

E3: Elevate Early Education is a nonpartisan issue-advocacy organization that advocates for policy initiatives and state funds to be invested in early learning programs through third grade. Our work focuses on improving equitable access to quality for all children. In late January of 2021, E3 invested in a statewide, bipartisan survey to determine where Virginia voters stand on early learning challenges and possible policy solutions. The following are highlights from this poll.

VIRGINIA VOTERS SUPPORT INVESTING IN ACCESS TO QUALITY EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

- Virginia voters agree that investments in early education should provide more resources for parents, families and classrooms.
- Early education funding has a very positive long-term impact on the Commonwealth and the bottom line: when kids gain access to high quality early education they are better prepared to succeed academically, socially and less likely to repeat grades. Voters agree.
- During the pandemic, children have fallen even further behind. Voters know this and they want candidates to address this challenge. Focusing on closing learning gaps from early learning to third grade should be a priority.

KEY SUPPORT

- Women (18-45) and voters with children believe **increasing funding** that focuses on early learning to third grade is a leading way to close learning gaps.
- Nearly **60%** of Virginians believe **we should be doing more** to ensure children enter kindergarten prepared.
- Independent voters are **more likely to support a candidate** who prioritizes early education funding.
- An **overwhelming majority of Virginians are concerned** that even before the pandemic, **44%** of children were not ready in literacy, math, social skills or self-regulation when entering kindergarten. And school closings due to the pandemic have only made this worse.

POLICIES TO CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

- Nearly **three quarters** of Virginians support creating greater access to quality early learning programs.
- More than **80%** of voters believe policymakers should give parents and teachers more tools and resources to improve the reading and math skills of children in kindergarten through third grade. This is a winning issue.
- **75%** of Virginia voters think the Commonwealth should increase pay for early education teachers to improve recruitment and retention in early learning classrooms.