

Vermont's Early Care and Education/Child Care Landscape Resources for Families Experiencing Homelessness

For families with children experiencing homelessness, making strong connections to early learning and development programs, child care and targeted financial assistance is critically important. From preparing children for success in school, to assisting with complex developmental needs, to providing quality child care so a parent can go to work, effectively accessing these resources supports family stability. This guide, developed by the AHS Department for Children and Families and Agency of Education is designed to help programs serving families who are homeless locate the early learning and development resources they may need. Information on Vermont's goal of ending child and family homelessness is available [here](#).

Service/Program	Eligibility	Services Provided	Homeless-specific Provisions	Contact and General Information
<p>Head Start (a comprehensive child development program)</p>	<p>Children ages 3-5 and their families. Federal regulations require that at least 90% of children enrolled be from families with an income at or below the federal poverty line and that at least 10% of children enrolled have a disability.</p>	<p>Promotes school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through educational, health, nutritional, social, and family support services. Services are provided through a range of program options, including: center-based; home-based; or family-child care program options. Some programs are full-day. Limited transportation.</p>	<p>Children & families experiencing homelessness and children in foster care are <u>categorically eligible for services</u> and do not need to provide proof of income to qualify.</p>	<p>Vermont's Head Start grantees provide services in every county and are administered by four Community Action Agencies, two mental health agencies and a school district.</p>
<p>Early Head Start (a comprehensive child development program)</p>	<p>Pregnant women and children age birth to 3 and their families. Federal regulations require that at least 90% of children enrolled be from families with an income at or below the federal poverty line and that at least 10% of children enrolled have a disability.</p>	<p>Provides early, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services in a home-based or center-based setting. Limited transportation. Center-based services are provided either full-day or full working day for at least 48 weeks per year. Home-based services consist of one visit per week in a family's home for at least 32 home visits/yr</p>	<p>Programs are required to identify homeless children, prioritize their enrollment, and allow their enrollment while enrollment documentation is obtained.</p> <p>Programs also must collaborate with McKinney-Vento programs and other programs in the community that serve homeless infants and toddlers.</p>	<p>Early Head Start grantees provide services in nine of 12 counties and are administered by a school district and three Community Action Agencies.</p> <p>VT Head Start Association: http://vermontheadstart.org/</p> <p>VT Head Start State Collaboration Office: http://vermontheadstart.org/partners-2/vt-head-start-state-collaboration-office/</p>

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<p>Assistance locating quality child care</p>	<p>Any family is eligible</p>	<p>Twelve community agencies help families find child care while providing consumer education about quality child care. Referral services are often provided by the agencies that help families access the Child Care Financial Assistance Program.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Call the appropriate community agency: http://dcf.vermont.gov/partners/cccsa or 1-877-705-9008</p> <p>Or search the state database: Vermont Child Development Division Bright Futures Information System www.brightfutures.dcf.state.vt.us/</p>
<p>Assistance paying for child care</p> <p>Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) (formerly known as subsidy)</p>	<p>Funding to support eligible families accessing child care services for infants, toddlers, and preschool- aged children; and before- and after-school care.</p>	<p>The Child Care Financial Assistance Program helps eligible families pay for child care services for children from age 6 weeks to age 13 (or to age 19 if the child has special needs). Families may choose any approved provider willing to accept payments from the Child Development Division.</p>	<p>Homelessness is one of the eligibility factors for family support child care. Families who are homeless according to the McKinney-Vento definition and complete an application are automatically eligible for this assistance.</p>	<p>Child care subsidies are administered by a variety of state agencies. Child care providers are located across communities.</p> <p>VT Child Care Financial Assistance Program: http://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/ccfap</p> <p>Local agencies providing services to families: http://dcf.vermont.gov/partners/cccsa</p>
<p>Children’s Integrated Services (CIS) Comprehensive Services</p>	<p>Families who are pregnant and have a question or concerns or have a condition/risk that may impact their baby's health; have a child from birth to age 3 with a suspected developmental delay or medical condition that may result in a developmental delay; have a child up to age 5 who is experiencing behavioral challenges, emotional issues, or other social emotional needs; have a child up to age 5 and your family is experiencing challenges; or struggles with parenting or their child's behaviors.</p>	<p>CIS services are family-centered, child-focused, and delivered through a network of providers throughout Vermont. CIS helps families decide what services they need, and helps families access the services they need. Services may include: parenting support and child development information; support during and after a; an assessment of your child and family's situation; early intervention services for children with a suspected delay or a medical condition that could lead to a delay, or a nurse or home visitor.</p>	<p>Families prenatal to families with a child thorough age 5 can call with questions and one of the criteria for accessing services is that the family is experiencing significant challenges.</p>	<p>To find the name of the CIS Coordinator and contact information for each area, go to: http://dcf.vermont.gov/partners/cis</p> <p>Children’s Integrated Services: http://dcf.vermont.gov/child-development/cis</p>

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<p>Children’s Integrated Services (CIS) Specialized Child Care</p>	<p>Families who are experiencing significant stress in areas such as homelessness, safety, emotional stability, substance abuse, children’s behaviors, and parenting issues are eligible. (See Child Care Financial Assistance Program)</p>	<p>CIS Specialized Child Care provides quality child care and specific supports to children in families with: open cases with DCF’s Family Services Division (Protective Services Child Care); In families experiencing significant stress in areas such as shelter & safety (Family Support Child Care); and with special physical, behavioral, or developmental needs (Special Needs Child Care).</p>	<p>Homelessness is one of the eligibility categories for Family Support Child Care and Specialized Child Care Services.</p>	<p>Services are provided through approved state-licensed child care and afterschool programs.</p>
<p>Vermont pre-k and preschool programs</p>	<p>Regardless of family income, three-, four-, and five-year-olds not yet enrolled in kindergarten are eligible to enroll in Vermont’s state-funded prekindergarten education program.</p>	<p>Half-day and full-day prekindergarten education programs are provided in public school or community-based settings or through community partnerships. Some programs provide referrals for health and developmental screening, provide supportive services to families, and offer opportunities for parent involvement. Children at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty line are eligible to enroll in full-day prekindergarten education funded by the Preschool Development Expansion Grant. Public and private prekindergarten education programs must apply for prequalification status under Act 166.</p>	<p>State-funded prekindergarten education under Acts 62 and 166 in Vermont does not prioritize homeless children for enrollment. Public schools and three Head Start grantees provide full-day prekindergarten education funded by the federal Preschool Development Expansion Grant to children at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty line must support the inclusion of homeless children as defined in subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act.</p>	<p>Search the CDD BFIS Database for Prequalifying programs at: www.brightfutures.dcf.state.vt.us/</p> <p>Information about Act 166 regarding Preschool Education services: http://education.vermont.gov/documents/early-ed-faqs-act166-access-prek</p> <p>Vermont Early Education: http://education.vermont.gov/student-support/early-education/early-childhood-special-education</p> <p>Agency of Education homeless education webpage http://education.vermont.gov/student-support/federal-programs/homeless-education</p>

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Vermont Essential Early Education (IDEA Part B)	Children ages 3-5 who need special education and related services due to a disability.	Parents and school district agree to an Individualized Education Program (IEP), a document developed for each eligible child with a disability outlining the services the child will receive. Services may include specially designed preschool instruction; speech/language, audiology, psychological, school health, and social work services; physical or occupational therapy; and transportation.	IDEA requires states to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities aged birth to 21, including those experiencing homelessness, who are in need of special education services. This process is called <i>Child Find</i> . Timely assessments and continuity of services are required for highly mobile children.	Early childhood special education is administered by school districts. Check with your local school district administration. VT Agency of Education: http://education.vermont.gov/student-support/early-education/early-childhood-special-education http://education.vermont.gov/student-support/special-education/funding#idea-b
Early Intervention (IDEA Part C, an early intervention program for infants & toddlers with disabilities)	Children birth to 3 with a developmental delay or physical or mental condition likely to result in a developmental delay.	Specially designed services for the child and family, provided in their natural environment. Services include developmental education, speech-language, audiology, psychological, health or social work services; home visits; physical or occupational therapy; and transportation. Parents and early intervention lead agency agree to a One Plan, a written document developed for each eligible infant or toddler with a disability that outlines services the child and family will receive.	IDEA requires states to locate and identify through screening all infants and toddlers with disabilities, including those experiencing homelessness, who are in need of special education services. This process is called <i>Child Find</i> . Services are provided to infants and toddlers with disabilities, including those experiencing homelessness, and their families, and may be provided where the child spends most of the time, such as a homeless shelter or child care center. States must ensure the meaningful involvement of homeless families in the planning and implementation of the Part C program.	Early intervention services are administered by host agencies in each area of the state, often at Parent Child Centers. These services are part of the State of Vermont's Children's Integrated Services. To find the name of the CIS Coordinator and contact information for each area, go to: http://dcf.vermont.gov/partners/cis Vermont Child Development Division: http://dcf.vermont.gov/child-development/cis/IDEA_part_C
Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) (maternal and early childhood home visiting services to children and families in at-risk communities)	First time pregnant moms, less than 29 weeks who are low-income. Home visiting services are provided by Registered Nurses until the child turns 2 years of age.	Evidence-based home visiting program. In VT, 12 of 14 counties have an NFP program sponsored by 5 Home Health Agencies. They are: Franklin County Home Health Agency, Caledonia Home Health Care and Hospice, Rutland VNA, Central Vermont Home Health, and VNA & Hospice of Vermont	Priority populations include low-income families, pregnant women under 21, families with a history of child abuse or neglect, families with a history of substance abuse, families with tobacco users in the home, families with children with low student achievement, families with children with developmental delays or disabilities, military families, and families in at-risk communities.	NFP is administered by the VT Dept. of Health. To find a local agency: http://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/locations/Vermont/find-a-local-agency NFP State Lead Agency Contact Information: Ann Giombetti, Maternal and Child Health 802-865-1336, Ann.Giombetti@vermont.gov
General Information Resource & Referral Vermont 2-1-1	Any Vermont resident can access this service	Information about finding child care and child development. There is a Help Me Grow specialist on duty during business hours and messages can be left after hours for a return call the next business day.	N/A	Dial: 2-1-1 Or visit: http://www.vermont211.org/

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ensures that children and youth experiencing homelessness have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education provided to other children and youth. The Act requires the removal of barriers to school enrollment, attendance and academic progress for students experiencing homelessness and gives students access to extra support services. More at: http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_eligibility.php