

FACT SHEET

SMART BEGINNINGS SOUTH HAMPTON ROADS

BACKGROUND

Smart Beginnings South Hampton Roads commissioned Collaborative Planning Committees in the five communities in the region — Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach — to develop community plans to ensure all children arrived at school prepared for success.

This work developed from a widespread recognition that the region would be more successful — in its economy, education system, and the health and welfare of its communities — if a better job was done of investing in children during their earliest years.

Collectively, the Collaborative Planning Committees included nearly 200 stakeholders including Mayors, city managers, city council members, early childhood experts and representatives from the public schools, public libraries, criminal justice system, redevelopment and housing authorities, early intervention, health care, philanthropy, health care community, higher education, criminal justice, United Way, Extension, departments in city government, and a diverse array of non-profit and advocacy organizations.

ABOUT THE REGIONAL PLAN

Using the framework of the National Education Goals panel, the Collaborative Planning Committees established plans around five goals — Ready Children, Ready Families, Ready Early Care and Education Services, Ready Health Services, and Ready Communities — and then defined objectives and benchmarks for success. The plans developed by the Committees will guide each community's work over the next three years to support families and ensure all children arrive at school prepared to succeed.

While each of the plans has distinct goals that reflect local needs, there were a number of ideas that were consistent across all five of the communities. This regional plan reflects these similarities and will help guide regional planning and implementation.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

✓ READY FAMILIES

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

- *OBJECTIVE: Ensure newborns are universally screened and receive appropriate referrals. By January 2010, agree to a region-wide newborn screening tool and make universal contact with all parents at hospitals at the time of birth. Use these visits to identify needs for additional services, such as home visitation and parenting education programs, and share information about state and local resources.*



✓ READY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION SERVICES

All families who wish to access early care and education programs have access to high quality, responsive early childhood programs.

- *OBJECTIVE: Improve the quality of early care and education by expanding a voluntary quality ratings and improvement system (QRIS) and have at least 28 centers and 10 family child care homes participating by October 2008.*
- *OBJECTIVE: Improve the quality of early care and education services by advocating for greater state investment in higher subsidy rates, expanding the QRIS, and other specifics identified by the communities for advocacy efforts.*



✓ READY COMMUNITIES

The region's businesses, faith-based organizations, early childhood service providers, community groups and local governments work together to support children's long-term success by providing collaborative leadership in advancing the principle of early education and care as essential elements of the city's infrastructure, and making certain that families have affordable access to information, services, high quality child care and early learning opportunities.

- *OBJECTIVE: Increase public-private investments and position funding for maximum impact. By 2009, identify and compile all funding streams (local, state and federal) and use this information to promote fiscal responsibility and efficient programmatic delivery.*

