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Creating a Coordinated, Integrated Early Care and Education System: State Early Childhood Administration

In 2018, the Bipartisan Policy Center examined how states oversee federal and state funding dedicated to early childhood education, or ECE, programs. Now in 2021, we revisit each state system to understand enacted improvements and emerging challenges in state governance.

As the country adjusts to a new reality of work and home life amid the pandemic, American families are faced with the challenge of finding and affording quality child care, now more than ever. Early learning operates within a fragile business model, in which services cost more than most families can afford to pay. For this reason, states must administer funding with efficiency and effectiveness to ensure families are able to access programs and to maximize the reach of federal and state investments.

States are now responsible to distributing recent COVID-19 relief funding for child care—allocated through three successive relief packages by Congress in 2020—in addition to established funding streams that support multiple early childhood programs. The relief packages are intended to stabilize the fragile system that challenged access to affordable, reliable care. State governments are tasked with coordinating and combining the many different ECE funding streams allocated to them.

For all but one federal program, governors have wide discretion with regard to the administration and coordination of early childhood funding. The Bipartisan Policy Center set out to re-examine the issues of state governance, coordination, and integration by reviewing how states are meeting requirements set by federal statutes and agencies, as well as how states are capitalizing on the opportunity to create efficiency through their governance structures.

With this in mind, BPC is making recommendations at the federal and state level with an eye towards further reducing duplication and improving results for families. These recommendations are summarized in the full report. The following summarizes the findings for Vermont.

More state data, including funding levels and demographic information, can be found at <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/report/national-child-care/>.

STRENGTHS OF VERMONT'S EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEM

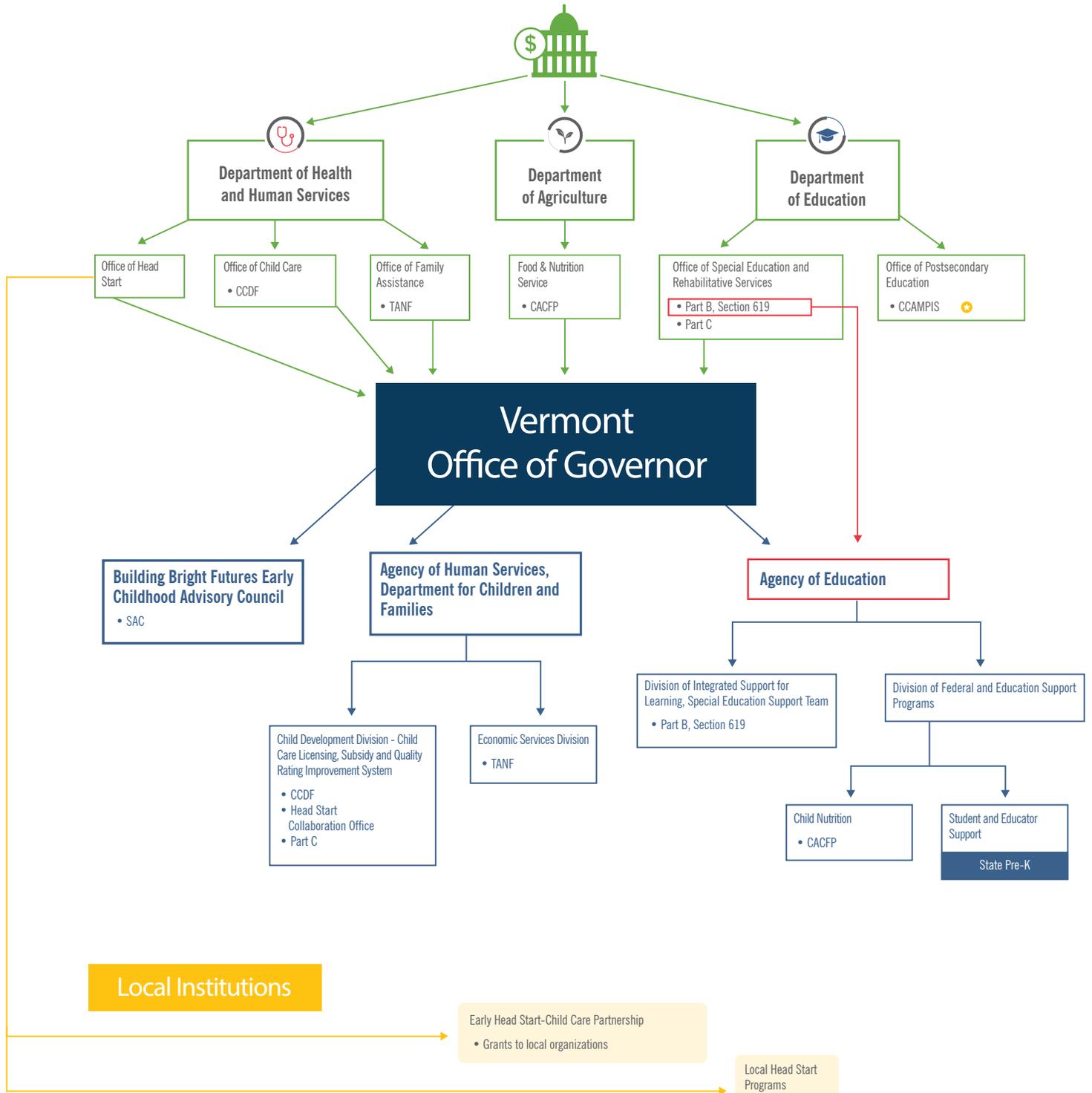
- Vermont includes licensing as the entry level for its Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), which ensures quality for all programs serving children.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VERMONT'S EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEM

- Facilitate cross-agency communication to ensure seamless coordination and transition for IDEA Part C (infants/toddlers) and Part B, Section 619 (3-5 year olds).
- Increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness of monitoring and oversight by aligning the administration of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) with state Pre-K and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- Improve program alignment and efficiency by colocating CCDF and Head Start Collaboration Office with state Pre-K.
- Ensure the State Advisory Council for Early Education and Care, mandated by the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, is fulfilling its required activities, including conducting a statewide needs assessment on the quality and availability of early care and learning programs.

Flow of Federal Early Childhood Funds: Vermont

KEY: → Funding mandated for State Departments of Education → Funding provided directly to local organizations
* State does not receive funding



ECE Funding in Vermont

Funding from Nine GAO-Identified Programs	FY 2019 Funding	FY 2020 Funding	FY 2021 Funding
CCDF Expenditure	\$343,440	\$18,068,709.79	\$74,026,585
Transfer from TANF	\$9,224,076	\$9,224,076	-
Head Start Allocation			
Head Start	\$22,364,137	-	-
Early Head Start			
IDEA Part C, Allocation (infant/toddler)	\$2,301,492	\$2,333,044	\$3,587,364
IDEA Part B, Section 619 Allocation (3–5 years)	\$897,688	\$911,259	\$1,395,448
CCAMPIS Grants	\$0	\$0	\$0
Additional ECE Funding Streams	FY 2019 Funding	FY 2020 Funding	FY 2021 Funding
TANF Child Care Expenditure (Direct)	\$23,031,169	\$24,131,191	-
TANF Pre-K / Head Start Expenditure	\$0	\$0	-
CACFP Allocation	\$5,699,656	\$4,039,302	\$4,860,938

BPC Reviewed

BPC reviewed the following federally-funded programs to assess the efficiency and integration of Vermont's early care and education system.

- Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)
- Head Start
- Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS)
- Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities (IDEA Part C)
- Preschool Development Grants (PDG)
- Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities (IDEA Part B, Section 619)
- Promise Neighborhoods
- Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP)
- Race to the Top, Early Learning Challenge

Number of Children Under Age 6



UNDER 3
15,468



3-4 YEARS OLD
11,692



5 YEARS OLD
5,117



Percentage of Children in Poverty
10.4%