

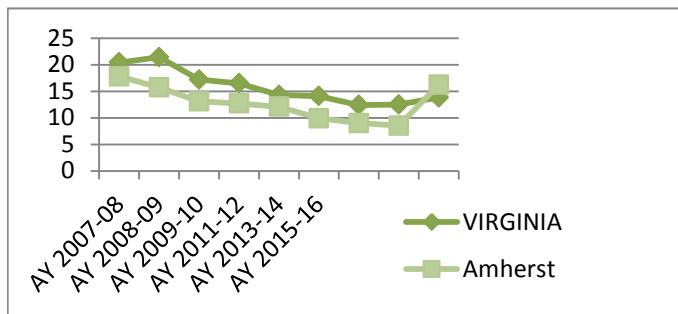


2017 Early Childhood Profile

Kindergarten Readiness

Smart Beginnings Central Virginia is part of a statewide network of coalitions that focus on early childhood development and education, with the vision that every child will enter school ready to learn. Kindergarten Readiness, in addition to referring to the skills children have mastered, describes the system of care that children experience prior to beginning kindergarten. This may include the family, community, and any early care and education settings a child attended prior to formal schooling. In Virginia, most schools assess the skills of Kindergarten students using PALS-K, a measure of children’s knowledge of literacy fundamentals, phonological awareness, alphabet recognition, concept of word and knowledge of letter sounds. PALS-K helps to identify children who are relatively behind in their acquisition of these fundamental skills.

Kindergarteners Whose PALS-K Scores were Below Readiness Levels



In the county, (2017-18) 18% of children scored below readiness levels. The state percentage was 16%.

	VIRGINIA	AMHERST	APPOMATTOX	BEDFORD	CAMPBELL	LYNCHBURG
AY 2002-03	20.4	17.8	10.6	18.1	18.8	21.7
AY 2007-08	16.5	12.7	10.1	12.8	13.2	14.9
AY 2012-13	13.0	12.4	n/a	11.7	12.8	14.0
AY 2013-14	12.5	8.5	6.0	12.1	4.7	12.8
AY 2014-15	12.9	11.8	n/a	11.7	8.3	12.3
AY 2015-16	13.8	16.2	10.3	12.8	5.6	14.5
AY 2016-17	14.6	17.0	13.0	15.0	8.0	16.0
AY 2017-18	16.0	18.0	5.0	16.0	9.0	17.0

Highlights

Total Population (2016 estimate, U.S. Census)	32,354
Population under 5 years old (2016 estimate, U.S. Census)	1,651
% of children Living in Poverty (below 100%; ages 0-17) 2016	20.9%
Percent of children in Poverty Living in Deep Poverty (2011-15)	50.6%
Percent of children eligible for free/reduced price lunch AY 16-17	50.3%
% of children identified as food insecure (under age 18)	15.98%
SNAP Participation Among Individuals FY2016	42.6%
Unemployment Rate 2016	4.3%
Number of children receiving childcare subsidies 2017	134
Four-year olds Served by Virginia Preschool Initiative FY 2015 (funded)	66
On-Time 4 year Graduation Rate 2017	95.7
Dropout Rate 2017	2.0
Percent of Students Retained K-3 (AY16-17)	2.3%

Third Grade Assessments

Below are the percentages of 3rd grade students who demonstrated proficiency on SOL tests for the school year 2016-2017.

Third Grade	State	County
English: Reading	75	69
Mathematics	77	64

Fourth Grade Assessments

Below are the percentages of 4th grade students who demonstrated proficiency on SOL tests for the school year 2016-2017.

Fourth Grade	State	County
English: Reading	77	80
Mathematics	83	77

Eighth Grade Assessments

Below are the percentages of 8th grade students who demonstrated proficiency on SOL tests for the school year 2016-2017.

Eighth Grade	State	County
English: Reading	75	76
English: Writing	71	74
Mathematics	73	80
Science	79	76

What is Quality Child Care?

Children who attend high quality preschool / childcare programs are better prepared when they enter kindergarten, are less likely to repeat a grade, and more likely to graduate.

Things to Consider When Choosing Care

- Health and Safety
- Education and Training of Staff
- Classroom Structure
- Interactions between adults and children
- Learning Environment & Instruction
- Commitment to Quality (VQ program)
- Communication with Families

<http://www.smartbeginningscv.org>

Kindergarten Readiness Leads to Success

In order to succeed in kindergarten, and fully benefit from the kindergarten experience, children need to arrive at school with many skills in place that involve:

- Physical well-being and motor development
- Social and Emotional development
- Language development
- Cognition and general knowledge

An effective Early Childhood Education System includes: families that support their children’s development; schools that do everything necessary to assure the success of every child; and communities that invest time and resources in the well-being of children.

Early Care and Education Programs

Quality Rating and Improvement System Virginia Quality

Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) exist in most states across the country and are a proven strategy to systematically improve the quality of childcare and early learning programs.

Virginia Quality is the state's voluntary QRIS.

Preschools and Child Care programs can voluntarily participate in Virginia Quality and engage in a process of continuous quality improvement. VQ programs are evaluated and receive a rating (between 1-5 levels). The higher level rating indicates that a program has met requirements related to curriculum, staff training, compliance with local governing authority and other quality indicators.

Professional Development opportunities are available that provide all of the training, learning and coaching necessary to deliver high-quality services.

Amherst County Programs Participating in Virginia Quality

Amelon Early Learning Center

Anointed Minds Family Day Home

The Master's Touch Family Day Home

Lyn-CAG Head Start at Elon, Madison Heights and Northern Amherst

Early Care and Education Workforce Support

Smart Beginnings supports the early care and education workforce with training, program incentives and individualized technical assistance.

Professional Development Educational programs are available to all early childhood care and education providers. A list of upcoming programs can be found at: www.smartbeginningscv.org.

Smart Beginnings is a locally driven enterprise that creates community commitment to school readiness by bringing public and private leaders together to collaborate on priorities for their youngest citizens. Membership is free and open to anyone interested in improving services to children and helping every child to succeed in school, and in life.

County Health, School and Family Facts

- The U.S. Census Bureau estimates 1,651 children under the age of five live in Amherst County, 5.1% of the total population.
- Chronic Absenteeism (students missing 10% or more of days enrolled) was 21.2% in 2015-16, more than twice the state rate of 10.4%.
- The cost of a child repeating a grade is estimated at \$10,793
- On-time high school graduation rates were at 91% in 2016, about the same as the state rate of 91.3%.
- 34.6% of children in Amherst live with only one parent (2011-2015); in Virginia, 31.3% of children live in single parent households.
- 14% of students in 2015 received special education services (ages 0-22).
- Third Grade SOL Reading Scores (percent passing) have dropped to 69% (2016-17) from 73% the previous two years.
- The percentage of children (under age 18) identified as *food insecure* was 15.9% in 2015, higher than the 14% state percentage.
- The percentage of county kindergarten students scoring above benchmark dropped for the third consecutive year and remain lower in comparison to the state.
- The percentage of low-income children without health insurance has dropped to 6.4%, the lowest in more than ten years.

Select Indicators:

	State	County
1st Trimester Prenatal Care 2015	86.6	84.8
Infant Mortality Rate 2015	5.9	0.0
Births to Mothers with Less than 12th Grade Education 2015	9.6	5.3
Non-marital Births (women ages 15-44) 2015	34.5	45.5
Low Birth weight Babies 2015	7.9%	8.4%
Babies born by Medicaid as Payment Source 2015	30.5%	39.3
% of Children Under Age 19 without Health Insurance 2015	5.0	5.9%
Low-income Children Under 19 without Health Insurance 2015	7.8%	6.4%
Rate of Child Abuse & Neglect (Founded Number Per 1,000 Children) 2016	2.5	1.8
Teen Pregnancy Rate Per 1,000 15-17 year olds, 2015	9.6	1.7