



Smart Beginnings COVID-19 Collaboratives

As Virginia adjusts to the rapidly changing landscape shaped by COVID-19, the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation is working as intermediary to support state level action/decision-making and community level strategies in response to both immediate need and long-term impact of the pandemic.

VECF is convening a peer group of community collaboratives to share information, data, and ideas across regions to develop early childhood-related responses to COVID. Initially these peer learning communities are focused on rapid-response solutions for emergency child care for essential personnel. Each collaborative, convened by a Smart Beginnings partner, includes philanthropic organizations that have set up relief funds, as well as hospital/health system executives, other employers, school superintendents, social services directors, child care providers, United Ways, YMCA/YWCAs, faith-based organizations, and local chambers of commerce. VECF is providing a peer engagement platform to spur cross-pollination of ideas and best practices as well as timely connection to state leaders and national experts to collectively solve for gaps that children, families, and communities are experiencing now. The end goal is to discern effective solutions and implement them quickly in order to bring relief to communities across the Commonwealth.

While the first focus of these efforts will be to address the crisis need for child care for essential workers, the peer collaborative will also tease out best strategies to guide child care providers and businesses about most appropriate economic relief strategies and attend to the supplemental needs of families such as food security.