

“Helping to create bright futures for our youngest citizens”

Virginia Beach has long recognized quality education as foundational for our City’s continued vitality and growth. The City has invested in early childhood education and programs to help ensure the healthy development and school readiness of our youngest citizens ages 0–8 and to promote the City’s economic vitality for tomorrow.



INVEST EARLY



STRONGER FUTURE WORKFORCE

Investing in our youngest citizens beginning at birth and continuing to do so throughout the school years makes smart economic sense—it’s workforce development. A world-class workforce begins with a world-class education system and the path to a strong education begins at birth.



2009

The City created GrowSmart to promote and improve early language and literacy, school readiness, and to provide our children a strong start on the path to success in school and in life.

2017

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

As an early adopter of innovative talk technology, GrowSmart launched LENA Start, a language development program geared for parents of children ages 0–3 years. LENA programs use a talk pedometer device and software to provide data insights on a child’s language environment. *[LENA stands for Learning Environment Analysis.]*

2019

INNOVATION

Virginia Beach was one of 5 Cities selected by Bloomberg Philanthropies to participate in a National Early Childhood Education Innovation grant and receive \$450k to replicate the Providence Talks language development program for children ages 0–5 years.

2019-
2022

ACTION.

GrowSmart, through its Virginia Beach Talks initiative, embeds 3 LENA program models—parent group (Start), Early Childhood Educator professional development (Grow) and home visiting enhancement (Home)—into its early childhood services for the Virginia Beach community.

2022

SUCCESS!

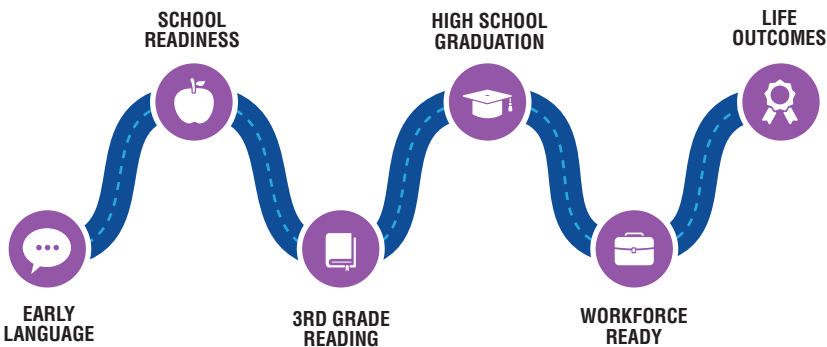
Virginia Beach ranked 1st among the 5 grant award cities in cumulative Virginia Beach Talks program recruitment reaching 737 children ages 0 – 5 years over the course of the grant period. *SOURCE: 5 Award Cities Innovation Grant Program Results 2019-2022 to date.*

The FACE of SUCCESS



The ROADMAP for SUCCESS

Starting on the right path early leads to positive life outcomes. Equitable participation is a cornerstone. The programs are offered free of charge to participants thanks to the Bloomberg Philanthropies grant and the City's commitment to quality early learning environments.



If we can strengthen these learning environments for young children ages 0 – 5 years, at home, at school/childcare, and in the community, we believe we could strengthen their school readiness assessments, which then leads to stronger performance and success in school and life.

— **BARB LITO, GROWSMART COORDINATOR**

Virginia Beach is leading the way, paving the path to bright futures for our youngest citizens.

For more information about GrowSmart programs visit:
vbgrowsmart.com or call **757-385-0144**

LENA

LENA stands for Language Environment Analysis.

LENA Programs at a Glance



LENA GROW:

Childcare centers geared to early educators of children ages 0-5.



LENA START:

Family group model geared to parents with children ages 0-3.



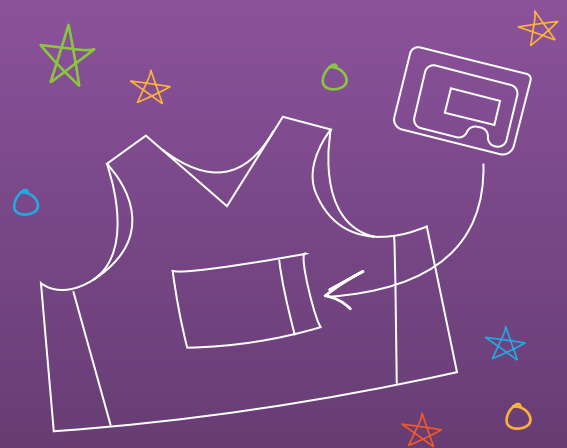
LENA HOME:

Home visitors working with parents of children ages 0-3.

How LENA Technology Works

A child wears a specially-designed vest which holds a small wearable device called a “talk pedometer.” The device measures adult words and “conversational turns”—back and forth conversations between a child and adult. Data from the device provides actionable feedback on the child’s language environment and development.

To learn more about LENA, visit
www.lena.org



Did you know?

“High quality birth-to-five programs for disadvantaged children can deliver a 13% Return on Investment”

SOURCE: <https://heckmanequation.org/resource/13-roi-toolbox/>