

## ATTACHMENT 1

# CONSENSUS QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

## CHILD CARE STUDY 2022

### FOR PARENTS:

#### Question 1: Affordability

Context: The median annual fees charged to Virginia parents for private center-based care is \$10,451 for 4-year-olds and \$13,709 for infants. These rates means a family with two young children making the Virginia median wage would spend over 32% of their income on child care. The Virginia Child Care Subsidy Program assists families in paying child care costs. The subsidy program has recently been expanded to reach more parents in need but the funding for this expansion is not guaranteed beyond 2024. Children at or below the federal poverty threshold are also eligible for federally-funded Head Start and early Head Start programs located across the state but not in every county and not providing enough slots for every child that would qualify.

CC IG Recommendation: The LWV-VA should support and advocate for policies that would cap the amount of pay that any Virginia family has to pay to access care for children 0-6. This means expanding the sliding scale subsidy program to all families irrespective of income level. It also means updating the Virginia code to ensure sufficient funding is allocated in the state budget to support these funding parameters.

**Should the LWV-VA support and advocate for policies that would cap the amount of pay that any Virginia family would have to pay to access care for children, aged 0-6 years?**

Yes  No  No consensus

Comments:

#### Question 2: Access

Context: As of December 2020 (the most recent available data), the 403,348 children 0-6 in Virginia with working parents were served by only 3,084 registered child care centers, family child care homes, or after-school programs. (child care Aware of Virginia, 2021) This number of programs is not enough. Among all registered centers, there were only 230,250 slots available meeting 57% of potential need. Moreover, the number of centers and programs had been steadily declining before the crisis brought on by the COVID pandemic and continues to do so.

CC IG Recommendation: The LWV-VA should support and advocate for policies that ensure sufficient supply of providers in all areas of the state by offering grants, low-interest loans and technical assistance (business mentors?) to child care entrepreneurs looking to establish new licensed centers or day-homes where there is unmet needs. It also means expanding state-funded preschool and after-school programs and adjusting the local match requirements so that the programs are accessible to counties with higher needs.

**Should the LWV-VA support and advocate for policies that ensure sufficient supply of providers in all areas of the state?**

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ No consensus

Comments:

### Question 3: Equity

Context: Many low income families, families of color, and immigrant families work in hourly jobs with long, non-flexible hours. Unless care options extend to evenings, weekends, and holidays, these families may not be able participate in the workforce because of lack of child care or may resort to non-licensed care providers. Parents who are not fluent in English similarly need access to information about care in understandable and culturally appropriate ways.

CC IG Recommendation: The LWV-VA should support and advocate for policies that acknowledge and understand unique needs of different families in a given community and allocate sufficient resources to address these needs which may include incentivizing providers to expand hours, and ensuring families who do not speak English have culturally appropriate information on available ECCE options.

**Should the LWV-VA support and advocate for policies that seek to understand and allocate sufficient resources to address different parents' care needs?**

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ No consensus

Comments:

## FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

### Question 4: Sustainability

Context: Even with the high fees charged by care providers, providers cannot afford to pay staff a wage in line with their education and responsibilities, invest in professional development, or purchase curriculum and materials. Current fees for child care are being driven by what the market

will bear, not what it actually costs to provide high quality care to infants and children. In many communities, providers cannot increase tuition rates to account for better staff compensation, required adult/child ratios, quality supports, and other resources because parents cannot afford to pay any more. (Virginia Department of Education, 2022A; AmericanProgress.org, 2021).

CC IG Recommendation: The LWV-VA should support and advocate for policies that provide direct support to providers using an equity adjustment formula that considers the ability of the provider to collect fees from the parents and communities they serve.

**Should the LWV-VA support and advocate for policies that provide direct financial support to providers?**

Yes  No  No consensus

Comments:

### Question 5: Viability

Context: Virginia has no program for increasing available staff for child care. In Massachusetts, a model has been piloted that demonstrates how a direct pipeline from schools and workforce development programs to child care jobs can be established to place entry-level workers (assistant teachers) in child care. These teachers then receive training and support to progress to lead teacher and program leader roles.

CC IG Recommendation: The LWV-VA should support and advocate for policies that foster greater collaboration between the state’s workforce development and ECCE systems so that providers are supported in the task of identifying and training new staff.

**Should the LWV-VA support and advocate for policies that foster greater collaboration between the state’s workforce development and ECCE systems?**

Yes  No  No consensus

Comments:

## FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

### Question 6: Access

As 90% of a child’s brain develops before the age of 6, it is critical that all children, especially children from low-income families, have equal access to a nurturing learning environment that prepares them for success in K-12 education. Universal, high quality preschool programs have proven to increase children’s cognitive and social skills, as well as modest improvements in social-

emotional and self-regulatory development. Since the LWVUS position calls on the government to “provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12”, the LWV-VA already ascribes to the notion that pre-school should be universally accessible. Yet conversations with parents in Virginia showed the importance of maintaining choice for ECCE and support for the state’s mixed delivery system. Given Virginia’s decentralized approach to ECCE, it is also important to clarify which level of government is ultimately responsible for funding and managing a universal preschool program.

CC IG Recommendation: The LWV-VA should support and advocate for the creation of a free and universal preschool program for 3-and 4-year olds that is fully and equitably funded by the state and administered at the local level under a mixed-delivery system. Should federal funds be made available, these can offset (but should not be contingent) on sufficient state funding being appropriated.

**Should the LWV-VA support and advocate for the creation of a free, universal mixed-delivery preschool program for 3-and 4-year olds in Virginia that is state-funded and locally administered.**

Yes  No  No consensus

Comments:

### Question 7: Quality, Health and Safety

Context: While Virginia has a well-developed system of licensing and inspection, standards don’t fully reflect those recommended by the U.S. Health and Human Services Agency. For example, there is no explicit prohibition against the use of tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs on program premises. More importantly, there are many providers who remain exempt from licensing requirements (such as religious institutions and small day-home providers) thereby avoiding inspection, adherence to existing standards and participation in the VQB5 quality measurement framework.

CC IG Recommendation: The LWV-VA should support and advocate for policies that require, and provide sufficient support to help all child care providers become and remain licensed.

**Should the LWV-VA support and advocate for policies that require, and provide sufficient support to help all child care providers become and remain licensed.**

Yes  No  No consensus

Comments:

### Question 8: Equity

Context: Teacher biases in assessments, punishments and encouragements based on childrens' race and gender as well as teachers' level of training in how to adequately support children with special needs (English-language learner, mental and behavioral health, physical abilities etc.) likely contribute to children's disparate outcomes in kindergarten readiness scores. Scores are disproportionately lower for black, hispanic, low-income and disabled students.

CC IG Recommendation: The LWV-VA should support and advocate for policies that emphasize diversity, equity and inclusion in early education assessments, curriculum design, educator training and professional development.

**Should the LWV-VA support and advocate for policies that emphasize diversity, equity and inclusion in early education assessments, curriculum design, educator training and professional development.**

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ No consensus

Comments:

## **FOR SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN**

### **Question 9: Affordability and Accessibility**

Context: The 2020 survey for Virginia from the Afterschool Alliance found that parents who did not enroll their child in an after-school program did so due to cost (60%), the lack of available programs (43%), and a lack of transportation to get children to and from the programs (47%). Over 600,000 children in Virginia would participate in after-school programs if one was available to them. There is vast difference in access to after-school and summer programs based on geography with many counties containing only 1-2 programs.

CC IG Recommendation: The LWV-VA should support and advocate for policies that make after-school programs more accessible and affordable. This may include funding more programs in schools, financially supporting staff recruitment and retention efforts, exploring the creation of a universal after-school program, strengthening data measurement and tracking of available programs to understand gaps in access, and by establishing a state-level child tax credit.

**Should the LWV-VA support and advocate for policies that make after-school programs more accessible and affordable?**

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ No consensus

Comments:

### Question 10: Quality and Equity

Context: While many states have followed the recommendations made by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services when developing after-school program standards, none have gone as far as to mandate their use or require that all after-school providers become licensed. One of the areas covered in Virginia's standards developed by the Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time (VPOST) involves culture and diversity which means that the program environment creates positive connections among all staff, participants, families and the community and beyond while celebrating culture and diversity.

CC IG Recommendation: The LWV-VA should support and advocate for policies that incentivize after-school programs to adopt quality and equity standards

Yes  No  No consensus

Comments: