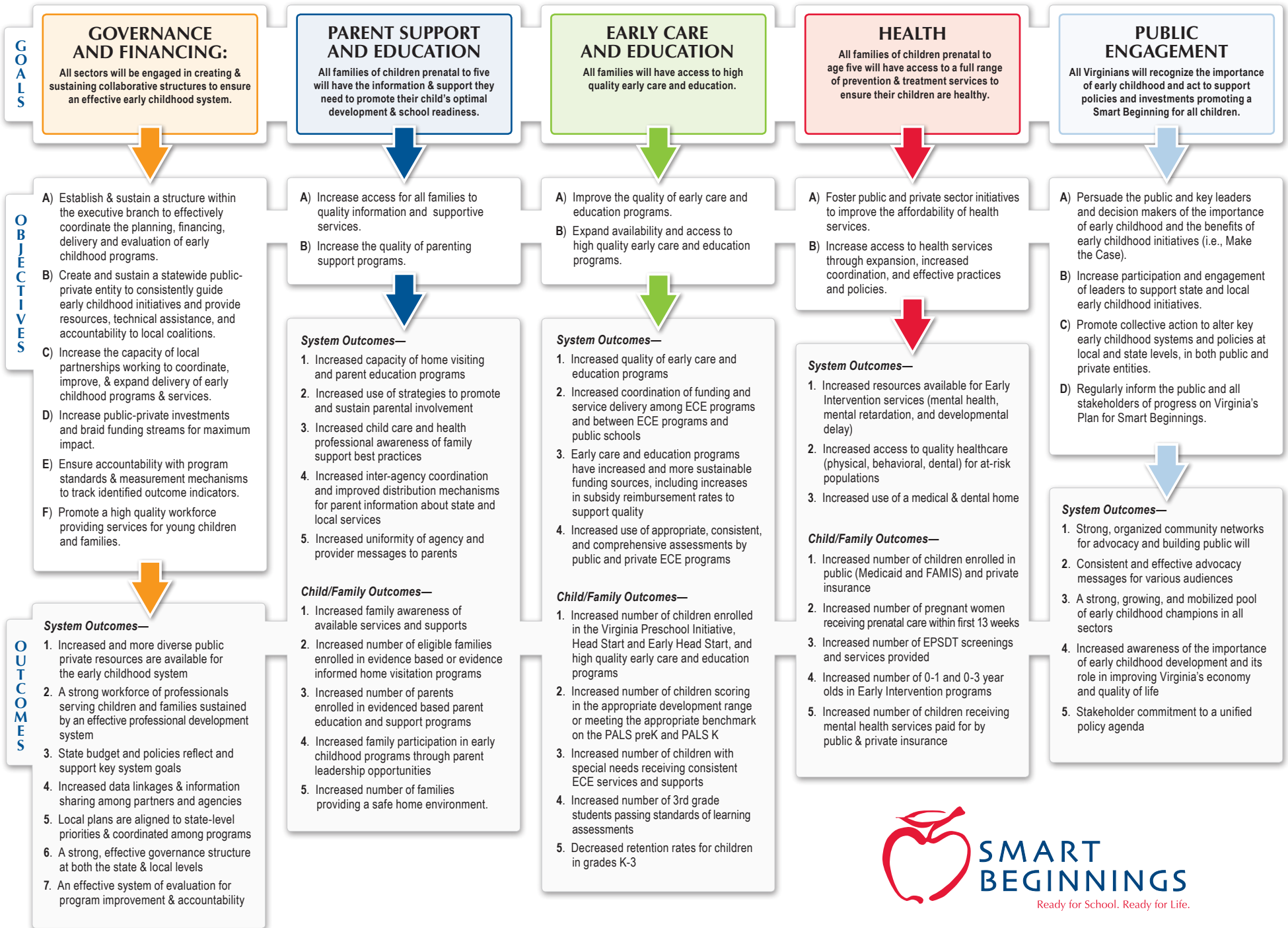


# VIRGINIA'S PLAN FOR SMART BEGINNINGS



# GOVERNANCE & FINANCING:

All sectors will be engaged in creating & sustaining collaborative structures to ensure an effective early childhood system.

## OBJECTIVES

A) Establish and sustain a structure within the executive branch to effectively coordinate the planning, financing, delivery and evaluation of early childhood programs.

B) Create and sustain a statewide public-private entity to consistently guide early childhood initiatives and provide resources, technical assistance, and accountability to local coalitions.

C) Increase the capacity of local partnerships working to coordinate, improve, and expand delivery of early childhood programs and services.

D) Increase public-private investments and braid funding streams for maximum impact.

E) Ensure accountability with program standards and measurement mechanisms to track identified outcome indicators.

F) Promote a high quality workforce providing services for young children and families.

## STRATEGIES

- i. Establish working group of senior leaders of relevant agencies and organizations
- ii. Promote collaborative strategies for the most effective governance and leadership among agencies and organizations
- iii. Align and integrate service deliveries across agencies and organizations

- i. Establish an effective organizational structure for the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation
- ii. Serve as a centralized source for exchange of information and resources

- i. Create local leadership coalitions at the community level
- ii. Develop local strategic plans to meet identified needs aligned with statewide priorities
- iii. Create learning communities to share best practices and resources

- i. Maximize available resources and secure sustainable, diversified investment
- ii. Coordinate state and local level resource development

- i. Define standards
- ii. Utilize appropriate assessment instruments and outcome indicators
- iii. Develop a method for tracking system and child outcomes

- i. Increase the supply of qualified professionals:  
*Conduct or utilize workforce studies to identify gaps & critical shortages; promote recruitment & retention strategies in fields & geographic areas with high needs; ensure adequate compensation & benefits*
- ii. Increase access, availability, and affordability of professional development :  
*Create a continuum of training, education, & ongoing professional development; expand the capacity of training & education institutions & organizations; expand scholarships, loan forgiveness, & other financial incentives*

## SYSTEM OUTCOMES

1. Increased and more diverse public-private resources are available for the early childhood system and coordinated among programs
2. A strong workforce of professionals serving children and families sustained by an effective professional development system
3. State budget & policies reflect & support key system goals
4. Increased data linkages and information sharing among all partners and agencies
5. Local plans are aligned to state-level priorities
6. A strong and effective governance structure at both the state and local levels
7. An effective system of evaluation for program improvement and accountability

# PARENT SUPPORT & EDUCATION

All families of children prenatal to five will have the information & supports they need to promote their child's optimal development and school readiness.

## OBJECTIVES

A) Increase access for all families to quality information and supportive services

B) Increase the quality of parenting support programs

## STRATEGIES

- i. Develop effective and efficient methods for providing information to all parents
  - Increase awareness and coordination of state resources such as the New Parent Kit, the 211 Line 1-800-CHILDREN, and VACCRRN
  - Increase awareness of community services that promote prevention and inclusion
  - Educate parents about high quality early care and education as a support for school readiness
- ii. Equip child- and family-serving providers with information to best serve families.
  - Increase provider awareness of how to refer to and work with local home visiting services and parent education programs
  - Adopt uniform messages across agencies, disciplines, and organizations
- iii. Identify gaps and develop strategies for expanding services.

- i. Implement best practice models, promising practices, and evidence-based family support programs
  - Provide professional development opportunities for child care and health professionals on best practices for supporting parents of all children
  - Promote and support use of best practices and researched based models in local coalitions
  - Involve families in the design and evaluation of services
  - Increase diverse parent representation on local and state-level coalitions and planning
  - Implement strategies to sustain parental involvement
- ii. Increase collaboration and coordination of services at the state and local levels

## OUTCOMES

### SYSTEM OUTCOMES

1. Increased capacity of home visiting & parent education programs
2. Increased use of strategies to promote and sustain parental and family involvement
3. Increased child care & health professional awareness of family support best practices
4. Increased interagency coordination and improved distribution mechanisms for parent and family information about state and local services
5. Increased uniformity of agency and provider messages to parents and families

### CHILD OUTCOMES

1. Increased family awareness of available services and supports
2. Increased number of eligible families enrolled in evidence-based and evidence informed home visitation programs
3. Increased # of parents in evidence-based parent education and support programs
4. Increased family participation in early childhood programs through parent leadership opportunities
5. Increased # of families providing a safe home environment

# EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

All families will have access to high quality early care and education.

## OBJECTIVES

A) Improve the quality of early care and education programs.

B) Expand availability and access to high quality early care and education programs.

## STRATEGIES

- i. Establish a voluntary statewide quality ratings and improvement system (QRIS)
  - Create QRIS standards for all early learning settings
  - Implement QRIS
- ii. Promote alignment of child care programs and public schools
  - Promote *Foundation Blocks for Early Learning and Milestones of Child Development*
  - Promote *transition practices*
  - Provide *joint professional development*
  - Explore *PK-3 strategies*

- i. Establish and maintain a strong and effective preschool network
  - Coordinate *enrollment among Head Start, VPI, and private child care providers*
  - Blend *classrooms and coordinate services*
  - Promote *effective and efficient funding strategies and policies*
- ii. Promote greater efficiency, accessibility and quality in the subsidy system
  - Integrate *subsidized child care into preschool delivery*
  - Identify *needs and gaps in subsidized services*
  - Increase the *percent of eligible families receiving subsidies and promote quality*
  - Provide *equitable subsidy reimbursement rates*
- iii. Identify and address local barriers to expansion of high quality child care programs

## OUTCOMES

### SYSTEM OUTCOMES

1. Increased quality of early care and education programs
2. Increased coordination of funding and service delivery among ECE programs and between ECE programs and public schools
3. Early care and education programs have increased and more sustainable funding sources, including increases in subsidy reimbursement rates to support quality
4. Increased use of appropriate, consistent, and comprehensive assessments by public and private ECE programs

### CHILD OUTCOMES

1. Increased # of children enrolled in high quality early care and education programs
2. Increased percentage of children scoring in the appropriate developmental range
3. Increased # of children with special needs identified and receiving appropriate ECE services and supports
4. Increased average 3rd grade SOL scores and pass rates
5. Decreased retention rates for children in grades K-3

# HEALTH

All families of children prenatal to age five will have access to a full range of prevention & treatment services to ensure their children are healthy.

## OBJECTIVES

A) Foster public and private sector initiatives to improve the affordability of health services.

B) Increase access to health services through expansion, increased coordination, & effective practices and policies.

## STRATEGIES

- i. Increase health insurance coverage, ensuring services during the prenatal, infant, toddler, and childhood years
- Promote enrollment and retention of all eligible children in Medicaid or FAMIS and all eligible pregnant women in FAMIS Moms
  - Explore policy changes to expand Medicaid eligibility for children and pregnant women

- i. Increase awareness and access to health care
- Coordinate & expand use of medical & dental homes
  - Educate pregnant women and families about the value and use of medical and dental homes
  - Distribute the NPK to all new parents (universal parent education)
  - Educate medical providers about best practices (as defined by Bright Futures & AAPD)
  - Educate non-medical child & family service providers about physical, dental, & behavioral development & services
  - Promote Joint Commission on Health Care recommendations re: premature & low birth weight infants
  - Reduce disparities by ensuring availability & coordination of services for diverse populations
- ii. Increase availability and access to behavioral health services
- Increase early intervention, perinatal depression, and substance abuse treatment services
  - Pursue universal screening of all children 0-5 from birth
  - Train child- and family-serving providers in the identification of children in need of further assessment
  - Facilitate information-sharing & referrals across disciplines & systems

- Educate health care providers about Medicaid reimbursement for oral health assessments and dental varnish services
- Promote mandate of Medicaid reimbursement for oral health assessments and dental varnish services
- Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates
- Enhance employer-sponsored health insurance

- iii. Increase availability and access to early dental care
- Promote initial pediatric dental appointment in the first year
  - Educate potential parents re: need of early dental services
  - Train medical & dental students in standards of care
  - Train non-medical & child care providers on dental risk assessment & prevention tools
  - Examine the scope of practice for professionals to maximize access to preventive services
  - Promote early referral of CSHCN for dental care
- iv. Promote healthy behaviors among all pregnant women and young children.
- Promote nutrition education for parents & families
  - Expand SNAP (State Nutrition Action Plan) to include other community partners including child care providers
  - Implement CHAMPION plan
  - Educate child & family service providers, including those serving high risk populations
  - Ensure that professional education curricula include high risk behaviors
  - Maximize participation in WIC, Food Stamps, local food pantries, & other programs for high-risk populations
  - Improve documentation/ information sharing with referrals so that agencies can contact families to initiate services

## OUTCOMES

### SYSTEM OUTCOMES

1. Increased resources available for Early Intervention services
2. Increased access to quality healthcare (physical, behavioral, dental) for at-risk populations
3. Increased use of a medical and dental home messages to parents and families

### CHILD OUTCOMES

1. Increased # of children & families enrolled in public (Medicaid and FAMIS) and private insurance
2. Increased # of pregnant women receiving recommended prenatal care
3. Increased # of children receiving health and developmental screenings & services
4. Increased # of eligible children served in Early Intervention programs
5. Increased number of eligible children & parents receiving mental health services paid for by public and private insurance

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

All Virginians will recognize the importance of early childhood and act to support policies and investments promoting a Smart Beginning for all children.

## OBJECTIVES

A) Persuade the public and key leaders and decision makers of the importance of early childhood and the benefits of early childhood initiatives (i.e., Make the Case).

B) Increase participation and engagement of leaders to support state and local early childhood initiatives.

C) Promote collective action to alter key early childhood systems and policies at local and state levels, in both public and private entities.

D) Regularly inform the public and all stakeholders of progress on Virginia's Plan for Smart Beginnings.

## STRATEGIES

- i. Develop uniform messages and frames
- ii. Select target audiences; plan and execute tailored communication methods
- iii. Plan and execute print, broadcast and online media approaches to persuade general public
- iv. Facilitate local, community-driven public awareness campaigns (i.e help local school readiness coalitions conduct campaigns)
- v. Conduct state and local media relations efforts to increase positive media placements

- i. Increase the number and strength of local Smart Beginnings coalitions
- ii. Recruit and cultivate local leaders from business, faith communities, law enforcement, and other sectors statewide
- iii. Establish and cultivate relationships between these local leaders and key elected and government officials
- iv. Create a statewide Business Leader Advisory Council to support early childhood initiatives

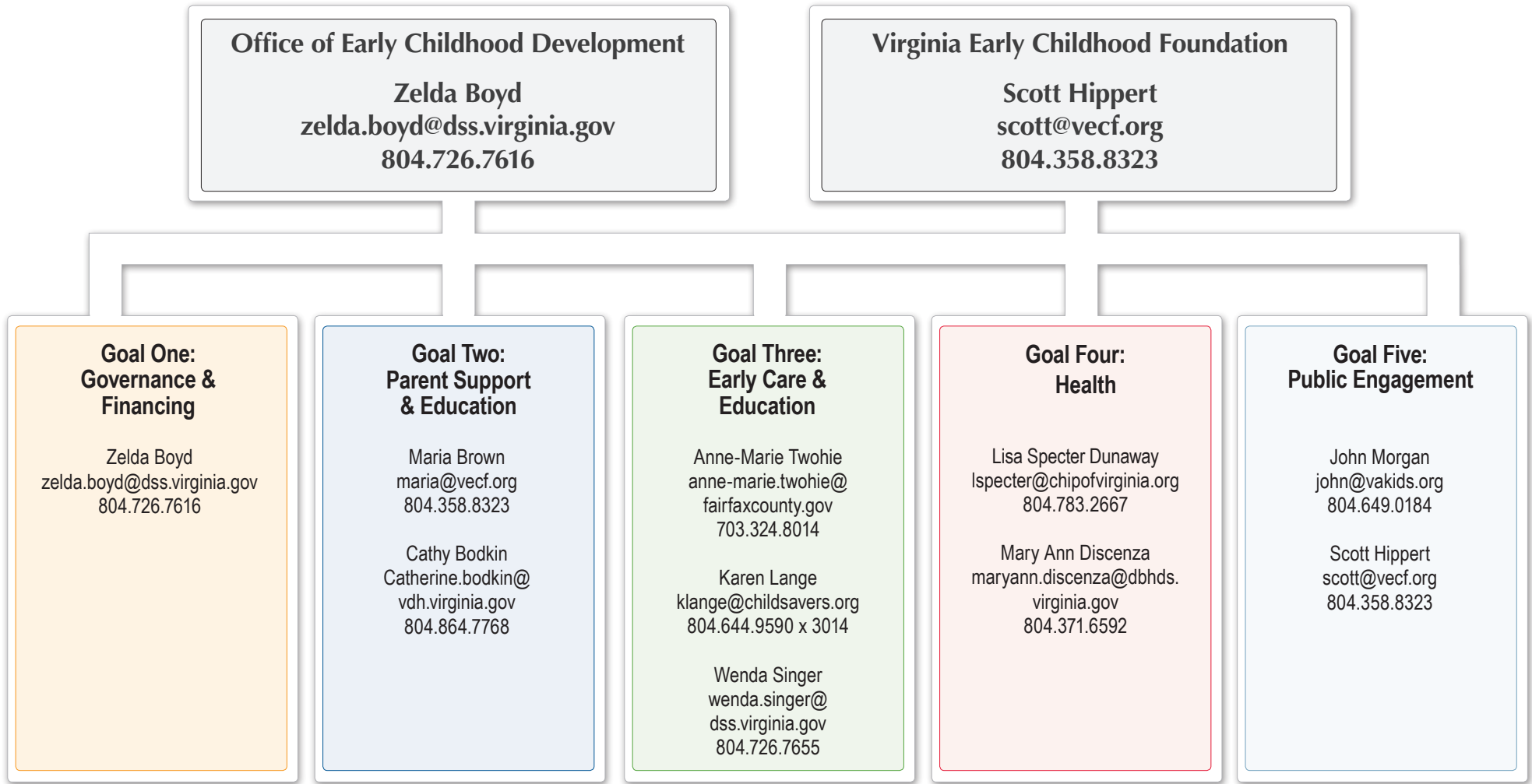
- i. Prepare community leaders to conduct personal advocacy with elected officials
- ii. Encourage and support local coalition-sponsored advocacy activities
- iii. Strengthen partnerships and communication among early childhood stakeholders
- iv. Jointly define key policy change priorities and collective action steps
- v. Create and strengthen communications to promote legislative advocacy by early childhood supporters

- i. Create a Virginia Plan for Smart Beginnings section online within [www.smartbeginnings.org](http://www.smartbeginnings.org)
- ii. Post updates to this plan and provide status reports
- iii. Publish an annual online report of progress
- iv. Conduct an annual meeting of stakeholders
- v. Establish online communications vehicle (list-serv) for sharing information
- vi. Create and execute a plan to brand and market this initiative

## SYSTEM OUTCOMES

1. Strong, organized community networks for advocacy and building public will
2. Consistent and effective advocacy messages for various audiences
3. A strong, growing, and mobilized pool of early childhood champions in all sectors
4. Increased awareness of the importance of early childhood development and its role in improving Virginia's economy and quality of life
5. Local plans are aligned to state-level priorities
6. A strong and effective governance structure at both the state and local levels
7. Stakeholder commitment to a unified policy agenda

# VIRGINIA'S PLAN FOR SMART BEGINNINGS



For more information about a particular goal, please contact the appropriate goal group leader(s).

