery Funding Guide](#)

[Integrated Financing Toolkit](#)

[ECCE Site Selection Flow Chart](#)

Zoho Connect Technical Assistance Group

In addition to written reference documents, VECF provides regular, ongoing Technical Assistance Opportunities and is available to serve as a trusted partner for consultation as needed.



