

# Hartford District BBF Council for Northern Windsor and Orange Counties Summary of Regional Plan

Building Bright Futures (BBF) seeks to assure that all of Vermont's children are healthy and successful by improving the quality, affordability, and accessibility of early health, care, and education services to all Vermont families with children under the age of six. The BBF Early Childhood Council for Northern Windsor and Orange Counties is one of twelve regional councils throughout the state which provides infrastructure to Vermont's early childhood system. The 2008-09 BBF Regional Plan is the result of a multi-year planning process reflective of the work of the Regional BBF Council, community leaders, and representative stakeholder groups of providers and families.

The Hartford Region officially encompasses 22 towns in northern Windsor and Orange Counties. However, part of this region is a bi-state area, known as the Upper Valley, on both sides of the Connecticut River.

## Quick Facts about Young Children and their Families

- Children under the age of six represented an estimated 5% of the population. The Hartford Region has approximately 300 births per year.
- Economic stability helps parents care and provide for their children. Families with young children are more likely to live in poverty than other families. Compared to 13% statewide, 10% children ages 0 - 5 in the Hartford Region were in families living below poverty (i.e., in households earning less than the Federal Poverty Level).
- Young parents are less likely to have the resources and skills to nurture their children. Of the state's 188 new families at risk (single parents younger than 20 years with less than 12 years of education), 4% (8) lived in the Hartford Region in 2004.
- Most parents of young children are in the labor force, indicating a need for quality early care and education. Yet only 9% of our child care programs have either national accreditation or 4/5 STARS.
- Vermont measures school readiness with a survey in which kindergarten teachers are asked to report on children's competencies in five domains. In 2007, 50% of children in our region were ready for kindergarten in all five domains.
- The proportion of children (ages 2-4) enrolled in WIC (the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children) who were overweight was 29% for the state and 25% for the Hartford Region in 2006.
- In 2006, Vermont's rate for substantiated cases of abuse and neglect among children under five was 84.5 per 10,000. In the Hartford Region, the rate was 55.8.

## Building Bright Futures Indicators and Strategies

The BBF planning approach uses a Results Based Accountability framework (Friedman), identifying outcomes, indicators, and key strategies and action steps for “turning the curve” toward improved early childhood health, development, and school readiness. Focusing on results-based accountability means: (1) understanding what outcomes/results our region hopes to achieve, (2) selecting indicators to monitor trends, and (3) engaging community stakeholders in efforts to “turn the curve” with proven strategies when the trend is not moving in the right direction.

The following outcomes and indicators were selected by the BBF Early Childhood Council for Northern Windsor and Orange Counties. Selected key strategies and action steps from our 2008-09 regional plan—as developed by our Council and an array of community partners—are highlighted below.

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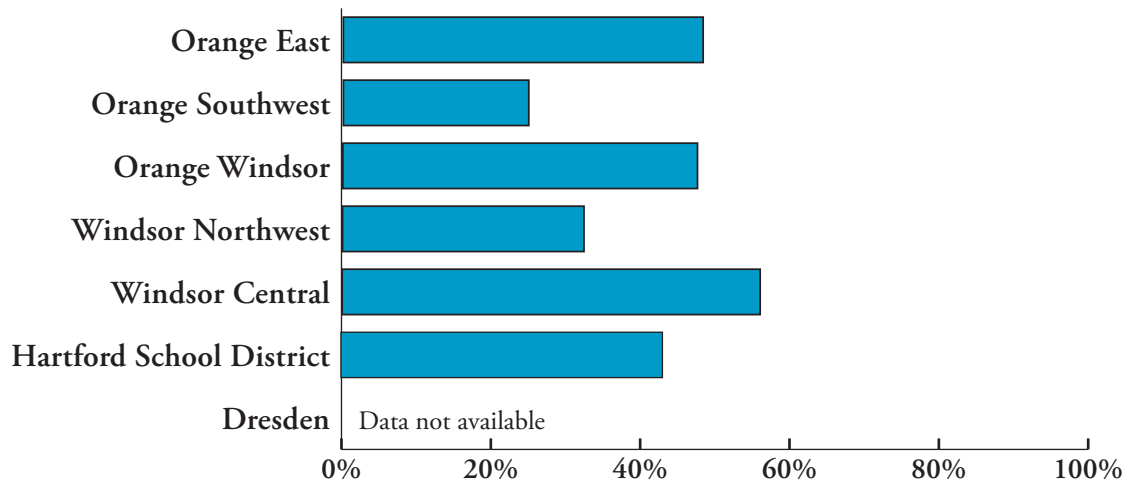
### *Outcome: Children are ready for school (and schools are ready for children)*

#### **Indicators: Percent of regulated early childhood programs that are nationally accredited or have 4/5 STARS.**

##### **Key Strategies and Action Steps:**

1. Develop partnerships with the business community to raise awareness about and increase resources for quality child care.
    - Convene Champions for Child Care Advisory Committee.
    - Recruit representatives from child care community (parents and providers) to form a speakers' bureau.
    - Create packets of information for the business community that address the benefits of child care.
  2. Assist child care providers in increasing program quality.
    - Explore ways to support providers in attaining national accreditation or participation in STARS.
    - Work with school districts and providers on opportunities through Act 62.
  3. Generate funding to invest in quality improvements and expansions.
    - Seek grant opportunities and contributions from businesses to increase access to quality care.
    - Establish a Child Care Fund at the United Way.
  4. Assist families in improving work family balance.
    - Work with HR directors to distribute Born learning materials for parents and to increase access to family friendly benefits.
    - Recruit parents for Parents Rising advocacy efforts.
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Percent of Children Ready for Kindergarten in All Five Domains of Development,  
By Supervisory Union, Hartford AHS District, 2007-08



*Outcome: Pregnant women and young children thrive*

**Indicator: Percent of kindergarteners fully immunized.**

**Key Strategies and Action Steps:**

1. Help families with young children maintain health coverage (esp. Medicaid/SCHIP).
  - Referral sources report on insurance status of families at Children's Integrated Services Intake Team meetings.
  - Home visitors help families apply for and stay insured as part of their family plan.
2. Improve identification and outreach to under-immunized young children.
  - Maximize use of Vermont Immunization Registry.
  - Increase provider use of Immunization Registry.
  - Use Bright Futures to partner with pediatricians to increase immunization rates.
3. Assure developmental screening for all children served by Children's Integrated. Services (CIS).
  - Use Ages and Stages screening tool and develop a plan to track screening progress and results.
  - Coordinate with pediatricians through the use of Bright Futures.



## *Outcome: Children live in stable, supported families*

**Indicator: Rate of substantiated child abuse and neglect for children under age five.**

### **Key Strategies and Action Steps:**

1. Educate the community about child abuse and neglect and how to help.
  - Hold trainings for early care and education providers on mandated reporting and responses.
  - Educate new pediatric residents.
  - Distribute child abuse prevention materials and available resources for parents through libraries, churches, playgroups, etc.
2. Generate and strengthen social connections for parents.
  - Increase quality and capacity of playgroups.
  - Increase opportunities for free family activities.
  - Build partnerships with Recreation Departments, libraries and other facilities.
3. Offer parenting education and support in families' natural environments.
  - Assure quality parent education and support through early childhood home visiting to high risk families.
  - Encourage child care providers to offer support to parents.
  - Share effective program models with professionals and parents in the community.
4. Increase financial security and access to economic resources.
  - Inventory and publicize financial, housing and other resources available through Economic Services and other community agencies and organizations.
  - Provide assistance with Earned Income Tax Credit.
  - Get involved with the work of the Vermont Child Poverty Council.

**For more information, visit [www.buildingbrightfutures.org](http://www.buildingbrightfutures.org)**



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