

Motion to Recommend Virginia Expand Childcare Facilities on Campuses

Multiple entities have researched and advocated for providing on-campus child care facilities. The Institute for Women's Policy Research reports that the number of student parents is growing in all regions and at all institution types. It estimates that student parents now make up 26 percent of the total undergraduate student body. The potential benefits of providing childcare include the following:

- Recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students with small children.
- Family involvement and enhanced connection and loyalty to state institutions.
- Less absenteeism.
- Increased employee satisfaction.
- Increased productivity and availability to students and colleagues.

Governor Northam issued Executive Order Number Thirteen on June 26, 2018 that established the Virginia Advisory Commission on Quality Child Care and Education. The Commission's mandate is to "explore the feasibility of providing an evidence based early care and learning program for young children of state employees working on and around Capitol Square in Richmond." The Governor explains that

"State employees across the Commonwealth struggle with the access to and affordability of quality early care and learning environments for their children. Childhood is a time of development and discovery for parent and child alike. Having a reliable, safe, and nurturing environment where young children can grow and explore individual potential is key to a parent's ability to be a productive member of the workforce. In order to compete to recruit and retain talented young employees, the Commonwealth must support state employees' ability to access and afford early care and learning for their children."

The Center for American Progress estimates that 47% of Virginians live in childcare deserts where there are more than three children for every licensed childcare slot. Five of the ten largest Virginia state agencies by number of employees are public universities. Given their regional dispersion throughout the state and high concentrations of state employees, Virginia's public universities, colleges, and community colleges are uniquely positioned to help the State address the lack of licensed daycare while simultaneously addressing the needs of their employees and students.

The Faculty Senate of Virginia therefore urges the General Assembly and Governor to seize this political opportunity to expand the Commission's mandate to include public universities, colleges and community colleges and for the state to increase its direct financial support for affordable, on-campus childcare facilities.