VERMONT COMMUNITY LOAN FUND

Invest in Vermont

Child Care Lending Program Assessment

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THE VERMONT COMMUNITY LOAN FUND

A private, nonprofit alternative lender, the Vermont Community Loan Fund (VCLF) provides loan capital to create opportunities that lead to healthy communities and financial stability for all Vermonters. A developer of capital-based approaches to the alleviation of poverty, the Loan Fund's mission is to put capital in the hands of Vermont entrepreneurs and community organizations that can't get it anywhere else, all to benefit the Vermonters who need it most. VCLF focuses on businesses and programs that help lower-income Vermonters access safe, affordable homes, quality jobs, child care and essential community services. The money VCLF lends comes from the community: individuals and families, corporations, foundations, faith-based groups and others who want their investments to match their values, earning them both financial and social returns.

VCLF has loaned almost $80 million over the course of 25 years, leveraging hundreds of millions more. On December 31st, 2012, VCLF's outstanding financing of $23.9 million and 265 loans represented 2,012 jobs created or preserved, 1,187 affordable homes, quality care for 2,069 children and essential services for 51,381 Vermonters. Since our inception, VCLF has created or preserved 3,500 jobs, 3,200 affordable homes, 2,600 child care slots and provided financing to community-based organizations serving hundreds of thousands of Vermonters through 760 distinct loans.

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

Since the inception of its Child Care Lending Program in 2000, the Vermont Community Loan Fund (VCLF) has made loans to 99 child care providers, reaching every county in Vermont except Grand Isle. In keeping with their social mission of "… increasing the capacity, accessibility, and quality of child care by financing the improvement of home and center-based facilities," VCLF has loaned close to seven million dollars, and leveraged three million more, to improve access to quality child care with a focus on low-income families and communities.

In the fall of 2012, a study was undertaken to measure the impact of VCLF's investments. Among others findings, the study found that VCLF's loans have contributed to an overall increase of quality child care available to low- and mixed-income families in communities around the state, have increased wages and added jobs.

DATA AND QUALITY INDICATORS

Based on established research on program quality and child and family outcomes in the field of early care and education, and on current knowledge of Vermonters' specific child care needs (e.g. access to quality infant and toddler care), VCLF identified indicators to measure program quality, child and family outcomes, impact on the workforce and sustainable business practices.

KEY FINDINGS

Findings from this study validate VCLF's lending practices and strategies designed to strengthen the child care business sector. On all comparable measures, VCLF borrowers rank higher than the statewide provider population.

VCLF serves more low-income families:
44.8% of VCLF total enrollment are low-income compared to under 30% statewide.

VCLF creates greater access to quality infant and toddler care:
85.6% of infants in programs run by VCLF borrowers are enrolled in high quality child care (defined by the state as programs with 3, 4, or 5 STARS) compared with 39% of infants enrolled in high quality care statewide.

VCLF creates higher wages:
The US Bureau of Labor cites Vermont's mean hourly child care worker wage at $10.63 in 2011. Average hourly wages in programs run by VCLF borrowers were $12.28.

VCLF increases program quality:
Of the VCLF cohort, 66% of registered homes and 70% of centers are enrolled in STARS. Statewide, 9% of registered homes and 54% of centers are enrolled.

VCLF increases food program participation:
55% of home programs and 62.9% of centers run by VCLF borrowers are enrolled in the USDA food program. The current state participation rate for homes is 54% and 23% for centers.

SUMMARY

The following report provides a detailed look at the documented child care needs addressed by VCLF's lending principles and practices, the purpose and methodology of this study, related research, findings, and a look at the future of the Child Care Lending Program.

Introduction

In the fall of 2012, the Vermont Community Loan Fund (VCLF) contracted for an assessment of its Child Care Lending Program to measure the impact of more than a decade of investments to improve access to quality child care with a focus on low-income families and communities.

Launched in 2000 with loans to a small group of carefully screened child care providers, VCLF has invested close to seven million dollars, leveraging an additional three million dollars in outside project funding, to help providers improve and expand existing facilities, purchase property and equipment, provide operating capital and restructure debt. Working with a group who typically lack business acumen and are disinclined to incur debt has required intensive education and mentoring, individual risk assessment and business skill building.

A vital component of the Child Care Lending Program has been VCLF's organizational commitment to help borrowers understand the importance of quality in child care settings and VCLF's support to achieve higher overall levels of program quality. Examples of this commitment to quality can be seen in their borrowers' rates of participation in STARS and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and increased staff wages and benefits, all of which ultimately lead to greater stability and sustainability for the child, family, business, staff and community.

VCLF's pledge to promote high quality, affordable and accessible child care aligns with their mission to "…transform Vermonters' lives by providing equitable access to capital for affordable housing, community facilities, child care providers and small businesses," and with their core values to promote social and economic justice and strong communities.

More than a decade of work with center and home providers has resulted in significant benefits, both targeted and contiguous, for these small business owners, the children and families they serve, the staff they employ and the communities they live in.

To evaluate the impact these investments have had on VCLF's target population of child care providers, research was conducted with 39 active borrowers. This report summarizes established research on which VCLF's investment priorities are based, presents the research project methodology with the selected quality indicators, highlights the findings, and proposes possible next steps.

Background

As part of its mission, VCLF states that it is "…dedicated to increasing the capacity, accessibility, and quality of child care by financing the improvement of home- and center-based facilities." To accomplish this, "VCLF provides loans at sliding scale interest rates for child care providers who cannot obtain financing at reasonable rates and terms for:

- Improvements to meet Vermont Core Standards or other professional standards.
- State regulatory requirements, such as fire safety.
- Improvements to meet ADA accessibility requirements.
- Renovations or additions to improve child care programs or increased capacity.
- Purchase of real estate, equipment and materials to improve quality of service."[1]

To be eligible for loans, programs must operate under the Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations that govern licensed centers and registered and licensed homes.[2]

In addition, to address high priority child care needs, e.g. the lack of availability of quality infant and toddler programs for low-income children, VCLF established targeted outreach and incentives for programs willing to meet these needs.

To augment their commitment to quality and more closely align with the State of Vermont's quality standards, VCLF requires programs to enroll in STARS (STep Ahead Recognition System), Vermont's quality rating system for child care, preschool, and afterschool programs. Programs that participate in STARS receive a higher reimbursement from the child care financial assistance fee scale.[3] Participation in STARS benefits VCLF's borrowers who enroll a high percentage (44.8%) of children from low-income families who are eligible for financial assistance from the state.

Recognizing the crucial importance and relationship of good nutrition to a child's ability to learn, VCLF also encourages its loan recipients to enroll in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a federal program administered by the Vermont Agency of Education that provides reimbursement for nutritious meals and snacks to public or private nonprofit child care centers. Meals served to children are reimbursed at rates based upon income levels of the children in care.[4]

All three of these VCLF commitments to quality - participation in the state's child care regulatory system, STARS and the federal food program - are supported by research identifying these as quality indicators that make a positive difference in child outcomes. VCLF supports these opportunities for providers through program eligibility requirements and by helping providers navigate the processes to gain the resulting benefits.

It is important to note VCLF's history of leadership and sustained investment in Vermont's evolving early care and education system. In 2001, VCLF was selected to partner with the Department for Children and Families to create and administer the Building Bright Futures Facilities Fund, appropriated by the Vermont Legislature to increase the supply and improve the quality of child care to Vermont families. Funded from sales of a special-issue Building Bright Futures license plate and an appropriation from the Legislature, VCLF has awarded over one million dollars in grants for the purchase or renovation of facilities to over 100 child care programs across Vermont, and leveraged an additional 39 million dollars from other sources.

VCLF has also assisted new and existing child care businesses with predevelopment costs, such as architectural and engineering plans, feasibility studies and other "soft costs" for which funding cannot be obtained elsewhere. Funds awarded to date total $92,000.

VCLF's organizational investment in operating capital to effectively manage the Child Care Lending Program totals over 1.3 million since 2002. The infrastructure needed to sustain the program includes significant staff time to provide the support child care businesses need to be successful.

VCLF also partners with the Permanent Fund for the Well-Being of Vermont Children, to administer the Vermont Birth to Three Small Grants Program. These grants benefit children ages birth to 3 years who are served in home-based child care with grants of up to $575 annually for age appropriate durable equipment. Grants awarded to date have totaled $112,052 to 231 providers.

Project Purpose & Methodology

The primary research question explored by this study is: **What impact has VCLF's investments in child care had over the past 12 years on low-income families, low-income communities and on the quality of child care in Vermont?**

Initial discussions included identification of five VCLF impact areas:

1. Impact on child health and development
2. Impact on the workforce
3. Impact on sustainable business practices
4. Impact on program quality
5. Impact on family and community

SELECTION OF INDICATORS

A set of indicators was selected to measure the impact of VCLF's investments in the five impact areas and to establish a baseline for future assessments. Consideration of indicators - or data sets - was also influenced by the likelihood of comparison with state and national indicators. As will be noted elsewhere, a number of the baseline indicators collected by VCLF were not available from state databases. However, they remain important indicators for VCLF to collect and measure.

A thorough study of VCLF's records and historical documents related to the Child Care Lending Program was conducted, including annual Impact Surveys and initial credit reports which contain a comprehensive set of information on each borrower: the borrower's financial needs, capacity, qualifications and individual situation. It was determined that consistent data sets could not be obtained from VCLF's existing reports.

SURVEY CONDUCTED

In order to collect accurate, reliable and up-to-date data, a survey was designed (see Appendix A) and sent out electronically to 35 current borrowers and four past borrowers, a total of 39 providers. After several weeks, follow up emails were made which did not result in the hoped for response rate. Follow-up phone calls were then made to each provider who had not responded. With the exception of one program that had closed and two unresponsive, 36 providers completed the survey.

Survey results were logged onto a Google Docs spreadsheet which provided the central repository for all data. From there, totals were compiled and initial findings noted.

Throughout the planning process for the assessment, including VCLF's selection of data sets, there was ongoing communication and consultation with Child Development Division staff members responsible for the Bright Futures Information System (BFIS), and with Kathleen Paterson, who is developing the Early Childhood Data Reporting System for Building Bright Futures.

While there was unanimity among these stakeholders about the importance of VCLF's selected data sets as essential baseline data for a state early childhood reporting system, the state was unable to provide the same baseline data to compare VCLF's provider sub-set with the state's regulated child care providers. Consequently, state data on enrollment, numbers of low-income children and the age groups served, staff wages and staff turnover, all considered to be key elements of an early childhood reporting system, were not available for comparison to VCLF's provider set. It is hoped that BFIS will be able to collect many of these same data sets from the state regulated providers in the future.

Nonetheless, VCLF's data and findings are an essential tool for organizational assessment and planning, can serve as a model for replication by the state and Building Bright Futures, and are a valuable asset to benchmark progress and the targeted effectiveness of VCLF"s investments.

Baseline Survey Data

The findings reported are based on a total of 36 borrowers: 27 centers, 9 homes.

TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 1212

234 (19.3%): B–2s (infants)
206 (16.9%): 2–3s (toddlers)
568 (46.8%): 3–5s (preschoolers)
201 (16.5%): School age
543 (44.8%) receive state financial assistance
44 (3%) are Protective Services children

STAFF

287 staff are employed: 87 PT, 200 FT.
There was a loss of approximately 27 positions due to closings and downsizings, and an increase of 85 new positions created as a result of VCLF funding, for a net gain of 58. Percent change in job growth: (229-287)/287 X 100% = 35%.

STAFF TURNOVER

Of 25 programs (24 centers and one registered home) reporting a total of 247 PT and FT staff, turnover for the past year was given as 27 positions or 10.9%.

WAGES

Average wages for staff employed in centers, including directors, were $13.28/hr.
Average wages of directors (7 reporting) were $18.88.
Average staff wages without directors were $12.28.
27 of 36 programs reported an increase in wages, including five home programs.

FOOD PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Of nine home programs, 5 are enrolled with one in the application process (55%).
Of 27 centers, 17 are enrolled (62.9%).

STARS PARTICIPATION

Six homes (66%) and 19 centers (70%) are enrolled in STARS. 17 reported an increase in STARS level attained since initial enrollment.

BENEFITS

With the exception of two home programs with no paid staff other than the director, all 34 programs offered employee benefits: from a minimum of discounted child care and paid holidays to full health insurance, dental, retirement and life insurance.

Findings

National and international research evidence on the determinants and effects of quality in child care lend critical support and guidance to VCLF's commitment to promoting high quality, affordable and accessible child care. The findings and research summarized here have been carefully explored to assist VCLF in targeting investments and organizational support to the Child Care Lending Program.

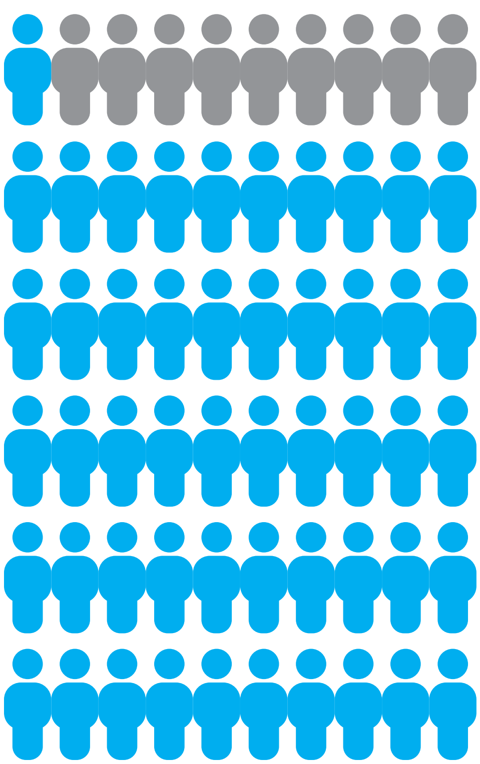
Selected findings and related research are presented under the headings of the five VCLF impact areas:

1. Impact on child health and development
2. Impact on family and community
3. Impact on the workforce
4. Impact on sustainable business practices
5. Impact on program quality

IMPACT ON CHILD HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT
IMPACT ON FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

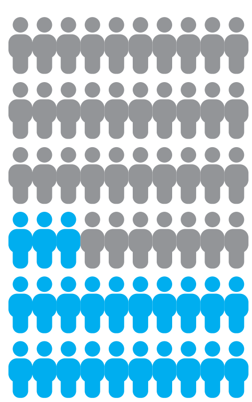
Access to Infant and Toddler Care

Access to high quality child care is a challenge for most working parents, but especially for low-income families. Quality, affordable infant and toddler care is the most difficult and expensive child care to find. To address that need, VCLF has worked with and encouraged providers to offer infant and toddler care, with the result that 36.2% of total enrollment is infants and toddlers.



85.6% of infants/toddlers in VCLF borrowers' care are in high-quality programs.

Licensing requirements for quality ratios are rigorous: for infants (six weeks to 23 months) the staff:child ratio is 1:4. For toddlers (24 to 35 months), the staff:child ratio is 1:5. This requires significant staff training in infant and toddler development and care, and an increased financial outlay for the additional staff needed.



***State average:* 39%**

Although the state does not collect actual enrollment figures for the different age categories (infant, toddler and preschool) in regulated programs, they do collect enrollment figures by age categories for children enrolled in STARS programs.

Comparing the number of children enrolled in VCLF borrowers' high quality STARS programs (high quality is defined by the state as programs with 3 to 5 STARS) with the state's numbers shows 553 infants (39%) of the state's total number of infants in high quality programs compared with 161 infants (85.6%) of VCLF borrowers' total number of infants in high quality programs.

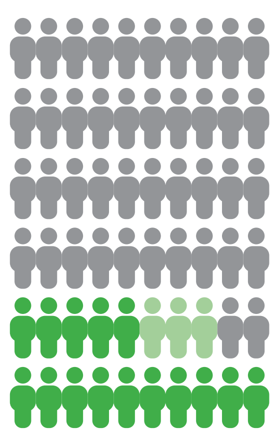
VCLF's focus on quality infant and toddler care is based in part on the documented high access need for this age cohort and also on the evidence on early brain development and its critical importance for this age group. In the 1990's, brain development research showed that "brain development occurs during the first five years of life, and the complexity, number and strength of neural pathways is a function of the quality and range of early experiences in interaction with genetic predisposition. Depending on the nature of these experiences children will be provided with 'sturdy or fragile' foundations for future development. "[5] Although the brain makes new connections in later stages, the speed and growth of learning at this early stage of development is not repeated at any other period. Being in a quality program during this critical time can have lifelong benefits.

Impact of Quality on Children from Low-Income Families

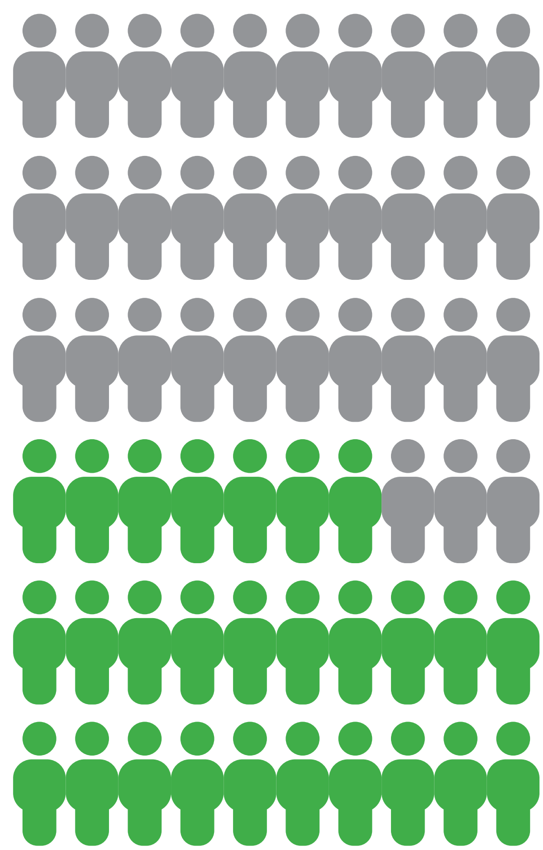
Research shows that enrollment in quality child care programs benefits children from low-income families. Nearly 45% of VCLF borrowers' total enrollment is low-income children (as documented by receipt of state financial assistance), as compared to Child Development Division estimates that between 25 and 30% of the total regulated care market are families who receive financial assistance.[6] VCLF borrowers offer significant benefits to children from disadvantaged families through access to quality care and daily nutritious snacks and meals.

Programs such as Head Start are designed to close the gap in readiness to learn between poor children and their more economically advantaged peers. Systematic reviews of the scientific literature demonstrate effectiveness of these programs in preventing developmental delay, as assessed by reductions in retention in grade and placement in special education.

A number of well known, long-term studies (e.g. the Perry Preschool Project, Head Start, and the Abecedarian Project) give strong evidence about the results of high quality child care as an intervention strat-



***State average:* 25%–30%**



45% of children in VCLF borrowers' care come from low-income families.

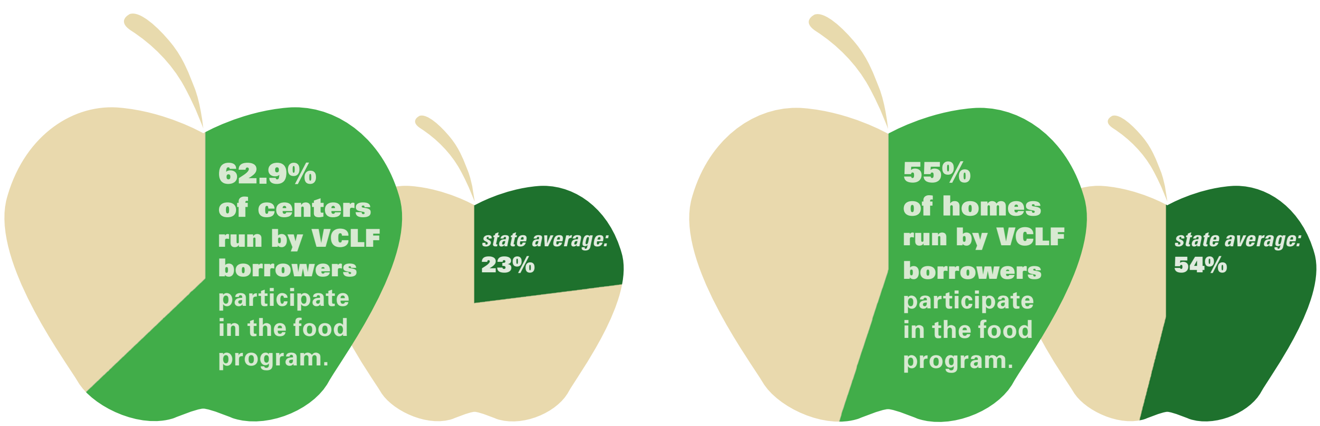
egy for disadvantaged populations, and have found " …a consistent pattern of results, with evidence of cost-effectiveness that continues to increase over the years and far outweighs the original cost of the programs. …there is other evidence that quality care may be more important for identifiable subgroups of children who are at risk for poor outcomes because of unfavorable family environments."[7]

The EPPE (Effective Provision of Preschool Education) study of the effects of preschool education in the United Kingdom found that disadvantaged children in particular benefited significantly from good quality preschool experiences, especially if groups contained a mixture of children from different social backgrounds (Sammons et al., 2003a, 2003b).[8] In all of the VCLF programs, children from low-income families are integrated with children from higher income families.

Importance of Good Nutrition

There is no question that adequate nutrition is closely linked to a child's overall health and development. It has also been shown to be a determinant of successful school performance, summed up by this statement from Child Trends: "insufficient diets can jeopardize children's development, threaten their readiness for school, and have lifelong effects on adult productivity. Adequate consumption of important nutrients is critical for normal growth and development and learning. Young children who do not get enough vitamins and nutrients may be negatively impacted in terms of how well and how much they can learn.[9]

Understanding the critical importance of good nutrition to child and family well being, VCLF has made this a priority. Of nine home programs, 5 (55%) are enrolled in the USDA Food Program and one is in the application process. Of 27 centers, 17 (62.9%) are enrolled giving the VCLF borrowers an overall rate of 58.9%. The state rate for centers is 23% and for homes, 54%, making the overall state



provider participation rate just under 40%.[10]

Enrolled providers receive reimbursement for serving nutritious meals and snacks that meet USDA standards. This is especially important for children from low-income or "food insecure" families who are reported to have higher rates of hospitalization, iron deficiency anemia, and other chronic health conditions. In very young children (under 3 years old), studies have associated food insecurity with higher rates of behavioral problems. There have been reports of increased psychosocial deficits, as well as higher rates of anxiety and depression. Food insecure children also experience smaller gains in math and reading achievement between kindergarten and third grade, and (for 6-11 year olds) have a higher likelihood of repeating a grade.[11]

IMPACT ON THE WORKFORCE
IMPACT ON SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

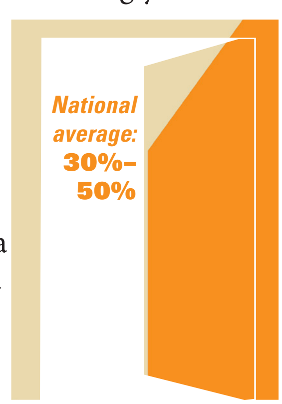
Staff Employed, Staff Turnover, Wages and Benefits

A primary goal for VCLF is to build stronger communities through sustainable job creation. When providers were surveyed in October and November, 2012, a total number of 287 staff — 87 PT and 200 FT — were employed including the program directors. Over 90% of the staff are employed in centers. Of the nine registered homes, seven are staffed by only one FT worker and a total of eight PT staff are employed.

85 new positions created by VCLF financing, for a net gain of 58 jobs.

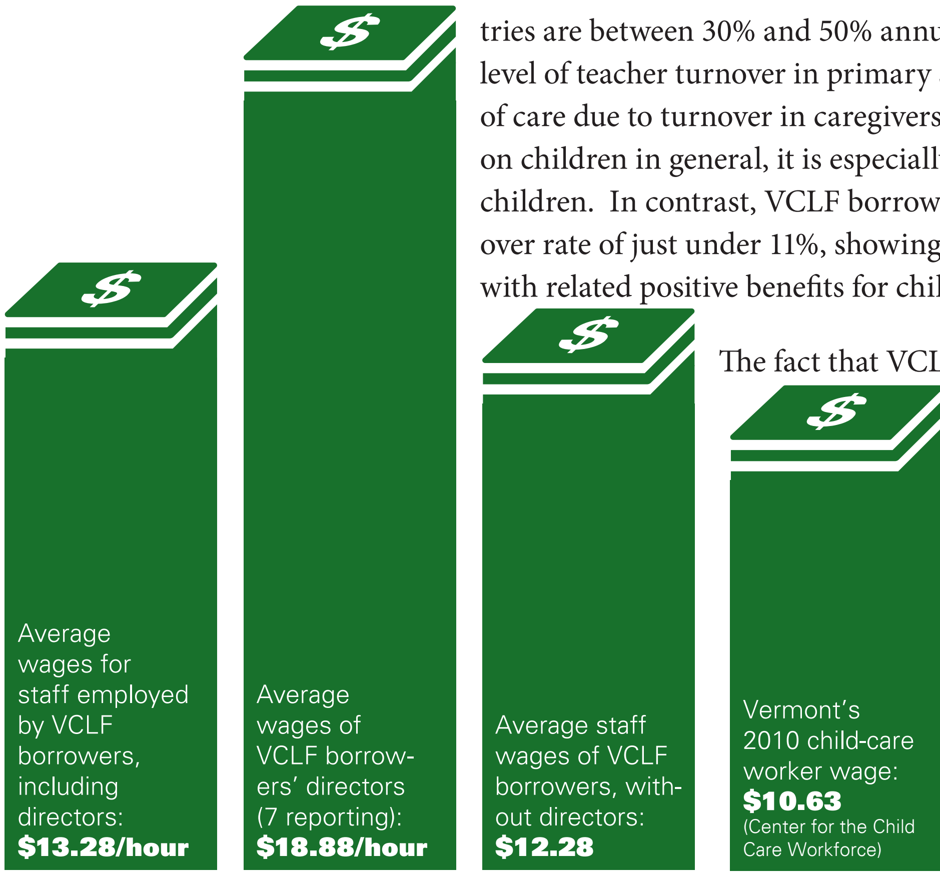
Due to several downsizings, there was a loss of approximately 27 positions. On the upside, there was an increase of 85 new positions created as a result of VCLF funding for program expansion. This represents a net gain of 58 new positions, a remarkable 35% increase in job growth.[12]

"Stability in care has been found to be strongly and consistently positively related to child outcomes."[13] Because the child care workforce is notoriously poorly paid, staff turnover is high and constant as a result. Research consistently points to the need for a stable, competent and caring workforce as a key predictor of positive child outcomes, along with staff



qualifications and training. The relationship of wages to hiring and retaining quality staff is a direct one.

Estimates of annual staff turnover in the U.S. and in other countries are between 30% and 50% annually,[14] about three times the level of teacher turnover in primary schools.[15] While disruption of care due to turnover in caregivers has a major negative impact on children in general, it is especially negative for the youngest children. In contrast, VCLF borrowers record an annual turnover rate of just under 11%, showing a high rate of staff stability with related positive benefits for children in care.



Accurate reports on wages from most registered child care homes were unavailable.

The fact that VCLF borrowers' average wages are significantly higher than the average Vermont child care wages is likely to be a primary determinant of the very low staff turnover rate. The US Bureau of Labor cites the national mean hourly wage for child care workers in Vermont to be $9.73 an hour in 2008.[16] The Center for the Child Care Workforce ranks hourly wages by state, with Vermont at 12th on their 2010 Wage Data Fact Sheet with an average hourly wage of $10.63.[17]

Average wages for staff employed by VCLF borrowers, including directors, were $13.28/hr, and average staff wages without directors were $12.28/hr, $1.65 more an hour than the average state hourly wage.

Although accurate reports on wages from most registered child care homes were unavailable, 27 of 36 programs reported an increase in wages, including five home programs. The increases occurred after receiving VCLF funding.

Goelman, Doherty, Lero et al. (2000) found that while an observed staff member's level of early childhood care and education-specific education was the strongest combined direct/indirect predictor of quality, the strongest direct predictor was the observed staff member's wages.[18]

As noted in the baseline data section, ection, with the exception of two home programs with no paid staff other than the director, the remaining 34 programs all offered a range of employee benefits: from a minimum of discounted child care and paid holidays to full health insurance, dental, retirement and life insurance. A list of the benefits offered by each individual program is available.

IMPACT ON PROGRAM QUALITY

Child:Adult Ratios

Some of the most consistently noted determinants of quality in child care concern what are commonly categorized as structural; elements typically subject to government regulation. These include child:adult ratios, group sizes and caregiver qualifications, all of which are regulated in Vermont by the state's Child Care Licensing Regulations. All of the VCLF borrowers must adhere to these regulations.

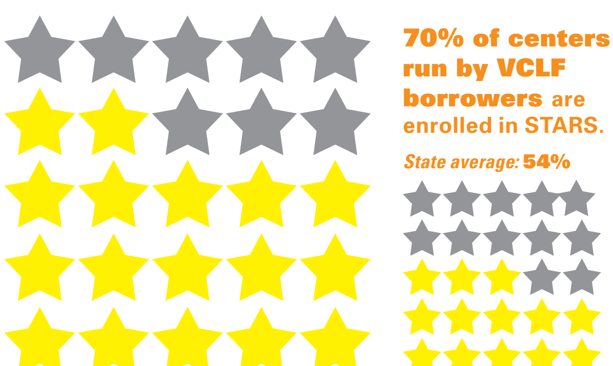
Lower child:adult ratios are associated with higher process quality. Process quality elements look at what actually happens in a child care program; interactions between staff and children, among children, engagement with classroom materials, etc. By requiring providers to maintain compliance with Vermont's Child Care Licensing Regulations, VCLF assures appropriate staff/child ratios, which have been found to be closely linked with higher global quality scores, higher process quality and better child outcomes.[19] There is also evidence that staff/child ratios are a stronger predictor of quality for infants and toddlers than for older children,"[20] a measure noted earlier in VCLF borrowers' commitment to meeting quality infant and toddler care standards.

STARS Participation

Vermont's quality rating system, STARS (STep Ahead Recognition System) — or an accepted national accreditation — is accepted as a valid measure of program quality. As noted earlier, VCLF requires programs to enroll in STARS as a condition of loan eligibility. Programs that participate in STARS receive a higher reimbursement on the child care financial assistance fee scale,[21] which is an important benefit to VCLF borrowers who enroll a high percentage (44.8%) of children from low-income families. Families who use a provider who is accredited or has 3, 4, or 5 STARS may also be eligible for a low-income child and dependent care tax credit.

The STARS represent levels of achievement related to:

- Compliance with state regulations;
- Staff qualifications and training;
- Interaction with and overall support of children, families, and communities;
- How thoroughly providers assess what they do and plan for improvements; and



• The strength of the program's operating policies and business practices.[22]

Taken together these five areas comprise a comprehensive profile of the program's quality.

Enrollment in STARS is also required for child care programs to qualify for Vermont's publicly-funded prekindergarten education for three-to five-year-old children. Child care programs must either be NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) accredited or hold 4 STARS with two points in each arena.[23] This opportunity to partner with school districts provides access to higher reimbursements, potential to participate in professional development offered by schools and public recognition for high quality providers. At this time there is no formal count on the number of VCLF borrowers partnering with school districts in the state's ADM program.

Vermont's definition of " high quality" means programs with a 3, 4, or 5 STARS rating. Statewide there are 672 licensed centers, of which 367 (54%) are quality. Of the 917 registered homes, 88 (9%) are quality.[24]

These numbers compare to the VCLF provider group in which six homes (66%) and 19 centers (70%) are enrolled in STARS. Of the VCLF centers enrolled, 15 (78.9%) are considered "high quality" and of the six registered homes, four (66%) are high quality. Overall, 17 programs reported an increase in STARS level attained since initial enrollment.

Summary

Although findings have been categorized into the five impact areas, there is considerable overlap and interconnectedness among them; for example, the impact of staff employment and wages on the overall health and stability of the community is evident. Low staff turnover affects not just the well-being of the children in care, but has a positive ripple effect on the family, the individual child care business and the larger community. Taken together, the selected indicators provide a framework that can be used to measure the quality and strength of the early care system in the communities where VCLF borrowers are located. The aggregate findings of the VCLF cohort offer insight and a valuable perspective on the overall health and potential of Vermont's child care system statewide.

VCLF's decision to undertake this study is evidence of their strong commitment to expanding what we know about the condition of child care in Vermont. VCLF will consider organizational strategies that build on and improve the assessment's positive findings. For example, an ongoing evaluation to track these indicators would create a trend line, highlighting areas for improvement or the re-targeting of investments toward selected outcomes. VCLF may choose to add indicators to the assessment that supplement the findings; for example, collecting information about staff credentials.

VCLF will share this report with their partners and collaborate with them to advance the collection of useful data for Vermont's early care and education field. The Bright Futures Information System (BFIS) and the Early Childhood Data Reporting System (ECDRS) represent major data collection efforts by the state and by Building Bright Futures, key partners who are working to establish an accessible and comprehensive data system to track results and drive continued improvement. VCLF and their partners recognize the need for a reliable data system that can be used to support sound policy choices and decision-making.

As one of VCLF's four cornerstone programs, the Child Care Lending Program is achieving the intent of the mission to "…transform Vermonters' lives by providing equitable access to capital for affordable housing, community facilities, child care providers and small businesses." Working with child care providers over the past 12 years has resulted in measurable benefits with likely positive long term effects on families, staff, small businesses and the greater community. The Child Care Lending Program can be held up as a model for meeting VCLF's core values to promote social and economic justice and strong communities.

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23 Vermont Department of Education, Act 62 requirements.

24 Vermont Department for Children and Families, Child Development Division,October, 2012, enrollment figures.

Report laid out and designed by Dana Dwinell-Yardley.

Icons courtesy of the Noun Project: child and person designed by Jens Tärning; apple designed by Dusan Popovic; door designed by Anas Ramadan.

Appendix A: Survey

VERMONT COMMUNITY LOAN FOUNDATION
CHILD CARE PROJECT

PROVIDER SURVEY
OCTOBER, 2012

Dear Provider,

By filling out this survey you will help us find out if VCLF's loans to child care programs have contributed to overall program quality and better environments for children.

If you have filled out the VCLF Impact Surveys, some of this information will seem redundant. The reason we're asking again is to obtain accurate and up-to-date data.

Your response will help us compare VCLF loan recipients with Vermont's overall provider population.

Please use the form below to answer the questions, then SAVE and FORWARD it to me - K.C. Whiteley – at kcwhiteley@yahoo.com by October 30th.

We greatly appreciate your help with this project. If it would be easier to give us the information by phone, we would be happy to give you a call. Just let me know by emailing back to this address.

Thank you for your valuable time and for your service to Vermont's young children and their families.

Survey Questions:

1) What is your current total enrollment? ________
   How many are Infants (birth to 2)? ________
   Toddlers (2 to 3)? ________
   Pre-schoolers (3 to 5)? ________
   School-age (5+)? ________

2) How many children receive financial assistance (subsidy)? _________
   How many Protective Services children are enrolled? _________

3) How many part-time (less than 35 hrs/wk) staff do you employ? _________
   How many full-time (35 hrs/wk or more) staff? _________
   (Be sure to include yourself)

4) How many additional or fewer people work for you now compared to when you first received financing from VCLF?
   Additional _________
   Fewer __________

5) Do you participate in the USDA Food Program?
YES ________
NO _________

6) Are you enrolled in the STARS program? NO _________ YES ________

How many STARS did you have when you first received financing from VCLF? _____

How many STARS do you have now? ________

7) What are the hourly wages you pay to staff?
Director _________
Lead Teacher _________
Assistant Teacher _________
Others _________

8) Have wages increased _________ or decreased? _________from when you received VCLF financing?

9) What is your staff turnover annually? _________ (*Example: I have 6 employees and typically have to replace 1 employee per year.*)

Has that increased _________ decreased _________ or stayed the same ________ from when you received VCLF funding?

10) Do you offer benefits?
Health Insurance ______
Paid holiday/time off ______
Discounted child care ______
Other ______

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY AND RETURNING IT