

V E R M O N T

EARLY CHILDHOOD ALLIANCE

VT EARLY CHILDHOOD ALLIANCE 2015 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Blue Ribbon Commission on Sustainable Funding: Public and private investments into the early childhood system are necessary to ensure young children and their families succeed. The Alliance supports Let's Grow Kids' proposal to form a Blue Ribbon Commission to provide recommendations for sustainably funding high quality, affordable childcare.

Improving Child Protection in Vermont: The Administration and legislature will be proposing policy changes to improve protections for vulnerable children. Voices for Vermont's Children and other Alliance members will be participating in the review of these proposals. The Alliance also supports Voices for Vermont's Children's proposal to establish public oversight of the state's child protection system by creating an Office of Child Advocate.

Earned Sick Days: 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 proposal by Voices for Vermont's Children and the Earned Sick Days Coalition to establish a minimum standard of earned sick days for all Vermont workers.

CCFAP Market Rate and Eligibility Increases: Increased funding for CCFAP will provide working families with more of the financial support they need to obtain quality child care and rich early learning opportunities for their children. The Alliance supports the proposal by VAEYC, Voices for Vermont's Children and Vermont Early Educators United to raise the base tuition payment made on behalf of families to at least the 50th percentile of the current market rate, and annually adjust the guidelines used to determine payments and eligibility for CCFAP to keep them current.

Early Childhood Workforce Training: In order to have high-quality child care and after-school programs with consistent, educated providers, the state needs to ensure workforce training opportunities are available. The Alliance supports VAEYC's efforts to secure additional, dedicated, and ongoing funding to support training and professional development for the early childhood and afterschool work force.

VACCRRRA Funding: Vermont's 12 child care resource and referral agencies struggle to provide assistance to the thousands of families and providers they serve every year. Demand for services has increased and costs have continued to rise, but funding remains at the FY '12 level. The Alliance supports VACCRRRA's request to return to pre-FY '12 funding levels, a restoration of \$223,000.

Alliance top priorities also include: 1) Reach Up reforms and funding increases; and, 2) opposition to state budget cuts to essential services and support for budgets based on need, not revenue limitations.

Alliance second tier priorities include: 1) support for the PCCs proposed \$1.25 million increase to the annual base grants; and, 2) support for efforts to increase state investments in housing programs that reduce homelessness and housing insecurity.

Lend your voice! To get more involved, go to www.vermontearlychildhoodalliance.org.