



New Hampshire's 2020-2023 Preschool Development Grant

In 2020, New Hampshire (NH) received a renewal Preschool Development Grant (PDG) from the Administration for Children and Families valued at \$27 million to strengthen the state's early childhood care and education system to better address the needs of vulnerable young children and their families. NH PDG was a collaboration between the [University of New Hampshire](#) (UNH), NH's [Department of Health and Human Services](#) (DHHS), [Department of Education](#) (NHED), and the [Council for Thriving Children](#). This one-page brief presents an overview of the **leadership and organization of the grant**, as well as a high-level summary of the **key activity areas** between 2020 and 2023. Additionally, the briefs that follow provide a summary of the NH PDG-funded activities in three focus areas: **Maximizing Family Knowledge, Choice, and Engagement**; **Supporting NH's Early Childhood Workforce**; and **Enhancing NH's Early Childhood Governance and Data Systems**.

NH PDG Leadership Team

Leadership from each agency collaborated and met on a regular basis to direct grant allocations and identify priority initiatives.



UNH also served as the grantee organization, managing:

- **Contracts with local, state, and national partner organizations** to support NH PDG initiatives
- **Subgrants to community and regional organizations** to increase regional and local early childhood system capacity and cross-sector coordination

NH PDG Key Activity Areas



Conducted comprehensive, statewide **needs assessments**

focusing on NH's early childhood workforce capacity and training needs and families' (in particular, families from vulnerable populations) experiences with and access to resources for supporting their young children's healthy development.



Supported NH's Strategic Plan for Early Childhood by funding staff positions and

contractors to identify measures of success for the [2020-2022 Strategic Plan](#), as well as developing action plans for implementing the priority initiatives of the [2023-2025 Strategic Plan](#).



Expanded statewide resources and services for families with young

children through developing open-source, universal [resources and supports for family engagement](#) and providing critical infrastructure support for NH's [Family Resource Centers](#).



Shared best practices and supports for the early childhood workforce by

launching multiple [Play-Based Learning](#) coaching initiatives, providing staff support to the [Granite Steps for Quality](#) system, and expanding access to [Pyramid Model](#) coaching and supports.



Implemented and expanded direct programs and services for young

children and families through funding initiatives to communities and regional partnerships. Examples of projects funded by NH PDG include Pyramid Model expansions, home visiting programs, and public awareness campaigns.



Enhanced NH's early childhood governance and data systems through

funding staff positions and contractors to launch a new Regional Early Childhood System, contributing to data integration efforts, and facilitating the Council for Thriving Children.



Maximizing Family Knowledge, Choice, and Engagement


NH PDG sought to improve family knowledge, choice, and engagement through the creation of resources and infrastructure. This brief presents **two highlighted initiatives** NH PDG funded in support of this goal, the **key successes** of each initiative, **future opportunities**, and **relevant findings from the evaluation of the grant**.


Resources for Authentic Family Engagement

NH PDG partnered with the Parent Information Center/ NH Family Voices (PIC/NHFV) to encourage authentic, meaningful family voice, engagement, and representation at all levels of the early childhood system.

 **Developed open-source, universal resources and supports for family engagement**, such as [interactive tools](#) to facilitate systematic family engagement, [roadmaps](#) for bringing families into decision-making processes, and a [webinar series](#) to support effective family engagement practices.

 **Collaborated on strategies and opportunities** for authentic family engagement in NH with the Alliance of Regional Early Childhood Coalitions (RECC Alliance).

 **Introduced resources and provided technical assistance and support to NH's Family Resource Centers (FRCs)** focused on systematic, evidence-based approaches to family engagement and incorporating family voice into decision-making processes. This work was a collaboration with New Hampshire Children's Trust (NHCT).

 **Provided training and support to the Family and Community Advisors**, a chartered body of parents, membership entity representatives, providers, advocates, and other stakeholder groups. The Family and Community Advisors forms one of the four quadrants of NH's early childhood governance structure alongside the DHHS and NHED Early Childhood Integration Teams and the Early Childhood Scientific Advisory Panel.



PIC/NHFV will **continue to lead the Family and Community Advisors** to advance efforts to incorporate family voice and perspectives into decision-making processes and early childhood program planning.



Stakeholders reported the family engagement resources and technical assistance supported by NH PDG **changed the family outreach practices of NH's FRCs**.



Stakeholders reported the family engagement practices of Regional Leads were **positively influenced by the family engagement resources and technical assistance**.



"[PIC/NHFV's and NHCT's support helped to] dispel the myth that FRCs are only for a certain kind of person or family...they are using strategies designed to engage all kinds of families to make them aware of the important services and programs they provide." — Stakeholder



Family Resource Center (FRC) Infrastructure Enhancement

FRCs are hubs of local support for families with young children that provide an array of programs and services specific to the needs of their communities. NH PDG partnered with NHCT to facilitate infrastructure enhancements for NH's 16 FRCs.

☀️ **Strengthened FRCs** by providing subgrants to support internal capacity building and community-specific initiatives, as well as facilitating trainings for FRC staff.

☀️ **Assisted FRCs in pursuing FRC of Quality (FRC-Q) designation**, both for the first time and for redesignation, through group training sessions and individual technical assistance.

☀️ **Enhanced FRC data systems and communications** through building and maintaining the Family Support Data System, which monitors family engagement and service data. NHCT also provided tailored communications support and a common platform for FRCs to manage social media.



NHCT will continue to provide **infrastructure support related to data systems, communications, and FRC-Q designation** to all 16 of NH's FRCs.

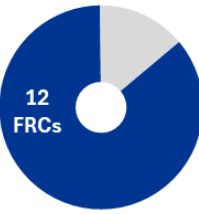
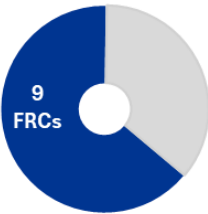


The majority of FRCs used subgrant funds for **capacity building or infrastructure** and for **creating or expanding programs**.

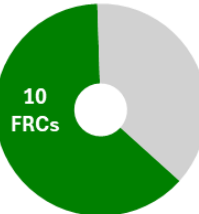
Capacity Building or Infrastructure

New or Expanded Programs

Year 1 (2020)
n = 14



Year 2 (2021)
n = 16

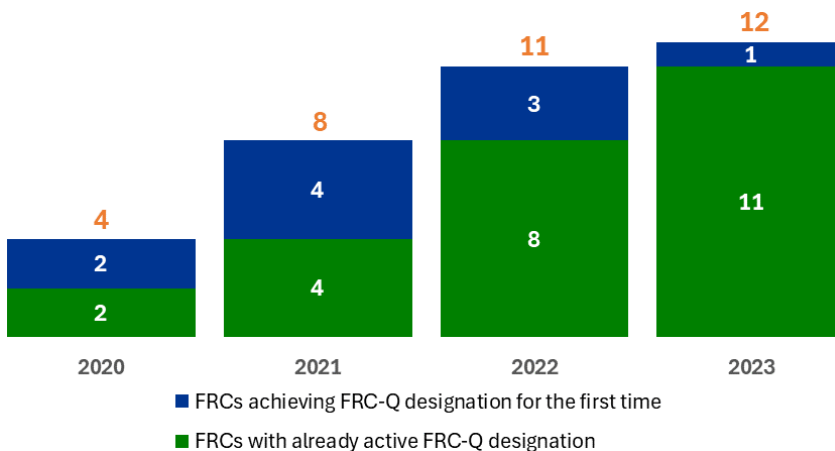


Examples of funded activities include:

- Staff training and professional development
- Data system/ technology upgrades
- Preschool programming
- Parent education classes
- Kinship Community closet
- Dads' groups
- Positive family connections group
- Play groups
- Developmental screening



The **total number of FRCs with the Quality designation tripled** from 2020 to 2023.



FRC-Q, as designated by NH's Wellness and Primary Prevention Council, denotes a documented level of service quality and family support approaches that meets the [NH FRC of Quality Operational Standards](#).



Supporting New Hampshire's Early Childhood Workforce

NH PDG made substantial contributions to statewide efforts to improve the quality of early care and education programs by offering early childhood educators coaching, training and other supports. This brief presents **two highlighted initiatives** NH PDG funded in support of this goal, the **key successes** of each initiative, **future opportunities**, and **relevant findings from the evaluation of the grant**.

Play-Based Learning

NH PDG funded coaching and professional development to support the successful implementation of play-based learning best practices.

★ **Funded the Early Childhood Initiative**, a broad-based body of work led by the NH PDG Early Learning Coaching Team to promote best practices in play-based learning, create and disseminate resources to educators in the early childhood care and education field, provide individual coaching and professional development to teachers on effective play-based strategies, and host region-level opportunities for providers to collaborate.

★ **Trained kindergarten teachers and early childhood providers** across the state to implement play-based learning practices, reaching one-third of all NH school districts and multiple cohorts of infant and toddler teachers.



UNH and the Early Learning Coaching Team will **continue to support programs and schools across the state to incorporate play-based learning strategies** into classroom practices.



Teachers receiving play-based training and coaching **reported positive experiences**.

Students in classrooms that received play-based training and coaching:

- **Were more likely to be involved in learning activities in the classroom.**
- **Talked more and used more manipulatives during learning activities.**

NH PDG Early Learning Coaching in NH Schools





Quality Improvement in Early Childhood Programs

NH PDG collaborated with DHHS on multiple efforts across the state to support quality improvement in early childhood programs.

★ Expanded access to and enhanced supports for the evidence-based **Pyramid Model** through partnership with the Pyramid Model Consortium, which funded and maintained a Master Cadre of trainers and coaches and launched 14 new Pyramid Model implementation sites.

★ Contributed to the development and launch of **Granite Steps for Quality (GSQ)**, the state's Quality Recognition and Improvement System for early childhood programs comprising multiple pathways for programs to document quality improvement, including Pyramid Model and Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Pathways.

★ Supported ERS Pathway programs transitioning to the GSQ by partnering with Southern New Hampshire Services and ACROSS NH to conduct ERS assessments in early care and education as well as afterschool programs.

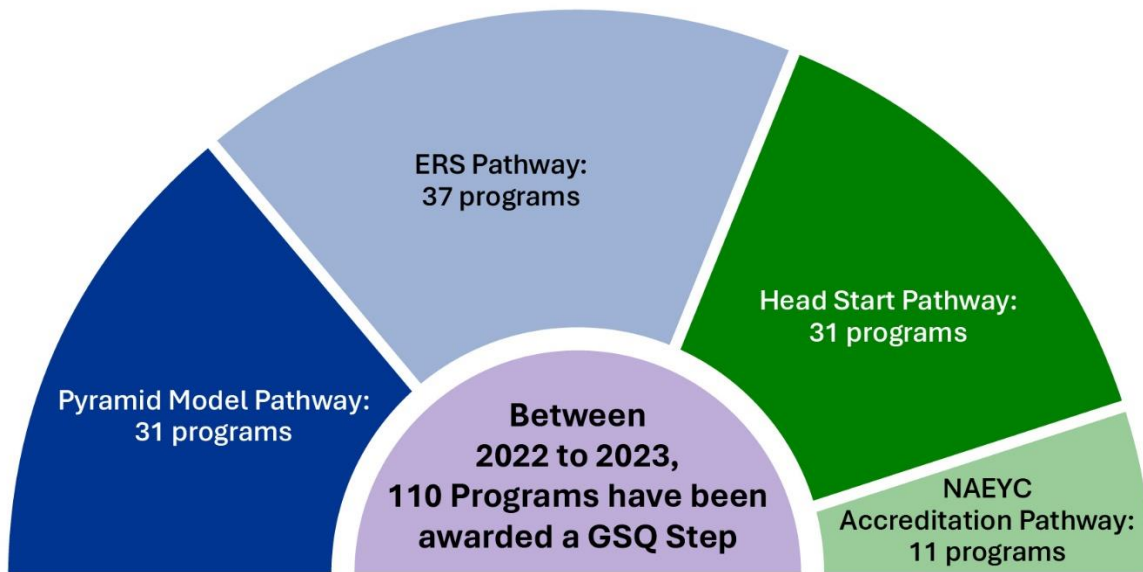
★ Supported early childhood mental health practitioners and family child care providers through subgrants for early childhood service coordination efforts and program quality improvements.



DHHS will **maintain and continue enhancing the supports embedded within the GSQ** through the GSQ Capacity Building Project led by Keene State College's Behavioral Health Improvement Institute and the Pyramid Model Consortium.



With critical NH PDG support, **multiple pathways for programs to assess and improve quality** were established. In addition, the new GSQ system also provides financial incentives for participation and/or continuous program improvement.









Enhancing New Hampshire's Early Childhood Governance and Data Systems

NH PDG sought to improve the overall quality of early childhood programs and services through data-driven decision-making and increased coordination among financing mechanisms and governance. This brief presents **three highlighted initiatives** that NH PDG funded in support of this goal, the **key successes** of each initiative, and **future opportunities**.

Early Childhood Data System Coordination & Integration

NH PDG invested in data system enhancements to integrate program-level data and encourage data-driven decision-making across programs and organizations serving children and families.


<p> Funded a Council for Thriving Children Business Analyst who supported the development of NH's Early Childhood Integrated Data System and a visual plan for integrating 38 programs and 24 data systems within DHHS' and NHED's inventory of funded programs.</p>	<p> Empowered Family Resource Centers to employ data-driven decision-making through the development of the NH Children's Trust's Family Support Data System, which monitors families' reported needs and access to services and programs.</p>	<p> Established policies to align the Early Childhood Integrated Data System efforts with an existing data platform and guide integration for early childhood programs within DHHS.</p>	<p> Supported development of several internal analytic data dashboards, including the Comprehensive Family Support Services and Department of Children, Youth, and Families Outcomes Dashboard.</p>
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 DHHS will continue to **use the enhanced data governance structures and dashboards** and **explore new and expanded programs to integrate into the Early Childhood Integrated Data System** to encourage continued and increased data-driven decision-making within the department.


NH's Early Childhood Governance Structure


NH PDG-funded staff positions fostered coordination and collaboration across state agencies.

Council for Thriving Children Director

-  Facilitated meetings and initiatives of the **Council for Thriving Children**, which fulfills the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law 110-134.
- Contributed to updating of the state's **Strategic Plan for Early Childhood** by engaging stakeholders across the [governance system](#) and early childhood sector.
 - Served on other relevant advisory bodies, including the Child Care Advisory Council and the Wellness and Primary Prevention Council.

Support for DHHS and NHED Integration Efforts

-  Department Affiliates and Coordinator staff positions supported Early Childhood Integration Teams to **improve coordination** and **communication** within and across DHHS and NHED.
- Contributed to **development of common definitions** for early childhood system terms.
 - Extended **DHHS-funded Community Health Worker training** on interpersonal communication to early childhood agency staff.
 - Supported **NHED's Leaning into Literacy Initiative** with Lexia (LETRS training).

 The **Council Director will continue in their role** through at least December 2024 and the **NHED and DHHS Early Childhood Integration Teams continue to operate**, with support from permanent DHHS and NHED staff.



Statewide System of Regional Early Childhood Partnerships

NH PDG sought to improve early childhood system capacity and coordination across the state through two sub-grant initiatives to directly fund local and regional early childhood organizations.

\$3 Million
awarded over 2020-2021 to
14 NH PDG Community Grantees

More than \$4.5 Million
awarded over 2021-2023 to
7 Regional Partnership Grantees
(see map below)

Capacity-Building Grants
funded infrastructure for local early childhood cross-sector collaboration and service alignment.

Implementation & Expansion Grants
funded 12 local programs to address areas of need identified for each community.

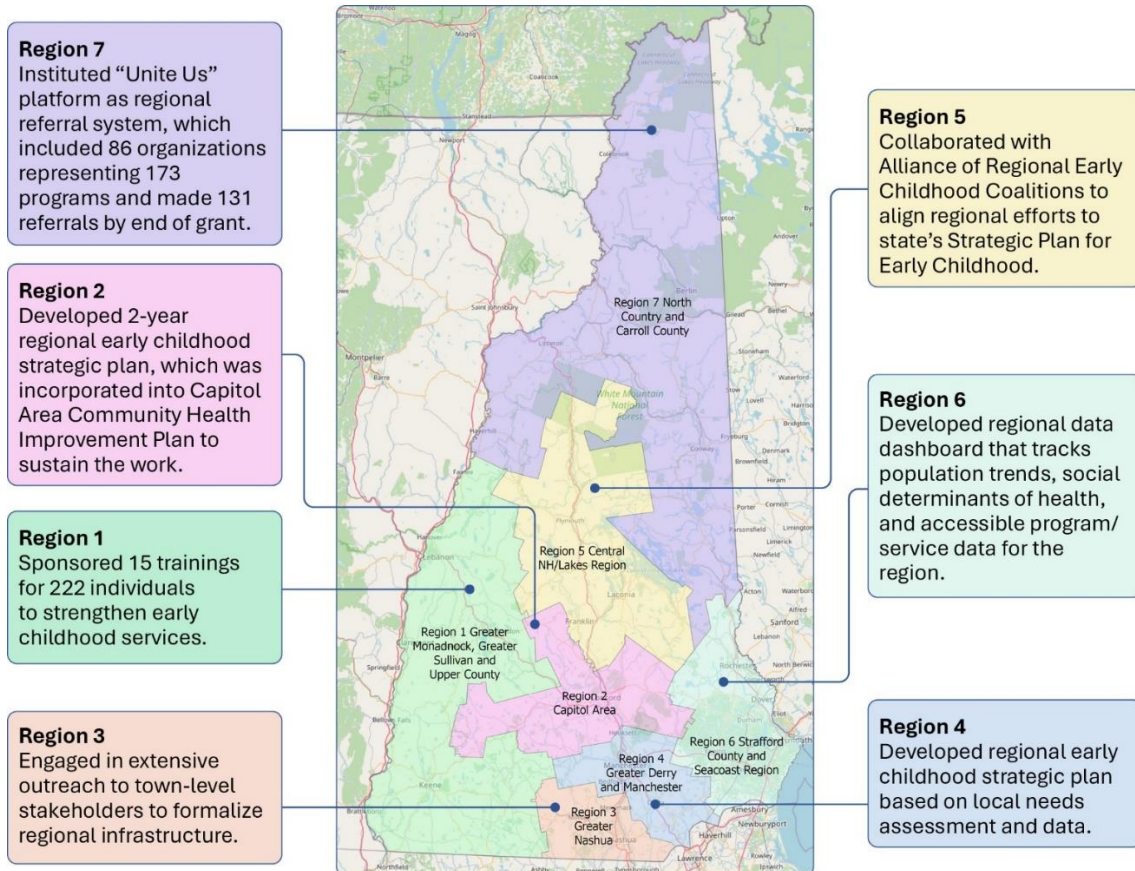
Established Regional Early Childhood System and funded regions to enhance early childhood-family support collaborations and build infrastructure.

Project-Specific Grants
funded 18 programs to address areas of need identified for each region.



While NH PDG funded the Regional Partnership Grants through June 2023, **DHHS issued follow-up funding in July 2023 for each region to continue capacity-building and coordination efforts** and funded **NH Children's Trust to serve as a facilitating organization** for the regional system.

Regional Partnership Grants Highlighted Accomplishments



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