



Building Bright Futures Policy Recommendations

Early Childhood Day at the Legislature 2025 | March 12, 2025

Meet the BBF Policy Team



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Building Bright Future's Role



- **Convene** early childhood partners through the Building Bright Futures Network
- **Monitor** the early childhood system through high-quality, up-to-date data
- **Empower** and elevate the voices of families and early childhood professionals
- **Respond** to needs by elevating emerging priorities and issuing policy recommendations
- **Advise** Vermont's Governor, Administration, and Legislature



Building Bright Futures Early Childhood Infrastructure and 500+ Person Network



The Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council Network is charged by Title 33, Chapter 46 monitor Vermont's early childhood system and to serve as an accountability mechanism.



Developing Policy Recommendations



- Identify Needs
- Consider Next Steps
- Leverage data and best practice
- Gather expert & lived expertise through network and partners
- Seek feedback & SAC endorsement



Policy Recommendation Timeline



Gather Input

June - August

How to get involved:

- Attend VECAP, Regional Council, and SAC Meetings



Draft & Endorse

September - November

How to get involved:

- Fill out the policy recommendation feedback form or get in touch with us!



Advise

January - May

How to get involved:

- Advocate for recommendations
- Track progress of recommendations



Advise & Advocate on Behalf of the System

RECOMMENDATIONS & STRATEGIES

2025 Policy Recommendations of Vermont's Early Childhood State Advisory Council Network

Vermont's Early Childhood State Advisory Council (SAC) is the state's Governor-appointed, primary advisory body on the well-being of children from the prenatal period through age 8 and their families. Each year, in partnership with Vermont's Early Childhood Action Plan (VECAP) Committees and Regional Councils, the SAC sets priorities and strategic direction for statewide initiatives by endorsing a series of Policy Recommendations. These annual Policy Recommendations of Vermont's Early Childhood State Advisory Council Network are developed using the VECAP, up-to-date data, and the most pressing feedback and challenges being faced in the early childhood system collected throughout the year. The annual Policy Recommendations identify the current gaps and needs in policy, promote action in strategic areas for the coming year, and aim to be measurable.


ACCESS TO BASIC NEEDS (VECAP GOAL 1)

Enact a Strong Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program

- Enact a Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance program for Vermonters seeking to take time off to care for a family member or themselves while welcoming a new child into the family, while navigating an illness or injury, or after experiencing a loss. Ensure that the benefit through this program covers all caregivers in the case of a two-parent household, and that the benefit is sufficiently generous for low-income families to utilize the program. *Renewed Policy Recommendation (2024)*

Invest to Ensure Families Have Access to Safe and Secure Housing in the Immediate and Long-Term

- Immediately stand up critically needed safe, accessible, non-congregate emergency solutions for sheltering families and children in crisis. Provide quality services and service coordination to support families accessing these shelters who are navigating a variety of complex needs (special health care needs, mental health conditions, substance use disorder, etc.). Ensure there is a long-term plan to continue to shelter families with young children as needed and sufficient funding to sustain this strategy.
- Prioritize data collection related to the demographics of those navigating homelessness to inform outreach and mitigation efforts, and to recognize the racial disparities embedded in our systems impacting families with young children.
- Support families navigating housing instability with a continuum of services that move them into more consistent housing. Invest in strategies that support families in finding and affording safe and stable housing, including funding for the HOME voucher program for families and a potential expansion of the Family Supportive Housing program.
- Prioritize significant and sustained investments in the creation of new housing units to alleviate the housing crisis, which has only been exacerbated by extreme weather events. When creating new housing units, invested parties should aim to locate housing in priority areas and near services needed by families, including transportation, schools, and child care, but outside of areas at high risk for flooding. Priority should be given to creating or rehabilitating housing that is designed to be permanently affordable.



Building Bright Futures

Date: January 23, 2025
To: Chair Marcotte and members of the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development
CC: Representative Jessica Brunstedt, Legislative representative on the State Advisory Council
From: Dr. Morgan Crowman, Executive Director, Building Bright Futures and Anna Brunelle, Policy and Program Director, Building Bright Futures
Re: Introduction to Building Bright Futures and Monitoring Act 76

Building Bright Future's Role in Vermont's Early Childhood System


Building Bright Futures (BBF) is Vermont's early childhood public-private partnership charged under Title 33, Chapter 46 and the federal Head Start Act to serve as Vermont's Early Childhood State Advisory Council. State statute charges BBF with maintaining and monitoring the vision and strategic plan for Vermont's early childhood system and serving as the primary advisor to the Governor and Legislature on the status of children in the prenatal period through age eight and their families.

BBF's mission: To improve the well-being of children and families in Vermont by using evidence to inform policy and bringing voices together across sectors and within regions to discuss critical challenges and problem-solve.

Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council (SAC) does not directly lobby for or oppose any specific bill or action discussed within the legislature or legislatively appointed committee. Our role is to convene and elevate the voices of families and early childhood partners, monitor the system by identifying high-quality up-to-date data, and synthesize this information to advise decision-makers.

BBF Network Infrastructure: These roles are fulfilled through BBF's infrastructure which includes a network of over 450 early childhood partners (figures below):

- A network of 12 Regional Councils convening early childhood experts throughout Vermont communities to move forward local and statewide early childhood priorities.
- 7 Vermont Early Childhood Action Plan (VECAP) committees updating and monitoring the Early Childhood vision and strategic plan for Vermont.
- The State Advisory Council (SAC) brings together cross-sector early childhood leaders to issue recommendations, increase coordination to advance a connected and evolving early childhood system, and advise the Governor and Legislature.



Policy/Strategy
Data/Research
Cross-Sector Partners
Regional Councils

Vermont's Early Childhood Data and Policy Center: The center is designed to be an independent source of data, research, and publications on the early childhood system, including:

- Vermont's Early Childhood Data Portal, where you can sort, visualize, and download data
- The State of Vermont's Childcare Keynote report
- A searchable database of BBF's publications and resources
- BBF's recent legislative achievement and Act 76 monitoring

2025 Legislation Related to VECAP Priorities									
Search by title...									
	Bill	Issues	Status Text	Last Timeline Action	Source Link	AI Summary	Committees		
1	H.141: An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments	Budgets, System of Care	Passed Second Chamber	Senate Message: Report of Committee of ...	External Link	The legislative text amends the fiscal year ...	VT House Committee on Ways and Means; VT ...	2/2	2/2
2	H.113: An act relating to Medicaid payment rates for home- and ...	Mental Health Access, Healthcare Access, 20...	Passed Original Chamber	Read 1st time & referred to Committee on Health...	External Link	The legislative text outlines provisions for ...	VT House Committee on Appropriations; VT ...	2/2	2/2
3	S.53: An act relating to certification of community-based perinatal doulas a...	Perinatal Health, Healthcare Access, ...	Out of Committee	Committed to Committee on Health and Welfare ...	External Link	The proposed legislation introduces a voluntary ...	VT Senate Committee on Government Operations	2/2	2/2
4	H.248: An act relating to supplemental child care grants and the Child Care ...	Family Child Care Homes, CCFAP, Child ...	Introduced or Prefiled	Read first time and referred to the ...	External Link	The proposed legislation aims to enhance the us...			
5	H.182: An act relating to the licensure of early childhood educators	Early Care & Education Workforce, Early Care ...	Introduced or Prefiled	Read first time and referred to the ...	External Link	The proposed legislation mandates the licensure...			
6	H.105: An act relating to developing and implementing a universal primary...	2025 Legislative Policy Agenda, Healthcare ...	Introduced or Prefiled	Read first time and referred to the ...	External Link	The proposed legislation aims to establish a ...	VT House Committee on Health Care		
7	H.131: An act relating to Reach Up grant calculation	Reach Up/Cash Assistance/TANF, Basic...	Introduced or Prefiled	Read first time and referred to the ...	External Link	The proposed legislation aims to modify the ...			
8	H.79: An act relating to certification of community-based perinatal doulas	Perinatal Health, Physical Health	Introduced or Prefiled	Read first time and referred to the ...	External Link	The proposed legislation establishes a voluntary ...	VT House Committee on Health Care		



Universal Pre-K

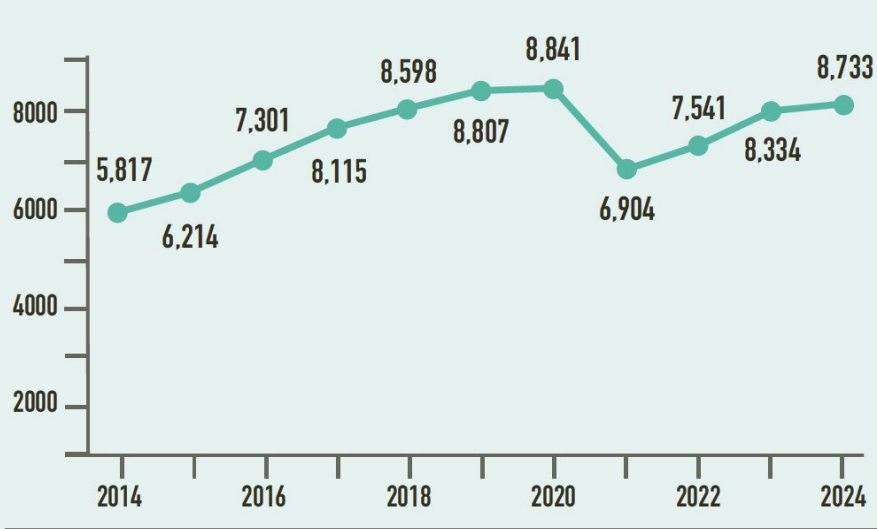


- Maintain access for 3- and 4-year-olds in mixed delivery system
- Implement robust data collection and analysis to monitor impact
- Secure sustained funding to ensure high quality data collection, reporting and integration



Advisement on Universal Pre-K

Universal Prekindergarten Education
Spring Enrollment 2014-2024⁸



- UPK enrollment has recovered to pre-pandemic levels
- Vermont has ranked second for 3-year-olds and sixth for 4-year-olds in access to UPK
- 43% of slots are available in school-based programs and 57% are available in center-based and family child care homes
- Children attending UPK programs had higher rates of readiness for Kindergarten
- Rise in 4-year-olds exceeding expectations in math and social emotional development



Access to Safe & Secure Housing



- Immediately stand up critically needed safe, accessible, non-congregate emergency solutions for sheltering families and children in crisis
- Support families navigating housing instability with a continuum of services that move them into more consistent housing
- Prioritize significant and sustained investments in the creation of new housing units to alleviate the housing crisis



Advisement on Access to Safe & Secure Housing

As of Monday, 3/10, 244 families with 393 children and 21 pregnant people were being served by the General Assistance Emergency Housing Program.

- Budget Adjustment Act as passed by House and Senate extends cold weather rules through 6/30/25
- Governor's FY26 proposed budget would
 - Fully fund VHCB
 - Continue Hotel Motel Program & Emergency Shelter until new legislation can take effect
- H. 91 offers a new Emergency Temporary Shelter program in 2026



Paid Family & Medical Leave Insurance



Enact a Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance program for Vermonters seeking to take time off to care for a family member or themselves while welcoming a new child into the family, while navigating an illness or injury, or after experiencing a loss.



Advisement on Paid Family & Medical Leave Insurance

*In Vermont, 47% of birthing parents returning to work after having a child **do not have paid leave**. Birthing parents returning to work in Vermont after paid leave are more likely to have private insurance (72%), while only 26% of birthing parents with access to paid leave are on Medicaid.*

- Members of the Vermont Paid Leave Coalition
- Meeting with national paid leave policy and data experts
- Aiming to collect more data on Vermont's voluntary PFML program



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



Questions



Tracking the Legislative Process



- Quorum is a public affairs monitoring database
- Monitoring progress towards policy recommendations and goals of the strategic plan
- Supports our ability to advocate on behalf of the early childhood system
- Increase transparency of policy making process



Tracking Sheets

- 2025 Policy Recommendation Related Legislation
- 2025 Legislation Related to VECAP Priorities

2025 Legislation Related to VECAP Priorities

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6	H.185: An act relating to developing and implementing a universal primary...	2025 Legislative Policy Agenda, Healthcare ...	Introduced or Prefiled	Read first time and referred to the ...	External Link	The proposed legislation aims to establish a ...	VT House Committee on Health Care	
7	H.131: An act relating to Reach Up grant calculation	Reach Up/Cash Assistance/TANF, Basic...	Introduced or Prefiled	Read first time and referred to the ...	External Link	The proposed legislation aims to modify the ...		
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Your Turn!



- Pull up the Legislation Related to VECAP Priorities Tracking Sheets on your device
- Select a bill that relates to an issue that is important to you
- Identify where that bill is in the legislative process
- Brainstorm what decision maker is likely to impact whether the legislation moves forward
- Brainstorm tactics you could use to influence that decision maker/s to support your position
- Debrief



Connect with us!



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