



VIRGINIA FEDERAL  
PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT BIRTH TO FIVE  
IMPLEMENTATION GUIDEBOOK



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# Introduction

Virginia's federal Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG) [Needs Assessment](#) clarified for Virginia that there are significant gaps in its systems for supporting vulnerable children birth through five and their families, and its PDG [Strategic Plan](#) laid out steps for action to address these gaps.

By building state level infrastructure, scaling local implementation models, and measuring progress with data-driven strategies, Virginia will: build and sustain a cohesive, equitable, and empowered network of diverse Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) programs; engage vulnerable families; and advance school readiness of at-risk infants, toddlers, and preschoolers across the Commonwealth.

## The Opportunity

PDG is collaboratively implemented by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF), the University of Virginia (UVA), and Pilot communities. Overall, the federal grant, awarded in 2019, has afforded Virginia the opportunity to strive for three significant advancements:

### 1. A statewide vision, needs assessment and strategic plan

The process, evidence of gaps, and strategic roadmap will be catalysts for strengthening the early childhood care and education system to improve outcomes, including school readiness.

### 2. Community models ready to scale

PDG Pilots representing Virginia's diversity will demonstrate models of effective local/regional implementation, with funding and support (technical assistance) from the state.

### 3. A stronger foundation at the state level

The Commonwealth will unify quality standards, establish a unified rating and improvement system, and realign funding to be well positioned to scale the PDG efforts statewide, having built the necessary capacity and durable infrastructure.

The goal for PDG Pilots is to make profound and fast-moving headway on strengthening relationships and structures for increasing access to, and improving the quality of, early childhood care and education (ECCE) services for children from birth to age 5. These efforts are intended to improve the experiences and outcomes for young children, their families, and the early educators who work with them.

Based on successes thus far and a strong vision and strategic plan for the initiative, Virginia has been awarded renewal funds for the coming three years (January 2020 – December 2022). Starting with the current participation of 20% of Virginia communities in PDG Pilots in the initial cohort, Virginia plans to expand to 40% of communities in 2020, 70% in 2021, and fully to 100% of the state's communities by 2022, with activities and resources to sustain cohorts over time.

The intent of this guidebook is to provide a strategic roadmap with insights, tools, and technical assistance (TA) for communities as they consider and commit to the many strategies and activities required for achieving the PDG objectives. Having these tools in hand will allow communities to focus on the vision as they build collaborative relationships, improve access and quality in publicly-funded ECCE programs, and engage families at every step along the way.

# Expected Outcomes

Through PDG at the state level, Virginia will promote a unified vision for quality, create a uniform continuous quality improvement (CQI) infrastructure, and realign funding to put communities and the state in a strong position to sustain a responsive, high quality ECCE system after the federal PDG ends.

Concurrently, local community pilots (Pilots) will execute a range of activities with the following objectives:

- **Build relationships** to foster rich cross-sector and cross-systems partnerships (including family supports, social services, health, and mental health)
- **Increase access** for at risk children by maximizing family choice and information
- **Strengthen quality** to ensure optimal experiences for young children and support for an effective early childhood workforce
- **Engage families** through clear communication and as partners in designing the system

The Pilots' activities will support the multi-faceted needs of young children and their families, and engagement with families and ECCE programs and educators will result in a robust set of data that clarifies, informs, and catalyzes an effective and efficient ECCE system for the Commonwealth.

These state and local level strategies will increase school readiness for children from birth to age 5, especially those most vulnerable. Through Virginia's Program Performance Evaluation Plan (PPEP) and relevant data tools (including a data dashboard), systems (LinkB5), and strategies (educator incentives), Virginia will assess, document, and broadly disseminate evidence of impact, building a compelling case for significant future investment in the ECCE system and workforce.

## Starting with "Why?"

In leading this effort to address the gaps in your community, you will find that communicating early and often about the "why" of the work will be essential to sustaining the will, motivation, and persistence needed to achieve our assertive goal of increasing school readiness for children birth through five in Virginia, especially those most vulnerable.

Why should communities implement PDG activities? PDG commits Virginia's state and local level leaders to build the infrastructure, relationships, strategies, financing, and public will to **scale a locally-driven and family-informed system of ECCE services** to advance school readiness of at-risk infants, toddlers, and preschoolers across the Commonwealth.

Pilots will commit to advancing school readiness through PDG by undertaking work in the following four areas:

- **Build Relationships**
- **Increase Access**
- **Strengthen Quality**
- **Engage Families**



As a result, Virginia will:

- Have a unified early childhood system that works for families
- Raise the quality of care for all children birth-five
- Increase access to high-quality care for the most vulnerable children
- Ensure the state has a well-supported early childhood workforce.

These advances in Virginia’s ECCE system will improve school readiness for children birth through five in the Commonwealth.

The gaps and challenges are complex and therefore so is the solution. A cohesive, systemic approach will have transformative impact and the work to get there is ambitious. Building a culture of reform and sustaining a unified, collaborative vision and change management plan will be key responsibilities for both state and local leaders engaged in PDG.

## PDG State Level Implementation Team

The PDG State Implementation Team is a partnership of three agencies, each with specific responsibilities in supporting the success of the grant initiative:



**The Virginia Department of Education** is the grant lead and fiscal agency, and is focused on developing unified standards across funded ECCE programs and creating a unified rating system in which all publicly funded ECCE programs will participate.

**The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation** oversees the PDG needs assessment and strategic planning process, coordinates and provides technical assistance for PDG Pilots, manages the incentive program, and develops statewide early childhood integrated data system goals and strategies.

**The University of Virginia** builds and maintains LinkB5, a data system that captures program-, classroom-, and teacher-level data. As part of its responsibility for PDG’s Program Performance Evaluation Plan, UVA also implements workforce surveys (including synthesis and analysis of results to learn insights about quality and turnover from incentives) and family surveys (to understand preferences, priorities, needs, and opinions of parents with young children).

# PDG Pilot Assurances and Budget

Communities identified as PDG Pilots will commit to a set of “assurances.” These commitments are the work that communities will complete during the course of the grant period.

The primary assurances in the PDG Pilot agreements are to:

- Build Relationships
- Increase Access
- Strengthen Quality
- Engage Families

In order to successfully contract for Pilot implementation, communities will collaboratively make decisions and agreements around their Pilot structure, including most relevant and appropriate fiscal agency/grantee, selection of Pilot Lead, and full execution of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The PDG State Implementation Team will provide the MOU, which will include:

- commitment to complete specific assurances
- project work plan
- budget worksheet
  - based on an estimate of publicly funded ECCE programs and classrooms
  - includes template for a project budget to help communities discern appropriate uses for Pilot funding

## Building Your Team



### Fiscal Agency and Pilot Lead

A Pilot Lead is the individual who is the primary point of contact for overseeing the coordination of PDG efforts in a given geographic area. The staff position of Pilot Lead is funded through the grant to coordinate the on-the-ground work of PDG. A Pilot Lead can be an employee of a school system, United Way, Smart Beginnings, a community action agency or other organization. As the fiscal agency for the grant, the organization must have demonstrated capacity to commit to the obligations and assurances in the PDG Pilot agreements as well as be a trusted convener of stakeholders and partners community-wide.

When determining your community's agreement on the individual/organization best poised to take on the role of Pilot Lead, consider the professional skills and personal dispositions that will ensure success. Pilot Leads should be good communicators, organized, sensitive to the unique needs of individuals, and committed to equity. Also consider that successful Pilot Leads have characteristics and capacities such as:

- Flexible: Nimble and adaptive
- Accountable: Committed to agreements, expectations, and deadlines
- Courageous and trusted: Reliable and tenacious
- Visionary: Adept at clarifying what success "looks like" and managing change

Fiscal agencies/organizations that are the employer of the Pilot Lead must demonstrate capacity to meet and support the primary assurances in the PDG Pilot agreements.

Pilot Leads have the responsibility for staffing and organizing their community-level work. Each community's organizational structure may look different. A key part of the community's team is a central/single point of contact for all PDG related work. The Pilot Lead is the primary point person who coordinates the community's work and receives/relays information to and from the state level PDG core team and Pilot community partners.



## Community Partners

The PDG effort encompasses all stakeholders engaged in supporting the healthy development of young children across the age continuum, including families, agencies, organizations, and ECCs. Just as young children's development and family needs are multi-faceted, supporting their successes requires a community-wide "village" approach. PDG Community Partners may include the following (not an exhaustive list):

- Families with young children
- Local philanthropy
- United Way
- Colleges & universities
- School divisions
- Community Action Agencies
- Local government agencies
- Service provider organizations including home visitors, health and mental health providers, early intervention and special education, etc.



## ECCE Program Partners

Pilots are expected to engage and ensure participation of all publicly-funded ECCE program partners.

ECCE program partners are individuals and organizations who receive public funding to provide ECCE services. You will find your program partners exist in many settings and are funded through various means:

- Family day home (FDH) providers who serve children of families accessing child care subsidy
- Child care centers, private schools, and faith-based programs that serve children of families accessing child care subsidy
- VPI classrooms in public and private sites
- Head Start and Early Head Start programs
- Title I classrooms
- ECSE classrooms and services

The coordination of communication among the Pilot Lead, the various Community Partners, and the ECCE Program Partners is a critical component of successful implementation. Consistent, predictable, and transparent communication structures will be essential to establish and build the open flow and understanding of all PDG activities.

## PDG Technical Assistance (TA)

Relationship-based TA is essential to PDG success. Your community has a large team at the state level implementing TA in a variety of formats. You are not expected to plan and implement PDG activities on your own. You can expect extensive guidance throughout the grant period from all state level partners, communicated/delivered primarily through VECF.

The ongoing PDG TA opportunities will provide you with support and information via various formats and modalities. The Pilot Lead is expected to engage in all opportunities presented. To take best advantage of these opportunities, your community may designate additional individuals to participate alongside the Pilot Lead.

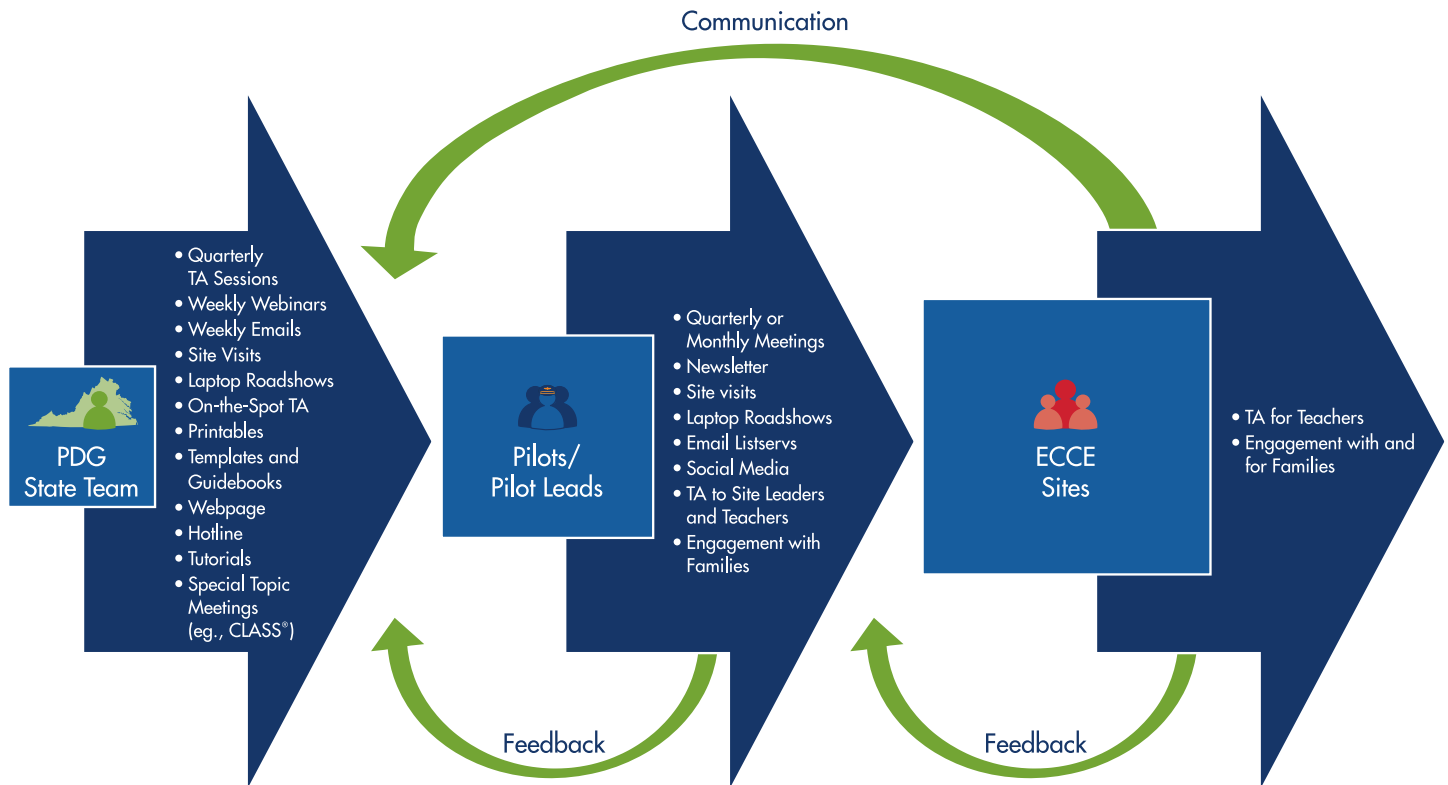
The PDG State Implementation Team (VECF, DOE, and UVA) will provide regular and ongoing TA to (and through) Pilot Leads and Pilot Communities, which in turn will work with families and Pilot Partners to ensure or coordinate supports and technical assistance to participating ECCE Program Sites, Leaders, and Teachers in each Pilot community.

As your team engages in PDG, you will find tools, templates, and resources on the [PDG webpage](#), a comprehensive collection of all grant-related materials. The PDG webpage is currently hosted on the VECF website at [vecf.org](http://vecf.org).



# PDG Partners: Communication and Technical Assistance

PDG TA and communication flows in multiple directions. In addition to providing TA, each partner is continuously receiving feedback to improve processes and communication.



## PDG Pilot Community Key Activities

The sections that follow will provide detail for each of the four assurance areas, including the why, specific expectations, key questions and considerations, and successes & challenges.

**A note about incentives:** Recognizing that the ECCE workforce is a high-value but low-wage workforce, a large percentage of PDG funding is allocated to educator incentives. Educator incentives are administered by VECF according to specific criteria which will be shared with your community. The outcome of the incentives on teacher retention and well-being are measured by UVA through workforce surveys and LinkB5 data collection. While communities do not have specific responsibility for managing or distributing incentives, Pilot Leads are expected to understand, communicate, and help facilitate the processes that ensure the incentives are distributed as designed. Throughout the course of the PDG grant period, you will receive information and instructions from VECF on how to assist with site and teacher registration and employment verification necessary for accountability and tracking.

# Detailed Responsibilities for PDG Pilots

## Build Relationships

### Why Build Relationships?

Relationships between and among community agencies and providers, families, early educators and children are at the heart of ECCE. By communicating, convening, and collaborating with these multi-faceted stakeholders, Pilots will establish, maintain, and grow relationships that support increasing access, quality, and shared accountability across communities. The Pilot Lead's ability to maintain a commitment to respectful transparency will go a long way to ease stress that may come from partners' various roles and/or ECCE site leader/participants' commitment to complete time-sensitive tasks to meet our ambitious goals.

The most critical member of your community's PDG team will be the Pilot Lead. The Pilot Lead is essential and must be able to dedicate time and energy to building relationships and developing a culture across the various stakeholders involved in PDG. The success of all PDG activities is dependent upon solid relationships. The Pilot Lead must consistently lead the work and keep the community focused on the "why" of PDG: improving school readiness for Virginia's children.

### Specific Expectations for Building Relationships

**Structure and Communications.** The Pilots are expected to:

- **Develop Pilot structure including Fiscal Agency and Pilot Lead.** This infrastructure will be formalized through a signed contract/MOU, which lays out the deliverables/assurances for the Pilot grant and activity as well as a work plan and budget worksheet for projecting costs. Additional information on project budgets and allowable expenditures is included in the appendix.
- **Build Pilot teams of support**, including staff within Pilot agency as well as others such as: school division representation, local department of social services and/or health district; local community action agency, leadership at private ECCE programs and multi-site organizations or franchises, higher education, and others.
- **Develop or refine structures and capacity for the Pilot Lead to communicate clearly and regularly** not only upstream with the state level PDG Implementation Team but also, across stream (including Pilot team), and downstream with site leaders and teachers from all publicly-funded ECCE programs/sites that serve children birth to five out of the home. (Please note that privately-funded programs may opt in to participate, but PDG focus and funds are specifically on those sites/programs that are publicly-funded.)
- **Design & implement communication processes and tools** (e.g., listserv, web page, hard copy print material distribution). Include a variety of options including low-tech strategies such as phone calls, mailed postcards, and in-person visits. Consistent, predictable communication structures can improve the efficacy of communication.
  - Every community's communications approach will be different, but successful examples include:
    - Bi-weekly emails to director/teacher listservs;
    - Having each pilot team member responsible for a portfolio of sites to include regular visits, updates about progress, ongoing education for new site staff;
    - One-on-one meetings with site directors for information-sharing and data entry support including
      - Sharing the "why" at all meetings;

- Sharing timeline and expectations at initial meeting;
- Frequent and consistent visits to assist with onboarding of new leadership at sites;
- Meeting with providers at times that are convenient for them;
- Hosting or attending group staff meetings on site;
- Providing laptops or technology to support registration or LinkB5 data entry;
- Visiting to support teacher understanding of CLASS® and provide foundational CLASS® training;
- Hosting/co-hosting CLASS® training; and
- Distributing hard copy materials to sites.

**Convening.** Pilots are expected to:

- Plan a “kick-off” in-person meeting convening all publicly funded ECCE program leaders to share information about the PDG opportunity and how programs can participate. Remember, the focus of the activity and majority of the funds are on publicly funded programs, but privately funded programs are welcomed to opt in.
- **Convene, on at least a quarterly basis, all ECCE program leaders who represent programs that** are publicly-funded and serve children birth to five. While face-to-face is always preferable, convening may include: in-person meetings; webinar or online meetings; or other ways to bring partners together. Examples of successful convening include:
  - Ensure buy-in and participation of superintendents from the beginning;
  - Plan for regular meetings with various stakeholder groups;
  - Recognize that there is not likely one time that works for everyone. Pilot Leads should plan to convene stakeholder groups in ways that ensure buy-in and dissemination of information (e.g., a meeting with superintendent and principals during the school day and a meeting with FDH providers in the evening, covering the same material in potentially different ways).
  - Remember - Publicly-funded program sites include:
    - All early childhood programs delivered within the school division including VPI, VPI+, early childhood special education (ECSE), Title I classrooms, and in some cases, Head Start;
    - All Head Start and Early Head Start programs administered across schools, community action agencies, and community-based organizations; and
    - All sites, including licensed family day homes, licensed child care centers, religious exempt and certified preschools that are considered VDSS subsidy vendors.
- Coordinate and facilitate registration of all PDG Programs in LinkB5. Getting a clear understanding and record at the outset of the participating ECCE program partners is an important task. Having built some rapport and trust with the ECCE programs through communication and convening will aid in addressing this activity.
- Engage and include other key partners to the extent possible, including privately-funded preschools and child care programs, early intervention programs, home visiting programs, resource and referral, infant and toddler mental health and other professional development programs.

**Collaboration.** Pilot Leads should:

- **Formalize roles and expectations** of Pilot Partners within your structure: Who plays what role, how will decisions be made, how does the funding flow?
- **Create MOUs as necessary** to formalize structure and responsibility.
  - Engage service partners including all organizations and agencies that implement or deliver early childhood services (for example Community Action Agency leaders implementing Head Start programs) and other community partners who can help further the work including but not limited to business, local, government, etc., and pursue public-private partnerships.
- **Lead activities and build culture.**
  - The PDG initiative involves a number of components, each requiring multi-faceted activities, some of which must be completed on tight timelines. Collegial relationships across initiative partners and effective coordination by the Pilot Lead will facilitate a community-wide culture of motivation and buy-in for shared accountability and shared benefit from the initiative.
- **Ensure commitments are met and activities are completed.**
  - Ensure all partners gather, submit to state, and use data on: access, enrollment, and quality. This will involve ensuring partners participate in training, gather and submit data on time and in an accurate manner to the state using LinkB5 and following up as necessary when requested by the state.

### Key Questions/Considerations for Building Relationships



- How will you consistently explain the “why” of PDG at all levels, at all meetings, in all communications?
- How will you ensure all levels have a clear understanding of their role and expectations in PDG?
- How will you map out the expectations on the front end?
- How will you involve all partners early and often?
- How will you provide regular communication/updates such as email, web page, video conferencing?
- How will you dedicate team member(s) early on to do site visits and provide technical assistance to site leaders?

### Lessons Learned about Building Relationships by the first cohort of Pilot Communities



The information below comes from quotes and notes from PDG pilot communities.

- It is critical to always introduce the purpose and goals of PDG, and to create and have available easily-digestible hard copy materials. Create separate communication streams from the start to differentiate information for participants.
- Setting up clear, frequent, present communication with participants is key. Face-to-face discussion of the “why” at the beginning is essential. Continually referencing the purpose and goals, as well as keeping multiple communication streams and modalities open is important for success.

- Opportunities for low-tech engagement are still essential for the field. Pilot teams should be prepared to offer site visits, face-to-face meetings, laptop roadshows, and paper forms if needed.
- An effective strategy is to meet with different groups at different times. For example, FDH providers respond well to evening meetings that include meals, professional development, and/or make-and-take activities. Superintendents and principals can more easily meet during the school day.
- There is a continual need to educate personnel who move into and out of the PDG system.

## Increase Access

### Why Increase Access?

To improve school readiness statewide, VA must empower its communities to lead the way by providing children and families with equitable access to high quality ECCE opportunities. This may not be simple, especially in cases when a community is a child care desert and/or in a rural area; when financing/affordability and transportation can be limiting factors; and when there are gaps in information for consumers (families of young children).

**Specific Expectations for Increasing Access:** Pilot Leads will need to ensure the following activities and deliverables:

### Counts

- **Facilitate data entry for LinkB5.** The LinkB5 data portal is a database that connects communities of child care and education providers serving children ages birth to five. LinkB5 is a part of the PDG. The goal is to help communities collect information about their unique early childhood landscape. You will find [LinkB5 resources](#) on the PDG webpage.
  - In the Fall, using LinkB5, ensure all participating sites enter data. This includes all sites that serve children birth to five, ensuring at a minimum that all publicly-funded sites are inventoried. Within these sites, ensure data entry at the site, classroom, and teacher level. As part of the unduplicated child count, partners must ensure that all children with special needs or receiving early intervention services are included as well as all children who are dual language learners, homeless or migrant.

### Collect, Analyze, and Communicate Data about Access

- **Convene Pilot Partners to conduct a coordinated enrollment self-assessment** in which all program partners come together to evaluate strengths and challenges of their enrollment system(s) including points of entry, eligibility, application, waitlist, matching, and transition to school entry processes. This conversation should include school divisions, private providers, family day home providers, community action agencies, and all partners who enroll/support enrollment of children in ECCE programs. VDOE will provide a template which must be signed by all partners and submitted back to the state. [You will find coordinated enrollment tools and resources on the PDG webpage.](#)
- **Analyze data to assess unmet need:** Compare child count data to live births and Medicaid data, thus establishing upper boundaries for unmet need by age birth to five. Use family focus groups, family survey, or other tools with partners to estimate other aspects of unmet need including current unmet demand for services (e.g., waitlist) as well as families who need care during non-traditional hours.

- **Participate in TA designed to lead to completion of fiscal map of public funds** to be used locally – federal, state, and local – as well as private contributions or match for slots. Identify barriers to integrating and maximizing funding. VECF’s [Integrated Financing Toolkit](#) and the [Integrated Financing Assessment Tool](#) can be located on the VECF website.
- **Develop a Local Plan.** Using all of the above, produce and begin to implement a local plan for coordinating enrollment and increasing access birth to five.



### Key Questions/Considerations for Increasing Access

- How will your community include a wide spectrum of provider voices at a joint coordinated enrollment meeting?
- What does it take to break down “turf” issues?
- What does the work around increasing access tell you about your community’s supply and demand?
- Can you use PDG as a mechanism to educate private providers about Child Care and Development Fund/Virginia Department of Social Services subsidy?
- How will your community ensure inclusion of a wide spectrum of provider voices at a joint coordinated enrollment meeting?



### Lessons Learned about Increasing Access by the first cohort of Pilot Communities

The information below comes from quotes and notes from PDG pilot communities.

- Starting with the “why” of coordinated enrollment – to better serve all children – is key for this conversation. No one program can serve all children.
- Laptop roadshows and one-on-one/face-to-face TA were effective and successful strategies.
- This is a chance for education and communication around increased reimbursement rates/integrating financing.
- Understanding the community’s specific challenges (part-day, lack of transportation, etc.) can help provide a roadmap to strategically increase access.

## Strengthen Quality

### Why Strengthen Quality?

Quality matters, yet we have little empirical evidence of the levels of quality in our early care and education system. We know that children in classrooms with teachers who demonstrate effective interactions have improved outcomes that last well into the early grades. Understanding areas of strength and opportunities for growth in the Commonwealth’s classrooms is essential as a starting point for continuous quality improvement.



PDG will measure classroom quality using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®) observation tool. PDG uses three observation tools from the CLASS® suite: Infant, Toddler, and PreK. This research-based, valid and reliable tool measures teacher-child interactions that are correlated to improved school readiness outcomes for young children. The results from CLASS® observations provide data to help communities and ECCE programs structure their quality improvement, plan for professional development, and align strategies with what we know is best for young children. You will find CLASS® and other quality resources on [the PDG webpage](#).

Unlike other quality efforts, the Pilots will measure the quality of every participating classroom, thus embedding capacity firmly within the community, especially with site leaders, and creating a lasting investment in quality.

**Specific Expectations for Strengthening Quality:** Pilots are expected to:

### Observation

- **Assess and inventory local CLASS® observers** within your region, utilizing available information of CLASS® observers by tool. You will find the [CLASS® Observer Directory](#) to be a useful starting point.
- **Develop a plan to build capacity of certified CLASS® observers within the community.**
  - Training of trainers and observers is a resource-intensive process that requires planning and support. Interested observers must attend 2-day training and pass reliability testing to become certified observers for an age group (Infant, Toddler, or PreK). Certification is valid for one year; observers must re-certify annually.
  - Develop a deep bench across all program types and age levels to support baseline observations, ongoing observation, and feedback for teacher growth and development (as well as program quality improvement) throughout the year.
  - The plan may include having key staff become CLASS® trainers, hosting observation trainings, and/or strategically recruiting program leaders to become reliable and provide observations.
  - Provide foundational CLASS® training for teachers and leaders who are new to the tool. At a minimum, all leaders and teachers should receive foundational training (but are not required to become reliable) on CLASS® prior to observations being conducted in the fall. This includes offering, at a minimum:
    - spring and summer options
    - offering different trainings to various sub-groups as needed (e.g., community partners, private site leaders, and public school providers)
    - coordinating with existing PD days such as in-service, staff meetings, principal retreats, or franchise leadership events.

- **Develop a plan to observe all classrooms** and provide feedback using the CLASS® tool at least twice a year. Complete all observations and provide feedback.
  - Using inventory of sites and classrooms, develop a plan to observe all classrooms and provide feedback using the CLASS® observation tool at least twice a year (ideally at the beginning and end of the year). Scheduling includes both observation and feedback for each teacher.
  - Observations include: following an observation protocol provided by the state to observe all classrooms using CLASS®, providing feedback to teachers, and entering scores into LinkB5.
  - Feedback includes: reviews of areas of strengths and opportunities for improvement.
- **Follow up/Data entry**
  - Assist site leaders' and observers' input of information into LinkB5.
  - Ensure CLASS® data is accurately entered and verified into LinkB5.

## Quality Improvement

- **Map and identify resources** that can be used for CQI. As you complete your fiscal map as outlined in the Increase Access assurance above, also map the funding used locally for professional development. Include federal, state, and local funds as well as private contributions or match for professional development or improving quality. Identify barriers to integrating and maximizing funding.
- **Submit a plan and budget to implement training options.** Use the lists of training opportunities on the PDG webpage ([CLASS® Trainings and Resources for PDG Communities](#) and [Introduction to CLASS® “Free and Short” Resources](#)). Develop and submit a plan and budget that is subject to state approval. Training, materials, and professional development should focus on teacher-child interactions and instruction, environment, or curriculum.
- **Develop and implement plan for quality improvement.**
  - Using all of the above, produce and begin to implement a local plan for strengthening quality across all classrooms that serve children birth to five. The plan should include PD options such as training, coaching, and learning communities.



### Key Questions/Considerations for Strengthening Quality

- Do you have a team member who will provide one-on-one consultation throughout the CLASS® training lifecycle (training, testing, certification, and renewal)?
- Do you have a team member who is ready to provide one-on-one consultation on using the tool in the field (observation, feedback, and data entry)?
- Do you have plan to ensure a broad base of observers with certification in the three tools (Infant, Toddler, and PreK)?
- Do you have a plan to coordinate observations for multiple purposes (and to communicate the “why” for each type of observation)?



### Lessons Learned in Strengthening Quality from the first cohort of Pilot Communities

The information below comes from quotes and notes from PDG pilot communities.

- Deepening the bench by including teachers, program leaders, principals, and others is essential. Asking for a commitment to provide observations in return for receiving training ensures capacity.
- Foundational CLASS® training will be more successful when you can tailor to what is known about a setting or the participants.

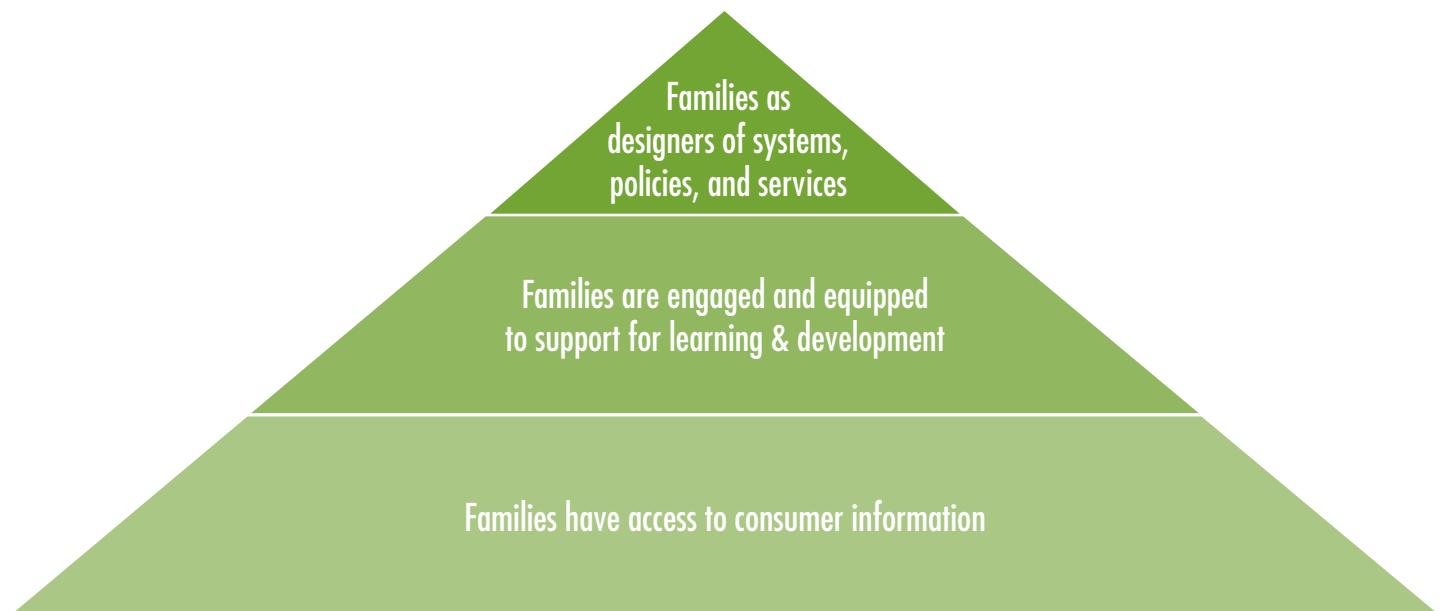
## Engage Families

### Why Engage Families?

Through PDG, Virginia is committed to learn from and better inform families; empower family choice; build knowledge; and promote parent-child relationships. VA is actively building local B-5 systems that trust the wisdom of families as children's first and most important teachers. These systems will promote strong parent-child relationships and provide supports to families (including those with unique needs such as children with disabilities, ELLs, families of VA's 11 tribal communities, and families in rural and underserved communities).

The PDG core team has identified a three-tiered approach to family engagement:

- 1) access to information for families as consumers regarding their ECCE options;
- 2) engaging parents in learning and supporting their children's growth and development; and
- 3) welcoming families to proactively inform the design of systems, services, and policies in the public sector.





**Specific Expectations for Engaging Families:** Pilots are expected to:

- **Learn from and better inform families; empower family choice; promote parent-child relationships:**
  - Develop informational outreach to parents about PDG participation efforts. Provide basic information at the start to sites to distribute to families informing them of what the PDG is and that their child's site is taking part in the initiative.
  - Conduct a self-assessment of current family engagement processes, in which all program partners come together to evaluate the strengths and challenges of their practices, including: program leadership, program environment, family partnership, teaching and learning, and community partnership (state will provide template).
  - Assist with dissemination of UVA family surveys as needed and use resulting data for CQI.
  - Collaboratively produce and begin to implement a local plan for strengthening family engagement. State will provide template and technical assistance.



### **Key Questions/Considerations for Engaging Families**

- Where does your community currently stand on the three levels of engagement?
- How are families already involved?
- How can you increase meaningful family participation?
- Are you offering opportunities for families to engage as designers of the system?

# Activity & Budget Guidance

Lead agencies are expected to use the PDG funding to complete the required activities to build relationships, increase access, strengthen quality, and engage families. Lead agencies have discretion in how to use the funding to support and carry out the responsibilities. Generally, funds may be used for staff (full time or part time) or contractors to ensure that counting activities, CLASS® observations, and other required activities are carried out. Funding should also be used to support the improvement of program quality, where needed, if all other lead agency expectations are being met. The chart below gives examples of how funding may be used to support required activities.

This chart provides several examples for each activity. Please note that these are ONLY examples; communities are not expected to use the funding in all of the ways listed below. It is also expected that none of the activities alone would require a full-time person; rather, each would require some portion of staff or consultant's time for a specified period. In some localities, activities could be completed by one full-time staff person, while in others, your team may want to divide the work over several existing staff, using the funds to adjust salary cost allocations. *While the different components of the work may be completed by different individuals, it is important to have one person (Pilot Lead) who is dedicated to managing the work and being a central point of coordination and contact.*

You will find a [budget template](#) and other resources on the [PDG webpage](#).

Required Activity	Potential Use(s) of Funding
Convene all publicly-funded partners, engage other partners, and develop communication process(es) and structures for working together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of a staff person to do outreach, set dates/agendas, manage logistics, and communicate one-on-one with partners as needed</li> <li>• Travel costs to visit and/or check in on sites</li> <li>• Website or shared file account (e.g., Dropbox)</li> </ul>
Ensure all partners gather, submit to state, and use data on access, enrollment, and quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of a staff person to communicate with partners, track progress, follow up with partners and liaise with state if partners are experiencing difficulty</li> </ul>
Ensure all required community-wide activities are completed, including but not limited to self-assessments, family focus groups, and family and teacher surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of staff person to communicate with partners, track progress, follow up with partners and liaise with state if partners have difficulty</li> </ul>
Count all sites, classrooms, children, etc., to ensure results are entered into state database.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of a staff person to communicate with partners, track progress, follow up with partners and liaise with state if partners have difficulty</li> </ul>
Conduct a self-assessment of current enrollment and family engagement processes, assess unmet need and complete fiscal map, all using templates and tools provided by the state.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of a staff person or consultant to learn template/tool, set dates, manage logistics, conduct activities, and submit materials to the state</li> </ul>

Assess training, instructional materials, and professional development needs of all partners. Use PDG and other funding to provide high quality training, materials, and professional development to participating leaders and teachers. *At a minimum, ALL leaders and teachers should receive foundational training on CLASS® prior to observations being conducted.*

- Percentage of a staff person to conduct assessment, coordinate budget, communicate with partners, submit materials to the state and oversee implementation
- Cost of foundational CLASS® training for leaders and teachers
- Cost of coaching and related supports for leaders and teachers as they receive CLASS® observations and feedback
- Stipends to support participants after-hours or pay for substitutes so participants can attend during work hours
- High quality curriculum materials for sites that are NOT using a quality curriculum, along with training and/or coaching to support implementation
- Other training, coaching, and materials costs as approved by state

Develop and implement a plan to observe all classrooms using CLASS®; provide feedback to teachers and enter results into database.

- Percentage of staff person to develop plan/schedule, communicate with partners, submit materials to the state and oversee implementation
- Cost of training local leaders such as child care directors, Head Start directors or elementary school principals to be CLASS®-reliable observers or the costs of contracting with local observers to conduct CLASS® observations and provide feedback to teachers
- Percentage of a staff person to be a CLASS® mentor and provide one-on-one TA throughout the training, reliability, and observation/feedback cycle

Complete fiscal map of public funds.

- Percentage of a staff person or consultant to learn template/tool, set dates, manage logistics, conduct activities and submit materials to the state

Engage families.

- Stipends to make participation of parents in system design and strategic planning efforts feasible

**Funding restrictions:** Please note that funding cannot be used to increase slots within programs, for construction or facility remodeling, or for fundraising or purchase of real property. Indirect costs are not allowed. Purchase of food or drink is limited to certain specific circumstances. Federal grant awards will not allow reimbursement of pre-award costs. Funds unexpended at the end of the year will revert to the state.



# Glossary

<b>Assurance</b>		A community's agreement or commitment to complete work as part of PDG
<b>CLASS®</b>	Classroom Assessment Scoring System	A classroom observation tool that measures teacher-child interactions. The tool used as a quality measure in PDG
<b>CQI</b>	Continuous Quality Improvement	A process where individuals, programs, and systems commit to continually measuring, evaluating, and improving quality
<b>ECCE</b>	Early Childhood Care & Education	
<b>ECSE</b>	Early Childhood Special Education	Also referred to as "Part B" services through the federal IDEA
<b>LinkB5</b>		Data Portal maintained by UVA
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding	A document that serves as a signed agreement between two or more parties
<b>PDG</b>	Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five	The federal funding opportunity designed to support states/territories to complete two primary efforts. The first is to analyze the current landscape of their early childhood care and education (ECCE) mixed delivery system. The second is to plan for changes to the system that maximize the availability of high-quality ECCE options across providers and partners for children and families, improve the quality of care, streamline administrative infrastructure, and improve state/territory-level ECCE funding efficiencies.
<b>PPEP</b>	Program Performance Evaluation Plan	The evaluative component of PDG, overseen by VDOE and implemented by UVA
<b>Pilot Lead</b>		Individual employed as the main point of contact for PDG activity within the Pilot Community
<b>UVA</b>	University of Virginia	Builds and maintains LinkB5, a data system that captures program-, classroom-, and teacher-level data. As part of its responsibility for PDG's Program Performance Evaluation Plan, UVA also implements teacher and family surveys, including synthesis and analysis of results.

VDOE	Virginia Department of Education	PDG lead and fiscal agency, focused on developing unified standards across funded ECCE programs and creating a unified rating system in which all publicly funded ECCE programs will participate
VDSS	Virginia Department of Social Services	State agency that has been the CCDF lead agency and responsible for child care licensing, subsidy administration, and Virginia Quality
VECF	Virginia Early Childhood Foundation	Oversees the PDG needs assessment and strategic planning process, coordinates and provides technical assistance for PDG. Pilots, manages the incentive program, and develops statewide early childhood integrated data system goals and strategies.
VPI	Virginia Preschool Initiative	State-funded preschool program for at-risk four-year-olds
VQ	Virginia Quality	Virginia's Voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

