

## COORDINATED ENROLLMENT PLANNING INFORMATION SHEET

### Starting with the Why

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) services are provided across a diverse array of settings, including private businesses (child care centers and family day homes) as well as in programs administered through school systems, local municipalities and in mixed delivery settings. Currently in Virginia, families have to visit multiple websites or make multiple calls to find information they need; they fill out lengthy, duplicative applications; and may or may not receive space in the program. Then they are placed on waiting lists – perhaps multiple – and providers have the laborious process of assessing current interest if a space opens up weeks or months later.

Thoughtful, well-planned, and equitable coordinated enrollment practices at the community level help families find care that meets their needs and providers streamline their administrative tasks, freeing up time and energy to focus on their children.

Coordination among ECCE providers is an expectation in DSS guidelines, a contingency of VPI funding, and a required component for PDG to help communities take system-building to the next level. While some coordination is happening, no community in Virginia is fully coordinating across ALL publicly-funded settings (to include DSS child subsidy and private providers). While the PDG communities are currently piloting these practices, the goal is to learn from their experiences and bring greater coordination to scale in all Virginia communities.

The PDG team will measure dimensions of the enrollment experience on family surveys, and as communities move the needle on coordination in enrollment processes, we anticipate movement in family survey responses. Communities will use these data to inform continuous improvement planning in future cycles.

### The Ask

In summer 2019, using the Coordinated Enrollment Self-Assessment Tool, PDG B-5 community pilots convened ECCE providers to self-assess the level of coordination across these five areas related to program enrollment:

- Informational Resources
- Information Campaigns
- Eligibility Determinations
- Application Processes
- Waitlists

Using the results of their summer Coordinated Enrollment Self-Assessment Tool as a guide, PDG communities must **develop a focused plan for better coordinating enrollment practices among publicly-funded ECCE programs in 2020-2021. These plans should include at least three goals touching on one or more of the target areas above.** This Coordinated Enrollment Plan may describe initiatives already underway in the community, or it may detail an upcoming initiative. Completed plans should be submitted to [Lucy@vecf.org](mailto:Lucy@vecf.org) by March 1, 2020. *The PDG team is not assessing or grading these plans, but rather will be providing feedback, periodic check-ins, and support to ensure communities take steps to reach their goals.*

### The How

#### ***Convene a Meeting***

- The pilot lead should convene a meeting with as many ECCE providers as possible, including at least one of each of the following:
  - Family day home director/owner
  - Private child care director
  - Head Start director/regional coordinator (if applicable)
  - School-based (e.g. VPI) principal or coordinator
  - Early childhood special education program representative
  - Local Department of Social Services (DSS) representative

Communities may also wish to include community partners such as early intervention providers, family advocates, or pediatricians, among others.

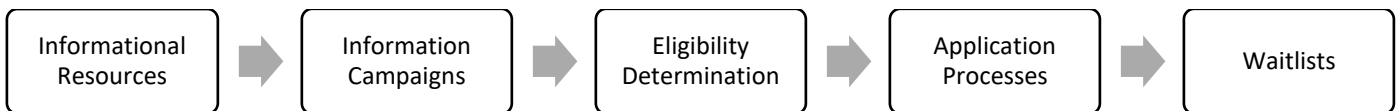
- Begin by re-orienting attendees to the *big why* – specifically the challenges related to the lack of coordinated enrollment efforts, and potential benefits for families and providers resulting from greater coordination.
- Set norms for upcoming discussion that will value diverse viewpoints.
- Briefly review the Coordinated Enrollment Self-Assessment Tool (important if you have new attendees who were not present during the summer) and the answers reached during the summer session.
- Discuss target areas and actionable goals related to coordinating enrollment in your community.

### **Think about Target Areas**

We advise building a shared understanding of these 5 target areas by walking through what they entail and what success might look like further down the road for families and providers. More thorough descriptions of what success might look like are presented in the *Coordinated Enrollment Rubric*.

### **Decide Upon Goals**

Although you may choose to set goals related to any of the area(s) you feel best meet your community’s needs, some aspects are more foundational. Communities might begin with goals to better coordinate their informational resources and develop campaigns around these resources. Communities who are satisfied with their coordination in these areas might instead set goals related to coordinating eligibility determination or developing a common application. We suggest that communities consider the sequence below when determining where to focus their efforts.



#### *Optional Prompts to Help Develop Goals:*

Consider what the data from your self-assessment tell you:

- Where are you currently and where do you want to be in a year’s time related to coordination?
- From which areas of strength might you build? Where is there high interest?
- Where is the biggest gap? What barriers did you identify?
- What changes might be most meaningful for families?
- Where is the low-hanging fruit, areas ripe for change without much objection?
- What “ah-has” emerged from your discussion?

#### *Setting Goals:*

- Once target area(s) are chosen, stakeholders should develop at least three *Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound* (SMART) goals related to coordinating enrollment for 2020-2021.
- The scope and content of these goals will differ across communities and should reflect each community’s needs and current levels of coordination. Additionally, they should be things each community can realistically accomplish this year. Some example SMART goal statements are as follows:
  - Plan and hold two joint enrollment events by May 2020 with representatives from HS, VPI, and at least 30% of private providers present. Attract at least 100 families to these events.
  - By May 2020, 25% of private providers will use a common application.

### **Articulate the Plan**

- Once your community sets its goals, you should develop a plan that describes the steps necessary to meet each of these goals. The *Coordinated Enrollment Planning Template* provides a framework, however, you may modify the template as necessary to accommodate your plans.
- Ask partners to sign the resulting coordinated enrollment plan assurances document.

### **Submit and Execute the Plan:**

- Submit a digital copy of the *Coordinated Enrollment Planning Template*, including the assurance signatures from partners, to [Lucy@vecf.org](mailto:Lucy@vecf.org) by March 1, 2020.
- Keep digital and paper copies locally, share, and follow-up with partners so it becomes actionable.
- Feel free to adjust this plan on an as needed basis – to tweak action steps and/or to document progress.
- If you have questions or need support, contact Laura Kassner ([laura.kassner@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:laura.kassner@doe.virginia.gov)).