

About Ready Regions

What is Ready Regions?

With steady investment and bipartisan support from Virginia’s governors and legislature, local Smart Beginnings have brought public and private leaders together to collaborate on priorities for young children since 2005. Building from this asset, **Ready Regions will bring unprecedented levels of coordination, accountability, and family engagement to early education programs** in every community in the Commonwealth by:



- **Covering all geographic areas of the state** so that every child and family in Virginia will benefit
- **Striking the important balance** between maintaining consistent standards across regions, while enabling flexibility to address local needs and priorities
- **Promoting greater efficiency and consistency** of standards through a new 9-region model
- **Enabling regional leads to work closely** with the Virginia Department of Education to implement new quality standards, aligned with robust data collection and reporting
- **Empowering regional leads** to more effectively manage and disperse grants from state and federal sources by simplifying distribution and oversight, covering all areas in the state

Why Ready Regions?

The COVID-19 pandemic has shined a bright light on the importance of a strong child care system to the well-being of children, families, and communities. Launch of the Ready Regions network is a critical component of **bipartisan efforts to reimagine our child care system** in the wake of the COVID crisis. This includes the July 2021 consolidation of child care oversight at the state level to the Virginia Department of Education, creating a single point of accountability for early childhood education. Through **public-private partnerships at the regional level**, Ready Regions will allow every child and family to benefit from greater access to quality child care services.

What’s the goal of Ready Regions?

Ready Regions will help every Virginia community to be:

ACCOUNTABLE

Virginia’s early education system must prepare children for success

PARENT-CENTERED

Families must be engaged in designing a system that works for them

RESPONSIVE

Parents must be able to choose the child care they want and need

RELIABLE

Early education programs need consistent supports to deliver quality services

BOLD

Every community in Virginia should be a place where families can thrive

Where can I learn more about Ready Regions?

The **Virginia Early Childhood Foundation** has put together [resources related to Ready Regions](#) on its website. You can also contact info@vecf.org.

About VQB5

What is VQB5?

The Unified Virginia Quality Birth to Five System (VQB5) is a measurement and improvement system that focuses on the **quality of all publicly-funded* birth-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 programs. Through VQB5, teachers and leaders will receive the feedback and support they need to help young children learn. By fall 2023, all publicly-funded programs will be required to participate with ratings shared publicly in fall 2024. Early childhood programs that do not receive any public funds have the option to participate.

Why participate in VQB5?

- **Strengthened quality:** Through VQB5, educators and leaders will receive individualized feedback and support to provide quality experiences for young children
- **Training and support:** Educators and leaders participating in VQB5 will have access to supports, training, and resources to help improve interactions and curriculum, including [CLASS®](#) training
- **Financial recognition:** Eligible educators participating in VQB5 will receive up to \$2,500 through RecognizeB5
- **Opportunity to prepare and receive a practice rating:** The 2022-2023 academic year is the last opportunity to practice participating in VQB5 before participation will be required for publicly-funded sites beginning in Fall 2023

What's different from last year?

Starting with the 2022-23 academic year, **EVMS Minus 9 to 5 will be administering the VQB5 grant for Ready Region Southeastern** (counties of Accomack, Isle of Wight, Northampton, and Southampton and cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach). This means that all publicly funded* birth-five classrooms in the region are eligible to participate.



Moreover, there are **more resources and supports available** for VQB5, including an increase in the Teacher / Assistant Teacher Recognition Award, more targeted professional development to support improvement of CLASS scores, an improved LinkB5 user experience, as well as new roles such as a Family Engagement Specialist, a Coordinated Enrollment Specialist, and a regional Family Council.

Where can I learn more about VQB5 and / or participating?

To learn more about VQB5 in Southeastern Virginia, please see EVMS Minus 9 to 5's Ready Region Southeastern resource page [here](#). To learn more about VQB5 in general, please see the Virginia Department of Education's VQB5 page [here](#).

* Publicly funded includes: Public School preschools (VPI, ECSE, Title I); Head Start and Early Head Start programs; Approved Subsidy Vendors (Child Care Centers, Family Day Homes, Local Child Care Assistance); CCAMPIS programs; VECF's Mixed Delivery programs; Military Child Care Fee Assistance programs.

About Ready Region Southeastern

What is Ready Region Southeastern?

Ready Region Southeastern is comprised of the counties of **Accomack, Isle of Wight, Northampton, and Southampton** and the cities of **Chesapeake, Franklin, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach**. This diverse and dynamic region is home to nearly 100,000 young children and represents a demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic diversity that's a microcosm of the Commonwealth. Moreover, the region is home to countless organizations, coalitions, caregivers, and advocates who bring excellence and innovation to our early childhood system.

Who is implementing Ready Region Southeastern?

Everyone in Southeastern Virginia who is dedicated to helping young children and their families thrive should consider themselves part of Ready Region Southeastern. Day-to-day implementation will be driven by the organizations that represented the above-named counties and cities in the legacy Smart Beginnings network: [EVMS](#), [Minus 9 to 5](#), [Smart Beginnings Eastern Shore](#), [Smart Beginnings Western Tidewater](#).



With the launch of Ready Regions, these three organizations will continue to operate as independent organizations to engage their many local partners, while also together collaborating to serve the whole of Southeastern Virginia. **EVMS Minus 9 to 5 has been selected as the Hub** of Ready Region Southeastern, and as such will oversee and administer the Unified Virginia Quality Birth to Five System (VQB5) and Mixed Delivery Program (MDP) grants and also serve as the main convener of councils and committees related to these grants and programs in the region.

What is the shared intent of Ready Region Southeastern?

While each of the three implementing organizations will continue to operate under their current visions and missions, they will align their teams and activities under a **shared framework**:

Our PURPOSE is to strengthen Southeastern Virginia by fostering equity and opportunity for young children, their families, and all who are dedicated to helping them thrive

The individual and collective work of the three organizations will focus on five **PILLARS**:



About Ready Region Southeastern

What are you doing, specifically, in each pillar?

 Authentic Family & Community Engagement	We put the hopes, needs, and voices of families at the center of everything that we do. We are building out a family engagement platform via a dedicated Family Engagement specialist and regional and local family councils. We also offer community-wide events and education , including the KIDS COUNT Forum on the Eastern Shore and promoting The Basics .
 Healthy Births & Healthy Starts	It's never too early to support a healthy start. We support the earliest months and years of children's lives in many ways, including via distributing Go & Grow Starter Packs on the Eastern Shore, educating families about infant safe sleep efforts , offering parent workshops in Western Tidewater, and promoting resources and screening tools .
 High-Quality Early Care & Education	Supporting educators, classrooms, and centers in their pursuit of quality is crucial. We are excited to be able to bring the Unified Virginia Quality Birth to Five System (VQB5) to all publicly-funded birth-five classrooms in our region. In addition, we have built a shared-services model to help child-care providers work together and strengthen their businesses.
 Connected & Equipped Services and Supports	When providers who care for, nurture, and educate our children are connected to each other and to resources, our whole region is stronger. We promote resources and trainings, and bring organizations together via Community Connections , the Western Tidewater Early Childhood Collaborative , and the KIDS COUNT Forum on the Eastern Shore.
 Supportive Government & Business Policies and Funding	Policymakers and businesses play critical roles in creating the conditions for young children and their families to thrive. We engage these important stakeholders by building public will, promoting a family-friendly business toolkit , advocating for key policies , and curating and sharing key data points about early childhood in our region.

How can I get involved?

If you are **already** engaging with one of the three organizations that are implementing Ready Region Southeastern, we thank you and hope you will continue to help us strengthen Southeastern Virginia by fostering equity and opportunity for young children, their families, and all who are dedicated to helping them thrive. Each of the three Ready Region Southeastern implementing organizations is committed to working closely with partners on the ground in their respective communities – while at the same time bringing a regional perspective to the work and connecting dots, people, and resources across Southeastern Virginia.

If you are **newly interested** in partnering with Ready Region Southeastern, please contact [EVMS Minus 9 to 5](#) (Region-wide; Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach); [Smart Beginnings Eastern Shore](#) (Accomack, Northampton); or [Smart Beginnings Western Tidewater](#) (Franklin, Southampton, Isle of Wight) and they can help you identify ways to get involved. As you can see, there are opportunities for you to contribute your time, treasure, and talents in each of the five pillars.