

## Federal Changes Impact Child Care Programs in Virginia

The passage of the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 demonstrates an increased investment in activities to improve the quality of child care throughout the country. The act makes significant advancements in health and safety requirements for child care and requires improvements in consumer education and child care options for the general public.

In addition, there is an increased emphasis on strengthening the child care workforce. Of special note, by September 2017, the measure requires comprehensive background checks for child care providers and programs that are licensed, regulated or registered under state law. A comprehensive background check includes a fingerprint check against state and federal records, a check of the state child abuse registry, and a check of the sex offender registry.

All states are developing plans to address the requirements such

as ensuring equal access to high quality and affordable child care for families with low income, establishing standards and monitoring processes to ensure the health and safety of child care settings, and supporting continuous quality improvement in child care services.

The Virginia Department of Social Services is currently working to revise licensing standards to meet the new requirements in the CCDBG Act, especially in the areas of health and safety, and background checks. The revisions will include new requirements and training for programs that receive child care subsidy funding. The Virginia General Assembly will also address applicable CCDBG requirements in the 2017 session. As always, the Office for Children will continue to provide information about the latest regulations and new requirements impacting child care programs in Fairfax County as they become available.

More information about the CCDBG reauthorization can be found on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Child Care website at [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ). Information about Virginia's efforts to promote the importance of health and safety standards, and the benefits of quality child care can be found at [www.childcareva.com](http://www.childcareva.com) on the "What's Changing" page.



## Provider Access A New Way to Do Business with OFC

Fairfax County Office for Children is pleased to announce the launch of Provider Access, a new online child care information management system, in spring 2016. This new system will offer a variety of self-service options for child care programs and family child care providers.

**Provider Access will allow you to conveniently:**

- ▶ **Update** elements of your business profile on OFC's website.
- ▶ **Request information** from Community Education and Provider Services staff about family child care permit requirements and inspections.

- ▶ **Manage and view** Online Reimbursement Submissions (ORS) and submit monthly attendance for children participating in the Child Care Assistance and Referral Program (CCAR). This system will replace the current ORS system. This option does not apply to families that utilize a state-funded "swipe card" to record attendance.

It is our hope that you find Provider Access convenient and beneficial to you and your business. More details on how to access and use Provider Access will be coming soon.

# Professional Development

## MITM and New First Book Online Resources – Free digital library for children



As early childhood educators, there are many opportunities to bring activities into your program that can support children’s development of executive function. In her book “Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs,” Ellen Galinsky identifies executive function as the basic system we develop to navigate our everyday lives. You use life skills including communicating, focus and self control, and perspective taking to perform tasks each day, especially when talking with parents and children, choosing healthy meals, and planning classroom activities.

A partnership between Mind in The Making and First Book provides educators with resources that support the development of children’s executive function skills through the

use of literature. The “Mind in the Making” Book Collection for ages birth-12 combines children’s books with tips for building essential life skills.

Each book has a tip sheet that provides ideas for sharing the story with the listener. The collection includes many favorite titles already found in children’s homes, early childhood programs, and the Fairfax County Public Library. For more information or to download tip sheets at no cost visit the website at [www.mindinthemaking.org](http://www.mindinthemaking.org).

First Book has just announced an additional resource to provide free access to these books digitally. The Open eBooks app will give children free access to a digital library of thousands of popular and award-winning children’s eBooks they can borrow and download on any mobile devices!

The Open eBooks app can be used in early childhood education programs and by children at home with their families. This app encourages family engagement while at the same time teaching digital literacy. For more information about how to register your program with Open eBooks visit [www.fbmarketplace.org/openebooks](http://www.fbmarketplace.org/openebooks).

## Out-of-School Time Network Forming

Quality Out-of-School Time programs play an important role in supporting the development of children and youth. Communities across the country have formed OST Networks to share best practices, expand access for families, and ensure positive outcomes for children.

To begin the formation of an OST Network in Fairfax County, the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services convened an initial planning group of county programs including School Age Child Care, the Park Authority, and FCPS Middle School After-School Program; and invited community OST programs to attend information sessions to learn about the benefits of a countywide network. All Out-of-School Time programs and providers are invited to be part of this newly forming network.

## Quality OST Programs Benefit Children’s Well-being

Working families look to Out-of-School Time providers to offer safe and engaging environments that support the success of children and youth. Frequent attendance in OST programs is



tied to positive outcomes for children, such as improved academic achievement, school attendance, behavior and relationships with children and adults.

For more information, please contact Tony Humphrey, SACC Program Administrator at 703-324-1414.

# Professional Development

## Scholarship Opportunities for Educators

**Virginia Early Childhood Foundation** in partnership with the **Virginia Community College System**, is offering, **Project Pathfinders**, a new scholarship opportunity for early childhood professionals seeking to complete a credential in early childhood education or child development through the Virginia Community College System. Priority will be given for individuals working with children from income-eligible families, and for individuals not already receiving other scholarship funds. Application materials and initial information sessions will be scheduled for early summer 2016 to allow interested scholarship recipients to begin coursework in fall semester 2016. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis and new awards made prior to each semester, while funding is available. Additional information will be posted on the website [www.vecf.org](http://www.vecf.org) in the coming weeks.

**The Northern Virginia Association for the Education of Young Children** offers three scholarship opportunities. Visit the NVAEYC website at [www.nvaeyc.org/training\\_scholarship.html](http://www.nvaeyc.org/training_scholarship.html) for more information. Applications for the following scholarships are accepted in April:

- ▶ **Professional Development Scholarships** – help an early childhood program fulfill its staff training and professional development goals.
- ▶ **Academic Scholarships** – awarded for students enrolled in early childhood programs at the Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctoral level.
- ▶ **Child Development Associate Credential Scholarships** – assist childhood professionals working with young children seeking to earn their CDA credential.

This is the first year NVAEYC is offering the Maria Gallagher Memorial CDA Scholarship. Gallagher was an instructor with the Office for Children and an active NVAEYC member who mentored many CDA candidates.

**The Virginia Child Care Provider Scholarship Program** offers tuition assistance to child care professionals for undergraduate college courses in the care and development of children. This federally funded program will pay your tuition for up to eight child-care related courses at one of Virginia's accredited colleges. Courses taken can be used towards certification or a degree in early childhood education. All early childhood and school-age professionals, who have earned a GED or a high school diploma, are eligible for the scholarship program.

Scholarship applications are accepted mid-March through mid-May (for the summer semester), mid-June through mid-August (for the fall semester), November through early January (for the spring semester). For more information, visit their website: [www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/professionals\\_resources.cgi](http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/professionals_resources.cgi).

**The Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education** annual scholarship project assists educators working with young children seeking to obtain their CDA Credential. VAECE will reimburse 50 percent of the amount paid towards the cost of the direct assessment credentialing fee or 50 percent of the amount paid towards the renewal fee paid by the candidate. The candidate must be a current member of VAECE. Awards will be given during VAECE's fiscal year (January 1–December 31). For more information, visit their website: [www.vaece.org/scholarships.html](http://www.vaece.org/scholarships.html).

Fairfax County

**O F C** Office for Children

*Partnering with families and the early childhood and school age community*

**Contact us**  
703-324-8000

**Child Care Assistance and Referral**  
703-449-8484

**Head Start and Early Head Start**  
703-324-8290

**School Age Child Care**  
703-449-8989

**Community Education and Provider Services**  
703-324-8100

**School Readiness**  
703-324-8103

**Institute for Early Learning**  
703-324-3044

**Virginia Preschool Initiative**  
703-324-7513

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## Community



### Get Ready for Kindergarten!

Children who will be 5 years old by Sept. 30, are eligible to start kindergarten this fall. This transition

evokes many feelings for children and families, so preparing children to be successful starts early.

### Kindergarten Registration

Registering for kindergarten before school starts allows rising kindergarteners and their families to become familiar with their school and the staff. Many schools and Parent Teacher Associations hold summer events to welcome new students. Here are some tips from the Office for Children for kindergarten registration:

- ▶ Begin the registration process this spring.
- ▶ Families can learn which elementary school their child should attend at [www.fcps.edu/boundary](http://www.fcps.edu/boundary) or by calling 571-423-2330. For general registration questions or to request translation services, call 703-204-6740. Contact the school about dates for kindergarten orientation and registration.
- ▶ Children and their families are encouraged to attend kindergarten orientation programs at the elementary school, and schedule a separate visit to the school to meet the kindergarten teachers and see several kindergarten rooms.

### Transition to Kindergarten

- ▶ Spring is a good time to start having frequent conversations with children about what to expect in kindergarten.
- ▶ Getting along with others and the ability to share ideas are skills that make the transition to kindergarten easier for children, parents and teachers. Children will need to use language to interact and solve problems. By having conversations with them, you are building these skills.
- ▶ Families and early childhood education programs have routines for sleeping, waking, eating meals and playtime. By following established routines, children will be prepared for the routines introduced in kindergarten.
- ▶ Making regular physical activity, rest and good nutrition a part of your routine plays an important role in getting each child ready for a day of learning in kindergarten.
- ▶ Playing on the elementary school playground with friends will support an easy transition by helping children to be comfortable in this new setting before school starts.
- ▶ Read books together about starting kindergarten. Some good suggestions can be found in the School Readiness Book Guide on OFC's website at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc).