



Building Bright Futures Role in Vermont's Early Childhood System

Presentation to House Committee on Human Services
Dr. Morgan Crossman, Executive Director

January 31, 2025

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.

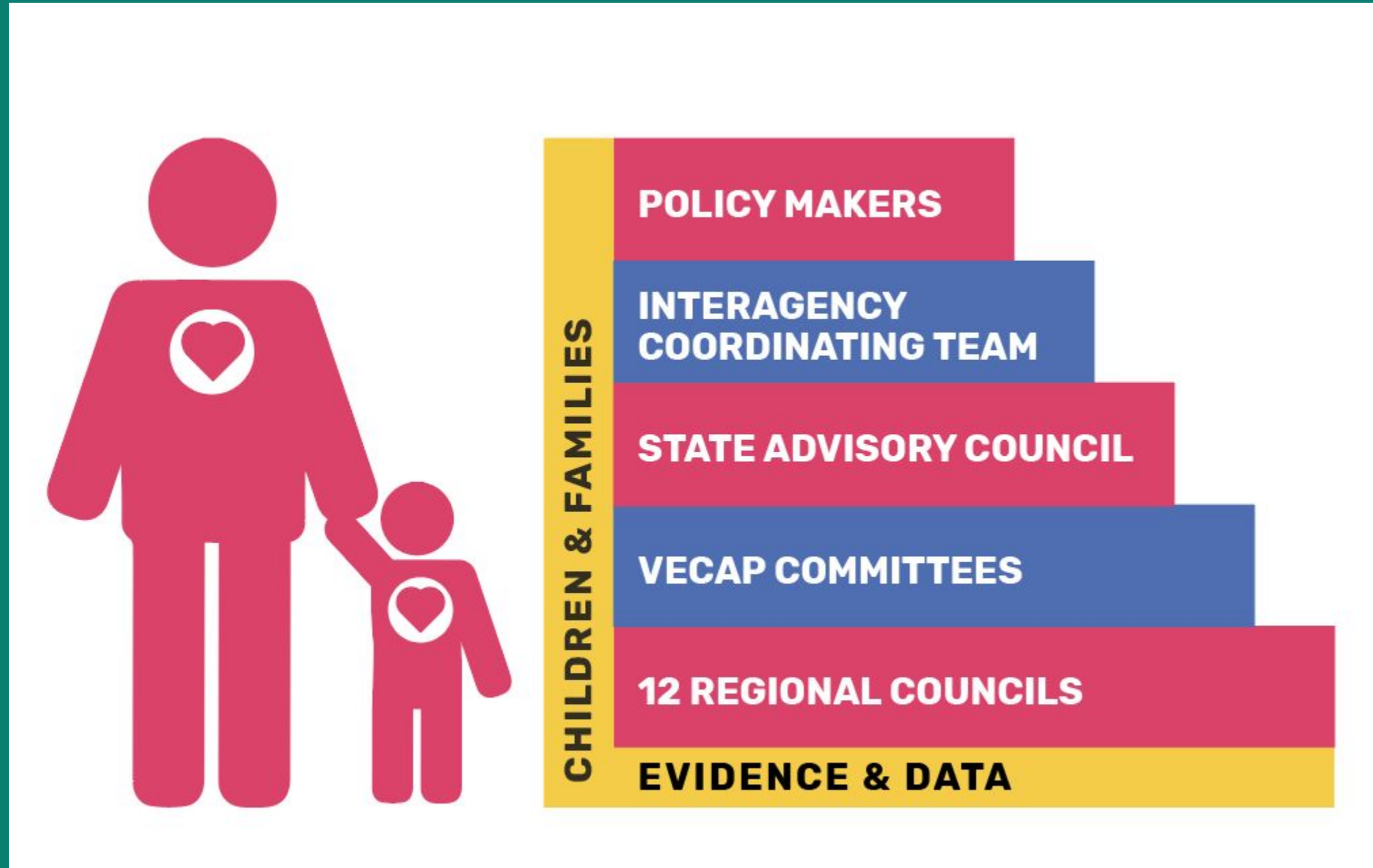


VISION

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.





Vermont's Early Childhood State Advisory Council

January 2025



Public Members

*Ilisa Stalberg, Vermont Department of Health, MCH
 *Renee Kelly; Head Start Collaboration Office
 Janet McLaughlin, DCF Child Development Division
 Jessica Vintinner, Agency of Commerce and Community Development
 Cheryle Wilcox; Department of Mental Health
 Monica Ogelby, Agency of Human Services, Secretary's Office
 Zoie Saunders, Agency of Education

Public Non-Voting Members

Monica Hutt, Chief Prevention Officer, Gov's Office
 Miranda Gray, Deputy Commissioner, Economic Services
 Carlie Thibault, Quality Assurance Administrator, Family Services

Legislative Members

Rep. Rey Garofano, Vermont House of Representatives
 Sen. Martine Gulick, Vermont Senate

At-Large Members

* Flor Diaz Smith; Vermont School Boards Association
 * Rebecca Webb; Barre Unified Union School District
 Libby Daghlian, Parent Representative
 Debra Hartswick, Retired Pediatrician
 Amber Hewston, Parent Representative
 Carol Lang-Godin, Parent Child Center Network
 Sharon Harrington, Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children
 Erica McLaughlin, Vermont Principals' Association
 Kiona Baez Heath, Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
 *Christy Swenson, Capstone Community Action/Head Start
 Xusana Davis; Office of Racial Equity
 Danielle Lindley Mitchell, Washington County Mental Health Services
 Eddie Gale, A. D. Henderson Foundation
 Dimitri Garder, Business Leader

*Executive Board denoted with an asterisk,



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

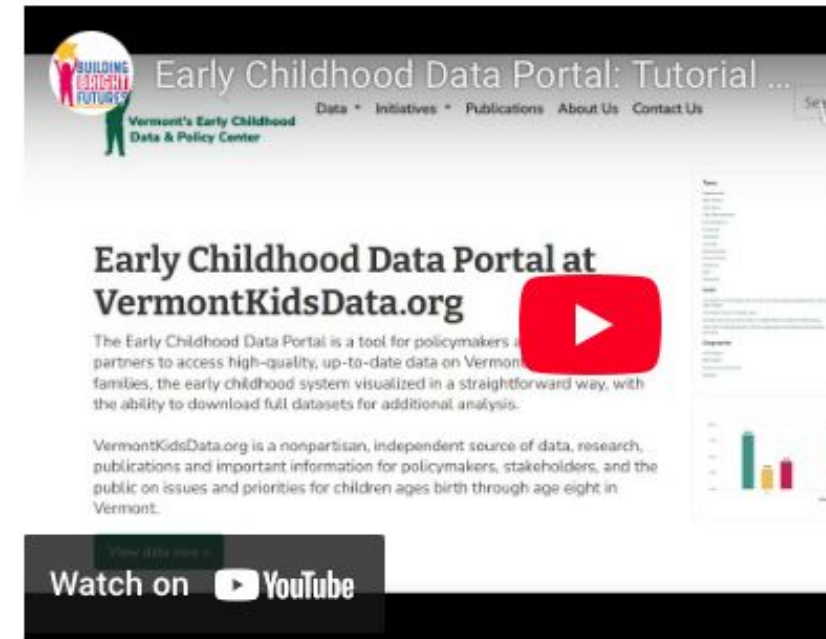
- Data, indicators, best practice
- Supporting vision and strategy for early childhood policy
- Elevating needs, challenges, opportunities from families & communities



Vermont's Early Childhood Data and Policy Center

How to Use the Portal

1. Scroll down on this page, then click on a topic, VECAP goal, or geography on the left. Of note—geographic data may not be in the visualization, but rather in the full downloadable dataset.
2. Select an indicator to review.
3. View the data, with the opportunity to download the full dataset if desired.
4. Click on the title for narrative context and the data source.
5. Scroll back to the top to review a different indicator for a more complete picture of the early childhood sector.



- **DATA:** A data portal, National and Vermont-specific datasets, data spotlights, and fact sheets
- **POLICY:** Early Childhood Policy updates, SAC Network recommendations, and BBF Legislative Testimony
- **PUBLICATIONS:** Reports and publications from BBF, agency, community and national partners, recorded research presentations, webinars, and Early Childhood Grand Rounds

Topics

Basic Needs

- Challenging Childhood Experiences
- Child Care
- Child Development
- Demographics
- Economics
- Education

Indicators / Basic Needs

Cost of Living

- Children Receiving Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) Bene
- Children Living in Poverty (Vermont)
- Households with Children Spending 30% or More of Their Income on Hous
- Birthing Parents without Paid Parental Leave
- Children Served by the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program
- Wage Benchmarks








State of Vermont's Children



Bright spots

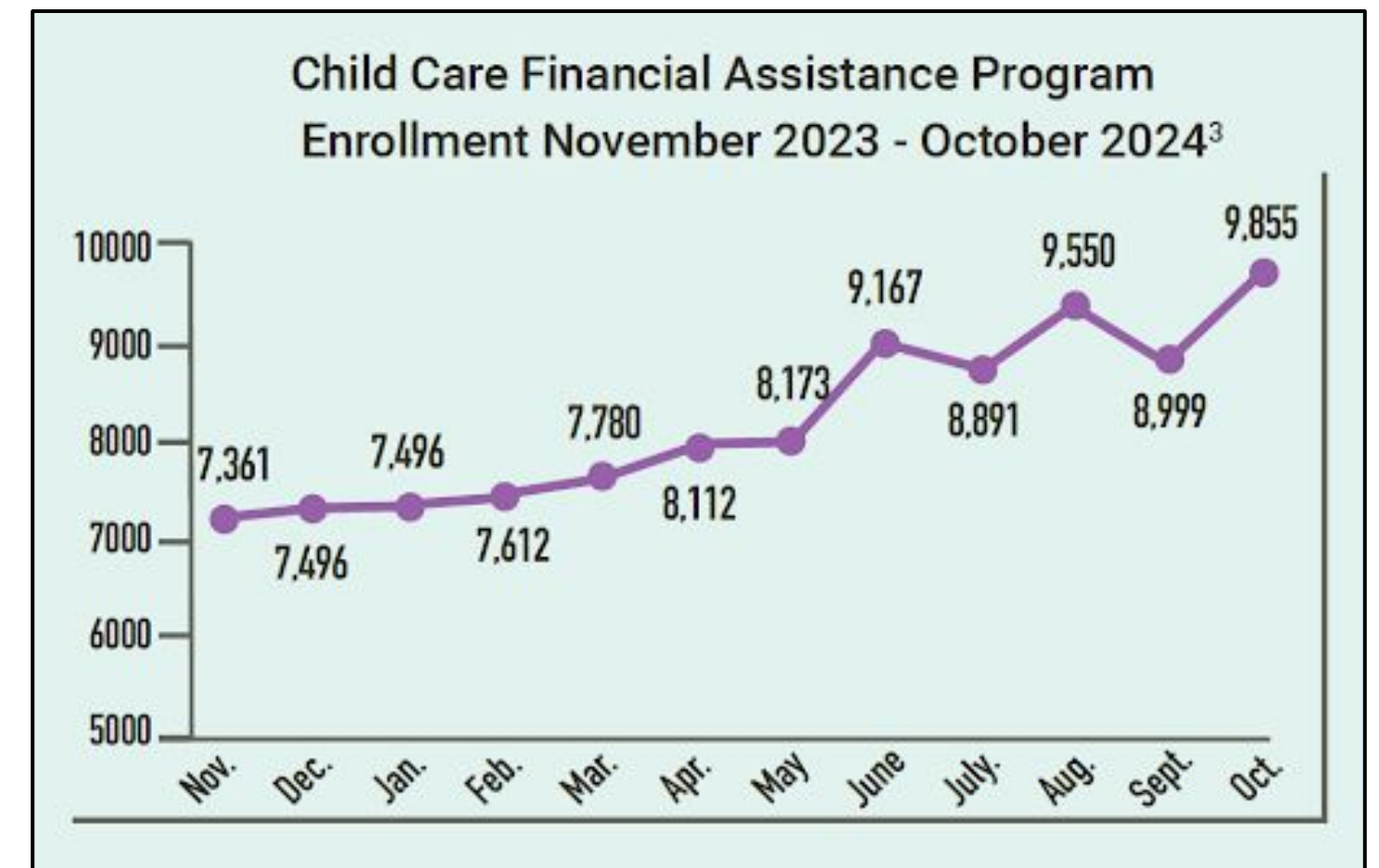
- CCFAP enrollment & leading the country in prioritizing child care
- UPK enrollment and access for 3 & 4-year-olds
- Rise in 4-year-olds exceeding expectations in math and social emotional development

Areas to monitor & course correct

-  unhoused children
-  children with behavioral, emotional, and mental health conditions
-  perinatal mood and anxiety disorders
-  3rd grade reading proficiency, lower for historically marginalized children
-  antiquated data systems and data capacity

Act 76 Monitoring in 2024

- **CAPACITY:** Increase of 170 infant slots in 2024 & in 2024, more early care businesses opened (60) than closed (40) for the first time since at least 2018
- **AFFORDABILITY:** 550 families at 175% FPL who no longer have a copay
- **AWARENESS:** 1,500 CCFAP applications submitted online in two months
- **ENROLLMENT:** 1,256 families above 400% now enrolled in CCFAP
- **WORKFORCE:** 480 career ladder bonuses awarded October 2023 to September 2024 communities



Act 76 Monitoring: The Prekindergarten Education Implementation Committee (PEIC)



The PEIC was formed to support the potential expansion of the universal pre-K program by 2026. The committee issued a final report with four recommendations, including:

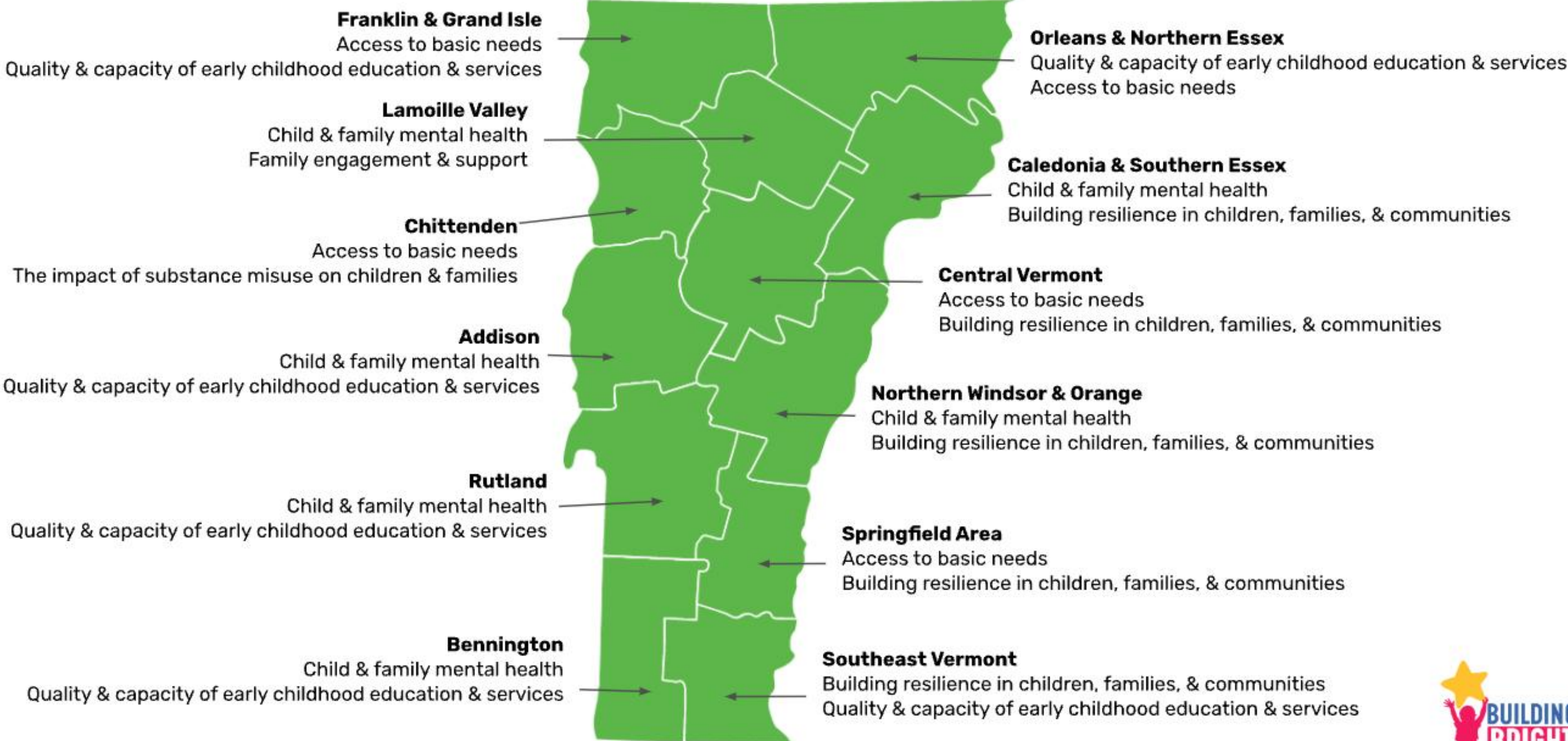
- Maintaining benefits for 3-year-olds
- Expanding access for 4-year-olds
- Commissioning a report on pupil weighting, and
- Reviewing the methodology for updating the rate for non-school-based programs

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



Elevating System Needs & Priorities

Building Bright Futures Regional Council Priorities 2024-2026



Elevating Family & Community Voice



Families and Communities Committee leaders reflect on their participation:

“It is a safe space to connect and advocate for my son and myself to help others and our community.” –F&CC Parent Representative

“Seeing my parent thoughts and views reflected in the wider work at BBF and across the state—my voice matters.” –F&CC Parent Representative



Advisement: 2025 Policy Recommendations

- The 2025 Policy Recommendations include priorities like:
 - Enacting best practices statewide for elevating the voices of families and community members
 - Investing to ensure families have access to safe and secure housing in the immediate term and long-term
 - Supporting families, children, staff, and providers navigating the child welfare system by investing in system improvements, like the CCWIS
 - Investing to ensure inclusion and meet social-emotional health needs in early education and afterschool programs
 - And many more: see the [handout on policy recommendations](#)



Accountability for Vermont's Early Childhood System

- BBF's role and scope has increased in recent years to support the complex Vermont early childhood system
- Need for an additional base public investment of \$322,444.50 annually to sustain the timely direct advisement required
 - This allocation would support personnel, overhead, Regional Councils, and program expenses/contracts.



**BBF advised
the Legislature
and decision-
makers**

more than

150 times

during the 2023-24
biennium.



Response to Emerging Needs & Priorities

Fall 2024 VECF Grantees

Grantee Focus Areas

- Increase access/provide equitable access to early childhood services and programs
- Improve the quality of existing services and programs
- ▲ Develop the early childhood workforce
- ★ Engage families and connect them to services

Chittenden County

- Champlain Center for Play Therapy and Family Counseling
Child parent relational therapy and therapy
- ★ Greater Burlington YMCA
Expanding family engagement & teacher support
- ▲ Lund
Growing the childcare workforce: pathways for New Americans year 2
- One Arts
Nutrition support program
- ★ Steps to End Domestic Violence
Early intervention violence prevention project

