Vermont's Early Learning Challenge

Fast Facts

What is it?

Vermont's Early Learning Challenge – Race to the Top Grant (ELC) is a $36.9 federally funded, four year grant to help build a high-quality and accessible early childhood system so that all young children in Vermont will be ready to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. The grant rapidly advances Vermont's larger reform agenda by serving as a "jumpstart" to Vermont's Early Childhood Action Plan. Grant implementation is led by the Governor's Office in partnership with the VT Agency of Education, the VT Department for Children and Families, the VT Department of Health, and Building Bright Futures.

What will it do?

Improve Quality and Access

Increase participation in the VT STARS quality rating program so that families will be able to access high quality programs in every VT community.

Develop and implement a Pre-K monitoring system to ensure high quality Pre-Kindergarten education programs.

Improve high-quality home visiting services to pregnant women and young children and support parents as their children's first teachers.

Invest in People

Award $900,000 in scholarships through the VAEYC T.E.A.C.H. program for professionals wishing to pursue a license or a degree.

Expand the VT Child Care Apprenticeship program to provide free college courses and formal on-the-job mentoring.

Offer training and coaching in the revised VT Early Learning Standards to better support the learning and development of children with high needs.

Empower Communities

Identify Promise Communities in rural areas to support improved outcomes for children with high needs.

Improve the power of communities to impact child and family well-being by strengthening the statewide Building Bright Futures network and its 12 Regional Councils.

Host a Help Me Grow phone line through VT 2-1-1 to provide information, support, community resources and referrals related to early childhood.

Ensure We Are Making a Difference

Revise VT's Kindergarten Readiness Survey to make sure we have valid and reliable assessment data to measure children's learning and development.

Launch vermontinsights.org as an online toolbox that helps Vermonters leverage meaningful data to guide policies that improve the well-being of children, families and communities.

Connect early childhood data to Vermont's K-12 State Longitudinal Data System.

Why does it matter?

The Early Learning Challenge grant supports early learning, and the healthy physical, social, and emotional development of children with high needs to lay the foundation for future success. Grant supported initiatives narrow the opportunity gap between high needs children and their peers before it occurs, so that all children are able to thrive and grow up to contribute to a vibrant economic future for our state.