School Readiness

Fairfax County
Successful Children and Youth Policy Team

Early childhood education is the healthy *development* and education of children from birth to age 5.

Quality early childhood education programs support the whole child – cognitive, social, emotional and physical development.

Parents are their child's first and life long teacher.

A mixed-delivery system ensures the availability of many options to support the diversity of the county.

Children in Fairfax County

74,422 children under the age of 5 (2012)

6% of children under the age of 5 (4,483) living below the poverty level (2012)

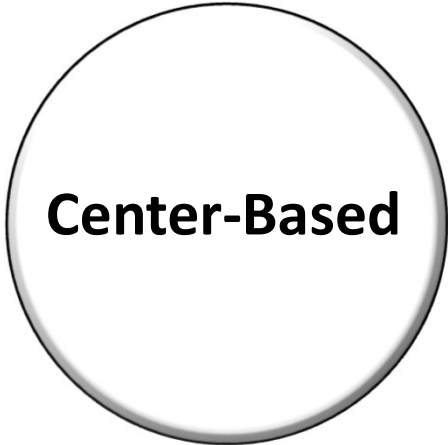62% of children under age 6 had all parents in the labor force (2011)

33.1% of kindergarteners in FCPS eligible for free/reduced meals (2012)

2,122 kindergarteners (16%) did not meet the fall FCPS reading intervention benchmark and referred for services (2012)

School Readiness = Quality + Access

PreK Experiences
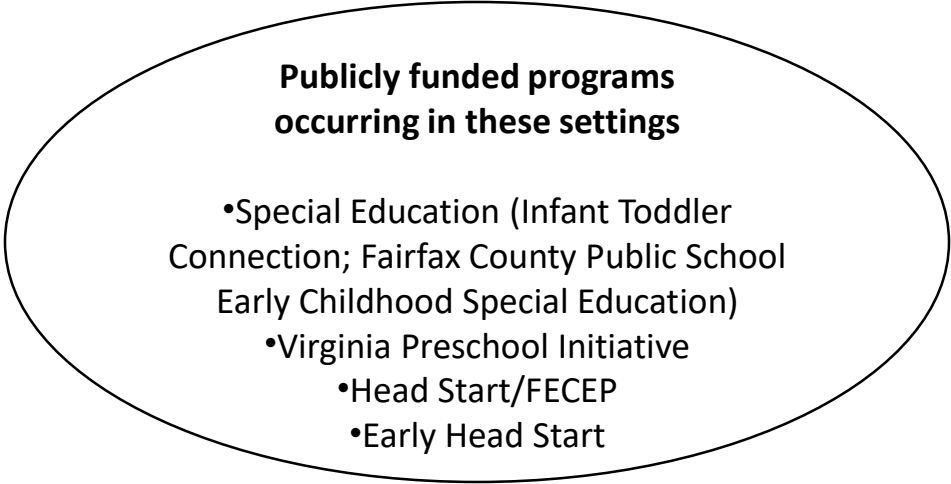
Center-Based

Family Child Care

Home
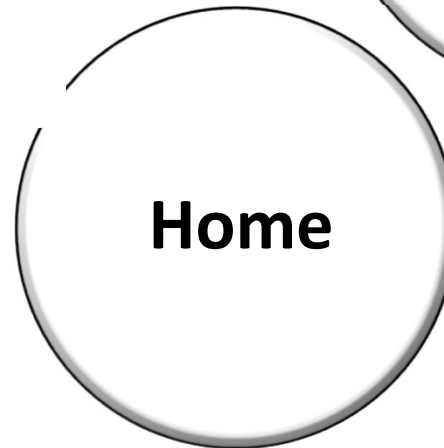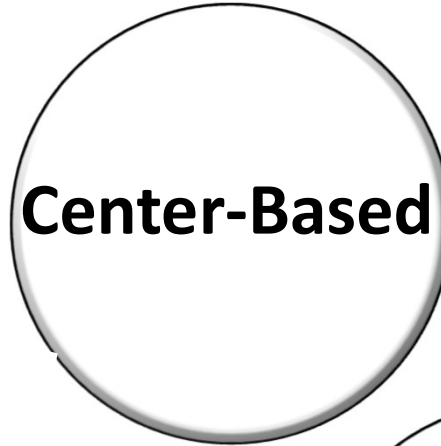
Center-Based

Community Child Care/Preschool

- Non-profit
- For-profit
- Faith-based

Publicly funded programs occurring in these settings

•Special Education (Infant Toddler Connection; Fairfax County Public School Early Childhood Special Education)
•Virginia Preschool Initiative
•Head Start/FECEP
•Early Head Start

Family Child Care

Fairfax County Permitted   **State Licensed**

Publicly funded programs occurring in these settings

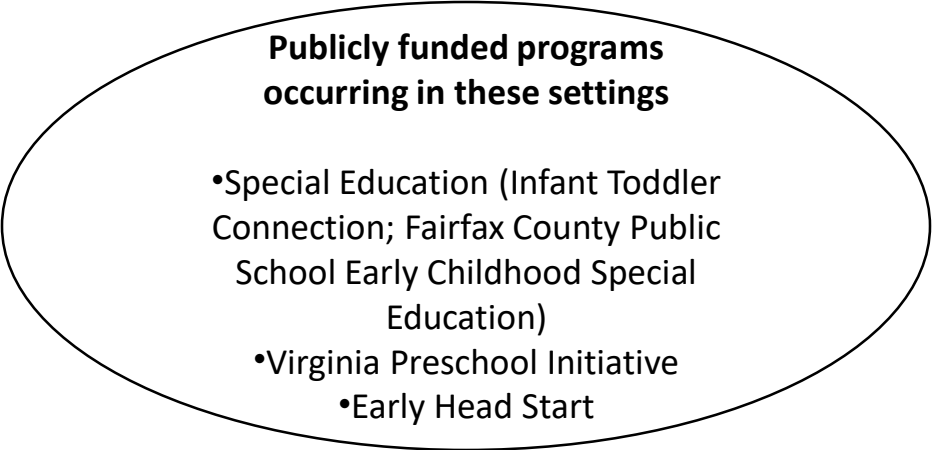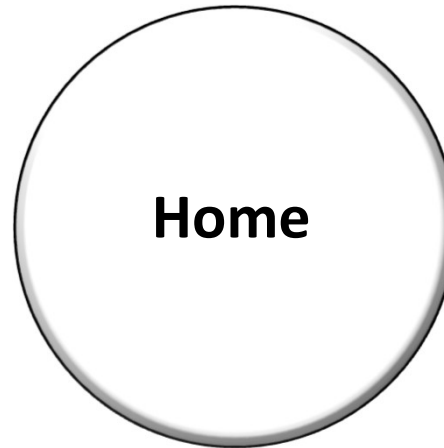•Special Education (Infant Toddler Connection; Fairfax County Public School Early Childhood Special Education)
•Virginia Preschool Initiative
•Early Head Start

Home

Children at home with a relative who provides experiences, e.g. museum visits, library, recreation center, playgroups

Publicly funded programs occurring in these settings

• Special Education (Infant Toddler Connection; Fairfax County Public School Early Childhood Special Education)

• Home visiting (Healthy Families Fairfax; Nurse Family Partnership; HIPPY=Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters; Resource Mothers; Early Head Start)
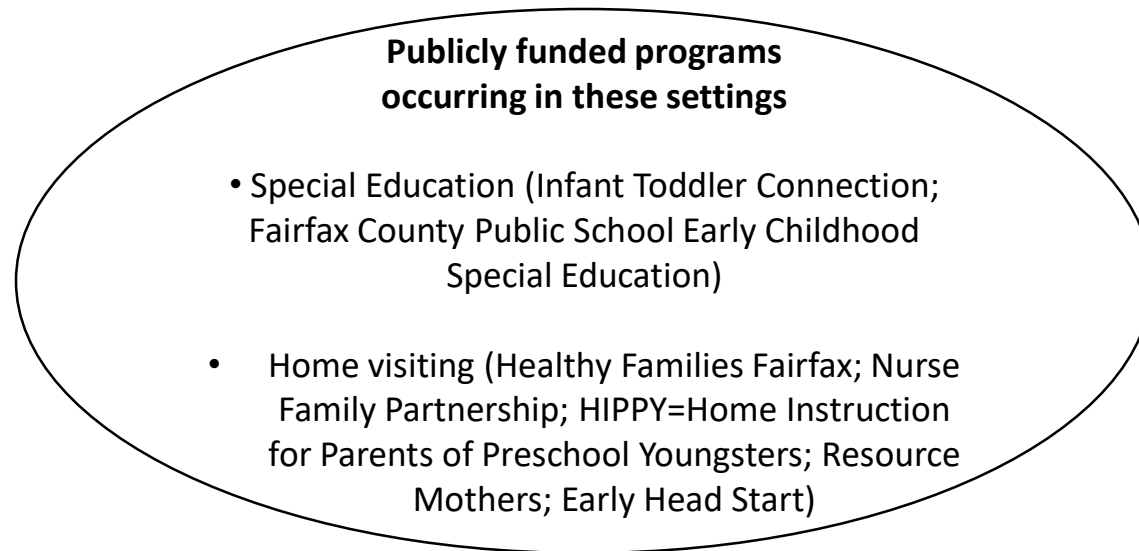
Examples of Other Pre-K Experiences in the Community

- Library (e.g., story times that provide adults and children the opportunity to engage in large and small group experiences)

- Recreation Centers (e.g., arts & crafts, swimming)

- Parks (e.g., exercise trails & playground equipment for gross motor skill development)

- Nature Centers (e.g., museum experiences, presentations and hands-on trail activities for young children)

- Private classes for young children (e.g., dance, gymnastics, soccer and music)

- Public school literacy classes (e.g., *Early Literacy and Family Literacy*)

School Readiness = Quality + Access

TODAY

FUTURE
(Our VISION)

Definition of Quality

- **Education, qualifications, and training of staff:** Effective early childhood professionals have a strong background in education and child development, building specialized early childhood competencies.

- **Interactions:** Effective teachers have the warmth and sensitivity to engage children, fostering self-confidence and positive interactions, and encouraging questions and curiosity.

- **Structure:** Small class sizes and low child to teacher ratios that allow for individual student attention are hallmarks of a high quality program.

- **Environment and Instruction:** An age-appropriate curriculum recognizing the psychological development of children is important, but the way a teacher implements that curriculum is more significant. Learning environments should stimulate children's cognitive development, with classrooms divided into smaller activity-based centers.

Access

Quality

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Definition of Access

- Availability

- Location with place-based coordinated services

- Affordability

Access

Quality

School Readin

Positive Child Outcom

Access

Quality

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School Readiness = Quality + Access

Path to Quality

- Coaching and professional development
- Licensing standards (safety, ratio)
- VQRIS and teacher qualifications (competency and foundational knowledge)
- Place-based coordinated services

Path to Access

- Additional facilities
  - Place-based coordinated services
  - Classroom space
- Funded program slots
- Scholarships

Access (vertical axis)

Quality (horizontal axis)

Left sidebar: Fairfax County — School Readiness — Successful Children and Youth Policy Team

Recommendation #1

Create a learning network of quality early care and education programs that promotes school readiness through the alignment of curricula to the *Virginia Foundation Blocks for Early Learning* in order to build knowledge and awareness of shared kindergarten expectations.

- Expand Neighborhood School Readiness Teams (NSRT) throughout Fairfax County to develop school, county, community partnerships.

- Provide on-site coaching for early childhood professionals.

Neighborhood School Readiness Teams (NSRT)

Collaborative partnerships between the community, early childhood programs, Fairfax County public schools, and county programs. NSRTs develop and implement action plans to support school readiness in their communities across the county. Team members support children's successful transition to kindergarten (including timely registration, increased opportunity to build relationships with incoming students, increased social skills of students, increased family engagement, immunization and physical completion prior to the start of school).

Goal **All Title I elementary schools will participate on a NSRT**

Currently 10 NSRTs

Strategy Add 18 neighborhoods by 2017 to ensure that all Title I schools are part of a NSRT

FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018
$102,182 6 neighborhoods (2 positions)	6 neighborhoods	$46,069 6 neighborhoods (1 position)	

Coaching and Professional Development

On-site coaching and professional development provides the opportunity for early childhood educators to gain knowledge of child development and best practices for implementing curriculum, both of which are critical for promoting positive school readiness outcomes for children. Practical application of concepts is supported through a coaching model of on-site technical assistance and professional development.

Goal **Increase coaching and professional development opportunities for early childhood educators**

Current The county provides professional development for early childhood educators, as well as on-site coaching in a limited number of grant-funded programs

Strategy Support adult learners through on-site coaching to build knowledge and skills related to curriculum implementation, environments, social emotional competency, and infant and toddler care to promote a high quality early learning network of child care programs

FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018
$281,905 (3 positions)		$281,905 (3 positions)	

Recommendation #2

Support children living in poverty to reach fall kindergarten benchmarks as reported on a universal screener.

- Increase access to quality programing through expansion of Virginia Preschool Initiative.

- Expand Virginia Quality Rating and Improvement System (VQRIS) in order to support quality in more early childhood programs.

- Provide additional access to affordable, quality child care through the Child Care Assistance and Referral program.

Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI)

Provides early childhood education and comprehensive services to four year olds at risk of school failure and their families.

Goal **To increase the number of children enrolled in VPI and to decrease the percentage of unused slots**

Currently The County serves 230 children in community based programs and 1,177 in FCPS classrooms

Strategy Provide Local Match to enable the County to draw down state VPI funding and serve additional children enrolled in community programs and to create new PreK classrooms in FCPS

FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018
$150,000 50 slots (community- based)		$150,000 50 slots (community-based)	
$408,000 34 slots & staffing (FCPS)	$531,068 34 slots & staffing (2 positions) (FCPS)	$408,000 34 slots & staffing (FCPS)	$408,000 34 slots & staffing (FCPS)

VPI in Fairfax County
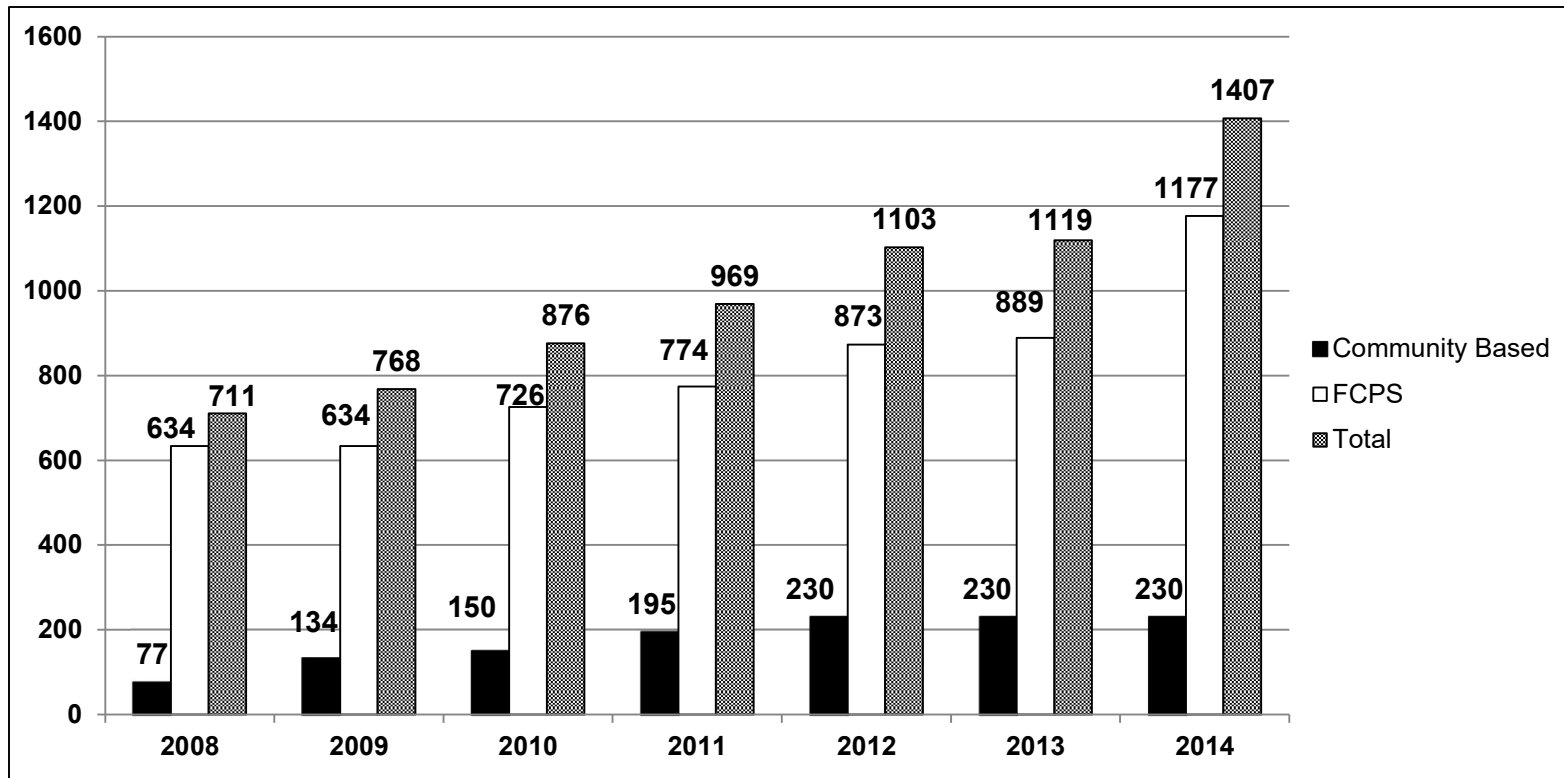
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Community Based	77	134	150	195	230	230	230
FCPS	634	634	726	774	873	889	1177
Total	711	768	876	969	1103	1119	1407

Availability of VPI Slots
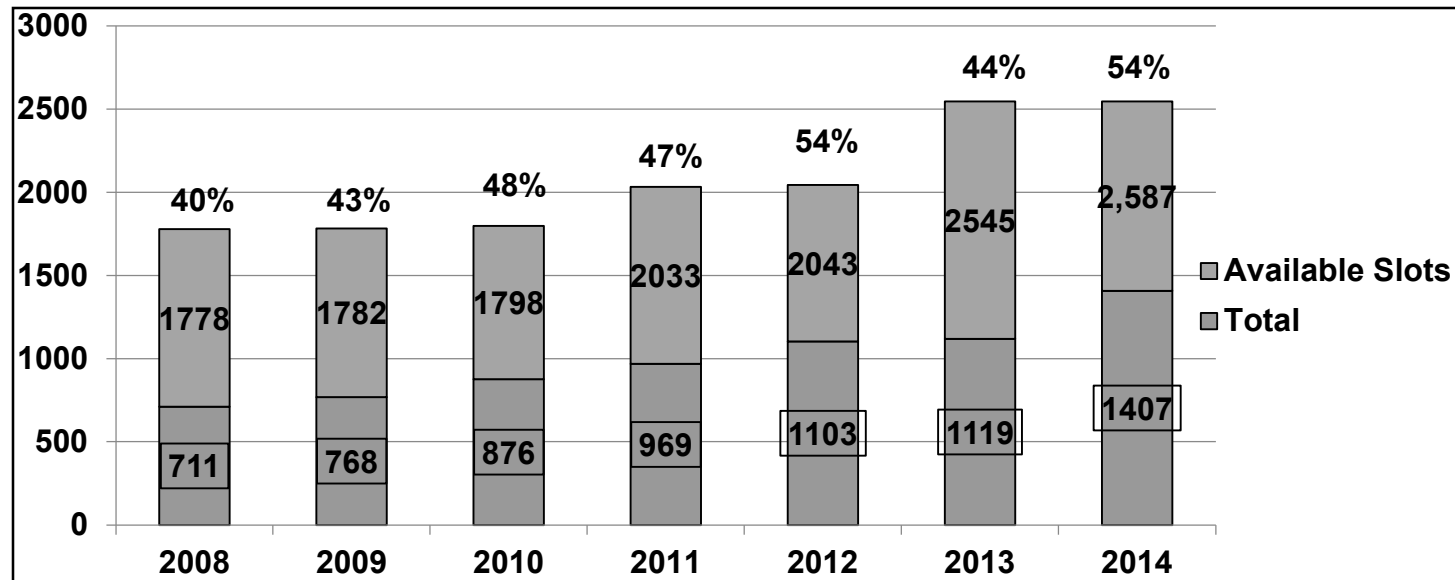
While the County has steadily increased the number of VPI slots used, all available slots/funding are not utilized. This is due to three key challenges faced by localities throughout the state:

- Local Match requirement (50%)
- VPI per pupil amount ($6,000)
- Space

The Virginia Quality Rating and Improvement System (VQRIS)

VQRIS is an initiative to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings that families consider for their children. VQRIS defines standards for early childhood education and creates a framework for accountability, while also establishing a network of support and outreach for programs and practitioners that promotes continuous quality improvement.

Goal **Enable county child care centers/preschools and family child care homes serving children living in poverty to participate in VQRIS**

Currently 40 programs participate in VQRIS (includes child care centers/preschools and family child care homes)

Strategy 120 additional programs will participate in VQRIS by 2018 with priority given to programs participating in the child care subsidy program

FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018
$194,456 30 programs 3.5 positions	$153,291 30 programs 3 positions	$194,456 30 programs 3.5 positions	$153,291 30 programs 3 positions

The Child Care Assistance and Referral Program (CCAR)

CCAR provides financial assistance for child care to families with low to moderate incomes who are working or are in education programs.

Goal **To increase the number of families who can access affordable, quality child care**

Currently CCAR currently serves approximately 4,600 children monthly with a combination of state and local funds. The program has a waiting list of over 3,000 children

Strategy Serve an additional 200 children from birth to age five by 2018. This strategy will be coordinated with early childhood program capital improvement planning and recommendations

FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018
	$800,000 100 children		$800,000 100 children

Recommendation #3

Improve accountability and opportunities for data-driven decision making through a comprehensive early childhood data system.

- Establish a joint county/FCPS work group to develop recommendations for identifying and implementing an integrated early childhood longitudinal data system that connects existing program data and provides the county and FCPS with the ability to analyze and strategically support positive school readiness outcomes for children and families.

- Link the early childhood longitudinal data system to the FCPS data system.
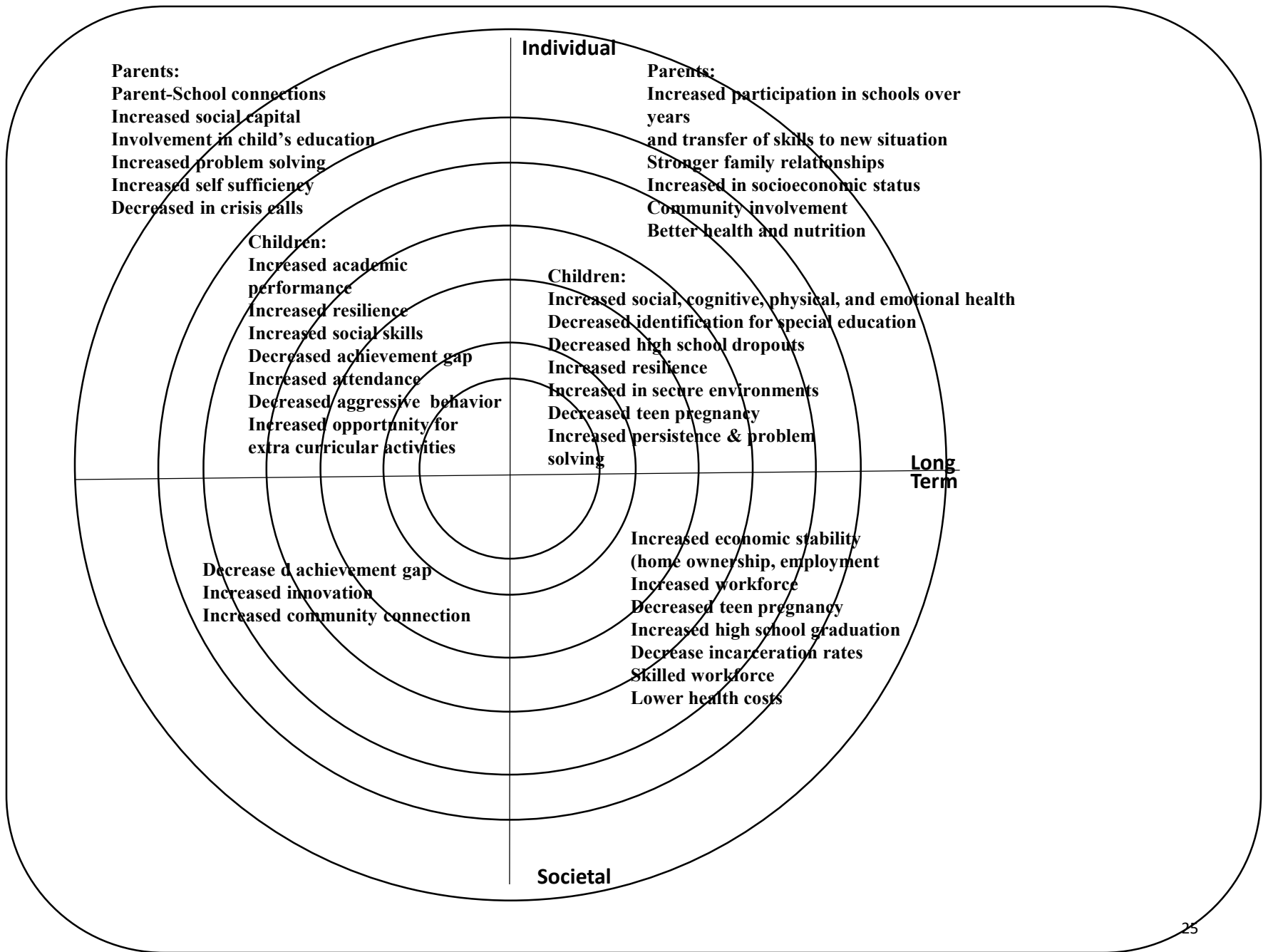
Recommendation #4

Provide place-based coordinated services (early care and education, health, mental health, nutrition, social services, dental) for children and their families in locations near their work or home.

- Establish a joint county/FCPS early childhood education capital improvement task force in coordination with the *Capital Facilities and Debt Management Committee* to strategically plan for future development of space for place-based early childhood programs co-located with coordinated services that support children and their families.
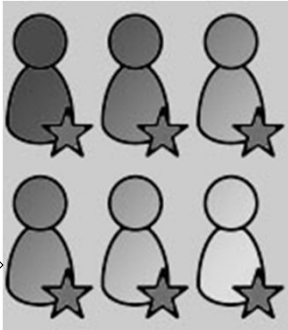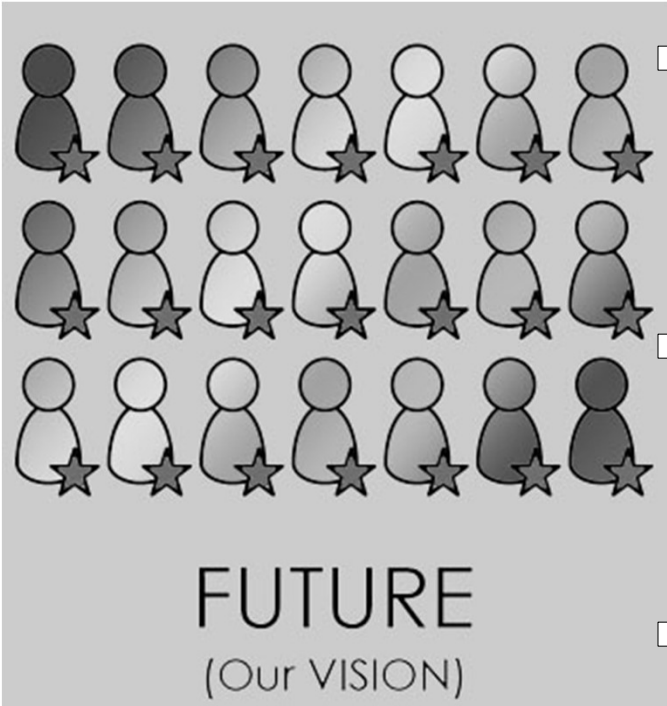
Possible locations for initial consideration: Bailey's and Gum Springs Community Centers, the Islamic Saudi Academy, Graham Road Community Building, Willston, East County Human Services building
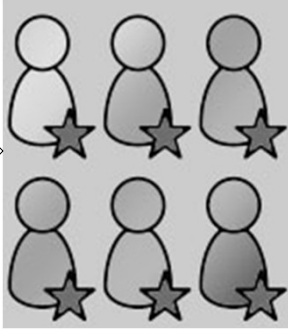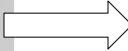
Individual
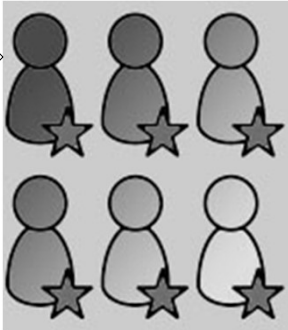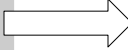
Parents:
Parent-School connections
Increased social capital
Involvement in child's education
Increased problem solving
Increased self sufficiency
Decreased in crisis calls

Children:
Increased academic
performance
Increased resilience
Increased social skills
Decreased achievement gap
Increased attendance
Decreased aggressive behavior
Increased opportunity for
extra curricular activities

Parents:
Increased participation in schools over
years
and transfer of skills to new situation
Stronger family relationships
Increased in socioeconomic status
Community involvement
Better health and nutrition

Children:
Increased social, cognitive, physical, and emotional health
Decreased identification for special education
Decreased high school dropouts
Increased resilience
Increased in secure environments
Decreased teen pregnancy
Increased persistence & problem
solving

Long Term

Decrease d achievement gap
Increased innovation
Increased community connection

Increased economic stability
(home ownership, employment
Increased workforce
Decreased teen pregnancy
Increased high school graduation
Decrease incarceration rates
Skilled workforce
Lower health costs

Societal

25

Funding Options

	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018
Recommendation 1				
NSRT	$102,182		$ 46,069	
Coaching & PD	$281,905		$281,905	
Recommendation 2				
VPI	$558,000	$531,068	$558,000	$408,000
VQRIS	$194,456	$153,291	$194,456	$153,291
CCAR		$800,000		$800,000
Totals:	$1,136,543	$1,484,359	$1,080,430	$1,361,291

Center-Based

Family Child Care

Home

FUTURE
(Our VISION)