



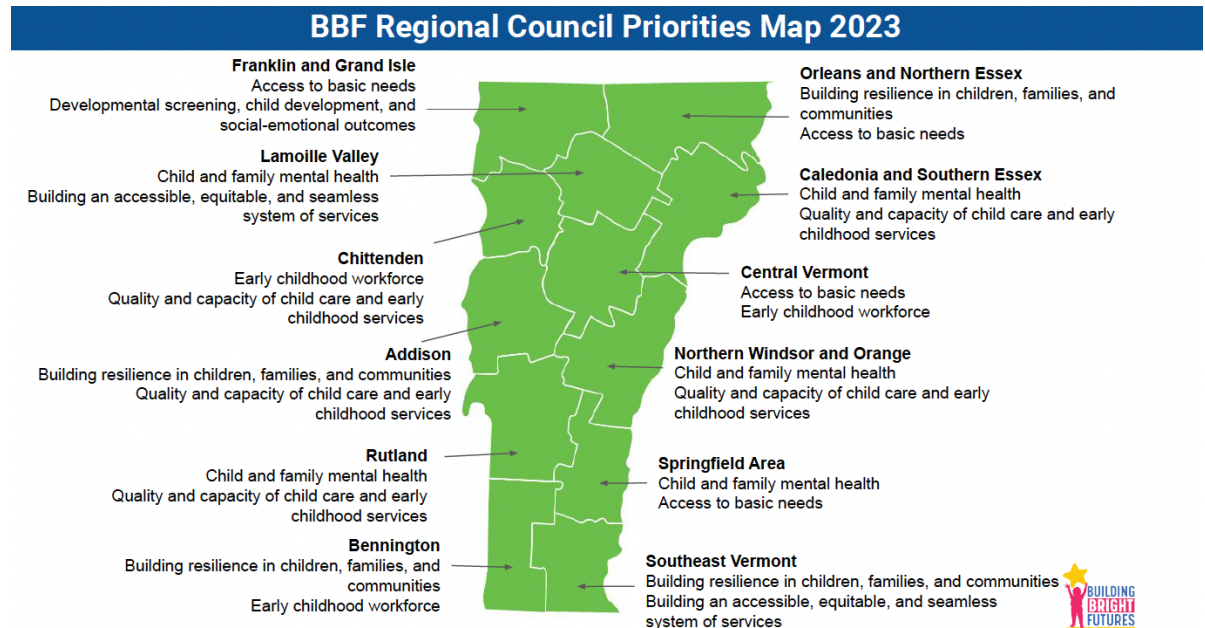
Bennington Regional Action Plan 2023-2024

Building Bright Futures' Regional Councils bring together early childhood stakeholders to identify gaps, share expertise and resources, elevate regional and family voices, and implement strategies in each respective region. These strategies include identifying gaps for children and families and aiming to improve access to services and supports across early care, health, and education for young children and families in their communities. Regional Council members are crucial to each stage of this process, both in official convenings of the Regional Councils and within the early childhood system more broadly.

The 12 Regional Councils are mandated to support an integrated system of early care, health, and education at the local level under Vermont Statute Title 33 § Chapter 46. In alignment with, and with support from, the State Advisory Council, Regional Councils are tasked with coordinating and implementing services in accordance with system and regional priorities. Regular Regional Council meetings are just one way that this mandate is fulfilled.

Early childhood stakeholders from across Vermont bring their perspectives together through Regional Councils 8-10 times a year. Participants at regional tables include professionals in physical and mental health, social services, basic needs, early childhood care and education, and pre-K-12 education; families of children under 9; and community members invested in the well-being of young children.

Annually, each Regional Council sets two regional priorities to guide their work. The map at right illustrates the top two priorities of each region, showcasing the similarities and differences among the 12 regions in Vermont.





Bennington Regional Council 2023-2024 Plan

Below you will find a plan outlining work to make progress for each priority as well as additional strategies and actions of the Bennington Regional Council.

Activity/Function	Council Time	VECF/ Council Funds	Strategic Partner- ships	BBF Staff Time	BBF Network	Notes/Status
Regional-State Coordination via BBF Network						
Convene regular Regional Council meetings	x		x			Leadership team to help create engaging agendas and help lead meetings
Identify needs/gaps within the region—Quality, capacity, leadership, professional development needs, mental health supports	X	x	X	X	x	Use emerging issue doc to identify regional needs— agenda topics/guests to dive more deeply into these points
Connect with others about successes, and announcements	x		x		x	Council members share their experiences and give and/or receive support or celebration
Foster connection among regional partners as part of a statewide network	X		X	X	X	Regional Manager to call out ties between regional work and statewide work
Develop strategies and next steps that support the regional needs of our communities						Leadership team and Regional Manager to identify next steps/who to bring to council for more information
Priority Issue: Building child, family, and community resilience - Work with families, programs, and communities to ensure that children reach their optimal well-being and potential. Promote education and training for caregivers about resilience and the impact of trauma, promote screening and early identification, and connect children and families to support.						
Identify who is not at our table to help guide actions steps and engage around resilience building	X		X	X		Leadership team identifies contacts. Regional Manager conducts outreach, schedules meetings to build relationships, invites to council discussion, etc. Key partners currently not at the table: Pre-K coordinator, Strong Families, Easterseals, Department for Children and Families (DCF), medical community, New



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						Americans, library. Ask council members to share contact information on the Who is Not at Our Table spreadsheet
Increase availability of quality enrichment activities (outside of supports)for families and young children	x	x	x		x	Support family activities in the community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Healthy Kids Day ● Use the shared calendar to promote events ● Locate central venue in Bennington County ● Play group engagement—Add central area for remote Northshire communities
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Curriculum for young children and communities	x	x	x		x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Synthesize/integrate/prioritize DEI through all events, initiatives, and practices. ● Provide opportunities for personal connection and leadership. ● Explore opportunities for online training in DEI for onboarding purposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create a list of possible trainings ○ Explore funding opportunities to pay for trainings ● Take small steps to build a community culture that supports and empowers all people with value on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Council to explore possibilities. ● For centers: Review of services presentation with physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, and others (via CIS, Children’s Integrated Services)
Identify emerging gaps and needs	X			X	X	Gather information through interviews, data collection, panel at Council, adding to BBF emerging priorities document. Populations underserved—gaps; Data—who



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						is served well? Who is not?
Explore how to best support early care and learning providers as they support children and families presenting with greater and greater needs	x		X	x	x	Connect with regional Family and Maternal Health teams, bring to leadership team—Make a standing point on agendas for a report out or sharing best practices
Promote family leadership and engagement regionally and statewide	X	X	X	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Council meeting with a panel of parents/staff around family engagement and leadership best practices sponsor activities ● Connect to BBF Families and Communities Committee/Parent Child Center, etc. ● Council to help identify family member who might be interested to join the council
Kindergarten transitions/Regional Summit	x	x		x	x	Explore how to come together in the region to share ideas and information in ways that best serve children and families. Planning Group, Quality Task Force
Priority Issue:Early Childhood Workforce - Promote quality through training and professional advancement, support recruitment efforts, promote a stable workforce through economic security strategies (benefits, incentives, supplemental wages).						
Clarity in pathways into early childhood education (document)—Looking to Become an Early Educator flyer	x		x	x	x	Distribution plan for flyer—hard copies and electronic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Display in early childhood centers—share with families & staff ● Ask home providers to display and hand out ● Add to email signatures ● Medical offices ● Department for Children and Families (DCF) ● Add to newsletters ● Health Department ● Social media ● Schools



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Create pathways for current and prospective early educators to have knowledge of and connection to existing resources	x			x	x	Connect with local reps from colleges & Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children (VTAEYC) to visit child care programs to review opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TEACH ● Tuition grants ● Loan repayment ● Career ladder bonuses ● Apprenticeship ● Use the “Looking to Become an Early Educator” flyer as a resource for this purpose
Retention—networking supports	x			x	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Link early educators to being in a profession—VTAEYC resource: vtaeyc.org/advancing-as-a-profession/ ● Council to discuss how to be sure all staff have regular access to materials/supports ● Council to discuss how to involve community in supporting early childhood education—teacher discounts
Professional Development Planning Discussion work group	x			x		Quality Task Force to arrange and implement this. Lead
Conduct assessment to identify emerging gaps and needs	X			X	X	Gather information through one-on-one meetings, data collection, discussion at Council meetings, adding to BBF emerging priorities. Populations underserved—gaps; Data—who is served well? Who is not?
Support families experiencing substance use disorder (SUD)	X		X	X		Support training for Early Care and Learning partners that work with families struggling with SUD. Help



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						remove stigma and support them with dignity. Parent Child Center training

Definitions

Council Time - Partners dedicating time to attend the council meeting, how the council time is used to build relationships, information sharing, and collaboration sharing accomplished together

Resources - Funds allocated to support council priorities by BBF, or awarded through other sources like the Vermont Early Childhood Fund or outside grants/sponsorships

Strategic Partnerships - Establishing or developing connections between the Council (Regional Manager or Council members) with other regional partners. This can be 1:1, attending other coalition meetings or convening small working groups.

BBF Staff Time - Time dedicated by the Regional Manager or other BBF staff to support a council effort (communication, data, planning, etc.)

BBF Network - Elevating a regional gap or need through the BBF Network to inform decision-making. This could be submitting an issue to the 'emerging priorities' document; bringing an issue to a VECAP committee for further discussion, identifying data gaps, or informing BBF SAC policy recommendations.