

Vermont families are able to help their infants and toddlers develop and learn functional social and/or emotional skills, and infants and toddlers substantially improve their social and/or emotional functional development.

SSIP Overview

Vermont's Part C Early Intervention services are known as Children's Integrated Services-Early Intervention (CIS-EI). Vermont CIS-EI supports families with young children who have developmental delays or are at risk of having developmental delays due to a medical condition. Knowing parents are their children's first and most important teachers, CIS-EI partners with families in their homes and community settings to provide services to support children's development.

To enhance Vermont's CIS-EI ideals¹, the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) defines the State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) as parent and child focused. The Vermont CIS-EI SiMR is: Vermont families are able to help their infants and toddlers develop and learn functional social and/or emotional skills, and infants and toddlers substantially improve their social and/or emotional functional development. To support achieving the SiMR, Vermont has implemented four interconnected strategies:

1. A Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (a framework to improve practitioner expertise and retention of highly qualified practitioners).
2. Fostering family connections to support families to connect with one another and learn advocacy and leadership skills.
3. Implementation of evidence-based strategies targeted to improve Vermont's SiMR, evaluating these strategies for fidelity and to determine that the supports had the intended results.
4. Aligning with other initiatives related to Vermont's SiMR to maximize resources and ensure consistent and uniform information.

"Supporting social and emotional development fosters positive relationships for children within their families, school, and broader community. These positive social connections and skills are a critical foundation that supports children's overall development now and in the future." *Vermont Interagency Coordinating Council, 2015*

CIS-EI's goal is to increase infants' and toddlers' social and/or emotional functional skills, which will be demonstrated by increases in Vermont's performance on the following Federal IDEA Part C Indicators:

Child Outcome 3A summary statement 1: Increasing the percentage of infants and toddlers who show substantial growth in positive social-emotional skills.

Family Outcome 4C: CIS-EI has helped me to help my child develop and learn.

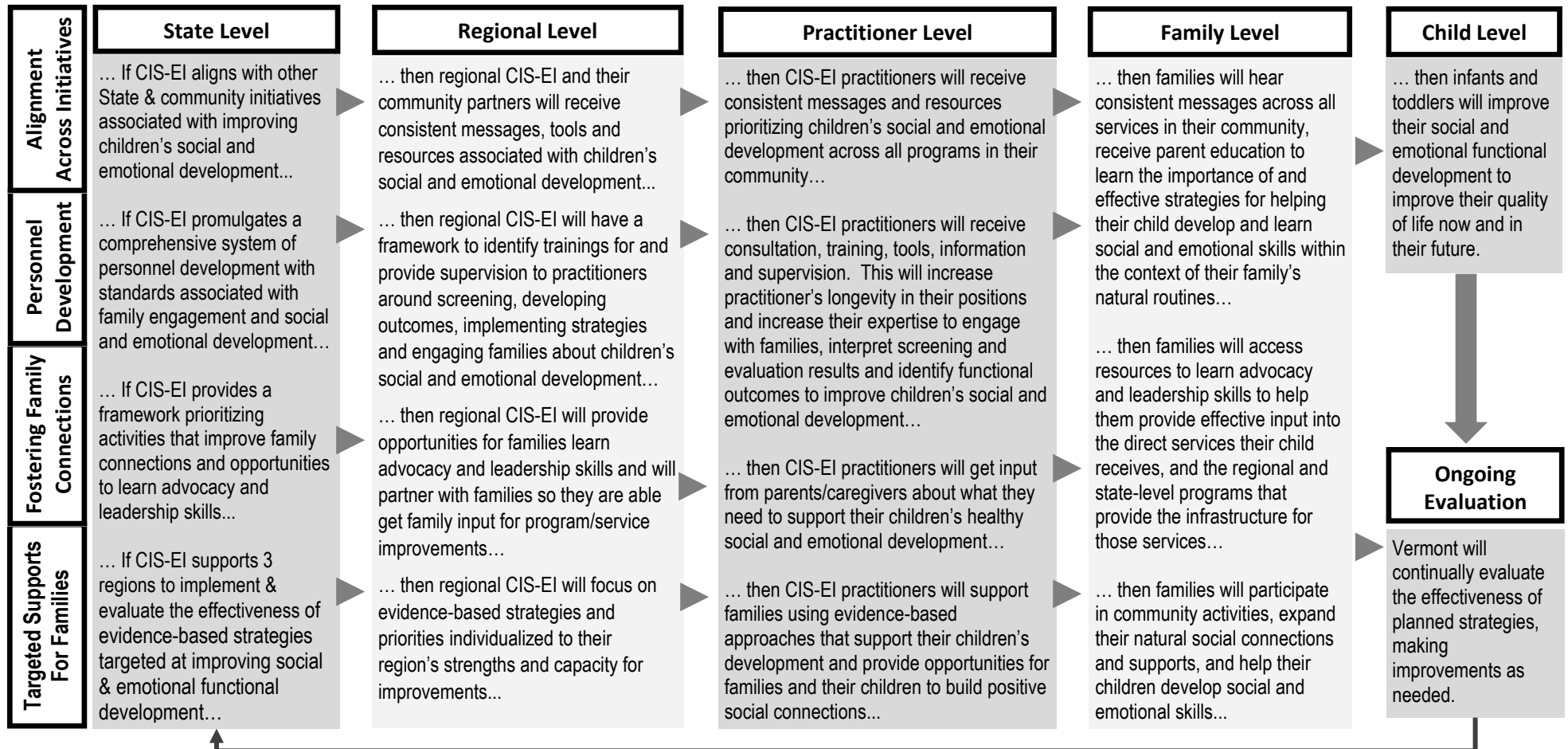
The following report describes Vermont's SSIP activities and results for the period between April 2017 and April 2018.

¹ Edelman, Larry (2004), *A Relationship-Based Approach to Early Intervention*, originally published in Resources and Connections, July-September, 2004, Volume 3, Number 2, also at: http://cacenter-ecmh.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/relationship_based_approach.pdf

Vermont’s strategies at the State, community and family level will improve the social and emotional functional development of infants and toddlers by: aligning with other State and community initiatives to maximize resources and unify messages; fostering family connections to increase social interactions and promote family advocacy and leadership skills; and increasing early intervention practitioners’ expertise to support families to help their infants and toddlers develop and improve functional social and emotional skills.

SiMR: Families are able to help their infants and toddlers develop and learn functional social and/or emotional skills, and infants and toddlers substantially improve their social and/or emotional functional development.

Rationale: Supporting social and emotional development fosters positive relationships for children within their families, school and other community settings. Parents are their children’s first and most important teachers. CIS-EI strategies will directly and positively impact families’ ability to support their children’s healthy social and emotional development. CIS-EI data show that 76% of families feel they have the skills to help their children develop and learn. CIS-EI data indicates only 67% of enrolled children are substantially improving their social and emotional skills. All learning happens in the context of relationships. Therefore, CIS-EI believes that, with direct help from their parents/caregivers, children’s social and emotional development will improve enabling them to form positive relationships with other adults and with their peers so they are able to maximize learning across all developmental domains.



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Summary of Phase III: Implementing Vermont's SSIP Between April 2017 and April 2018

Infrastructure

Vermont CIS-EI has made several infrastructure improvements through this Phase of the SSIP. These improvements are directly linked to the identified coherent improvement strategies and will be discussed within those strategies below. Additionally, as explained in the State Performance Plan, Vermont's CIS-EI program was part of a significant organizational change in 2006. During that time, Part C services, along with early childhood nursing (well-child home visits), family support social work (to address family risks and parent educational needs, and mental health services (for young children and their parents/caregivers) were integrated into the Children's Integrated Services unit. This re-organization led to significant infrastructure changes to support seamless, integrated service delivery to Vermont infants, toddlers, and preschool children and their families. Having CIS-EI a part of the CIS unit ensures the SSIP work benefits from the input and expertise of these early childhood services.

The Agency of Human Services (AHS) transitioned away from the Integrating Family Services (IFS) (<http://humanservices.vermont.gov/Integrating-Family-Services>) approach as a distinct unit this past year. However, the Agency's priority on coordination and collaboration between the six AHS departments remains in the form of active working IFS groups. The SSIP work remains aligned through the participation of the Part C Coordinator in the statewide IFS Autism Workgroup. The IFS Autism workgroup is seeking to develop a comprehensive, statewide approach to addressing the needs of children with Autism across the age spectrum (infant/toddler through age 22). The regions developing evidence-based targeted supports all noted that children diagnosed with Autism (ASD) or highly suspected of having Autism often end up in their identified cohorts of children with functional social and or emotional developmental challenges. CIS's participation in this work will ensure that the system supports Part C children as effectively as school-aged children and prioritizes their healthy social and emotional development along with other developmental domains.

The four areas of focus for the IFS Autism Workgroup's work are (see <http://humanservices.vermont.gov/Integrating-Family-Services/autism-plan-matrix-updated-august-2015-2.pdf> for more information):

1. All children in Vermont receive effective, individualized, intervention services consistent with the National Research Council (NRC) recommendations from 2001 as soon as the diagnosis of ASD is seriously suspected.
2. Professionals who provide services to individuals with ASD will demonstrate competencies that reflect the experience needed when working with individuals on the spectrum. Training will be available to all professionals for building capacity to meet the needs of individuals with ASD and their families.
3. Educational services that provide the full range of continuum of supports and services will be available to students with ASD throughout Vermont.

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Over the past year, CIS-EI Autism supports have been reviewed and are moving toward greater alignment with the Applied Behavior Analysis work of Vermont's Designated Mental Health and Developmental Services Agencies. It is hoped that this alignment will enable Vermont to leverage resources and provide more seamless services to children with Autism from the date of their diagnosis.

Though the IFS Youth and Family Engagement Workgroup disbanded this past year, CIS-EI is an active member of the newly formed BBF Family Engagement Workgroup as described above. This group will likely be an effective broad stakeholder group to involve in the SSIP Fostering Family Connections strategy in the coming year.

Vermont CIS had made infrastructure changes that aim in part to positively impact SSIP implementation, including transitioning the CIS Family Engagement Coordinator role from a contractual position to a State staff member for continuity and sustainability. To accomplish this, the CIS Family Engagement Coordinator role was combined with the Early Learning Challenge Promise Communities Technical Assistant position, the latter of which's duties are phasing down, allowing for a primary focus on CIS activities. The roles have overlapping activities and similar focus on family and community engagement strategies, so the shift tangibly fulfills the SSIP strategy of alignment across initiatives. With this change, regional CIS-EI and community partners, along with families will receive consistent messages, tools and resources to foster family and community connections.

Vermont's CIS Personnel Development Coordinator continues to lead the development of the CSPD. Having a staff person dedicated to lead this activity enables Vermont to take full advantage of the intensive technical assistance grant applied for and received from the Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC). The Personnel Development Coordinator engaged and communicates with key stakeholders and partners participating in the development of the CSPD. As described in the Stakeholder section above, it is challenging to keep broad groups of stakeholders involved in this work. The Personnel Development Coordinator connects using alternative methods such as email, phone calls, and one-on-one meetings with individuals between or in lieu of their attendance at larger stakeholder meetings.

Communication

The State communicates all SSIP activities broadly to CIS-EI practitioners and key stakeholders. The State's CIS blog provides a mechanism for transmitting information and will be a place for engaging staff in dialogue about posted items to deepen their understanding and practice knowledge. The blog currently has over 300 subscribers. The blog contains professional development posts, and articles about current research and evidence-based practice.

The State hosts a state-wide call each month with all CIS-EI directors and supervisors. This call provides an opportunity to communicate program information, process changes, data, and data

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improvement protocols. Throughout the SSIP process the State has used this statewide call to communicate about the SSIP, SiMR and the four key strategies. This monthly call will continue to be used as a key communication tool.

The Family Engagement Coordinator has contributed articles to the family newsletter, e-listserv and blog hosted by Vermont's Parent Training and Information Center.

Coherent Improvement Strategies to Support the SiMR

The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (a framework to improve practitioner expertise and retention of highly qualified practitioners) achieved the following outcomes during this period:

- Building Bright Futures Professional Preparation Committee agreed to advise and assist the CSPD inservice work.
- The CSPD has a working Vision and Mission.
- The Annual Recruitment and Retention Survey was completed for the second year, with 50% of providers responding from across the CIS disciplines, including CIS-EI. Data analysis shows progress in some areas due to engagement with CIS agencies with the previous year's data.
- The CIS-EI stakeholder group (Strategic Planning Team) agreed the CIS-EI certification renewal process should be aligned with Vermont's Early Childhood Special Education Endorsement to leverage resources and support a career pathway for CIS-EI personnel.
- Continued Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC) Technical Assistance and participation in the ECPC Leadership Institute expanded the Early Childhood CSPD Integration Team's understanding of the components of a comprehensive system of personnel development. The Early Childhood CSPD Team is using the Transforming the Early Education Workforce (<https://www.newamerica.org/in-depth/transforming-early-education-workforce/>) recommendations paired with the Principles of Vermont's Professional Development System for Early Childhood Preschool and Center-based education professionals (<https://northernlightscdc.org/about-vnl/principles-of-vermonts-professional-development-system/>) to develop goals for moving this strategy forward. This is in keeping with Vermont's strategy of aligning across initiatives.
- The CIS Institute focused on Family Engagement and many CIS practitioners benefitted from the learning available. The Institute prompted some regions to engage further in the Foster Family Connections Roadmap work.

Fostering family connections to support families to connect with one another and learn advocacy and leadership skills achieved the following outcomes during this period:

- The Vermont Interagency Coordinating Council (VICC) adopted three priorities to focus on and membership is at an all-time high, supported by an active web site, orientation booklet, and outreach materials.

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“Anything off routine is stressful for a child and family. Consistency of having a provider who knows the family and the family story is critical. Staff retention is crucial.”

Parent

- The VICC held the first of two meetings in community locations to increase opportunities for family and broader stakeholder participation.
- The CIS SSIP State Team Family Engagement Coordinator finalized the *Family and Community Engagement Practices Assessment of Efforts and Rating Rubric*, and three communities have begun to engage with the tool and roadmap.
- Vermont participates in the National Center for Systemic Improvement Family Outcomes Cross-state Learning Collaborative, gaining knowledge in leading by convening techniques, utilization of info-graphics to communicate more effectively with stakeholders, and effective family coaching practices. Vermont uses this knowledge with the VICC, the family and community engagement practices, and the CIS Institute planning process.
- The CIS Family Engagement Coordinator is a key member of the Building Bright Futures (BBF) newly formed Family Engagement Workgroup. Alignment with this workgroup will enable the SSIP work to expand more broadly in support of Vermont’s Early Childhood Action Plan (<http://buildingbrightfutures.org/the-early-childhood-action-plan/>)
- A recent staffing change provides an opportunity for closer alignment with Early Learning Challenge Grant Promise Communities work ensuring families with young children receive consistent messages and opportunities for authentic engagement in improvement efforts across Vermont’s early childhood system.

Implementation of evidence-based strategies targeted to improve Vermont’s SiMR within three CIS-EI regions achieved the following outcomes during this period:

- Full implementation of strategies began July 1, 2017.
- Regions participated in three Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles to evaluate data and progress to date, adjusting strategic plans or evaluation measures as needed based on this review.
- Regions report progress on families identifying social emotional outcomes for their infant/toddler, and infants and toddlers making progress on these outcomes. While the data set is still insufficient to draw extensive conclusions, at the time of this writing, the early results appear promising.
- Regions also report that use of the evidence-based tools provide CIS-EI practitioners with an effective way to engage families in talking about the importance of social and emotional development and how it impacts all of a child’s development. This is an important step as practitioners had highlighted, during Phase I root cause analysis, that they had difficulty helping parents understand the need for developing outcomes focused on social and emotional development.

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As evidenced above, and as will be made more explicit throughout this report, Vermont's strategy of aligning with other initiatives related to Vermont's SiMR continues to maximize resources and ensure consistent and uniform information is conveyed to agencies, communities and families.

High-level Overview of Stakeholder Involvement

Vermont Part C CIS-EI relies on stakeholders to examine Vermont's strategies more deeply, identify and implement infrastructure changes and approaches to supporting implementation of evidence-based practices and develop evaluation criteria. Stakeholders involved in implementation of the SSIP include the:

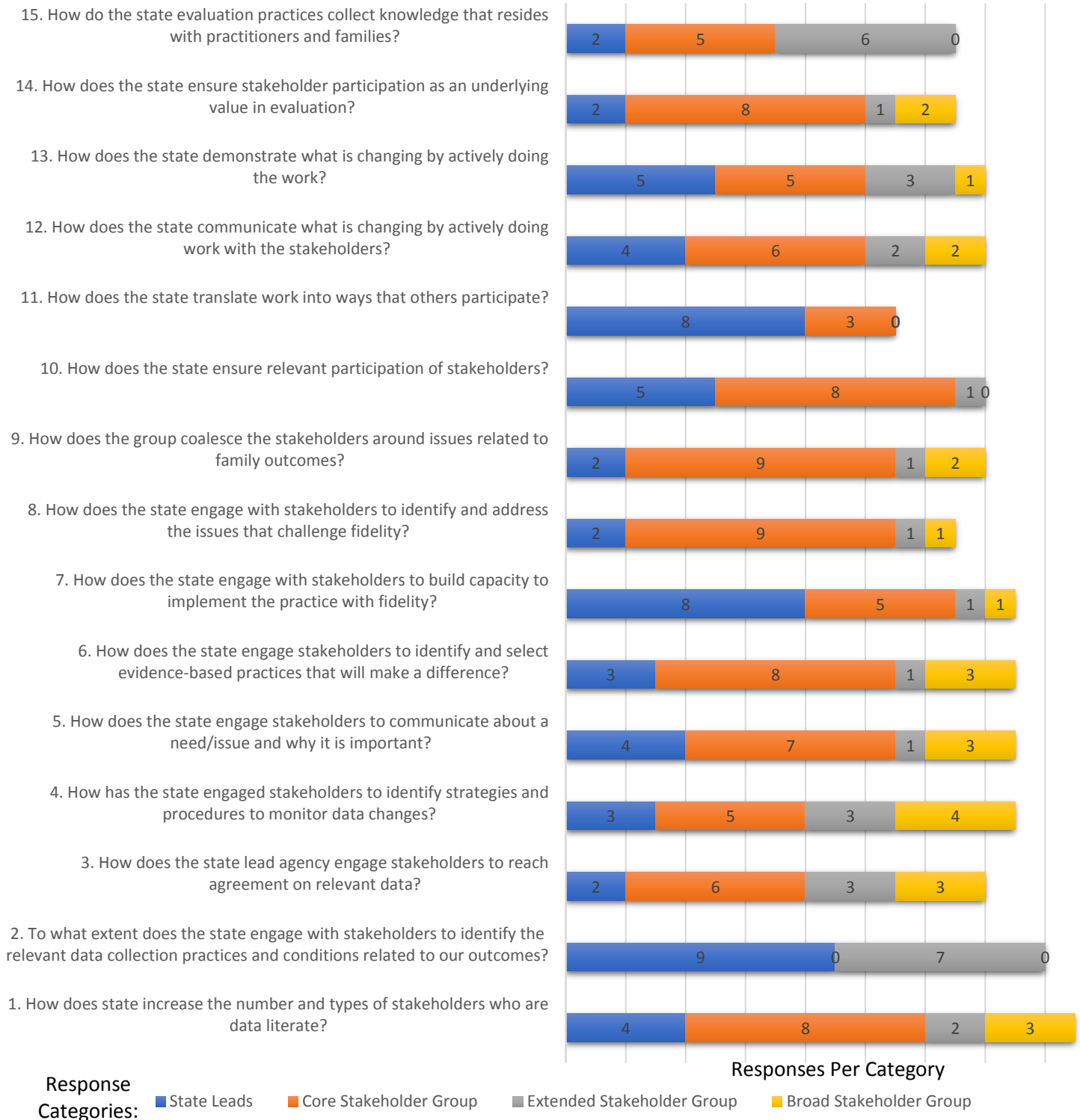
- Vermont Interagency Coordinating Council (VICC)
- Child Development Division (CDD) Vermont Statewide Systems and Community Collaborations Unit
- Agency of Education Part B 619 (AOE)
- Early Learning Challenge (ELC) Grant project coordinators
- All CIS-EI Host Agencies, especially the regions implementing evidence-based Targeted Supports
- Building Bright Futures
- Early Childhood Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Integration Team (CSPD)
- Agency of Human Services (AHS)
- Integrating Family Services (IFS)
- University of Vermont Early Childhood Special Education Program (UVM ECSE)

The State SSIP Team met weekly to move to work of the SSIP coherent improvement strategies forward and develop the evaluation plan. Core participation includes the Part C Coordinator, CIS Family Engagement Coordinator, and the CIS Personnel Development Coordinator, with all CIS staff invited to attend. Notes and decision points are distributed to all staff to facilitate full information sharing and contributions from the team.

It is important to Vermont that Stakeholders are not just informed about the SSIP strategies and progress, but they have a voice in continuous efforts to achieve outcomes related to the identified strategies. Recently, with the support of the National Center for Systemic Improvement Family Outcomes Cross-State Learning Collaborative, Vermont gathered data on stakeholder perceptions of engagement in the SSIP. Stakeholders participating in Early Childhood CSPD Integration Team, VICC, and the Targeted Supports work were asked to respond to a survey from the Collaborative. The survey asked respondents to identify the levels of stakeholder engagement within the State's approach to various aspects of the SSIP implementation of strategies. The responses were compiled by the Collaborative and provided back to Vermont. These data results are as follows:

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Stakeholder Engagement



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The results show that Vermont has made some progress and that Vermont has effective core groups involved in helping to review data, consider strategies, and provide input into the SSIP work. However, it is apparent that there are some areas that would benefit from broadening the cadre of stakeholders actively involved in identification and implementation of the activities. Vermont's small population and the many initiatives that already underway to support Vermont's early childhood work across State and local agencies make it difficult to get this broad representation.

Vermont's strategy of aligning with existing initiatives can help to address this challenge. This past year the Governor charged Vermont's Building Bright Futures (BBF) Statewide and regional councils to make progress on the Early Childhood Action Plan priorities. The SSIP has begun to achieve some results through this emphasis by having the BBF PPD Committee agree to advise and assist the CSPD inservice area. Also, the BBF has just formed a Family Engagement committee. The CIS-EI Family Engagement Coordinator is involved in this committee and will seek opportunities to align its work with the SSIP Fostering Family Connections strategy.

The Part C and Part B 619 Coordinators continue to collaborate on areas of intersection between both Part C and Part B's SSIPs. These areas include projects to begin data sharing for generating longitudinal data, developing a plan for hosting the Child Outcomes training modules developed by the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, as well as personnel development, standards, and certification.

The CIS Personnel Development Coordinator meets regularly with the University of Vermont (UVM) Early Childhood Special Education Degree Program Coordinator. Discussions include the personnel development standards and certification, UVM Special Education Program enrollment, data related to Part C staff retention challenges, pre-service training, and ways to increase and support Part C field placements for UVM students.

The development of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) involves diverse stakeholders from across the Early Childhood workforce. For the purposes of CSPD work, the definition of the Early Childhood workforce is any practitioner who works with children and families, prenatal to age 8, across all settings, environments, and disciplines. People in the following roles have been involved over the past year:

- Children's Integrated Services (CIS) Early Intervention (EI) Part C Coordinator,
- CIS – Specialized Child Care Program Manager,
- CIS Home Visiting Nursing and Family Support Program Manager,
- Parent involvement from Vermont's Interagency Coordinating Council (VICC),
- Early Head Start,
- Faculty from UVM Department of Early Childhood Special Education,
- multiple team members from Vermont's State Child Development Division's Quality and Workforce Development team,
- AOE Part B Early Learning Team members,
- CIS CSPD Personnel Development Coordinator,

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- CIS Continuous Quality Improvement Coordinator,
- CIS Family Engagement Coordinator,
- Vermont's Department of Health,
- Building Bright Future's regional representative and members of the Personnel Preparation and Development Committee,
- Higher Ed Collaborative,
- Program Manager of Vermont's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant,
- The University of Vermont Integrated Team Early Intervention Project,
- Regional CIS-EI Administrators, Supervisors, and practitioners

Vermont is actively engaged with the following Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) funded National Technical Assistance Centers to support our SSIP work:

- Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC),
- National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI),
- Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA),
- The Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy).

As the data above show, Vermont needs to continue to broaden our stakeholder input. Some key stakeholders to involve include: Regional Nursing Supervisors, Lyndon State College, CIS Coordinators, Early Childhood Higher Education Committee, family support practitioners, specialized child care practitioners, and Early Childhood and Family Mental Health (ECFMH) practitioners.

CIS-EI will continue to actively collaborate with various projects funded by Vermont's Race-to-the-Top Early Learning Challenge Grant (ELC), the Building Bright Futures (BBF) Council and committees, and the Agency of Human Services Integrating Family Services (IFS) active workgroups. These shared activities include personnel development standards and framework, data, evaluation, developing an effective statewide approach to serving children with Autism, and family engagement activities. Representatives from the ELC, BBF, and IFS projects are included in SSIP workgroup activities. Likewise, CIS-EI representatives actively participate in workgroup activities originating from the ELC, BBF and IFS projects.

CIS-EI shares data with and seeks input from the Vermont Interagency Coordinating Council (VICC) on all aspects of the SSIP. During Phase III, the VICC revised their core statement: *Vermont believe in all children reaching their developmental potential. Vermont advise and assist Children's Integrated Services. When children and families thrive, Vermont thrives.*

Further, the VICC is instrumental in providing input into the annual statewide data-sharing and determinations meeting with regional CIS-EI staffs on January 19, 2018. The theme the VICC promoted for the meeting for the second year in a row was: *"Data informs practice improvements that support all children to reach their developmental potential."* There were three goals for this meeting: 1) Sharing out of the State Annual Performance Report Data; 2) Development of Regional Quality Improvement Plans; 3) Building relationships between VICC and CIS regional staff.

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Following the meeting, the State SSIP Team and VICC analyzed the effectiveness of the meeting approach and outcomes. Data from this year's meeting will inform activities for next year.

The CIS-EI SSIP State Team meets monthly by phone with the twelve regional CIS-EI host agencies. These meetings are used to gather input into SSIP strategies, share progress, including data, and provide guidance. The State CIS-EI program continues to support the regions as they develop and implement improvement strategies to address indicators identified in their determinations as requiring improvement, especially those indicators related to Vermont's SiMR: Indicators 3a Summary Statement 1 and 4C. Vermont provides technical assistance to those regions providing Targeted Supports related to the SSIP.

Progress and Data on Implementation of SSIP Outcomes for April 2017 to April 2018

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

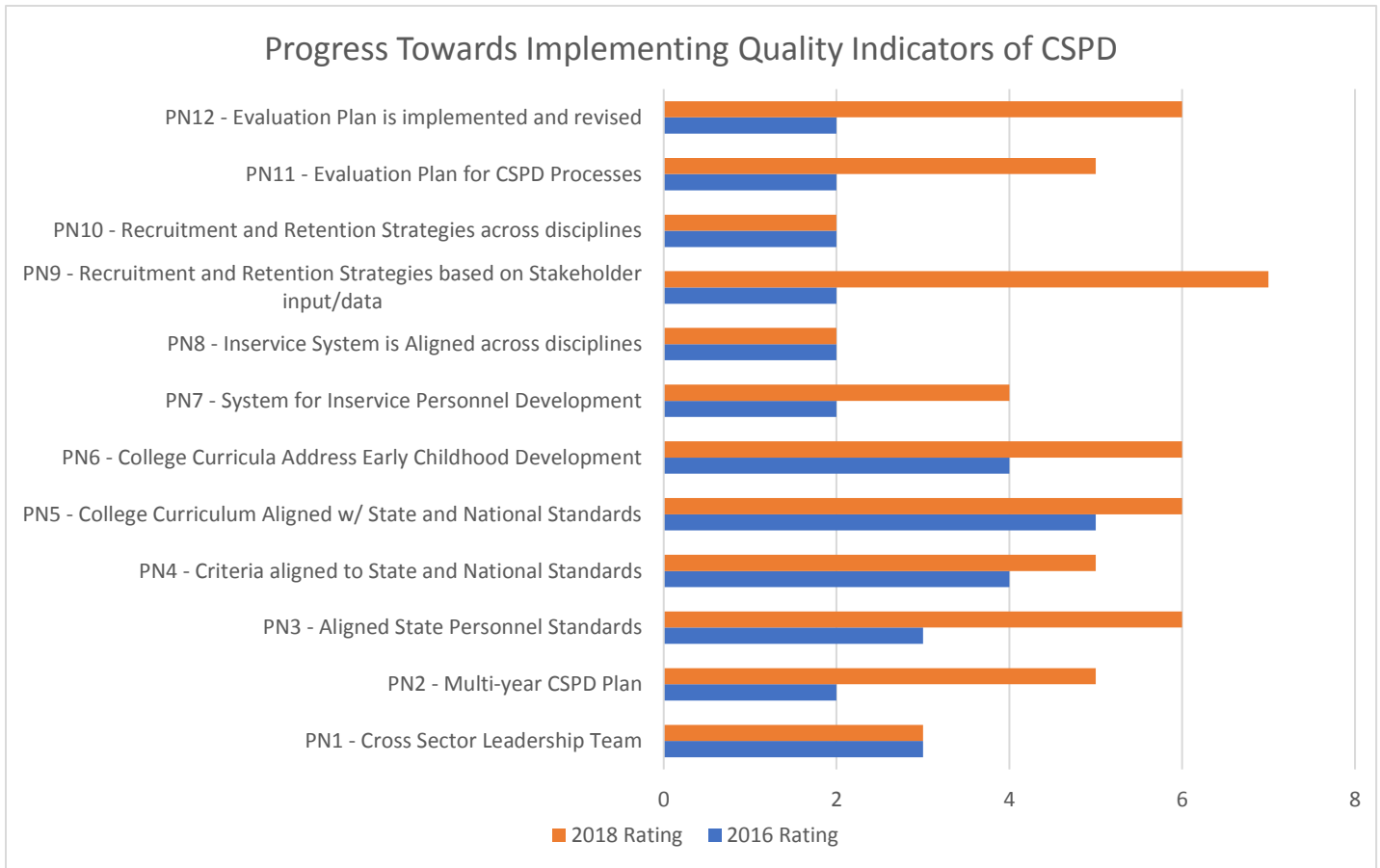
...if CIS-EI promulgates a comprehensive system of personnel development with standards associated with family engagement and social and emotional development...

SSIP Theory of Action

In June 2017, the CIS-EI Personnel Development Coordinator met with a group of diverse stakeholders from across the Vermont early childhood workforce to evaluate the implementation of a CSPD. This group of stakeholders included Early Intervention supervisors and field practitioners. These stakeholders discussed each quality indicator in the State Self-Assessment provided by the Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC). Two years of data show two distinct shifts.

The chart below indicates Vermont's progress toward fully implementing a CSPD. In 2016, all elements were being planned to be worked on or just getting started (represented by a rating of 2), with no elements of a CSPD fully implemented (represented by a rating of 7). Over the past year, Vermont moved from having 7 elements of a CSPD out of 12 being just getting started, to 1 element being fully implemented, 7 other elements partially or mostly implemented, and only 2 remaining in the 'planning or just beginning to be implemented. This represents substantial system's growth for this outcome toward achieving the mission that: *Vermont's CSPD aligns, integrates and coordinates personnel development to equitably prepare, support and retain qualified personnel across settings and disciplines.*

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There has begun to be a shift in Vermont’s siloed early childhood professional development system. Stakeholders representing professional development across the early childhood sectors who have been participating in the CSPD work have acknowledged the need to work together to implement a high quality, comprehensive, integrated system of personnel development. Since September 2017, the CSPD Integration Team and the Transition Team for “Northern Lights at the Community College of Vermont” brought together stakeholders from the child care system, Part B and the Agency of Education, Early Intervention, higher education and other invested individuals to determine common issues and areas for improvement. Through the work of these two groups, Early Intervention was able to embed a training for a State-Approved five domain evaluation tool into the CDD contract with Northern Lights at the Community College of Vermont. This is the first fruits of an integrated system.

The CIS SSIP State Team, led by the CIS Professional Development Coordinator developed a CSPD Logic Model to facilitate clear communication and increase the allocation of resources for CSPD-related projects. This product allows our partners, management and leadership groups to see and understand the complexity of the systems work that has been accomplished so far and the work that remains.



Part C State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Phase III: Implementation and Evaluation

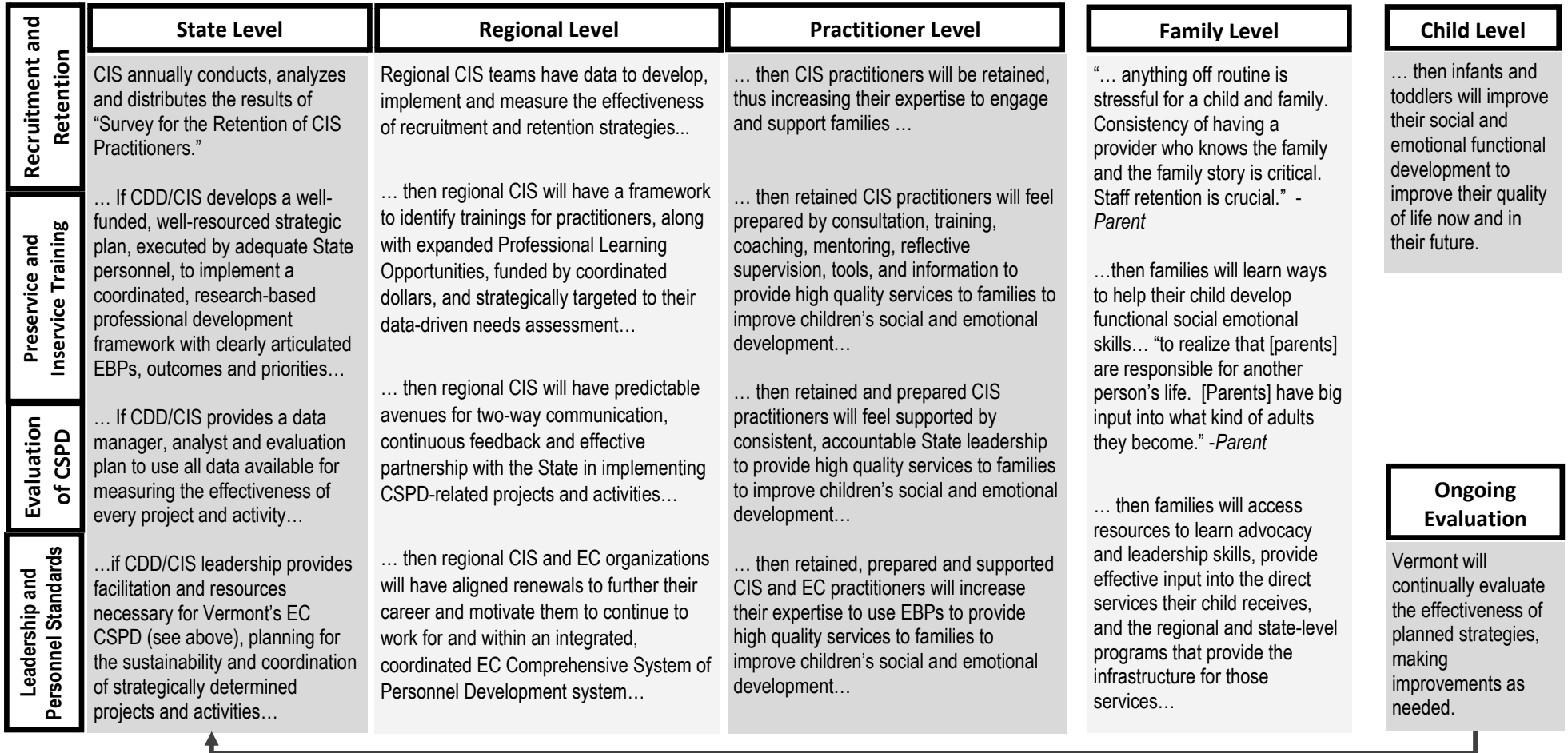
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Vermont's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Logic Model

Vision Statement: Vermont's Early Childhood Personnel Development System prepares and supports professionals to effectively engage with children, families and systems to realize the promise of every child.

Mission Statement: Vermont's Early Childhood Personnel Development System aligns, integrates and coordinates personnel development to equitably prepare, support and retain qualified personnel across settings and disciplines.

Rationale: Within the context of the larger early childhood personnel development system, Children's Integrated Services (including CIS-Early Intervention Part C services) will implement strategies to improve the quality, integration and comprehensiveness of our CSPD to prepare, support and retain practitioners to provide high quality services to families and children. A CSPD is one of four strategies identified through a root cause analysis for achieving Vermont's SiMR.



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Future Plans:

Vermont will continue to gather stakeholder feedback on the implementation of an Early Childhood CSPD, as well as continue to monitor and make data-driven decisions around the effectiveness of the CIS-EI CSPD.

Recruitment and Retention

A stable, highly qualified field of practitioners reduces service delivery disruption and ensures families have a trusted, experienced person helping them identify and learn skills to help support their child(ren)'s development. The job satisfaction data collected annually is a research-based, industry-benchmarked tool to support and evaluate the effectiveness of recruitment and retention strategies. With two years of data, Vermont can see the largest areas of improvement, and the areas of strength in our workforce that are beginning to show consistency.

CIS annually conducts, analyzes and distributes the results of the "Survey for the Retention of CIS Practitioners."
CSPD Theory of Action

Based on two years of data, the CIS SSIP State Team developed a Recruitment flyer for the CIS field. CIS Regions, including CIS-EI, also received copies of their regional data so they could develop specific strategies targeting the needs of their local workforce.

... then CIS practitioners will be retained, thus increasing their expertise to engage and support families ...
CSPD Theory of Action

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15 GREAT REASONS TO WORK FOR CHILDREN'S INTEGRATED SERVICES



Based on 2016 and 2017 results from the "Survey for the Retention of CIS Professionals"

Surveys were sent to 292 CIS Practitioners. This data has a confidence interval of 95% +/- 5%.



Two Years in a Row! 99%



Two Years in a Row! 97%



Two Years in a Row! 93%



10% Increase from 2016! 92%



7% Increase from 2016! 90%



Two Years in a Row! 87%

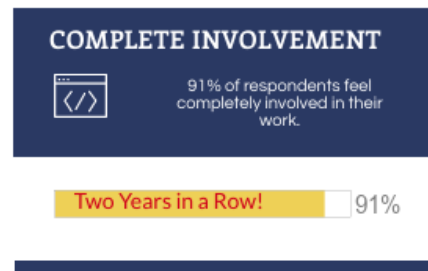
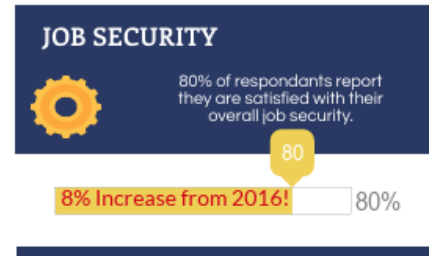


5% Increase from 2016! 89%



7% Increase from 2016! 84%

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THE TOP 3 REASONS PROFESSIONALS CHOOSE TO WORK AT CIS



IT'S A GREAT WAY TO HELP CHILDREN:

"My area of expertise is child development, over 20 years of working and learning about young children. I love the challenge and find joy in working with young children."

IT'S A GREAT WAY TO HELP FAMILIES:

"I specifically believe in the philosophy of helping parents help their children and be advocates for themselves and their families."

I LIKE THE PEOPLE I WORK WITH:

"We have a great team here... from the office staff to the administration to a top notch group of providers."

Contact your local
CIS Coordinator
here:

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State Personnel Standards

Vermont began the process of aligning the renewal process for the current CIS-EI Certification with the requirements of an ECSE teaching license and endorsement. Due to the history and development of the CIS-EI Certification, these adjustments will require tremendous buy-in from both impacted stakeholders and leadership across two agencies.

...then regional CIS and EC organizations will have aligned renewals to further their career and motivate them to continue to work for and within an integrated, coordinated EC Comprehensive System of Personnel Development system...
CSPD Theory of Action

During a day-long stakeholder engagement meeting to discuss the renewal process, Vermont had a great resource gathered by our ECTA TA around how other states across the nation certify and renew their early intervention staff. This information proved to be very valuable as Vermont explored our options.

Future Plans:

Over the next year, our goals are to gather leadership approval, guidance and buy-in into an evaluation process for the CIS-EI Certifications and the potential renewal process. Ideally, Vermont will gather together a diverse group of stakeholders to develop a proposal for our current CIS-EI certification and renewal process that meets the following CSPD State Personnel Standard requirements:

- Opens a career development pathway for Early Interventionists
- Continually recruits new practitioners with the promise of a career pathway
- Retains practitioners within a highly supportive environment and continual professional growth
- Aligns our Personnel Standards with national professional standards and across disciplines
- Balance the tension between support, quality and R&R in the most productive way possible

Current Data:

- 87 total CIS-EI certifications issued from May 5, 2016 to March 21, 2018.
- 55 (63%) are initial certificates requiring a renewal process.
- 32 (37%) are provisional certificates, requiring evidence to be submitted before the expiration date 1-2 years after issue.
- 14 applications (16%) had prior ECSE or ECFMH endorsements or credentials.

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Inservice Personnel Development

...If CDD/CIS-EI develops a well-funded, well-resourced strategic plan, executed by adequate State personnel, to implement a coordinated, research-based professional development framework with clearly articulated Evidence-Based Practices, outcomes and priorities...

CSPD Theory of Action

In 2017 Vermont used a strategic planning process to analyze all our data sources to determine any training needs for the EI workforce. Vermont engaged in 3 stakeholder meetings to analyze, brainstorm and discuss the relevance, priority and importance of each training. Stakeholders came from across the Early Childhood workforce and multiple community partners, including Institutions of Higher Ed. With the in-person and virtual TA support Vermont received from ECPC, Vermont narrowed down the options. Vermont then looked at cost,

if the state or region is responsible for providing this training and additional considerations. By August Vermont proposed a strategically developed budget of training priorities for the Part C Grant. This proposal was submitted to CDD leadership to determine the priorities to move forward with during a transition in CIS Directors.

Future Plans

Vermont will use the following strategic planning process, with stakeholder input, CIS-EI indicator and outcomes data, and other CIS performance measures to make data-driven decisions to determine annual training priorities:

Request to CDD Leadership: Approval to move forward with strategic planning process to determine CIS training and PD needs for July 2018 – June 2019:

1. Conduct no more than three (3) Stakeholder meetings to:
 - 1) Conduct a needs assessment by
 - i. Gathering and analyzing all CIS data
 - ii. Gathering and analyzing any service specific data, with surveys from SCCC, nursing, ECFMH and Family Support
 - iii. Gather and analyze regional input
 - 2) Brainstorm, discuss and analyze relevance and importance of each training
 - 3) Narrow down by
 - i. Is the state responsible?
 - ii. Need training, TA or other support?
 - iii. Cost
 - iv. Other considerations
2. Two to three State Team meetings to discuss, analyze and approve process and results.
3. Proposal brought to CDD Leadership.
4. Gain timely approval or adjustment.

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One training priority identified during this strategic planning process conducted in the fall of 2017 revolved around the annual CIS Institute. Vermont selected the topic using the evaluation data from the previous year's Institute. Vermont consulted on a monthly basis with a stakeholder group of field practitioners and supervisors who participate on the CIS Professional Development Committee.

The goal identified by the Committee was to implement research-based, adult learning initial and follow-up instructional strategies. These strategies were identified from a research synthesis provided by ECPC technical assistance. The design of the Institute changed from a two-day overnight training experience to a one-day training kick-off in May 2018 with monthly follow up supports over the next 8-10 months. The plan is to identify a cohort of participants who will participate in all follow up supports activities from a monthly community of practice call to case consultation with job embedded coaching, to half or full-day trainings for each region. Vermont will evaluate each of these activities to determine how successful this structure has been compared to last year, engaging in continuous quality improvement processes to increase the effectiveness of practice changes in the field.

Additional Trainings developed or delivered during this reporting period include:

- In a collaborative effort with the CDCI Early Intervention Interdisciplinary Team Vermont developed a web-based training for CIS-EI regions on how to develop collaborative, functional goals with families using routines-based interviewing and professional collaboration skills.
- Regional One Plan training (available upon request) was provided in one region in December 2017 and is being planned for another region in the spring of 2018. This training supports regions to understand how to develop One Plans (Vermont's IFSP) using a family centered, outcomes oriented, team-based approach.
- Vermont implemented a Collaboration Day training with Part C and Part B to discuss questions around transitions for children at age 3. Vermont reviewed the federal regulations and state rules, answered questions, and provided updated guidance to the field. This spring, the State and regions will update the Interagency Agreement with a particular focus on developing agreements between regional Early Intervention Programs and Lead Education Agencies that support successful transitions.

Future Plans

- Vermont is also working in partnership with ECTA, DaSy and Vermont's Part B State staff to get COS modules from Johns Hopkins set up on a Vermont-based website. This will improve our infrastructure supports for preservice students, and inservice field practitioners. Vermont will collect performance data and target any follow up regional trainings based on these data.
- Vermont CIS-EI will be rolling out the web-based training on developing collaborative, functional goals to regions through 2018. This training supports Vermont's alignment strategy in that this training supports teams' understanding how all providers working with a

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child/family can support common outcomes, optimizing a child's development and providing consistent information and focus to families.

Preservice Personnel Development

This past year brought two opportunities to align and improve training and instruction in our only Part C ECSE higher education program at UVM. Vermont worked with Professor Jen Hurley's ECSP 220/320 Seminar in Student Teaching, which is coordinated with ECSP 187/386 Student Teaching in Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education. Vermont were able to provide two levels of "Paperwork Bootcamp" to introduce students to the Vermont One Plan (i.e. IFSP), federal regulations, timelines, documentation and the importance of incorporating family voice into the goals.

Future plans include analyzing the evaluation data Vermont received from students through Survey Monkey and using it to engage in continuous quality improvements for each semester moving forward.

Evaluation

A large number of projects were executed and completed over the past year. The attached evaluation plan shows Vermont obtained two years of retention data from the field, participated in two ECPC Leadership conferences with an Early Childhood cross-sector cohort, developed a webinar around using routines-based interviewing to develop functional collaborative goals with families. Vermont ensured an annual training on a State-approved assessment tool would be provided through the professional development training grant with the Community Colleges of Vermont. Vermont provided a One Plan (i.e. IFSP) training and a Collaboration Day training for both Part B and Part C practitioners around state rules and federal regulations for children transitioning at age 3.

... then retained and prepared CIS practitioners will feel supported by consistent, accountable State leadership to provide high quality services to families to improve children's social and emotional development...

CSPD Theory of Action

Vermont developed a training budget for the Part C grant funds using data-driven decision-making and stakeholder input. Vermont plan to implement the results of this strategic plan over the next year, pending leadership approval.

Future plans

As stated above, Vermont plans to collaborate with Part to determine a way to host the ECTA-developed COS modules on a Vermont website, with capabilities of tracking the quiz scores of both preservice students in Part B and Part C programs; and tracking the quiz scores

... then families will access resources to learn advocacy and leadership skills, provide effective input into the direct services their child receives, and the regional and state-level programs that provide the infrastructure for those services...

CSPD Theory of Action

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of in-service field practitioners to target improvements in the curriculum offered through Vermont's institutes for higher education, as well as our in-service trainings. Vermont are looking at how to increase and improve our practice changes to fidelity using evidence-based practices in family engagement, parent coaching and child development.

Fostering Family Connection Activities to Support the CIS-EI Program

With guidance from the CIS Data Manager along with National TA from DaSy, a logic model for Family and Community Engagement was completed in May 2017. This logic model is aligned with performance measures linked to SSIP outcomes, VICC outcomes, and The U.S. Dept. of HHS/DOE Policy Statement on Family Engagement (2016) as intended.

Logic Model for Vermont Family and Community Engagement Strategies

| Goals | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family members are wise consumers and active participants in their child's healthy learning and development - Programs/Organizations know families' hopes for their children, their interests and needs, and the barriers to and opportunities for engagement - Each of the 12 CIS Regions have a systemic and co-constructed family and community engagement strategy that is integrated with the work of instruction rather than as a separate initiative | | |
| Inputs | Activities | Outcomes |
| Shared statewide vision/definition for family and community engagement Family and community engagement connected to child and family outcomes Strategic investments in programing and practitioners Evaluation for accountability and continuous learning and development | <p>Collect Data: Family and Community Engagement Road Map</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct annual regional family and community engagement assessment to identify strengths and improvement areas for family and community engagement by program/organization and region. - At regional level, design family and community engagement action plan based on assessment results, child/family outcome needs, and/or Community Café feedback <p>Build Family's Cultural and Social Capital</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Train existing and new family leaders on skills development to assume leadership roles - Create feedback loops with families to plan, implement, and assess learning and development activities - Grow networks and relationships among families through community organizing and other established networks (e.g. VICC, Community Cafés, BBF Council, etc.) - Create mechanisms and processes that collect and share information and data with families <p>Utilize a Human-Centered Approach to Family and Community Engagement</p> | <p>Short-term outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased awareness about the importance of family and community engagement (R, P/O, F) - Increased awareness about rights and opportunities for family and community engagement (R, P/O, F) - Improved attitudes for shared responsibility, role efficacy, and coordination of family and community engagement (R, P/O, F) - Increased knowledge and skills about strategies for family and community engagement (P/O, F) - Increased knowledge of strategies and resources to support healthy child learning and development (P/O, F) - Increased understanding of child learning and development progress, strengths, and weaknesses (P/O, F) <p>Intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved home-program/organization communication and family-practitioner relationships (P/O, F) - Better home environment and parenting to support learning (F) - Improved parent-child relationships (F, C) |

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| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning to empathize with families, practitioners can see a wider set of possibilities for how and where families can be engaged. - Build collaboration among families through committing to <i>plan with</i> them in ways that are both meaningful and effective. <p>Foster State-Wide Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Align family and community engagement with regional learning outcomes and standards - Include family and community engagement in classroom/home visit, program/organization, and regional performance measures <p>Build Program/Organization Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide ongoing professional development and technical assistance opportunities for family and community engagement to all practitioners - Implement program/organization-based action teams for family and community engagement - Create mechanisms and arenas for managers and practitioners to share research and best practices across regions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved program/organization culture, including trust among practitioners (P/O) - Increased participation and use of programs and resources that support child learning and development (C) <p>Long-term outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased parent membership on the Vermont Interagency Coordinating Council (R) - Increased number of families reporting CIS-EI has helped me to help my child develop and learn (R, F) - Increased number of infants and toddlers who show substantial growth in positive social-emotional skills (R, F, C) |
|--|--|---|

Performance Measures

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Measures of effort (selected examples)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → # of new program/organization family and community engagement collaborations with local businesses, industries, and community organizations → # of new parent members on the Vermont Interagency Coordinating Council → # of participants that attended the Community Café training and then implemented a café within their community → % of CIS regions that report “achieving measurable results” or “committed with resources” level of effort on the Family and Community Engagement Practices Assessment of Efforts and Rating Rubric among 4 out of 6 elements | <p>Measures of effect (selected examples)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → % increase of family members reporting on the annual Family Outcomes Survey “CIS-EI has helped me to help my child develop and learn.” → % increase in infants and toddlers who show substantial growth in positive social-emotional skills. → Regional program/organization policies that promote family and community engagement. → % decrease in CIS-EI regions reporting families “lost to follow-up” at 12 months |
|---|--|

R – Region or Regional staff outcomes; P/O – program/organization or program/organization staff outcome; F – family or home outcome; C – child outcome

Each Fostering Family Connections activity implemented was evaluated by surveying participants or stakeholders (using Survey Monkey). Data from these surveys helped the CIS SSIP State Team, including the Family Engagement coordinator, identify areas of improvement and progress toward intended outcomes identified in the Family and Community Engagement Logic Model.

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Vermont implemented the following strategic activities during this reporting period:

| Goal | Input | Activities | Anticipated Timeline | Intended Outcome(s) |
|---|---|---|---------------------------|---|
| Programs/Organizations know families' hopes for their children, their interests and needs, and the barriers to and opportunities for engagement | Shared statewide vision/ definition for family and community engagement | <u>Community Cafes</u> : Utilize a human-centered approach to build collaboration among families through committing to <i>plan with</i> them in ways that are both meaningful and effective | May 2017 Start; Ongoing | Improved attitudes for shared responsibility, role efficacy, and coordination of family and community engagement |
| Each of the 12 CIS Regions have a systemic and co-constructed family and community engagement strategy that is integrated with the work of instruction rather than as a separate initiative | Shared statewide vision/ definition for family and community engagement Family and community engagement connected to child and family outcomes | <u>Family and Community Engagement Road Map</u> : Identify strengths and improvement areas for family and community engagement given current practices and cultural dynamics of each region in Vermont by designing a family and community engagement action plan based on assessment results, child/family outcome needs, and/or Community Café feedback | Sept. 2017 Start; Ongoing | Increased awareness about the importance of family and community engagement Improved program/organization culture, including an increased level of trust around the family's funds of knowledge and leadership skills Regional program/organization policies that promote family and community engagement |
| Family members are wise consumers and active participants in their child's healthy learning and development | Shared statewide vision/ definition for family and community engagement | <u>Building Bright Futures Families and Communities Committee</u> : Grow networks and relationships among families through community organizing and other established networks | Jan. 2018 Start; Ongoing | Increased awareness about rights and opportunities for family and community engagement Develop a statewide approach that enriches and expands family leadership at the provider, agency, and community level. |

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| Goal | Input | Activities | Anticipated Timeline | Intended Outcome(s) |
|---|--|--|-----------------------------|--|
| Programs/Organizations know families' hopes for their children, their interests and needs, and the barriers to and opportunities for engagement | Shared statewide vision/ definition for family and community engagement | <u>Vermont Family Network eNews</u> : Collaborate and contribute to their monthly newsletter around family engagement within the state and share newsletters with the CIS community through the CIS Blog | Monthly (20 th) | Increased awareness about the importance of family and community engagement Increased awareness about rights and opportunities for family and community engagement |
| Each of the 12 CIS Regions have a systemic and co-constructed family and community engagement strategy that is integrated with the work of instruction rather than as a separate initiative | Family and community engagement connected to child and family outcomes Strategic investments in programing and practitioner | <u>National Center for Systemic Improvement Family Outcomes Cross-State Learning Collaborative</u> : Align family and community engagement with regional learning outcomes and standards; Provide ongoing professional development and technical assistance opportunities for family and community engagement to all practitioners | Ongoing | Increased knowledge and skills about strategies for family and community engagement Increased participation and use of programs and resources that support child learning and development Increased number of infants and toddlers who show substantial growth in positive social-emotional skills |

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Community Café Model Implementation to Increase Family Leadership: As Vermont looked into utilizing the national Community Café approach to hosting meaningful conversations with families in Vermont to support the building of social capital following the statewide training offered in collaboration with Promise Communities (Project 24 of Vermont’s Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant (ELC)), CIS-EI focused on one region that already had a significant portion of its infrastructure attend the training and interested in implementation.

The region began to build their family connections approach by developing a Facebook Page with input from the regional staff and modeled from the Babywearer’s Facebook page already implemented in the region in order to leverage a social media tool easily recognizable and effective within the community. Designed with the purpose providing an on-line place where parents could seek support, give support, ask for opinions, and share what families have learned by connecting with other families. This page has a membership total of 162 since October 2017 and continues to grow. The region has subsequently developed sufficient parent interest in coming together in person, that the region held the first of three planned Community Cafes on March 20, 2018.

This Community Café model is a simple, effective, and flexible format for hosting large group dialogue. The Community Café approach relies heavily on the Principles of Hosting from the World Café: set the context; create a hospitable space; explore questions that matter; encourage everyone’s contribution; connect diverse perspectives; listen together for patterns & insights (collective knowledge); and harvest and share knowledge and discoveries to transform them to action. Therefore, this method aligns well with other State and community initiatives associated with gathering community level parent input for the system seeking to improve children’s social and emotional development. At right is an example of a Harvest from a World Café conducted during a Child Development Division All Staff meeting on September 28, 2017 focused on Professional Development and Evaluation needs within the Division.



Vermont Regional Family and Community Engagement Assessment of Efforts & Rating Rubric was finalized in May 2017 and the CIS Family Engagement Coordinator presented about the tool during the CIS Institute that same month. The Tool was developed with input from CIS practitioners, families, and other CIS-EI community partners. A diverse group of eleven individuals participated in a short-term ad hoc family and community engagement work group to review and provide input into both tools that would form the foundation to the much larger Family and Community Engagement Road Map.

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The Road Map was shared with CIS regions and three regions began working with the CIS Family Engagement Coordinator in the fall of 2017 to utilize the tool to develop regional plans to foster family connections. The Road Map includes a rubric for assessing community strengths and gaps with regard to family engagement. Once complete, the data from this assessment is used by the region to develop actionable next steps. The Road Map includes research-based tools and resources regions can access to support identified strategies. The Road Map rubric and activities are aligned with the Strengthening Families, Head Start, & HHS/DE Policy Statement Engagement Frameworks, making this an effective tool to support cross-sector community assessment.

The Family Engagement Coordinator was unable to gather data on a quarterly basis about formal family engagement activities in each region as planned as the timeline for the work was not met. Regions were invited to participate, but coordinating effective working regional teams, and completing the assessment took longer than originally anticipated. One the CIS Family Engagement Coordinator understood the level of direct support technical assistance that regions needed, a monthly schedule to move the work forward was developed. While a slow start, one region began the assessment process in November 2017 and completed the assessment in March 2018.

Future Plans

The region that completed the assessment will continue to receive direct technical assistance to develop a regional plan, including strategies and evaluation measure to foster family connections. Two other regions will continue to receive technical assistance from the CIS SSIP State Team through 2018 to participate in the assessment, planning and implementation of activities to foster family connections.

The Road Map was presented to the BBF Families and Communities Committee as existing work happening throughout other statewide systems. The BFF restructure and hire of a staff person to oversee the ECAP, Children's Integrated Services Director changes, and the broader Child Development Division re-visioning of Family Engagement efforts have increased awareness about the importance of family and community engagement. Vermont anticipates the change in the Family Engagement Coordinator staff member continuing this activity in a seamless way to increase a more consistent messaging and resource support across the Early Childhood System.

Early Childhood Friendly Media Portal: Initially identified during the root cause analysis phase, the family connections portal to be developed in collaboration with Vermont Family Network (VFN), was determined during Phase III to be unattainable at this time due to capacity within each organization. During an initiative alignment meeting August 2017 with Building Bright Futures (BBF) leadership and the Family Engagement Coordinator, it was determined that alignment with BBF Families and Communities Committee would support attaining this goal.

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Part of the restructuring that has occurred within BBF included hiring a staff person to oversee the Governor's Early Childhood Action Plan (ECAP) that was promulgated in March 2014. Goal 2 of the ECAP is "Families and Communities play a leading role in children's well-being" and there are four strategies under this goal. Focusing on the identified strategy to: "convene a statewide Family Leadership Team, comprised of at least 51% families with children birth through 3rd grade, to develop a statewide family leadership plan." Therefore, this goal was envisioned to be completed through a BBF Families and Communities Committee. This Committee will explore national research around family engagement, develop a catalogue of best practices from the field using appreciative inquiry, and develop a framework for the field. The CIS SSIP State Team will participate in this Committee and align the SSIP strategies for fostering family connections wherever possible to ensure consistent messages to regional stakeholders and families.

Stakeholder/Technical Assistance Engagement in SSIP Implementation

Vermont continued to participate as part of the NCSI Family Outcomes Cross State Learning Collaborative during this period, to assist in the ongoing development and implementation of one of our four interconnected strategies as part of Vermont's SiMR and increase knowledge of family engagement strategies by conducting research into other state's practices around family connections. Vermont's participation in this cross-state learning collaborative has resulted in targeted technical assistance and guidance in utilizing new ways to communicate information to and receive feedback from stakeholders. The use of infographics as seen in this year's submission are a direct result of this technical assistance. Vermont additionally had the opportunity in October 2017 to pilot the Stakeholder Engagement Survey utilizing the *Leading by Convening* rubrics on levels of engagement, in order to determine at which levels of stakeholder engagement Vermont currently operates, the results of which are found on page 8 of this report.

Additionally, Vermont participated in the NCSI-hosted Stakeholder Engagement Chats on ways to engage stakeholders as partners to improve outcomes for infants, toddlers, youth and families. During these calls, Vermont was highlighted for our experience with Stakeholder Engagement Survey utilizing the *Leading by Convening* rubrics on levels of engagement and our established vision for continued use of this resource to evaluate stakeholder engagement annually to evaluate for consistent messaging and resources prioritizing children's social and emotional development. Vermont assisted in the revision of this tool for future uses by reflecting with other states on how it could be more user friendly.

Through 2017 Vermont participated in the "Engaging Families and Creating Trusting Partnerships to Improve Child and Family Outcomes" series offered by ECTA. This series was led by a couple that had children with disabilities and could speak to the cultural shift over the years around the necessity to engage families in the process of service provision. Following each webinar, the NCSI Family Outcomes Cross State Learning Collaborative met to debrief and discuss their learning.

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Many of the frameworks and resources that were discussed during this series had been used to develop Vermont's Family and Community Engagement Road Map. The perspectives of others from across the nation, including a number of colleagues from within the Collaborative, were informative to the implementation and utilization of the resources to reach more families and engage stakeholders in this SSIP Phase. The series and subsequent discussion highlighted the importance of knowing the families, tailoring interactions to meet their needs and ensuring that you have the resources to do it.

In winter 2017/18 Vermont participated in the SSIP Evaluating Infrastructure Improvement Online Workshops sponsored by DaSy and ECTA in collaboration with NCSI and IDC. These workshops helped Vermont refine evaluation plans for the fostering family connections strategy to increase systemic family and community engagement practices. This series helped Vermont to understand the power of info-graphics to engage stakeholders and inform others about the work. The CIS Family Engagement Coordinator, with the CIS SSIP State Team developed an info-graphic to communicate the SSIP CIS Fostering Family Connections work:

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Fostering Family Connections

Families Connect With Each Other

- ✓ Community Cafes
- ✓ Social Media
- ✓ Local Playgroups

Families Know & Access Local Resources

- ✓ Medical and Dental Home
- ✓ Parent Child Center & Community Action Agency
- ✓ Local Community Clubs & Events

Authentic Family Leadership

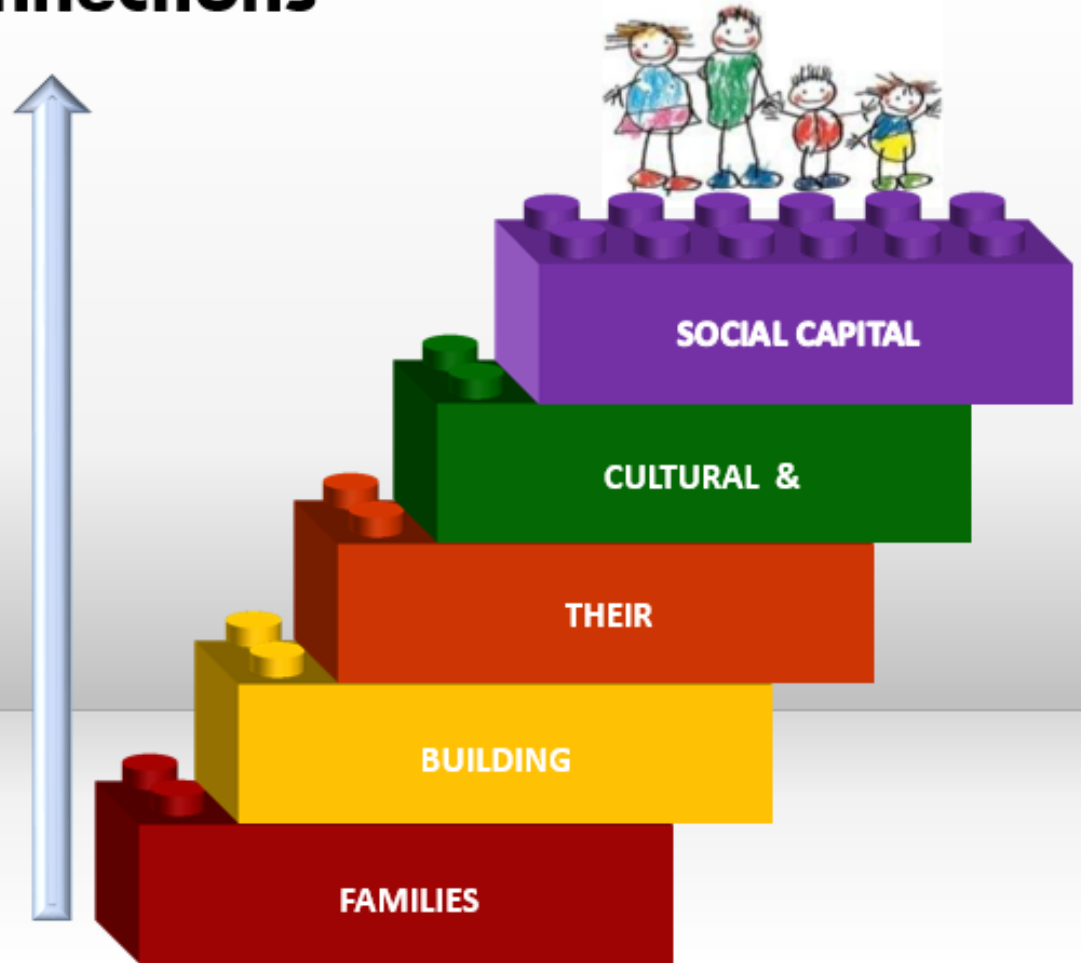
- ✓ Family & Community Engagement Road Map
- ✓ Local Agency Program Improvement Efforts
- ✓ Vermont Leadership Series

Community, Cross-Sector Leadership

- ✓ Children's Integrated Services Administrative Teams
- ✓ Building Bright Futures Regional Councils
- ✓ Promise Community Steering Committees

Statewide, Cross-Sector Leadership

- ✓ Vermont Interagency Coordinating Council
- ✓ Building Bright Futures Families and Communities Committee



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Vermont CIS-EI utilized the Vermont Interagency Coordinating Council (VICC) heavily during this SSIP Phase as they looked to become more deeply engaged in the work as high-functioning group of stakeholders. The May 2017 Council meeting was a crucial point in which this vision was realized. During this meeting, through an appreciative inquiry process, the Council strategically planned two (2) regionally hosted VICC meetings to address Parent Recruitment efforts and build relationships with regional practitioners. At the time of this submission one regional meeting has been successfully completed. At this meeting, participants heard directly from a parent about how the system can work best to help families as they seek to support their children's development. The Family Engagement Coordinator provided meeting participants with a copy of the family interview conducted prior to the meeting. Participants were then invited to ask the parent questions to develop a deeper understanding.

"The best thing you can do for children is to help their parents...Children suffer for their parent's indiscretions! You can criticize someone in a positive way. But not just showing a parent what they are doing wrong but give them a road to follow."

Parent

Utilizing the World Café data and the family input gathered during the VICC meeting, the Family Engagement Coordinator was able to illustrate how introducing change could really help. It helped the group to become more child- and family-centered rather than problem-centered. In a November 30, 2017 TED Talk Max Hardy, one of Australia's foremost experts in deliberative processes, said this about how providers and programs can engage communities around change: "We sometimes think that our communities are a problem to be solved, rather than an asset to utilize." The Vermont Interagency Coordinating Council wanted to invite communities to be part of the creative process to improve CIS services statewide. Following the final Council meeting for the 2017/2018 year, membership will reflect upon and determine how to use the information and data gathered during both conversations to inform system improvements.

Future Plans

Vermont will continue implementing the SSIP strategy of Fostering Family Connections through the coming year. Additional activities to be fully implemented for FFY 2018 include:

- Provide technical assistance to two additional regions to utilize the Family Engagement Road Map beginning Summer 2018. Measure the impact of the planned strategies for each region as they are implemented.
- Continue to utilize the Community Café model as a human-centered approach to build collaboration among families through committing to *plan with* them in ways that are both meaningful and effective during monthly Spectrum Talk Parent Group meetings in Bennington (Ongoing). Identify a second region to utilize the Community Café model (Fall 2018).
- Develop a statewide approach that enriches and expands family leadership at the provider, agency, and community level through utilization of the BBF Families and

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Communities Committee as a formal Action Team to implement the TA received from NE-PACT in the Spring of 2018.

- Improve attitudes for shared responsibility, role efficacy, and coordination of family and community engagement through coordinating a CIS-EI workshop on the role of the family in the process of data collection for the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) in the fall of 2018.

Vermont will continue collaborating with the national TA providers, particularly NCSI, ECTA, DaSy, and NCFPP, to apply research and utilize EBPs to support social and emotional development and foster positive relationships for children within their families, school and other community settings. If Vermont CIS continues to effectively engage families in the provision of services, system development, and quality improvement, families will receive the information and supports they need to help their child(ren) develop functional social and emotional skills and children's social and emotional functional development will substantially improve. Effective family and community engagement strategies embedded within early childhood systems and programs ensure families are able to connect with other families to build their social capital and natural support systems.

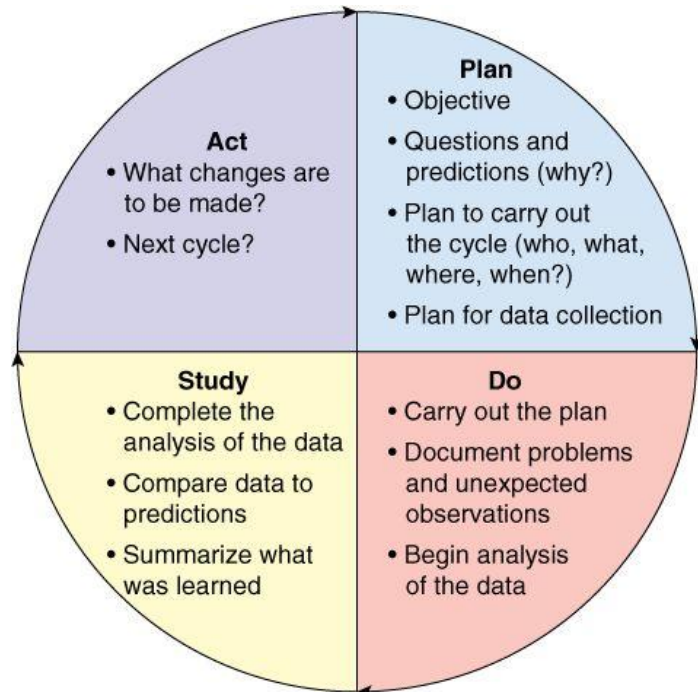
Evidence-Based² Targeted Supports

Three regional CIS-EI host agencies have engaged in strategic delivery of evidence-based supports targeted to improving infant's and toddler's functional social and emotional development. Effective July 1, 2017, the three regions had fully trained all CIS-EI practitioners in the evidence-based supports, identified cohorts and began to implement the supports with families. This supports Vermont's Theory of Action that CIS-EI practitioners will support families using evidence-based approaches that support their children's development and provider opportunities for families and their children to build positive social connections.

² The State is using the following definition: "Evidence-based practice is a decision-making process that integrates the best available research evidence with professional wisdom and values."; Buysse, V., Winton, P., Rous, B., Epstein, D., & Lim, C. (2012). Evidence-Based Practice: Foundation for the CONNECT 5-Step Learning Cycle in Professional Development. *Zero to Three*, 32(4), 25-29.

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The regions receive monthly technical assistance from the CIS-EI SSIP State team. The regions met together quarterly with the CIS-EI SSIP State team to share opportunities, challenges and barriers. During these meetings, the regions used the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) method to objectively examine their data and fidelity of the implementation of their planned strategies, test their assumptions, present reality, and make any adjustments necessary to their strategic implementation and evaluation plans. Three PDSA meetings were held between July 2017 and April 2018. The monthly meetings with the CIS-EI SSIP State team to provide technical assistance, as well as the quarterly PDSA meetings, provide a method for the State and regional partners to monitor progress and ensure the strategies are followed through as planned and with fidelity.



Source: McKean S, Ross JJ, Dressler DD, Brotman DJ, Ginsberg JS: *Principles and Practice of Hospital Medicine*: www.accessmedicine.com

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The three targeted strategies include:

1. Region 1 Strategy – Ages and Stages Questionnaire®: Social Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ:SE-2). If a child received a four or below on for their entry child outcome rating, the region uses the ASQ:SE-2 to engage with the child’s parent(s) and caregiver(s) to identify functional areas of social and emotional development to prioritize and develop an outcome to address.

“...the ASQ-SE is an easy tool to use to measure progress (or not!) every six months. This could help inform the team if supports need to be added, changed, etc. if not making progress or confirming that supports are making a difference...even if the exit COS rating does not.” *Early Intervention Regional Director*

- a. Modifications to this strategy: After the second Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle the region modified the cohort to include any infant/toddler with an entry child outcome rating of five or below in order to target supports to all children who enter the program below the developmental level of their same-age peers. This change was due to an improved understanding of the Child Outcomes Rating from technical assistance provided by DaSy and ECTA.
- b. Evaluation measures: the initial ASQ:SE-2 serves as the baseline for each child. The screening is administered every six months to determine child progress.

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The ASQ:SE-2 has been means tested for inter-rater reliability. To measure fidelity to the Targeted Support strategy, the region gathers data on the date and number of social emotional outcomes are added to the child's One Plan (Vermont's Individualized Family Services Plan), or, if no outcomes are added the reason.

These measures align with Vermont's theory of action that: if families learn of the importance of helping their child development social and emotional skills, then children will improve their functional development in this domain. Vermont's root cause analysis during Phase I of the SSIP found that practitioners stated they had difficulty getting families to identify or prioritize goals associated with their child's social and emotional development. The director in this region shared that CIS-EI providers have found that the ASQ:SE-2 "...provided a way to talk with the family about concerns [in this domain]." In addition, she said that the ASQ:SE-2 gives the developmental educators functional activities they can teach to parents to work on with their child. If parents learn the importance of social and emotional development, they will develop outcomes to address that domain. Then Early Intervention Developmental Educators can give parents effective strategies to help their child develop and learn within the context of their family's natural routines. Therefore, measuring outcomes during this early stage of implementation to prove the strategy may be effective and supports Vermont's theory of action.

c. Outcomes Achieved Between July 2017 and April 2018:

8 children are active participants in the cohort. 3 others had begun receiving the targeted support but exited prior to receiving six months of service and therefore did not receive a subsequent ASQ:SE-2 score, so were removed from the cohort data set.

Of the 8 children in the cohort, the average COS rating was 4.75 (out of 7) of the child's ability to demonstrate positive social and emotional skills.

The average ASQ:SE-2 score for the cohort children was 160. One child did not get an entry ASQ:SE-2 score as they were too young at entry.

7 out of the 8 children have outcomes of their One Plan (Vermont's IFSP) related to social and emotional development as identified by the parent. The child who does not yet have an outcome joined the cohort most recently (in October).

One child has exited having received a second ASQ:SE-2 score. This child received an initial score of 180 (at 24 months old) and exited with a score of 125 (at 30 months). This child had 2 outcomes identified on the One Plan to address social and emotional development. Exit COS data has not yet been collected for

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this child. One child had an ASQ:SE-2 due in February that has not yet been completed. Two other children had an ASQ:SE-2 due in March. Those scores were not available at the time of this report. The monthly meetings with the CIS-EI SSIP State team to provide technical assistance, as well as the quarterly PDSA, provide a method for the State and regional partner to monitor these missing data and ensure the strategies are followed through with fidelity.

This region's Child Outcomes Indicator 3A Summary Statement 1 data for FFY'2016 as reported in the APR was 72.73% of children made substantial progress in their social and emotional development. This data point serves as a functional baseline to help determine if, by the end of this first implementation year, the region's COS rating for Indicator 3A Summary Statement 1 has shown improvement. It also serves to compare the COS data for the cohort children to determine their level of progress to all children receiving Early Intervention in the region.

In addition, since Vermont's SiMR also seeks to ensure families are able to help their children develop and learn functional social and/or emotional skills, this region's 2017 Family Survey data (gathered in the Spring of 2017, prior to the implementation of the targeted supports) serve as a baseline measure for progress. The results for Family Outcome Indicator 4C for this region were that 92.3% of families felt that Early Intervention helped them to help their child develop and learn.

2. Region 2 Strategy – Social-Emotional Assessment/Evaluation Measure (SEAM™). If a child received a four or below on for their entry child outcome rating, within six months of being made active, the region administers the SEAM to identify specific areas of development and engage with the child's parent(s) and caregiver(s) to identify outcomes and functional strategies to support improvement in those areas.
 - a. Modifications to this strategy: After the first Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle this region decided to stop using the ASQ:SE-2, which was in their original strategy, as this delayed the utilization of the SEAM and did not prove to be any more effective than the SEAM itself for engaging families, in their experience. The ASQ:SE

Following the second Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle the region modified the cohort to include any infant/toddler with an entry child outcome rating of five or below in order to target supports to all children who enter the program below the developmental level of their same-age peers. This change was due to an improved understanding of the Child Outcomes Rating from technical assistance provided by DaSy and ECTA.

The State purchased the SEAM activity book at the region's request to support their work with families using the SEAM.

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- b. Evaluation Measures: The region tracks staff professional development to ensure all staff are trained in the SEAM. The initial SEAM score serves as the baseline for each child in the cohort. The SEAM is re-administered at six months to determine the child's developmental progress. Data on pro-social and anti-social behaviors identified with the family to increase or reduce respectively are also collected to determine effectiveness of the Targeted Support, as well as being used as a fidelity measure.

Additional fidelity measures used by the region include tracking data on the number of social and emotional outcomes added to a child's One Plan and achieved. In keeping with the Vermont's two-part SiMR, the region also tracks data on the activities introduced to and completed by parents that they can use to help their child develop and learn functional social and emotional skills.

These measures align with Vermont's theory of action that: if families learn of the importance of helping their child development social and emotional skills, then children will improve their functional development in this domain, and infants and toddlers have improved social and emotional development will improve their quality of life.

"...completing the SEAM, it has opened a larger conversation with parents earlier on in the service provision to streamline the referral and diagnosis process. It shows where there is a significant gap in social emotional development...that might have otherwise gone unnoticed. It is a more parent friendly way of communicating these concerns with families."

Early Intervention Regional Director

Vermont's root cause analysis during Phase I of the SSIP found that practitioners stated they had difficulty getting families to identify or prioritize goals associated with their child's social and emotional development. If parents learn the importance of social and emotional development, they will develop outcomes to address that domain. Then Early Intervention Developmental Educators can give parents effective strategies to help their child develop and learn within the context of their family's natural routines. Then infants and toddlers will improve their social and emotional functional development to improve their quality of life. Therefore, measuring outcomes and activities introduced to parents during this early stage of implementation, as well as measuring changes to children's pro- and anti-social behaviors to prove the strategy may be effective and supports Vermont's theory of action.

- c. Outcomes Achieved Between July 2017 and April 2018:

Of the 15 children in the cohort, the average COS rating was 4.13 (out of 7) of the child's ability to demonstrate positive social and emotional skills. Five children were diagnosed with Autism during this period and transferred to a private

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provider for Applied Behavioral Analysis services and are now no longer part of the cohort.

The average SEAM score for the cohort children was 62.

All 10 children who remain in the cohort have outcomes identified on their One Plan (Vermont's IFSP) related to social and emotional development as identified by the parent. A combined 50 social and emotional outcomes have been identified for these cohort children. 4 children achieved a combined 17 outcomes to date. 6 children have not yet achieved their identified outcomes. Families learned 66 activities to support their child's identified outcomes. 23 activities were identified as having been completed, meaning the family reported achieving mastery of the activity. Activities included:

- Play gentle people games and parent stops when child indicates enough.;
- Keep a home routine for eating, sleeping, diapering, and playtime; Sensory social activities that are pleasurable and engaging to him (i.e. finger plays, lap games, floor games, etc.);
- Sing songs and do finger plays to assist with social interactions;
- Provide new vocabulary words with highly motivating activities;
- When child picks up a toy parent will do something to the object to encourage child imitation.

9 children had pro- or anti- social behaviors specifically identified and measured for improvement. Of the combined 16 behaviors identified, 11 were successfully improved during this reporting period.

This region's Child Outcomes Indicator 3A Summary Statement 1 data for FFY'2016 as reported in the APR was 61.9% of children made substantial progress in their social and emotional development. This data point serves as a functional baseline to help determine if, by the end of this first implementation year, the region's COS rating for Indicator 3A Summary Statement 1 has shown improvement. It also serves to compare the COS data for the cohort children to determine their level of progress to all children receiving Early Intervention in the region.

In addition, since Vermont's SiMR also seeks to ensure families are able to help their children develop and learn functional social and/or emotional skills, this region's 2017 Family Survey data (gathered in the Spring of 2017, prior to the implementation of the targeted supports) serve as a baseline measure for progress. The results for Family Outcome Indicator 4C for this region were that 83.3% of families felt that Early Intervention helped them to help their child develop and learn.

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3. Region 3 Strategy – Self Sufficiency Outcomes Matrix (SSOM) and Touchpoints

(http://www.brazeltontouchpoints.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Touchpoints_Model_of_Development_Aug_2007.pdf).

The regional cohort children two and a half years or younger of families who reported three or more stressors on the SSOM family assessment. The region uses the Touchpoints approach to help the family understand how their child’s optimal social and emotional development occurs in the context of the relationships they have with them, and to develop outcomes to support their child’s development in this area. Families also are supported to develop at least one outcome on their One Plan to address a family stressor and are connected with community resources to help them achieve the identified outcome(s). This region’s strategy is aligned across CIS as all other CIS services had been using the SSOM. Additionally, the Touchpoints training was co-

“Toxic stress impacts outcomes. Touchpoints creates the right values in practitioners for working with families... this approach helps when having hard conversations...”
Early Intervention Regional Director

sponsored by the Vermont Department of Health, Children with Special Health Needs (CSHN) as a pilot project to improve success in working with families across service sectors who have children with identified special health needs.

- a. Modifications to this strategy: After the first Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle this region decided to stop measuring social and emotional outcomes and focus on fidelity measures and measurement of SSOM score improvement (ie. reduction of family stressors).

The region has expanded Touchpoints training to multiple partners within the community, and to several communities beyond the region as part of the partnership with CSHN. The CIS Professional Development Coordinator will be attending a Touchpoints training session later this spring and the State CIS-EI team is examining the value of scaling up this evidence-based approach.

- b. Evaluation Measures: The region measures progress on the strategy by collecting initial SSOM data and numbers of outcomes addressing family stressors identified on the initial One Plan as a baseline. The SSOM is re-administered and outcomes addressing family stressors that have been achieved or added every six months to measure progress. Finally, at the six month and annual reviews, the region measures the numbers of families in the cohort who are able to articulate functional strategies to support their child’s social and emotional development.

The region gathers fidelity data on practitioner’s implementation of the Touchpoints approach. A pre-survey gathered baseline data, and ongoing evaluation by the practitioner’s supervisor is used to measure practitioner improvement to attain fidelity implementation.

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These measures align with Vermont’s theory of action that: if regional CIS-EI programs focus on evidence-based strategies, then CIS-EI practitioners support families using these evidence-based approaches, then families will participate in community activities, expand their natural social connections and supports, and help their children develop social and emotional skills. Therefore, measuring practitioner confidence in their incorporation of the evidence-based practice into their work with families, and families’ identification of outcomes to address identified stressors at this stage of implementation to prove the strategy may be effective and supports Vermont’s theory of action.

c. Outcomes Achieved Between July 2017 and April 2018:

65 families had a Self Sufficiency Outcomes Matrix (SSOM) administered. 29 families were identified for the cohort based on stressors identified from the SSOM and developed family outcomes on their One Plan (Vermont’s IFSP) to address those stressors. 16 of the 29 (59%) reported decreased stress on a subsequent administration of the SSOM during the reporting period.

“The SSOM has led EI to do a lot more service coordination referring families to community resources...this is good. Helping them find resources helps them reduce their stress.”

Early Intervention Regional Director

Prior to the implementation of the targeted strategy, a chart review was conducted and only 23.8% of children served by the regional Early Intervention Program had family-oriented outcomes on their One Plan. Since the implementation of the SSOM targeted support, 50% of children’s One Plans have family-oriented outcomes.

Early Interventionists reported their knowledge of the Touchpoints approach to have improved almost 12 percentage points six months after being trained. Early Interventionists reported a 10-percentage point increase in their ability to demonstrate the Touchpoints principles and assumptions in their practice with families. The Early Intervention supervisor will continue to use the Touchpoint principles and assumptions survey she developed for this targeted support strategy every six months during reflective supervision with staff to continue to monitor progress.

This region’s Child Outcomes Indicator 3A Summary Statement 1 data for FFY’2016 as reported in the APR was 72% of children made substantial progress in their social and emotional development. This data point serves as a functional baseline to help determine if, by the end of this first implementation year, the region’s COS rating for Indicator 3A Summary Statement 1 has shown improvement. It also serves to compare the COS data for the cohort children to

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determine their level of progress to all children receiving Early Intervention in the region.

In addition, since Vermont's SiMR also seeks to ensure families are able to help their children develop and learn functional social and/or emotional skills, this region's 2017 Family Survey data (gathered in the Spring of 2017, prior to the implementation of the targeted supports) serve as a baseline measure for progress. The results for Family Outcome Indicator 4C for this region were that 81.8% of families felt that Early Intervention helped them to help their child develop and learn.

The State continues to support the three regions' evaluation efforts by ensuring they have access to current CIS-EI data for their region, connecting them with national technical assistance as needed, and assisting them to develop effective data collection mechanisms. Regions are also able to request technical assistance and send data-related inquiries to the CIS Data Analyst and Information Coordinator as needed. Each region also has a dedicated technical assistance liaison from the CIS-EI State team.

Targeted Supports For Families and their Children to Improve Social and Emotional Functional

Regions use evidence-based screening and assessment tools to support families to identify goals to improve functional social and emotional skills. Each targeted support activity is implemented with an identified infant/toddler or their family at specified points in time during their enrollment in Part C services. By administering and then re-administering the screening or assessment tools, the infant/toddler's progress can be measured over time. Regions implement fidelity measures to ensure that each strategy is implemented as planned and regularly review progress.

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| Ages & Stages—SE Questionnaire | All Early Intervention practitioners have been trained in the 3 regions on the Ages and Stages—Social Emotional screening tool... | Practitioners screen for and engage families in talking about infant's and toddler's social and emotional functional skills... | Families identify functional goals to promote social and/or emotional development where these skills are significantly below the expected range for the child's chronological age... [94% of children had social/emotional outcomes on their One Plans]; | | Region 1 11 children were screened 8 children were served 88% of children have Social/Emotional Outcomes |
| Social Emotional Assessment Measure | Two EI practitioners were trained on the Social Emotional Evaluation and Assessment Measure... | Practitioners assess and engage families in talking about infants and toddler's social and emotional functional skills... | Families identify goals and access resources to address risks & needs that may impact their ability to effectively support their infant's and toddler's social and/or emotional skill development... [50% of children had family outcomes on their One Plans] | Families learn ways to help their infants and toddlers to significantly improve their functional social and/or emotional development. | Region 2 15 children were assessed 10 children were served 9 children showed improved social behavior |
| Self-Sufficiency Outcomes Matrix & Touchpoints | 4 practitioners have been trained in Touchpoints and the Self-Sufficiency Outcomes Matrix... | Practitioners assess families' risks & needs to address family factors that may impact their ability to support their infant's and toddler's social and/or emotional skill development... | | | Region 3 65 families were assessed 29 children were served Practitioners report 10 percentage point increase in skills |
| Ongoing Assessment and Review | The State supports regions to measure outcomes and continually assess using Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles... | Regions examine progress quarterly and adjust plans as needed... | | | |

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Future Plans

Vermont plans to continue to implement the strategies identified in the Theory of Action.

The State and the three regions will continue to meet quarterly to analyze the regional data associated with the targeted supports. The purpose of this analysis is to determine the fidelity of the implementation, effectiveness of the strategies, and any adjustments needed. By December 2018, the State hopes to have sufficient evidence from the data collected to determine which targeted supports could be most successfully scaled up to other regions or to a statewide level due to their proven efficacy.

The State has increased the budget for training or materials needed for implementation of the targeted supports as Vermont looks to scale up in the coming year. Any trainings provided will be open to the entire state, even though the intended recipients are those regions implementing the targeted support(s). Vermont is using this method for any such investments in trainings provided through the SSIP.

In July, data from the Targeted Supports regions will be presented to the remaining Early Intervention Regions. Regions will be identified to engage as stakeholders in planning for scaling up at least one targeted support that has proven the most effective to improving Vermont's SiMR. The regions, along with the State and the VICC will establish plans for scaling up the identified targeted support, with implementation to begin in 2019.

A challenge that Vermont has is that all data collected for the Targeted Supports is done using manual counting and recorded on spreadsheets. Vermont does not currently have the technology infrastructure to gather the Targeted Supports data within an electronic database. All three regions currently engaged in this SSIP strategy report that the data collection, analysis and reporting, while highly valued, is incredibly burdensome and difficult to maintain. Vermont's Child Development Division is exploring various data-base solutions for CIS, but this exploration is not likely to yield a solution for at least another year. Also, the SSIP targeted supports data would not be priority requirement for roll-out of a new database.

Regularity of training in the evidence-based tools is another challenge the region's shared. One training is rarely sufficient as staff need skills reinforced over time and turnover requires new staff to be trained. The region using the SEAM reported the following:

"Getting trained to complete the SEAM is difficult due to the copyrights from Brooks Publishing and the cost to bring in a trainer. Once a supervisor has been trained, he/she can train their new staff, but it less

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than ideal to a training from Brooks. Being trained in tools that Vermont can train others is more sustainable. The ASQ:SE-2 train-the-trainer model is ideal because it addresses staff-turnover. If Vermont can't get a train-the-trainer model for SEAM, scaling up will not be as feasible."

The ongoing training needs will be an important consideration in Vermont's plan to scale up an evidence-based tool.

Additionally, Vermont will begin exploring expanding Early Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (E-MTSS) beyond the early childhood education (regulated child care) populations. Key partners in the Agency of Education and the Integrating Family Services Autism Workgroup have indicated an interest in this expansion. The Child Development Division, which houses CIS-EI, is a key partner in the current system supporting E-MTSS. With the notification of the new technical assistance center supporting E-MTSS sponsored by the Office of Special Education Programs, Vermont recognizes the potential value of E-MTSS as a strategy for supporting children of all developmental levels.

Vermont is also exploring whether the Child Development Division CIS Early Intervention Program and the Agency of Education Early Childhood Special Education Unit can collaborate to host the Child Outcomes (COS) Training Modules developed by the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center. Vermont is receiving technical assistance from DaSy and ECTA around this activity. The State hopes to determine the feasibility of this approach and, if indicated, develop a plan to achieve this outcome in 2018 for implementation in 2019.

Hosting the COS Modules would enable Vermont to monitor training activities and skill development among Part C and Part B practitioners. These data, correlated with Child Outcomes indicator data, would help Vermont better understand where to target our technical assistance and ensure all staff have the necessary skills to develop the COS rating. Once Vermont has achieved this goal, then supporting staff to incorporate Child Outcomes into the One Plan could be more feasible in the coming years.

Vermont believes that the SSIP strategies are beginning to achieve elements of the SSIP Theory of Action. It is expected that within two years, these changes will begin to be reflected in indicator 3A, Summary Statement 1, as Vermont's infants and toddlers substantially improve their social and/or emotional functional development.