



Supporting Working Parents: Protecting Children in Care Care



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Meeting the Needs of Working Parents

Every week in Virginia:

Nearly 394,000 children under age 6 spend some time in child care

- 231,952 are in two parent families with working parents
- 118,442 live in single parent families led by a working mother
- 36,779 live in single parent families led by a working father

Another 489,000 children between the ages of 6 and 12 have working parents.



Military families:

- 45,752 children under age 6
- 6,055 children under age 6 in the Guard and Reserve

Tragic & Preventable

It is a tragedy when any child dies.

But, it is an even greater tragedy to know that these deaths could be prevented.



In Virginia, more than 54 children have died in unlicensed care.

Unlicensed Child Care Homes

Cami Lafkin, 3 months old
Joseph Allen, 1 year old
P'Nut Bodine, 11 months old

- Unlicensed care
- Number of children
- Unsafe sleep practices
- Unsafe safety practices
- Need for background checks

We can prevent these tragedies.



Fingerprint-Based Background Checks

Legislature Passed bill for a task force last year.

The task force recommended:

- Implementing fingerprint background checks
- Pending legislation: Senator Hanger (SB 1168); Delegate Anderson (HB 1931); Delegate Filler-Corn (HB 1552)
- **A fingerprint-based background check is essential to weed out those with a criminal history who should not be in the business of caring for other people's children.**

Background Check Implementation

Some start up funding is needed.

The task force estimated \$1.6 million seed money to buy equipment and increase staffing (VSP & DSS).

Estimates are that background checks will be more than self-sustaining; they will generate revenue.

Projected net revenue (more than \$600,000 in year 1; more than \$825,000 in year 2)

Revenue raised should go into a fund to be used to protect children (i.e., threshold reduction, inspections, training, etc.).

New federal law requires fingerprint background checks for providers caring for children on a subsidy.

Effective Date:
October 2017.

Unlicensed Child Care Homes

Our job is to help parents find child care.

But it's hard for many families. Some want a small child care home with just a few children. Those homes aren't licensed.

Some simply can't find licensed care. It's not available in their community or licensed places are full. Waiting lists are common, particularly for infant care.



Virginia is one of only 8 states that do not license child care until 6 unrelated children are in the home.

Pending Child Care Bills

Some bills count all children in care. (SB 780, SB 1124, HB 1929)

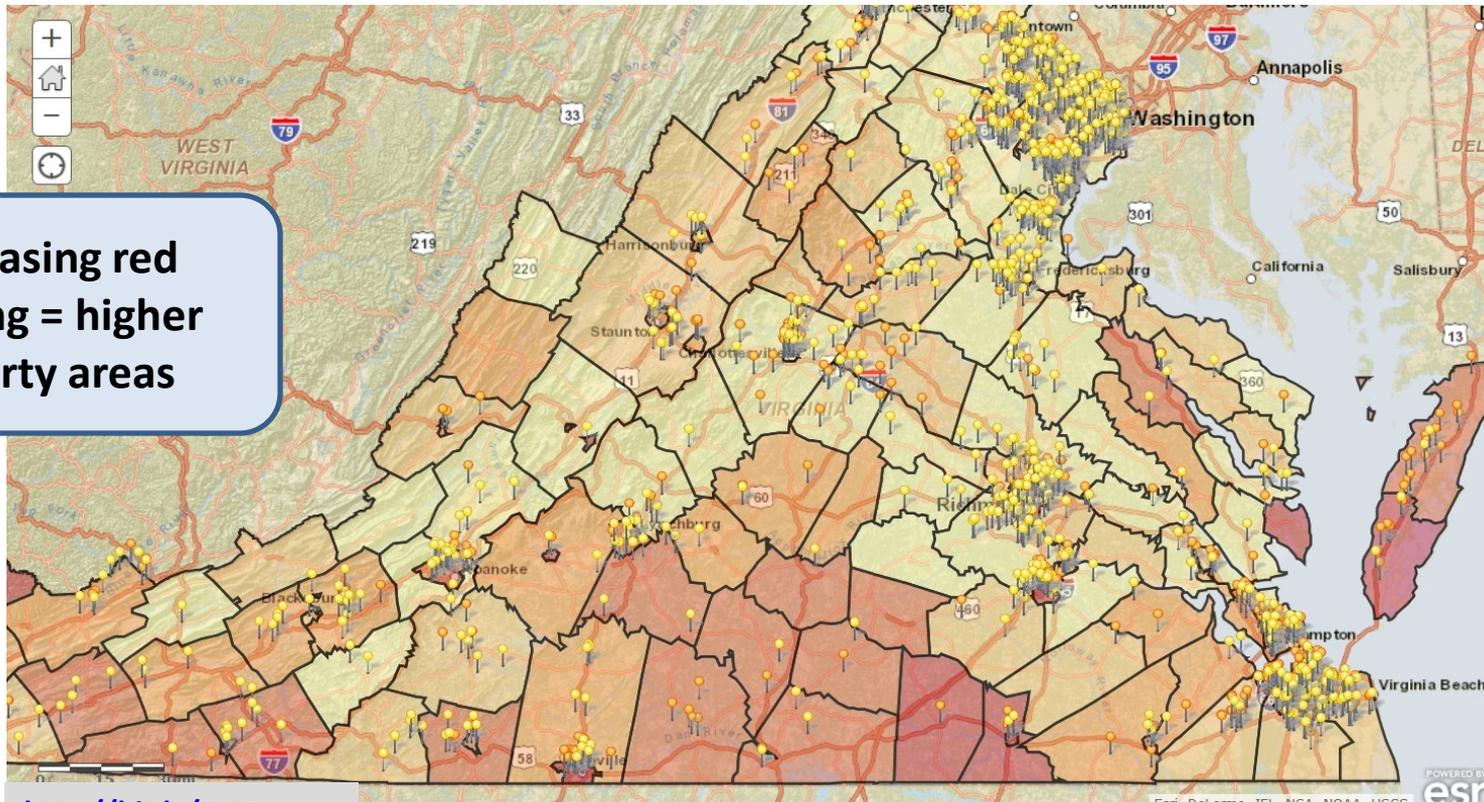
Counting all children makes sense. In a fire, all children need to be safely evacuated, including the invisible ones that don't count for the state licensing threshold.

But, counting all children is only part of the answer. The threshold is the real problem. (SB 818, HB 1552, HB 2046)

Some bills require subsidy care to be licensed. (SB 1123, HB 2023).

That's a good first step. But, nearly 400,000 children under 6 have working parents. Only 4,200 are on subsidy in unlicensed care (about 17% of the children on subsidy).

Child Care Homes



Increasing red shading = higher poverty areas

As you can see, the distribution of child care homes throughout VA varies greatly. Yellow pins are licensed homes. Orange pins are voluntary registered homes.

1989 JLARC Study



25 years ago, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) was charged by the Legislature to conduct a study on child care

- Except for the dates, you would think that study could have been written today
- The review is thorough, the recommendations are sound

Little has changed except:

- The number of working mothers is greater today (i.e. more children need child care)
- We have data from the Washington Post and Richmond Times Dispatch about the number of deaths in child care over the past decade

Biggest finding?

- “Children in unregulated care situations are at greater risk.”

JLARC Recommendations

- **The state should begin to count all related children when determining the total number of children in care within a family day care home**

Child care services should be defined as any care of one or more children which meets the following criteria:

- Care is provided by one or more individuals who are not the parents or guardians of all children in care;
- Care is provided on a part-day basis (not 24 hour care)
- There is a contractual agreement with the parents of the children in care
- The provider is expected to be responsible for the whereabouts and well-being of the children while in his or her care; and
- Care is available on an ongoing, regular basis. (page 60)

JLARC estimated that 337,000 children in VA under 13 were in some type of child care. Today, there are 883,000 children under age 13 with working parents.

Protecting Children

The JLARC report noted, *“the Commonwealth has historically regulated industries and professions when there is a demonstrated need to protect the public interest.”*

Where is the public interest greater than to protect our children?

Link to full 1989 JLARC report.

<http://jlarc.virginia.gov/reports/Rpt108.pdf>



Policy Recommendations



Child Care Aware of Virginia recommends:

- Fingerprint-based background checks for child care providers;
- Requiring a child care license as soon as providers are paid to care for one unrelated child (regularly, as a business);
- Training and technical assistance to support a quality early childhood workforce; and
- Tough penalties against those providers who circumvent the law.