


2021-2022

ANNUAL REPORT



River Valley Child Development Services





**Mission Statement:
To provide quality services and support to children, families,
and the early childhood community.**

Message from the Executive Director

Fred Rogers said, "Anyone who does anything to help a child in his life is a hero to me."

Over the past year, River Valley Child Development Services (RVCDS) has continued to help children, families, and early childhood providers—both directly and indirectly. Throughout the global health crisis, the need for quality early childhood services and supports has become more critical than ever and employees at RVCDS continue to rise to the occasion.



I have seen first-hand:

- Case managers whose caseloads have doubled over the course of the pandemic to ensure essential workers have access to childcare
- Staff spending countless consecutive hours to ensure COVID-relief funds are awarded to providers who need them
- Supervisors and Directors assuming duties of the staff they supervise when vacancies arise
- Employees step out of their comfort zone and learn new virtual technology in order to successfully do their job
- Employees volunteer to stay over their scheduled shift or work late to ensure children are cared for
- Employees mask up, vaccinate, and continue providing services virtually, in homes, at centers

Nonprofit organizations are often known for fostering and promoting a spirit of service. RVCDS is one of these. Without questions, RVCDS employees are heroes among us.

This report not only summarizes RVCDS' programmatic and fiscal achievements for FY 21-22, it demonstrates our commitment to providing quality services and support to children, families, and the early childhood community.

I am honored and humbled to lead RVCDS endeavors through these historical times. I have always valued how RVCDS employees rise to meet challenges and explore opportunities. This past year, that dedication has been taken to new heights as employees adapted to the continued challenges of a global pandemic but also to new leadership. Through everything, employees have continued delivering uninterrupted services for the populations we serve at a time when they have needed us the most.

We look forward to advancing the agency's mission, believing the best is yet to come!

Candice D. Mullins

Candice D. Mullins, MA
Executive Director, River Valley Child Development Services

Programs Overview

Family Child Care Food Program (FCCFP)

- Children of participating family childcare providers are fed nutritious, USDA regulated meals that help ensure their proper growth and development.
- Families of children enrolled in the program are assured that their children are receiving quality, well-balanced meals. With proper nutrition, their child is less likely to experience illness or fatigue and more likely to develop at a normal physical and intellectual pace.
- Early childhood professionals participating in the FCCFP have access to educational and financial resources, which allows these providers to improve the quality of childcare available in the community.

Resource and Referrals (R&R's) - Link, Connect, and Choices

- Manage the subsidy programs
- Link parents with child care options, promoting the availability of quality childcare services in the area and information on how to evaluate quality child care
- Provide consumer information
- Provide training, technical assistance, and resources to childcare providers
- Inform families of other resources in their community and maintain collaborative partnerships with community resources

West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources (WVECTCR)

- WVECTCR is the agency's largest program— a statewide program designed to provide professional development opportunities for the early care and education community.
- Through an extensive network of information, training and technical assistance, resources, and collaboration, WVECTCR strives to improve the quality of early education services for young children and their families
- WVECTCR projects include: ACDS, Camp Gizmo, Celebrating Connections, Child Health Care Educators, Early Care Share WV, Interagency Coordinating Council, Nurse Health Consultants, and WV STARS.

Programs Overview (continued)

School Age Connection (SAC)

- RVCDS School Age Connection programs aim to provide families with high quality care for their school aged children through positive adult interactions, engaging activities, and new experiences.
- SAC programs were located in the following:
 1. SAC Summer—2021 5th Avenue West
 2. SAC—All Day Release—2021 5th Avenue West
 3. SAC—Ona Elementary
 4. SAC - Nichols Elementary (merged with Ona Elementary 4/11/2022).

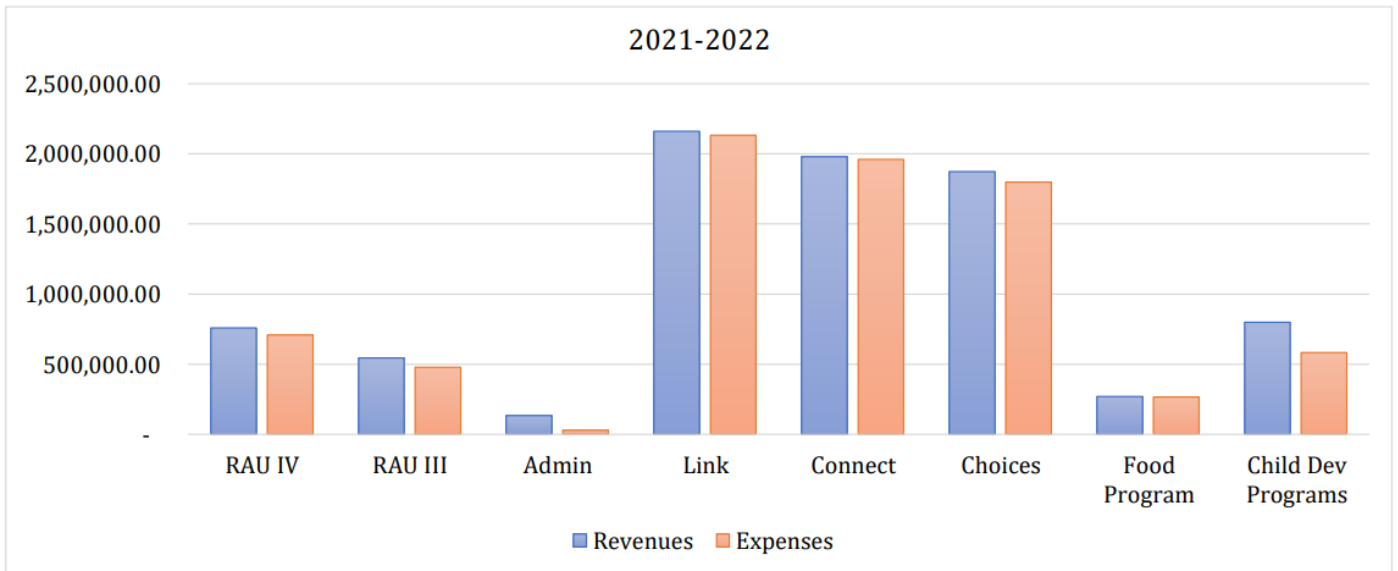
River Valley CARES (RV CARES)

- Located at 2021 5th Avenue West, the mission of RV CARES is to provide high quality and comprehensive services to children exposed to substance use disorder and their families in order to promote healthy brain and body development through positive and nurturing relationships.
- RV CARES is committed to:
 1. Safe, nurturing, and inclusive learning environments.
 2. High standards of professionalism and practice.
 3. Connecting families to resources, support, and opportunities.

Regional Administrative Units (RAU's)

- Serve as the point of entry for families into the West Virginia Birth to Three (WVBTT) program
- WVBTT is a system of services and supports for children ages birth to three who have a delay in their development or who may be at risk for a delay.
- Staff at the RAU's: take referrals, complete family assessments, link families to services, facilitate eligibility/IFSP meetings, and help with transitioning children to services beyond the age of three.
- RAU's are responsible for data entry, facilitating family involvement activities, Child Find activities, and training practitioners.

Fiscal Information



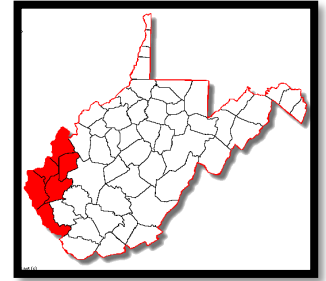
Agency Summary

Revenues	Expenses
32,498,864.77	31,910,980.87



Family Child Care Food Program

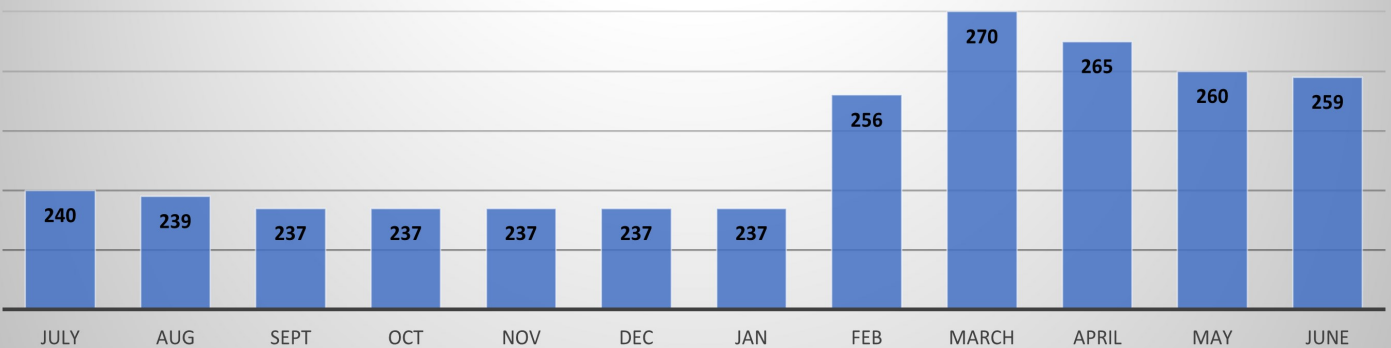
a program of RVCDs since 1976



Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- The USDA gave a one-time COVID-19 Emergency Grant to providers and to the FCCFP.
- The number of registered childcare providers declined during the year making it difficult to recruit new providers for the FCCFP.
- Childcare providers receiving additional COVID funds created a challenge in recruiting and retaining providers on FCCFP, as the need for meal reimbursement was not as critical.
- Childcare providers receiving subsidy reimbursement for enrollment as opposed to attendance created a challenge for the FCCFP as providers could still only receive reimbursement through FCCFP for actual meals served when children attended.
- Monitoring, enrolling new providers, and training became more challenging, though there were waivers issued by USDA to allow for business to be conducted virtually.
- Providers who contracted or were exposed to COVID-19 were quarantined which presented challenges with contacting the providers.
- Many childcare providers stopped offering family child care due to the additional regulatory requirements and the fear of COVID-19 entering into their homes.

children served

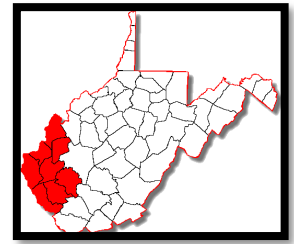


Program Highlight

The WVDE Office of Child Nutrition's management evaluation was completed with no findings.

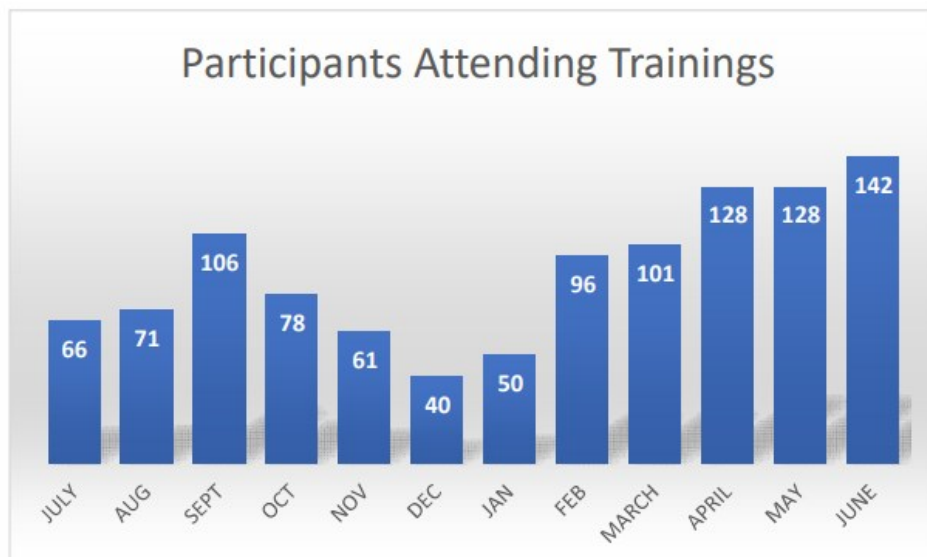
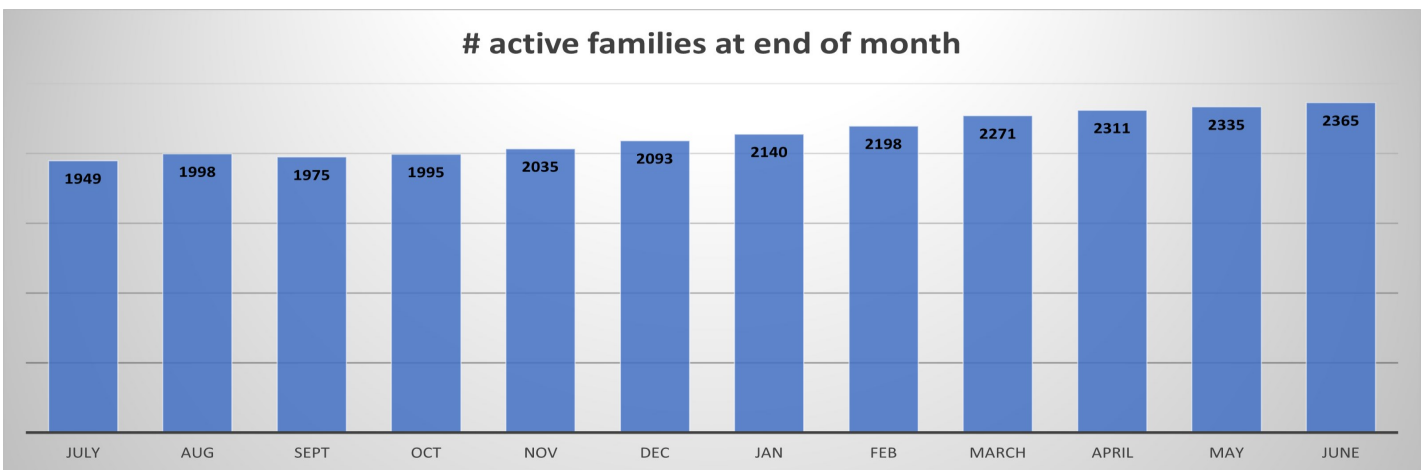
Link Child Care Resource and Referral

a program of RVCDS since 1992



Impact of COVID-19:

- Training team offered face-to-face trainings, but they were often cancelled due to low enrollment
- Able to accept client and provider information via e-mail.
- Caseloads steadily increased due to the State of WV continuing to provide child care to over-income essential workers. This has led extremely high caseload numbers for case managers and supervisors assisting with carrying caseloads.
- The State of WV is paying providers based on enrollment, but we cannot pay to providers for the same child for the same timeframe. This has led to an increase in the amount of work for our Provider Support Specialists and supervisors.



Program Highlights

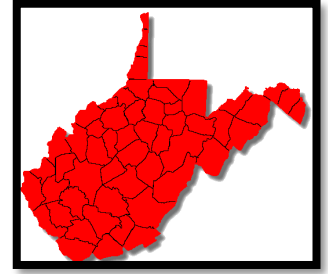
Staffing changes included:

- Separating the Assistant Director and Professional Development Supervisor roles.
- Adding an additional Family Services Supervisor position.

Link's Program In-Service returned to in-person and featured a keynote speaker.

WVECTCR

a program of RVCDS since 1998



Project Data

- 423 - Pathway to Earnings applications approved
- 63 - Pathway Advancement Scholarship applications approved
- 1,555 - Career Pathway Applications approved
- 1,456 Registry Applications approved
- 1,337 - WVBTT Informational and Educational Session Attendees
- 1,240 - attendees at statewide conferences and trainings
- 2,280 - Quality Provider Bonus Payments
- 795 - total Capacity Building Grants distributed
- 361 - ERS completed
- 1,238 - Health, Safety, Nutrition Training attendees
- 1,100 - Medication Administration Training attendees
- 73 - Number of apprentices that completed 4th semester of ACDS

Program Highlights

Distribution of over \$20 million in COVID relief funds.

Early Child Quality Evaluators returning to assessments and getting closer to completing the 1st phase of their project, ITERS/ECERS of all child care center classrooms, and receiving training and reaching reliability on SACERS in order to begin the 2nd phase of the project.

WVECTCR Team continues to meet the challenges brought on by the continuing pandemic with positive attitudes, a collaborative team spirit and a dedication to the children, families and early care and education professionals throughout the state of WV.

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic:

WVECTCR continued to face the challenges of providing our services during another year of the pandemic.

Smaller meetings/trainings and ACDS courses returned to face to face interactions, but many of the larger events (Celebrating Connections, Great Beginnings, Social Emotional Institute) remained virtual, and Camp Gizmo was again cancelled completely.

Early Childhood Quality Evaluators returned to providing assessments of child care center classrooms and receiving training on the next phase of the project – SACERS-U.

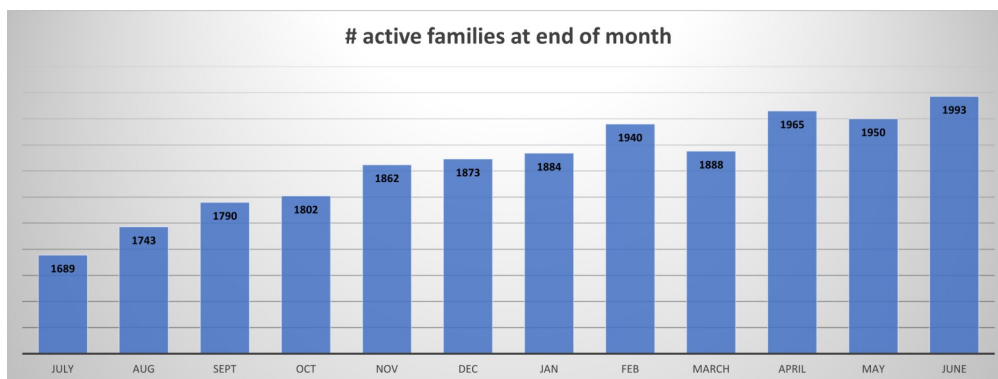
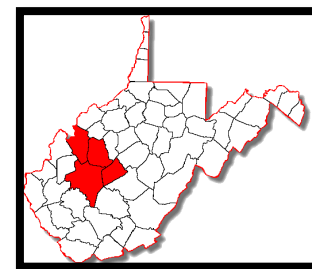
WVECTCR continued to provide the vast array of services as outlined in our workplan to the professionals, families and communities throughout WV and staff rose to the challenge of a hybrid work schedule working from home 2 days a week and in office 3 days all while continuing to provide the services of their position/project require.

WVECTCR was provided over \$20 million in COVID relief funds through our ECE grant to distribute to child care providers (centers, facilities, homes and afterschool) through Quality Provider Bonuses and Capacity Building Grants.



Connect Child Care Resource and Referral

a program of RVCDS since 2000



Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic:

From the start of the pandemic, Connect never stopped serving our communities. During the fiscal year, Connect saw a steady growth in the number families they served with childcare assistance due to more options for families to apply for services and the critical care funding.

From July 2021 until March 2022, Connect was affected by several staff vacancies, **reaching 12 vacant positions during the month of December 2021**. As of June 2022, this improved to two (2) vacant positions.

Connect reopened to the public allowing clients to come in the office if they chose, but clients visiting the office continues to remain lower than pre-pandemic numbers.

Trainings for providers were offered via webinar, which opened a lot of opportunity to our Professional Development team to reach more providers who were previously unable to come into the office. Our staff began developing trainings and adjusting them so that they were prepared to present them both in person and online. The Professional Development team was not able to complete cold calls until June 2022 and now determines whether they complete a cold call weekly depending on the covid rating for the county the provider is located.

TRAILS continued to visit providers, with modifications to their procedures in an effort to reduce person-to-person contact.

All staff and unit meetings for the months of July 2021- Nov 2021 were held strictly virtually. Return to in person meetings occurred December 2021 and now both options are utilized.

Community outreach efforts were paused until October 2021

Staff travel out of state was also paused during this time, which required all conferences to be attended virtually.



Program Highlights

Connect was able to offer providers continued assistance with purchasing health and safety items.

We worked with Healthy Grand families to help provide continued information to grandparents.

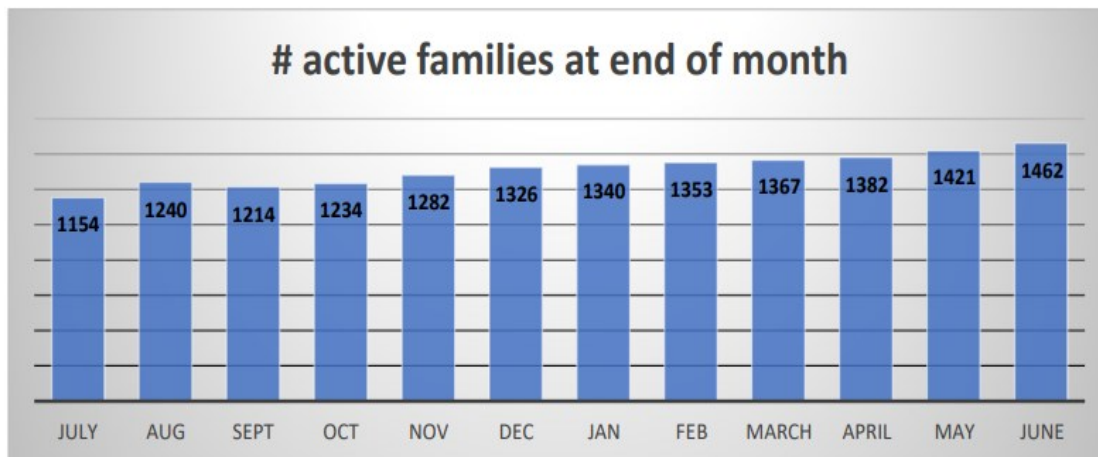
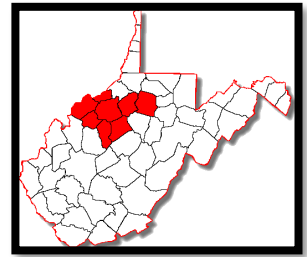
Connect provided training to 1,677 childcare providers through in person and online trainings from July 2021 until May 2022.

The Connect TRIP team had a successful year at reaching providers given the difficulties caused by the pandemic. The team completed quarterly meetings, a needs assessment with providers, technical assistance visits and trainings, and provided multiple resources for childcare providers



Choices Child Care Resource and Referral

a program of RVCDS since 2001



Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Most of this fiscal year, clients have completed child care applications and reviews electronically and we did not conducting face to face interviews.
- During 21-22 FY, services were still being provided to all essential workers. Due to this, caseloads continued to rise and required two new case manager position to be created.
- Professional Development team members continued to provide mostly virtual trainings but completed some in-person technical assistance.
- Staff have continued to provide excellent customer service and support to children and families during this difficult time.

Program Highlights

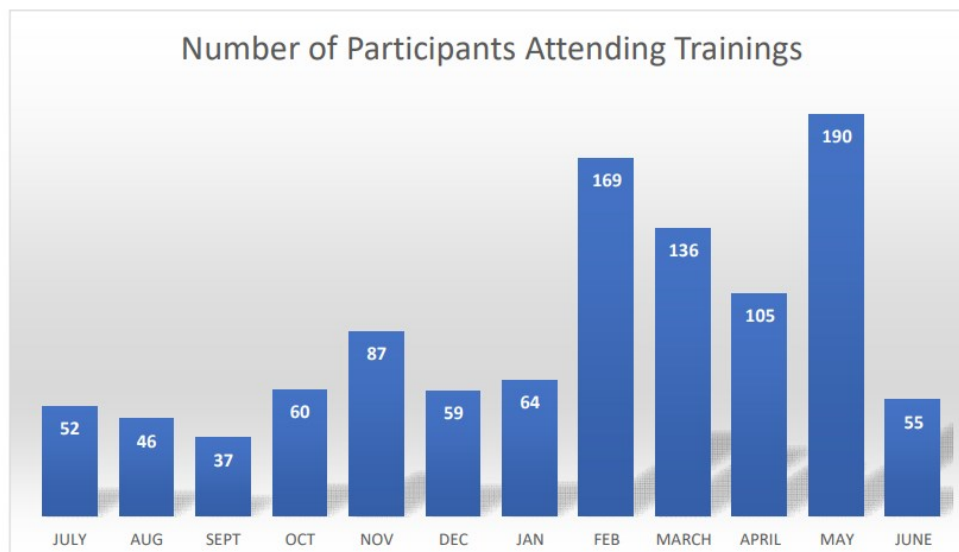
Choices continued to provide excellent customer service despite the influx of clients and COVID protocol and restrictions.

We added two new Case Manager positions.

We provided over \$120,000 to child care providers in playground/outdoor equipment and materials.

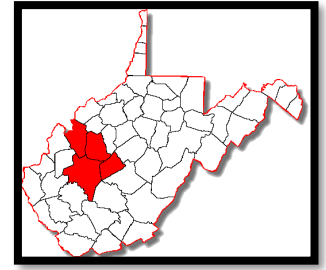
Choices had a virtual in-service with a superhero theme.

Our region gained three new Tier II providers this year.



RAU III

a program of RVCDS since 2003



Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Services were transitioned to a virtual format for Service Coordinators and Practitioners.
- Meetings and trainings were held virtually.
- The RAU has begun the process of going green.



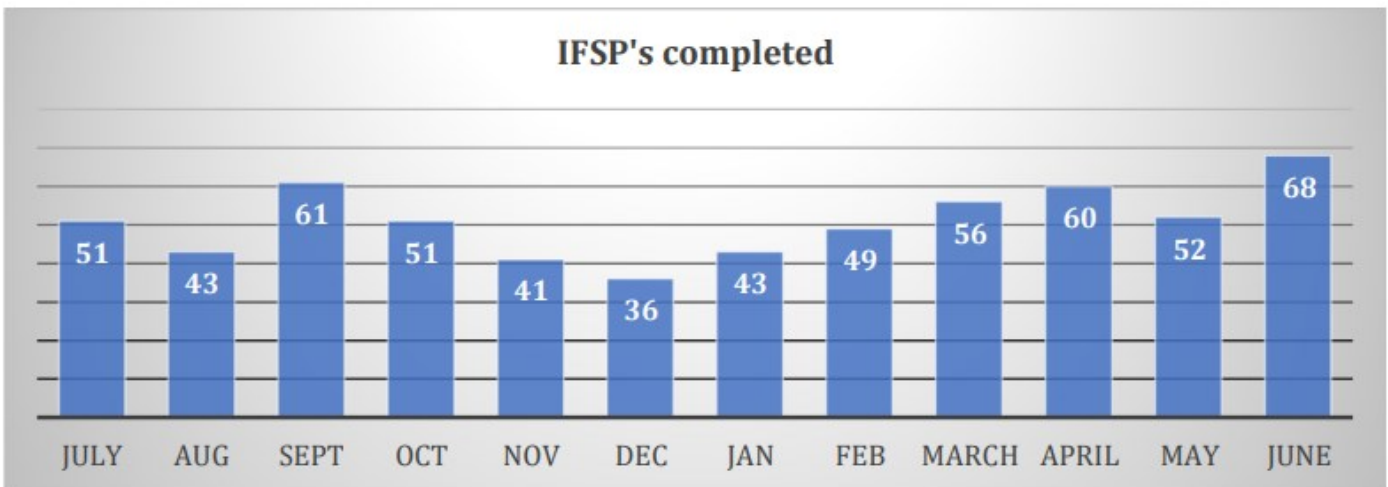
Program Highlights

1,213—Number of referrals received

718—Number of intakes completed

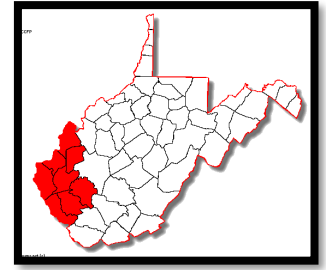
611—Number of IFSP's completed

IFSP's completed



RAU IV

a program of RVCDS since 2003



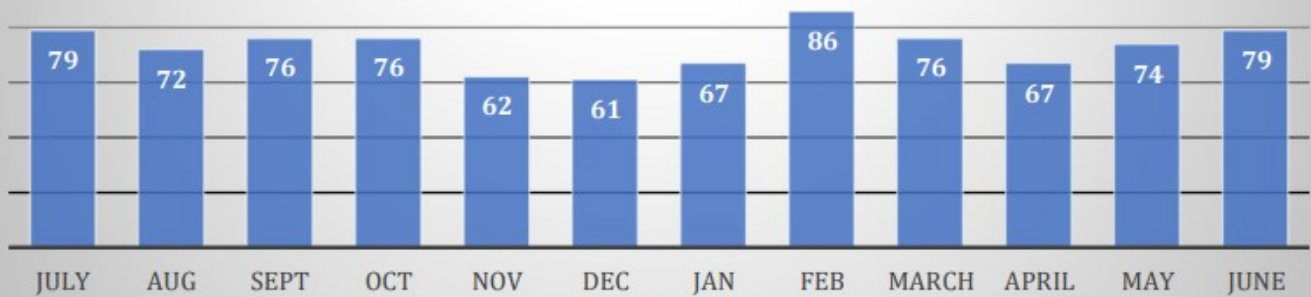
Program Highlights

1,632—Number of referrals received

1,092—Number of intakes completed

875—Number of IFSP's completed

IFSP's completed



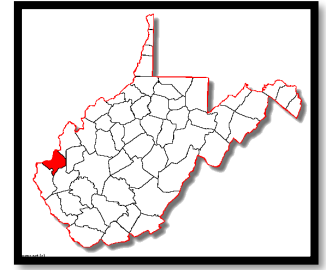
Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic:

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Child Care Programs RV CARES

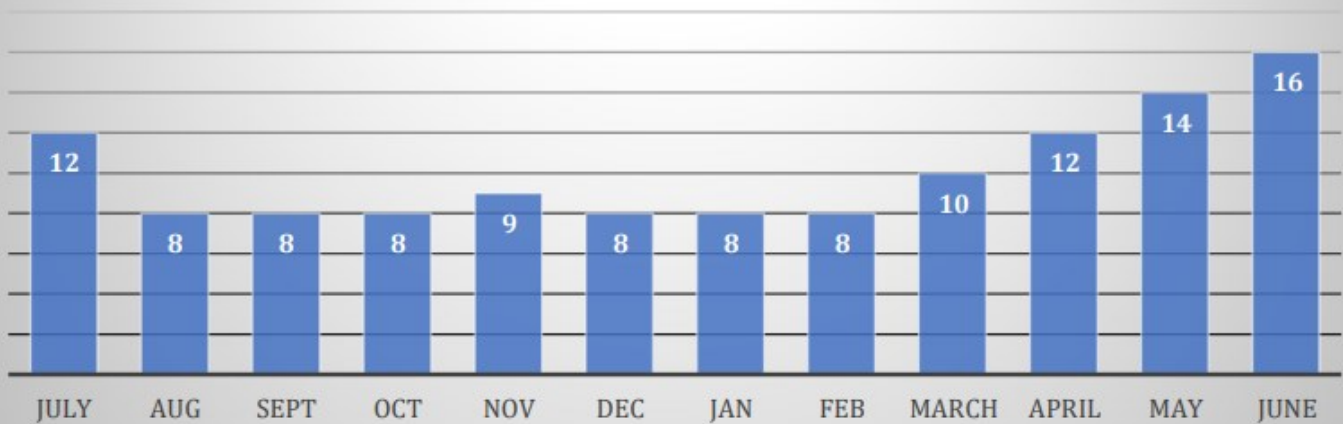
a program of RVCDS since 2019



Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Keeping center open, as program implemented safety precautions when children and staff tested positive for COVID-19
- Adequate staffing
- Additional funding from American Rescue Plan (ARP)
- Additional funding from Training Connections and Resources grants

Children Enrolled



Program Highlights

Increased enrollment with the start of new Director in January 2022.

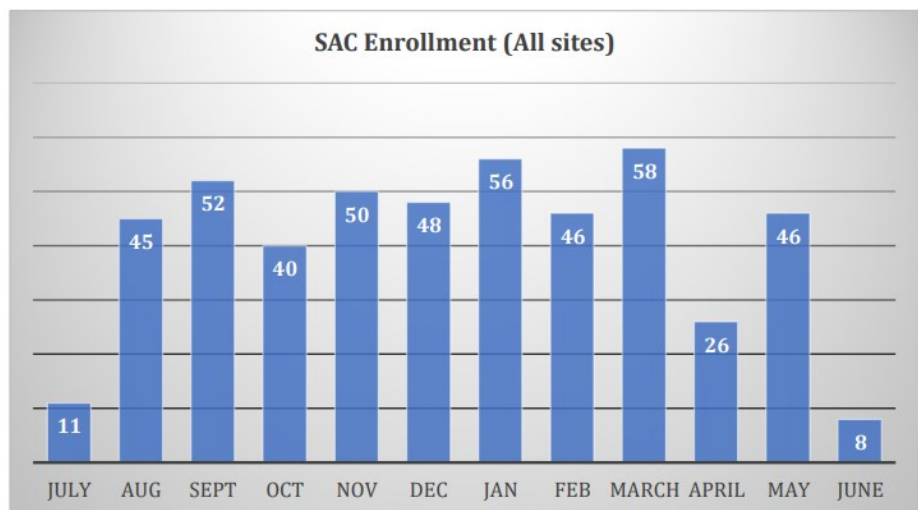
Family Navigators (Health Connections) returned to the building as an onsite support to connect families to necessary resources.

SAC Nichols merged with SAC Ona in April 2022.

School Age Connection (SAC)

a program of RVCDS since 1991

SAC Enrollment (All sites)



Compliance

Fiscal Year 2021-2022 revealed a need to create and develop a culture of compliance for our agency. Surveys were conducted to gauge employee's level of comfort around compliance. Further conversations were had with staff to try to assess areas of dissonance between expectations and interpretations. In October of 2021, Compliance began training staff on the agency's expectations for staff based on policies, procedures, and Code of Ethical Conduct. Staff have always received a brief introduction to these topics during orientation; however, adding the review has proven to be beneficial in aiding the agency's culture of compliance. In addition to the training, Compliance Newsletters have been created and are emailed to staff. Audits and reviews were conducted for Administration and the Food Program. Administration audits and reviews were the greatest focus. Policies and procedures were reviewed and compared to laws and regulations. Extensive dives into federal, state, and local laws revealed areas in which our agency's policies and procedure could be strengthened. A framework for a formal Compliance Program has been established. This framework will allow for more consistency as the agency moves forward and continues improving its processes. Audits will continue to be conducted.

ADMIN

- Conducted internal self-assessment
- Compensation committee developed compensation policy, procedure
- Operational plan outline developed
- Expansion of Expense Management in Paycom
- Job description revision started
- Affirmative Action Plan developed
- Internal Controls policy/procedure developed
- Internal audit of policies and procedures completed and action plan developed for policy committee

The Impact of Early Intervention: It's in the Tiny Moments – Debbie Smith's Story

I will never forget walking into the NICU room and seeing this tiny 4lb baby boy on a feeding tube, wrapped in a blanket and alone. To say I was overwhelmed was an understatement. How were my husband and I going to care for this baby? We fostered and adopted my son, who was born severely drug exposed and six weeks premature, which is quite rare. I did not know this was rare, but the nurses and doctors told me babies born this early don't normally experience withdrawal because certain parts of their brain haven't developed enough to go through withdrawals and even process the drugs. Because of this, he was entered into a case study to track his progress, which recently just ended at his 2-year well

baby checkup. The results of this

will eventually be published

because of the great progress

my son James made. Even

though he initially suffered

from several developmental

delays, now, at 2 ½, he is almost

completely on target with his peers.

Again, this is rare, but the impact of the

Birth to Three program has helped him made tremendous gains.

My son was determined eligible for WV Birth to Three at two months of age. He had a large team -

a speech therapist for feeding,

a physical therapist, a

developmental therapist, and

we later added an occupational

therapist when he was 18 months old. These

practitioners coached my husband and I, supported us and became a second family.

When I saw a job opening to be an Interim

Service Coordinator for Birth to Three, jumped

on it. I fell in love with Birth to Three through my own personal experiences with my son, and with my

education and previous job history, it was the perfect fit.



Here I am two years later, still loving Birth to Three, advocating for the program, and loving seeing my son thrive.



When I found out the case study was going to be published because of the great success he has made I made sure to let the doctor conducting the case study know that a large part of his success was due to the quality early intervention services he received. I will never forget when he signed “more” to me for more food. My heart burst. He told me what he wanted! James’ journey has involved celebrating many of those tiny moments that actually aren’t so tiny. It is those moments that have showed me exactly how beneficial his serves were. The staff I dealt with made sure I was involved, supported, and that I fully understood the Birth to Three process. Even when I felt overwhelmed, I was reassured.

I wish more families knew about the West Virginia Birth to Three program, that it’s free, that Birth to Three staff such as myself are here to help and support all families, and how impactful early intervention services can be. These services, coupled with a stable environment and supportive care can help ensure children can thrive, even the rare cases like my son, who is thriving and continues to beat the odds and overcome the consequences of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS).



**River Valley Child Development Services
2021-2022 Board of Directors**

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Thank you to our funders and donors!

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources
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River Valley Child Development Services is:

- An equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, or national origin with respect to the people who we serve or the people we employ.
- A 501(c)(3) charitable organization; financial statements are available on our website: <http://www.rvcds.org>
- A member of the West Virginia Non Profit Association (WVNPA)
- A member of Corporate Compliance
- A member of Child Care Aware
- A member of NWRA

Multiple programs of RVCDS are being presented with financial assistance as a grant from the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources.

