

Vermont Parent Child Center Network

2024 Impact Report



The Parent Child Center Network provides **collaborative leadership, advocacy, and support** to achieve the best outcomes for Vermont's children, youth, and families.



Welcome from the new Vermont Parent Child Center Network!

This year marks an exciting milestone in the history of the Vermont Parent Child Center Network as we begin our inaugural year as a professional Network, authorized by Act 150 in 2022, and funded by the Vermont Department for Children and Families through the PCCN Integrated Grant. The Network began in 1988 with four committed Directors of the first Parent Child Centers who joined together to share resources, deepen the collective impact of the first Centers and spread the vision of Centers as hubs for families with young children, focused on early childhood development, support to parents, and prevention services. Since then, the Network has grown steadily to fulfill this legacy to ensure that Vermont's families are welcomed and supported to give their children the best possible start in life. The Network hired its first full-time Director in August of 2024. We are pleased to share our impact and activities from FY2024, the breadth and scope of all that the PCCs do, and our vision for the future that works to ensure that Vermont families with children under six are supported and strengthened through universal services that meet a range of needs.

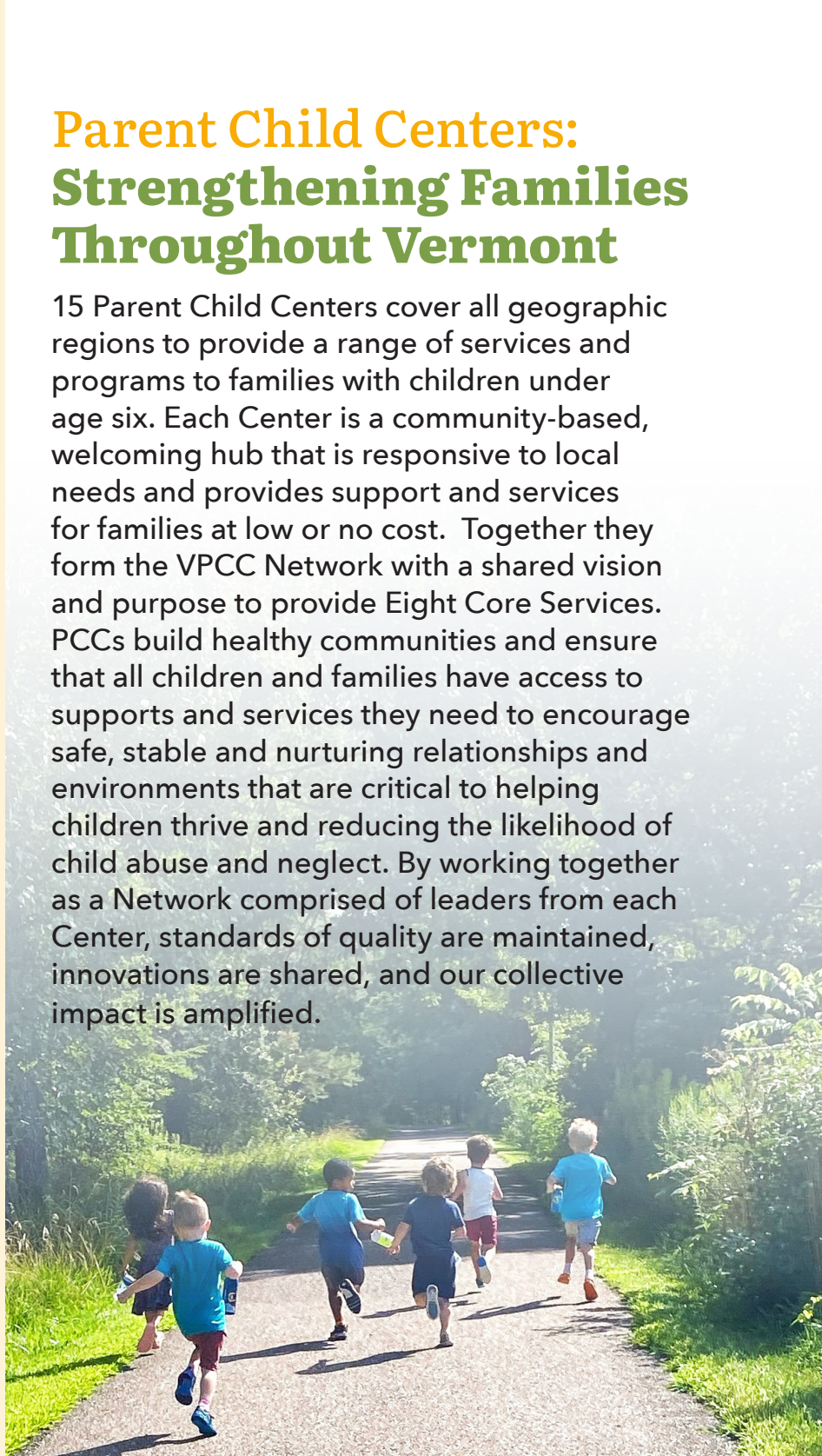
Ellen Amstutz, MSW, PhD,
Director, Vermont Parent Child Center Network

Claire Kendall, M.Ed,
VPCCN Co-chair and Co-Executive Director, Family Center of Washington County

Carol Lang-Godin,
VPCCN Co-chair and Executive Director, Lamoille Family Center

Parent Child Centers: Strengthening Families Throughout Vermont

15 Parent Child Centers cover all geographic regions to provide a range of services and programs to families with children under age six. Each Center is a community-based, welcoming hub that is responsive to local needs and provides support and services for families at low or no cost. Together they form the VPCC Network with a shared vision and purpose to provide Eight Core Services. PCCs build healthy communities and ensure that all children and families have access to supports and services they need to encourage safe, stable and nurturing relationships and environments that are critical to helping children thrive and reducing the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. By working together as a Network comprised of leaders from each Center, standards of quality are maintained, innovations are shared, and our collective impact is amplified.



Last year Parent Child Centers served:

18,754

Parents

21,381

Children

*This includes **1,320 children** with developmental, physical or health related special needs.*

NOTE: We use the terms "parent" and "parents" to encompass all caregivers who play a parenting role.

8 Core Services

All Parent Child Centers in Vermont offer these essential core services:

1. Parent Support

Families gain mutual support from peers and share common experiences to navigate the challenges of parenting. Group and individualized opportunities are offered to address a range of life circumstances. Research shows that parents who have sources of support are better able to provide responsive emotional and physical care.

93% of parents reported feeling stronger and more confident as a parent after participating in PCC programs.

2. Parent Education

PCCs provide opportunities to learn practical and empowering information to help in coping with transitions, behaviors, and challenges of parenting, including supporting each child's individual needs. Programs are conducted in groups, and one-to-one with knowledgeable staff and early childhood development experts.

1,220 parents participated in opportunities to support **effective parenting**.

3. Concrete Supports

By providing families with material and financial support to address immediate needs, such as food, diapers, clothing, transportation, utility and rent assistance, PCCs can mitigate hardship and help parents navigate short-term challenges. Reducing financial stress is an effective strategy to support safe parenting and reduce child welfare system involvement.

Over **3,300 families** received short term **financial assistance and concrete supports**.

4. Home Visits

Trained family support staff provide visits based on family goals and individual needs. Using evidence-based models and research informed strategies, prenatal and early childhood home visiting is effective in supporting safe parenting and improving developmental outcomes.

Over **18,000 home visits** were made to **1,500 families**.

5. Playgroups

New parents are at elevated risk for social isolation. Playgroups provide a social connection for parents and an opportunity for children to develop social skills. Playgroups are offered on a regular basis and take place at PCCs as well as in community locations. Playgroups are especially effective in engaging fathers who are often reluctant to ask for support.

1,756 playgroups were **offered this year** throughout the state.

6. Information and Referral

Navigating the complex landscape of children's services, public benefits and health care can be overwhelming. Using a no wrong door approach, PCCs are a gateway to local and state resources. Staff ensure parents get services they need including application assistance, advocacy and follow up. New parents are introduced to their local PCC through Welcome Baby outreach.

Welcome baby visits and packages reached **1,157 new families**.

7. Early Childhood Services

High quality childcare offered at PCCs or through close partnerships, provides childcare for parents from all economic circumstances. Parents can work or pursue education while children have peer interaction and social development in a safe and nurturing place. PCCs can serve families who face challenges such as economic instability, and children who require specialized care.

11 PCCs have **child care on site** and **4** partner with **child care providers**.

8. Community Development

PCCs are represented on Building Bright Futures Councils, local and State advisory groups and coalitions of cross-sector services—early childhood, mental health, homelessness, housing, and businesses—to build family centered communities and ensure that parents' voices are heard. PCCs are visible at community events and fairs to reach new participants.

PCCs are active participants and leaders in over **20 coalitions and convenings** locally and statewide.

Tiered Support Model

PCCs provide tiered support to families and children depending on individual needs.

High Intensity

Individualized support is provided to families and children who face the most persistent challenges.

- Financial help for immediate needs such as utilities, rent and transportation.
- Mental health supports
- Substance abuse recovery referrals.
- Weekly home visits
- Early Intervention



HIGH
INTENSITY

“The [PCC] has had an incredibly positive experience on my life (and the life of my partner and child). I was dealing with severe postpartum anxiety, insomnia and depression and **coming to the PCC turned my life around**. I am grateful for their support and their non-judgmental welcoming and positive environment.”

Targeted

All families face challenges at one time or another. PCCs provide services to proactively address emerging needs before they become problems. Services include;

- Children’s Integrated Services (CIS) for early intervention and prevention.
- Food shelves, meals and diapers to help stretch family food budgets.
- Support groups bring parents together to cope with shared challenges.



TARGETED

“A big thank you to everyone who **helped me and my son keep our home and get through my financial struggles**. It was a true blessing I won’t forget.”

Universal

All families need support, regardless of economic or individual circumstances. PCCs open their doors to welcome all families and children. All 8 core services are offered universally.

- Play groups
- Parent support and education
- Home visits
- Welcome Baby visits
- Information and Referral
- Childcare and more.



UNIVERSAL

“**The sense of community** this center has offered my family has been absolutely incredible.”

Approaches & Strategies

High-Quality Services; Innovation

PCCs embrace a Two-Generation Approach

When parents do well, children thrive. By supporting parents economically and socially, they can give their children the best possible start. Through a holistic, family-centered approach families get the services and supports they need.

84% of VPCCN parents reported **they always received the help they needed** and that was right for them.

PCCs listen to and involve parents

PCCs have parent representation on their individual Boards of Directors, and all have Family Advisory Committees to inform program development and share parent perspectives. Parents complete an annual survey, and feedback is used to improve services.

97% of parents report their PCC had a **positive impact on their family**. **89%** would **always recommend the services** to a family or friend.

PCCs are partners in Vermont's systems of care

- Health Care: **Medical and mental health providers** accounted for **31% of referrals** to PCCs. Health care providers recognize the benefits that PCCs make to overall health and well-being.
- Government safety net programs: **37% of parents** who use PCC services **were referred** by the Vermont Department of Children and Families, Reach Up, WIC (Women Infants and Children Nutrition program) or the Department of Health. PCCs are a key part of Vermont's government safety net to support those most in need.

Evidence-based and research informed programs are used wherever possible

Examples are;

- Parents As Teachers (PAT) home visiting curriculum, Strong Families/ Family Supportive Home Visiting
- DULCE- Developmental Understand and Legal Collaboration for Everyone promotes healthy development of infants from birth to six months of age in pediatric health care settings.
- Learning Together Program (LTP): A state approved alternative high school completion program for pregnant or parenting teens and youth up to age 24.
- Therapeutic Child Care models such as EMTSS (Early Multi-tiered System of Support)



Early childhood programs deliver high Returns on Investment (ROI)

Research shows that high quality birth-to-five programs can deliver a 13% per year return on investments throughout the lifecycle (Heckman, J, 2017, *The Lifecycle Benefits of an Early Childhood Program*). Benefits include a range of life outcomes such as health, labor market activity and income, and quality of life.

Maintaining quality through research-informed national standards

The Network is part of the National Family Support Network, a membership organization of 41 State Networks and 3,000 Family Resource Centers. PCCs follow the nationally-adopted Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support which integrate and operationalize a research-informed approach to building **five key protective factors** developed by Center for the Study of Social Policy:

- **Parental resilience:** Managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma.
- **Social connections:** Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental and spiritual support.
- **Knowledge of parenting and child development:** Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development.
- **Concrete support in times of need:** Access to concrete support and services that address a family's needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges.
- **Social and emotional competence of children:** Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships.



PCCs Build Protective Factors

The Network administers an annual survey of PCC participants. In FY24 (7/1/23–6/30/24) and we heard from 1,230 respondents. Below are **results from the survey that relate to key protective factors that PCCs provide to parents and families.** The results show the percent of respondents who answered “always” or “most of the time” to the statements before participating or receiving services through their local PCC, followed by the percent of (same) respondents who answered “always” or “most of the time” after receiving services from their PCC.

● Before working with PCCs ● After working with PCCs

I feel strong and confident as a parent.



I understand my child(ren)’s development.



I feel able to handle stressful events.



When I am worried about my child, I have someone to talk with.



I take good care of my child(ren) even when I have personal problems.



I manage the daily responsibilities of being a parent/caregiver.



I know where I can get helpful information about parenting and taking care of children.



I have relationships with people who provide me with support when I need it.



VPCCN Builds Family-Friendly Communities Across Vermont

Trained and Caring Professionals

PCCs employ over 400 talented, creative and committed professionals statewide. For the last two years the Network has been supported by the A.D Henderson Foundation to bring staff from across the Network to the PCCN Innovations Institute--a two-day conference for learning, connecting and skills development. The Network supports training across the state to build our capacity to offer research informed programs and services and to maintain standards of quality.

State Appropriations

In FY24 the Parent Child Centers received \$6.8 million in funding for 15 Centers. PCC grants comprised between 10-25% of individual PCCs total revenue, thereby providing an essential resource to maintain financial stability.

FY25 is the first year of the VPCCN Integrated Grant Base Funding (\$7.1 million) authorized by Act 150 and operating as a grantee of the Department for Children and Families, Child Development Division. The VPCCN provides overall leadership and oversight, including administering individual subawards to the PCCs.

Community Development and Partnership

PCCs are leaders in their communities on issues that affect parents of young children. PCCs are represented on:

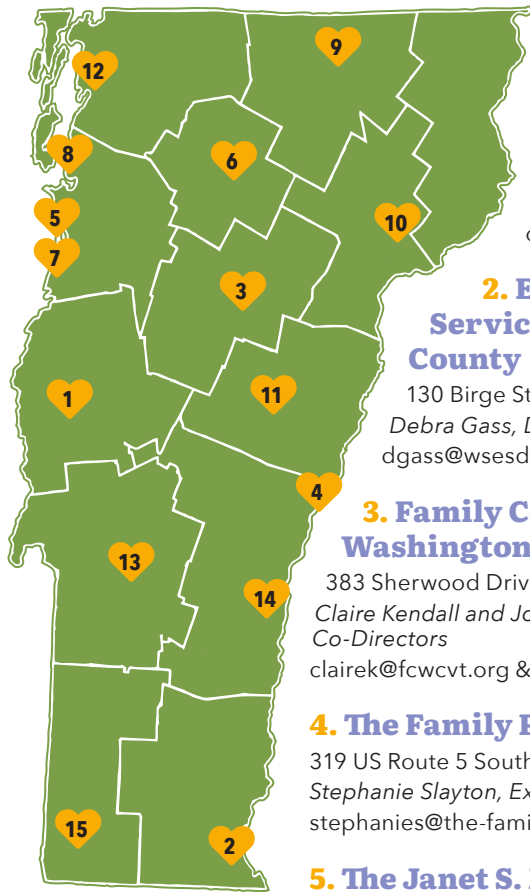
- Blueprint for Health- Accountable Communities
- Building Bright Futures Regional Councils and Standing Committees
- Children's Integrated Services
- Empty Arms Vermont
- Family Supported Housing
- Homelessness and Housing organizations
- Hunger Free Vermont/Hunger Council
- Domestic Violence Task Force
- Interagency Coordination Council
- Let's Grow Kids Work Group
- Parents As Teachers (PAT) Advisory Group
- Pediatric Community Care Team
- Vermont Early Childhood Action Alliance
- Maternal Child Health Regional Meetings
- Perinatal Grief/Loss Coalition
- And others



“When working with [PCC staff], I always feel like I am being heard and my kids’ needs come first, no matter how difficult it may be.”



Parent Child Centers in Vermont



1. Addison County Parent Child Center

126 Monroe Street,
Middlebury
Donna Bailey, Director
dbailey@addisoncountypcc.org

2. Early Education Services/Windham County

130 Birge Street, Brattleboro
Debra Gass, Director
dgass@wsesdvt.org

3. Family Center of Washington County

383 Sherwood Drive, Montpelier
Claire Kendall and Joe Ferrada,
Co-Directors
clairek@fcwcvct.org & josephf@fcwcvct.org

4. The Family Place

319 US Route 5 South, Norwich
Stephanie Slayton, Executive Director
stephanies@the-family-place.org

5. The Janet S. Munt Family Room

20 Allen Street, Burlington
Josh Miller, Executive Director
josh@thefamilyroomvt.org

6. Lamoille Family Center

480 Cady's Falls Road, Morrisville
Carol Lang-Godin, Executive Director
clang-godin@lamoillefamilycenter.org

7. Lund

50 Joy Drive, South Burlington
Kim Laroche, Director of PCC Services
kiml@lundvt.org

8. Milton Family Community Center

23 Villemaire Lane, PO Box 619, Milton
Nicole Sener, Executive Director
nsener@miltonfamilycenter.org

9. NEKCA Family Resource Center at Lakemont

76 Lakemont Road, Newport
Nancy Powers, Director of Early Childhood and Family Services
npowers@neckavt.org

10. NEKCA Family Resource Center at Lyndon Institute

78 Matty House Circle, Lyndon Center
Nancy Powers, Director of Early Childhood and Family Services
npowers@neckavt.org

11. Orange County Parent Child Center

693 VT Route 110, Tunbridge
Lindsey Trombley, Executive Director
lindsey@orangecountypcc.org

12. Parent Child Center of Northwestern Counseling & Support Services

130 Fisher Pond Road, St. Albans
Margaret Walsh,
Children, Youth & Families Division
margaret.maley@ncssinc.org

13. Rutland County Parent Child Center

61 Pleasant Street, Rutland
Stephanie Carvey and Corissa Burnell,
Co-Executive Directors
stephanie.carvey@rcpcc.org & corissa.burnell@rcpcc.org

14. Springfield Area Parent Child Center

80 Jack & Jill Lane, North Springfield
Danna Bare, Executive Director
danna.bare@sapcc-vt.org

15. Sunrise Family Resource Center

244 Union Street, PO Box 1517, Bennington
Denise Main, Executive Director
dmain@sunrisepcc.com



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