

2026 Child Safety Preparedness Checklist: Virginia Edition



Prepared by PPE Kids | www.ppekids.org

As of **February 1, 2026**, Virginia has implemented updated general procedures for background checks and child day program licensure (8VAC20-821). Use this checklist to ensure your organization is compliant and protected.

1. Personnel & Background Vetting (The "Gold Standard")

- **Fingerprint-Based Criminal History:** Ensure all staff and volunteers with direct access to children have completed a biometric (fingerprint) check through the Virginia State Police (VSP) and FBI.
- **Virginia Central Registry Search:** Verify that every individual has a cleared search of the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) registry for founded complaints of child abuse/neglect.
- **Sworn Disclosure Statements:** Collect signed "Sworn Statements or Affirmations" from all personnel disclosing any criminal history or pending charges.
- **5-Year Residency Rule:** For any staff who have lived outside of Virginia in the last 5 years, you must now request out-of-state criminal and child abuse registry searches from their previous states.
- **Portability Verification:** If hiring someone who recently cleared a check at another VA organization (within 180 days), ensure you have processed the formal "portability request" through the OBI portal.

2. Mandatory Reporting Compliance (VA Code § 63.2-1509)

- **Annual Mandated Reporter Training:** Confirm all "designated reporters" (teachers, coaches, ministers, and program directors) have completed the latest 2026 Virginia DSS training on recognizing and reporting abuse.
- **Posted Protocols:** Is the Virginia Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline number (**1-800-552-7096**) clearly posted in staff breakrooms and volunteer areas?
- **Psychological Review:** Ensure your internal reporting SOPs are **trauma-informed** and do not require "internal investigations" before calling the authorities.

3. Policy & Governance (Organizational Guardrails)

- **Anti-Grooming Policy:** Does your policy specifically define and prohibit "grooming behaviors" (e.g., private messaging, gift-giving, and unauthorized off-site contact)?
- **The "Two-Deep" Rule:** Audit your facilities to ensure no adult is ever alone with a child in a room without clear line-of-sight or a second adult present.

- **Digital Safety SOPs:** Have you updated your social media and texting policy to include 2026 standards for AI-generated content and digital boundary-setting?
- **Religiously-Exempt Documentation:** (If applicable) Ensure your "Statement of Intent" and annual tax-exempt filings are submitted to the VDOE by your 2026 deadline.

4. Training & Culture

- **"Behind the Smile" Training:** Schedule your 2026 PPE Kids grooming prevention training for all new staff.
- **Lumi Program Integration:** Provide parents with access to the "Lumi" direct-to-child education episodes to empower children to set their own boundaries.
- **Leadership Facilitation:** Conduct a "Safety Listening Session" with your Board or Elders to identify systemic risks in your specific building or program structure.

How PPE Kids Can Help This Week:

- **Policy Audits:** We can review your 2026 handbook for compliance with Virginia "Barrier Crime" laws.
- **Background Check Management:** We assist in navigating the Fieldprint facility ID process for Virginia organizations.
- **Trauma-Informed Training:** Expert-led sessions that go beyond "red flags" to building resilient, safe cultures.

Contact Osona Wilson, MS, PHR at info@ppekids.org, for questions or concerns about clearing your checklist.