



EARLY CHILDHOOD DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2020 | 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

AGENDA

7:30 – 9:00 AM	Breakfast bar, <i>State House Cafeteria</i>
8:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Vendor displays, <i>Capitol Plaza</i>
8:00 – 9:00 AM	Check in, breakfast and vendor displays, <i>Capitol Plaza</i>
9:00 – 9:10 AM	Welcome, <i>Capitol Plaza Hotel, Governor’s Ballroom</i> Matt Levin, Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance; Aly Richards, Let’s Grow Kids; Morgan Crossman, Building Bright Futures
9:10 – 9:20 AM	Remarks, Governor Phil Scott, <i>Capitol Plaza Hotel, Governor’s Ballroom</i>
9:20 – 9:30 AM	Break
9:30 – 10:30 AM	Issue sessions, <i>Capitol Plaza Hotel and State House</i>
10:30 – 10:40 AM	Break
10:40 – 11:40 AM	Issue sessions, <i>Capitol Plaza Hotel</i>
11:40 – 11:50 AM	Proceed to Lunch
11:50 AM – 12:00 PM	Region conversation planning, <i>Capitol Plaza, Governor’s Ballroom/Montpelier Room</i>
12:00 – 1:00 PM	Constituent/legislator lunch, <i>Capitol Plaza, Governor’s Ballroom/Montpelier Room</i>
1:00 – 1:05 PM	Devotions, <i>State House, House Chamber</i>
1:05 – 1:10 PM	Resolution, <i>State House, House Chamber</i>
1:15 – 1:45 PM	Rally, <i>State House Front Steps (Inclement Weather Location: Capitol Plaza)</i>
2:00 – 3:00 PM	Advocacy seminars, meetings with legislators, <i>State House, Rooms 10 & 11</i>
All Day	Meetings with legislators, <i>State House</i>
All Day	Card room display, <i>State House</i>

ISSUE SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Look to your name badge for the two hour–long issue sessions you selected during registration. Read the descriptions and room locations below. Please be prompt in your arrival and dismissal. You have ten minutes for transitions.

Morning Advocacy Seminar, *State House – Meet in Capitol Plaza Lobby by 9:30 AM*

Participants who pre-registered for these small group tours of the State House will be led by experienced lobbyists and staff. Participants will receive an insider’s walk through key spaces and discuss effective advocacy techniques. Depending on the business in the building or spontaneous opportunities, activities may include observation of a committee hearing and conversations with legislators. At the end of the hour-long session, return to the Capitol Plaza Hotel by 10:35 AM for the next breakout session.

Children's Integrated Services, *Steeple Room*

- Margaret Atkinson, Director of Development & Community Relations, Winston Prouty Center for Child and Family Development
- Pam McCarthy, CEO/President, Vermont Family Network
- Jane Van Buren, Executive Director, Vermont Child Care Resource

Children's Integrated Systems (CIS) is Vermont's signature early childhood initiative designed to maximize children's health, development, and learning by providing individualized support to families. The intent of integrating services for children and families is to improve child and family outcomes and save the state money. Unfortunately, the program has been chronically underfunded while the actual costs of providing these services have steadily increased. We will share a snapshot of current statewide CIS data and trends and focus on key points for advocacy. CIS has been level funded since 2009 and is currently underfunded. Learn more about this early childhood system and how to talk to legislators about this important issue.

Early Care and Education Priorities, *Governor's Ballroom*

- Sonja Raymond, Executive Director, Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children
- Sarah Kenney, Senior Director of Policy, Let's Grow Kids
- Jen Horwitz, Policy & Research Director, Let's Grow Kids

Participants will learn more about the overall strategy for the 2020 legislative session to strengthen Vermont's early care and education system through early childhood educator supports, strengthening Vermont's Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP), and working with employers and community partners to increase the supply of child care in our state. Participants will also spend part of the workshop session in breakout groups to dive into one of the three core areas in more detail and practice talking to legislators about their chosen topic.

Family and Medical Leave Insurance, *Montpelier Room (Upper Level)*

- Morgan Nichols, State Director, Main Street Alliance of Vermont

As we prepare for the next biennium and work together to support a Paid Family and Medical Leave policy, let's take the opportunity to frame out foundational components that remain at the heart of our core principles. The VT FaMLI Coalition continues to work to ensure that the program would allow all working Vermonters to have access to job-protected, paid leave to welcome a new child, recover from a personal illness or injury, or care for a seriously ill or injured close family member. Additionally, we will have the opportunity to hear from *In The Public Interest*, a non-profit that is a comprehensive research and policy center on privatization and responsible contracting. They will share examples from around the country about the costs and risks of privatization and help us frame the conversation about why we must continue to advocate and ensure that our public dollars are put in a public trust. This session is a great opportunity to frame the conversation as we move forward, to have your questions answered, and to learn about opportunities for action in the months ahead.

Farm to School and Early Childhood, *Montpelier Room (Lower Level)*

- Cynthia Greene, Farm to Early Childhood, Systems Specialist, Vermont FEED

Farm to School and Early Childhood programming could expand with your help! Join the discussion to learn how a \$500,000 allocation for Farm to School and Early Childhood will expand opportunities for registered and licensed early childhood programs through technical assistance, professional development, and equipment grants. Sharpen your understanding of these educational programs and refine your talking points for engaging legislators in the opportunity to invest in child nutrition.

Housing and Homelessness, *Montpelier Room (Lower Level)*

- Jessica Hyman, Director of the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity Fair Housing Project

Early childhood and housing advocates have a common goal in securing funding for housing programs that provide shelter to families and children in need. Learn more about the need for affordable housing and the positive impact that stable housing can have on families. Hear about successful projects and how to share compelling stories with legislators.

Medicaid Coverage for Doulas, *Boardroom 232*

- Sarah Teel, Research Director, Voices for Vermont's Children

This workshop will ground participants in the role and impact of birth doulas on a variety of important outcomes. We will discuss why, and how, we are working to increase access to doulas and how doulas can be part of achieving a broader goal of reproductive justice. Birth doulas are trained professionals who provide continuous physical, emotional, and informational support to a pregnant person before, during, and shortly after childbirth to help them achieve the healthiest, most satisfying experience possible. This is an evidence-based intervention that can support better, safer, less expensive births; improved birth outcomes and infant health; and perinatal well-being. Currently, birth doulas are most available to families who can afford to pay out-of-pocket. However, research shows stronger beneficial effects for people who are low income, socially disadvantaged, or who experience cultural or language barriers to accessing care.

Office of the Child Advocate, *Boardroom 338*

- Amy Brady, Policy Associate, Voices for Vermont's Children

Right now, Vermont is the only state in New England without an Office of Child Advocate. When it comes to child protection, we can't access the data we need to understand whether the system is working as intended, and the limited information we do have paints an increasingly worrisome picture. Without adequate tools and independent, objective oversight, we are setting everyone up to fail. We aren't waiting for disaster to strike - it is striking, right here in our homes and our communities, often in ways that we cannot see. Join our workshop to learn more about H.215 and more importantly - join us in the effort to establish an Office of Child Advocate for VT.

PCC Network Master Grant, *Montpelier Room (Upper Level)*

- Donna Bailey, Director, Addison County Parent Child Center

Come and learn more about Parent Child Centers (PCCs), the services offered, and roles we play in communities across Vermont. PCCs deliver critical and essential state services to families with young children through a Master Grant with the Department for Children and Families as well as provide comprehensive wrap-around services through our many contracts. Learn more about our impact on families and why updating our statute and increasing our base support in the legislature is crucial to the integrated, multi-generational approach that PCCs provide to families.

Reach Up Funding, *Boardroom 335*

- Michelle Faye, Executive Director, Voices for Vermont's Children

Reach Up is Vermont's safety net program for families with little or no income, intended to improve the well-being of children by providing for their immediate basic needs while supporting their caregivers' efforts to secure employment. Children and families enrolled in the program receive less than 40% of a subsistence income. Even in combination with 3SquaresVT nutrition benefits, families are well below the federal poverty line. In this breakout session we'll explore the policy decisions that led to this situation and the consequences of allowing thousands of Vermont children to spend their critical development years living in extreme poverty. You'll be prepared with data and stories to press legislators about the need to raise the floor of Reach Up to a level that prevents damaging hardship for children and youth.

State Budget, *Executive Boardroom*

- Matt Levin, Executive Director, Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance

The Governor's budget address took place in January. The House Appropriations Committee is working to pass their FY21 budget by March 20. The Senate process will follow. What was the process that got us to this point, and how does our advocacy fit in to that process? Come hear an overview of the annual budget-writing process and tips for how you can best communicate that early childhood programs are sound investments in Vermont's children, families, and workforce. This information will help you to engage legislators in deeper, more detailed discussions and answer their questions about how the budget process impacts essential early childhood programs that are seeking funding increases.

Universal School Meals, *Boardroom 335*

- Faye Mack, Advocacy & Education Director, Hunger Free Vermont

All students need good nutrition to learn well, and every student should have access to the same things while at school, whether it is educational opportunities or food. That's why Hunger Free Vermont is leading a campaign to bring universal school meals to every public school in Vermont. The legislature is considering bills (H.812 and S.223) that would allow every student to eat a nutritious breakfast and lunch at school with no additional charge to their families. Join us to learn more about these bills and the impact that universal school meals is proven to have on children's health and learning, school culture, local agriculture, and family finances. You'll have the opportunity to take action in this workshop to help ensure that every student, in every Vermont public school, has the same opportunity to thrive with Universal School Meals!

Vermonters Feeding Vermonters, *Boardroom 232*

- Nicole Whalen, Director of Communications & Public Affairs, Vermont Foodbank

Access to healthy, fresh food during early childhood is critical for healthy physical and social development. With 18,700 Vermont children facing food insecurity, the state needs a creative solution to ensure that Vermont's bounty of local, fresh food makes it onto the plates of those who need it most. Join the Vermont Foodbank to advocate for state funding for Vermonters Feeding Vermonters, a program to purchase fresh, local food to distribute to our neighbors struggling with hunger. Come learn about the campaign and how you can get involved.

LOGISTICS GUIDE

NEED ANYTHING? Look for the name badges of co-host staff or event coordinators:

- Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance
- Let's Grow Kids
- Building Bright Futures
- Delaney Meeting and Event Management

GET SOCIAL!

- **Wifi passcode:** Vermont2020
- Post photos on **social media** using the hashtags **#investinkids** and **#ECDL2020**. Tag the Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance, Let's Grow Kids, Building Bright Futures and/or any of the lead organizations working on legislative issues (or their campaign pages). Go to their **Facebook pages** and like their ECDL posts.
- Do you want to be available to **talk to the media** about your story? Find Amy Russo-Perler, the Alliance's Outreach Manager, and let her know (or email her at amy@vecaa.org).

DO YOUR RESEARCH

- Visit the **Vermont Legislature website** (legislature.vermont.gov) to find your legislators' bios and research what Committees they sit on. Search for bills you are tracking.
- Consult the **ECDL message document** and the **Alliance's issue webpages** (vecaa.org) to review talking points on the issues you care about. Identify which Committees are involved and research whether your legislators sit on any of the Committees.

REGISTRATION MATERIALS

- The **Agenda** outlines the day's activities and timing. The **Session Descriptions** describe the break out sessions and locations. The **Logistics Guide** provides logistical details and notes.
- The Alliance's **2020 Legislative Agenda** provides a snapshot of the key issues.
- **Issue Message Document** offers talking points for the Alliance's 2020 Legislative Agenda issues.
- **State House** maps provide orientation to the building.
- An **Invest in Kids** lapel sticker – wear and share!

REGIONAL PLANNING SESSIONS

After the second issue session, go to the Governor's Ballroom and look for regional table signs to sit where you live. Leave two seats open at your table for legislators. If you are with more than two people from your organization or program, we suggest that you sit at separate tables so legislators have different perspectives to listen to. A facilitator will support the group in reviewing the issues and legislative asks to be discussed with legislators in advance of legislators' arrival. Legislators will be seated at tables by escorts from the front lobby.

LEGISLATOR LUNCH

The facilitator will ensure the conversation goes smoothly and support your story telling. This is your time to share your experience with legislators and ask them about your issues in the legislative process. If you need anything, consult the facilitator. The facilitators will take notes and wrap up by 12:45 PM. Thank legislators for their time.

DEVOTION AND RESOLUTION

If you are prepared to leave the Hotel by 1:00 PM (bring all your items with you to the State House) and walk with legislators to the State House. Once you arrive, go directly to the House chamber back row (2nd floor) or climb the stairs to the balcony (3rd floor) to witness an early childhood devotional and reading of the early childhood resolution. This should all happen by 1:10 PM, and advocates can then leave the chamber quietly to go back outside to the front steps of the State House to join the Rally for Kids.

RALLY FOR KIDS

For those leaving Capitol Plaza a little later than 1:00 PM, dress warmly and walk with legislators or groups of other advocates to the front steps of the State House by 1:15 PM. Find a spot on the steps and listen to inspiring speakers. After the rally, enter the State House through the right or left entrances. Leave pom poms with volunteers. There is a coat room on the first floor. Consult the State House floor map for orientation and etiquette. For parents with children, head to the cafeteria on the second floor for kids activities. On the way, browse the early childhood display in the Card Room outside the cafeteria. For those not pre-registered for an ECDL advocacy seminar, go to the cafeteria to find a staff person to support your direct advocacy or to write a letter that can be put in your legislator's mailbox.
Note - if the weather is bad, the Rally will be held at Capitol Plaza in the Governor's Ballroom.

ADVOCACY SEMINARS

For those who are interested in an afternoon Advocacy Seminar, head to Room 10 for an Advanced tour and Room 11 for a Beginner tour. Find a guide and enjoy the next hour!