

How well is the need for child care being met for infants & toddlers in Bennington County?

More than 70% of Vermont kids under age 6 are likely to need some form of child care because their parents are in the labor force.

Likely to need child care in Bennington County:

- 542 infants
- 282 toddlers

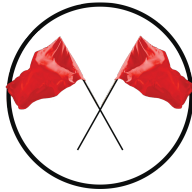
For many working parents, child care program hours of operation are critical.



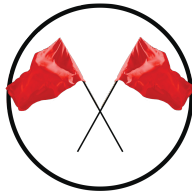
Hours of operation for programs serving infants or toddlers in Bennington County:

- First program opens 5:30 AM
- Most programs open 7:00 AM
- Most programs close 5:30 PM
- Last program closes 6:00 PM

Infant Access Status: Stalled at the Start



61% of infants likely to need care don't have access to any **regulated*** programs.

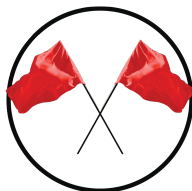


78% of infants likely to need care don't have access to **high-quality**** (4- or 5-star) programs.

Toddler Access Status: Stalled at the Start



21% of toddlers likely to need care don't have access to any **regulated** programs.



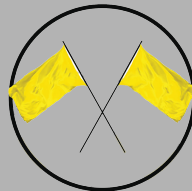
53% of toddlers likely to need care don't have access to **high-quality** (4- or 5-star) programs.

**Regulated means licensed with the state.
**See back to learn more about high-quality.*

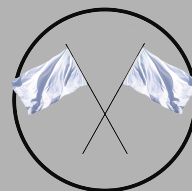
Child Care Status Flag Descriptions



Stalled at the Start
51-100%



Hazard
16-50%



Final Lap
1-15%



Win for Kids!
<1% - 0%

Vermont has a child care challenge. Statewide, 77% of infants and toddlers likely to need child care don't have access to high-quality (4- or 5-star) programs and 51% don't have access to any regulated child care programs. Vermont families and child care providers need our support to strengthen resources for our early care and learning programs.

HOW DO WE DEFINE INFANTS & TODDLERS?

Based on state definitions, "infants" are children ages 6 weeks old to 23 months old and "toddlers" are children ages 24 months old (2 years) to 35 months old (almost 3 years).

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY HIGH-QUALITY CHILD CARE?

High-quality early care and learning programs are staffed by consistent, nurturing caregivers educated in early childhood learning and development. In addition to keeping children safe, high-quality programs offer a clean, cheerful environment with outdoor space, and include play-based activities that enrich and promote learning and development, preparing children for success in school, relationships and life.



In Vermont, regulated child care programs can participate in the state's voluntary quality recognition and improvement system, called STARS (Step Ahead Recognition System). Within STARS, child care programs can receive a quality recognition level of 1 to 5 stars. This report refers to programs that have achieved 4- and 5-star recognition levels as high-quality because these levels have been identified in legislation, by partner organizations and in the work of Vermont's Blue Ribbon Commission on Financing High Quality, Affordable Child Care as targets for quality.

Earning stars takes time and there are many quality child care programs in Vermont committed to continuous improvement that have not yet achieved a 4- or 5-star rating. We want to acknowledge these programs and note that this level of detail is not reflected in this particular report. More information about regulated child care programs in Vermont can be found at www.brightfutures.dcf.state.vt.us.

TAKE ACTION!

- ▶ Read the full report on access to high-quality child care for infants and toddlers statewide at letsgrowkids.org/stalled-start.
- ▶ Contact your Let's Grow Kids field manager to get involved in the campaign: Vicky Senni, vicky@letsgrowkids.org.
- ▶ Sign **the Petition** at letsgrowkids.org to increase public investments in high-quality, affordable child care to ensure every Vermont child has a strong start.

