



**THE STATE OF  
VERMONT'S CHILDREN**

2021 YEAR IN REVIEW



# The State of Vermont's Children

2021 Year in Review

Presented by Building Bright Futures and  
Vermont's Early Childhood Data & Policy Center  
([Vermontkidsdata.org](https://vermontkidsdata.org))

Monday, January 10, 2022





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# Briefing Agenda

- Remarks from Governor Scott
- 2021 Data Spotlight:
  - Vermont's Early Childhood Workforce Crisis
- Highlights from The State of Vermont's Children
- Policy Recommendations Into Action
  - Step Up to Child Care
  - Family Leadership and Engagement; Progress and Opportunities
- *Closing Remarks, Questions & Discussion*



# Our Collective Vision for Vermont's Children And Their Families

## Goal 3:

**All Children And Families Have Access To  
High-quality Opportunities That Meet Their Needs**

The whole family is connected to their diverse community and can access high-quality opportunities that meet their needs. Mariah grows into a toddler, preschooler, and eventually transitions into the local elementary school. She is resilient and able to navigate even the difficult days she will face.

## Goal 2:

**Families And Communities Play  
A Leading Role In Children's Well-being**

Mariah thrives with the loving care of her family. Their home is warm and safe. There is food in the fridge today and on the horizon.

## Goal 1:

**All Children Have A Healthy Start**

In the year 2026, a child is born to a family in Vermont. We will call her baby Mariah. Vermont is a state where all children and families are accepted for who they are. Mariah and her family are supported from the very start all the way through her development and education.

## Goal 4:

**The Early Childhood  
System Will Be Integrated,  
Well Resourced And Data-informed**

Mariah does not yet know there is a community holding her and her family through a seamless early childhood system.



# 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.



# SPOTLIGHT Vermont's Early Childhood Workforce Crisis

*Each and every individual working in early childhood fields plays a critical role in supporting Vermont children, their families, and the future of the communities and economy of Vermont.*

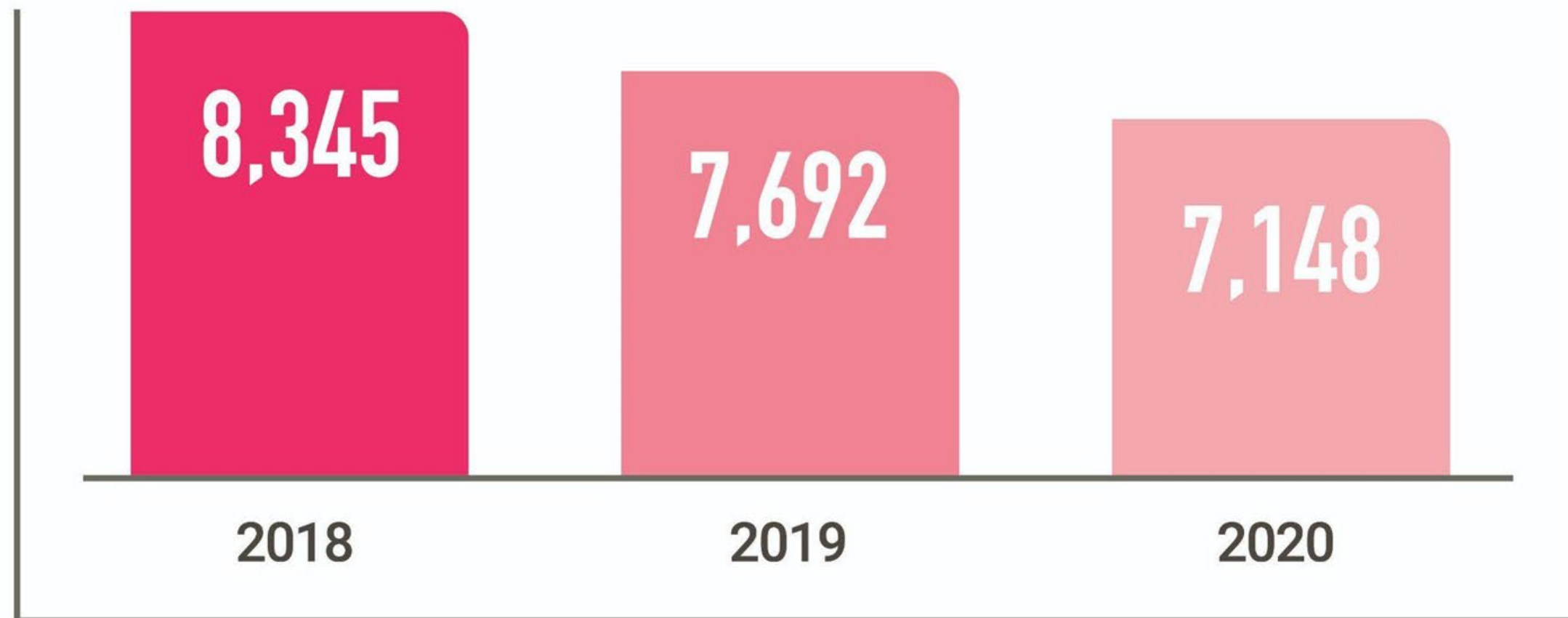




# SPOTLIGHT Vermont's Early Childhood Workforce Crisis

## Child Care Workforce

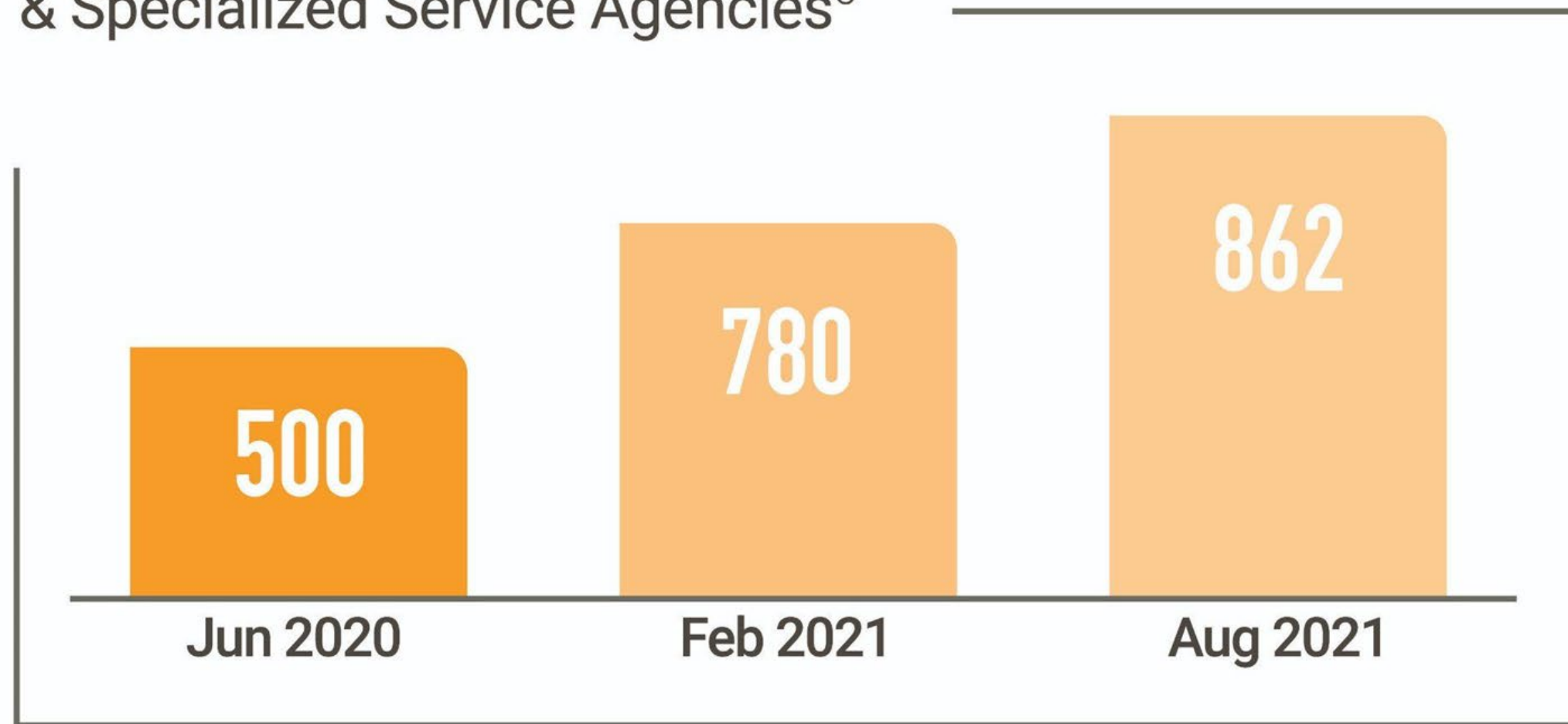
Unduplicated Individuals Working in Regulated  
Child Care Settings, in Positions Working with Children<sup>4</sup>



- From December 2018 to 2020 there was a 14% decline (1,200) in the number of individuals working with children
- 27% of Head Start and Early Head Start slots are unable to be used because of vacancies

## Mental Health Workforce

Vacancies in Designated Mental Health Agencies  
& Specialized Service Agencies<sup>6</sup>



- 72% increase in vacancies in Vermont's Designated Agencies and Specialized Service Agencies
- 31% workforce turnover rate
- 970 vacancies in September 2021

## Overall Workforce Changes and Challenges



- Almost 3% of Americans left their jobs in August 2021
- Who is leaving?
  - 30 - 45-year-olds
  - Women
- There are 28,000 fewer people in the VT labor force than 2 years ago





## Who Are Vermont's Young Children?

Distribution of Children Under 10 Years and  
Total Population by Race & Ethnicity (2019)<sup>13</sup>

Racial Distribution	Children Under 10	Population
American Indian or Alaska Native	Suppressed	Suppressed
Black or African	1.1%	1.4%
American	1.9%	1.5%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	<0.1%	0.1%
Some Other Race	0.6%	0.4%
Two or More Races	4.6%	2%
White	91.8%	94.6%
Hispanic or Latino	2.9%	2%

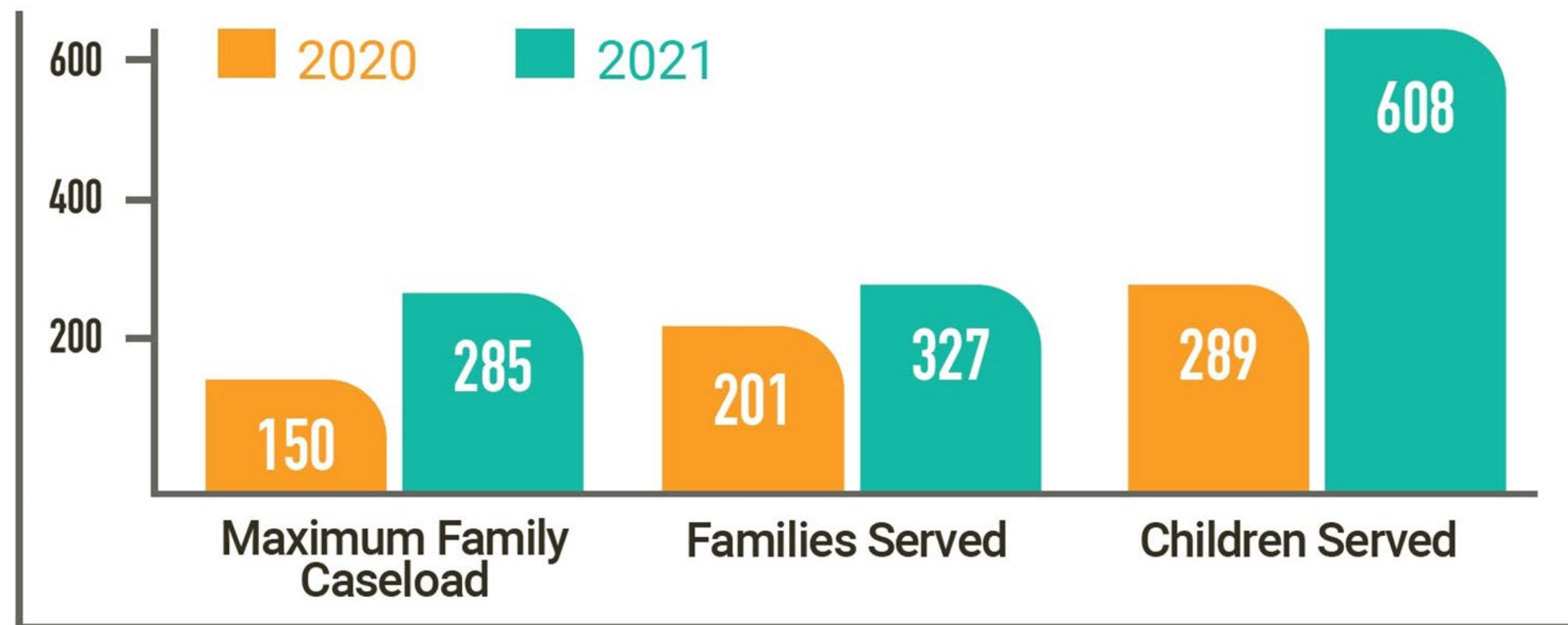
- **53,821** children under 9
- **55%** of children live in 4 regions
- **96%** of children under 9 have some type of health insurance; **81%** have adequate insurance
- **35.7%** of children under 6 live in poverty





## Housing and Homelessness

Family Supportive Housing 2020 and 2021<sup>28</sup>

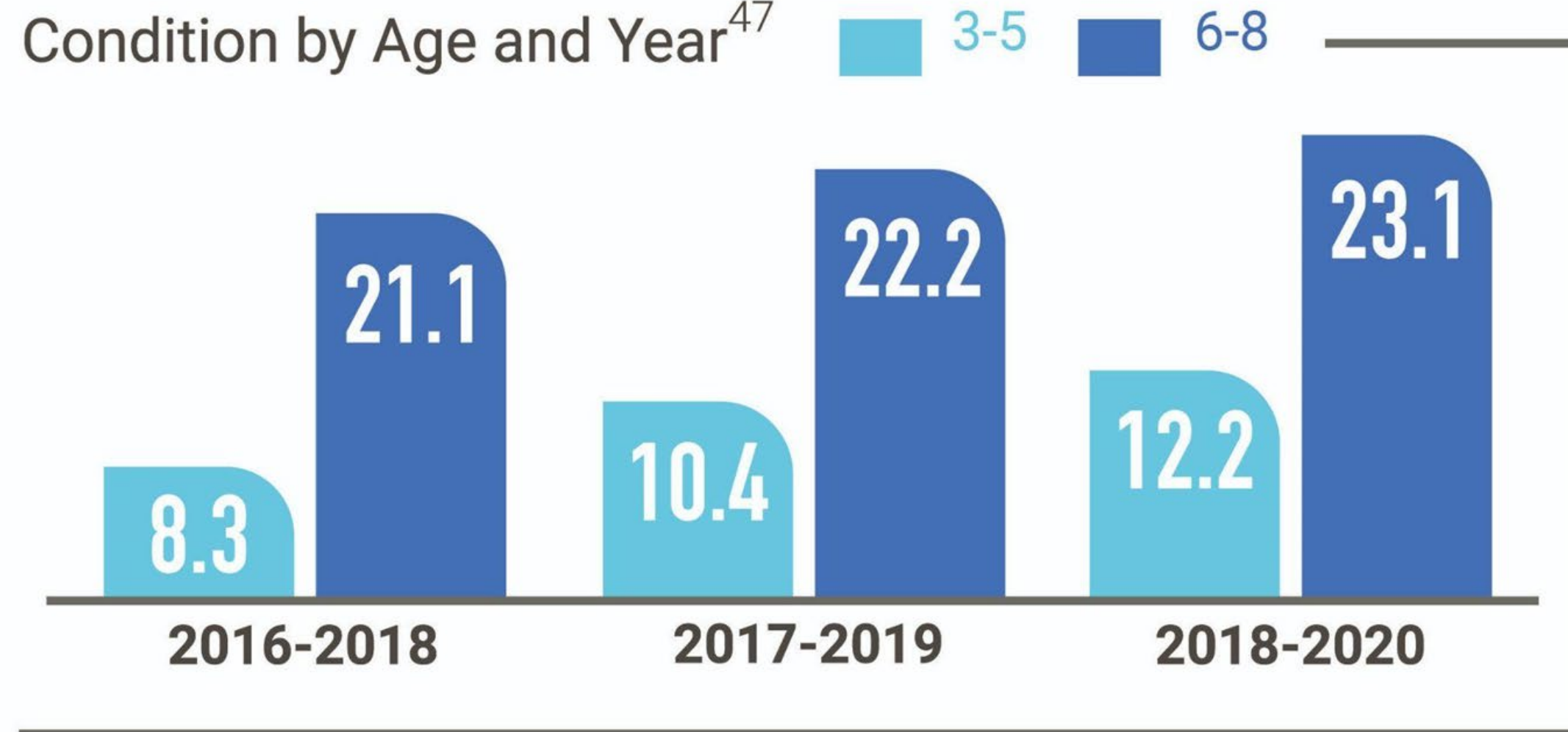


- 25% of homeowners and 55% of renters spend 30% of their income on mortgage or rent
- Approximately 425 children sheltered in motels each night throughout the pandemic
- 90% increase in maximum family supportive housing caseload



## Early Childhood & Family Mental Health

Percent of Children with a Behavioral, Emotional, Mental Health, or Developmental Condition by Age and Year<sup>47</sup>



- **ADD/ADHD**
- **anxiety**
- **depression**
- **behavioral/conduct problems**
- autism or ASD
- developmental delay,
- intellectual disability
- learning disability
- speech or other language disorder,
- Tourette syndrome



## Early Childhood & Family Mental Health

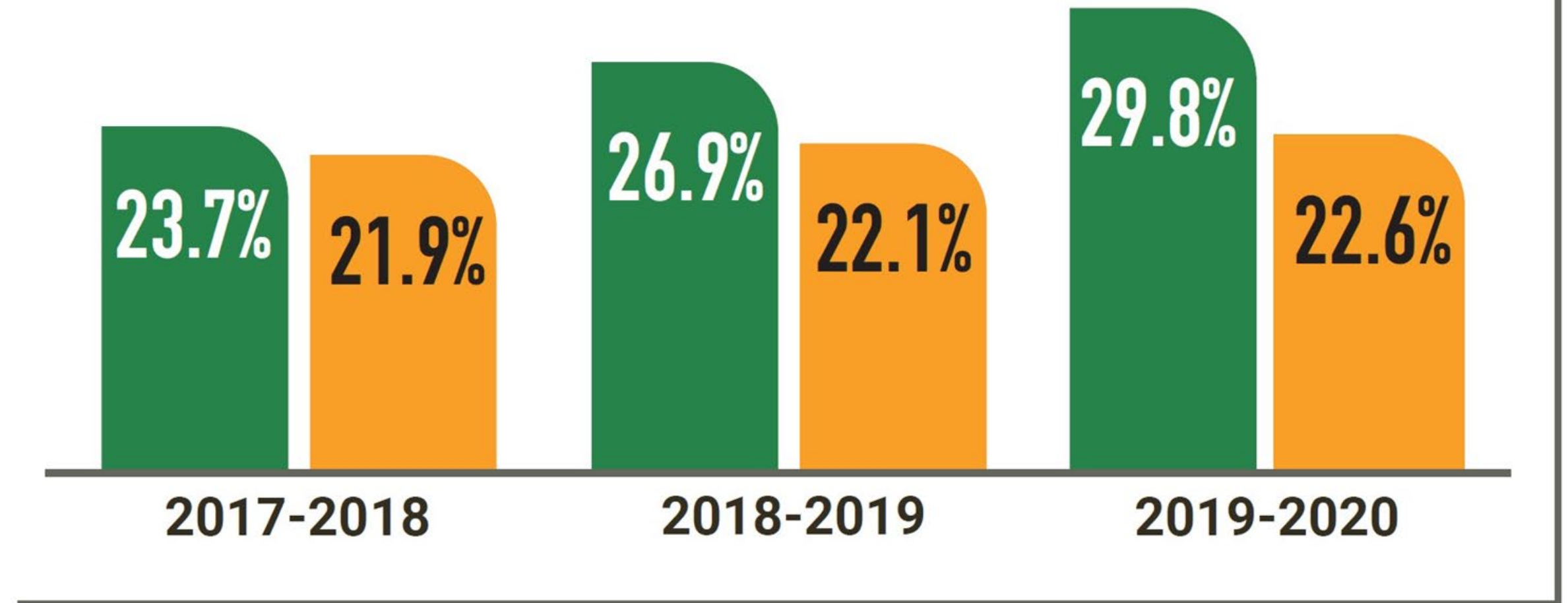


1 in 3  
children in Vermont have a  
behavioral, emotional,  
developmental, or mental  
health condition

Percent of Children with a Behavioral, Emotional, Mental Health, or Developmental Condition by Year.

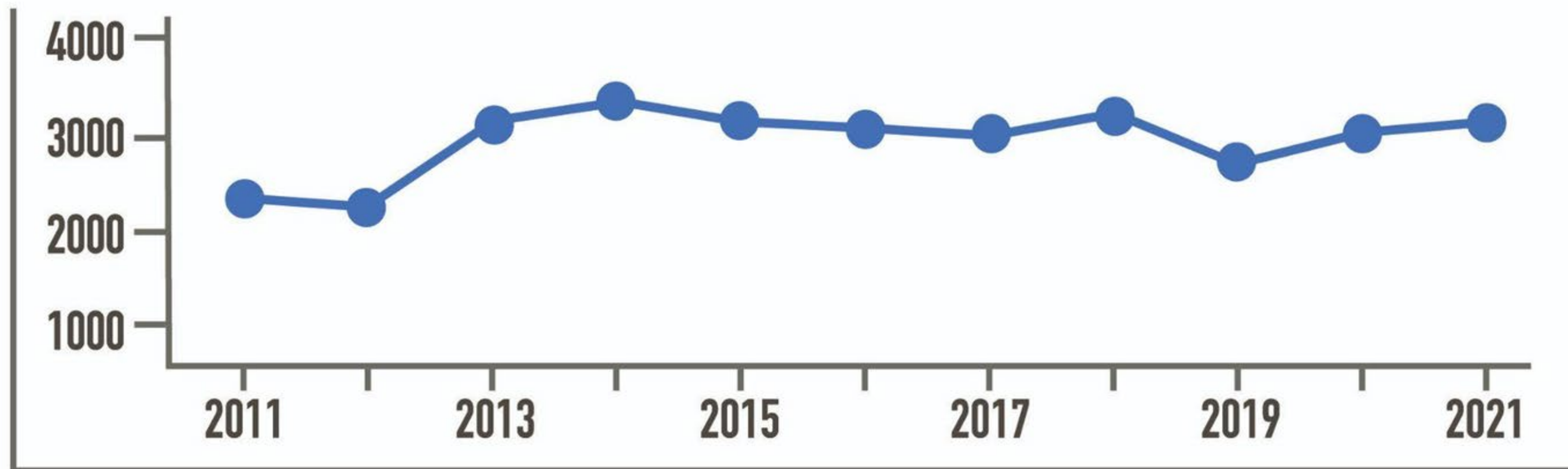
Vermont and US

■ Vermont ■ US



# Early Childhood & Family Mental Health

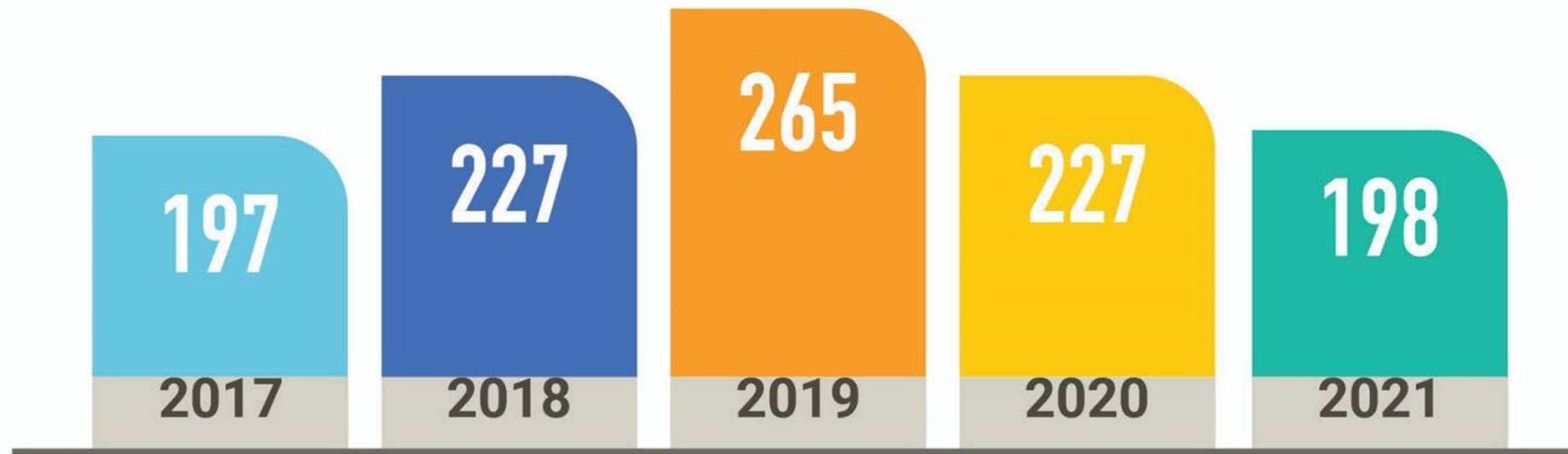
No. of Children Under 9 Served by Designated Mental Health Agencies 2011-2021<sup>48</sup>





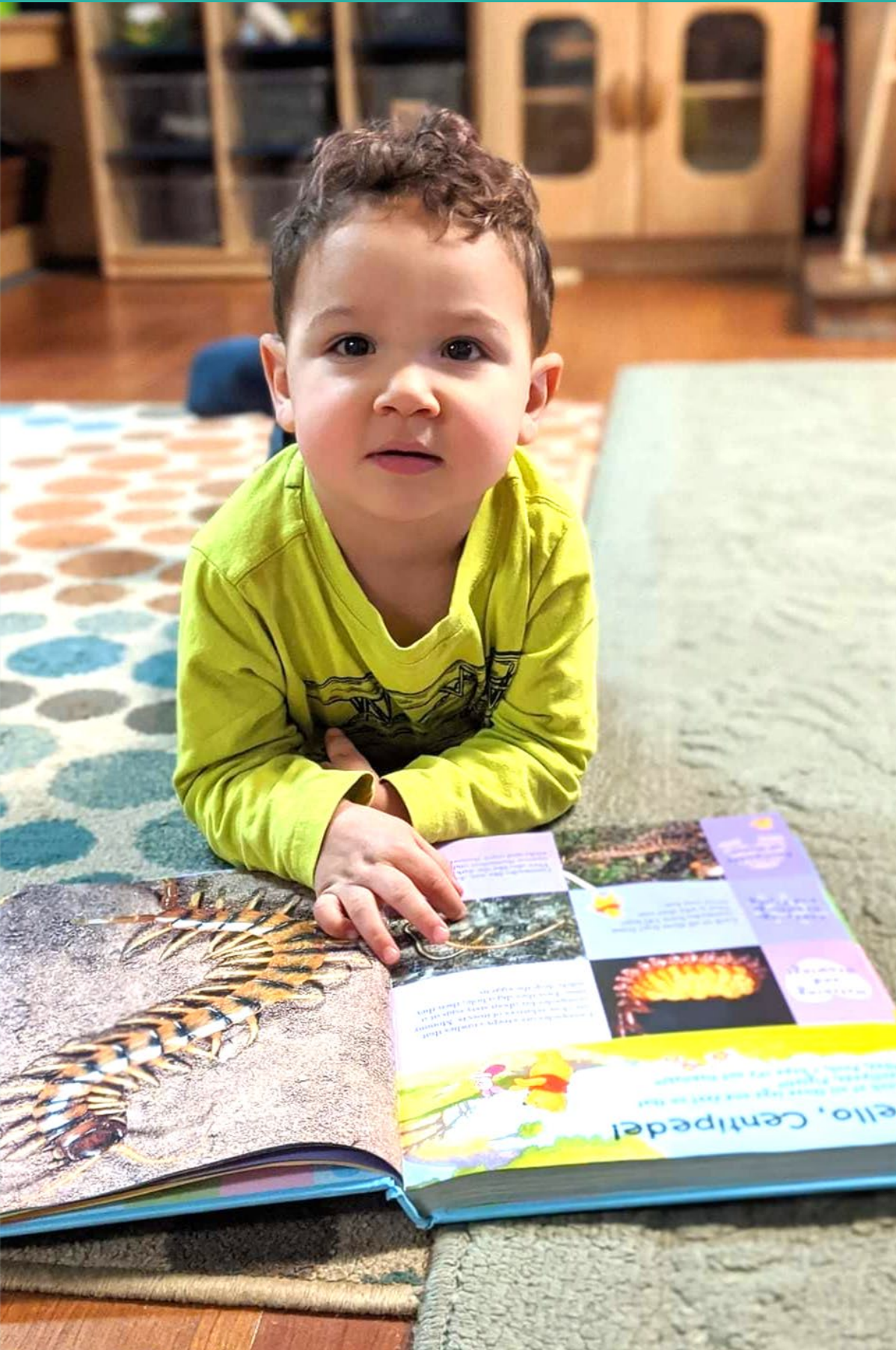
## Early Childhood & Family Mental Health

No. of Children Under 9 Accessing Crisis Services  
2017-2020<sup>49</sup>

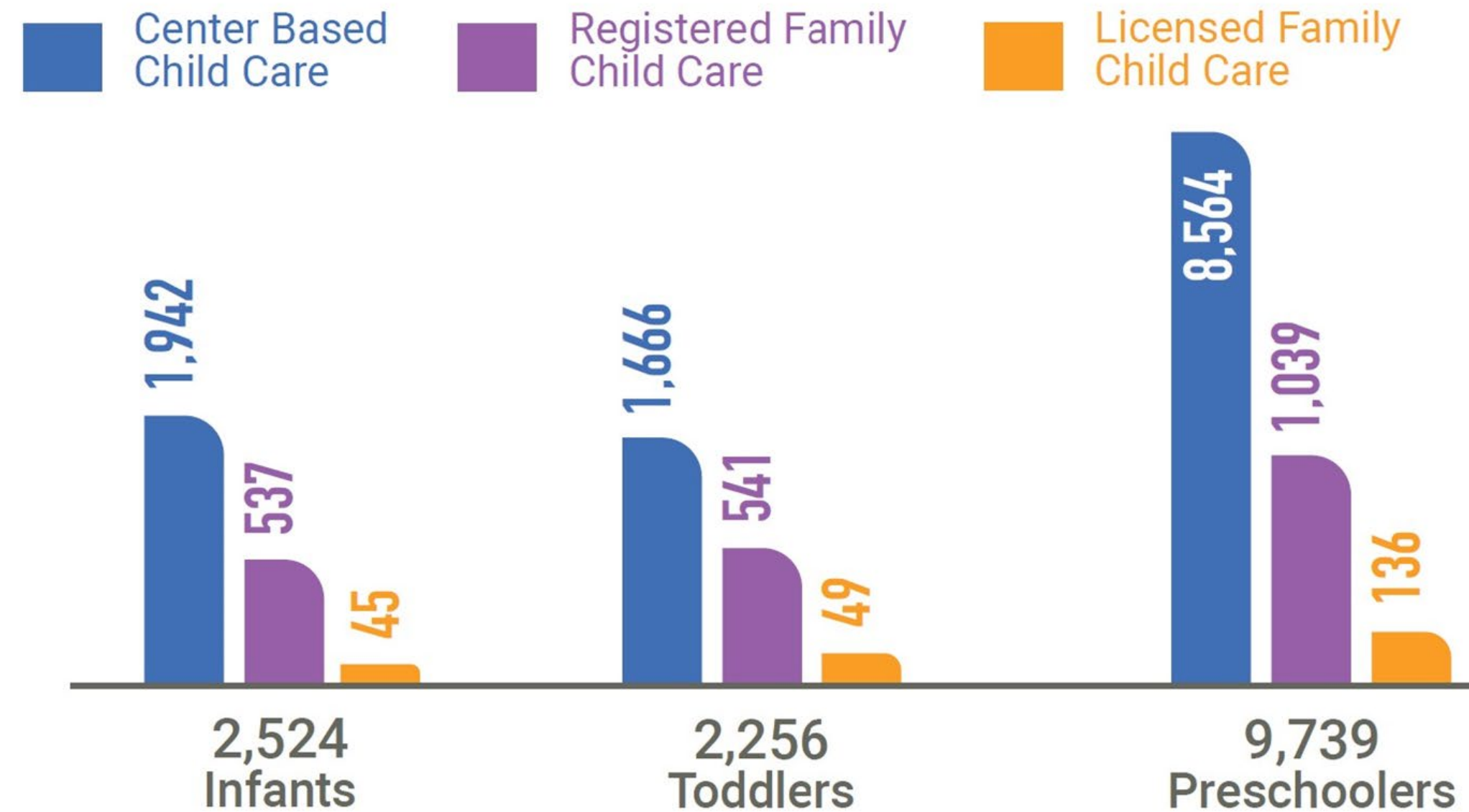


# Child Development & Education

## Child Care Enrollment



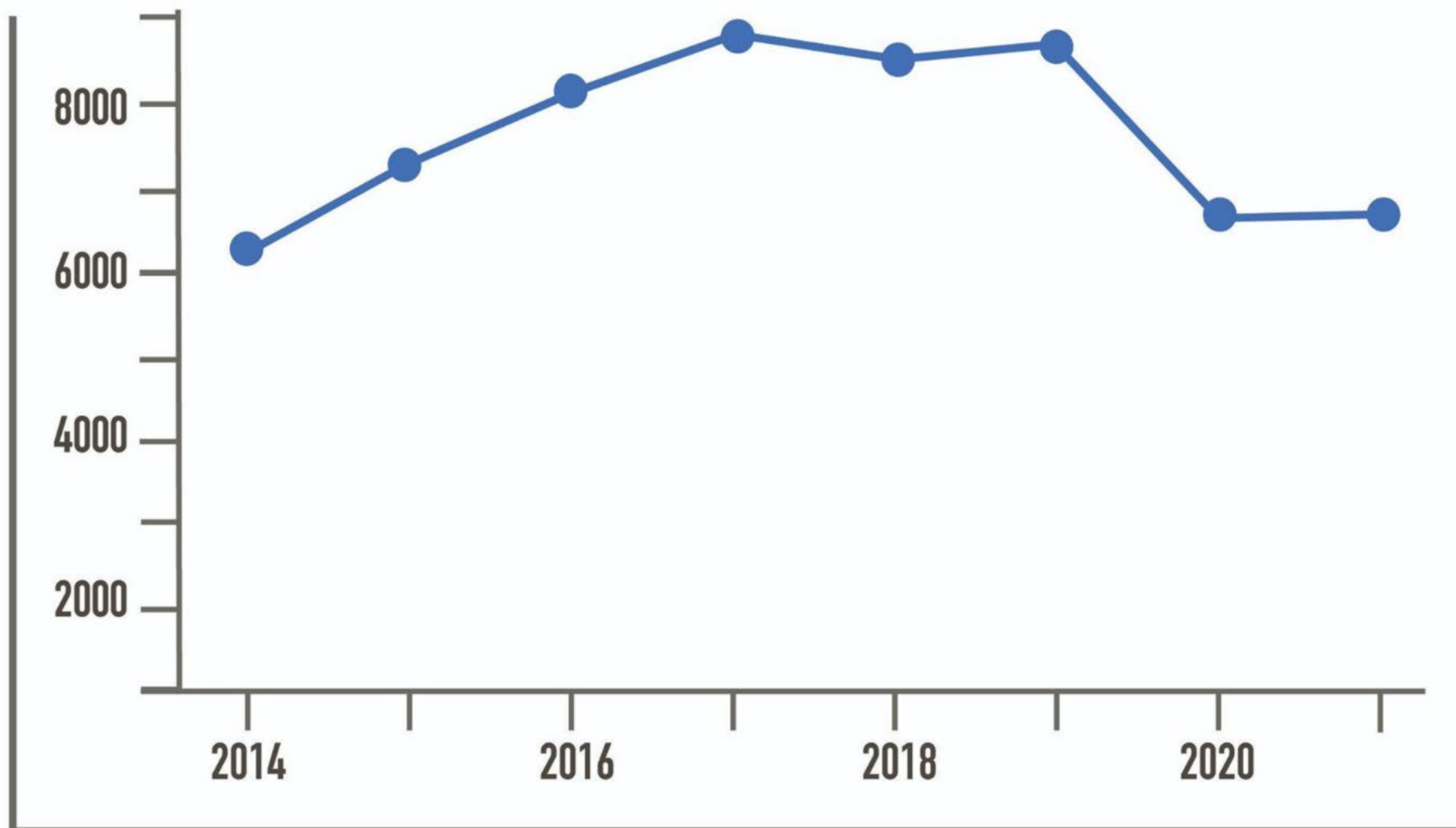
2020-2021 Enrollment in Regulated Early Childhood Education Programs<sup>60</sup>





## Universal Prekindergarten Enrollment

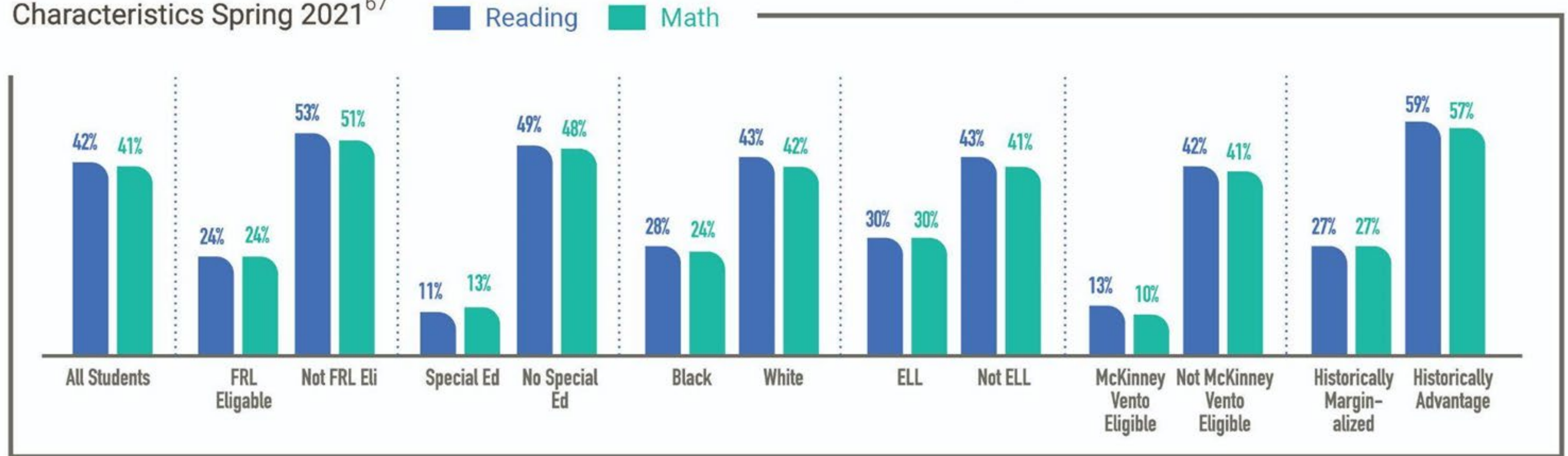
Universal Prekindergarten Education  
Fall Enrollment<sup>58</sup>



- 6,675 children enrolled as of October 1, 2021
- 54% in private programs and 46% in school based programs
- Variability across regions

## Third Grade Reading and Math Assessments

Percent of Third Graders Proficient or Above in Reading & Math Assessments by Characteristics Spring 2021<sup>67</sup>





# 2021-2022 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VERMONT EARLY CHILDHOOD STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL NETWORK



- A. RESPOND TO VERMONT'S MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS**
- B. ADDRESS CHRONIC INEQUITIES IN VERMONT'S EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM**
- C. ELEVATE FAMILIES AS DECISION MAKERS**
- D. DEVELOP A WELL-RESOURCED EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEM**
- E. EVOLVE THE EARLY CHILDHOOD DATA SYSTEM AND INFRASTRUCTURE**





# Why are these recommendations important?



- Provide common language
- Resource to make policy changes and motivate decision-makers
- Reiterate the importance of unsolved statewide issues
- Call attention to urgent priorities
- Validate the work we're doing
- Require championing





## Recommendations In Action



- **THE LEGISLATURE, COMMISSIONS, AND TASK FORCES**

- Coordinated voice signaling priorities
- Building responsible policy
- Informing priorities & monitoring accountability

- **AGENCY AND SOV LEADERS**

- Developing State plans required under Build Back Better
- Identifying targets for, and alignment with state and federal funding opportunities





## Recommendations In Action



- **COMMUNITY, ACADEMIC, PROGRAMMATIC, & ADVOCACY PARTNERS**
  - Informing priorities and strategy
  - Having additional data and tools for creating change
- **EMPOWERING FAMILIES AT ALL LEVELS**
  - Ensuring family voice and lived experience informs decisions
  - Building a system that works for families by partnering with them

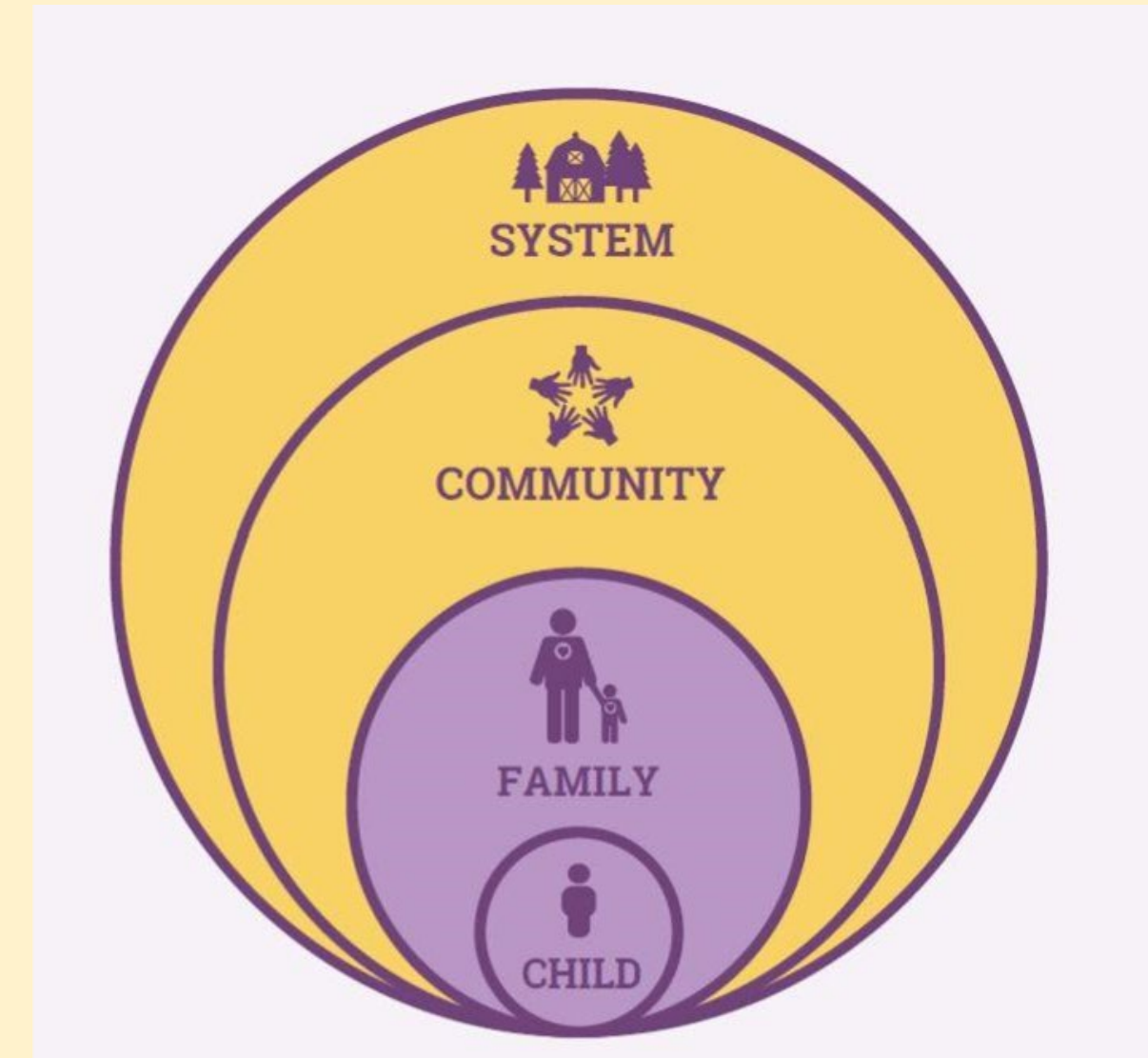




## DEVELOP A WELL-RESOURCED EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEM

RECOMMENDATION 1 (Level 4) Improve equitable access to affordable, high quality early care and afterschool programs by responding to the gaps in current funding:

- > Respond to the ECE workforce crisis by investing in compensation, recruitment, retention, training, and professional development.
- > **Identify state administrative capacity required to serve more families due to the planned expansion of CCFAP and anticipated federal investment.**
- > Implement and monitor CCFAP eligibility expansion through the development of the CDD Information System.
- > Seek resolution around CCFAP payment by enrollment vs attendance policy in CCFAP that will both foster stability of the childcare industry and improve access for children and families.





## DEVELOP A WELL-RESOURCED EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEM

*Regional Strategy: Step Up To Child Care is a 3 month apprenticeship style training program designed to prepare individuals to acquire fundamental skills and knowledge of the Early Childhood field.*



### Key Partners

- Apple Tree Learning Center
- Building Bright Futures
- Central Vermont Adult Basic Education
- Green Mountain Technical Career Center
- Northeast Kingdom Learning Services
- Northern Lights at CCV
- United Way of Lamoille County
- VocRehab Vermont





# Scaling Up *Step Up to Child Care*

## Northeast Kingdom Learning Services Step Up to Child Care

The Step Up to Child Care program and curriculum was established by NEKLS in 2019 and has since graduated 3 cohorts of early childhood educators ready for entry into the workforce.

## Building Bright Futures Regional Network

Regional Councils identify challenges, develop strategies to address the challenges, and make progress based on regional action plans. Together, Councils make essential connections within and between regions to align resources toward our common vision.

## Lamoille County Step Up to Child Care

The first Lamoille County cohort will start this year with funding from the Vermont Early Childhood Fund, and in-kind support from key partners, council members, and community partners.





## *What Participants are Saying about Step Up to Child Care*



### **On Accountability and Workplace Relationships**

*“The training and lessons made me think more about how to handle situations in the field. I’m not sure if I would have been able to gain the skills I needed to use in the field without participating.” -Participant in Step Up to Child Care*

### **On Fundamentals of Child Care Curricula**

*“I have always wanted to work with kids, and step up to childcare gave me the opportunity to gain the tools I needed to be successful. I wouldn't have been able to obtain the information or resources that I have now if it wasn't for this program... This program solidified the love I have in working with children” -Participant in Step Up to Child Care*

### **On Workforce Compensation**

*“The step-up to childcare program helped me enter the early childhood field by providing me the resources needed to do so. The paid internship was super helpful, because at the time I was a single mom of two young children.” -Participant in Step Up to Child Care*

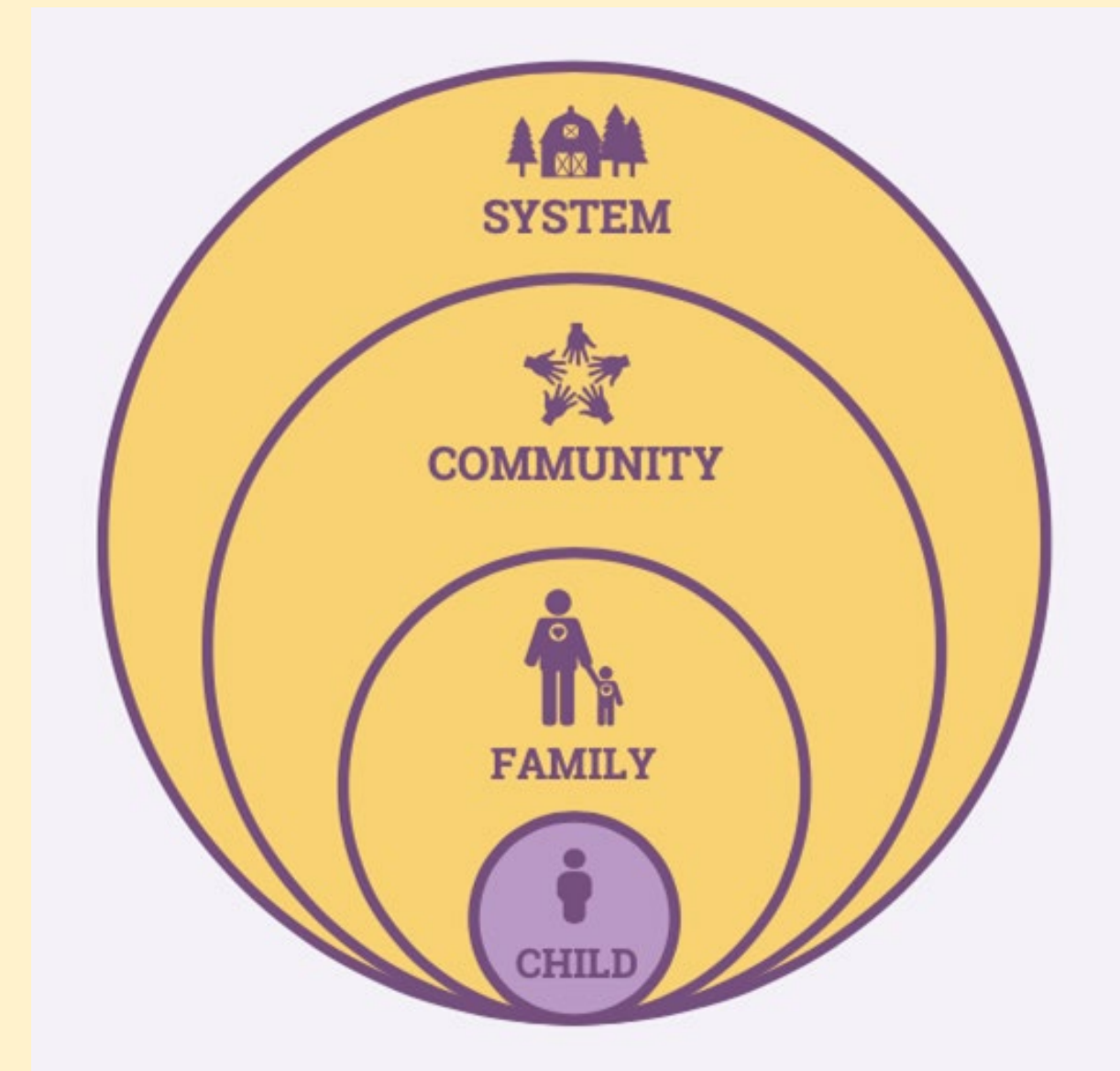




## ELEVATE FAMILIES AS DECISION MAKERS

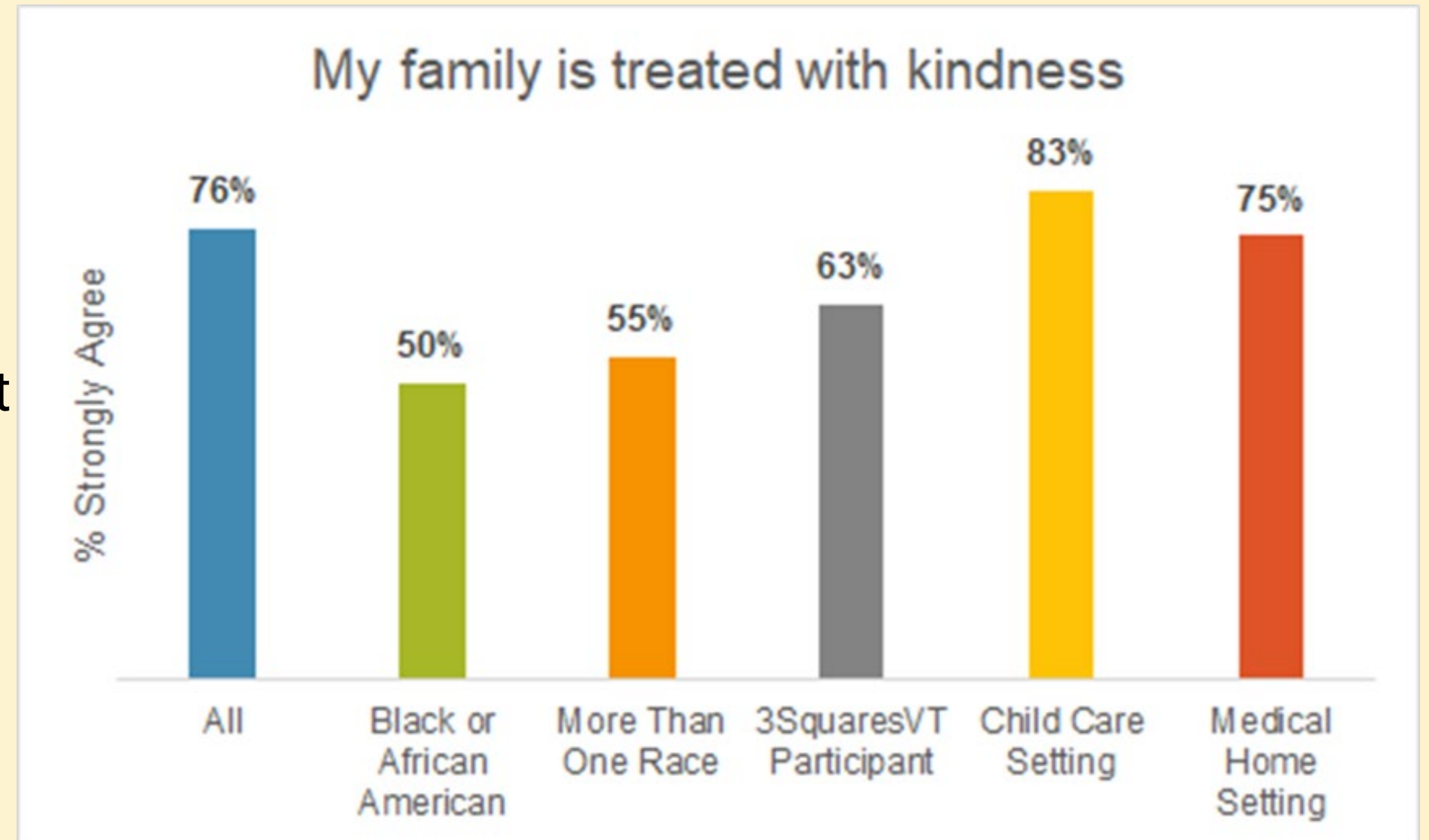
### **RECOMMENDATION 2: Create a culture that invites and supports family engagement and partnership, and provides the necessary training and coaching to attract families who are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the current process, language, and decision-making structure:**

- > Develop and use a common definition of family engagement and partnership throughout the state's early childhood system.
- > Invest in strategies to engage culturally and linguistically diverse populations (provide translation and interpretation, accessible language, utilize cultural brokers, identify current barriers etc.)
- > Provide training and coaching of early childhood professionals, boards/committees and policy makers in order to successfully engage diverse populations and families as decision makers.
- > Promote and increase family participation through engagement, training, coaching, compensation in early childhood programs and services.
- > Measure impact and ensure accountability by conducting regular family engagement assessments.



# 2020 Family Engagement Assessment Report

- Data was collected to inform the Early Childhood system
- Recruited and trained 22 Parent Ambassadors
- Provided Compensation to Parent Ambassadors
- Process was designed to build community and family engagement
- Impact of COVID
- 423 survey responses





# Families & Communities Committee



## Progress

- 3 Parent Ambassadors have taken on leadership positions
- 2 parent representative seats on the State Advisory Council
- F&C over 51% family representation
- Community culture

## Opportunities

- Integration in Vermont's P-3 Early Childhood and Maternal Child Systems grant (VIP-3)
  - Increasing state level capacity of family leaders
  - \$1.3 million over 5 years
  - Compensation
  - Training/leadership development
  - Strengthening community culture
- Upcoming 2022 Family Engagement Assessment





# Questions that need to be addressed



- What does family leadership and engagement actually mean and look like?
- How are we supporting both leadership and engagement?
- In what ways can we support family leadership?
- How do we provide a space where families are comfortable and are truly welcome at the table?
- How are we holding ourselves and each other accountable?





# Vermont's Early Childhood Data and Policy Center | Vermontkidsdata.org

## What is vermontkidsdata.org?

Vermontkidsdata.org is a hub of the most high-quality, up-to-date information on the status of children and families across sectors. It is a critical tool for answering policy questions by centralizing data from the complex early childhood system.



### Data Question

Do you have a question about early childhood data in Vermont? For example, the status of universal prekindergarten education (UPK)?

### Data Dashboard

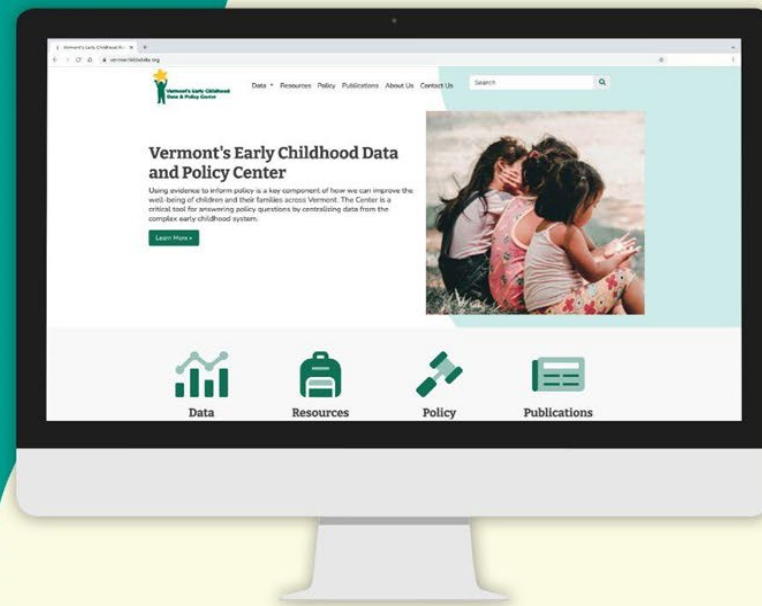
Vermontkidsdata.org includes searchable individual data points across sectors (mental health, basic needs, child development, and education). For UPK, the data dashboard contains the most recent data on UPK enrollment.

### Publications

The publications page is a robust collection of Vermont-specific and national publications by topic. The page is organized to provide a broad overview of each component of the early childhood system and dive into what is known about a particular topic. UPK publications include official documents, studies, and reports that can be used to inform policy development.

### Policy

The policy sections outline how the BBF Network and State Advisory Council identify priorities, make recommendations, and track progress on those recommendations. Other policy work includes documentation of legislative testimony, data briefs, and analysis of and advisement on federal legislation. UPK is a clear priority identified in the 2021 Policy Recommendations under "Develop a Well-Resourced Early Care and Education System."



### What's next?

Vermontkidsdata.org provides the foundation for Vermonters to understand what data and evidence exist (and what is missing) to build an early childhood system that is integrated, well-resourced, and data-informed (VECAP Goal 4). Two mechanisms that will be used to support this work are Early Childhood Grand Rounds and the Data and Evaluation Committee.

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







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