

V E R M O N T
EARLY CHILDHOOD ALLIANCE

2016 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



Current CCFAP payments are based on what programs charged to provide child care in 2008. These figures are now more than seven years out of date.

Increase CCFAP Funding

The Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) helps families access affordable, quality child care so that they can work and overcome life challenges. The program is underfunded. The assistance available gives eligible families access to a fraction of the child care market. The Alliance supports the Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children, the Vermont Child Care Providers Association, and the Vermont Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies in educating legislators and the Blue Ribbon Commission about CCFAP and advancing proposals for incremental investments to increase CCFAP families' access to high quality programs.



Workers without paid sick days are

2x as likely
as workers with paid sick days to send their child to school or child care sick.

Pass Paid Sick Days Legislation

To ensure that workplace standards in Vermont promote public health and safety and are responsive to the needs of Vermont's workforce and families, the Alliance supports the work of Voices for Vermont's Children and the Paid Sick Days Coalition to secure passage of H.187, the Healthy Workplaces bill. The bill would establish a minimum standard of paid sick leave for all permanent employees in Vermont.

During the 2013–14 school year,

1,145 homeless youth

were enrolled in Vermont schools, a 45% increase from 2007–08.



Fully Fund VHCB; Increase Housing Investments

The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) supports the development of affordable housing and reduces homelessness, helping ensure that all Vermonters have safe, affordable places to live. For years the State has diverted funding from VHCB to other uses. If the full amount set by law had been dedicated to VHCB, it would have helped build an estimated 1,000 additional homes. The Alliance supports the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition's efforts to secure full statutory funding for VHCB and additional State investments that provide emergency housing alternatives for homeless and at-risk families.

Legislators anticipate being asked to cut \$50–\$70 million from the FY '17 budget, on top of similar cuts made in previous years.

Pass FY '16/'17 State Budgets Based on Need

The Alliance will work with like-minded organizations to oppose cuts to essential programs and direct services in the Agency of Human Services budget, and will support a state budget based on needs, not revenue limitations.

“My daughter hasn’t been able to receive these much-needed services and now my family and I are having to move.”

—Colchester parent

More than 21,000 VT kids are enrolled in an afterschool program, but

22,000

are waiting for an available slot.

Since its inception, the Building Bright Spaces Fund has provided 110 grants totaling

\$1,216,762

to early childhood programs across the state, leveraging an additional \$47 million in private capital.

AHS’s current computer system, ACCESS, is

30+
years old.



Allow Equal Access to Special Education

There is agreement among special education providers and advocates that some families struggle to have equal access to needed special pre-K education services to which their children are entitled. The Alliance supports efforts by Vermont Family Network and others to work with state agencies to ensure that all children have equal access to these services so they can thrive.

Increase Access to Afterschool/Summer Learning

Quality afterschool and summer learning programs keep kids safe, inspire learners, and help working families. The Alliance supports Vermont Afterschool’s “Zap the Gap” campaign to create a state appropriation for the Expanded Learning Opportunities Special Fund, which if funded can provide grants to increase access to these programs, particularly for low-income children and families.

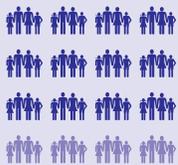
Increase Funding for Building Bright Spaces for Bright Futures Fund

This fund is the only dedicated financial resource available to early childhood programs to start, relocate, expand and improve their physical space. The Alliance supports efforts by the Vermont Community Loan Fund to increase funding by expanding the Fund’s specialty license plate program.

Invest in AHS Computer Systems

Improvements to Agency of Human Services (AHS) computer systems would ease administrative burdens, increase efficiencies, bring more federal money to our state, and lower barriers to programs. The Alliance supports Hunger Free Vermont’s efforts to ensure state investments continue to support a cost-effective integrated eligibility model that links AHS programs.

Best practice indicates caseloads should be 12 families per social worker.



In Vermont, the average is currently

17.7 families per worker.

Improve Child Protection

The Alliance supports efforts to clarify language in legislation passed in 2015 regarding reporting and other administrative requirements. The Alliance also supports efforts to secure additional resources for the child protection system and Voices for Vermont’s Children’s proposal to establish an Office of Child Advocate to provide more public oversight, accountability, and engagement.

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a program of the Vermont
Community Loan Fund

The Vermont Early Childhood Alliance is a statewide, independent, advocacy coalition of parents, community members, organizations, businesses, early childhood providers and strategic partners who are committed to improving public policies that impact young children between birth and age eight in the areas of health, safety, nutrition, economic security, and early care and education.