



Vermont Farm to Early Childhood Policy Strategic Plan 2023-26



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Executive Summary

Farm to early childhood (FTEC) is a national movement connecting early childhood programs to locally grown food and a variety of educational opportunities. The program connects nutrition, local food, and gardening education in ECE programs to support child wellness, family engagement, and community connections. Vermont has a long-standing history of supporting farm to institution models, including FTEC, and as such, received funding from the Association of State Public Health Nutritionists (ASPHN) to engage in policy strategic planning to sustain their movement.

To develop the Statewide Policy Strategic Plan, members of the Vermont Farm to Early Childhood Coalition met monthly between December 2022 and May 2023 to assess the current movement and develop strategies and activities to advance their work. This three-year plan aims to expand FTEC access across Vermont by creating a shared vision among the Vermont Farm to Early Childhood Coalition and partner organizations. This plan is intended to strengthen stakeholder knowledge and awareness, integrate FTEC into state systems, and pursue sustainable and equitable scaling of activities. The goals are accompanied by a series of strategies and activities designed to advance the FTEC movement in Vermont, while being sensitive and responsive to both state and federal policy actions likely to affect early childhood education and food systems.

Policy Goal 1: Strengthen stakeholder knowledge and awareness of the positive impacts of FTEC and the unique needs for successful statewide implementation.

- Conduct outreach to Vermont government agencies.
- Conduct outreach to Vermont early childhood and food system community partners.
- Conduct outreach to Vermont state legislature.
- Conduct outreach to governor's office and administration.
- Examine current messaging for FTEC.

Policy Goal 2: Identify and advance opportunities to integrate and align FTEC with state early childhood systems.

- Integrate FTEC in the STep Ahead Recognition System (STARS).
- Align/integrate FTEC with System for Program Access to Resources for Quality Supports (SPARQS).
- Identify existing data gaps on the needs of young children (aged 0-5) and their families and create infographics that share key findings.
- Align FTEC professional development (PD) across the credentialing levels and systems.
- Align current FTEC curriculum with the state's early learning standards.
- Align FTEC with the K-12 FTS system and network more intentionally to anticipate future policy opportunities that support FTEC.

Policy Goal 3: Identify, pursue, and leverage cross-sector resources to support equitable access and scaling of FTEC that reflect statewide and community-driven approaches.

- Identify and pursue funding opportunities to support FTEC implementation statewide.
- Support community-driven projects.
- Center equity in FTEC.



Introduction to Farm to Early Childhood

Farm to Early Childhood (FTEC) is a national movement to increase access to locally produced foods and hands-on gardening opportunities, and to incorporate nutrition, food, and agriculture education in early childhood programs. FTEC is designed to support the diversity of early childhood settings, from childcare centers and family childcare homes, to Head Start/Early Head Start and public and private school programs.

Incorporating elements of FTEC enhances the quality of educational experiences for young children, providing an important opportunity for family and community engagement, and supporting the life-long health and wellness of children, families, and caregivers. The model brings together a diverse group of stakeholders from the early childhood, health, and food systems to address systemic inequities—often related to race and income.

FTEC increases access to locally produced foods while increasing the quality of early childhood settings, which together supports children's cognitive, physical, and social-emotional development, improves community nutrition, and builds sustainable local food systems.

Examples of FTEC Activities in Early Childhood Programs



Local Food Sourcing: Purchase local foods (e.g., Vermont- grown fruits, veggies, dairy products, proteins, and whole grains) at farmers' markets, food hubs, grocery stores, or through a community supported agriculture (CSA) share. Local foods can be incorporated into meals, snacks, or taste-test activities in childcare programs.



Gardening Opportunities: Start as small as plant and seed studies inside of classrooms, to container and raised beds gardens, window box herbs, to full on-site gardens. This is an opportunity to connect children with their diverse culinary backgrounds while supporting an understanding of where food comes from.



Nutrition, Food, and Agriculture Education: Incorporate range of experiential-based learning activities, from field trips to farms, local farmers' markets and community gardens, to taking part in cooking activities and learning about health and nutrition.

Vermont applies the “3C” approach of FTEC by integrating activities in the Classroom, Cafeteria (or kitchen), and Community to support the initiative.

- **Classroom:** Bringing in learning about health, nutrition, food, and food systems at a crucial period when children are developing food preferences and health habits.
- **Cafeteria & Kitchen:** Serving nutritious and local foods in early childhood programs—from snacks and on-site meals, to taste tests and cooking projects—all help support young children's health and development.
- **Community:** Engaging with food system partners and early childhood programs strengthens the local economy and builds connected resilient communities.

Across the US, a number of state coalitions have formed to engage in the broader FTEC movement, and efforts to fund FTEC have emerged on the national and local levels. One of these funding sources is a cooperative agreement between the Centers

for Disease Control (CDC) and the Association of State Public Health Nutritionists (ASPHN): the Farm-to-ECE Implementation Grant (FIG). Since 2018, the FIG grant has supported 10 state Farm-to-ECE coalitions in implementing FTEC through mini-grants to ECE providers and farmers in their respective states. In its third year of implementation, FIG offered grantees “springboard opportunities” intended to sustain their Farm-to-ECE work beyond the duration of the grant. One of these springboard opportunities was policy strategic planning, and three states—Vermont, Michigan, and North Carolina—were chosen to engage in this process.

This Policy Strategic Plan will focus on Vermont and the three-year goals of their network. This statewide plan aims to create a shared vision to support coordination across the VT Farm to Early Childhood Coalition and its partner organizations to expand FTEC across the state. As interest in the field continues to grow, the Policy Strategic Plan is an opportunity for partners to advance financial and policy opportunities that integrate FTEC within the early childhood system in a way that best supports providers and practitioners.

Vermont Farm to Early Childhood Coalition

The Coalition was established with the aim of expanding FTEC opportunities to a greater number of Vermont children, families, and communities and embedding FTEC into state and local early childhood systems. In 2021, the Coalition was integrated into the previously existing Farm to School network as the Vermont Farm to School and Early Childhood Network. Efforts to align the work and priorities of both Farm to School and Farm to Early Childhood fall under the following shared goal of the Network:

By 2030, every educational community in Vermont connects classrooms, cafeterias, and communities with equitable access to integrated food system education, community-based learning, and 30% local food purchasing that promotes climate resilience and social justice.

Members of the Coalition work to support values related to *Education, Equity, Transparency, Relationships, and Collaboration*.

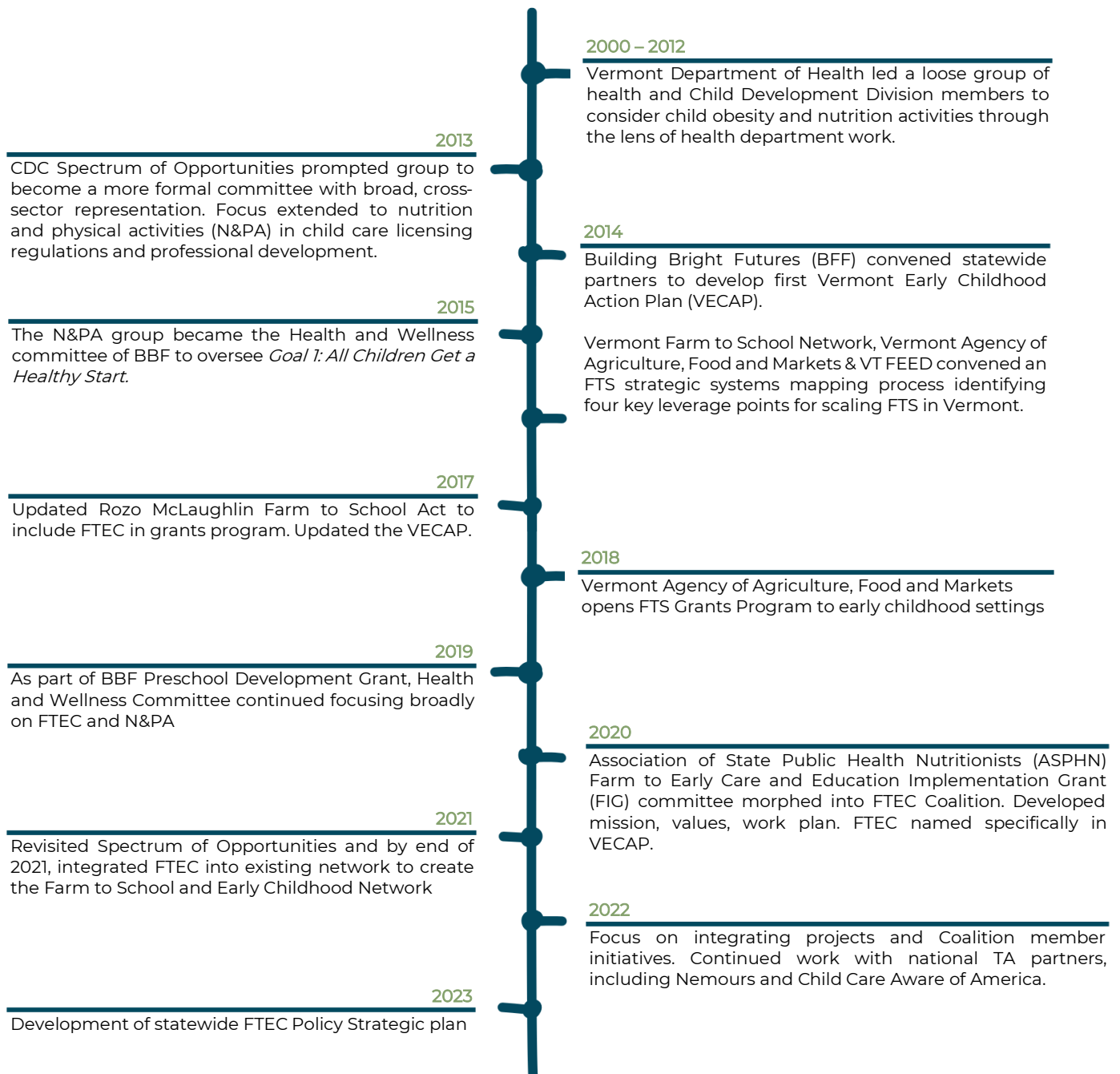
The Coalition has representation from various state agencies and division partners, as well as food system, early childhood, school, and community partner representatives:

- Barre Unified Union School District
- Building Bright Futures
- Food Connects
- Hunger Free Vermont
- Northeast Organic Farming Association
- Northshire Day School
- Northwestern Counseling & Support Services
- Shelburne Farms
- Sheldon Food Shelf
- Sheldon Methodist Church Food Shelf
- University of Vermont Extension
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
- Vermont Agency of Education—Child Nutrition Programs
- Vermont Agency of Human Services
 - Vermont Department for Children & Families—Child Development Division
 - Vermont Department of Health
 - Physical Activity & Nutrition
 - Women Infant Children Program
 - Worksite Wellness
 - Vermont Department of Mental Health
- Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance
- Vermont FEED (NOFA-VT & Shelburne Farms)
- Vermont Garden Network

Additional information about the Vermont Farm to Early Childhood Coalition is available at the following website: <https://vermontfarmtoschool.org/vt-farm-early-childhood/coalition>

History of Farm to Early Childhood in Vermont

The timeline below provides an overview of the FTEC movement in the state and key points of success for expanding FTEC and building coalitions.



Why a Policy Strategic Plan?

Policy touches everyone's lives, and it is especially impactful on the daily work of ECE providers. Early childhood providers must follow state licensing standards, expectations around quality, safety, and a myriad of other metrics. Some providers are also navigating federal subsidy reimbursement programs such as the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). Similarly, farmers and other stakeholders who work to maintain our food system are impacted by policies related to food safety, modernization, packaging, and even transportation and processing. Both groups of stakeholders are constantly thinking about another big outcome of policymaking: funding.

The purpose of this statewide FTEC Policy Strategic Plan is to create a shared three-year plan for coordination and alignment of FTEC initiatives, which help achieve the Vermont Farm to School and Early Childhood Network 2023 goal.¹ Integrated into the goal is a need to remain responsive to state and federal early childhood and food system policy and investment actions, which will promote collective impact through coordination with state agencies, community partners, and advocacy groups.

At present, there is momentum to support early childhood health, wellness, and development, along with improving nutrition security and building healthy food habits in children and communities. Positioning FTEC as a viable partner and market for food producers works to create high-quality early care and education experiences, supports local farms, and helps create thriving and resilient local economies.



¹ By 2030, every educational community in Vermont connects classrooms, cafeterias, and communities with equitable access to integrated food system education, community-based learning, and 30% local food purchasing that promotes climate resilience and social justice.

Methodology

Members of the Vermont FTEC Strategic Planning Core Group met monthly between December 2022 and May 2023 to identify the key goals, objectives, and activities for this three-year Policy Strategic Plan. The Core Group identified ongoing efforts across the state to advance FTEC and completed a crosswalk of current statewide early childhood plans, including the Vermont Farm to Plate Strategic Plan (2021-23)², the Child Care Development Block Grant plan (CCDBG) for Vermont (FY22-24)³, and the Vermont Early Childhood Action Plan.⁴ These collaborative monthly meetings resulted in the creation of three policy goals and the supporting matrixes of strategies and activities.

To ensure broad stakeholder feedback, draft sections of the strategic plan were shared with members of the Advisory Committee. The strategic plan was presented to the full Farm to Early Childhood Coalition on May 8th and June 12th for feedback. During each review period, feedback was incorporated with stakeholders, and any changes made due to feedback were shared out. Figure 1 provides an overview of the teams supporting the development of the strategic plan.

Figure 1: Members of Strategic Plan Core Group, Advisory Committee, and Reviewing Committee



² Vermont Farm to Plate. (2021). Vermont Agriculture & Food System Strategic Plan 2021-23.

https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/sites/default/files/2022-03/vermont_agriculture_and_food_system_strategic_plan_2021-2030.pdf

³ Vermont Department for Children and Families. (2022). Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan for Vermont (FY 2022-24). <https://outside.vermont.gov/dept/DCF/Shared%20Documents/CDD/Reports/CCDF-Plans/CCDF-Plan-2022-2024.pdf>

⁴ Building Bright Futures. (2020). Vermont Early Childhood Action Plan. <https://buildingbrightfutures.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/VECAP-Final.pdf>

Department of Mental Health, Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance, Vermont Garden Network

Reviewing Committee

Members of the *Core Group*, the *Advisory Committee*, plus Common Circle of VTFTSEC Network, BBF Leadership Team, BBF Action Plan Committees, BBF Regional Councils, Head Start Collaboration Office, FTSEC Grantees, Action Circles, Let's Grow Kids, private philanthropy organizations, legislators, parent child centers, Farm 2 Plate, farmers, regional FTS partners.



Introduction to Vermont's Farm to Early Childhood Policy Goals

The goals below capture a shared vision for the sustainability of FTEC across Vermont. The first step in the policymaking process is to get an idea of the policy agenda. As such, the first policy goal focuses on educating stakeholders about the impacts of FTEC to build a statewide network of champions. The second goal integrates FTEC approaches into statewide early childhood quality systems. The final goal ensures equity approaches are applied while working to implement FTEC statewide. The success of each of these is dependent on the continued coordination of local, regional, and statewide stakeholders to ensure a shared message of purpose and need for FTEC.

Integrated into the three policy goals is a commitment to center equity and community-driven work in every strategy and activity. Opportunities to engage a diverse range of partner and community voices will be critical to support policy efforts that equitably expand the access of FTEC.

North Star Goal

Farm to Early Childhood strategies are fully integrated into early childhood systems and programs as foundational approaches supporting high-quality early childhood education.

Nutrition access, security, and sovereignty are considered fundamental building blocks of healthy development and are universally supported components accessible to Vermont's early childhood programs.

Policy Goal 1: Strengthen stakeholder knowledge and awareness of the positive impacts of FTEC and the unique needs for successful statewide implementation.

Overview: Vermont's longstanding support for farm to institution models has provided fertile ground to support the FTEC movement. Early educators' interest in FTEC and collaboration with local partners and key state agencies have supported initial efforts to increase access to more early childhood programs. Targeted education to Vermont state agencies and early childhood and food systems community partners and policymakers will help increase awareness about FTEC, highlight the challenges associated with successful implementation, and support a growing network of champions across the state.

Team Lead	Strategies	Activities	Timeline
Governance Team: each member taking the lead for their agency	1. Conducting outreach to Vermont government agencies, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Agency of Education—Early Childhood & CACFP</i> • <i>Agency of Human Services—Child Development Division</i> • <i>Department of Mental Health</i> • <i>Department of Health</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Health Promotion and Disease Prevention</i> ◦ <i>Family and Child Health</i> • <i>Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets</i> 	1.1. Develop presentation materials, including slide decks, handouts, and briefing sheets that introduce FTEC, its benefits to young children, caregivers, and the community at large, and its role in advancing equity.	Summer/Fall 2023
		1.2. Schedule meetings with individual state agencies to share information and answer questions about FTEC.	Fall 2023
		1.3. Convene identified government agencies for a deep discussion concerning opportunities for alignment and co-engagement, especially around policy and funding alignment in support of equitable implementation access to advance FTEC across the state.	Fall 2023
Governance Team and Coalition members who have developed relationships with specific community partners	2. Conduct outreach to Vermont early childhood and food systems community partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Building Bright Futures—Regional Councils and BBF Committees</i> • <i>Vermont Early Childhood Alliance</i> • <i>Let's Grow Kids</i> • <i>CACFP Sponsors</i> • <i>F2Plate: Food Security Planning Project (trauma responsive)</i> • <i>VAAFM and NE-FTS Institute Coaches</i> • <i>VT FTS&EC Network</i> • <i>VTAEYC</i> 	2.1. Develop presentation materials, including slide decks, handouts, and briefing sheets that introduce FTEC, its benefits to young children, caregivers, and the community at large, and its role in advancing equity.	Summer/Fall 2023
		2.2. Schedule meetings with individual early childhood and food systems community partners/champions to share information and answer questions about FTEC.	Fall/Winter 2023-24
		2.3. Attend existing meetings and/or convene with individual early childhood and food systems community partners/champions to share information and answer questions about FTEC. When possible, engage in deeper discussions concerning opportunities for alignment and co-engagement, especially around policy and funding alignment in support of equitable implementation access to advance FTEC across the state.	Fall/Winter 2023-24

FTS&EC Campaign Team	3. Conducting outreach to Vermont state legislature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>House and Senate Education Committees</i> • <i>House and Senate Agriculture Committees (VAAFM grants program)</i> • <i>House Human Services (potentially)</i> • <i>Senate Health & Welfare (potentially)</i> 	3.1. Develop presentation materials, including slide decks, handouts, briefing sheets, and talking points that introduce FTEC, its benefits to young children, caregivers, and the community at large, and its role in advancing equity.	Summer/Fall 2023
		3.2. Schedule meetings with individual FTS&EC legislative champions to share information and answer questions about FTEC.	Fall 2023
		3.3. Attend local meet-and-greets and/or legislative committees as requested for a discussion concerning opportunities for alignment and co-engagement in advancing the FTEC movement.	Winter/Spring 2024
FTS&EC Campaign Team	4. Conducting outreach to governor's office & administration	4.1. Develop presentation materials, including slide decks, handouts, and briefing sheets that introduce FTEC, its benefits to young children, caregivers, and the community at large, and its role in advancing equity.	Spring/Summer 2023
		4.2. Schedule meetings with individual administrative officers to share information and answer questions about FTEC.	Late Summer 2023
		4.3. Convene the governor's office and members of the administration for a deep discussion concerning opportunities for alignment and co-engagement in advancing the FTEC movement.	Late Summer/Fall 2023
Cynthia, Keely SF Comms Team	5. Examining current messaging for FTEC	5.1. Evaluate the current message map to ensure FTEC talking points align with current systems efforts and messages still resonate for audiences.	Summer 2023
		5.2. Refine communication for stakeholders to reinforce FTEC as flexible integrated approaches in ECE (not as a separate prescribed program or "add on" to existing programming).	Summer/Fall 2023
		5.3. Articulate to stakeholders how FTEC elevates equitable nutrition access as a fundamental building block of early development.	Summer/Fall 2023
		5.4. Ensure all messaging actively calls out how FTEC centers equity and community-driven priorities.	Ongoing as projects develop

Policy Goal 2: Identify and advance opportunities to integrate and align FTEC with state early childhood systems.

Goal Overview: The complex network of state systems that oversee early childhood services in Vermont provides an opportunity to integrate and align FTEC across multiple levels. Making sure there is alignment not only encourages program participation, but also ensures resources, technical assistance, and coaches are available to support their engagement. At the state level, this alignment creates a deeper understanding of FTEC as an important approach that supports early childhood quality while fostering equity.

Team Lead	Strategies	Activities	Timeline
Cynthia, Amy B., Johanna V.	1. Integrate FTEC in the STep Ahead Recognition System (STARS).	1.1. Incorporate language in the updated QRIS guidance manual to define FTEC activities as a measure of quality and to help SPARQS coaches support providers in their implementation of FTEC approaches.	Summer 2023
		1.2. Offer FTEC resources for inclusion in the QRIS guidance manual.	Summer 2023
Cynthia, Amy B, Maggie R. SPARQS entity VT FEED	2. Align/integrate FTEC with SPARQS (System for Program Access to Resources for Quality Supports Program).	2.1. Ensure FTEC coaches meet SPARQS (and/or MATCH registry) competency and eligibility requirements.	Fall 2023
		2.2. Ensure FTEC coaches register within SPARQS/MATCH system.	Fall 2023
		2.3. Ensure continued training and CoPs for FTEC coaches.	Ongoing
FTS&EC Network Eval Action Team Sarah B. Amy M. Cynthia FTEC Coalition BBF Data & Eval Cmt.	3. Identify existing data gaps on the needs of young children (aged 0-5) and their families and create infographics that share out key findings.	3.1. Identify opportunities for data collection around the nutrition and health needs of young children aged 0-5 and their families.	Fall 2023
		3.2. Continue supporting the use of existing tools, including the statewide CACFP participation map and the Hunger Free Vermont 2022 Report, <i>Providing Meals in Early Childhood Settings</i> .	Summer 2023 ongoing
		3.3. Develop public-facing infographics related to young children's nutrition security, nutrition education, and food programs while highlighting success stories.	Fall 2024 into 2025
		3.4. Identify existing data gaps, including any emerging racial and socioeconomic disparities, and consider cross-sector data sets (e.g., WIC, Food Shelf, SNAP, Food as Medicine, etc.).	Fall 2023

Cynthia & FTEC TA Organizations VT FEED, VAAFM, FTS&EC Network	4. Align FTEC professional development (PD) across the credentialing levels and systems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Lights CCDIS Agency of Education ALiS SPARQS/MATCH 	4.1. Continue supporting the availability of FTEC training through Northern Lights at CCV professional development registry.	Ongoing
		4.2. Align FTEC professional development with the ECE educator credentials and licensure systems.	Ongoing and as systems are updated
		4.3. Build out FTEC coach capacity with regional experts throughout the state.	Summer 2023 Ongoing
FTEC Coalition Nutrition Access Action Team Sheila/Food Connects	5. Align current FTEC curriculum with the State's Early Learning Standards. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultivating Joy and Wonder Growing Minds Harvest of the Month Creative Curriculum for Infants/Toddlers and CC for Preschool Grow It Try It Like It Harvest for Healthy Kids 	5.1. Develop VELs and curriculum resource crosswalk documents.	January 2024 Ongoing
		5.2. Attune to VELs training and family engagement initiatives under the Preschool Development Grant (2023-27) to align/integrate relevant FTEC resources and training opportunities.	2024-27
FTS&EC Network Teams: ~ Ed. Value ~ Ease of Use ~ Local Purchasing Kayla	6. Align FTEC with the K-12 FTS system and network more intentionally to anticipate future policy opportunities that support FTEC.	6.1. Cultivate interagency relationships and partnerships.	Summer 2023 Ongoing
		6.2. Share updates about the FTEC Coalition with the VT FTSEC Network.	2023 Network Gathering
		6.3. Elevate FTEC needs in other FTS&EC Network action teams.	2023 Network Gathering
		6.4. Integrate FTEC needs/approaches with FTS&EC Network action team efforts.	2024 Ongoing
		6.5. Identify a shared set of core principles related to equity and community-driven work that connects the FTS and EC teams.	2023 Network Gathering

Policy Goal 3: Identify, pursue, and leverage cross-sector resources to support equitable access and scaling of FTEC that reflect statewide and community-driven approaches.

Goal Overview: Three key elements, (1) sustained funding, (2) community voice, and (3) a commitment to center equity in scaling, are essential and co-dependent as the Network works to leverage policy opportunities to scale up access and implementation of FTEC. There is a unique opportunity to build upon the momentum in K-12 legislation (i.e., Universal School Meals and the Local Purchasing Incentive) to secure funding and support for early childhood. The Network will deepen relationships with appropriate partners to leverage these and other funding opportunities. Building upon community-driven approaches and best practices in scaling FTEC will inform resource allocation efforts and ensure the Network makes decisions using an equity lens to sustain the FTEC movement.

Team Lead	Strategies	Activities	Timeline
FTEC Coalition FTS&EC Network State agencies	1. Identify and pursue funding opportunities to support FTEC implementation statewide. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDG—3-year Implementation Grant • VAAFM Grants • VDH—Family & Child Health, SPAN, SNAP-Ed • Child Care Development Fund and Child Care Financial Assistance Program • Explore opportunities for adapting the Local Purchasing Incentive from K-12 to include early childhood settings. • Explore the concept of Universal School Meals in early childhood settings. 	1.1. Identify funding opportunities.	Summer 2023 Ongoing
		1.2. Establish list of partners who could be engaged to share future funding resources when available/appropriate.	Summer 2023 Ongoing
		1.3. Promote equitable access to funding and other benefits from funding by promoting outreach, application, review, allocation, and reporting processes that are flexible and responsive to all group conditions.	Summer 2023 Ongoing
		1.4. Promote FTEC, and nutrition services in particular, as early childhood program cost components supported through the Child Care Development Fund and Child Care Financial Assistance Program.	2024–25
		1.5. Leverage legislative policy and investments within the K-12 system (USM & LPI) to create access points for early childhood programs.	2025–26
		1.6. FTEC Coalition acts as an advisory body for VAAFM Farm to School and Early Childhood Grants Programs to ensure the funding opportunities meet the needs of early childhood educators, and that the application process and selection criteria are equitable.	2023–26 Ongoing

FTEC Coalition State agencies FTS&EC Network	2. Support community-driven projects, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid cycle pilots (plan, do, study, act) • Projects responsive to immediate needs • Projects that apply and build equity in communities and according to community voice 	2.1. Pilot project for procurement in a diverse range of ECE settings	Summer 2023 Ongoing as resources allow
		2.2. Share and promote best practices and success stories from a diverse range of providers and educators.	Summer 2023 Ongoing as resources allow
		2.3. Solicit and incorporate requests and ideas for community-driven projects, pilot programs, and rapid-cycle learning endeavors.	Ongoing
		2.4. Support building the coach bench of community-based educators and community leaders to implement and champion FTEC.	2024 Ongoing
FTEC Governance Team State agencies FTS&EC Network	3. Center equity in FTEC.	3.1. Use community-level data to drive implementation/resource allocation decisions.	Summer 2023 Ongoing
		3.2. Support culturally sustaining and trauma-responsive updates to FTEC practices, curriculum, and resources.	2024 Ongoing
		3.3. Engage in initiatives that elevate and support women, LGBTQIA+, and people of the global majority who are farmers and producers.	2024 Ongoing
		3.4. Elevate food access and nutrition security messaging through all avenues available to reinforce the concept of “nutritious meals for all children wherever they are in their days.”	2024 Ongoing
		3.5. Support ongoing learning and integration of equity, inclusion, and belonging work among FTEC Coalition members.	Yearly at FTEC Coalition Meetings
		3.6. Advise and promote equitable access to funding and other benefits from funding and make processes more accessible: outreach, application, reviewing, implementation, and reporting phases.	2023–26

Assessment of Progress and Revisions

In recognition of the ever-changing policy landscape in Vermont, and in particular, discussions to revise the early childhood governance structure, it is essential that the Policy Strategic Plan is revisited and adjusted to meet the current moment in time. As such, following the end of each state legislative session, the Farm to Early Childhood Coalition will meet to assess progress made on each goal activity and revise the plan activities as needed.

Many of the activities in this strategic plan are broad, providing space for the Farm to Early Childhood Coalition to adjust course depending on, for example, changes to early childhood systems (e.g., redesign of STARS system), partners/organizations assigned to oversee work, the current priorities of the network, or any state or federal legislative actions that impact local community conditions. With the Coalition's current active and engaged membership, revisiting the plan will be a natural process.

The Coalition will present and discuss progress made and any revisions to the Policy Strategic Plan at the annual Farm to School and Early Childhood Network Gathering.

Conclusion & Acknowledgements

The Farm to Early Childhood Coalition believes that collective impact that centers equity and local community voice has the greatest chance of positively influencing policy and investment to meet the needs of Vermont's citizens. Nutrition access, security, and sovereignty are considered fundamental building blocks of healthy development and science tells us that starting early in children's lives to foster wellness and appetites for nutritious food promotes health and wellbeing for a lifetime. Farm to Early Childhood approaches support this access and learning and contribute to high-quality early educational services. The Coalition is committed to policy actions that increase equitable scaling and access to farm to early childhood across the state.

Thank you to the Core Group for your expertise and care in guiding the planning process:

- Khaya Ganguly
- Gina Clithero
- Keely Agan
- Amy Bolger
- Rebecca Webb
- Cynthia Greene

Appreciation to all who reviewed drafts, materials, timelines and provided valuable insights.

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