

Remarks from Dr. Laura Sands, professor in the Human Development Department in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, at the April 15, 2016 Bring Your Children to School Day, sponsored by Virginia Tech Graduate School.

WELCOME Everyone!

What a joy to see so many children here today

I know both parents and their children are loving being with each other today

But today is an exception for most families who must find care for their children while their parents work. Finding affordable, quality care can be incredibly challenging. Most parents agree that they seek not just care providers who will care FOR their child, but care providers who truly cares about their child.

Tim and I have had at least one of our four children in some type of care setting for 19 years, nearly two-thirds of our working lives! Finding quality childcare was a huge undertaking during each of our moves from California to New Jersey, from New Jersey to California, and from California to Indiana.

Quality may be defined in a variety of ways, and is of course personally determined.

Regardless of the indicators we use, we know from seminal work by distinguished VTCRI Professors, Sharon and Craig Ramey, that quality childcare is associated with:

- Sustained Higher cognitive functioning
- Better school performance
- Fewer behavior problems
- Significantly higher graduation rates and college attendance, and all the career and financial benefits associated with a college education.

Tim and I truly understand the value of quality care for children, not just to the family, but to the community.

For our community, the availability of quality child care will enhance our ability to recruit and retain talented faculty and staff with families and grow our graduate programs.

It is so wonderful how the community and Virginia Tech are coming together to address this important issue.

It is so encouraging that the university has joined the Town of Blacksburg, Montgomery County, and the private sector to launch the Alliance for Better Childcare Strategies (ABCs) to provide leadership and realize enhanced quality childcare for our community.

Together we can! We CAN:

- IMPROVE our community' commitment to our children
- IMPROVE children's early learning experiences
- IMPROVE the quality of life for families with children

Thank you so much for your passion and commitment.