

Child Success

Alexandria thrives when our children thrive.

The Opportunity

The pandemic has forced us to reckon with the social and educational inequities that have plagued our communities for too long. We can no longer hide behind or fail to address things that should have been addressed by now. Parents, schools, and local and state officials need to partner to advance equity and support our young people from cradle to career.

Child Care:

The average cost for center-based child care for a child under the age of 3 is \$1,885 per month in Alexandria. Even if a family can afford the cost—which many in Alexandria cannot—they may have difficulty finding an available seat. Prior to the pandemic, waiting lists at some high-quality center- and home-based locations were hard to find. The pandemic has forced many child care providers to close permanently and, as such, seats at high-quality facilities may be even harder to find. Unfortunately, many Alexandria families aren't able to consider quality, or even location, because they either can't afford the high cost of high quality child care or can't find available seats.

Schools:

Our schools provide safe spaces for our children to learn, play, and explore so that they can grow up to achieve their full potential. Schools also serve our children in other ways, attending to their physical and mental health, as well as many of their most basic needs. An investment in schools is not only an investment in our present, but also a deposit into our future. We need to support our schools as they wrestle with when and how to reopen safely; and, we need to explore how the City and Alexandria City Public Schools can more effectively partner in supporting education and the overall well-being of our children.

Goals

- Increase the number of child care seats for children 0-3 so that every child will have access to safe, high-quality child care, affordable to working families
- Develop a program to identify and support informal providers, with quality grants, free or subsidized training, and tax credits so that interested providers are incentivized to become licensed
- Convene a group of business leaders, early childhood advocates, K12 educators, and community leaders to consider viable revenue sources to help fund our growing child care and educational infrastructure needs
- Partner with local institutions such as the new Virginia Tech Campus, Amazon HQ2, and Fort Belvoir Army Base to develop workforce readiness pipelines to give our young people access to high-paying, high-quality jobs after graduation

Let's Work Together

- How might we attract more quality child care providers to the communities in our City that don't have sufficient providers?
- What opportunities exist to encourage developers to include child care providers as an amenity in new and renovated developments and/or property owners to lease space to providers at below market rates?
- How might we partner with state policymakers to expand the Quality Collaborative Coaching program to serve more child care centers and broaden the focus beyond the limited scope of the Virginia Preschool Initiative program?
- How can we support our schools as they work to reopen safely for students, teachers and support staff while mitigating the inevitability of social-emotional and academic learning loss?
- How can we support Alexandria City Public Schools to ensure that children are ready to learn and able to focus when they walk into their classrooms?

Alyia's Approach

Alyia is committed to advancing equitable results. Alyia knows that the people who are affected by a problem are most likely to know what's needed to fix it. She is prepared to reach out, ask questions, hear all perspectives, and review the data. She will work with the community to marshal our collective imagination to figure out next steps and implement a plan.