



Promoting Research and Evaluation about CCDF Payment Policies in Vermont

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Research partnership project overview

Partners:

- Vermont's Child Development Division (CDD)
- Building Bright Futures (BBF)
- Child Trends

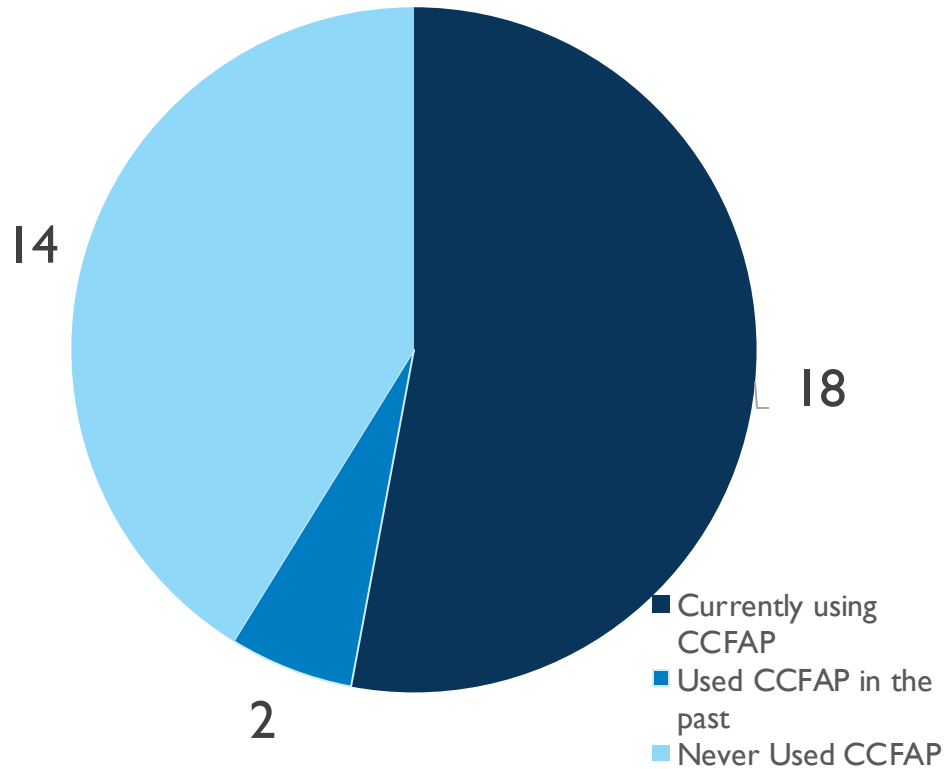
Study overview:

- Learn about how recent changes to child care subsidies (called the Child Care Financial Assistance Program, or **CCFAP**, in VT) have impacted equal access to child care
- Surveys and focus groups, administrative child care data
- Study is informed by ongoing feedback from families and providers

Focus group sample

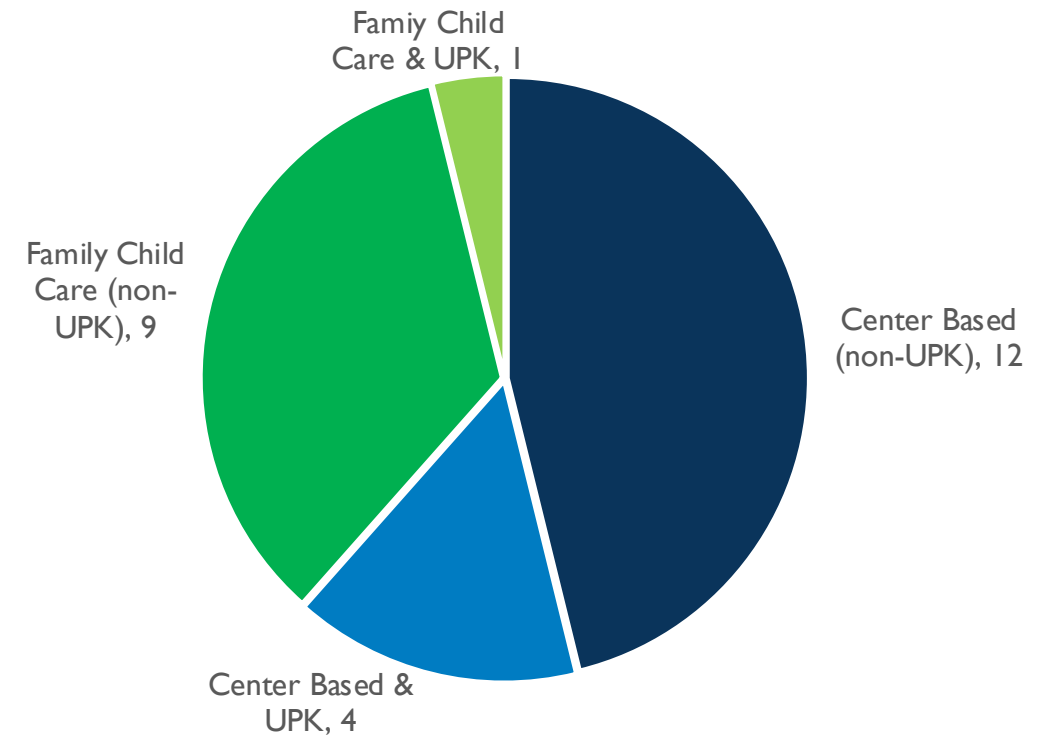
34

Total Parents and Caregivers



26

Total ECE Administrators



2022

➤ JULY

- Family eligibility increases to 350% of the federal poverty line (FPL)
- Increased base reimbursement rates and raised tiered rates for STARS
- Co-payments waived for families at 150% FPL
- Single co-payment implemented for families at 350% FPL

2023

➤ JULY

- Reimbursement rates increased, and no longer based on a programs' STARS level

➤ SEPTEMBER

- Readiness payment program established, distributing extra money to programs that accept CCFAP families

➤ DECEMBER

- Reimbursement rates increase an additional 35%

2024

➤ APRIL

- Family eligibility increases to 400% FPL
- Co-payments waived for families at 175% FPL

➤ JUNE

- Reimbursement rates increase for family child care home programs
- New eligibility category added for non-citizen residents

➤ OCTOBER

- Family eligibility increases to 575% FPL
- Educators can receive increased professional development bonuses

In their voices: Parents' and administrator' experiences with CCFAP

“Just having the one on one of [eligibility specialist] pulling up the file and highlighting the things...[meeting with them] in person you kind of know what we're going to do. And there is the set meeting time saying we're going to do this now.”

– Parent/Caregiver

“I just love that we can allow families to use our program if they can't afford it... We hadn't had anyone use CCFAP for about two years, but we have some now.”

– ECE Administrator

“That money [CCFAP and UPK funding] is not 'extra money' because we know we haven't been paid enough and we need more materials. We're so use to scraping by with so little, the increase [in CCFAP reimbursement rate] is getting closer to reflecting the actual cost of care...”

– ECE Administrator

Areas for improvement

Parents/caregivers:

- Challenges finding available slots for child care
- Confusion over copayments and rate changes (e.g., families with multiple children, children in pre-k)
- ECE Providers charging extra fees or increasing rates
- Challenges gathering needed documents for CCFAP application/renewal (e.g., parents who were self-employed or working part-time)
- Language barriers

ECE Administrators:

- Unsure how to handle the **family share payment** when a family has children and multiple programs
- Challenges helping parents and caregivers with the **CCFAP application**

Impacts of changes to CCFAP

Administrators and parents/caregivers reported numerous positive impacts of the recent changes to CCFAP:

Families

- More families receive subsidies
- More children in care
- ECE is more affordable
- Reduced stress
- Increased access for immigrant families

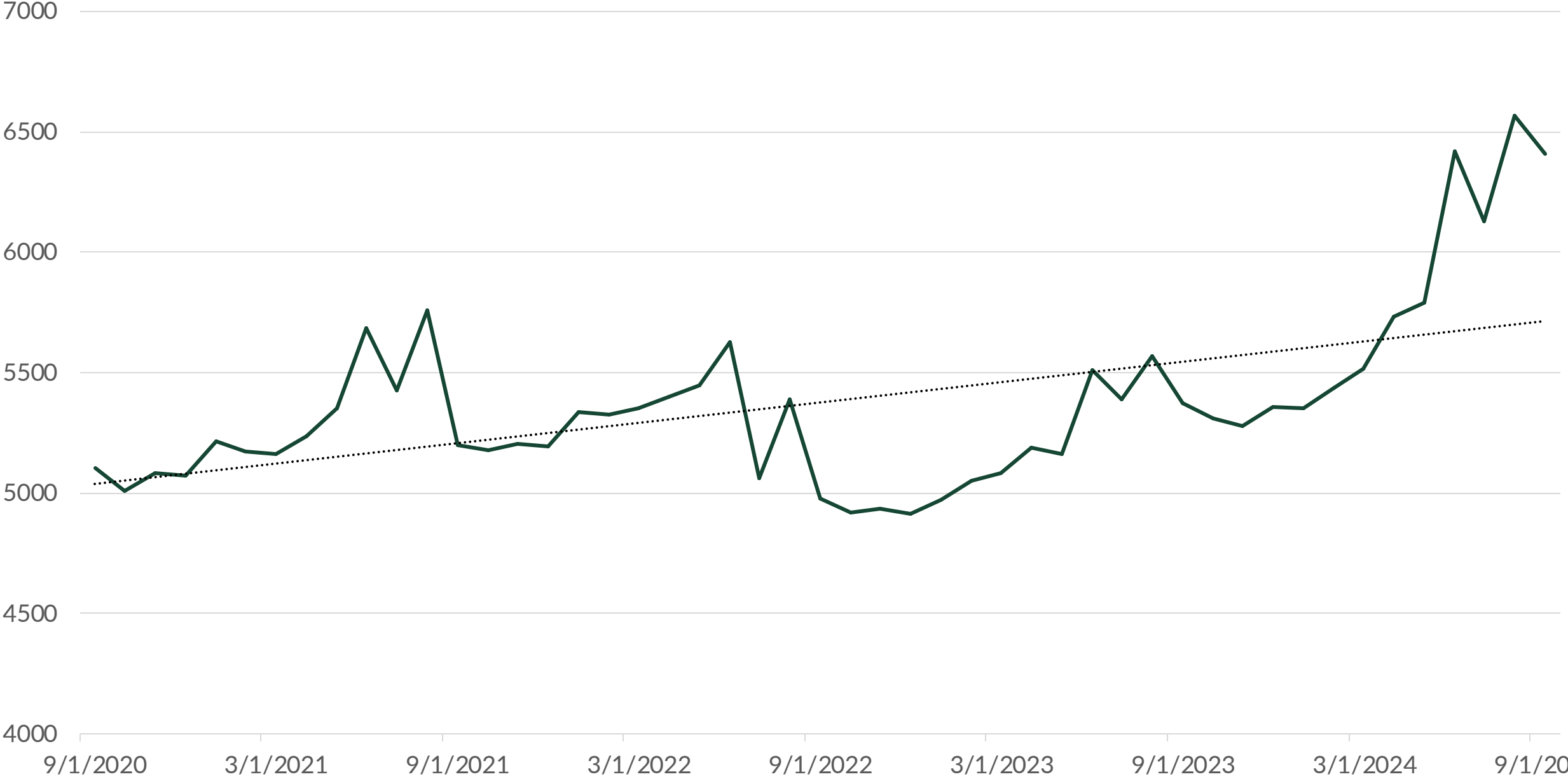
ECE workforce

- Bonuses
- Increased pay
- Benefits: health insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, short-term disability to cover parental leave

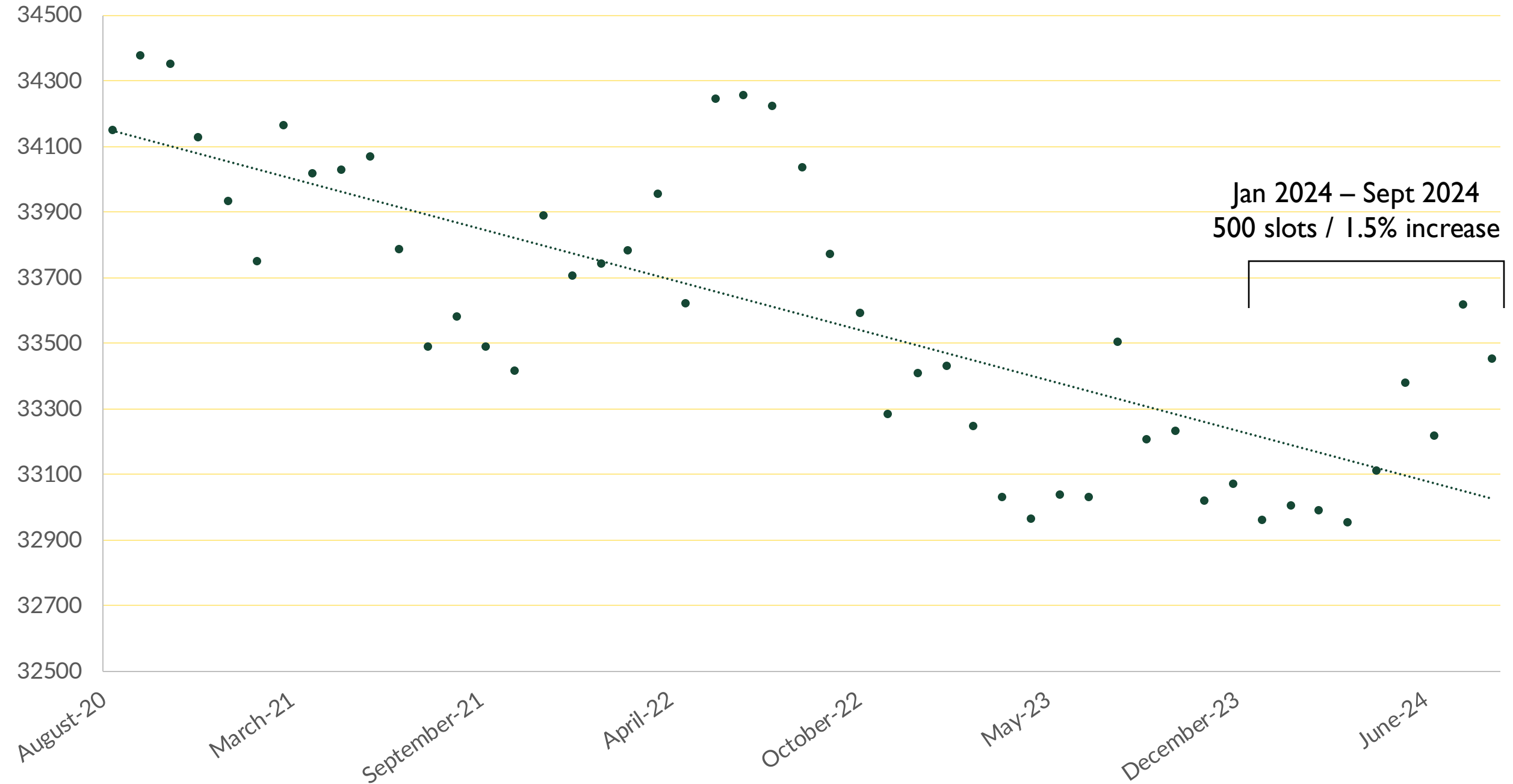
ECE programs

- More stable enrollment
- Reliable funding/ financial stability

Number of Families in Vermont Receiving Subsidies

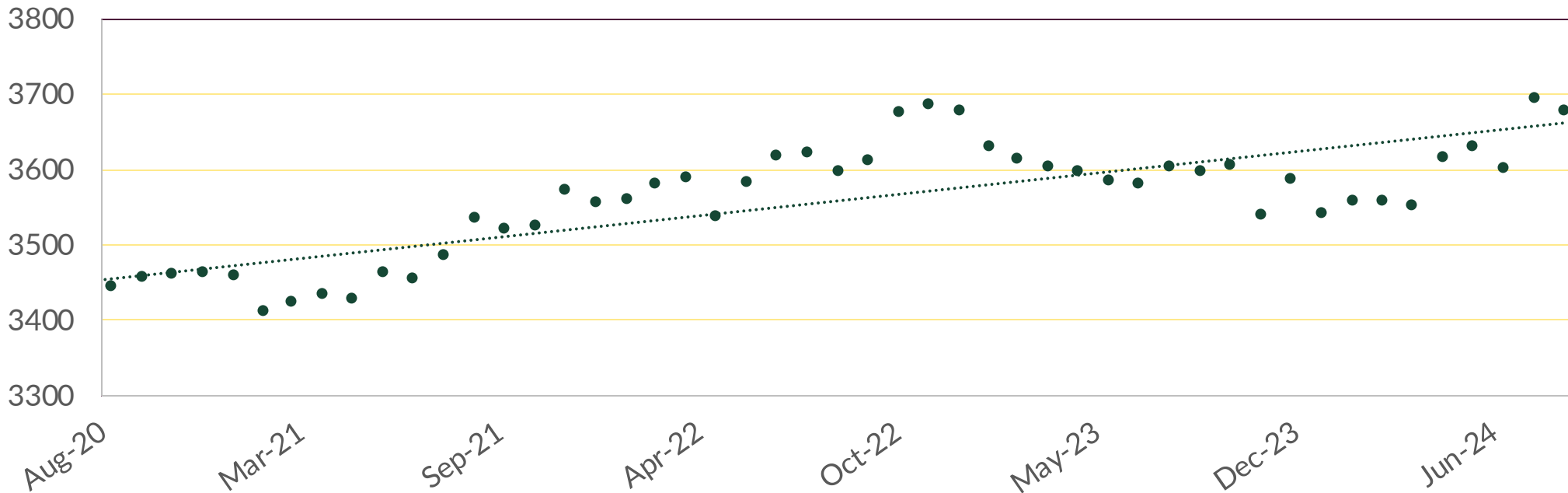
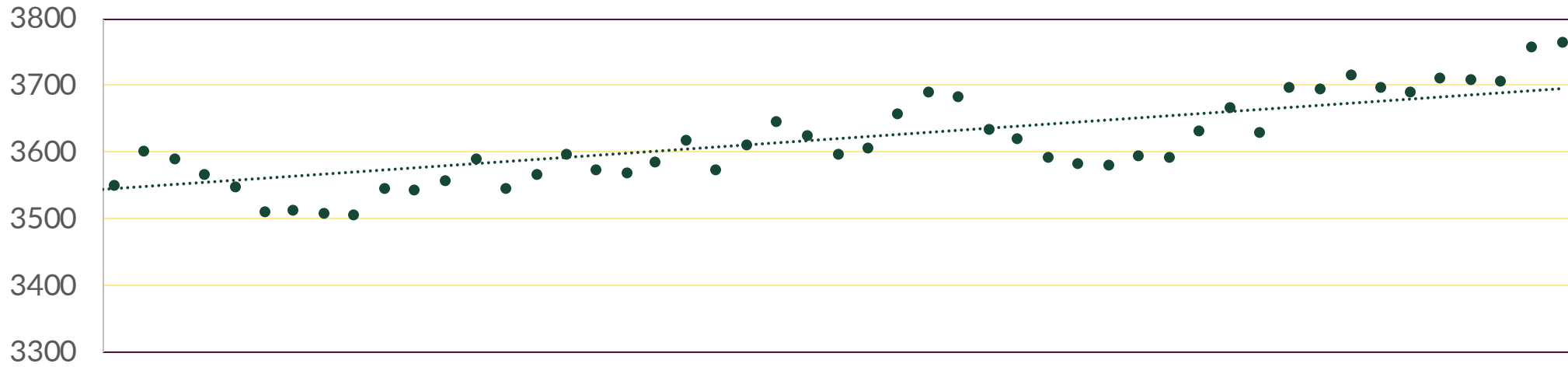


Number of Child Care Slots Over Time

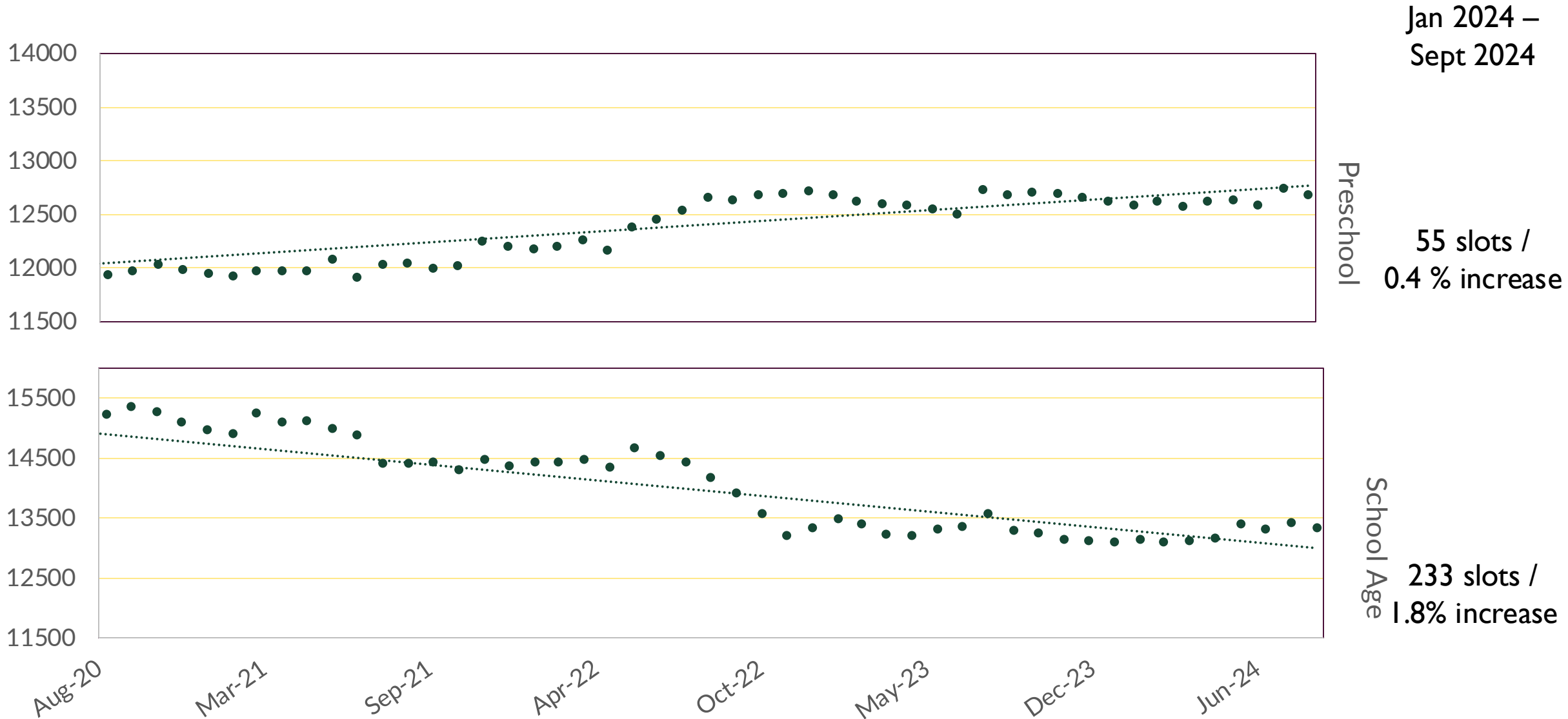


Change in Slots by Age Group, Infants and Toddlers

Jan 2024 – Sept
2024



Change in Slots by Age Group, Preschool and School Age



Next steps

Sample research questions	Parent survey	Provider survey	Administrative data analyses
To what extent do families' child care arrangements align with their needs and preferences?	X		
How are the policy changes contributing to changes in the demographic characteristics of children/families who are accessing child care subsidies?	X		X
Are more providers opening and are more providers participating in CCFAP following these policy changes? Are some parts of the state impacted more than others?		X	X
How have the increased reimbursement rates and capacity payments helped offset providers' costs?		X	

Thank You!

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