



EARLY CHILDHOOD DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE

March 10, 2021

9:30 am-1:30 pm



VERMONT
EARLY CHILDHOOD
ADVOCACY ALLIANCE



AGENDA

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| 9:30 am – 10:00 am | <p>Welcome and Keynote Speaker – Remarks from senior state officials and co-hosts start the day, then Xusana Davis, Vermont's Executive Director of Racial Equity, addresses the early childhood community.</p> <p><i>Matt Levin, Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance</i>
<i>Aly Richards, Let's Grow Kids</i>
<i>Morgan Crossman, Building Bright Futures</i>
<i>Molly Gray, Lieutenant Governor</i>
<i>Rep. Jill Krowinski, Speaker of the House</i>
<i>Xusana Davis, Vermont's Executive Director of Racial Equity</i></p> |
| 10:00 am – 10:50 am
10:55 am – 11:40 am | <p>Issue Sessions – Learn about policy initiatives on the Alliance's 2021 Legislative Agenda, plus Coronavirus Relief Funding and the State Budget.</p> |
| 11:40 am – 11:50 am | <p>Break – Join the next Zoom, then grab your lunch, take a break, and get ready for the afternoon!</p> |
| 11:50 am – 1:00 pm | <p>Lunch with Legislators – Bring your lunch and sit down virtually with a group of other advocates from your area to talk with legislators about the issues you care about.</p> |
| 1:00 pm – 1:10 pm | <p>Debrief and Networking – Take some time to connect with your peers and debrief from the lunchtime discussion.</p> |
| 1:10 pm – 1:30 pm | <p>Conclusion – Find out more about events in the virtual State House celebrating ECDL and next steps for advocates, and hear closing remarks from senior state and federal officials.</p> <p><i>Congressman Peter Welch</i>
<i>Sen. Becca Balint, Senate President Pro Tempore</i>
<i>Governor Phil Scott</i></p> |

ISSUE SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Children's Integrated Services

- Margaret Atkinson, Director of Development & Community Relations, Winston Prouty Center for Child and Family Development
- Claire Kendall, Co-Executive Director, Family Center of Washington County
- Courtney Farrell, Director of Child and Family Services, Lund Family Center

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.

Child Care is Essential

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

Participants will learn more about H. 171 (the child care bill), and how to support our vision to strengthen Vermont's childhood education system and support children, families, early educators, programs, and Vermont's economic recovery by improving access, affordability, quality, governance, and sustainability. LGK and VTAEYC will walk participants through the important components of H.171, including investments in the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP), IT upgrades, supports for early childhood educators, and plans to study the best way to sustainably govern and finance a future early childhood education system. Participants will also receive an update on the bill, and will get the chance to practice talking points to legislators in smaller breakout groups.

Family and Medical Leave Insurance

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

As we 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. This session is a great opportunity to understand the current landscape on this issue both at the state and federal levels, to have your questions answered, and to learn about opportunities for action in the months ahead.

Farm to School and Early Childhood

- Cynthia Greene, Farm to Early Childhood Education Partnership Coordinator, Shelburne Farms

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

- 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.

PCC Network Master Grant

- Amy Johnson, Program Director, Northwestern Counseling & Support Services/Co-Chair of the Vermont Parent Child Center Network

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

- 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.

Coronavirus Relief Funding

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

Confused about the status of federal pandemic relief funds? So is everyone else! This session will help you get updated on the status of Vermont's use of federal funding, and help you pitch your ideas to legislators in the most effective ways.

State Budget

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

This year's budget development process is more complicated than usual because of the overlaps between federal pandemic response, the FY21 budget adjustment process, and the FY22 budget development process. The ECDL State Budget session will provide an update and overview of the processes used by the legislature to allocate and appropriate those funds.

Universal School Meals

- 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 Senate is currently working on a bill that would allow every student to eat a nutritious breakfast and lunch at school with no additional charges 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!

Special Accommodation Grants

- Margaret Atkinson, Director of Development & Community Relations, Winston Prouty Center for Child and Family Development
- Pam McCarthy, CEO/President, Vermont Family Network
- Sharon Halnon, CIS Specialized Care Coordinator, Vermont Child Care Resource

The State of Vermont has for many years offered Special Accommodation Grants (SAG) to early care and learning providers to assist with the expense of caring for children with special needs. Most often SAGs pay for a one-to-one aide to support children with special health needs, such as a feeding tube, or children on the autism spectrum or with behavioral issues who need extra support to stay safe in the early learning setting. With this extra support, children are then able to participate and benefit from high-quality early care and learning, and in turn, their parents are able to work.

LOGISTICS GUIDE

NEED ANYTHING? Contact co-host staff or event coordinators:

- Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance – Amy Russo-Perler, 860-212-5918
- Let's Grow Kids – Ansley Bloomer, 802-595-0723
- Delaney Meeting and Event Management – Leslie Pelch, 802-598-0048

PREPARING FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE

DO SOME RESEARCH IN ADVANCE

- Visit the **Vermont Legislature website** (<https://legislature.vermont.gov>) to find legislators' bios and research what committees they sit on. Search for bills you are tracking.
- Consult the **Alliance's Legislative Agenda and issue webpages** (<http://vecaa.org/legislative-agenda>) to review talking points on the issues you care about. Identify which committees are involved and research which legislators sit on the key committees.

GET TECH READY

- Download the Whova and Zoom apps before March 10.
- Review this video on navigating the online conference platform: <http://bit.ly/ECDL-Attendee-Video>
- Best practices for Zoom
 - In each session, rename yourself with the name you used for registration, instead of your organization name.
 - Remain on mute unless you are speaking.
 - Use the Zoom chat function as instructed, for introductions and questions.
- The next pages in this document include a detailed platform attendee guide from our event planner, Delaney Meeting and Event Management.

PREPARING TO TALK TO LEGISLATORS

ISSUE SESSIONS – 10:55 am – 11:40 am

Learn about policy initiatives on the Alliance's 2021 Legislative Agenda, plus Coronavirus Relief Funding and the State Budget. Gather background information, data, and talking points that will help guide your conversation with legislators.

REGIONAL PLANNING SESSIONS – 11:50 am – 12:00 pm

After the second issue session, **go to the lunchtime Zoom session *before* starting your 10-minute break.** Use the Whova agenda to navigate into the session called "Lunch with Legislators and Closing Session," and click "view live stream" BEFORE you begin your break. When you return, you will have been assigned to a regional Zoom room, based on the information you provided in registration. 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 join the Zoom rooms at 12:00 pm.

LEGISLATOR LUNCH – 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Enjoy your lunch while talking with legislators. The facilitator will support your story telling and ensure the conversation goes smoothly. This is your time to share your experience with legislators and ask them about your issue in the legislative process. If you need anything, consult the facilitator. The facilitators will take notes and wrap up by 1:00 pm. Thank legislators for their time.



Attendee “Know Before You Go” Guide *From Delaney Meeting and Event Management*

In Advance:

- **Important Note About Internet Browsers:** it is strongly recommended that you use **Google Chrome** web browser. **Do not use Internet Explorer.**
- Follow the directions below to log in to the virtual event site well before the day of the conference.
- Check to make sure your internet is working well.
- Explore the ECDL digital platform- this is the same link you’ll use to log in on March 10!:
https://whova.com/portal/webapp/ecdl_202103

Tips for Virtual Events:

- Please make your environment as distraction-free as possible.
- Don’t compete with others in your household for internet bandwidth if at all possible during the conference. Cameras and screen sharing use a lot of bandwidth, so if you find you have weak internet, it is suggested to turn your camera off.

In This Guide:

- Help
- Accessing the Virtual Site
- Attending Sessions
- Sponsors
- Additional Information

If you are a Presenter or Tech Host, please also refer to the Presenter & Tech Host Guides for information specific to your roles.

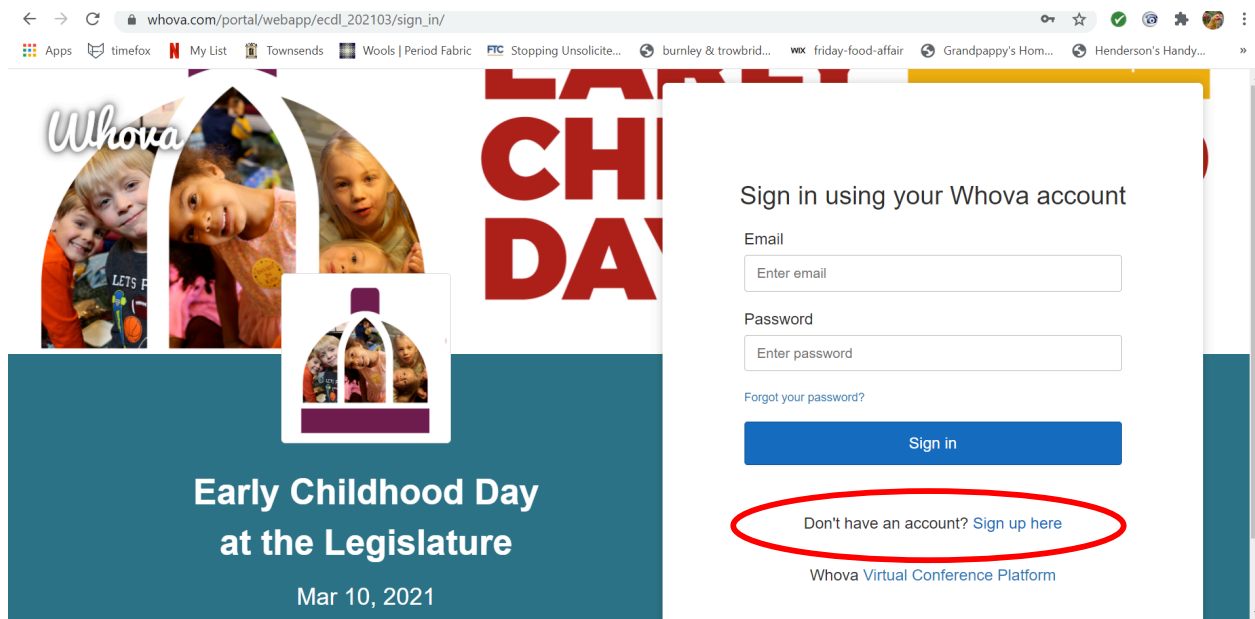
HELP!

If you need assistance accessing the Whova platform or need technical support, please call 802-865-5202 or email info@delaneymeetingevent.com.

Navigating the Virtual Conference Platform

ACCESSING THE VIRTUAL EVENT SITE

- Use this link to access the Virtual Conference: whova.com/portal/webapp/ecdl_202103
- When you visit the virtual Early Childhood Day at the Legislature virtual event site for the first time, you'll be asked to login to claim your account.



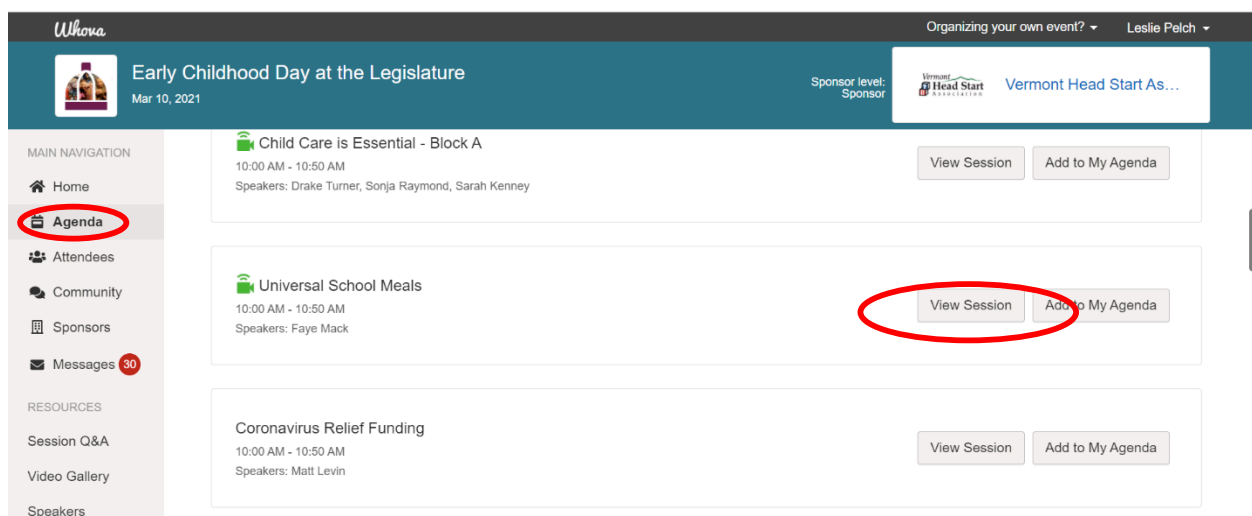
- Select "Sign up here" and then create a password (use the email you used when registering for the conference!).
- If you've previously used Whova, you'll login using your existing password, or click "Forgot your password?" to reset it.

ATTENDING SESSIONS AND OTHER AGENDA EVENTS

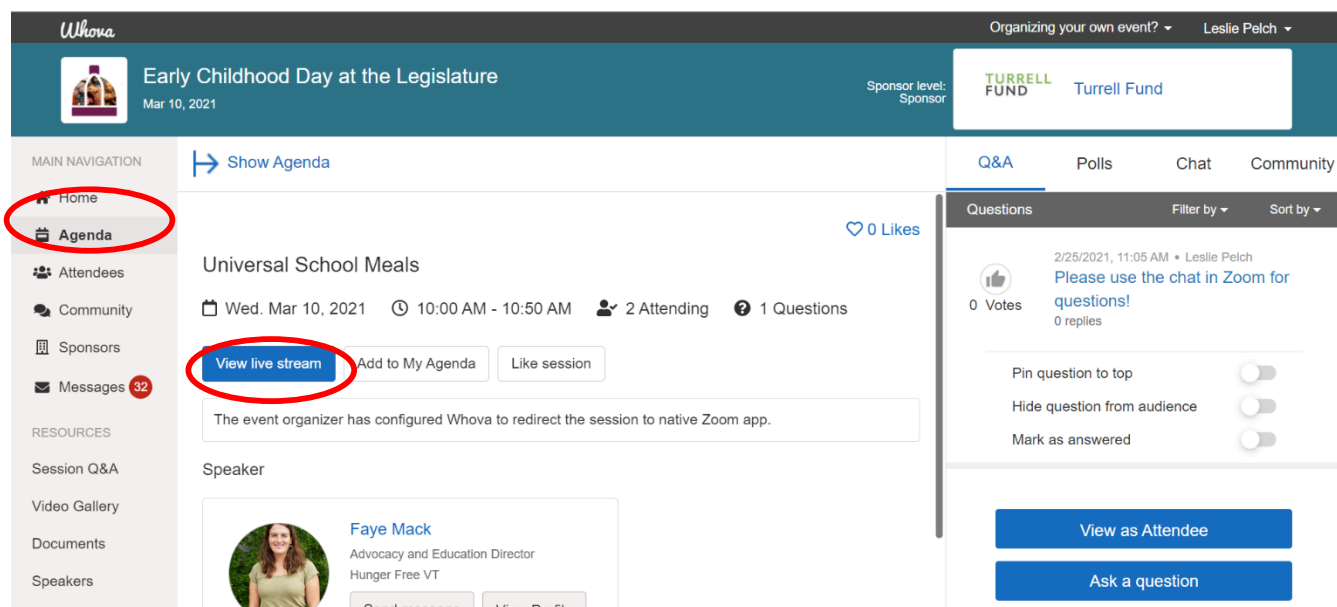
- After setting up your log in, you will be brought to the **Home Page**. From here, click **Agenda**.



- Once you locate the session you would like to join, click **View Session** to see the sessions details.



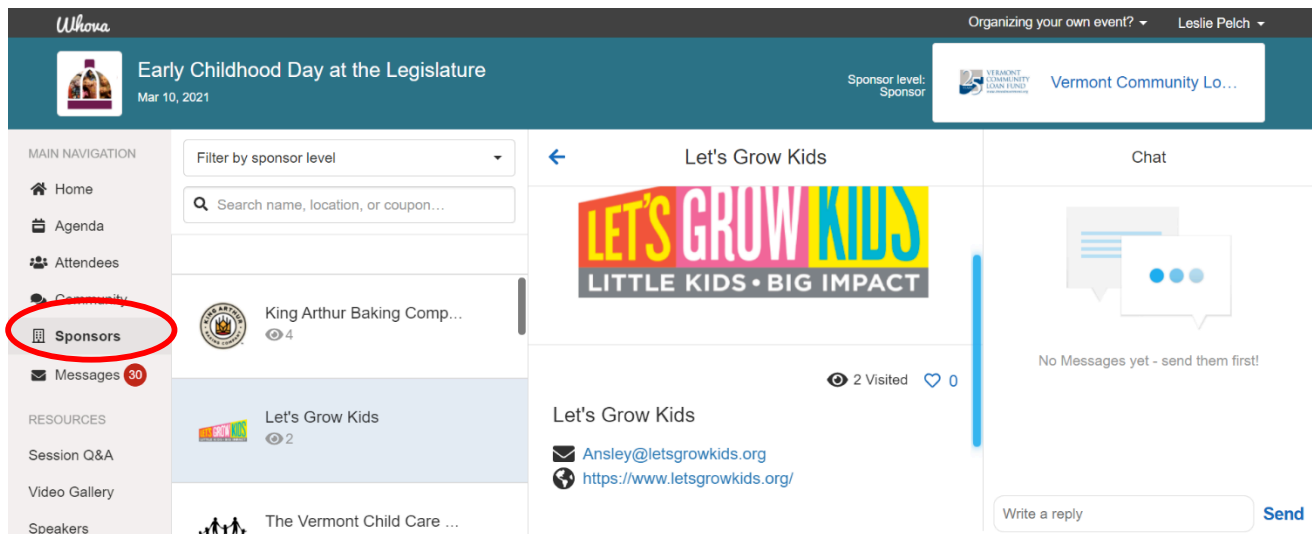
- On a session details page, once a presentation is live, there will be blue button that says **View live stream**. This is the link you will use to join your session's Zoom Meeting.
- Use the chat in Zoom (not in Whova) to submit questions for the presenter and to ask for technical help from the Tech Host.
- You will also see title, time, and speaker information on the session details page.



- When your session has ended, the Zoom meeting will close and you will return to the Agenda to join your next session. Please do so immediately after leaving the previous session (even if you plan to take a short break). This is particularly important after the second Issues Session.
- **Please join the Lunch with Legislators and Closing Session at 11:40 (beginning of the break).** Use the Whova agenda to navigate into the session called "Lunch with Legislators and Closing Session," and click "view live stream" BEFORE you begin your break, so that we can assign you to the correct legislative region breakout. You can turn off your camera and mic, and step away to grab your lunch right after you join the Zoom meeting!

SPONSORS

- Click on the Sponsors button in the Main Navigation to visit the sponsors' virtual booths
- Each will have contact information and possibly videos and documents posted as well



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Documents such as a PDF of the Agenda for the day as well as various custom guides can be found in the Documents area, linked from the Resources area of the Navigation bar.
- For a tutorial on using all features and functions of the Whova apps, checkout the **Whova Guides** linked from the Resources area of the Navigation bar.

