



Virginia Promise in Action Announces 2024 Child Care Champions of the Year

Richmond, Va. (Aug. 14, 2024) – Virginia Promise in Action (VPiA), a bipartisan nonprofit organization focused on advancing effective policy improvements and increasing investment in Virginia’s childcare system, today named Governor Glenn Youngkin and a bipartisan group of five Virginia legislators – Senator Ghazala Hashmi, Senator Louise Lucas, Delegate Sam Rasoul, Delegate Mark Sickles and Delegate Anne Ferrell Tata – as 2024 Child Care Champions of the Year.

Now in its third year, the Child Care Champions award honors legislators who recognize the vital role that child care plays in the well-being of the Commonwealth’s families, communities and economy. All of the 2024 honorees have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to strengthening and expanding access to Virginia’s early education and care systems.

“A strong early education system is essential to supporting a thriving workforce and driving long-term economic development and growth. Virginia Promise in Action is proud to recognize Governor Youngkin and these dedicated leaders in the General Assembly for prioritizing the needs of our state’s youngest learners and their families,” said **VPiA Board Chair Jim Dyke**.

“Many families in Virginia have difficulty finding affordable childcare options that fit their needs,” said **VPiA Board Treasurer Gary Thomson**. “At the same time, childcare providers work in a business faced with challenging cost structures. Our 2024 Child Care Champions have been leaders in advancing effective policy improvements and increasing investments that will benefit Virginia children, families, businesses, and communities more broadly.”

Through his Building Blocks for Virginia Families plan released in December 2023, **Governor Glenn Youngkin** proposed critical funding needed to sustain childcare services for at-risk and low-income families and address record demand from working families as temporary federal relief dollars expired. The significant investments included in the Governor’s introduced biennial budget provided a critical baseline and clear commitment to accessible and affordable quality child care for Virginia families.

With resounding bipartisan support, the 2024 Virginia General Assembly provided additional investments to support access to childcare services, resulting in an adopted state budget signed by the Governor on May 13, 2024 that provides over \$1.1 billion in early childhood care and education services, including state general fund investments of \$366 million in FY25 and \$461 million in FY26. This unprecedented commitment by Gov. Youngkin and Virginia’s General Assembly will ensure that eligible families across the Commonwealth continue to have access to

childcare services that fit their needs and preferences, and will ultimately support school-ready children, work-ready parents, thriving communities and a strong economy.

Senator Ghazala Hashmi (D-Chesterfield) has championed efforts to protect the rights of young children and to increase investments in Virginia's early childhood care and education (ECCE) system with a particular focus on strengthening the early education workforce. As Chair of the Senate Education and Health Committee, Senator Hashmi provided key leadership in legislative efforts that strengthen Virginia's ECCE system.

Senator Louise Lucas (D-Portsmouth) is a vigorous supporter of investments and policies that increase access to quality, affordable childcare services for Virginia families, especially those who are most vulnerable. As Chair of the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee, Senator Lucas oversaw an historic investment in child care in response to growing family demand and the end of temporary federal funding.

Delegate Sam Rasoul (D-Roanoke City) has been a long-standing advocate for ECCE throughout his career. During the 2024 legislative session, under his leadership as Chair of the House Education Committee and Chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education, a record number of ECCE bills were thoughtfully considered and enacted, resulting in policy improvements and increased investments for Virginia families.

Delegate Mark Sickles (D-Fairfax) is deeply committed to making child care affordable for families in Virginia. As Vice Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, Delegate Sickles has been a longtime champion of the Mixed Delivery program, which enables eligible families with young children to gain access to high quality, full-day, year-round ECCE services in the settings of their choice so that they can work and their children can enter kindergarten ready to learn.

Delegate Anne Ferrell Tata (R-Virginia Beach) has been a staunch advocate for policies that support quality early learning and provide affordable ECCE options for Virginia families. As patron of House Bill 146 during the 2024 session, Delegate Tata led efforts to reduce burdensome regulations for child care programs that serve military families.

To learn more about Virginia Promise in Action, visit <https://vapromiseinaction.org/>.

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