

Foundation First Family Engagement Newsletter



September 2025

As the school year begins and we say goodbye to the long summer days, we welcome the excitement and routines that come with fall. For many of our little ones, this season marks an important milestone—whether starting preschool, stepping into kindergarten, or simply settling into new family routines that support learning at home.

At Foundation First, we are committed to supporting families and educators across our region in building strong foundations for our youngest learners, birth through age five. This year, we are especially excited to partner directly with educators through the Virginia Quality Birth to Five (VQB5) system, using the CLASS tool and feedback to strengthen high-quality interactions that make a lasting difference in children's lives.

Early childhood education is at the heart of a thriving community, and together—with families, educators, and community partners—we are shaping brighter futures. We look forward to working alongside you this fall to celebrate every small step of progress and to nurture the curiosity, resilience, and joy of learning in all of our children.

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!



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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



September 7, 2025 12:00-3:00
350 Lansdowne Rd., FXBG, VA
22408



Starting 9/11/2025



Starting 9/1/2025
9:15-4:00

Greater Prince William Area

Manassas Great Strides Walk

Get ready to lace up and join us for our annual 5K walk to cure cystic fibrosis (CF).

With each step, every Great Strides participant makes a difference for people living CF. The walk starts and finishes at the Harris Pavilion and goes through Historic Downtown Manassas.

Saturday, Sept. 6th 9:00 am - 1:00 pm
Harris Pavilion 9201 Center St, Manassas 20110



Sean Connaughton Plaza
1 County Complex Court
Woodbridge, VA 22192

Loudoun, Fauquier, Culpeper Area





LFC:



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

GPW:

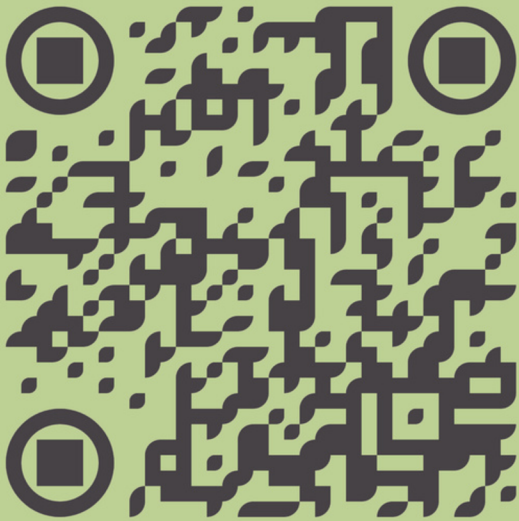


RAP:

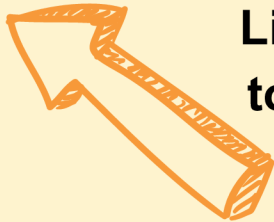


Family Resources

Regional Resources



SCAN HERE



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.



Healthy Families

Healthy Families provides a home visiting program in Fauquier, Rappahannock, Madison and Orange counties designed to assist families and their children from birth to age 5. All Healthy Families services are free and voluntary with the primary purpose of providing guidance and support by trained professionals to get new families off to the best start possible. Healthy Families is available to anyone who is expecting a child or has a newborn and is interested in receiving information on parenting and community resources.

Healthy Families Rappahannock Area is a home-visiting service that supports new parents by

- Building positive parent-child relationships
- Understanding Your Child's development
- Linking to available Resources
- Being your #1 Cheerleader

In 1994 Families First – Healthy Families Culpeper, a non-profit program, got started by providing three services Welcome Home Baby, Healthy Steps, and Parenting Education Program to families in Culpeper for free.

NVFS Healthy Families provides the tools, guidance, and support that families need to build a healthy, successful life. The program provides free services in Arlington County, Fairfax County, Loudoun County, the Greater Prince William Area, and the City of Alexandria to promote healthy child development and to prevent child abuse and neglect for families with children pre-birth to age 3 or 4 (depending on the jurisdiction.) Healthy Families' four goals are to promote positive, nurturing, responsive parenting; improve child health and development; promote school readiness; and prevent child abuse and neglect.

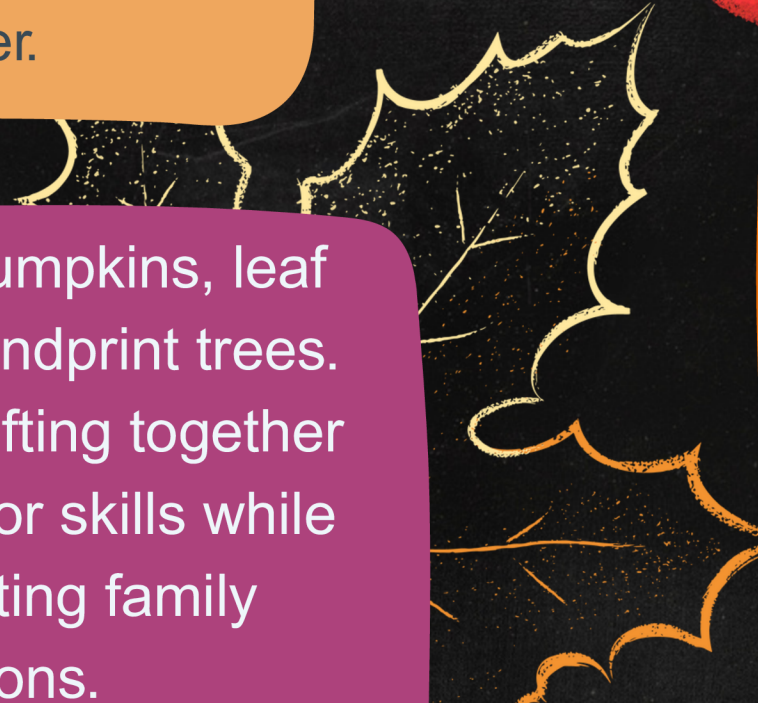
Fun September Activities for Preschoolers



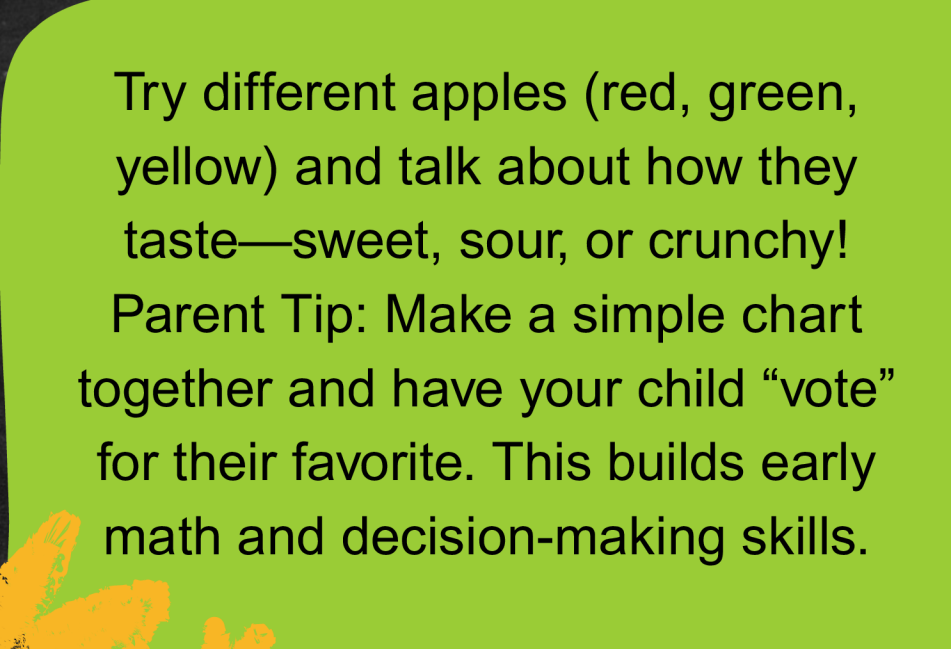
September is a wonderful time to enjoy the changing season, build new routines, and make everyday moments fun and meaningful. Here are 10 simple activities you can do with your preschooler this month—each supporting early learning while making special memories together!



Introduce fun songs for routines like cleaning up or getting ready in the morning.
Parent Tip: Music helps children transition more easily and makes daily routines smoother.



Make paper pumpkins, leaf garlands, or handprint trees.
Parent Tip: Crafting together builds fine motor skills while creating lasting family traditions.



Try different apples (red, green, yellow) and talk about how they taste—sweet, sour, or crunchy!
Parent Tip: Make a simple chart together and have your child “vote” for their favorite. This builds early math and decision-making skills.



Let your child help plant mums or herbs in a small pot.
Parent Tip: Caring for plants teaches responsibility and patience while connecting children with nature.



Mark the new school year with a simple family celebration—have a special dinner, bake muffins, or share one thing everyone is excited for.

Parent Tip: Celebrating milestones gives children a sense of belonging and helps them look forward to new routines.

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.