



# **Early Childhood Education Research, Assessment, Effective Teaching**

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# **The Premise: Early Childhood Education**

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**Every poor child has access to a highly effective preschool program before they enter Kindergarten.**

- **Ingredients: Effective curriculum; high-quality teacher-child interactions; trained workforce; K readiness assessment.**
- **Sufficient intensity to close gaps.**
- **Scale: Statewide assessments of inputs (quality) and outcomes (readiness); build and test turnkey model(s).**

# Early Childhood—Access



**Fragmented, idiosyncratic implementation**



# **Access: How are we doing?**

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- **80% of 3- to 4-year-olds in some form of preschool education in 2010**
- **State-funded pre-k: 38 states, 1.1 million 4-yr-olds**
- **~ \$20 billion in expenditures**
- **Virginia: HS and VPI enrolling at national levels; room for added #s in VPI**



# Impacts?

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- Scaled-up programs deliver modest benefits to kids
- Interpret ROI with care
- Programs with more “educational” aims produce greater benefits (~30% long-term gap)
- Virginia
  - Some evidence of benefits (JLARC)
  - No controlled evaluations
  - Quality, curriculum uneven
  - Lacking readiness assessments
  - Strong work on standards



# Defining quality

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- **Debate has shifted to focus on what's happening in classrooms**
- **Teacher-child interactions**
- **Curriculum**
- **Workforce development**
- **Readiness assessments**



# A path for Virginia

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- **Stronger curriculum with training for implementation**
- **Continued emphasis on quality of interactions (VECF initiatives)**
- **Readiness assessments**
  - **Planning, improvement, accountability**
  - **Linkage of preschool→K-12**
  - **Relevance to K teachers**

# Readiness assessments

- **VECF piloting of TS Gold (teacher-report)**
  - Relevance to teachers
- **E3/UVA-CASTL examination of TS Gold and alternatives**
  - TS Gold lack of differentiation of skills; modest relations with direct assessments; readiness cut-offs unclear
- **Plans for CASTL further piloting 2014-15**
  - Direct assessments of key areas (e.g., math) combine with PALS
  - Relevance to teachers
  - Standardized snapshot of population readiness—all or representative
  - Recommendations for statewide use – January 2015
  - Launch statewide use 2015

# Effective teaching in early childhood

- **Importance of effective curricula**

- Need work here

- **Teacher-child interactions**

- Social and instructional supports
- Observe classrooms; ratings (CLASS)
- Links to professional development to improve

- **Classrooms with observation and aligned pd**

- Increase quality significantly
- Increase children's language, vocabulary, self-control, behavior, literacy

- **Statewide strategy?**

- **Links to teacher preparation?**



# Moving ahead

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- **Planned work on readiness assessment**
- **Continued (expanded) focus on quality assessment**
- **Focus on curriculum and quality improvement**
- **Data and decision-making infrastructure**

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# Early Childhood—Impact



**Integrated, effective, scalable implementation**