

Fast Facts - VT Early Childhood Initiatives

Background

In the past few years, Vermont has invested significant resources to improve the wellbeing of young children and families in Vermont. Parents, educators, service providers, state agencies, philanthropic partners, the business community, and other key stakeholders are working together in new ways to realize the promise of every Vermont child. Outlined below are several recent key initiatives.

Timeline

March 2013 – March 2014: Following Governor Shumlin's January 2013 announcement of an Early Childhood Summit, a group of government, community, and business leaders drafts, with significant public input, an Early Childhood Framework and Action Plan. The Framework recognizes Vermonters' shared responsibility to ensure that our young children grow up happy, healthy and ready for a lifetime of learning. The Action Plan charts the course to achieve the goals of the Framework.

Dec 2013: Vermont is awarded a \$36.9 million four-year federal Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant. This grant builds a foundation for a coordinated and accountable early childhood system that increases quality of programs and services, provides training and support, empowers communities to play a leading role, and develops existing data systems to monitor effectiveness and increase accountability.

June 2014: Vermont passes Act 166, a universal Pre-K bill, allowing every three and four year old in the state to access 10 hours of publicly funded Pre-Kindergarten.

Dec 2014: Vermont is awarded a \$33 million, four-year federal Preschool Expansion Grant that directly supports targeted Pre-K programs providing services to low-income four year-olds to further improve quality, increase capacity, and expand to full day.

Dec 2014: Vermont receives Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership and Early Head Start Expansion awards that allow new or existing Early Head Start programs to partner with local child care providers to better serve infants and toddlers from low-income families by providing full-day, full-year programs.

A Case Study in Collaboration

While each of these initiatives is different in scope, they are all tightly coordinated and work together to make Vermont a national leader in the area of early childhood. One strong example of how they work together is in the promotion of high-quality, accessible Pre-Kindergarten education.

The Early Childhood Framework and Action Plan serve as the foundation for all early childhood efforts in Vermont. The action plan specifically calls for strategies that are included in the Early Learning Challenge grant, Act 166, and the Preschool Expansion grant.



The Early Learning Challenge grant supports professional development, program and child assessment, and data collection that will enable more programs in the state to become pre-qualified public Pre-K providers. These efforts will also support a robust monitoring and accountability system going forward.



Act 166 relies on these pre-qualified programs to provide universal access to 10 hours of publicly funded Pre-K for all Vermont three and four year-olds. This public funding helps support the quality of programs statewide.



The Preschool Expansion grant will allow selected pre-qualified programs to provide high-quality, full-day Pre-K education for Vermont four year-olds in families at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

See opposite side for more information about each initiative