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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Childcare Support Available for Virtual Learners

The Gloucester County Board of Supervisors has contributed Federal CARES Act dollars to a regional collaborative effort designed to support working families with children learning virtually due to COVID-19. The Care and Supervision for School-Age Children (CASSAC) program provides grant-vouchers to parents of school-age children for tuition and provides resources to childcare providers who desire to expand their services to support virtual learning.

The CASSAC is administered by United Way of the Virginia Peninsula, in partnership with Smart Beginnings Virginia Peninsula. Gloucester County has allocated \$61,140 to the program, which will be used exclusively to serve Gloucester residents.

Currently, 55 childcare slots are available to providers in Gloucester. This number will change daily as more providers sign up adding slots, and families sign up taking the slots.

Meanwhile, approximately 57 Gloucester children are expected to be served through the CASSAC program with the funding that is available. This number was calculated as an estimate based on 70-percent of the market rate for providers in Gloucester (70-percent market rate is a common measure for Department of Social Services assistance). United Way of the Virginia Peninsula continues to pursue matching funding to expand the services of the program.

Families seeking safe and supportive virtual learning environments may be eligible for funding if they are working or attending training for employment; have at least one child enrolled in a public school that is not offering in-classroom learning five days per week and have a household income between 30 and 80 percent of the Area Medium Income. For more information or to find a safe place for your virtual learner, call the United Way Community Resource Center at 757-229-2222.

CASSAC funding is made available in the form of "grant vouchers" for use at childcare providers and will pay up to 140-percent of the provider's base tuition rate for children (newly) enrolled in virtual learning programs. Funds received by a provider through voucher redemption can be used by the provider to pay for PPE and other allowable expenses related to expanding capacity for school-age children. To see if you qualify, contact Smart Beginnings at 757-240-2731 and choose option #1.

“We are thrilled to be able to offer this opportunity to our residents with virtual learners,” said Brent Fedors, Gloucester’s County Administrator. “We understand that these times of virtual learning can be quite challenging for our families, and we are hoping this will be a solid step toward alleviating some of the anxiety those families – and childcare providers – are experiencing.”

For more information on the grant program, visit Smart Beginnings’ website at <https://www.smartbeginningsvp.org/>.

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