



August 2021

## Vermont's Child Care and Early Childhood Education Systems Analysis (ECSA)

**Goal:** To examine systems that govern and administer child care and early childhood education and use this information to make recommendations for Vermont's approaches to improve functionality of services and systems that will promote optimal outcomes for children and families.

**Timeline:** August 15, 2021 - June 30, 2022

**Background:** The Vermont Child Care and Early Childhood Education Systems Analysis (ECSA) was mandated by the Vermont Legislature in Act 45/H.171 and signed by Governor Scott on June 1, 2021. The analysis is intended to develop recommendations for the following areas by reviewing what exists related to child care and early childhood education and how it can be strengthened: optimal organization, capacity, and functioning of State Government to meet the needs of children, families, educators and communities; the infrastructure for authority, accountability, integration, and family and community engagement; and the data infrastructure.

### Key areas of investigation:

#### AREAS OF INVESTIGATION TO CONSIDER

*\*Across all categories, consider the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Federal supports on the horizon as well as ensuring an anti-racist approach*

#### Systematic Document Review

- What is the current status of Vermont's early childhood system, what can be learned from national best practices, and how are these currently embedded or not in Vermont?

#### Governance, Administration & Integration

- Mapping Vermont's early childhood system, and examining early childhood governance and administration, including collaborative oversight of programs within and between state agencies, departments and divisions, public-private partnerships, community partners, families, and practitioners.
- Identification of decision-making authority and how it's informed by early childhood stakeholders (i.e. examining participation, representation of marginalized groups and how stakeholders, including families and educators, are engaged in decision-making)
- Examination of capacity and quality of governance and administration for child care and early childhood education
- Examination of formal and informal collaboration, coordination, and integration across early childhood programs and infrastructure to support this work (i.e. responsibility and authority of Vermont's Early Childhood State Advisory Council, State Agencies, Head Start Collaboration Office, systems for monitoring quality, equitable access to services, and seamless transitions for families)
- Barriers to effective governance, administration and integration
- Mechanisms to strengthen system oversight and administration

#### Early Childhood Data Infrastructure

- Examine the data governance infrastructure as well as data prioritization efforts
- Examine Vermont's early childhood data infrastructure and gaps
- Examine Vermont's ability to demonstrate impact of programs, policies, and investments



**Recommendation areas:**

The consultant will consider the Vermont Early Childhood Action Plan (VECAP), specifically the vision of ensuring that Vermont’s early childhood system is an integrated, continuous, comprehensive, high quality system of services that is equitable, accessible and will improve outcomes for each and every child and their family in developing recommendations. To address the broader goals above, the contractor will develop a series of recommendations across the following categories:

1. Recommendations for the strengthening the child care and early education system supporting children “Birth through Pre Kindergarten education”
2. Recommendations for strengthening the system supporting children “Kindergarten through age 12 (including after school and out of school care)”
3. Recommendations for strengthening the integration of child care, early childhood education and Kindergarten through age 12.
4. Recommendations reflective of the current status of Vermont’s early childhood system (COVID-19 recovery and revisioning) assuming no changes to federal and state funding
5. Recommendations reflective of the overall goals and legislative intent of H. 171 (i.e. increased CCFAP rates and family co-payments not exceeding 10% of income)
6. Recommendations reflective of the Biden Administration’s priorities around child care and Universal Prekindergarten Education

**Vermont Child Care and Early Childhood Education Systems Analysis - Ways to be engaged:**

<p><b>Request for Proposals (RFP) Advisory Committee</b> (completed)</p>	<p>Cross-sector leaders (7) charged with review and sign-off on the Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit proposals for a national contractor. This group came together to review top proposals and select contractor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1 Senator from the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare</li> <li>● 1 Representative from the House Committee on Human Services</li> <li>● 1 leader from the Agency of Human Services</li> <li>● 1 leader from the Agency of Education</li> <li>● 1 faculty member from the University of Vermont’s Department of Education</li> <li>● 1 leader from Let’s Grow Kids</li> <li>● 1 leader from Building Bright Futures</li> </ul>
<p><b>Early Childhood Systems Analysis (ECSA) Advisory Committee</b></p>	<p>A cross-sector advisory committee will oversee the project. The Advisory Committee will include membership from the RFP Advisory Committee, VECAP Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Team and the VECAP Early Learning and Development Committee. The advisory group will meet an estimated 5 times utilizing standing committee meeting times when possible.</p>
<p><b>Systematic Document Review</b></p>	<p>Examination of previous needs assessments, strategic plans, academic studies, policy reports, evaluations, and progress reports related to Vermont’s child care and early childhood education system (compilation in progress)</p>



<b>Key informant interviews</b>	Semi-structure key informant interviews will take place with political leaders, notable experts, leaders, and families in Vermont’s early childhood system.
<b>Focus groups/community discussions</b>	Open and targeted community conversation utilizing regional councils and the BBF Network will be used to collect data in the form of qualitative focus groups and community events or summits.
<b>Surveys</b>	Surveys may be developed to elicit perspectives and feedback from a range of early childhood partners, leaders and families across Vermont to ensure diverse voices and perspectives are included.

<b>ECSA Advisory Committee tentative schedule</b>	
August 19 9:00-10:00 am	ECSA Advisory Committee Orientation
September TBD	ECSA Advisory Committee - 1 <sup>st</sup> Work In Progress (WIP)
November 17 1:30-3:00 pm (during standing ECICT meeting time)	ECSA Advisory Committee - 2 <sup>nd</sup> Work In Progress (WIP)
February 11 10:00-12:00 pm (during standing ELD meeting time)	ECSA Advisory Committee - 3 <sup>rd</sup> Work In Progress (WIP)
April TBD	ECSA Advisory Committee - 4 <sup>th</sup> Work In Progress (WIP)
June 1 1:30-3:00pm	ECSA Advisory Committee - Final Works in Progress (WIP), Findings and draft recommendations from Consultant
July 11 1:00-2:00pm	Public Webinar: Final Report & Recommendations

**Project Management and Oversight**

The Legislature identified the Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council as the appointed body to oversee the Systems Analysis and procure a contractor. A rigorous procurement process led Vermont to contract with Foresight Law + Policy and Watershed Advisors.

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