

Fast Track Initiative Employer Information

Ready Region Blue Ridge



Fast Track Information

We recognize that staff shortages are at crisis levels and can be a real stressor for early childhood program leaders like you. We've learned from the [April 2023 Data Brief: Staffing Challenges at VA Child Care Centers](#) that 68% of early care and education site leaders participating in Child Care Subsidy said hiring was very challenging. 80% reported that current staff are working more hours or taking on additional responsibilities, and 63% reported serving fewer children and/or having to turn families away. We're excited that a new initiative that can help with solutions is coming to our region in July!

The Early Education Fast Track Initiative is an exciting new opportunity from the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) with support from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). Fast Track addresses new assistant teacher recruitment, compensation, training, retention, and ongoing professional development. Participating childcare employers benefit from a VECF-led recruitment campaign designed to attract fresh talent to your program; screening, interviewing and background check support for candidates; online, interactive "Introduction to Early Childhood" training for new Fast Track employees; retention bonuses for each new Fast Track employee, and more.

Participation in the Early Educator Fast Track Initiative enables you to:

- Address your staffing shortage crisis by filling assistant teacher vacancies
- Bolster your talent pipeline with new assistant teachers who are ready to grow
- Benefit from high-quality training that prepares new Fast Track employees for success
- Reduce stress and strain on current staff
- Increase ability to open additional classrooms and/or operate at enrollment capacity
- Increase ability to serve current and new families and children with a fuller staff team
- Decrease the need to turn families (and revenue) away due to staff vacancies
- Save time while VECF handles recruitment, screening and interviewing
- Get training and resources to use the Central Registry electronic portal
- Attract new talent and interested applicants through competitive compensation at \$17 per hour
- Pay new Fast Track employees \$1,500 in retention bonuses in the first year, provided by VECF
- Receive compensation reimbursement (40 hrs/wk--4 wks) for each FT employee during Fast Track training
- Receive a loaner laptop for each Fast Track employee for training and college coursework
- Connect new Fast Track employees to local early childhood college instructors and scholarships for coursework, fees, and textbooks
- Have new Fast Track employees working in the classroom for up to 24 hrs/wk during the 4 weeks of Fast Track training
- Gain experience in creating compensation structures to methodically increase teacher wages
- Implement compensation supported by cost-of-quality reimbursement rates through Child Care Subsidy and Mixed Delivery
- Be a part of the solution to resolve workforce challenges in the childcare industry

The Fast Track Initiative is administered by the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation in collaboration with Ready Regions and the Virginia Department of Education.

Fast Track Initiative Employer Information

Ready Region Blue Ridge



Rate Increases

Virginia is moving toward funding programs at the “cost of quality,” which is based on the actual cost to the provider to deliver high quality early childhood services, including compensating educators at competitive rates (moving toward parity with public school educators). Subsidy and Mixed Delivery rates have increased to enable early childhood care and education programs to phase-in teacher compensation increases:

- Child Care Subsidy (2022)
 - Full day Infant rate up 84%; Toddler rate up 65%; PreK rate up 27%.
- Mixed Delivery (FY2024)
 - Full day Infant rate in your region=\$24,180; Toddlers=\$21,060; 2-year-olds=\$16,206; PreK=\$14,560.

These amounts are reimbursed directly and fully to the provider on behalf of children enrolled in these programs. Child Care Subsidy is paid via child vouchers and Mixed Delivery is paid via contracts in blocks of slots of at least 10 for each center and at least (approximately) half of classroom enrollment.

Value to Employer (in \$) for Participation in Fast Track

VECF will cover the following costs for each new employee hired via Fast Track:

Value	Description	Details
\$2,780	Full-time compensation for four weeks of online and onsite training at \$17 per hour	Introduction to Early Childhood (similar to CHD120) taught by regional ECCE college professors
\$1,500	Retention bonuses	Paid at 6 months and one year of employment
\$90	Books for each educator	Course textbook, new Virginia early learning standards, and seven children’s storybooks
\$4,370	Total Fast Track costs (paid by VECF)	Per new employee hired via Fast Track

Looking for additional resources?

[VDOE Child Care Provider Scholarships: vaccscholarship.com](http://vaccscholarship.com)

[VECF Pathfinders: ECCE Scholarships](#)

[VQB5 - Virginia's Quality Measurement and Improvement System | Virginia Department of Education](#)

[Recognize B5: Virginia's Educator Incentive](#)