

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 STRONGLY SUPPORT INVESTING IN ACCESS TO QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

- We need to provide more resources to parents, students and teachers to ensure they have access to quality early learning all the way through third grade. This will help children have every opportunity to learn, grow and succeed.
- The pandemic has set children back, particularly lower income and minority children who have struggled the most with remote learning, and we owe it to them to provide this critical help.
- Too many children are entering kindergarten not ready, and the pandemic has made our children fall further behind.
- Lower income 3 & 4 year olds deserve the same opportunity to access high quality early education as every other child in Virginia.

KEY SUPPORT

- Women (18-45) and Black Virginians in particular believe **increasing funding** for quality early learning through third grade is a leading way to close learning gaps.
- Nearly sixty percent of Virginians believe **we should be doing more** to make sure children enter kindergarten ready to learn and succeed.
- 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 one or more critical areas when entering kindergarten.
- Democrats, Independents, and particularly minority voters **widely favor dedicated funding for early education** in Virginia.

POLICIES TO CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

- Nearly **three quarters** of Virginians support 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.
- **75%** of Virginia voters think the Commonwealth should increase pay for early education teachers to improve recruitment and retention in early learning classrooms.

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