# Vermont's Early Learning Challenge *Fast Facts*

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## WHAT IS IT?

*Vermont's Early Learning Challenge—Race to the Top grant (ELC) is a $36.9 million federally funded, five-year systems-level grant to help build a high quality, accessible early childhood system so all young children in Vermont succeed in kindergarten and beyond. Grant implementation is a partnership between the Governor's office, the Agency of Education, the Department for Children and Families, the Department of Health, Building Bright Futures, and philanthropic partners. The grant was awarded in January 2014. The grant will be completed as of December 31, 2018. Highlights as of December 2017 are described below.*



## WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED?

### *Improve Quality and Access*

❖ Improved standards for Specialized Child Care providers who care for children at risk.
❖ Revised and updated Vermont's Early Learning Standards to provide a common set of research-based standards, birth – Grade 3.
❖ Expanded Strengthening Families to child care homes, and engaged families, programs and communities in promoting protective factors.
❖ Substantially increased participation in the STARS child care quality rating and improvement system.
❖ Established Help Me Grow to increase early detection through universal developmental screening and to connect families to existing services.
❖ Expanded Early Multi-Tiered System of Support (Early MTSS), utilizing the research-based Pyramid Model to promote the social and emotional competence of all young children.

### *Invest in the Early Childhood Workforce*

❖ Designed an Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment system to assist practitioners in supporting children in developmentally appropriate ways.
❖ Awarded over one hundred TEACH scholarships to early childhood practitioners to pursue a teaching license or an associate's degree.
❖ Expanded Vermont's Child Care Apprenticeship program to enable early childhood practitioners to take courses in higher education.

- ❖ Created an Early Childhood Summer Institute at Castleton University to enable early childhood practitioners to further their education, with ten institutions of higher education providing early childhood coursework at AA, BA and Master's levels.
- ❖ Surveyed the early childhood workforce. Key findings included information on educational attainment, wages and benefits, and job satisfaction.

### *Empower Communities*

- ❖ Supported local leadership, strategies and activities in twenty-four Promise Communities to better improve school readiness for young children and families.
- ❖ Strengthened Building Bright Futures to demonstrate collective impact and re-structured it for long-term sustainability.
- ❖ Established the Snelling Center's Early Childhood Leadership Institute.

### *Ensure We Are Making a Difference*

- ❖ Evaluated and updated the kindergarten readiness survey, and piloted, validated and fully implemented the new R4K!S.
- ❖ Evaluated and validated STARS, Vermont's quality rating and improvement system for child care, preschool and after school programs.
- ❖ Building Bright Futures designed and implemented Vermont Insights, Vermont's early childhood data hub.



## WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES?

The Early Learning Challenge grant:

- ➢ improved the coordination and cohesion of early childhood in Vermont;
- ➢ helped to improve the quality of, and access to, high quality early learning programs;
- ➢ enabled early childhood professionals to increase their educational attainment;
- ➢ supported communities to better support young children, and
- ➢ set up systems to ensure accountability.

More information about the outcomes for the Early Learning Challenge grant, including Annual Performance Reports and trend data on the performance measures, visit http://buildingbrightfutures.org/elc_grant/outcomes/.

Questions? Visit http://buildingbrightfutures.org/early-learning-challenge/ or
contact Julie Cadwallader Staub, ELC Grant Director at Julie.cadwalladerstaub@vermont.gov