

Voices
for Vermont's Children



Seeing the Whole Child

A KIDS COUNT® in Vermont
State Data Book



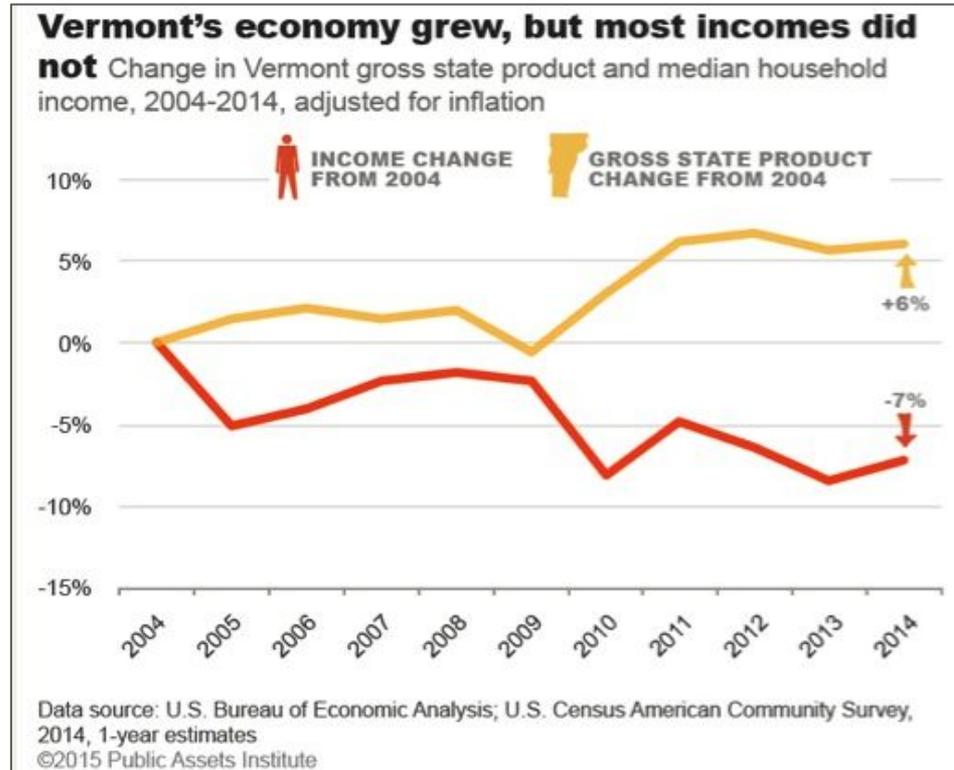
Seeing the Whole Child: A KIDS COUNT in Vermont State Data Book



This data book is divided into four domains: **Economic Wellbeing, Education, Health, and Family & Community**. In each section, we show where state policies and investments support different aspects of child wellbeing, and where we can build on the strength of our existing commitments. We also illuminate where these practices still leave some of our kids behind. Successful interventions must recognize the interconnectedness of child, family, and community wellbeing and the connections between all different areas of a child's life.

Income inequality has been growing for decades, and cannot be reversed without sustained commitment to dismantling the policies that have led to a massive upward redistribution of wealth. *john powell. Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society*

Income Inequality



EQUALITY VERSUS EQUITY



In the first image, it is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same supports. They are being treated equally.



In the second image, individuals are given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access to the game. They are being treated equitably.



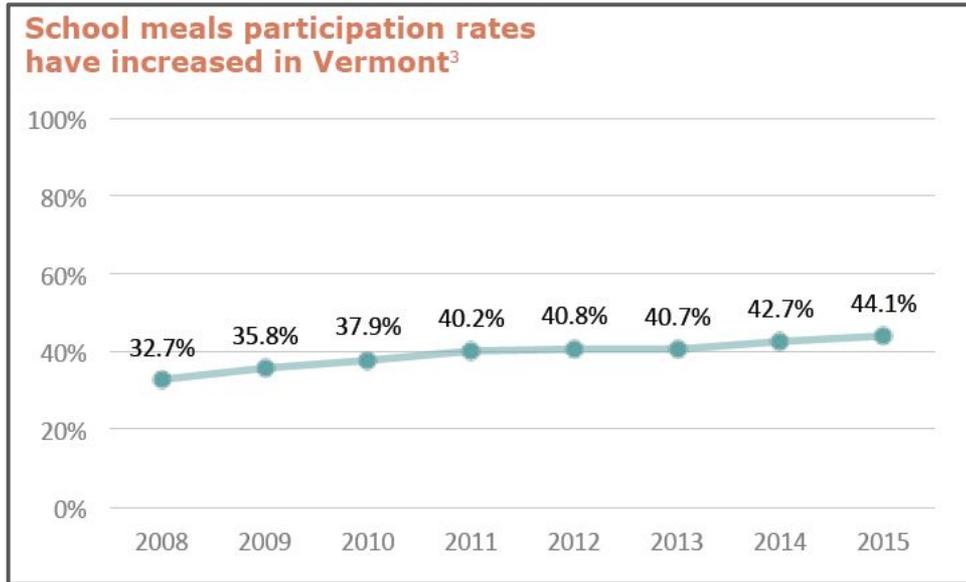
In the third image, all three can see the game without any supports or accommodations because the cause of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.

Equity

How Are We Doing?

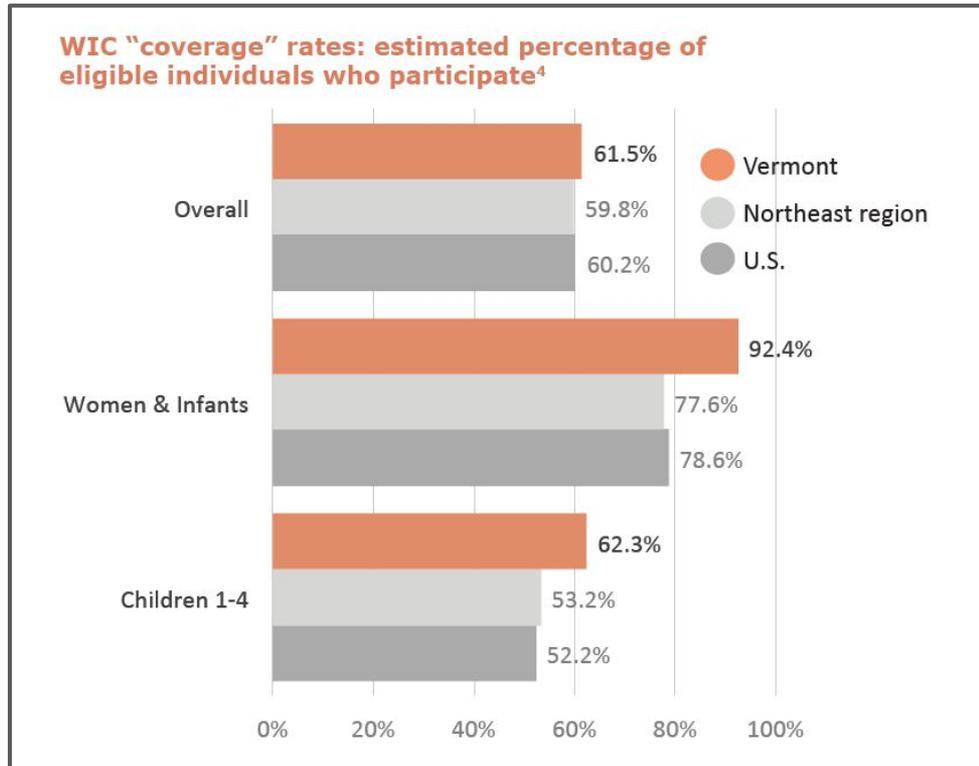
Part 1: Progress Worth Protecting

Economic Wellbeing: School Meals



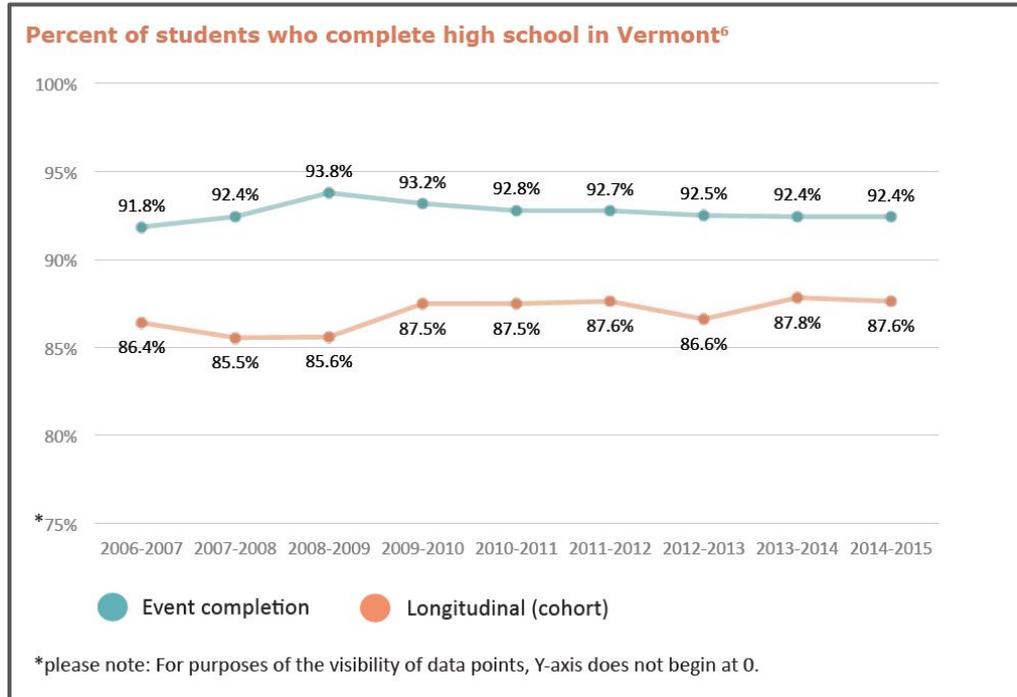
- 38,063 Vermont kids participated in school meals in the 2015-16 school year, an increase of 7,226 kids since 2008-09
- In addition to school lunch, key pieces to ensuring access to adequate nutrition include: meals offered after school, in summer, at breakfast time, and in childcare settings.

Economic Wellbeing: WIC Participation



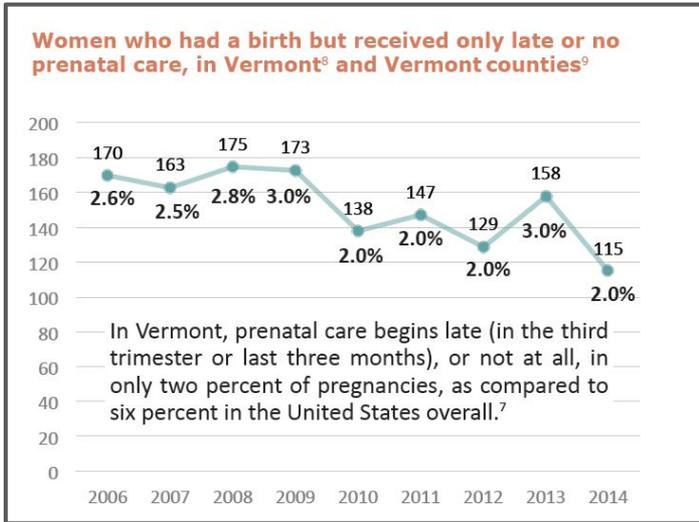
- 92.4% eligible women and infants participate, compared with 78.6% nationally.
- Coverage rates are lower for children ages 1-4, indicating the need for increased awareness and outreach.

Education: Graduation Rates

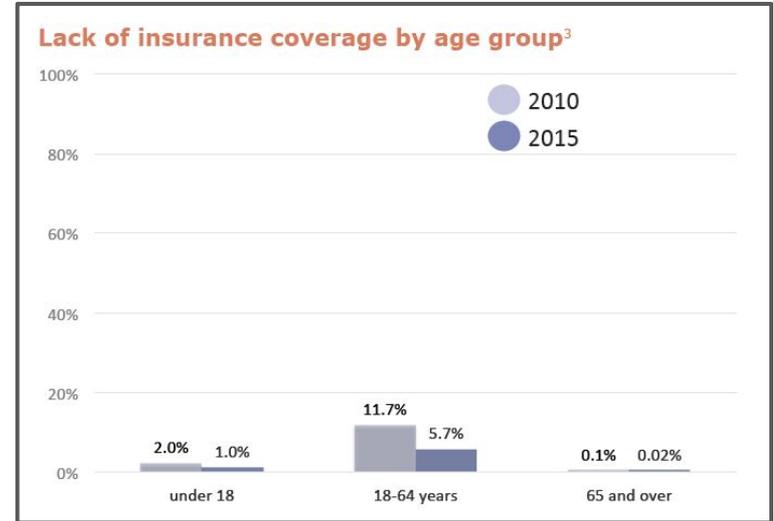


- Vermont has one of the highest on-time graduation rates in the country, but disparities by income, disability, and race exist.
- Only 78.1% of economically disadvantaged students graduate on time, compared to 95.3% of students who are not economically disadvantaged.

Health: Early Prenatal Care & Children's Insurance



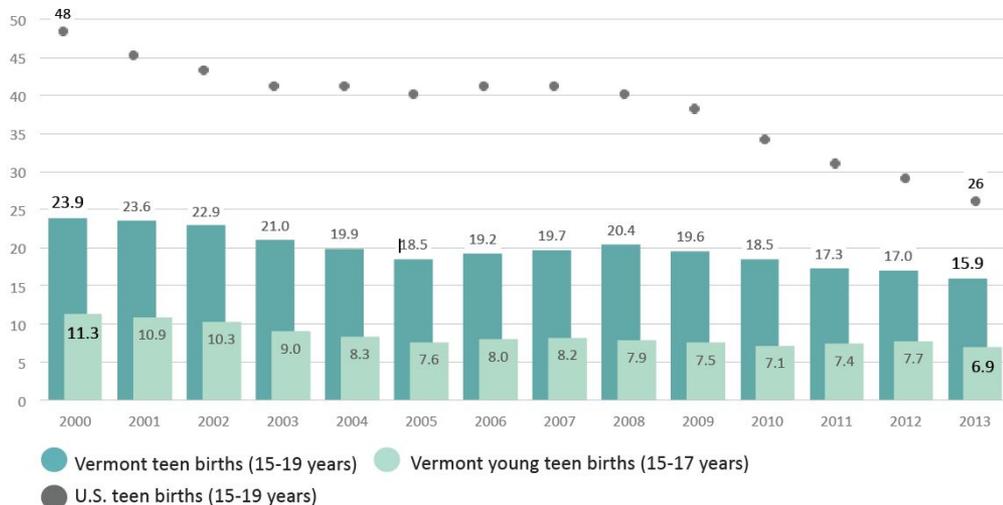
83.5% of pregnant women in VT access prenatal care in their first trimester, compared with 76.7% in the US. The difference for women on public insurance are even more pronounced: 83% (VT) and 63.1% (US)



1% of Vermont's children are not covered by health insurance - the best rate in the US. Providing coverage to the remaining 1,000 children is an achievable goal.

Family & Community: Teen Births

The declining teen birth rate is a national trend



Teen births have declined by 33.5% in Vermont since 2000, and young teen births have declined by 38.9%.⁸ Total teen births in the country as a whole have seen an even sharper decline of 45.8% in the same time period.⁹

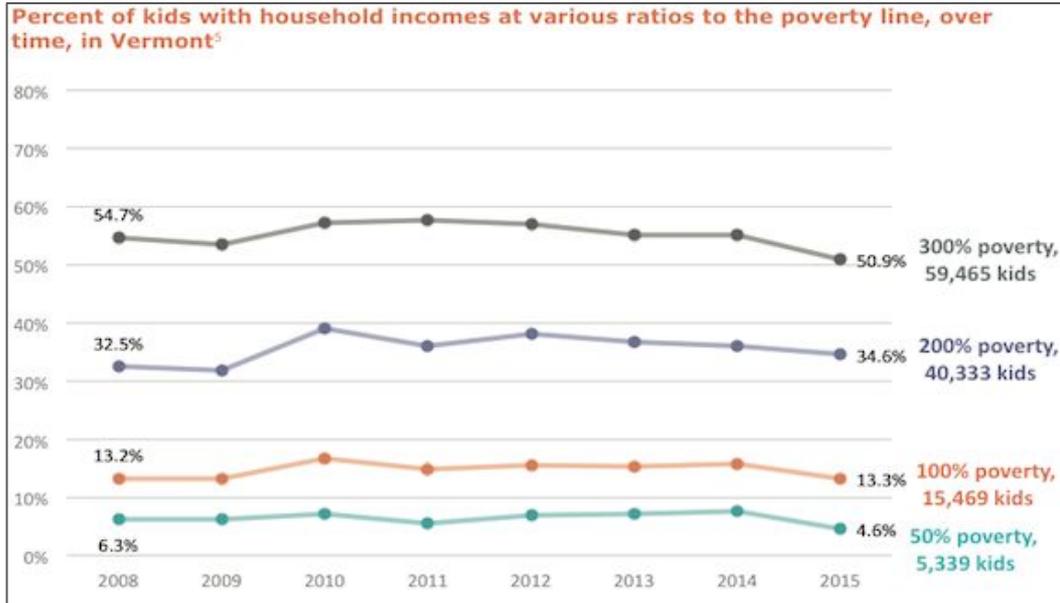
- Births to teen mothers (ages 15-19) are declining in Vermont as they have across the country, and Vermont has maintained one of the lowest rates in the US.
- The VT Dept. of Health also tracks the percentage of first births to women under age 20 who have not completed high school. The rate of such “new families at risk” has fallen from 8.4 percent to 4.4 percent since 2000, a decrease of 47.6 percent

How Are We Doing?

Part 2:

**Time to step up,
not back down**

Economic Wellbeing: Children are the Poorest Age Group



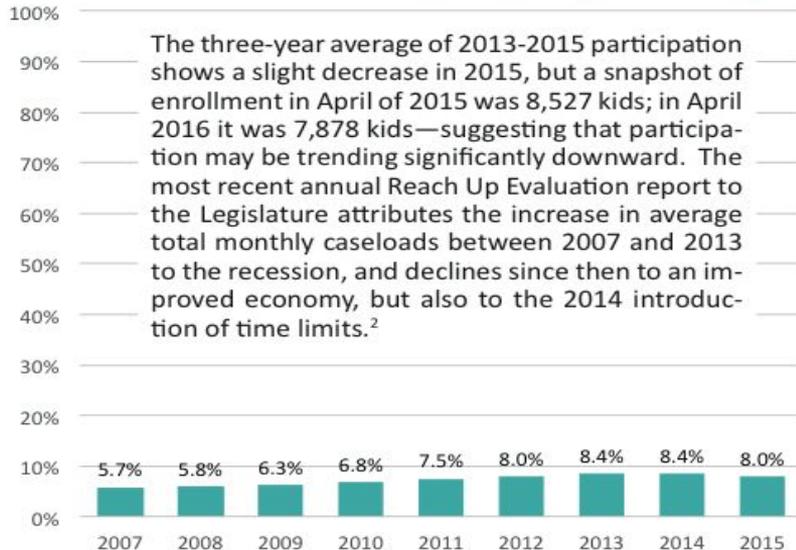
- Disaggregated data reveal that poverty is highest in young children. Between 2011-2015, 18.2% of Vermont children under 5 were below poverty, compared to 15.1% of kids overall.
- **To mitigate the effects of poverty and help reduce the poverty rate, we must:**
 - build a strong social safety net and implement progressive tax policies,
 - support secure employment with adequate wages,
 - Invest in two-generation approaches that address the needs of whole families together,
 - continue to invest in the education of children and youth of all ages.

Economic Wellbeing: Reach Up

33 VSA § 1102: The purpose of the Reach Up program is: (6) to improve the well-being of **children** by providing for their immediate basic needs, including food, housing, and clothing;

Vermont's TANF program, called Reach Up, provides cash assistance to families experiencing extreme financial hardship.

Percent of children in Vermont participating in Reach Up¹



- **Over 72% of Reach Up recipients are children.** (*Based on the average monthly numbers for the period: October 2015 through September 2016*).
- **Grant amounts fall far short of meeting families immediate basic needs.** (more on next slide)
- **To increase the effectiveness of this critical part of Vermont's safety net** Vermont should adjust grants to reflect the cost of living, protect Reach Up's identity as a cash assistance program, and restore or seek to achieve benefit levels that meet families' needs and so truly help protect children from deprivation.

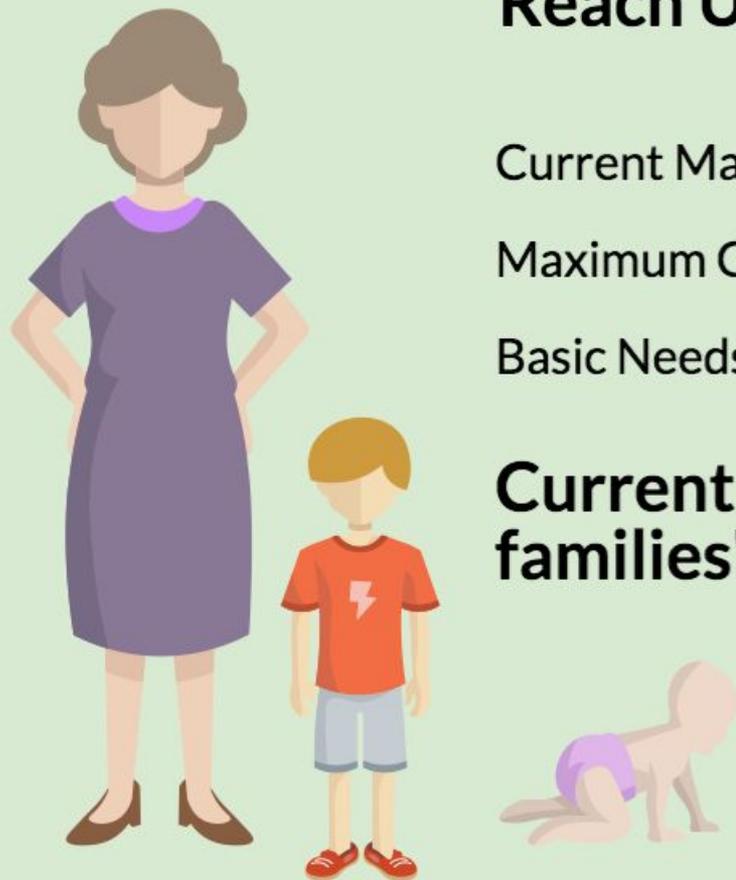
Reach Up for a Family of Three

Current Maximum Grant = \$640

Maximum Grant if COLA applied = \$894

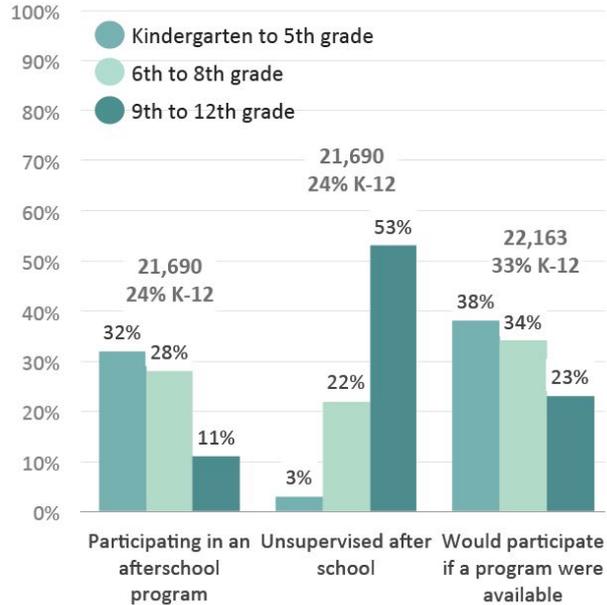
Basic Needs Budget = \$1,804

Current grants cover only 35% of families' basic needs.



Education: Afterschool Programs

Participation and demand for afterschool programs¹



- Studies show that participation in summer and afterschool programs can dramatically reduce achievement gaps: consistent participation in afterschool activities in elementary school can help close the gap in math achievement between low-income and high-income children by grade 5, reduce absences, and improve overall academic performance.
- Over the summer, low-income students lose more than two months of grade-level proficiency in reading achievement on average, while their middle-income peers make slight gains in reading over the summer.

Health: Mental & Emotional Health

20%

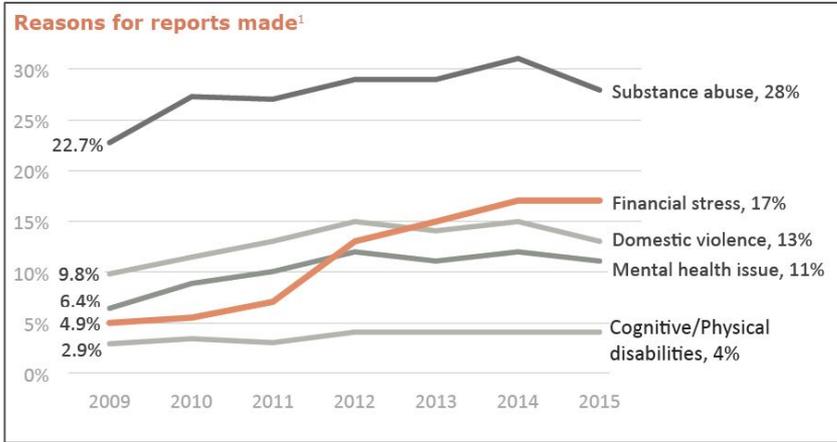
of Vermont children have been diagnosed with one or more emotional, behavioral, or developmental condition. That's

23,000 kids

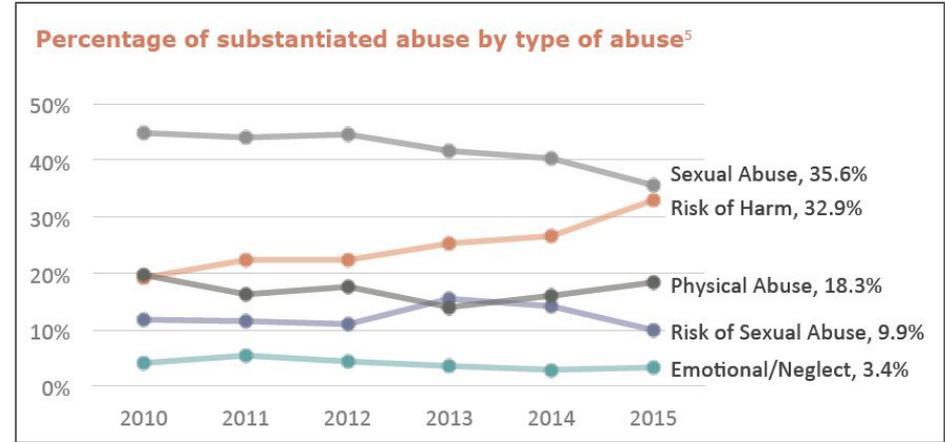
Vermont has one of the highest rates in the country, where rates range from 12-24%.

- LGBTQ youth and members of racial/ethnic minorities experience much higher rates of depression and suicide risk.
- On the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 25% of LGBTQ youth indicated that they had attempted suicide in the past year, compared to 4% of heterosexual youth.

Family & Community: Child Protection



While VT law prohibits child neglect substantiations based solely on the lack of financial resources of the parent or guardian, a growing number of families are coming to DCF's attention due to "financial stress."



Definitions of types of abuse vary widely across states. Sexual abuse, as defined in Vermont, is the most common type of substantiated abuse.

Vermont's "risk of harm" category captures much of what in other states might be termed neglect.

Notes & References

For complete citations and references, see the full report “Seeing the Whole Child, a Kids Count in Vermont Data Book” at <http://www.voicesforvtkids.org/publications-and-resources/>

You will also find a number of other state and national data resources on our website, including Voices’ recent reports on Housing and Education.

Voices for Vermont’s Children

PO Box 261

Montpelier, VT 05601

www.voicesforvtkids.org

802-229-6377