



Vermont's Universal Pre-K Program and Related Recommendations

Presentation to House Committee on Human Services and House Committee on Education
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VERMONT'S EARLY CHILDHOOD STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL

MISSION

To improve the well-being of each and every child and family in Vermont by using evidence to inform policy and bringing voices together to discuss critical challenges and problem solve.

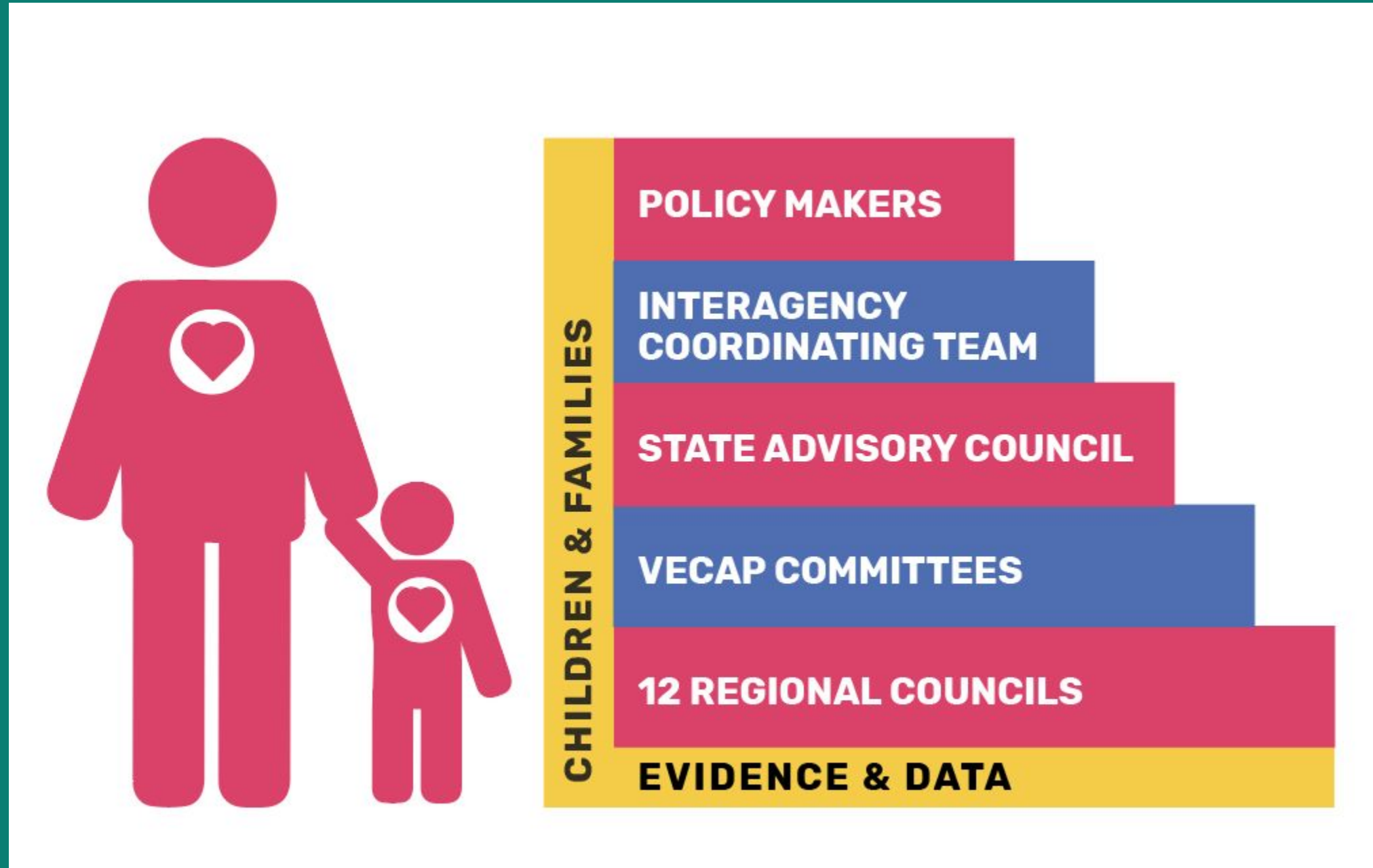


VISION

BBF maintains the vision and strategic plan for Vermont's Early Childhood System. Vermont's vision for the Early Childhood system is to be an integrated continuum of comprehensive, high quality services that is equitable and accessible and will improve outcomes for each and every child in the prenatal period to age eight and their family in Vermont.



Building Bright Futures Early Childhood Infrastructure and 450+ Person Network



The Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council and network infrastructure is charged by Act 104/Title 33, Chapter 46 to use evidence and data to monitor the system of services and provide the mechanism to support accountability.



Data to Inform Policy

Monitoring

- Vermont's Early Childhood Data Portal
- State of Vermont's Children
- Prekindergarten Education Implementation Committee
- Data Briefs
- Act 76 Monitoring
- Vermont's Early Childhood Data and Policy Center
- Continuous identification of needs

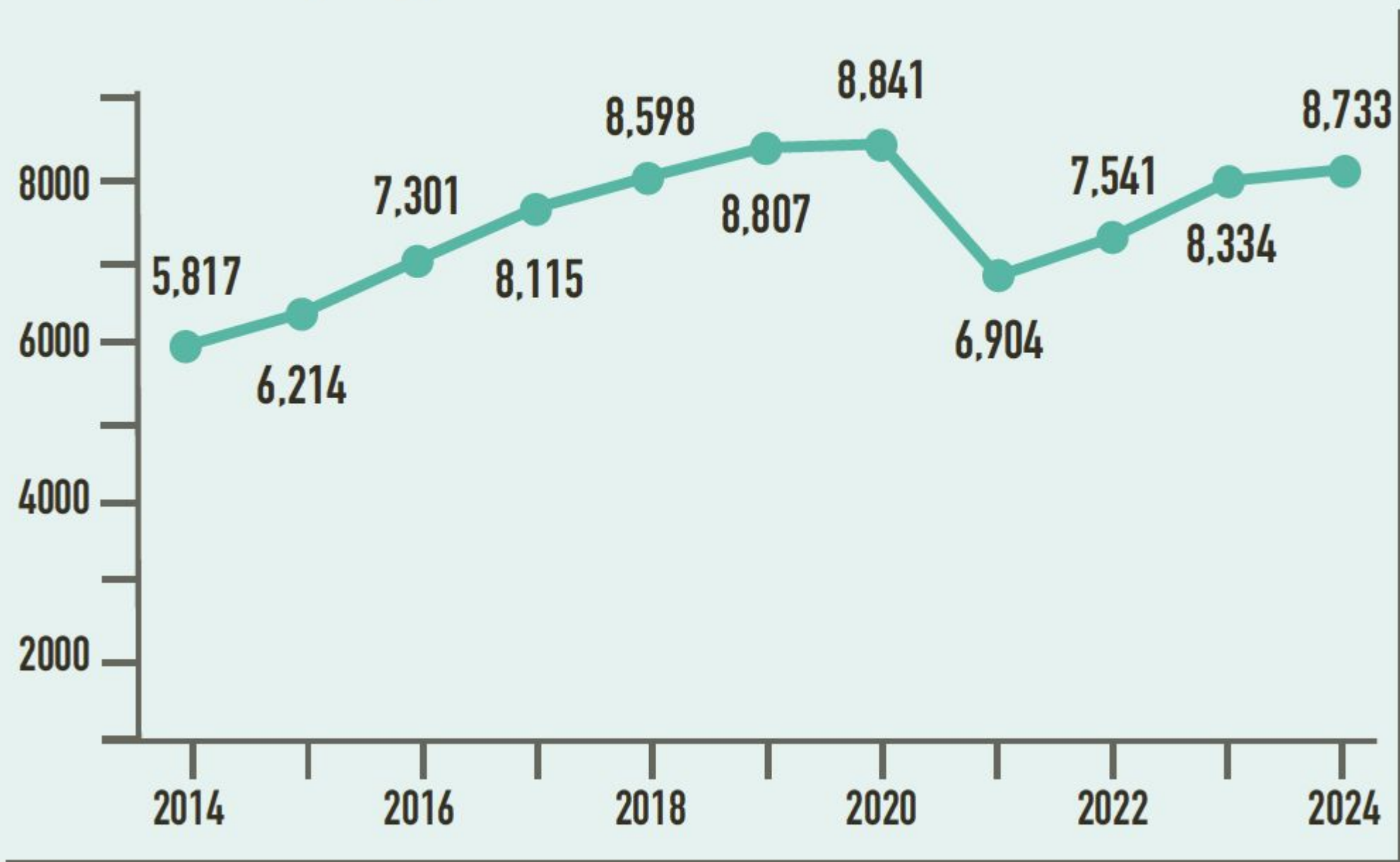
Advisement

- Data, indicators, best practice
- Supporting vision and strategy for early childhood policy
- Elevating needs, challenges, opportunities from families & communities



What do we know about Vermont's current UPK program?

Universal Prekindergarten Education
Spring Enrollment 2014-2024⁸



- **Enrollment:** UPK enrollment has recovered to pre-pandemic levels
- **Access:** Vermont has ranked second for 3-year-olds and sixth for 4-year-olds in access to UPK
- **Capacity:** 43% of slots are available in school-based programs and 57% are available in center-based and family child care homes
- **Child Outcomes:**
 - Children attending UPK programs had higher rates of readiness for Kindergarten
 - Rise in 4-year-olds exceeding expectations in math and social emotional development
 - 2 years of pre-K is beneficial for children



The Prekindergarten Education Implementation Committee (PEIC) Data Gathering Efforts



- 4 Surveys
 - public prekindergarten education teachers
 - principles
 - superintendents
 - school boards
- Thematic findings
 - Infrastructure needs
 - Workforce
 - Impact on 3-year-olds
 - Regulatory oversight
 - Financial considerations
 - Importance of mixed delivery
 - Expanding hours
 - Impacts on afterschool and out-of-school-time care
 - Special Education & transportation



Strengths and Challenges Related to the PEIC



Strengths of the work of the PEIC:

- Strong facilitation
- Data-driven decision-making
- Committed members

Challenges of the work of the PEIC:

- Unrealistic timeline
- Insufficient data systems
- Leadership transitions
- Evolving political priorities

The PEIC's challenges highlight the need for strengthened data systems to inform pre-K policy and accountability.



2025 Policy Recommendations Related to Vermont's Universal Pre-K Program

Monitor to Ensure Equitable Access for All 3- and 4-Year-Olds in Vermont's Universal Pre-K Program

- Ensure Vermont's Universal Prekindergarten Education (UPK) program continues to lead the country by maintaining universal access for 3- and 4-year-olds in a mixed-delivery system (school-based, center-based, and home-based programs) and centering the developmental needs of young children and their families. *Renewed Policy Recommendation (2022, 2023)*
- Task the Agency of Education, Child Development Division, and Building Bright Futures to create, implement, and update as necessary a monitoring and accountability protocol to better monitor Vermont's Universal Prekindergarten Education (UPK) Vermont's universal pre-K program, including robust data collection and analysis. The development of the process should include feedback from impacted communities and individuals (families, educators, Act 166 Coordinators, the Prekindergarten Education Implementation Committee, preK–12 administrators, etc.), and should be mindful of the additional capacity and skills reporting this data requires from programs. Collected data should include financial information, enrollment by student characteristics, staffing, and student outcomes.
- Secure sustained funding for personnel across all three entities to ensure high-quality data through the following activities: data management and reporting activities,; training and TA to support quality collection and reporting,; engagement in data integration meetings and visioning, data analysis, and making data publicly available.

