



Foundation First Family Engagement Newsletter

August 2025

As we turn the page to August, we find ourselves soaking in the last moments of summer while beginning to prepare for the exciting transition back to school. Whether your child is entering a program for the first time or moving up to a new classroom, this season is full of new opportunities, growth, and milestones.

This time of year is a perfect opportunity for families to reconnect with routines, set goals, and partner with educators to support your child's learning journey. In this issue, you'll find helpful tips to ease back-to-school transitions, resources, and ways to stay involved in your child's early learning experience.

Family engagement is at the heart of everything we do—because when families and caregivers are actively involved, children thrive. We're excited to walk alongside you as we wrap up the summer and gear up for a strong start to the school year!

“Children learn as they play. Most importantly, in play, children learn how to learn.” – O. Fred Donaldson

Let's keep learning, growing, and playing—together.

Consider becoming a **Family Engagement** council member!

Sign Up!



Offer input in the early childhood decisions that **matter most** to you!.

Meet your Family & Engagement Staff!



Jennifer Douglas
LFC Family & Engagement Specialist
jennifer@foundationfirstva.org



Pua Yule
GPW Family & Engagement Specialist
pua@foundationfirstva.org



Ashley Terry
RAP Family & Engagement Specialist
ashley@foundationfirstva.org

The Family Council is a group under Foundation First

Who is Foundation First?

- Foundation First is led by a dedicated, passionate team with extensive early childhood education knowledge and expertise. The Foundation First team is supported by an active volunteer Board comprised of community leaders, local business leaders, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, and local and state governments. We bring together families, businesses, community organizations and state and local agencies to strengthen existing early childhood education programs and implement new approaches where needed.

We serve the following areas:

- Fredericksburg, Manassas and Manassas Park and the counties of Loudoun, Fauquier, Culpeper, Caroline, King George, Prince William, Spotsylvania and Stafford.

Events this Month

Rappahannock Area



Greater Prince William Area



Loudoun, Fauquier, Culpeper Area



Join Leesburg Animal Park for a fun, foam-filled party with water slides! Starring Foam Froggy with a bubble wand station and an inflatable water slide, you don't want to miss out on Saturday, August 16th, 12-2 PM





Facebook Groups

Stay connected, stay informed, and stay involved in all the exciting opportunities for families in our region! Join other families to share fun activities, engage in meaningful conversations, discover helpful resources, and highlight what's happening in your own neighborhood. One of the best ways to stay in the loop is by joining our Facebook groups designed just for families like yours!

LFC: Connecting Loudoun, Fauquier and Culpeper Families

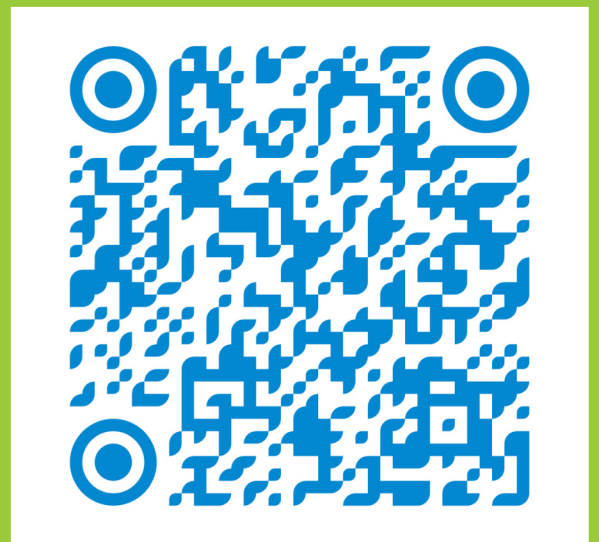
GPW: Connecting Greater Prince William, Manassas Park and City of Manassas Families

RAP: Connecting Stafford, City of Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, King George and Caroline Families

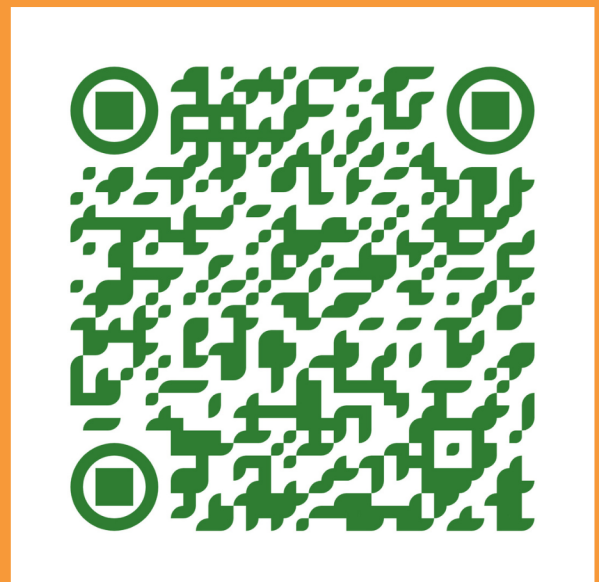
LFC:



GPW:



RAP:



Family Resources



Regional Resources

Looking for family resources across the region and in your local community? Check out Foundation First's Family Resources LinkTree! It's regularly updated, so be sure to visit often to discover new ways we can support your family.

Infant and Toddler Connection of VA

The Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia (ITCVA) is Virginia's early intervention system for infants and toddlers (age 0-36 months) with disabilities and their families.



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Virginia

211 Virginia is a free, confidential service available 24/7, 365 days a year, connecting people with information on available housing, food, healthcare, and other community resources throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.



Back to School Tips

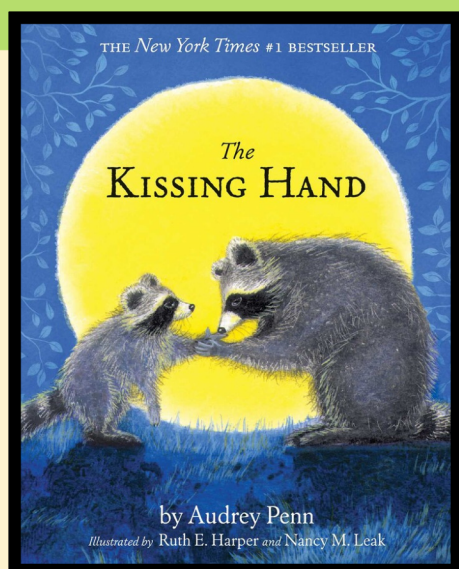
Begin conversations about school a couple of weeks before it starts. Talk about what they'll do, who they might see, and how fun learning can be.

Gradually return to regular sleep and meal schedules. A consistent bedtime and morning routine help children feel safe and prepared for their day.

A fun handshake, hug routine, or short goodbye phrase can give your child something consistent and comforting during drop-off.

Look for age-appropriate books that highlight starting school, making friends, or saying goodbye to caregivers.

Some great options include "The Kissing Hand" by Audrey Penn or "Llama Llama Misses Mama" by Anna Dewdney.



Encourage your child to practice skills they'll use at school—washing hands, putting on shoes, opening lunch containers, or using the bathroom independently.



VQB5 for Families

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is a state agency that oversees birth-to-five early childhood programs including child care centers, pre-K or preschool in public schools, family day homes, and Head Start. This includes measuring the quality of programs.

What is VQB5?

In response to state law, Virginia has developed VQB5 to measure and improve the quality of infant, toddler, and preschool classrooms. VQB5 is used in child care centers, family day homes, public school preschools, and Head Start sites. VQB5 helps families learn about different birth-to-five programs so they can choose a program that best meets their needs.

What does this mean if my child is enrolled in a VQB5 site?

VQB5 sites are focused on providing quality learning experiences for your child. This means your child's teacher is receiving feedback and support multiple times a year. Your site is also likely using a quality curriculum.

Why do VQB5 sites need to give child enrollment information?

State law requires the VDOE to improve learning experiences for young children so that more children can enter school ready. This information helps the VDOE better understand how all these different early learning experiences support kindergarten readiness.

How will the privacy of my child's information be protected?

Federal and state laws protect how child information is used. VDOE will keep child information private and secure. VDOE will never share information in a way that would identify any child or any small group of children.

Have questions?

Email vqb5@doe.virginia.gov

OR find more information on the VQB5 website!



Why measure Quality?

Our goal is that all Virginia children have learning experiences that prepare them for kindergarten. Measuring the quality of these learning experiences helps strengthen programs and provide important information to families.

How does VQB5 work?

There are two parts of VQB5.

1. Trained observers look at all classrooms using a nationally-regarded early childhood observation tool called **CLASS**.
 - This observation lasts 60-80 minutes. The trained observer focuses on the interactions between teachers and children. This is not a child-level observation.
 - Teachers receive feedback on what they are doing well and support to improve.
2. VQB5 also looks at whether classrooms are using a quality curriculum that has been approved by the state. Curriculum is always optional, and programs have lots of choices.

Who takes part in VQB5?

Birth-to-five early childhood programs who receive government funding are required to take part in VQB5. Programs that do not receive any government funding can choose to take part.

What are VQB5 Sites required to do?

VQB5 sites are required to do the following each year:

1. Have CLASS observations in every infant, toddler, and preschool classroom in the fall and spring.
2. Report on their use of approved early childhood curriculum.
3. Provide important information about their teachers and classrooms, including child enrollment information to VDOE each fall.