



Early Childhood Special Education Update September 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).

The school year has started in all 131 school divisions across Virginia.

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 will take place December 1, 2025.

VQB5

VQB5 is beginning 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.

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.

Itinerant Model of Instruction Community of Learning

VDOE will be providing a Community of Learning to 28 teachers this 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 was implemented in 3 school divisions to improve the quality of inclusive settings.

Professional Development

VDOE offers many PD opportunities to educators. Many of the events can be found [here](#).

Teacher Shortage

Teacher shortages in special education continued. Early Childhood Special Education has been challenged as new teachers are difficult to find. As a result:

- VDOE provided additional funding for tuition assistance to support licensure in ECSE
- VDOE supported the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) program for ECSE teachers with 0-3 years of experience (launched summer 2025 for 25 new teachers)
- VDOE provides the Early Childhood Provisionally Licensed Teacher Incentive Program, providing funding to school divisions.

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.