

Providers' and Parents' Awareness of Policy Changes to Vermont's Child Care Financial Assistance Program

Patti Banghart, Catherine Schaefer, Catherine Richards, and Sarah Daily

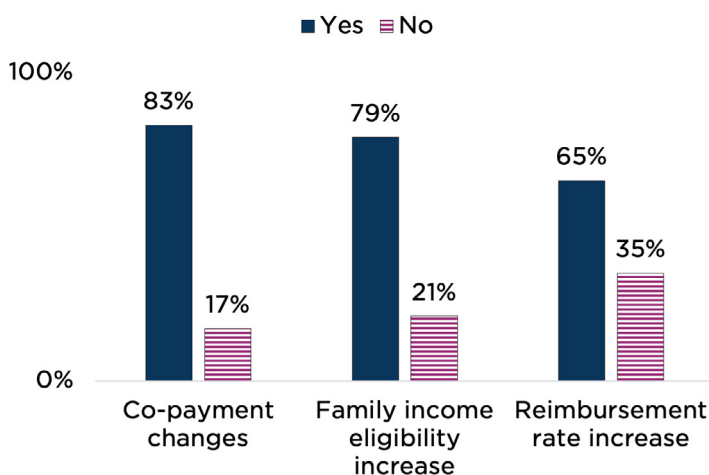
In 2021, Vermont enacted several changes to its Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP), which is administered by the Vermont Child Development Division (CDD), Department for Children and Families. These changes included:

- **Increased family income eligibility** to families earning 350 percent of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL)
- **Waived family copayments** for families earning 150 percent of the FPL or less and **reduced family copayments** for families earning from 150 percent FPL to 350 percent FPL—this allows families to pay a single copayment based on their income and the type of care chosen for their youngest child in subsidized care (referred to as a family share payment)
- **Increased provider reimbursement rates** by 20 percent to the 50th percentile of the 2019 market rate survey (MRS)¹ and then increased to the 75th percentile of the 2019 MRS in 2022

To better understand child care providers' and parents' awareness of these policy changes, which were implemented in July 2022, Child Trends surveyed licensed center-based and family child care providers and parents in Vermont who had and had not participated in CCFAP in March-April 2023—eight months following the implementation of the new policies. Providers were asked about their awareness of all three policy changes, while parents were asked about their awareness of changes to the co-payment policies. We also asked providers and parents who were aware of the changes how they had learned of them.

Most providers were aware of the 2021 CCFAP policy changes.

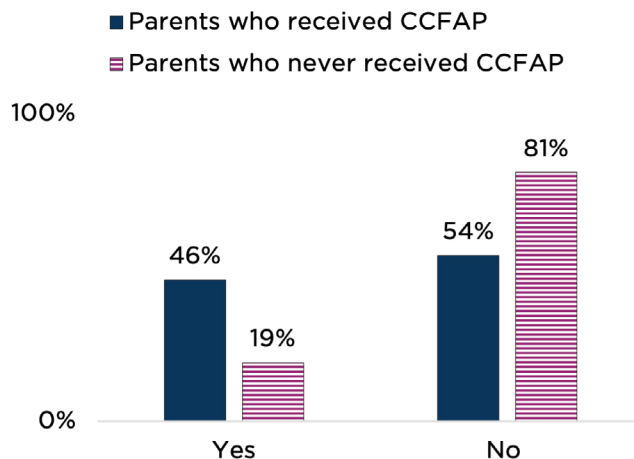
Figure 1. Child care providers' awareness of the CCFAP policy changes (n=299)



Source: Child Trends survey of licensed child care providers in Vermont.

Most parents, including over half of parents who received CCFAP,² were not aware of the new family share copayment policy.

Figure 2. Parents' awareness of the CCFAP co-payment policy changes (n=760)



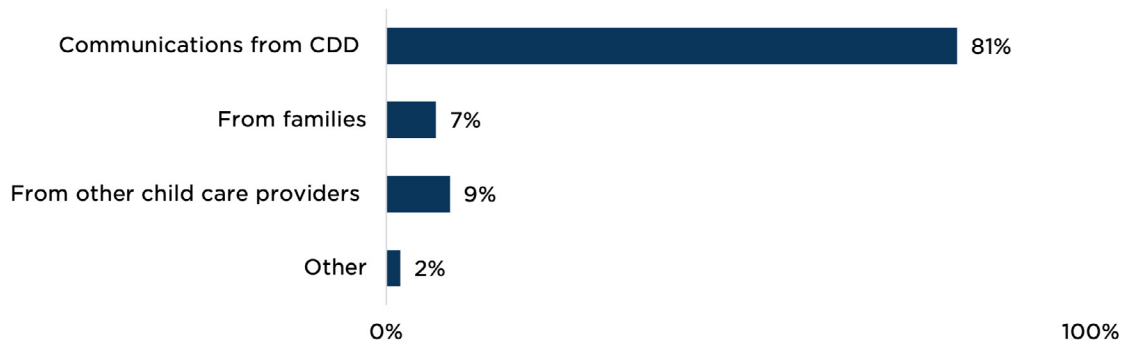
Source: Child Trends survey of parents in Vermont

¹ Vermont General Assembly, 2021. [Bill Status H.171 \(Act 45\) \(vermont.gov\)](#)

² Parents who received CCFAP included parents currently receiving CCFAP and parents who received CCFAP previously.

Most providers learned about the policy changes from communications (e.g., emails, letters, social media) from the Child Development Division (CDD).

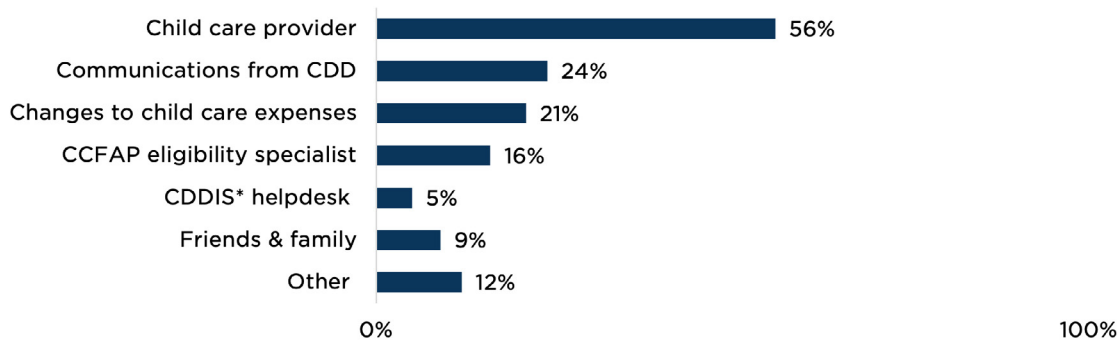
Figure 3. How child care providers learned about the new policies (n=244)



Source: Child Trends survey of parents in Vermont

Of families that knew about the family share payment policy change, most learned about the change from their child care provider.

Figure 4. How parents learned about the family share payment policy (n=353)



* Child Development Division Information System

Source: Child Trends survey of parents in Vermont

Conclusion

The CCFAP policy changes enacted in 2021 aim to increase access to high-quality child care by expanding families' eligibility for child care subsidies, reducing the cost of child care for families who receive a subsidy, and encouraging providers to care for children receiving subsidies by raising reimbursement rates to help providers offer care at a cost that is accessible to families who need it. CDD can facilitate these goals by making sure that families and providers are aware of policy shifts. The survey results indicate that, while providers were generally aware of the policy changes through communications from CDD, families were less aware. Families may benefit from CDD enhancing outreach efforts about policy changes, particularly by partnering with providers to share policy updates with families.

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