



READY TOGETHER

Supplement to Mixed Delivery Program Guidelines – FY26

Version 2 - 8.28.2025



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Introduction

Since its inception, VECF's Mixed Delivery program has served as Virginia's innovation hub for ECCE services – addressing barriers to true access to ECCE that meets families' needs and preferences. In FY26, building on the successful Mixed Delivery model, Virginia began collaborating with Ready Region Southwest to pilot Ready Together, an innovative public-private cost sharing model. Ready Together allows Virginia to test a new access and financing strategy within Mixed Delivery that can stretch state dollars further to serve more families and children and support the participating employers' workforce.

Ready Together is a pilot program within Mixed Delivery that mirrors the Mixed Delivery model with a key modification to the per-slot tuition funding structure. While Mixed Delivery tuition is funded with state general funds and a modest family copayment, Ready Together slot tuition is funded by a combination of state, employer, and employee contributions. Additional payors may also contribute. In FY26, some of Ready Region Southwest's Mixed Delivery slots have been converted into Ready Together slots in order to conduct this pilot.

Additions/Changes to Mixed Delivery Program Guidelines for Ready Together

Most Mixed Delivery program guidelines and requirements also apply to Ready Together. This **Ready Together Supplement to the Mixed Delivery Program Guidelines – FY26** provides information on any differences or additions in guidelines and requirements between the two programs and provides additional information on Ready Together.

Unless otherwise stated below, Ready Regions and Ready Together ECCE sites must follow all Mixed Delivery Program Guidelines.

Ready Together Cost Sharing

The Ready Together pilot is based on a multi-payor model including the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Ready Together employer, and the employee (parent of participating child). In some cases, additional payors may also contribute. These parties share the cost of quality tuition rate as indicated below. Cost of quality tuition rates are based on the slot age type and Ready Region (see **Mixed Delivery Program Guidelines – FY26, page 38**).

Employers and Additional Payors:

- ◆ Employer contributions are based on the annual employer share of \$5,000 per slot.
- ◆ Each month, beginning the month the slot is first occupied by an enrolled child, the Ready Together employer pays \$416.67 (1/12th of the annual employer share for each slot). Additional payors (e.g. non-profits, foundations, donors) may be engaged to pay a portion of the employer share.

Employees:

- ◆ Employee contributions (copayments) are based on employee income and will mirror Mixed

Delivery per-child family copayment rates.

- ◆ Employees pay their contribution directly to the Mixed Delivery ECCE site.

State:

- ◆ State contributions are based on the portion of the per slot tuition rate that remains after parent and employer contributions are factored in.
- ◆ The Virginia Department of Education calculates the state portion and issues funds on a monthly basis to VECF for disbursement to the Ready Region.
- ◆ VECF accounts for any proration for partial-month enrollment and issues funds on a monthly basis to the Ready Region for disbursement to the Ready Together ECCE site(s).

Core Mixed Delivery Organization Descriptions

(Mixed Delivery Program Guidelines – FY26, page 2)

Ready Together Employer – Business working with participating employees and the Ready Region to participate in the Ready Together pilot.

Core Mixed Delivery Organization Roles

(Mixed Delivery Program Guidelines – FY26, pages 2-4)

VECF will:

- ◆ Oversee the design and development of the Ready Together model and pilot program.
- ◆ Provide the **Mixed Delivery Program Guidelines – FY26** and this document.
- ◆ Provide technical assistance and implementation guidance to the Ready Region.

The Ready Region Lead Agency will:

- ◆ Identify and contract with at least two (2) employers capable of and committed to participating in Ready Together.
- ◆ In collaboration with employers: identify, recruit, and contract with at least two (2) eligible and capable ECCE sites run by at least two (2) different owners/operators to provide Ready Together ECCE slots for children of the employers' employees.
- ◆ Collaborate with employers in the development of the employers' processes that support Ready Together implementation, including timely identification of interested and eligible employees and enrollment of their children.
- ◆ **“Work with the Ready Together employer to develop and conduct a child and family eligibility process and maintain evidence of eligibility verification.”**
- ◆ Participate in and support employers in participating in ongoing reporting and data collection activities as required or requested by VECF.

Ready Together Employers will:

- ◆ Collaborate with their Ready Region to develop policies and procedures for identifying eligible employees and determining who will participate in Ready Together.
- ◆ Communicate to eligible employees:
 - » the potential opportunity to participate in Ready Together;
 - » participant determination policies and procedures as developed by the employer in collaboration with the Ready Region;
 - » the program's eligibility requirements as outlined in this document and the **Mixed Delivery Program Guidelines – FY26, page 20**; and
 - » employee payment responsibilities as outlined in the **Ready Together Family Letter - FY26 (included)**
- ◆ Identify employees eligible for Ready Together who have an interest in participating.
- ◆ Collaborate with their Ready Region to enroll children of participating eligible employees in appropriate Ready Together slots at participating ECCE sites.
- ◆ Maintain a waitlist of eligible employees and share this waitlist with the Ready Region.
- ◆ Pay the employer portion of Ready Together tuition funding per their Memorandum of Understanding with the Ready Region
- ◆ At least quarterly, and upon request, provide the Ready Region with documentation of these payments.
- ◆ Provide requested data to the Ready Region including employer and employee data for the purposes of successful Ready Together implementation and/or evaluation of the pilot.
 - » Employer data may include, but is not limited to, the total number of employees, the number of employees eligible for Ready Together, general recruitment and retention data, and Ready Together-specific recruitment and retention data.
 - » Employee data may include, but is not limited to, employee role, title, work start date, employee feedback, etc.
 - » Data may be gathered through surveys, interviews, applications, screening forms, attestation forms, or other methods.

Additional Payors will:

- ◆ Pay the agreed-upon portion of the employer contribution per the Memorandum of Understanding between VECF, the Ready Region Lead Agency, the Ready Together Employer, and any Additional Payor/s.
- ◆ Provide the Ready Region with documentation of these payments, per the Memorandum of Understanding referenced above, and upon request.

Child Eligibility Criteria

(Mixed Delivery Program Guidelines – FY26, page 20)

- ◆ Children of parent(s) employed by the Ready Together employer whose household income is up

to 350% or meet at least one child eligibility criteria for Mixed Delivery are eligible for Ready Together.

Family Eligibility: Parental Activity Requirements

(Mixed Delivery Program Guidelines – FY26, page 22)

- ◆ At least one parent must be employed by a Ready Together employer.
- ◆ All available parents in the household must be engaging in at least one of the following activities: employment; education or training program; job search (with restrictions); exception for good cause.

Child and Family Eligibility Determination

(Mixed Delivery Program Guidelines – FY26, page 23)

- ◆ The Ready Together employer must identify eligible employees in collaboration with the Ready Region. The Ready Region must collaborate with ECCE site(s) to assign eligible employees' children to Ready Together slots.

Per-Child Family Copayments

(Mixed Delivery Program Guidelines – FY26, pages 39-40)

Beginning on September 1, 2025, Ready Together per-child family copayments will be the same as Mixed Delivery copayments.

Mixed Delivery Wraparound

(Mixed Delivery Program Guidelines – FY26, page 36)

- ◆ Ready Together **does not** have a wraparound option. Children participating in Ready Together may not be authorized for CCSP, or receive Early Head Start, Head Start, or VPI funding to cover any portion of the costs to cover a full-day, year-round program, as defined on in the [Minimum Hours section of Mixed Delivery Program Guidelines – FY26, page 10](#).



Ready Together Family Letter – FY26



Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to Ready Together! Here is some information we want you to know about the program. For other questions about Ready Together, please talk to your childcare provider.

What is Ready Together?

Ready Together is part of Virginia's Mixed Delivery program, and provides full-day, year-round childcare and preschool to eligible children. With Ready Together, more young children have high-quality care and education. This sets them up for success in school and life! Children enrolled in child care through Ready Together have parent(s) who work for a participating employer. Your employer pays some of your child's childcare tuition. If you stop working for your employer, Ready Together will no longer be able to pay for your child's childcare tuition.

Designed to be High-quality

- ◆ Approved curriculum in all Ready Together classrooms
- ◆ Language, math, and social-emotional assessments to inform teaching in Ready Together preschool classrooms
- ◆ Classroom quality is measured in Ready Together classrooms; teachers receive support based on classroom quality observations.

Designed to Support Families

- ◆ For families who need and/or prefer full-day, year-round childcare or preschool
- ◆ Access to at least 2,400 hours of care each year (usually as approximately 240 10-hr days)
- ◆ Provided at a low cost to families with a copayment based on family income
 - » If your family's income goes down, your copayment may go down too (talk to your childcare provider)
- ◆ Other than your copayment, you can't be charged tuition, fees for extended care (hours that your provider is open to children), enrollment/registration fees; or fees for things offered to other children for free
 - » Your childcare provider may choose to charge for optional activities or supplies, and late pick-up fees

(please see back)

Family Responsibilities

Copayments

- ◆ Pay your copayments to your childcare provider
 - » Your childcare provider will collect information about your income to find out your copayment.
 - » Your copayment depends on your family income.
 - » Your childcare provider will help you find out your copayment.
 - » Ask your childcare provider if they have payment rules (e.g., timing, what happens if you don't pay)
 - » Here are the possible copayments, based on family income:

FPL % Threshold	0	0 - 100%	101 - 125%	126 - 150%	151 - 175%	176 - 200%	201 - 250%	251 - 300%	301 - 350%	351+%
Monthly Copay Amount	\$0	\$5	\$85	\$110	\$130	\$155	\$200	\$275	\$325	\$375

Attendance

- ◆ Ready Together is for families that want and need full-time year-round child care.
- ◆ Regular attendance helps your child receive the most benefit from the high-quality experiences offered by your childcare provider.
- ◆ Because of this, please make sure your child attends regularly and contact your childcare provider about absences.
- ◆ Here is the Ready Together attendance policy:

If a child in Ready Together is absent for 50% or more of the school days in any two (2) consecutive months, they will be disenrolled from Ready Together at the end of the second month.

- ◆ If your child is absent for 50% or more school days in one month, your childcare provider will contact you to remind you about this policy. They may also contact you about frequent absences before this time.
- ◆ Ask your childcare provider if they have any additional site attendance guidelines that families need to follow.

Thank you for your participation and support!