

SUCCESS

BY

6™

Coalition

of the

Shenandoah Valley

STRATEGIC PLAN

A bold strategy to prepare our young children to enter school ready to learn.

January 2007



Imagine living in a community...

that draws people together to shape a positive and healthy future for its youngest citizens.

Imagine a community where...

- *all children love books and are ready to learn by the time they enter school.*
- *all parents are equipped with the tools and resources necessary to raise healthy children prepared to succeed in school (including quality childcare options).*
- *employers partner with employees and service providers to ensure economic self-sufficiency for our young families.*
- *all community leaders demonstrate a commitment to young children by mobilizing resources and implementing policies that support child growth and development.*

The Success By 6 Coalition of the Shenandoah Valley imagined just such a place when it was launched in 2001. Over the past 5 years, community and business leaders worked together to identify, understand, and address the needs of our youngest community members. Over \$1.5 million in grant funds were obtained and invested locally in new programs for our community. The efforts of the Coalition resulted in the first annual Early Childhood Summit in January 2006 engaging over 150 persons in setting goals and objectives for our shared vision.

The Coalition is changing the way things work so young children can come to school ready to succeed. The Coalition is galvanizing business, government and non-profit leaders around early learning by raising the awareness of the importance of early childhood development, increasing access to services, advocating for public policies and improving systems – budgets, laws and supports – to improve young children’s lives.

Currently, the Success By 6 Coalition of the Shenandoah Valley has over 150 community and business leaders from Harrisonburg City, Page and Rockingham Counties, and surrounding counties. The Strategic Plan presented in this booklet outlines the strategy for our continued work over the next three to five years. It has been approved by the Coalition and endorsed by numerous key leaders and organizations in the area. We continue our quest to make our community one that is dedicated to...

Ready Services

Ready Schools

Ready Families

+ Ready Communities

Children Ready for School

Quality services for families are essential to a child's future.



Sheriff Danny Presgraves
Page County

We can prevent childhood unpreparedness. Children who succeed in school are less likely to enter the criminal justice system as adolescents.¹ For every \$1 invested in early childhood development, we save \$5 in crime costs down the line.²

Our children face incredible challenges. On a typical day in Virginia, 22 babies are born that weigh less than 5.5 lbs and 18 children are found to be abused or neglected. The outcomes from strong support of early childhood development benefit us all.¹⁴



Jim Krauss
President
Rockingham Memorial Hospital



Christine Michaels
Executive Director
Harrisonburg-Rockingham
Chamber of Commerce

School success begins in infancy. Children who are successful in their early years will be better able to achieve higher education and job training as adults. For the working parents of infants, childcare presents a challenge. There are 21 childcare centers in the Central Shenandoah Valley, but only 43% of them care for children under age two. All of these centers report that their infant spaces are full and they have waiting lists.³

Ready Services

Ready services promote positive child development through a comprehensive network of quality programs.

Goal A: Quality childcare options are available for all families.

1. Provide ongoing professional development for caregivers related to the diverse needs of children including social, emotional, behavioral, physical, and cultural.
2. Use state and national guidelines for quality early childhood programs.
3. Identify family, friend, and neighbor providers and offer quality training opportunities.

Goal B: Affordable childcare options are available for all families.

1. Broaden the choices and settings where subsidized childcare is available.
2. Increase the amount of funding available to assist families with childcare costs.

Goal C: Information on early childhood readiness resources is available to all families.

1. Compile and disseminate information in several languages by phone, web, and print.
2. Develop and launch an awareness campaign about available readiness resources.

Goal D: Childcare workers receive appropriate recognition for their role in early childhood readiness.

1. Compensate childcare providers, with comparable qualifications, equivalent to public school educators.
2. Recognize exceptional childcare providers with annual awards.

Goal E: Children have access to medical, dental, and mental health services.

1. Identify and serve families that qualify for Medicaid and FAMIS.
2. Increase availability of affordable dental care for children.
3. Increase availability of affordable mental health services for children.

Children must start school *ready to learn.*

Children who start school behind rarely catch up with their peers. Twenty-five percent of the Shenandoah Valley children under the age of 4 are considered at risk for early childhood failure. This may lead to failure in school and diminished employment opportunities.⁴



Dr. Randall Thomas
Superintendent
Page County Schools

School readiness is about children's ability to adjust to the demands of school. Children need to be able to interact with others positively, pay attention, remember lessons, follow a teacher's directions, finish tasks, and practice what they have learned.⁵

Learning begins at birth. By the time a child reaches the age of 5, 85% of the brain's growth is complete. However, 95% of public investment in education occurs after age 5.⁹



Dr. Donald Ford
Superintendent
Harrisonburg City Schools



Dr. John Kidd
Superintendent
Rockingham County Schools
January, 1994 - June, 2007

Ready Schools

Ready schools provide quality programs and seamless transitions as children progress through early childhood settings to kindergarten.

Goal A: Public and private settings have comprehensive, coordinated transition plans for children entering kindergarten.

1. Develop and implement a consistent transition model.

Goal B: Public and private settings provide a quality kindergarten experience in a safe environment.

1. Meet federal and state initiatives in all private and public kindergartens.
2. Establish communication between private and public kindergartens on curricular goals and objectives.

Goal C: Private and public settings meet the diverse cultural, economic and special needs of our children.

1. Seek funding sources to provide training on cultural, economic and special needs of our children.
2. Identify available early intervention services.
3. Communicate with local childcare centers, family childcare providers, and private schools concerning services offered by early intervention agencies.

Goal D: Private and public settings meet the physical, social-emotional, cognitive, and linguistic developmental needs of our children.

1. Seek funding sources to provide training on the physical, social-emotional, cognitive, and linguistic developmental needs of our children.
2. Meet federal and state initiatives for childcare centers and family childcare providers.

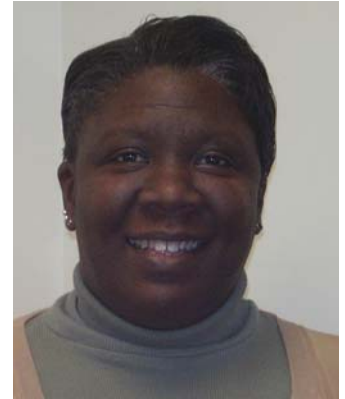
Families need tools *for literacy.*

The business voice is critical in supporting the need for quality early childhood development programs. **Today, 75% of parents of pre-school-age children work outside the home, making the need for accessible and affordable childcare essential.**⁷



Charlotte McNulty
Executive Director
Harrisonburg-Rockingham
Community Services Board

Reading to and with children at young ages maximizes literacy development. **Reading is core to learning and to a child's entire future.**⁶



Angie Rouse
Pastor
Potter's House Church

Early identification of special needs in children under age 6 can reap great benefits. **Enrolling a child in special education at least two years before kindergarten can produce savings of \$30,000 to \$100,000 per child.**⁸



Dr. Linwood Rose
President
James Madison University

Ready Families

Ready families provide a healthy, safe and nurturing environment for young children.

Goal A. Families have opportunities and resources to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

1. Understand the economic self-sufficiency standards for our area.
2. Identify strategies and resources to close the gap between current wages and self-sufficiency.
3. Advocate for implementation of identified strategies and resources to close the wage gap.
4. Provide eligible families knowledge of and access to programs to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Goal B. Families are equipped for the roles and responsibilities of raising children ready for school.

1. Promote effective parenting as a community value.
2. Assess available resources that support effective parenting and identify gaps in resources.
3. Develop additional resources to bridge the identified gaps.

Goal C. Parents have the mental health wellness to care for their children effectively.

1. Assess available mental health resources and identify gaps in resources.
2. Provide access for parents to affordable mental health services to improve their effectiveness as parents.

Investing in children's early care makes economic sense.

Investing money in early childhood development programs is perhaps the best form of economic development. In fact, this investment produces annual returns that can exceed the stock market's and can result in more savings to society than any other social program. **A good preschool can offer a 12% annual return after inflation.**¹⁰



Martha Davis Shifflett
President
SunTrust Bank

Investing in human capital is smart economic development and it leads to a satisfying quality of life. You get the most payoff the earlier you invest. **For every \$1 invested in early childhood development programs there is a \$7-\$8 return.**¹¹



Carol Lee Fisher-Strickler
Page County
Board of Supervisors



Betsy Hay
Executive Director
United Way of Harrisonburg/Rockingham

Professional employees rank the ability to balance work and family as the #1 factor in their decision to remain with a company.¹²
The lack of available childcare can cost an employer \$789 per employee per year.¹³

Ready Communities

Ready communities invest resources and implement policies that demonstrate a commitment to young children.

Goal A. Local policies reflect a focus on early childhood readiness as a key to successful children.

1. Adopt early childhood readiness as a key economic initiative.
2. Adopt early childhood readiness as a key community health indicator.
3. Advocate state and local policies that support the vision of the coalition.

Goal B. The business community partners with other stakeholders to mobilize resources necessary to fund and sustain early childhood readiness efforts.

1. Create and fund a regional early childhood coordinator position.
2. Fund and sustain local initiatives to make early childhood readiness a top priority.



Milt McPike
General Manager/Assistant Vice-President
Cargill



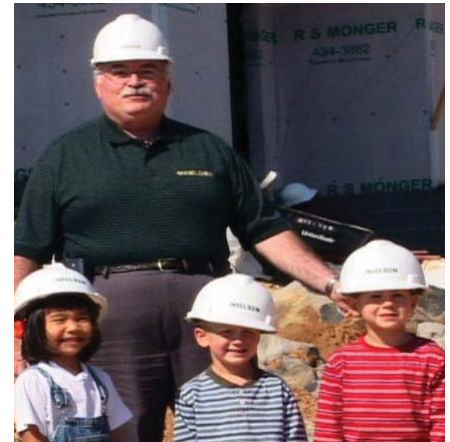
Tracey Jones
General Manager
WHSV TV-3



Angel Rodriguez
Biotechnology Lab Technician
Merck



Bob Drumheller
President, R.B. Drumheller
Owner/Operator McDonald's



John Neff
President
Nielsen Construction

Ready Children

What does research show?

- Children who enter kindergarten ready to learn are more likely to read at grade level by third grade.
- Children who read at grade level by third grade are more likely to graduate from high school.
- Children who graduate from high school are more likely to go on to higher education or enter the job market.

Who are ready children?

- Children who have a variety of quality learning experiences.
- Children who are comfortable with their peers and have positive interactions with them.
- Children who communicate and interact effectively with adults.
- Children who have their basic life needs met prior to coming to school so they can put all their energy into learning.

Quality childcare facilities, *involved* families,
and *committed* businesses and organizations
prepare our children for school and life.

Ready Services

Ready Schools

Ready Families

+ Ready Communities

Children Ready for School

What Can I Do to Help?

- **Join** the Success By 6 Coalition of the Shenandoah Valley by attending quarterly meetings or serving on one of the four Action Teams.
- **Ask** your business or organization to endorse the Success By 6 Strategic Plan and partner with other stakeholders to achieve the common vision for young children in our community.
- **Recognize** childcare as a critical industry that supports a dependable workforce while raising ready children.
- **Know** the availability and affordability of services for young children and their families and how such services affect workplace and economic vitality.
- **Take** a stand for parents by advocating economic self-sufficiency for families and equipping parents for their roles and responsibilities.
- **Visit** www.smartbeginnings.com to learn about current initiatives in the Commonwealth of Virginia to establish early childhood development as a top state priority.
- **Support** state and locally funded programs, such as FAMIS, Healthy Families and the Virginia Preschool Initiative, that help ensure our young children are safe, healthy and nurtured.
- **Personally invest** in early childhood development in our community by volunteering your time, contributing your resources, influencing public policy or promoting Success By 6 goals and objectives.





Vision Statement

A diverse community where every family is supported and has access to quality programs and resources for their young child.

Mission Statement

To help all children enter school healthy and prepared to succeed by

- Expanding and enhancing our community's early childhood readiness efforts
- Establishing effective partnerships between parents, community leaders and all those interested in the lives of young children and
- Ensuring that services are available for all children from birth to age six.

For more information:

Pat Kennedy, M.Ed.
Project Director
Neighborhood Early Learning Project
James Madison University
Harrisonburg, VA 22807
540-568-2557
kennedpa@jmu.edu

Betsy Hay, MSW
Co-chair
United Way of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County
P.O. Box 326
Harrisonburg, VA 22803
540-434-6639
besty.hay@uwhr.org

Cheryl L. Burke, M.A.
Co-chair
3380 Lakewood Drive
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
540-421-1049
cburkeedc@aol.com

The Success By 6 Coalition of the Shenandoah Valley wishes to thank Rockingham Memorial Hospital Foundation for financing the printing of this Strategic Plan document.

A special thanks to the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce.

References

1. Lawrence, D., Jr. (2003, December 15). [Speech given before the National Governors Association Forum on Quality Pre-School in Orlando]. Early Childhood Foundation Institute. Retrieved May 23, 2005 from <http://teachmorelovemore.org/speeches.asp?speechid=12>.
2. The White House (2000). Remarks at the Fight Crime Invest in Kids Child Care Event (4/28/00). Retrieved May 17, 2005, from http://clinton4nara.gov/WH/EOP/First_Lady/html/generalspeeches/Wed_Jul_26_160509_2000.html.
3. Center for Research & Evaluation United Way of Greater Richmond and Petersburg (2005, April). Child Care Workforce Study: Metro Richmond Area. Richmond, VA: Hicks, L. Available at <http://www.yourunitedway.org/NR/rdonlyres/E3767FA6824148120998FFBFB3B1A6156/0/ChildCareWorkforceStudy2005.pdf>.
4. Voices for Virginia's Children (2004, April). No Time to Waste: Indicators of School Readiness 2004 Data Book, p. 45.
5. Lawrence, D., Jr. (2003, December 15). [Speech given before the National Governors Association Forum on Quality Pre-School in Orlando]. Early Childhood Foundation Institute. Retrieved May 23, 2005 from <http://teachmorelove.org/speeches.asp?speechid=12>.
6. Youth Matters (2005, February). Getting to Scale Richmond Report (Jan.-Dec. 2004, Chart 1). Richmond, VA: Newlin, B.
7. National Center for Education Statistics (2001). National Household Education Survey of 1999 Data Files.
8. Glascoe, F.P. (2000, August). Early detection of developmental and behavioral problems. Pediatrics in Review, 21(8) Retrieved from Voices for Virginia's Children (2004, April). No Time to Waste: Indicators of School Readiness 2004 Data Book.
9. EVERYBODY READY. (n.d.) Retrieved May 23, 2005 from www.everybodyready.com.
10. Beckstrom, Maja (2003, October 24). 'Invest in kids' taken literally. Saint Paul Pioneer Press. Quoting Art Rolnick.
11. Beckstrom, Maja (2003, October 24). 'Invest in kids' taken literally. Saint Paul Pioneer Press. Quoting Art Rolnick.
12. Shellenback, Karen (2004, December). Child Care and Parent Productivity: Making the Business Case (Linking Economic Development & Child Care Research Project). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, Department of City and Regional Planning. Retrieved May 23, 2005 from <http://government.cce.cornell.edu/doc/pdf/childcareparentproductivity.pdf>.
13. Shellenback, Karen (2004, December). Child Care & Parent Productivity: Making the Business Case (Linking Economic Development & Child Care Research Project). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, Department of City and Regional Planning. Retrieved May 23, 2005 from <http://government.cce.cornell.edu/doc/pdf/childcareparentproductivity.pdf>.
14. Capital One (2005). The Economics of Investing in Children.