

# CCDF

# Vermont State Plan

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**FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2022-2024**



# Purpose of Convening

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- The Child Development Division within the Department for Children and Families is the lead agency receiving funds from the federal government under the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)
- CCDF is administered by the Child Development Division (the lead agency)
  - Outlines how federal funds will be used to implement early childhood education services in Vermont
  - Partially funds the Child Care Financial Assistance program
  - Funds many programs through the Child Development Division such as child care referral, professional development activities and STARS

# Purpose of Convening

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- The Child Development Division must submit information every three years describing how the state complies with federal requirement (“State Plan”)
- State Plan describes CCDF programs that will be implemented in Vermont from October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2024
- The lead agency is responsible to consult with the State Advisory Council to share information about the programs that will be implemented that are included in the 3-year plan

# CCDF State Plan

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CCDF Leadership  
and Coordination

Family  
Engagement

Stable Child Care  
Financial  
Assistance

Equal Access to  
High-Quality  
Child Care

Ensure Health and  
Safety

Recruit and Retain  
a Qualified  
Workforce

Support  
Continuous  
Quality  
Improvement

Ensure Grantee  
Accountability

# **CCDF Leadership and Coordination**

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**REY GAROFANO**

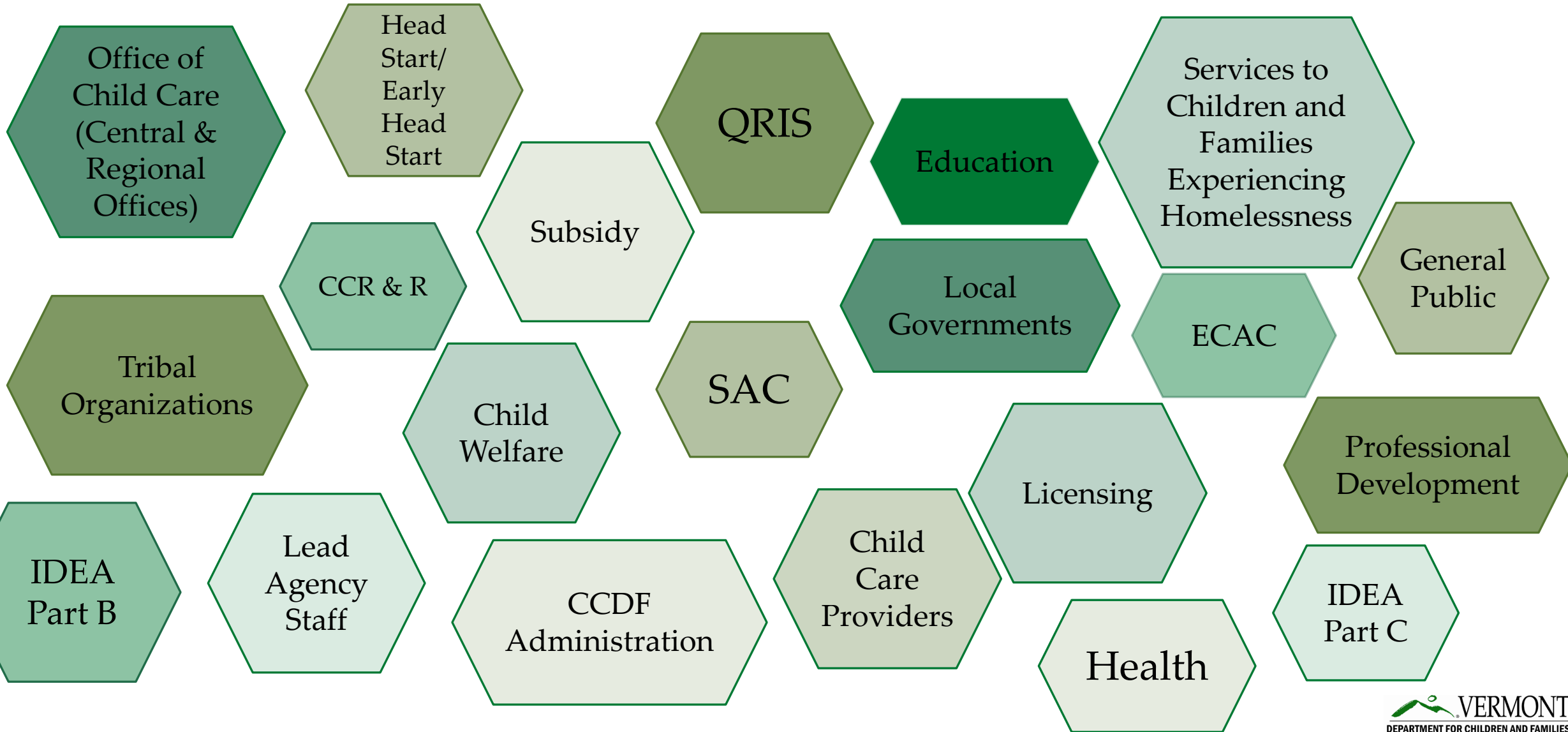
**CHILD CARE QUALITY PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR**

# Lead Agency Responsibilities

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- Administer and implement programs
- Maintain its overall responsibility for CCDF child care programs
- Consultation in the development of CCDF plan
- Serve as the single point of contact for all child care issues
- Public/private partnerships
- Develop and administer the CCDF Plan

# CCDF Administrator Relationships and Responsibilities



# **Promote Family Engagement Through Outreach and Consumer Education**

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**HEATHER MATTISON**

**SENIOR PROCESS AND PERFORMANCE ANALYST**



# Promote Family Engagement Through Outreach and Consumer Education

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The target audience for the consumer education information includes three groups:

- Parents receiving CCDF assistance
- The general public,
- Child care providers (when appropriate)

OCC expects that Lead Agencies are using targeted strategies for each group to ensure tailored consumer education information

# Access for Individuals with Disabilities or Limited English Proficiency

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Includes the CDD website, materials and having interpretation available in person

- The DCF Child Development Division website pages:
  - Google translate
  - 508 Compliant
  - Written in Plain Language
- Materials:
  - Some are translated or have language about available interpretation
  - Written in Plain Language and target 5th grade reading level
  - Considerations for ADA compliance – screen reader/size font/colors/etc.
- Interpretation Services:
  - Contractors are required to have interpreters available if needed
  - State uses interpreters by phone or in person as necessarily

# Complaint Process

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- Available to parents and general public by calling the Child Care Consumer Line or going to website
- Complaints are maintained in our data system
- Cited violations are available once the site visit is complete on our public portion of our data system – Bright Futures Information System (BFIS)
- Child care regulations outline the process for complaints

# Consumer Information

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- Bright Futures Information System (BFIS) has a child care search function, providing information on all regulated programs, and additional information provided by the child care program. The search is available by zip code as required by federal regulation, and additional search criteria to support families
- CDD website has links to the regulations
- Reports include a report on aggregate data on child deaths, serious injury, and child abuse in Vermont child care programs
- Monitoring reports
- Contact for referral
- Other benefit programs
- Information for CCFAP families

# **Provide Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families**

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**ANNE RADA**

**CHILD CARE BENEFITS ADMINISTRATOR**

# Provide Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families

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In providing childcare financial assistance to families, the Office of Child Care (OCC) requires states to implement policies and procedures that determine/define eligibility for services.

These include:

- Defining Eligible Children and Families
- Increasing Access for Vulnerable Children and Families
- Continuity for Working Families

# Eligible Children and Families

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Required to have procedures for documenting and verifying that children receiving CCDF funds meet eligibility criteria at the time of eligibility determination and redetermination

## Eligible Children

The Child Care Financial Assistance Program serves children from 6 weeks through 12 years of age. Child care may be authorized up to age 18 if the child is physically or mentally incapable of self-care or is under DCF supervision.

## Eligible Families

- A family must have a reason for childcare (service need). CCDF defines services needs as working, job training, education and protective services, In addition to those required by CCDF, Vermont accepts the service needs of Reach Up, Special Health Need-Adult, Special Health Need-Child, Seeking Employment and Family Support
- A family's income must fall within the limits specified on our sliding fee scale. CCDF rules state that to be found eligible, a family's income must be below the federal threshold of 85% of the state median income

# Increasing Access for Vulnerable Children and Families

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Lead Agencies are required to give priority for childcare assistance to children with special needs, which can include vulnerable populations, in families with very low incomes, and to children experiencing homelessness.

- Vermont does not freeze enrollment and we do not have a waiting list for CCFAP therefore priority enrollment is not necessary
- CDD reimburses at higher rates for providers receiving specialized training to care for children with special needs, children in protective services, and for families with a service need of Family Support or Reach Up
- If client identifies as homeless, the application is forwarded to the Specialized Child Care Coordinator in Children's Integrated Services (CIS) for processing as a Family Support application. Income and service needs are waived for clients under the service need of Family Support.



# Continuity for Working Families

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Lead Agencies are required to implement these policies and procedures: a minimum 12-month eligibility period, a process to account for irregular fluctuations in earnings, policies to provide for a job search of no fewer than 3 months.

- Child Care Financial Assistance Regulations state that eligibility for childcare services based on a service need of employment, self-employment, training, special health needs, protective services, or family support will be re-determined annually
- The service need of Seeking Employment may be authorized for up to 12 weeks (3 Months) for an income eligible parent/caretaker
- CCFAP defines temporary change as a change in eligible activities including job loss, change in educational activity, a time-limited absence from work, interruption of work for seasonal workers or a student semester/holiday break. Termination of eligibility will not occur due to a temporary change.
- To account for fluctuations in earnings, CCFAP will average the family's earnings over a period of time, request pay stubs that are most representative of the family's monthly income and deduct temporary increases in wages from the family's standard monthly income

# **Ensure Equal Access to Child Care for Low- Income Children**

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**HEATHER MATTISON**

**SENIOR PROCESS AND PERFORMANCE ANALYST**

# Ensure Equal Access to Child Care for Low-Income Children

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- Core purpose of CCDF is to promote parental choice and to empower working parents to make their own decisions regarding the child care services that best suit their family's needs
- Parents have the option to choose from center-based care, family child care, or care provided in the child's own home
- In supporting parental choice, the Lead Agencies must ensure that families receiving CCDF funding have the opportunity to choose from the full range of eligible child care settings and must provide families with equal access to child care that is comparable to that of non-CCDF families

# Equal Access

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- Parents can choose the type of provider they would like to use for their child – license centers, afterschool, regulated preschool, registered or licensed home programs, or a family member of the child
- Information on the certificate includes what the state will pay and what the provider's reported rate is for the type of care
- Vermont chooses not to limit the providers to agreements with higher standards than licensing, or other payment expectations that would limit the choices available to families
- Regulations require that programs allow parents to have unlimited access to their children

# Market Rates

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- Data is collected through provider rate agreements which are required to receive payment from CDD. 81% - 94% of providers have an agreement in the system
- A Market Rate Survey is conducted every two years using the data from the provider rate agreements
- This allows CDD to compare what the state pays to what privately paying families would be charged. Access means families receiving CCFAP would have the same access as privately paying families
- The federal government requires a Market Rate Survey to be completed, and Vermont statute, rule and federal rule requires rates to be set with consideration to the market rate

# Changes to CCFAP

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- CDD is changing the way that CCFAP is paid, this is part of a 5-year plan. SFY2022 (July 2021) is year 3 of the plan.
  - Set a flat co-payment for a family, based on a family size and income
  - Family co-payment assessed at the youngest child first
  - Expand eligibility by increasing income guidelines
  - Stop using a benefit level based on a percent of the state rate
  - Pay the provider's reported rate based on age of child and schedule after the co-payment is assessed, up to a capped rate

Additional information on these changes will be released as they are available. CDD is currently working with a vendor to build a new system to make these changes.

# Implement Generally Accepted Payment Practices and Ensure Timeliness of Payments

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- Billing can happen immediately after the pay period ends, and providers receive payment in a week from submitting an invoice
- Providers are paid based on the enrollment of the child as long as the child attends at least one hour in the week or an approved code is used
- Payments are paid on part time, full time, or extended schedule

# Ensure Health and Safety

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**CHRISTEL MICHAUD**

**DIRECTOR OF CHILD CARE LICENSING**



# Licensing Requirements

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- Identification of who's required to be licensed and of exemption criteria
- Ratio and group size requirements
- Teaching, director, and caregiver qualifications

# 12 Health and Safety Standards and Training

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1. Prevention and control of infectious diseases (including immunizations) health and safety standards and training requirements
2. Prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and the use of safe-sleep practices
3. Administration of medication, consistent with standards for parental consent
4. Prevention of and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions
5. Building and physical premises safety, including the identification of and protection from hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic
6. Prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment
7. Emergency preparedness and response planning for emergencies

# 12 Health and Safety Standards and Training

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8. Handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of bio-contaminants
9. Precautions in transporting children
10. Pediatric first aid and pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
11. Recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect
12. Child Development

# Optional Health and Safety Standards and Training

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- Nutrition
- Access to physical activity
- Caring for children with special needs
- Other areas determined necessary to promote child development or to protect children's health and safety

# Monitoring and Enforcement Policies and Procedures

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- Procedures for collaborating with other state and local health, safety, and fire authorities
- Pre-licensure visits
- Unannounced, compliance visits
- Qualifications for Licensing Field Specialists and ongoing professional development
- Licensing Field Specialists' territory size

# Comprehensive Background Checks

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- National checks
  - ✓ FBI criminal registry
  - ✓ National sex offender registry
- Out-of-state checks
  - ✓ Criminal registry check
  - ✓ Sex offender registry
  - ✓ Child abuse and neglect registry
- In-state checks
  - ✓ Criminal registry check
  - ✓ Sex offender registry
  - ✓ Child abuse and neglect registry

# **Recruit and Retain a Qualified and Effective Child Care Workforce**

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**LYNNE ROBBINS**

**EARLY CHILDHOOD AND AFTERSCHOOL SYSTEMS SPECIALIST**

# Recruit and Retain a Qualified and Effective Child Care Workforce

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- This section covers the state or territory framework
  - Professional development including training
  - Post-secondary
- Provides a description of strategies used to strengthen the business practices of child care providers
- Addresses early learning and developmental guidelines



# Recruit and Retain a Qualified and Effective Child Care Workforce

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Vermont's framework includes these components:

1. Professional standards and competencies
2. Career pathways
3. Advisory structures
4. Articulation with higher education
5. Workforce information
6. Financing

# CCDF Priorities that relate to Vermont's Professional Development System

1

Working with families who are homelessness

2

Strengthening the business practices of child care providers

3

Professional development on early learning development and guidelines (Vermont Early Learning Standards)

4

Supporting the quality, diversity, stability, and retention of caregivers, teachers, and directors

5

Having an advisory structure in place

# CDD State Plan Professional Development Activities

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- Northern Lights at CCV Professional Development Hub Services
- Vermont Afterschool Professional Development and Program Support
- Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children
  - Vermont T.E.A.C.H. Program
  - Vermont Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program
  - Individual grants and bonuses for Level Certificates and other certificate completion
- Vermont Early Childhood Networks
- Early Educator's Institute at Castleton

# Support Continuous Quality Improvement

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**REY GAROFANO**

**CHILD CARE QUALITY PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR**

# Focus on Quality Improvement

Federal Fiscal Year	FFY 2020 (& ongoing)
% Quality Set-aside	9%
% Infant and Toddler Set-aside	3%
Total % Quality Set aside	12%

# Vermont's Quality Activities

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Training and professional development

Early learning and developmental guidelines

Tiered quality rating and improvement system

Improving the supply and quality of child care for infants and toddlers

Facilitating compliance with state health and safety requirements

Evaluating and assessing the quality and effectiveness of child care programs

Supporting accreditation

Other activities to improve the quality of child care services

# Vermont's Quality Activities

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- Based on the Vermont Early Childhood Action Plan (VECAP)
  - Updated in 2020 through an extensive 2-year process
  - Participation of over 300 stakeholders
  - Led by Building Bright Futures (Vermont's State Advisory Committee)
- VECAP Goals
  1. All Children Have a Healthy Start
  2. Families and Communities Play a Leading Role in Children's Well-Being
  3. All Children and Families Have Access to High-Quality Opportunities that Meet Their Needs
  4. The Early Childhood System will be Integrated, Well Resourced and Data-Informed

# Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS)

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- Vermont quality recognition system for child care, preschool, and afterschool programs
- Provides financial incentives and other supports designed to help child care providers improve quality of services
- Administered statewide
- Oversight Committee advises on administration and includes representatives from:
  - Stakeholder groups
  - Child care providers



# Participating Provider Types in STARS

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- Licensed child care centers
- Licensed family child care homes
- Early Head Start programs
- State Prekindergarten or preschool programs
- Non-recurring services
- Afterschool programs
- Non-recurring programs

# **Ensure Grantee Program Integrity and Accountability**

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**ANNE RADA**

**CHILD CARE BENEFITS ADMINISTRATOR**

# Ensure Grantee Program Integrity and Accountability

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Lead Agencies are required to have in place effective internal controls that ensure integrity and accountability while maintaining the continuity of services. These accountability measures should address reducing fraud, waste, and abuse, including program violations and administrative errors.

To ensure program integrity, CCFAP implements the following processes:

- Share/match data from other programs (e.g., ESD, FSD, Office of Child Support).
- Generate regular reports related to enrollment of subsidized children at or above licensed capacity, children with multiple providers, and providers with consistently high subsidy payments.
- Audit childcare provider attendance and billing records, on a weekly basis, for accuracy
- Conduct regular on-site monitoring of the community childcare support agencies. Subsidy cases are reviewed to ensure compliance with eligibility regulations and required documentation.

# Next Steps

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- Plan published on or before May 31, 2021
- Virtual public hearing Wednesday, June 2, 2021

Wednesday, June 2, 2021 - 5:30 PM

## [Virtual Teams Meeting](#)

Please click on this link at the time of the meeting: [Click here to join the meeting.](#)

Or call 1-802-552-8456 Phone Conference id 926108777# Please note that if you click on this link on a mobile device it will require you to download Microsoft Teams app to continue, this is a free and safe application. Joining through the link will require the device/computer to have a microphone and speakers, a headset is recommended

Opportunity for comments and feedback via survey

- Plan due July 1, 2021