



Vermont's Early Childhood
Data & Policy Center



2022 Vermont Early Childhood Family Needs Assessment: Appendices



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Early Childhood Family Needs Assessment Survey

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts and experiences on raising young children in Vermont. This survey is designed to gather information and feedback on supports and services (listed below) that families with young children (prenatal through age 8) have received. Responses to this survey will be used to inform policy and decision makers on how families are feeling about services and supports in Vermont.

Your responses to this survey are anonymous. By participating in this survey, you are agreeing to have your anonymous responses, shared as either quotes or quantitative analysis, included in publications/materials such as data briefs, legislative testimony, presentation materials, etc.

Except for the first two screening questions, **all questions and sections are optional.** Thank you for your time!

*Do you live in Vermont?

- Yes
- No → At this time, we are only looking for responses from Vermont residents. Thanks for your time!

*Are you the primary caretaker of a child 8 years old or younger? (i.e. Parent, guardian, foster parent etc.)

- Yes
- No → At this time, we are only looking for responses from families with children under the age of 9 years old. Thanks for your time!

Demographic Questions: (This is an optional section to share your demographic information)

Please share the age of your child(ren):

(Select all that apply)

- Under 1 year old
- 1 year old
- 2 years old
- 3 years old
- 4 years old
- 5 years old
- 6 years old
- 7 years old
- 8 years old
- 9+ years old

How long have you lived in Vermont?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-7 years
- 8+ years

What county do you live in most of the time?

- Addison
 - Bennington
 - Caledonia
 - Chittenden
 - Essex
 - Franklin
 - Grand Isle
 - Lamoille
 - Orange
 - Orleans
 - Rutland
 - Washington
 - Windham
 - Windsor
 - If unsure, what town do you live in?
-

The categories in the following questions are standardized, however, we realize that they may not fully capture how you identify. Please choose the categories that most closely describe how you identify. As a reminder, all questions are optional.

How do you identify? (Select all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
 - White
 - Two or More Races
 - Prefer Not to Answer
 - Another (please specify)
-

How do members of your family/household identify? (Select all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
 - White
 - Two or More Races
 - Prefer Not to Answer
 - Another (please specify)
-

How do you identify? (Select all that apply)

- Female
 - Male
 - Non-binary
 - Transgender
 - Prefer not to answer
 - Another (please specify)
-

How do you identify?

- Hispanic or Latino
- Not Hispanic or Latino
- Prefer Not to Answer

Is your family eligible for, or does your family participate in 3SquaresVT? (3SquaresVT, also known as SNAP, EBT and food stamps helps income-eligible people and families buy the food they need.)

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- Prefer not to answer

Basic Needs:

For each of the statements below, select the response that best describes how you feel about the statement related to your family's experience.

	Strongly	Disagree	Somewhat	Somewhat	Agree	Strongly
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	Disagree		Disagree	Agree		Agree
My family currently has access to safe, secure, and affordable housing.	•	•	•	•	•	•
My family has access to reliable transportation to get where we need to go. (work, school/child care, medical appointments, etc.)	•	•	•	•	•	•
My family has access to affordable food that meets our needs and preferences.	•	•	•	•	•	•
My family has access to and can afford the necessities we need. (like diapers and/or formula)	•	•	•	•	•	•

For each of the following services/supports, select the response that best describes how you feel about the statement related to your family's experience. *My experience with each of the following services/supports was overall positive. (for example: met the needs of my family, and was easy to access):*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
Medical Care	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Children's Integrated Services (CIS)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Head Start	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Town or Community Resource (Library, Parent Child Center, etc.)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Child Care/Early Learning Settings (0-5)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Publicly Funded Pre-K	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
School (K-3)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

This is **the first of three** opportunities to provide feedback about a specific service or support.

Please indicate what type of service or support you are providing feedback on: (*Select one*)

Medical Care <input type="checkbox"/> Prenatal <input type="checkbox"/> Pediatric <input type="checkbox"/> Well-child visit <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency <input type="checkbox"/> Urgent
Children’s Integrated Services <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood and Family Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/> Early Intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Specialized Child Care <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Families VT Home Visiting
Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Early Head Start
Town or Community Based Resource <input type="checkbox"/> Library <input type="checkbox"/> Playgroup <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation programs <input type="checkbox"/> Food shelf or community meals <input type="checkbox"/> Another town or community based resource (specify) _____
Child Care/Early Learning Settings (0-5) (<i>apart from publicly funded Pre-kindergarten in a private program or school-based setting</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Infant (under 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Toddler (2-3) <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool (3-5)
Publicly funded Pre-kindergarten <input type="checkbox"/> In a center based child care program <input type="checkbox"/> In a family home child care program <input type="checkbox"/> In an elementary school setting
School (kindergarten through third grade) <input type="checkbox"/> Kindergarten <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 3

For each of the questions below, select the response that best describes how you feel about the statement related to your family’s experience.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel that my family was welcomed and treated with kindness.	•	•	•	•	•	•
I feel that my family’s culture and values were understood and respected.	•	•	•	•	•	•
I feel that I’m given the opportunity to make decisions about how to best care for my child(ren) and family.	•	•	•	•	•	•
I feel that I have the access and tools to communicate my family’s needs to staff.	•	•	•	•	•	•

Tell us about a time when it was easy to identify and access your selected service. What made it easy?

Tell us about a time when it was challenging to identify and access your selected service. What made it challenging?

This is **the second of three** opportunities to provide feedback about a specific service or support.

Please indicate what type of service or support you are providing feedback on: (*Select one*)

Medical Care <input type="checkbox"/> Prenatal <input type="checkbox"/> Pediatric <input type="checkbox"/> Well-child visit <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency <input type="checkbox"/> Urgent
Children's Integrated Services <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood and Family Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/> Early Intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Specialized Child Care <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Families VT Home Visiting
Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Early Head Start
Town or Community Based Resource <input type="checkbox"/> Library <input type="checkbox"/> Playgroup <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation programs <input type="checkbox"/> Food shelf or community meals <input type="checkbox"/> Another town or community based resource (specify) _____
Child Care/Early Learning Settings (0-5) <i>(apart from publicly funded Pre-kindergarten in a private program or school-based setting)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Infant (under 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Toddler (2-3) <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool (3-5)
Publicly funded Pre-kindergarten <input type="checkbox"/> In a center based child care program <input type="checkbox"/> In a family home child care program <input type="checkbox"/> In an elementary school setting
School (kindergarten through third grade) <input type="checkbox"/> Kindergarten <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 3

For each of the questions below, select the response that best describes how you feel about the statement related to your family's experience.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel that my family was welcomed and treated with kindness.	•	•	•	•	•	•
I feel that my family's culture and values were understood and respected.	•	•	•	•	•	•
I feel that I'm given the opportunity to make decisions about how to best care for my child(ren) and family.	•	•	•	•	•	•
I feel that I have the access and tools to communicate my family's needs to staff.	•	•	•	•	•	•

Tell us about a time when it was easy to identify and access your selected service. What made it easy?

Tell us about a time when it was challenging to identify and access your selected service. What made it challenging?

This is **the third of three** opportunities to provide feedback about a specific service or support.

Please indicate what type of service or support you are providing feedback on: (*Select one*)

Medical Care <input type="checkbox"/> Prenatal <input type="checkbox"/> Pediatric <input type="checkbox"/> Well-child visit <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency <input type="checkbox"/> Urgent
Children's Integrated Services

<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood and Family Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/> Early Intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Specialized Child Care <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Families VT Home Visiting
Head Start
<input type="checkbox"/> Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Early Head Start
Town or Community Based Resource
<input type="checkbox"/> Library <input type="checkbox"/> Playgroup <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation programs <input type="checkbox"/> Food shelf or community meals <input type="checkbox"/> Another town or community based resource (specify) _____
Child Care/Early Learning Settings (0-5) (apart from publicly funded Pre-kindergarten in a private program or school-based setting)
<input type="checkbox"/> Infant (under 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Toddler (2-3) <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool (3-5)
Publicly funded Pre-kindergarten
<input type="checkbox"/> In a center based child care program <input type="checkbox"/> In a family home child care program <input type="checkbox"/> In an elementary school setting
School (kindergarten through third grade)
<input type="checkbox"/> Kindergarten <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 3

For each of the questions below, select the response that best describes how you feel about the statement related to your family's experience.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel that my family was welcomed and treated with kindness.	•	•	•	•	•	•
I feel that my family's culture and values were understood and respected.	•	•	•	•	•	•
I feel that I'm given the opportunity to make decisions about how to best care for my child(ren) and family.	•	•	•	•	•	•
I feel that I have the access and tools to communicate my family's needs to staff.	•	•	•	•	•	•

Tell us about a time when it was easy to identify and access your selected service. What made it easy?

Tell us about a time when it was challenging to identify and access your selected service. What made it challenging?

Knowledge of and accessing resources/services:

For each of the statements below, select the response that best describes how you feel about the statement related to your family's experience with accessing resources or services in general, across the early childhood system in Vermont:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I know where to look or who to ask when I am looking to access a new resource.	•	•	•	•	•	•

I am comfortable asking for services and supports that my child(ren) and family need.	•	•	•	•	•	•
I was able to access needed services, resources, or support for my child(ren) and/or family.	•	•	•	•	•	•

What can make it challenging to know where to look for and access services and supports? Are there any barriers that you've experienced to accessing the services your family needs?

What is a resource you wish existed that does not?

Is there another service that your family accessed that wasn't previously asked about that you would like to share your experience with?

Transitions:

Think of a time when you experienced a transition with your family (in or out of child care, from child care to pre-K, from pre-K to Kindergarten, or from Early Intervention services (birth to age 3) to Early Childhood Special Education Services (age 3 to age 6) or another transition).

What type of transition have you/your family experienced that you would like to share more about your experience with?

- Transition into a new child care setting
- Transition from a child care to a pre-K setting
- Transition from pre-K or preschool to Kindergarten
- A transition in special education services (EI Services to Early Childhood Special Education, etc.)
- Another transition (please specify) _____
- I do not wish to provide feedback on a transition

For each of the statements below, select the response that best describes how you feel about the statement related to your family’s experience with a recent transition.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The transition went smoothly and my family and child’s needs were met.	•	•	•	•	•	•
During the time of the transition, my family felt supported and knew where to go for information or questions.	•	•	•	•	•	•

What about the transition was easy for you and your family? What supports made it easy?

What about the transition was challenging for you and your family? What supports were missing that would have made it easier?

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts and experiences on raising young children in Vermont.

Responses to this survey will be used to inform policy and decision makers on how families are feeling about the services and supports available. Your responses to this survey are anonymous.

Get Involved!

If you would like to get connected with the group performing this survey, please fill out the additional survey below or go to <https://bit.ly/GetInvolvedFCC> to enter your information.



Would you be interested in getting more information about connecting with any of the following groups or opportunities:

- I'd like to learn more about the Families and Communities Committee
- I'd like to be involved in this specific project (helping the team reviewing the data, writing the report, or sharing the survey in your community)
- I'd like to receive a copy of the findings from this survey once completed

Name: _____

Email: _____

Enter the Raffle!



If you would like to be entered into a raffle for a \$50 gift certificate, please enter your information at the link or QR code below.

www.surveymonkey.com/r/NND7F6R

Appendix B: Demographics

The FNA survey resulted in **639** valid responses from families of **1,089 children**, representative of about 2% of Vermont’s total child population under age 9.

Respondents primarily identified as white (87.9%) and non-Hispanic/Latina/o/x (92.5%). However, FNA respondents were more racially diverse than the Vermont population as a whole (87.9% white vs. 94% for the state and 87.9% non-Hispanic/Latina/o/x vs. 97.8% for Vermont). Respondents also primarily identified as female (83%) with the rest identifying as male (14%) or either another gender identity or preferred not to answer (3%). Again, when compared to the population as a whole, there were many more female respondents than in the Vermont population as a whole (83% vs. 50.3%). See table below for a more complete set of demographic characteristics.

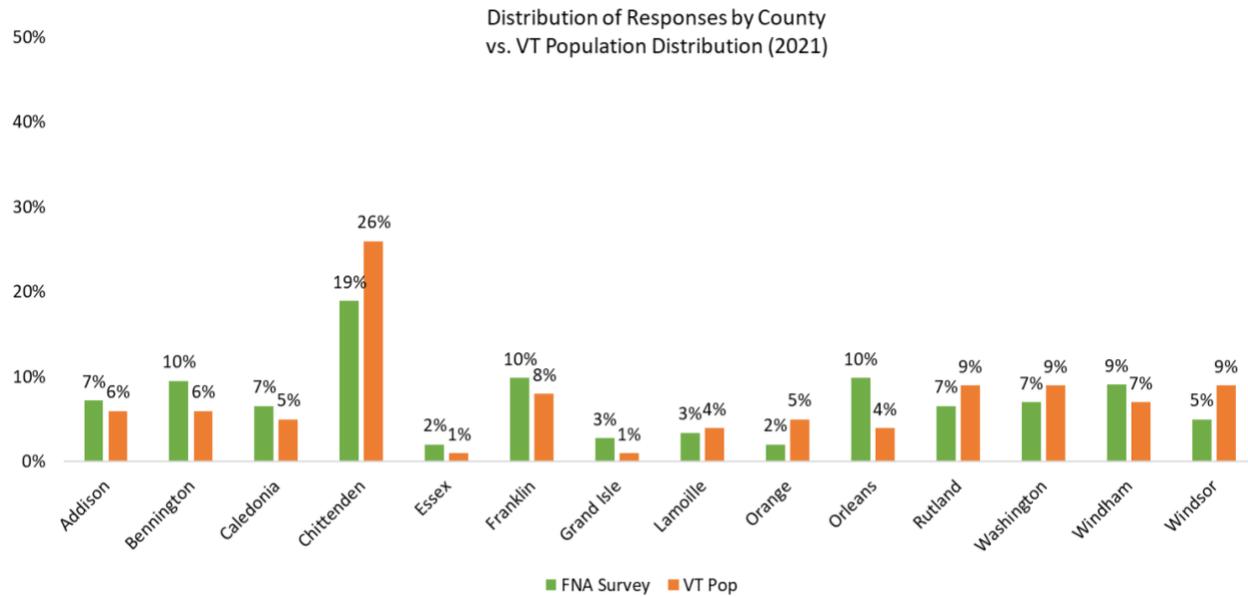
Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondent and the Vermont Population (2021)		
	Survey Respondents	Vermont Population ¹
Race		
American Indian or Alaska Native	***	0.4%
Asian	2.2%	2%
Black or African American	2%	3.2%
Native Hawaiian	***	0.1%
White	87.9%	94%
Two or More Races	3.3%	1.9%
Prefer Not to Answer	2%	NA
Ethnicity		
Hispanic or Latina/o/x	7.5%	2.2%
Gender		
Female	83%	50.3%
Male	14%	49.7%
Another Gender Identity	***	NA
Prefer Not to Answer	***	NA

*** Data are not shown because the number of respondents was under 11

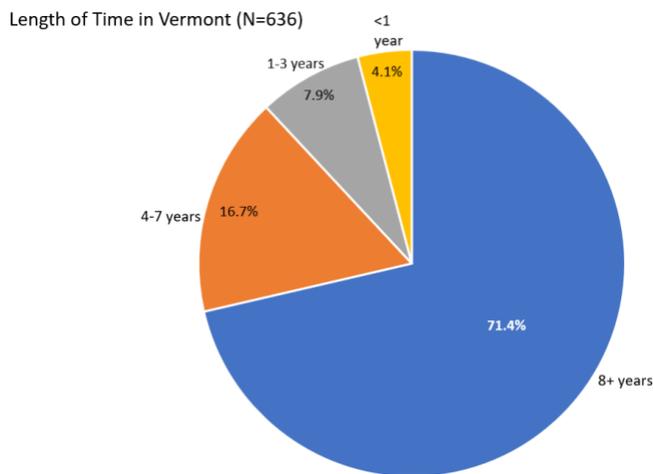
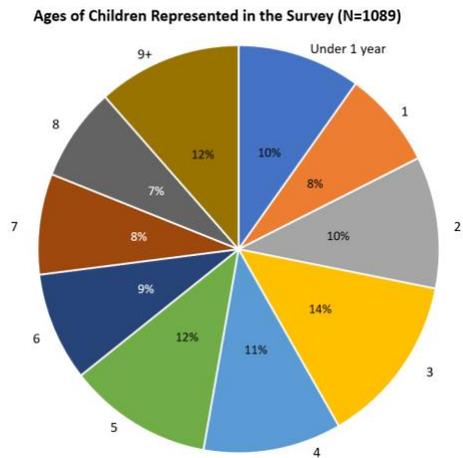
Responses were recorded in each county of Vermont. Similar to the comparison with the race and ethnicity breakdown above, as can be seen in the chart below, when compared with the Vermont population as a whole, there were more respondents in Orleans and Bennington counties, and fewer in Chittenden and Windsor counties likely due to the reach of the Parent

¹ Vermont Department of Health. *Population of Vermont by AHS/VDH Districts, Age and Sex, 2000-2021*. Retrieved from <https://www.healthvermont.gov/health-statistics-vital-records/vital-records-population-data/vermont-population-estimates>

Ambassadors and the extended Building Bright Futures Network. The most responses were recorded in Chittenden County with 121, while the least were from Essex and Orange counties.



There were 1,089 children in the households of survey respondents. The largest groups were 3, 4, and 5 year olds, with 14%, 11%, and 12% each, with the remaining ages making up between 7% and 12%. See figure for the age breakdown of children in respondent’s households.

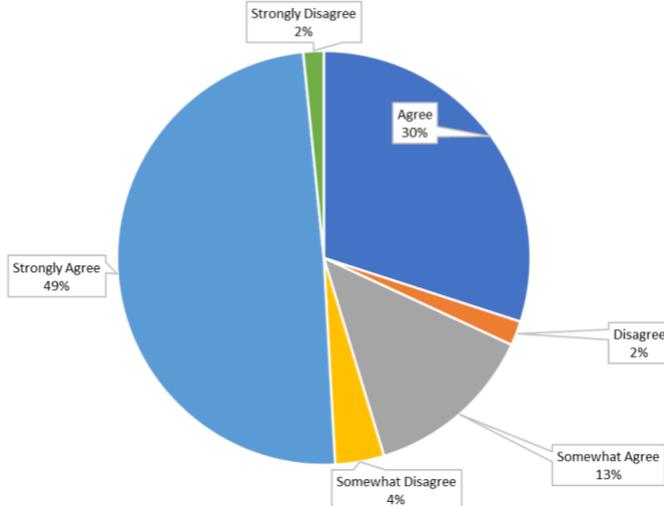


Most respondents were long-time Vermont residents, with 71% living in the state for 8 years or longer and a further 17% living in Vermont for 4-7 years.

Appendix C: Basic Needs

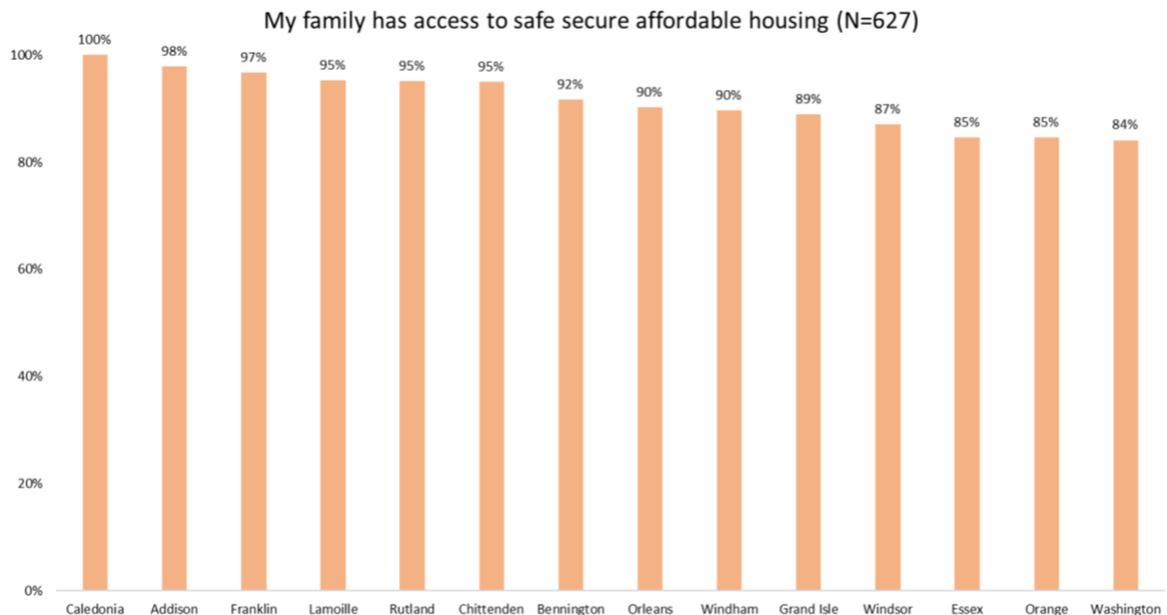
Housing

My family currently has access to safe, secure, and affordable housing (N=627)



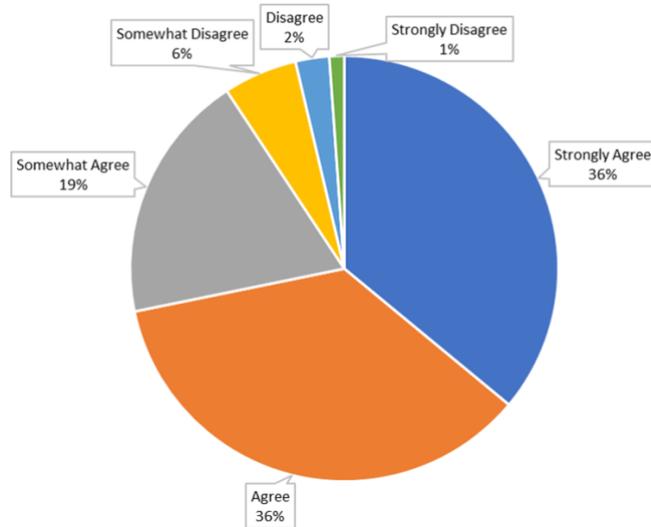
Finding affordable, desirable housing can be extremely challenging for Vermont families. However, in the Family Needs Assessment, 92% of respondents agreed that they had access to safe, secure, affordable housing. 46, or 8% of survey respondents disagreed.

Location-wise, the percentage of people who agreed they had this access ranged from 100% in Caledonia County to 84% in Washington county. Please note that Essex, Orange, and Grand Isle counties had less than 20 responses to this question; therefore, be wary of drawing wide-ranging conclusions from these results.



Food Security

My family has access to affordable food that meets our needs and preferences (N=627)



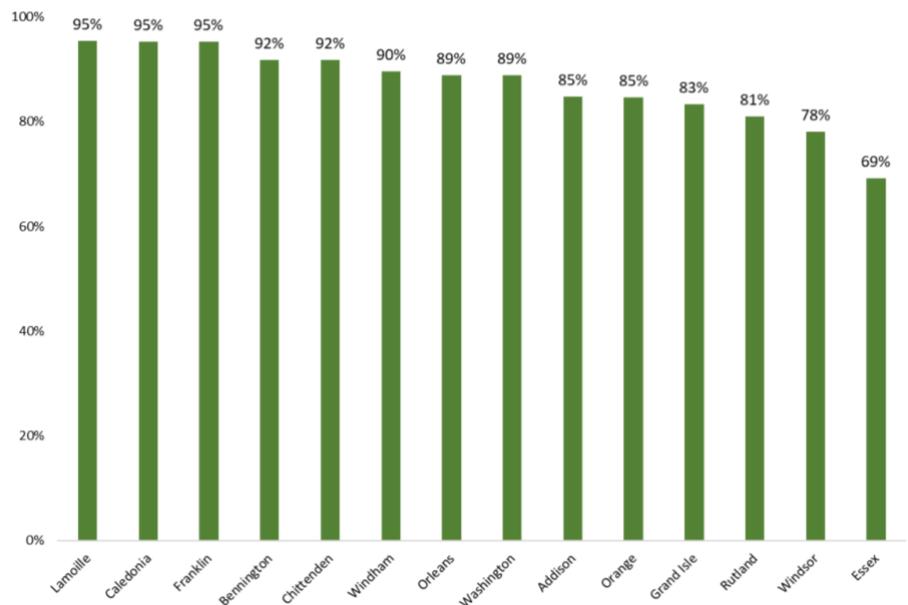
Food is an essential need for families to access. **90.7%** of respondents agreed with the statement “*My family has access to affordable food that meets our needs and preferences.*” This is the lowest rate of agreement of the four main categories of housing, transportation, food, and necessities.

According to the latest State of Vermont’s Children produced by Building Bright Futures, Vermont households, on average, were paying \$603, or 11%, more per month for goods such as food, shelter, transportation,

and energy in total inflation costs in September 2022 compared to January 2021². This is a significant financial burden to families.

Food security ranged widely depending on location, and didn’t correlate with rural or urban areas. For example, Essex, a very rural county, and Rutland, a very urban one (by Vermont standards), reported less food security than other counties. As mentioned in the Housing section above, low response rates from certain counties should be taken into account when looking at these percentages.

My family has access to affordable food that meets our needs and preferences (N=627)



² Building Bright Futures. (January 2023). *State of Vermont’s Children*. Retrieved from <https://buildingbrightfutures.org/wp-content/uploads/State-of-Vermonts-Children-2022.pdf>

Those who participated in 3squaresVT (**26%** of respondents) were more likely to report food insecurity.

My Family Has Access to Affordable Food	Agree	Agree %
Does not participate in 3squares	371	92%
Eligible for or participates in 3squares	144	87%

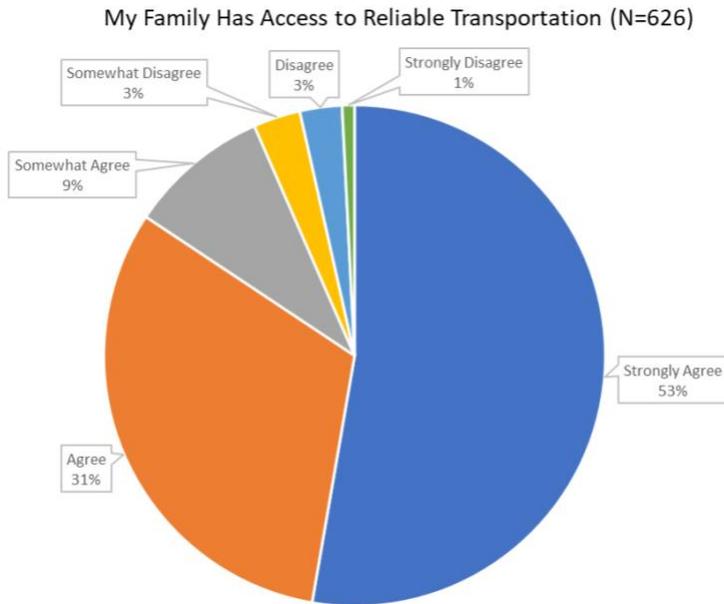
**Participants self-reported their eligibility or participation in 3SquaresVT, also known as SNAP, EBT and food stamps.

White respondents were more likely to agree they had food security than non-white respondents.

Race	Agree	Agree %
Non-White or Multiracial Respondents	49	82%
White	505	90%

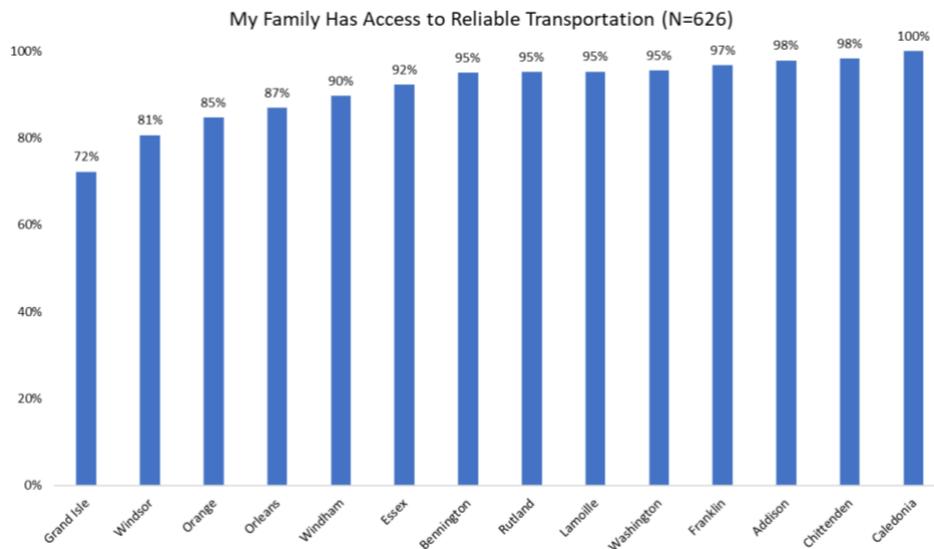
Non-white and multiracial respondents were combined to protect confidentiality outlined in the survey.

Transportation



Transportation is an essential resource in a mostly rural state such as Vermont. Families in particular can struggle with having reliable cars or buses to get them to school, work, and other activities. In the Family Needs Assessment, 93% of respondents agreed with the statement “My family has access to reliable transportation”.

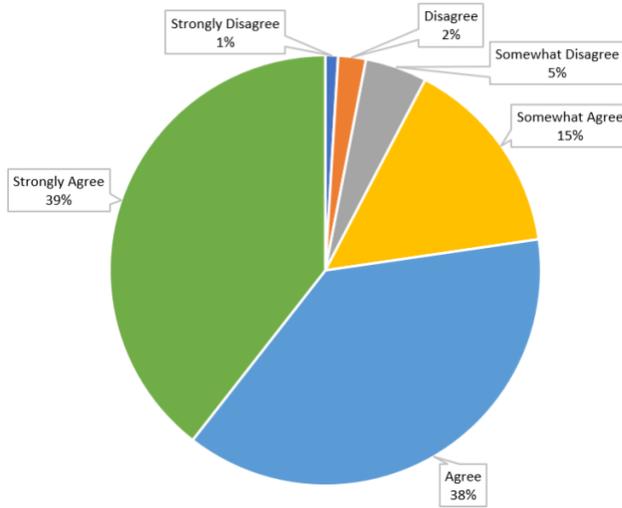
Responses varied based on county, with some rural counties such as Grand Isle and Windsor reporting the most transportation insecurity. According to the latest State of Vermont’s Children produced by Building Bright Futures, 63% of children under 6 living in households with incomes below the FPL live in rural areas³ where having a vehicle is critical to access basic goods and services, as well as to get to work and school.



³ Building Bright Futures. January 2023. State of Vermont’s Children. Retrieved from <https://buildingbrightfutures.org/wp-content/uploads/State-of-Vermonts-Children-2022.pdf>

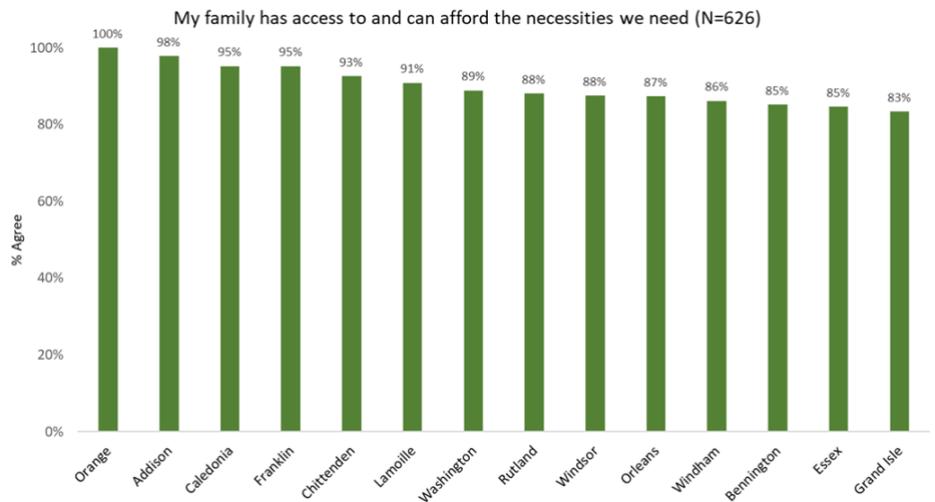
Necessities and Basic Needs

My family has access to and can afford the necessities we need (N=626)



FNA survey respondents were asked about necessities and basic needs, such as diapers, heat access, and formula. 92.3% agreed with the statement “My family has access to and can afford the necessities we need.”

Responses ranged by county, with Grand Isle reporting the most insecurity with basic needs and Orange county reporting the strongest. It should be noted that some counties, such as Orange, had smaller response rates (N=13), so these results should only be applied to survey participants and are not representative of all families in the county.



There was a significant difference between white and non-white responses; non-white respondents were less likely to agree they could afford the necessities they needed.

My family has access to and can afford the necessities we need	Agree
White respondents	94%
Non-white or multiracial respondents	78%

Appendix D: Child Care and Early Learning Settings

Vermont’s system of child care and early learning programs is considered a “mixed delivery system,” meaning it consists of a mix of programs that serve children 6 weeks to 5 years old and not yet in kindergarten. This



“I took a day off of work to call over 30 providers trying to find a spot for our daughter.”

includes licensed and registered family child care programs, center-based programs, and school-based programs. 72.8% of children ages 5 and under in Vermont have all available parents in the labor force⁴, meaning many families in the state rely on child care programs.

Respondents to the Early Childhood Needs Assessment Survey had two opportunities to reflect on their experiences with child care and early learning settings. The first was to rate their agreement with the statement, “My experience was overall positive”.

71% of respondents agreed with the statement,⁵ the lowest of any of the services rated. The table below shows the percentage breakdown by specific agree/disagree statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
7%	12%	10%	16%	32%	22%

Respondents were also able to provide in depth information on their experiences with child care and early learning settings, including rating different aspects of their experience and open ended opportunities to share examples of positive and challenging experiences. Below are the emergent themes and ratings of different aspects of experiences with child care and early learning settings.

Experiences with Child care/Early Learning Settings	% Agree
I feel that my family was welcomed and treated with kindness	90%
I feel that I’m given the opportunity to make decisions about how to best care for my child(ren) and family	85%
I feel that my family’s culture and values were understood and respected	92%
I feel that I have the access and tools to communicate my family’s needs to staff	87%

⁴ Let’s Grow Kids. (2022). *Stalled at the Start: Vermont’s Child Care Challenge*. Retrieved from https://letsgrowkids.org/client_media/files/FinalSATS2022.pdf

⁵ 553 of 639 respondents rated their experience with child care. Of note, not all children and families have received services from child care or early learning settings.

Survey participants were also asked about the ease of accessing child care, as well as the challenges they faced.

Tell us about a time when it was easy to identify and access your selected service. What made it easy? (Most common comment themes)
We're pleased with our childcare program One respondent expressed: <i>"Our childcare is incredible. We are very happy with it."</i>
Found childcare through a personal connection or working in the field One respondent stated, <i>"Deciding on a daycare facility. My partner knew the owner so it was an easy choice."</i>
It's easy to locate available care in my area One respondent shared, <i>"Easy to navigate website, contact information and hours readily available. Information regarding funding available and consistent access to care."</i>
Caregivers have great communication with child care staff <i>"The center is small and we've been able to build good relationships with the providers. It's very easy to talk with them over the app."</i>

Tell us about a time when it was challenging to identify and access your selected service. What made it challenging? (Most common comment themes)
Accessing child care/finding a spot for my child is very difficult <i>"I took a day off of work to call over 30 providers trying to find a spot for our daughter."</i>
Child care is too expensive <i>"We pay almost the same amount as we do for our mortgage for our son's care but have no other options available to us as my wife and I both need to work to afford to live in this area."</i> <i>"Originally we were grateful for the slot. Now we're terrified of how we are going to afford it."</i>
There are not enough quality options in my area <i>"The challenge we face is that there are NO childcare providers who serve children 0-2 within 30 minutes of our house. Our options for childcare were limited and the commute makes it impossible for us to work full-time during the day. We have to work nights and weekends to meet our work obligations."</i>

There is too much staff turnover

"The daycare that had availability and we selected has had closures multiple times a month often short notice due to staffing issues. They've had limited hours due to staffing issues for 5+ months."

Lack of child care hurts family economically and/or professionally

"There is no local availability for childcare for my infant twins and because of this I lost my job."

The hours don't cover working parents' needs

"I spent HOURS on the phone calling each individual [child care program] to see if they had openings, what they had to offer, and the most important question - how much would it cost! I couldn't afford 97% of the places I reached out to. Or the hours they could offer wouldn't work, or they only had an opening like two Wednesdays per month or some crazy thing like that."

Appendix E: Children’s Integrated Services (CIS)

Children’s Integrated Services (CIS) is Vermont’s model for integrating the following four services for pregnant and postpartum women and children birth to age 6:⁶ early childhood and family mental health (ECFMH), early intervention (EI), Strong Families Vermont Home Visiting, and specialized child care. The model is designed to improve child and family outcomes by providing family-centric holistic services, effective service coordination, flexible funding to address gaps in services, prevention, early intervention, health promotion, and accountability.⁷ The prevention-focused program is intended to wrap around the whole family including support for parents or caregivers to understand and advocate for the needs of their children, provide a point person to support care coordination, and access to high-quality child development, mental health, and prevention services.



*"The agency provided **amazing** early intervention services for my child with delayed speech. He is now **thriving** because of them."*

Respondents to the Early Childhood Needs Assessment Survey had two opportunities to reflect on their experiences with CIS. The first was to rate their agreement with the statement, “My experience was overall positive”.

83% of respondents agreed with the statement.⁸ The table below shows the percentage breakdown by specific agree/disagree statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3%	5%	9%	18%	39%	25%

Respondents were also able to provide in depth information on their experiences with CIS, including rating different aspects of their experience and open-ended opportunities to share positive and challenging examples. Below are the emergent themes and ratings of different aspects of experiences with CIS.

⁶ In addition, children up to age 13 and early childhood education programs are eligible for services through specialized child care

⁷ Vermont Department for Children and Families. (2022). *Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan for Vermont*. Retrieved from <https://outside.vermont.gov/dept/DCF/Shared%20Documents/CDD/Reports/CCDF-Plans/CCDF-Plan-2022-2024.pdf>

⁸ 373 of 639 respondents rated their experience with CIS. Of note, not all children and families are eligible or have received services from CIS.

Experiences with CIS	% Agree
I feel that my family was welcomed and treated with kindness	77%
I feel that I'm given the opportunity to make decisions about how to best care for my child(ren) and family	75%
I feel that my family's culture and values were understood and respected	81%
I feel that I have the access and tools to communicate my family's needs to staff	75%

Tell us about a time when it was easy to identify and access CIS. What made it easy? (Most common comment themes)
<p>It's easy to understand and access services</p> <p><i>"The agency provided amazing early intervention services for my child with delayed speech. He is now thriving because of them."</i></p>
<p>Friendly, supportive staff and environment</p> <p><i>"Our early intervention worker is wonderful and so caring. She listens to my family's needs and works hard to help us find the right resources or ideas."</i></p>
<p>It's easy to get referred to services</p> <p><i>"Early Intervention contacted me via a referral from [the] pediatrician."</i></p>
<p>There's great communication with staff</p> <p><i>"We were referred for early intervention shortly after our daughter was born and have only had good experiences. The staff are proactive and communicate very well."</i></p>

Tell us about a time when it was challenging to identify and access CIS. What made it challenging? (Most common comment themes)
<p>Referrals to providers take too long</p> <p><i>"I had to wait for a referral to EI for speech concerns until my child was 18 months. I advocated from the time he was 5 months and forward. The pediatrician's office didn't do a good job at supporting parents' desire for assessments."</i></p>
<p>It's a struggle to find a specialty provider</p> <p><i>"Our speech therapist [left] and no replacement has been hired so we are struggling to find our daughter these much needed services."</i></p>

Mental health services are difficult to access

“It has not been easy for my child & I to get mental health counseling. Both my child & I were waitlisted at at least 15 plus different counseling centers or private counselors & we remained without therapy for over 2 years until we both finally got in at separate places.”

Caretakers are unsure what services are available

“As a first time mom, not knowing much about what services there were available or where to look for them. I ended up needing speech for my oldest son and got referred but he was at that point already too old.”

Appendix F: Head Start/Early Head Start

Head Start is a publicly funded program that provides services for pregnant women and children up to age five, including child care, health screening services, parenting education, and social support services.

Respondents to the Early Childhood Needs Assessment Survey had two opportunities to reflect on their experiences with Head Start and Early Head Start. The first was to rate their agreement with the statement, “My experience was overall positive”.



“Head Start program was located within the school - easy access.”

82% of respondents agreed with the statement.⁹ The table below shows the percentage breakdown by specific agree/disagree statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
4%	8%	6%	19%	37%	26%

Respondents were also able to provide in depth information on their experiences with Head Start and Early Head Start, including rating different aspects of their experience and open ended opportunities to share positive and challenging examples. Below are the emergent themes and ratings of different aspects of experiences with Head Start and Early Head Start.

Experiences with Head Start and Early Head Start	% Agree
I feel that my family was welcomed and treated with kindness	94%
I feel that I’m given the opportunity to make decisions about how to best care for my child(ren) and family	94%
I feel that my family’s culture and values were understood and respected	96%
I feel that I have the access and tools to communicate my family’s needs to staff	94%

⁹ 257 of 639 respondents rated their experience with Head Start. Of note, not all children and families are eligible or have received services from Head Start

Tell us about a time when it was easy to identify and access Head Start and Early Head Start. What made it easy? (Most common comment themes)

Head Start staff are helpful and supportive

"The teachers were fantastic at communicating what was going on with my child"

Easy access in school

"Head Start program was located within the school - easy access."

Tell us about a time when it was challenging to identify and access Head Start and Early Head Start. What made it challenging? (Most common comment themes)

Staff are not supportive or didn't follow through on services

"We struggled with staff at Head Start with our son due to his situation at the time. He was in foster care and by the time he was placed in our home, he had been written off as a "bad" kid and was told that often. No one wanted to deal with his behaviors or utilize resources that were helpful to him. We ended up pulling him before kindergarten because we struggled so much with the program meeting his needs."

Appendix G: Medical Care

Medical care is an essential component of young children’s health. Participants of the survey were asked several questions about medical care, including agree/disagree statements and what challenges they faced in accessing it. Most of the analysis was done through qualitative measures based on comments from families.



“I called the pediatricians office, left a voicemail and my call was returned within the hour. I was able to make an appointment for my son the same day. Easy and efficient.”

Respondents to the Early Childhood Needs Assessment Survey had two opportunities to reflect on their experiences with medical care. The first was to rate their agreement with the statement, “My experience was overall positive”.

93% of respondents agreed with the statement,¹⁰ the highest rated of all the services. The table below shows the percentage breakdown by specific agree/disagree statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1%	3%	3%	13%	43%	36%

Respondents were also able to provide in depth information on their experiences with medical care, including rating different aspects of their experience and open ended opportunities to share positive and challenging examples. Below are the emergent themes and ratings of different aspects of experiences with medical care.

Experiences with Medical Care	% Agree
I feel that my family was welcomed and treated with kindness	94%
I feel that I’m given the opportunity to make decisions about how to best care for my child(ren) and family	95%
I feel that my family’s culture and values were understood and respected	95%
I feel that I have the access and tools to communicate my family’s needs to staff	94%

¹⁰ 606 of 639 respondents rated their experience with medical care

Tell us about a time when it was easy to identify and access medical care. What made it easy? (Most common comment themes)

Welcoming, attentive, high-quality, supportive practice

"The connections between the wellness center, the lactation consultant, and the pediatrician were really seamless- the consultant reached out to me in both settings, rather than having to seek them out. In the future, I will feel comforted knowing that support is so readily available if I need it again."

It is easy to access care: Appointments are easy to make (including through apps and portals) with flexible scheduling, same day appointments, and availability after hours

"The OBGYN team provided exceptional service throughout my pregnancy and during delivery. They provide wrap-around support including access to a social worker throughout pregnancy and post-partum. Services were easily accessible, there were appointment times available outside 9am-5pm, they had a specific phone number for after-hours pregnancy related concerns, and staff were compassionate."

Easy quick communication, including through apps and portals

"I called the pediatricians office, left a voicemail and my call was returned within the hour. I was able to make an appointment for my son the same day. Easy and efficient."

Finding a provider was easy

"Our pediatrician's office is in the neighborhood, and has been amazingly responsive, supportive, and helpful."

Tell us about a time when it was challenging to identify and access medical care. What made it challenging? (Most common comment themes)

Doctor's office not very supportive or responsive

"Some drs don't take the time to listen to my concerns and / or can shrug them off like it's not a big deal."

Hard to find a quality provider -or any accepting new patients- in area

"Pediatrics in this area is impossible. Providers are wonderful and compassionate, but there are not enough of them, and support staff are overworked, underpaid, and apathetic. We had to move to a provider who operates outside of insurance entirely to ensure that my children could actually be seen in a timely manner (in my sons' first six months of life, we spent hours waiting in exam rooms, and spent maybe 30 minutes of actual time with a provider)."

COVID made accessing providers difficult/hard to get vaccine info

“Due to COVID, appointments could be hard to come by, especially when our kids didn't have COVID but needed appointments for other illnesses.”

Long waits for responses and appointments/appts inconvenient to schedule

“Sometimes it is challenging when you do not get a callback from a nurse when you are in a panic situation with your child. Sometimes you wait hours or even a day or more waiting for a callback.”

Transportation to appointments is far

“I don't feel there are good local health services, so I have to drive 45 minutes to access quality care. This requires significant time away from work to deal with any medical appointments.”

Appendix H: Publicly Funded Pre-K

Act 166 offers Universal Prekindergarten Education (UPK) to all 3- and 4-year-olds, and to 5-year-olds not enrolled in Kindergarten, for up to 10 hours a week of publicly-funded pre-kindergarten education for 35 weeks of the academic year. Vermont’s mixed delivery system means that these hours can be used in school based programs or in prequalified pre-kindergarten center-based child care and family child care programs.

“Staff communicate wonderfully and are great with the kids.”

Respondents to the Early Childhood Needs Assessment Survey had two opportunities to reflect on their experiences with publicly funded pre-K. The first was to rate their agreement with the statement, “My experience was overall positive”.



77% of respondents agreed with the statement.¹¹The table below shows the percentage breakdown by specific agree/disagree statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
5%	8%	10%	18%	35%	24%

Respondents were also able to provide in depth information on their experiences with publicly funded pre-K, including rating different aspects of their experience and open ended opportunities to share positive and challenging examples. Below are the emergent themes and ratings of different aspects of experiences with publicly funded pre-K.

Experiences with Publicly Funded Pre-K	% Agree
I feel that my family was welcomed and treated with kindness	91%
I feel that I’m given the opportunity to make decisions about how to best care for my child(ren) and family	88%
I feel that my family’s culture and values were understood and respected	93%
I feel that I have the access and tools to communicate my family’s needs to staff	95%

¹¹ 464 of 639 respondents rated their experience with child care. Of note, not all children and families are eligible or have received services related to child care.

Tell us about a time when it was easy to identify and access your selected service. What made it easy? (Most common comment themes)

Good communication with staff

"Staff communicate wonderfully and are great with the kids."

Easy process to find a Pre-K spot

"Signing up our son for public pre-k was easy because we spoke to the elementary school administrative staff and they told us the steps to take and took care of the rest."

Family feels supported by care

"We accessed public pre-K. Handling the forms for Act 166 with the school district was seamless, and both providers were exceptional at welcoming us into the community, caring for our children and keeping us involved."

Tell us about a time when it was challenging to identify and access your selected service. What made it challenging? (Most common comment themes)

Hours are too short or limited for working parents

"Public pre-k of this type is only half day three days a week which is not at all convenient for working families. Neighboring school districts offer all day and 5 day pre-k programs."

Childcare waiting lists are long or spots are too limited

"My public school district has a 40-kid waitlist for Pre-K, and it's not a full day program, which would cause our family to struggle with wraparound care, even if we got off the waitlist. Therefore, our child is enrolled in a private (religious) school, where we are paying out of pocket."

Cost is too high*

*Some parents may have mistaken this question to refer to all Pre-K, not just publicly funded

Appendix I: School (K-3)

School (K - 3) provides students with the foundation for their future academic and personal success. In school, children learn skills such as reading, writing, and math, as well as social and emotional skills. These include teamwork, communication, and problem-solving. This is a time when children develop their sense of self and curiosity about the world around them. For rural and remote communities, schools can serve as important community hubs. They provide a central gathering place for families and children. Schools can play an important role in fostering a sense of community and connectedness in Vermont.



“The communication with families was excellent. It made it easy to know what was happening with my child.”

Respondents to the Early Childhood Needs Assessment Survey had two opportunities to reflect on their experiences with school. The first was to rate their agreement with the statement, “My experience was overall positive”.

91% of respondents agreed with the statement,¹² the second highest rated of all the services. The table below shows the percentage breakdown by specific agree/disagree statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3%	2%	4%	14%	44%	33%

Respondents were also able to provide in depth information on their experiences with school, including rating different aspects of their experience and open ended opportunities to share positive and challenging examples. Below are the emergent themes and ratings of different aspects of experiences with school.

Experiences with School (K-3)	% Agree
I feel that my family was welcomed and treated with kindness	90%
I feel that I’m given the opportunity to make decisions about how to best care for my child(ren) and family	88%
I feel that my family’s culture and values were understood and respected	88%
I feel that I have the access and tools to communicate my family’s needs to staff	86%

¹² 425 of 639 respondents rated their experience with schools. Of note, not all children and families are eligible or have received services from CIS.

Tell us about a time when it was easy to identify and access your selected service. What made it easy? (Most common comment themes)

Teachers and/or school administration very communicative and supportive

"Wonderful supportive teacher and school."

School staff are great to work with

"The communication with families was excellent. It made it easy to know what was happening with my child."

School has IEP testing/good IEP staff

"IEP Staff and providers are great and answer questions and concerns I have."

Tell us about a time when it was challenging to identify and access your selected service. What made it challenging? (Most common comment themes)

Specialty services are difficult to access

"It has been extremely challenging to gain access to better supports for my child who has significant behavioral challenges because he score "great" on tests used to determine need for services. This is not only a disservice to him, but a disservice to the general educator who has to handle the challenging behaviors of many with not enough support."

School and/or staff not communicative enough

"The local school has no family involvement in education and only puts out 2 report cards a year. Very little communication with families, and family ideas or sharing of experiences with kids is completely disregarded."

Local public school system is not good

"The [local public schools] are horrible and a waste of money. We refuse to send our kids there, but because of Vermont's discriminatory school choice laws, we can't get any tax breaks or vouchers to send our children to schools that are worth the money. They also won't let us use the money for homeschool materials. This state traps families in awful schools and forces families that choose to pay for private school instead to pay for their kids' education twice."

Appendix J: Town and Community Resources

Parents and caregivers often rely on community resources such as libraries, playgroups, recreation departments, or food shelves to support their children and bond with other caregivers.

"The local playgroup worked hard to have an online presence and a community presence. They were easy to find and welcoming. The people I met there became best friends for years."



Respondents to the Early Childhood Needs Assessment Survey had two opportunities to reflect on their experiences with town and community resources. The first was to rate their agreement with the statement, "My experience was overall positive".

88% of respondents agreed with the statement.¹³ The table below shows the percentage breakdown by specific agree/disagree statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1%	4%	6%	16%	44%	28%

Respondents were also able to provide in depth information on their experiences with town and community resources, including rating different aspects of their experience and open ended opportunities to share positive and challenging examples. Below are the emergent themes and ratings of different aspects of experiences with town and community resources.

Experiences with Town/Community Resource	% Agree
I feel that my family was welcomed and treated with kindness	93%
I feel that I'm given the opportunity to make decisions about how to best care for my child(ren) and family	91%
I feel that my family's culture and values were understood and respected	93%
I feel that I have the access and tools to communicate my family's needs to staff	90%

¹³ 533 of 639 respondents rated their experience with a town or community resource.

Tell us about a time when it was easy to identify and access your selected service. What made it easy? (Most common comment themes)

Library programs and staff are great

"The library has the most knowledgeable, welcoming, and accessible children's staff. We have spent many hours there utilizing this incredible resource. Could not be more grateful for our library!"

It's easy to access information and/or sign up for services and activities

"Parks and rec camp sign up is easy to use and staff is good at communicating when needed."

Community is helpful and welcoming

"The local playgroup worked hard to have an online presence and a community presence. They were easy to find and welcoming. The people I met there became best friends for years."

Local recreation department has great services

"Our recreation department has a number of wonderful opportunities for our community and our children clearly benefit from those experiences when they have the chance to participate."

Tell us about a time when it was challenging to identify and access your selected service. What made it challenging? (Most common comments themes)

Access or transportation to services or events is challenging

"Story time is on a day my family works so it's hard to attend."

Hours of activity or service are not convenient

"Food shelves aren't open every week and when you are trying to feed a family of 6 it takes a lot of \$\$ and then other bills slip and get behind."

Sign up for or availability of activities is difficult

"The challenge is summer programming. I have two kids 7 and 9 and a reasonable local summer program would be really helpful for those of us who work full time."

The pandemic made accessing services and resources more difficult

"The pandemic made it challenging, though I appreciated the library's staff willingness to find creative solutions (i.e., story time on youtube, etc.)"

Appendix K: Resources

Vermont families have many resources available to them. This being said, caregivers often don't know exactly what resources are at their disposal or how to access them.

Participants of the survey were given the opportunity to share their experiences with resources including agree/disagree statements, what challenges they faced in accessing resources, and a space for sharing a dream resource - one that does not exist, but the respondent wishes did exist.

Resources	% Agree
I am comfortable asking for services and supports that my child(ren) and family need	91%
I was able to access needed services, resources, or support for my child(ren) and/or family.	87%
I know where to look or who to ask when I am looking to access a new resource	86%

Only 27% "strongly" agreed with the statement "I know where to look or who to ask when I am looking for a new resource". This was a common theme when caregivers were given the opportunity to further comment.

What can make it challenging to know where to look for and access services and supports? Are there any barriers that you've experienced to accessing the services your family needs? (Most common comment themes)
<p>Lack of centralized information and systems that are difficult to navigate. This includes difficulty with referrals to the correct services, and well as long waitlists for services</p> <p>Various resources were mentioned as difficult to access, such as state subsidies, mental health therapists, or music classes for toddlers. One surveyee summed it up, "<i>I feel like information on various services is so scattered that it's hard to find and access everything that's available.</i>"</p> <p>One respondent simply stated, "<i>Where do you go? Who do you talk to? Who is there to help?</i>"</p> <p>Navigating the various resource systems can be very challenging. One respondent shared, "<i>We've had difficulty finding help with breastfeeding, baby/child weight gain concerns, child mental health concerns. Even as an educated person in the healthcare field, I'm having trouble getting resources for my children or myself.</i>"</p>

There is a lack of available, affordable health providers

One respondent shared *“Huge waits for needed services! A year and a half wait for early child development and psychiatric referral. The delays will be much worse in that time!”*

Difficulty accessing (affordable, convenient) childcare (including camps)

One respondent shared their struggle: *“Confusing websites, so many different vacation/summer camps with little central search access. Programs dropping last min. So many camps run 9-3 and that sucks for working parents, plus \$300-400 price tag weekly.”*

Families are experiencing financial hardship, including for basic needs

Another caregiver stated: *“The system is quite complicated and doesn't apply to middle class families like mine. I spent hours applying and looking into anything that could help us and we qualify for nothing.”*

What is a resource you wish existed that does not?

More (affordable) quality childcare options or universal childcare

Several respondents had comments about childcare.

“Free or affordable child care centers in our area so families are able to work and earn enough to not struggle from paycheck to paycheck.”

“More early childhood care options! So hard to find infant care!”

“Universal Pre-K should be expanded to match the hours / schedule of the rest of public school. Early educator pay should match teachers in K-12 so teaching quality is maintained and turnover is reduced.”

More programs for young kids in community that are convenient for parents, including affordable “third space” options such as after school, sports, or camps

“Longer hours and full vacation/summer coverage for the city camps. Parks and rec, YMCA, the big ones that are the most cost effective. Often times the 'free'/school based preschool programs only run half day, the only parents that can make that work are ones that generally dont [sic] work anyways. Not enough support for working parents makes it too easy for women to leave workforce even when they don't want to. So many of my college educated peers have been forced to work less than they would like to because of this. The program staffs are great and I dont [sic] blame them but its like we are beholden to them and whatever is offered because we have no choice. “

A centralized database of resources and childcare programs for parents with kids with disabilities or learning differences

One respondent shared the suggestion: *“An inventory of resources, services, and supports by region, age and other characteristics. An active, up-to-date registry of child care and prek programs with availability of slots and capacity. An early childhood integrated data system. A workforce registry. A standardized way to assess needs across the early childhood system.”*

More financial resources for middle income families

“Maternity leave. Being the breadwinner, and having 8 wks off unpaid bc the employer doesn’t feel it’s necessary to pay that really set our household back. We’re still struggling to catch up, 1 year later.”

More mental health services and specialty providers for children

“Wait lists for mental health professionals in our area are outrageous!”

Appendix L: Transitions

Families experience many transitions as their children grow older, such as from child care to preschool or preschool to Kindergarten. Participants were asked several questions about these transitions, including about specific kinds and about the challenges they faced or are currently facing.



*"Kindergarten begins in a week and we are **dreading** the transition. We still haven't received any communications regarding how drop-off works or what the daily routine looks like."*

During the time of the transition, my family felt supported and knew where to go for information or questions	% Agree
Pre-K to Kindergarten	77%
Special Education	77%
Childcare to Pre-K	84%
New Childcare Setting	87%

The transition went smoothly and my family and child's needs were met	% Agree
Pre-K to Kindergarten	80%
Special Education	87%
Childcare to Pre-K	88%
New Childcare Setting	90%

The transition from Pre-K to Kindergarten had the lowest positivity rate of all the transitions. This is reflected in caregiver comments; the most prevalent theme in the comments section was that a lack of communication from staff at the new setting made the transition worse.

What about the transition was challenging for you and your family? What supports were missing that would've made it easier? (Most common comment themes)

Caregivers need better communication from new setting about transition

"Kindergarten begins in a week and we are dreading the transition. We still haven't received any communications regarding how drop-off works or what the daily routine looks like. After much digging on the website, I was able to find out what time school starts and ends."

Hours of care in new setting do not cover parent needs

"A day care day was from 8 to 5. A pre k day was 730 to 230. The lack of afternoon care made scheduling difficult and impossible for our family to fully access the reduced expense of prek."

Parents feel fear about and have difficulty with transition

"Just the fear of leaving something so precious in a new place with relative strangers."

Child struggled with transition

"My child was incredibly unhappy with the change and wanted nothing to do with going to school. It was a fairly large class and there was a struggle to keep him engaged."

What about the transition was easy for you and your family? What supports made it easy? (Most common comment themes)

Great communication with staff about transitions

"I had excellent communication with my childcare provider and was able to work out some feeding challenges for my baby easily."

Friendly and supportive staff

"The center I transitioned to had a director who was accessible and knowledgeable. The team of teachers were excellent and passionate and communicative."

Ability to visit setting and/or meet with staff prior to transition

"The orientation to kindergarten for all families was helpful to meet the teachers and staff. The Ice Cream Social held a few days before school was great to have our child meet the teacher again and see her classroom and spaces...It also allowed the parents to connect with other parents in each class. It was a fun, non-threatening way to make this transition."

Family already familiar with building/program/staff

"Friendly, familiar teaching staff. Familiar building (older sibling goes to school already)."



Publication Information



Building Bright Futures (BBF) is Vermont's early childhood public-private partnership, charged under Vermont Title 33 § Chapter 46 and the Federal Head Start Act (Public Law 110-134) as Vermont's Early Childhood State Advisory Council (SAC), the mechanism used to advise the Governor and Legislature on the well-being of children in the prenatal period through age 8 and their families. BBF maintains the vision and strategic plan for Vermont's early childhood system. BBF's Network infrastructure includes 12 Regional Councils, seven VECAP Committees, and the State Advisory Council. Learn more at buildingbrightfutures.org.

The Vermont Early Childhood Data and Policy Center is a nonpartisan, independent source of data, research, publications and important information for policymakers, stakeholders, and the public on issues and priorities for children ages birth through age 8 in Vermont. Using evidence to inform policy is a key component of how we can improve the well-being of children and their families across Vermont. The Center is a critical tool for answering policy questions by centralizing data from the complex early childhood system. Learn more at vermontkidsdata.org.



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