



## Early Childhood Special Education Update December 2025

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### **Mission**

- VDOE Mission
  - The mission of the Virginia Department of Education is to lead and facilitate the development and implementation of a quality public education system that meets the needs of students and assists them in becoming educated, productive, and responsible citizens.
- Virginia State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR)
  - The Virginia Department of Education intends to improve the statewide rate of graduation for students with disabilities identified with an Emotional Disability (ED), Intellectual Disability (ID), Other Health Impairment (OHI), or a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) receiving a regular high school diploma (Standard and Advanced Studies Diplomas).

### **Early Childhood Special Education Child Count**

As of December 1, 2024, Virginia served 14,500 children with Individualized Education Programs ages 2-5. A new child count is now underway. Data should be available in early March.

### **Creating Connections to Shining Stars July 2026: Save the Date and Call for Proposals**

Creating Connections to Shining Stars 2026 is a collaborative effort between Virginia's Part C, Early Intervention and Part B, Early Childhood Special Education programs. The conference will focus on promoting and supporting the implementation of evidence-based practices in inclusive settings for infants, toddlers, and young children.

- July 14 – 16, 2026 at the Hotel Roanoke

### **VQB5**

Virginia's early childhood quality and improvement system is underway with its third year of implementation. VQB5 Quality Profiles are available depicting ratings for all participating Early Childhood Care and Education sites. Profiles provide families with clear and comparable

quality information about all publicly-funded ECCE sites. There is now 2 years of data on the site.

- <https://earlychildhoodquality.doe.virginia.gov/>.

Virginia's early childhood system must ensure that all children have quality teaching and learning experiences that meet their unique needs. To do this, Virginia has developed the Unified Virginia Quality Birth to Five System (VQB5) which recognizes the impact of every classroom, provides feedback to every educator, and supports all publicly funded birth-to-five programs to improve.

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.

There are 2 primary nationally recognized components to VQB5.

1) Teacher-child interactions. Teacher-child interactions will be measured using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) twice a year and providing individualized professional development to those who need it the most.

2) Vetted curriculum implementation. VDOE has a list of vetted curricula based on specific guidelines for quality curricula that can be implemented in ECCE programs.

### **Inclusive Practices**

This school year, VDOE continues to work to improve EC inclusive practices through the following activities.

#### **IPOP**

Improving Inclusive Practices and Outcomes for Preschoolers is a systems change initiative to improve inclusive practices in public school programs. VDOE's Training and Technical Assistance Centers provided technical assistance to approximately 30 school divisions this year.

#### **Virginia Early Childhood Special Education Itinerant Model Technical Assistance Document - launched**

The itinerant model is a service delivery approach where an early childhood special education teacher (itinerant teacher) travels to various school-based and/or community-based settings to provide services to young children with Individualized Education Programs (IEP). This model supports the child's inclusion by offering direct instruction, consultation with early childhood educators and families, and professional development to ensure all involved adults can effectively support the child's IEP goals. The purpose of this technical assistance document is to provide a description of the Virginia Itinerant Early Childhood Special Education Model (IECSE) developed by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and to support Virginia's school divisions and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programs in its implementation. This document provides the critical practices that support children's access and participation in inclusive settings and natural environments. A webinar will be held on February 10 for those who would like to learn more about the model and the document.

[Virginia Itinerant Early Childhood Special Education Model TA Document.pdf](#)

### **Itinerant Model of Instruction Community of Learning**

VDOE provided a Community of Learning to 28 teachers in the fall on using the itinerant model of instruction. The itinerant model allows ECSE teachers to serve children with IEPs in Head Start, Virginia Preschool Initiative, community-based classrooms and wherever they are.

### **Project PASS with the VCU Autism Center for Education**

Project PASS (Preparing for Academic and Social Success) is an intensive TA model. It is currently being implemented in 3 school divisions to improve the quality of inclusive settings.

### **Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) Virginia Reliable Observer Description and Training Application**

Applications are open for ICP Virginia Reliable Observers: Cohort 3. This initiative is intended for divisions and early childhood programs that plan to use the ICP to improve the quality of inclusive practices. To learn more about the ICP and the Virginia Reliable Observer Training Process, visit the LEADS site [Inclusive Classroom Profile \(ICP\) Virginia Reliable Observer Application](#) and review the [ICP Virginia Reliability Description and Application](#). Applications are due December 15, and training is anticipated to begin in early 2026.

### **The Essentials of Eligibility and Evaluation in Early Childhood, Two-Part Webinar Series (1/14 and 1/21, 3-4:30 pm)**

Determining the eligibility of children aged two to five is a consequential responsibility of school divisions. It requires assessing if a child has one of the 13 recognized disabilities and determining if that disability adversely affects their educational performance, requiring special education services. For young children, evaluation requires a child-centered process, using various sources of data that provides the most representative sample of the child's behavior to inform eligibility and gather information about strengths and abilities. The VDOE will provide a two-part webinar series on the Essentials of Eligibility and Evaluation in Early Childhood. These webinars are most helpful for school division team members who are engaged in determining eligibility for special education and related services for children ages two through five. While they can be viewed individually, it would be helpful to watch with other team members who participate in eligibility evaluations. Participants will learn about best practices in evaluation of young children to ensure informed decisions are made regarding eligibility for special education and related services. The webinars will be co-presented by Martha Montgomery, Eligibility and Related Services Specialist and Dawn Hendricks, Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator. The webinars will be recorded. Recordings will be sent to all who register.

### **TRAC-IT**

VDOE is working with EI to update and improve the system to notify the state of referrals to LEAs with the change to the EI data system. There are no updates currently.