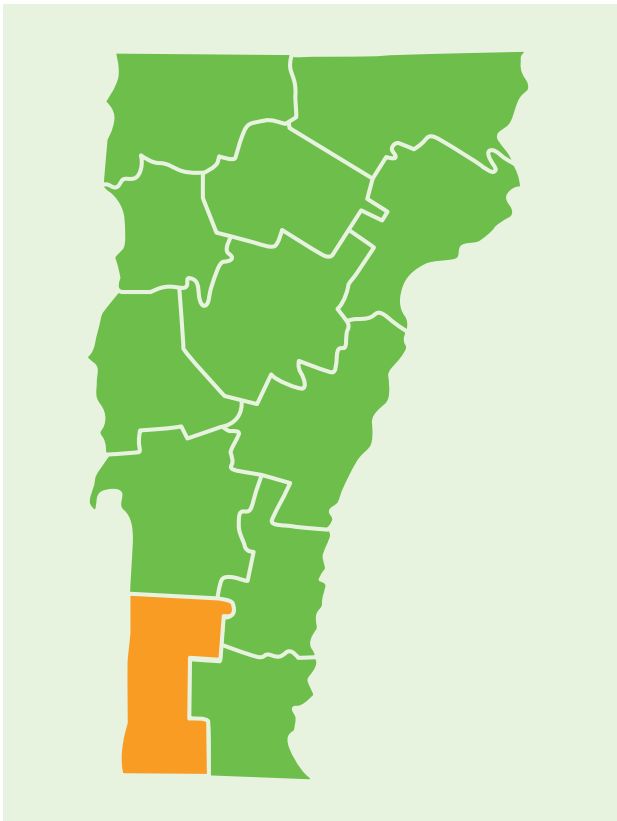


Bennington

The Bennington Regional Council is focused on ensuring equitable access to services for children and families. Two of the strategies underway address professional development and transportation. The Council is partnering with Outright Vermont to promote inclusive practices throughout the Bennington Region. The region-wide training on Gender inclusive skills and practices for early educators and those that work with young children offered resources for educators as well as families, and was created as a pilot that can be expanded throughout the state moving forward.

Because of the rural nature of the region, for some families, the nearest services are more than 30 minutes away with no public transportation option. The Bennington Regional Council is working with regional and statewide experts to investigate structures and funding opportunities to potentially form a transportation hub to serve the Bennington Region. While still in the initial stages of formative research, there is a clear need for new approaches to accessing services in rural areas. Concretely addressing the professional development and transportation needs are only two of the ways the Bennington Regional Council is moving forward **VECAP Goal 3: All Children and Families Have Access to High-Quality Opportunities That Meet Their Needs.**



Current Status

CHILD POPULATION¹¹ (2019)

3,043 children under 9

Decreased by 7% from 3,272 in 2014

CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY⁶⁹ (2019)

46.9% children under 6 (972)

Decreased by 13% from 54.2% - 1,160 in 2014

CHILDREN IN OUT OF HOME CUSTODY³⁵ (2021)

57 children under 9

Increased by 27% from 45 in 2016

Educational Assessments

SUPERVISORY UNION / SCHOOL DISTRICT

Battenkill Valley SU	84.6%
Bennington Rutland SU	87.2%
Southwest Vermont SU	76.7%
Windham Southwest SU	94.1%

KINDERGARTEN READINESS⁶⁸ (FALL 2020)

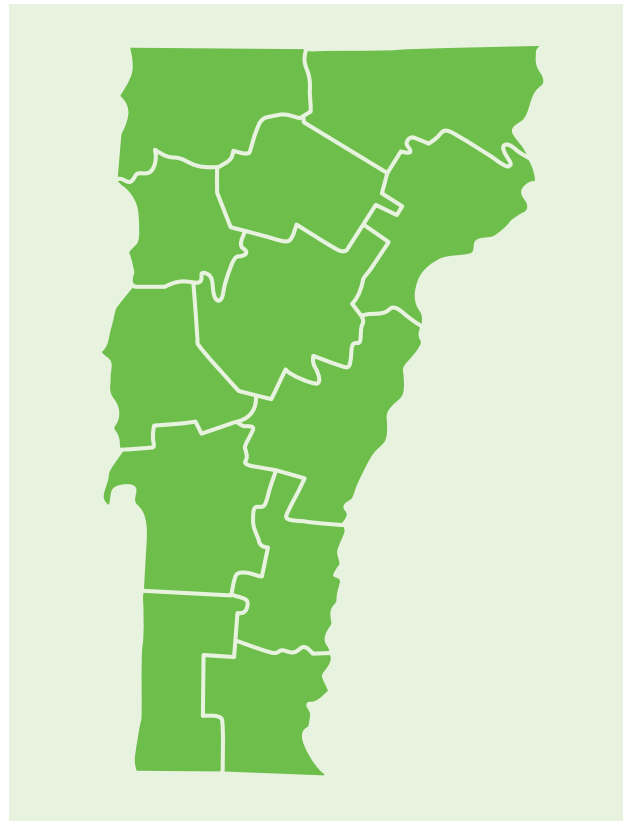
Introduction to Regional Profiles

While Vermont is a relatively small state with commonalities across communities, each region is unique. The following regional profiles offer a snapshot of selected indicators of child and family well-being for each of Vermont’s 12 regions. Each indicator includes the most high-quality, up-to-date data that is available at the regional level and includes the same data from five years prior for comparison.

Each Regional Council is addressing the early childhood workforce crisis with a regional focus based on the strengths and opportunities available as part of the Council Action Plan. Each profile outlines one way that the Regional Council is addressing these challenges and moving forward the **VECAP Goal 3: All Children and Families Have Access to High-Quality Opportunities That Meet Their Needs.**

For more information on the early childhood workforce crisis, see the Spotlight starting on page 10.

Please note that due to “test administration during 2020-2021 [being] impacted by several, novel variables”, proficiency in third grade reading assessments is not included for each School District/Supervisory Union.⁶⁷



Current Status of All Vermont Children

CHILD POPULATION¹¹ (2019)

53,821 children under 9

Decreased by 5% from 56,495 in 2014

CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY⁶⁹ (2019)

35.7% children under 6 (12,382)

Decreased by 16% from 42.5% - 15,628 in 2014

CHILDREN IN OUT OF HOME CUSTODY³⁵ (2021)

520 children under 9

Decreased by 28% from 721 in 2016

Educational Assessments

VERMONT STUDENTS

All Students	86%
Boys	82%
Girls	91%
Free and Reduced Lunch Eligible	77%
Not Free and Reduced Lunch Eligible	89%
Attended Publicly Funded PreK	87%
Did Not Attend Publicly Funded PreK	82%
Percent of Students Surveyed	90%

KINDERGARTEN READINESS⁶⁸ (FALL 2020)

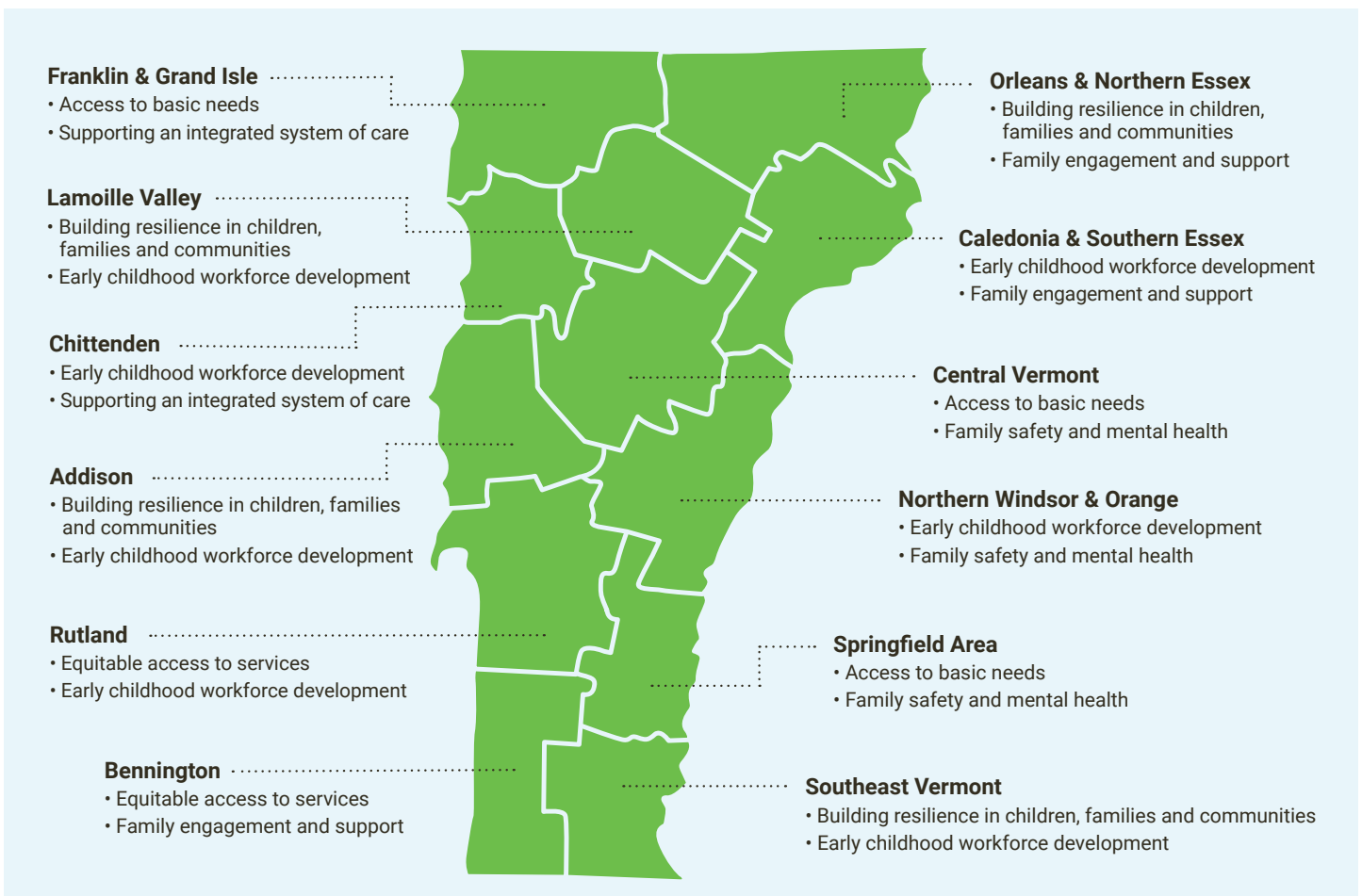
ABOUT REGIONAL COUNCILS

Building Bright Futures’ Regional Councils bring together early childhood stakeholders to identify gaps; share expertise and resources to break down silos; elevate regional and family voice; and implement strategies to respond to the needs of each and every child and family in their respective area. 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.

Statewide, nearly 250 people bring their perspectives together through Regional Councils on a monthly basis. Early childhood stakeholders across regional tables include professionals in physical and mental health, social services, basic needs, early childhood education, PreK-12 education, families of children under 9, and community members invested in the well-being of young children.

Each Regional Council has an action plan to guide decisions and activities. While each plan supports a local comprehensive early childhood system, two regional priorities are set by Regional Councils annually to share across the state. The map below presents the top two priorities of each region which showcases the strength of the regional council network in local priority setting, as well as the connections and variation between the 12 regions in Vermont.



More information about each region including monthly council meetings and updates can be found at buildingbrightfutures.org/what-we-do/regional-councils/