

# VERMONT EARLY CHILDHOOD STRATEGIC PLAN 2030

*Working Draft 5.19.25*

## *Goal 3: Children and Families Have Access to High Quality Opportunities That Promote Child Development and Well-Being*

Goal 1: All Children and Families Have Their Basic Needs Met

Goal 2: All Children are Raised in Safe & Healthy Environments

**Goal 3: Children and Families Have Access to High Quality Opportunities That Promote Child Development and Well-Being**

Goal 4: Invest in the Early Childhood Workforce to Help Kids Thrive

Goal 5: Our System Centers Children and Families and is Coordinated, Well-Resourced, Data-Driven

[\[Learn more about the Strategic Plan update and read about the other draft goals on the Building Bright Futures website\]](#)

## **Goal 3: All Children and Families Have Access to High Quality Opportunities That Promote Child Development and Well-Being.**

*Every child deserves access to opportunities that nurture their physical, social-emotional, and intellectual growth, free from barriers or disparities. We must create a system where children of all abilities, backgrounds, and circumstances can thrive in environments that empower their development and well-being, with no exclusions or inequities.*

### **3.A. NURTURE CHILDREN'S PHYSICAL, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL, AND INTELLECTUAL GROWTH THROUGH EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION.**

*All children deserve early care and education that fosters their full development. We must provide equitable access to comprehensive, inclusive education and support systems that address developmental needs, ensure healthy emotional growth, and prepare every child for success in life, no matter their background or ability.*

➤ **3.A.1. Guarantee access to early intervention services for children with developmental delays and disabilities.**

Strategies:

- Increase the availability of developmental screenings, referrals, and ongoing monitoring processes where children are served. Use the Universal Developmental Screening Registry for providers to collaborate on how a child will be served.
- Increase capacity of CIS to serve children in need of services (see below under system improvement).
- Improve transitions for children moving from early intervention (0-3) to school based SPED services (3+).

➤ **3.A.2. Eliminate exclusionary discipline and embed mental health support.**

Strategies:

- Increase use of mental health consultation.
- Increase support for healthy social- emotional development, reduce instances of suspension and expulsion, and eliminate racial disparities in these practices.
- Increase access to mental health services for young children and their families, including counseling and therapy options. Increase the number of local, qualified providers who can provide behavioral health services for children and who accept Medicaid.

➤ **3.A.3. Confront opportunity gaps through bold equity-driven investments.**

Strategies:

- Promote the importance of Head Start and Early Head Start programs in supporting Vermont's most vulnerable children and their families.
- Expand access to evidenced based literacy knowledge and instruction for all K-3 teachers.
- Identify strategies to address achievement gaps for low-income students (math and reading).
- Improve transitions for children to move from ECE to school based programs (UPK or K).

➤ **3.A.4. Fully include children with disabilities and developmental delays in all learning and social spaces.**

Strategies:

- Increase parent choice and equitable access for children with disabilities and developmental delays to high quality early care and education programs.
- Ensure children can fully participate alongside their peers in learning and social activities and meet high expectations, facilitated by individualized accommodations and differentiated interventions and inclusive instruction.

➤ **3.A.5. Promote universal design and inclusion supports.**

- Partner with educators to increase access and implementation through coaching, training, and materials on universal design.
- Invest in the integration of early childhood education to serve the whole child and family.
- Include gender identity, racial equity, and disability justice in every school's curriculum, not just select ones.

### **3.B. DELIVER EQUITABLE, AFFORDABLE, CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION IN A MIXED DELIVERY SYSTEM.**

*Child care and education must be accessible, affordable, and culturally responsive. We need a diverse system of delivery that works for all families whether they prefer home-based care, center-based settings, or school-based programs, while addressing the specific needs of underserved communities.*

➤ **3.B.1. Increase child care availability and access.**

Strategies:

- Increase the availability of early childhood education with a focus on infant, toddler, and expansion of access in identified child care “deserts.”
- Retain the mixed delivery system that ensures families can access programs that work for them (family home, center-based, school-based).
- Increase Family Childcare Homes to better serve rural families.

➤ **3.B.2. Increase child care affordability for families.**

Strategies:

- Promote the impact of public investment in child care.
- Promote expanded Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) eligibility (non-citizens, income eligibility, self-employed).
- Make it easier for families to access UPK (standard enrollment forms, transition activities).

➤ **3.B.3. Expand access to Universal Prekindergarten Education (UPK) with specific attention to child outcomes, equity, and access.**

Strategies:

- Expand beyond 10 hours/week and retain the mixed delivery system.
- Use evaluation results to continue to expand and enhance Universal Preschool implementation.
- Encourage collaboration and partnership between private Universal Prekindergarten Education (UPK) programs and partnering school districts, for shared educational resources, strategies and professional development opportunities.

➤ **3.B.4. Provide equitable access to after school and out of school time programming.**

Strategies:

- Create and retain programs serving families during out of school time (afterschool, school vacation, and summer) with a focus on school-aged children of underserved populations (e.g. low-income, children with disabilities, rural families).
- Increase the capacity of child care and afterschool programs to serve more children by identifying efficiencies and removing barriers to expansion (e.g. financing, technical assistance, shared services).

➤ **3.B.5. Address system inequities.**

Strategies:

- Invest and expand support for Children's Integrated Services and early intervention under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) Part C, to assure that when children are eligible for early intervention and special education services they get the support they need.
- Change the funding structure so SPED supports for children aged 3-6 follow the child and are not restricted to district lines.
- Protect and promote Head Start and Early Head Start programs that include wrap-around supports for families.