

VIRGINIA  
INFANT & TODDLER SPECIALIST  
NETWORK

"Achieving Excellence in Early Care"  
[www.va-itsnetwork.org](http://www.va-itsnetwork.org)

**Congratulations!**



## VA ITSN Recognizes Infant and Toddler Providers

Each year the VA ITSN recognizes child care providers across Virginia who have taken great efforts to improve the quality of infant and toddler care. Virginia Infant and Toddler Specialists and Mental Health Consultants nominate one child care center and one family day home from each of their regions. A pool of these Level 1 nominations is submitted to the VA ITSN Leadership Council for review and they select those to be recognized. The programs are gifted with resources and materials to support their efforts.

Below are the names of the child care centers and family day homes selected for the 2019-2020 program year and pictures with a few of the materials chosen by the providers.

**Central:** John Ortiz & Wee Care Christian Learning Center

**Eastern:** Shenia Hayes & Children's Learning Paradise

**North Central:** Ebony Smith & Willow Creek Academy

**Northern:** Vijaya Shah & Capital Kids

**Peninsula:** Zatora Lee & Sunshine Faces

**Piedmont Roanoke:** Frederica Payne & Toadally Kidz

**Piedmont Southside:** Sherry Gammon & Sunshine Smiles Child Learning Center

**Valley:** Tracey Morris & Braddock Street United Methodist Church

**Western:** Caroline Byrd & Steps of Faith

**Congratulations to each of these programs and thank you for continuing to promote excellence in care!**



If you are interested in participating in Level 1 services, click below to fill out our online request!

Click here to request on-site services online now!





## Resource Spotlight:

### Caring for Infants and Toddlers While Wearing Face Coverings

[Click here](#) for tips on how to build warm, positive relationships with infants and toddlers while wearing a face-covering to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This resource is also available by visiting the [Q-CCIT webpage](#).

### Office of Child Care (OCC) Mental Health and Wellness Resources

OCC recently created the [OCC Mental Health and Wellness Resources page](#) to make important mental health resources easy to find for families, children, and child care workforce members.

### OCC COVID-19 Resources

Additional resources are also available from OCC's Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System (ECTTAS) [COVID-19 Resources pages](#).

## Upcoming PD Opportunities

[Visit us](#) to see a new **Inclusion** section with resources and webinars. Select Inclusion Resources & Webinars under the Inclusion tab which is under the Early Care Providers tab.

There are several [webinars](#) that share tips and tools to support children with disabilities and implement high-quality inclusive services. Resources for specific disabilities are also included.



## Did you know...?



## Virginia has a Breastfeeding Friendly Early Care Designation?

Breastfeeding offers babies the very best nutritional start. Unfortunately, many families stop breastfeeding when parents return to work. Child care providers who follow “Breastfeeding Friendly Early Care” (BFF EC) standards can be a critical support for families who want to continue with this important nutrition decision.



Virginia child care providers who follow these standards are eligible to be recognized statewide with a *Breastfeeding Friendly Early Care* designation! In addition to ensuring that babies in care get this ideal nutritional start, *BFF EC*-recognized programs receive a framed certificate and window cling that tells families looking for breastfeeding support that your program is ready!

The VA ITSN is proud to have supported the following excellent programs in achieving the BFF EC recognition in 2020:

- **Rising Star Early Childhood Education Center Head Start- Fredericksburg**
- **North Star Early Head Start-Stafford**
- **First Steps CDC-Lafayette High School-Williamsburg**
- **First Steps CDC-Griffin Yeates-Williamsburg**
- **Highland Children’s House-Monterey**
- **Play & Learn at Aisha’s-Springfield**
- **Playful Learners Preschool-Charlottesville**

To learn more about technical assistance and resources available through the VA ITSN to become BFF EC, email [TA@va-itsnetwork.org](mailto:TA@va-itsnetwork.org).

[Other awardees and Virginia’s BFF EC application and resources can be found here.](#)



*A nonprofit agency changing the lives of babies, toddlers & their families*

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