**Early Childhood Quality Grant**

**2019-2020**

**Application Package**

**Virginia Department of Education**

**Division of School Readiness**

**Office of Early Childhood**

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE:**

**May 3, 2019**

**Submission of Grant Application:** In order to be considered for selection, applicants must submit all required information with complete responses. The application must be emailed to [Laura.Heath@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Laura.Heath@doe.virginia.gov) **no later than 4 p.m. on May 3, 2019.**



# Early Childhood Quality Grant

## Background and Purpose

All Virginia children, regardless of background or zip code, are capable of and deserve to enter kindergarten ready. Yet the most recent data from the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program indicates that 40% of students enter kindergarten “not ready” in terms of demonstrating key school readiness skills. For children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds that percentage climbs to 48% – far behind their more advantaged peers. Unaddressed, not being ready for kindergarten has long-term consequences – falling below grade level expectations, grade retention, special education placement and school drop-out.

An investment in the early years of life is one of the best investments society can make. This return is life-long—children who experience effective early childhood programs are more likely to finish college, get high-paying jobs, and be healthier and happier later in life. Yet access does not equal quality and quality does not happen by chance.If the quality of early childhood education experiences is not high there will be little or no return on investment.

In response to the 2018 General Assembly, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) created *A Plan to Ensure High-Quality Instruction in All Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) Classrooms*. The plan aggregates lessons learned from the [JLARC study](http://jlarc.virginia.gov/pdfs/reports/Rpt502.pdf), Virginia Preschool Initiative Plus implementation, and University of Virginia (UVA) – Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL). The *Plan*describes how Virginia will work to ensure that VPI provides a high-quality preschool experience that helps prepare each 4-year-old served for kindergarten. Because school divisions may also serve children with Individualized Education Programs (IEP) ages two through five in early childhood special education (ECSE) classrooms, the same components of high-quality are to be applied to these classrooms as well. In fact, the plan strongly encourages divisions to incorporate the quality elements that follow into all early childhood classrooms, regardless of funding source.

The *Plan* outlines quality improvements in three areas: 1) use of integrated, evidenced-based curriculum, 2) assessing teacher-child interactions, and 3) providing individualized professional development.

1. Curriculum: Curriculum help teachers ensure children are provided opportunities, experiences, and materials that allow them to engage deeply and build school readiness skills. Early childhood teachers will:
   1. Be supported to use a vetted, integrated and evidence based curriculum.
   2. Implement the chosen curriculum with fidelity to promote children’s learning and development.
   3. Use assessment to individualize their instruction to meet the needs of their students.
2. Assessing Teacher Child Interaction Quality: Children who experience high quality teacher-child interactions learn and grow more, even those who may otherwise struggle in the classroom. Early childhood teachers will:
   1. Be observed at least two times a year with the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), a valid and reliable observation tool that measures the quality of teacher-child interactions, by local observers who will also provide targeted feedback and professional development.
   2. Also be observed at least every two years with CLASS® by external observers
3. Providing Individualized Professional Development: Teachers need individualized feedback and ongoing professional development to effectively and consistently promote all children’s learning and development. Early Childhood teachers will:
   1. Receive high-quality professional development that supports their knowledge, skills, and practice to facilitate effective teacher-child interactions and instruction that promotes children’s learning and development towards kindergarten readiness. Professional development will be individualized based on the classroom data (e.g. CLASS® scores or children’s assessment data); focus on standards, curriculum and/or improving teacher-child interactions; and be delivered with fidelity.

The Early Childhood Quality Grant

Implementation of thethree quality components outlined in the *Plan* is now strongly encouraged in all early childhood classrooms across the Commonwealth of Virginia. To support quality improvements in Virginia Preschool Initiative and ECSE classrooms, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is offering the Early Childhood Quality Grant. While there are three components to the *Plan*, this initial grant opportunity will focus on building capacity for the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®):

Early Childhood Quality Grant – Building Capacity for the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®): This grant opportunity provides funds to train local, reliable local CLASS® observers to conduct observations two-times a year for measuring teacher-child interactions during the 2019-2020 school year in all VPI and ECSE classrooms.

School divisions applying for this grant are to target quality improvements and implementation of the CLASS® in both VPI **and** classrooms where children with IEPs receive services, including regular early childhood programs and self-contained classrooms. This grant is for those school divisions which are:

* Committed and ready to conduct local CLASS® observations two-times a year for measuring teacher-child interactions during the 2019-2020 school year in all VPI classrooms and ECSE classrooms.
* Prepared to provide professional development/coaching to teachers and instructional assistants (VPI & ECSE) on CLASS® domains/dimensions.

# General Grant Information

# Early Childhood Quality Grant - CLASS

## Eligibility

All local lead governmental agencies administering a VPI program are eligible to apply for an Early Childhood Quality Grant. School divisions are the primary lead agency for VPI; however, in some localities this is the local Department of Social Services. For the purpose of this grant application, the localities will be referred to as school divisions.

## Grant Awards Process

Federal funds (Preschool Expansion Grant [PEG] and Early Childhood Special Education [ECSE] 619) will support grant awards issued.

PEG funds are to be used to:

* Provide CLASS® reliability training to those completing observations in VPI and/or classrooms where children with IEPs receive services, including self-contained classrooms.
* Provide CLASS® related professional development/coaching to teachers and instructional assistants in VPI and/or classrooms where children with IEPs receive services, including self-contained classrooms.
* Support students enrolled in VPI classrooms that meet the PEG criteria of 200% of the poverty level or below.
  + Divisions that have used local eligibility to enroll students above 200% of the poverty level should provide a local investment towards Early Childhood Quality Grant activities matching the percent of local eligibility seats enrolled.

ECSE funds are to be used to:

* Provide CLASS® reliability training to those completing observations in classrooms where children with IEPs receive services, including self-contained classrooms.
* Provide CLASS® related professional development/coaching to teachers and instructional assistants in classrooms where children with IEPs receive services, including self-contained classrooms.

Those applying for this grant are strongly encouraged to target quality improvements and implementation of the CLASS® in both VPI classrooms **and** classrooms where children with IEPs receive services, including self-contained classrooms. Doing so can enable collaborative planning and professional development for teachers which can, in turn, improve outcomes for all learners.

Grant Period: May 2019 – September 30, 2019

All federal funds must be encumbered by September 30, 2019 with all final reimbursement requests submitted to the VDOE by November 8, 2019. School divisions will be required to use the VDOE’s Online Management of Education Grant Award (OMEGA) system for reimbursement requests.

## Estimated Number of Grant Awards and Funding Range

Funds requested must be in proportion to the number of VPI and ECSE classrooms and teachers being impacted.

A school division is to request funds from both funding sources.

A total of 15-18 grants may be awarded with an estimated range of $10,000-$40,000.

## Competitive Priority Ranking

Completed applications submitted by the deadline will be reviewed by VDOE staff and ranked in order using the following for priority ranking.

* Poverty concentration by the percent of students eligible for free/reduced lunch (2017-2018 percent).
* Percentage of students not meeting fall PALS kindergarten benchmarks (2017).
* Commitment to train local, reliable local CLASS® observers to conduct observations two-times a year for measuring teacher-child interactions during the 2019-2020 school year in all VPI classrooms **and** ECSE classrooms.
* Commitment to provide professional development/coaching to teachers **and** instructional assistants (VPI and ECSE) on CLASS domains/dimensions.

Applicants with the highest priority rankings will be considered first for grant funds. If funds remain after this selection process, or if there are several applicants with the same priority ranking, applicants will be randomly selected from this pool of applicants until funds are depleted. Depending on available funds, all requested components of a school divisions’ application may or may not be awarded to successful applicants. Selected applicants may be asked to revise applications and budgets as deemed appropriate by the VDOE. VDOE may consider geographic distribution of grant recipients in the selection process.

## Notification

The individual serving as the grant application contact for the division will be notified via email as to the final status of the application (i.e., budget revisions needed, awarded, not awarded) once a decision is made in spring 2019. School division superintendents of divisions selected for Early Childhood Quality Grant awards will be notified of the grant award via an official Notification of Grant Award sent through the United States Postal Service.

## Webinar Dates/Times

All interested school divisions are strongly encouraged to have the grant application contact attend one of two Early Childhood Quality Grant Application Webinars offered on the dates provided below. Additional information and technical assistance will be provided on the grant application process and an opportunity for questions will be provided. One of the grant webinars will be recorded and a link to the recording will be sent to all VPI and ECSE Coordinators.

* [Quality Grant Webinar Option One](https://vdoe.adobeconnect.com/qeccgrant/): Monday, April 1, 2019 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
* [Quality Grant Webinar Option Two](https://vdoe.adobeconnect.com/qeccgrant/): Monday, April 8, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Webinar Dial-In Number: 1-800-832-0736

Meeting Room Number: 9253732

# COVER PAGE AND ASSURANCES

# Early Childhood Quality Grant – CLASS

| School Division: | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Grant Contact: | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Title: | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Address: | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Email: | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Telephone: | Click or tap here to enter text. |

## Statement of Assurances

Should an award of federal funds be made to the applicant in support of activities proposed in this application, the authorized signature certifies to the Virginia Department of Education that the authorized official will:

1. Conduct activities funded by this project in compliance with laws, regulations, and grant criteria;
2. Use grant funds to supplement and not supplant funds;
3. Provide leadership and support for the division’s plan to assess teacher-child interactions using CLASS®  for all VPI and ECSE classrooms two times a year, as stipulated in the grant application, and to provide professional development for both of these areas;
4. Submit CLASS® data from local observations to the VDOE when requested and in the format requested;
5. Submit by November 8, 2019, a final report, with required documentation and data in the format requested, to the VDOE.

**Certification Statement:**

I certify to the best of my knowledge that the information in this application is correct, that the filing of this application is duly authorized, and that this organization will comply with the Statement of Assurances.

| **Print Division Superintendent Name:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| --- | --- |
| **Signature:** |  |
| **Date**: | Click or tap here to enter text. |

# Early Childhood Quality Grant – CLASS

# CLASS® Grant Activities and Budget

## Activities and Budget Request Totals

(Note: The Excel budget template must be completed and returned as a part of the grant application and must match the information provided on this form.)

| Total number of local CLASS® observers to be trained to reliability to conduct observations two-times a year in VPI classrooms and classrooms where children with IEPs receive services, including self-contained classrooms | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| --- | --- |
| Total number of teachers (VPI & ECSE) to receive professional development/coaching on CLASS® domains/dimensions | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Total number of instructional assistants (VPI & ECSE) to receive professional development/coaching on CLASS® domains/dimensions | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Amount requested for local CLASS® observer training and professional development to teachers and instructional assistants (from Quality Grant Budget Template) | **$** Click or tap here to enter text. |

## Activities and Budget Request Totals by Classroom Type

## VPI

1. Total number of **VPI** Classrooms: Click or tap here to enter text.
2. Number of **VPI** classrooms to receive local CLASS® observations in 2019-2020: Click or tap here to enter text.
3. Percent of total **VPI** classrooms to receive local CLASS® observations in 2019-2020: Click or tap here to enter text.

**Early childhood special education (self-contained classrooms)** *Note: If school division does not serve children in self-contained classrooms, please leave blank and skip to the next section.*

1. Total number of **childhood special education (self-contained classrooms)**: Click or tap here to enter text.
2. Total number of **early childhood special education (self-contained classrooms)** to receive local CLASS® observations in 2019-2020: Click or tap here to enter text.
3. Percent of total e**arly childhood special education (self-contained classrooms)** to receive local CLASS® observations in 2019-2020: Click or tap here to enter text.

**Classrooms where children with IEPs receive services (other than self-contained classrooms)**

1. Total number of **classrooms where children with IEPs receive services (other than self-contained classrooms)** to receive local CLASS® observations in 2019-2020: Click or tap here to enter text.

## CLASS® Implementation and Timeline

*Describe your plan, including a timeline and person(s) responsible, for ensuring local, trained, reliable CLASS® observers will measure the quality of teacher-child interactions two times a year in all VPI and ECSE classrooms. Your description must include the following components:*

1. *Who will serve as local observers,*
2. *How will local observers will be trained to CLASS® reliability,*
3. *When will local observers be trained in CLASS® reliability,*
4. *When observations will take place during 2019-2020, and*
5. *Who will provide CLASS® observation feedback after each observation?*

| **Key Milestone** | **Description** | **Timeline\*** | **Person(s) Responsible** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who will serve as local observers | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| How will local observers be trained in CLASS® reliability | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| When will local observers be trained in CLASS® reliability | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| When will CLASS® observations take place in VPI & ECSE Classrooms (2x\*\*) | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Who will provide CLASS® observation feedback | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |

\*All funds must be encumbered by September 30, 2019 and requested for reimbursement by November 8, 2019. \*\*One local *CLASS®* observation must take place during first semester and one during second semester of the 2019-2020 school year. Please note that these are in addition to the every two years external CLASS observation provided by the University of Virginia.

## Early Childhood Quality Grant Budget Template

Complete the attached Early Childhood Quality Grant - Budget Template.

# APPLICATION GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

## Budget Development

CLASS® Observations

* A variety of CLASS® observation reliability training options are available through Teachstone. The budget must align with the number of individuals that will serve as local observers and the type of training selected by the division and described in the application (e.g., onsite training in the school division, regional training, pop-up training). School divisions applying for the grant are encouraged to collaborate together if selecting regional training or pop-up CLASS® training.
* Additional information regarding estimated costs for CLASS® training and observations will be provided during the Early Childhood Quality Grant Application Webinars.

## Definitions

Virginia Preschool Initiative Classroom**:** A VPI classroom is any classroom with one or more VPI eligible student funded by state VPI funds.

Early Childhood Special Education Self-Contained Classroom: An ESCE self-contained classroom is taught by an Early Childhood Special Education teacher.  It may be a reverse inclusion classroom that also serves non-disabled children from the community.

CLASS® Observations: Classroom observations using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) tool. CLASS® observations may be conducted by local observers (coordinated by the local division) or they may be conducted by external observers (provided by the University of Virginia).

## Resources

[Virginia Department of Education’s Procurement Web Page](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/school_finance/procurement/index.shtml): Current preschool curriculum and professional development state contracts are listed on this web page. School divisions may request copies of contracts awarded for school division use by the Department of Education from the Office of Procurement.  Please contact Monique Jones ([monique.jones@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:monique.jones@doe.virginia.gov)) concerning **Student Growth Assessments**, and Marie Williams ([marie.williams@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:marie.williams@doe.virginia.gov)).

[Teachstone](https://teachstone.com/planning-for-class-observation-implementation/) Website: This website is provided to assist organizations in preparing for CLASS® observations. Specific guidance on how CLASS® can be used to support children with special needs is also [available](http://info.teachstone.com/resources/research/special-needs-class-tool-report).