



# EARLY CHILDHOOD DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE

March 11, 2026

## Agenda

8:00 am - 1:30 pm	Vendor Displays
8:00 - 9:00 am	Registration
9:00 - 9:20 am	Welcoming Comments
9:20 - 9:30 am	Break
9:30 - 10:30 am	Issue Session A
10:30 - 10:40 am	Break
10:40 - 11:40 am	Issue Session B
11:45 am - 12:50 pm	Constituent/Legislator lunch
12:50 - 1:00 pm	Travel to State House
1:00 - 1:20 pm	House of Representatives Welcome
1:20 - 1:30 pm	Break
1:30 - 2:30 pm	Afternoon Workshops

## Morning Issue Session Options at the Capitol Plaza Hotel

### Session A

#### **CACFP Sponsor Funding: Improve Food Access in ECE Settings, *Hunger Free VT***

Come learn more about the funding request being led by Hunger Free Vermont to support organizations who sponsor the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Securing this funding is a critical next step in increasing access to nutritious meals and snacks for children in child care settings. Participants will leave with an understanding of the request and what they can do to support it when connecting with legislators.

#### **ECE Workforce: Establishing Early Childhood Education as a Profession, *VTAEYC***

The ECE Profession Bill (S.206), which would establish professional recognition for early childhood educators, is working its way through the Legislature. This session provides essential background for early childhood educators who are curious about or just learning about this bill. Participants will learn about the field-led initiative that started the conversation, how educator voices have influenced the bill and can continue to inform the process, and why professional recognition benefits early childhood educators, children, and families.



**Fingerprinting: Streamline and Modernize Background Checks, *YMCAs/VT Head Start Assoc.***

This session will examine the status of Vermont's fingerprinting and background check modernization efforts and how the current system fails to fulfil the promise of Act 76. With processing timelines averaging seven weeks or longer, early childhood education and afterschool providers continue to face delays in hiring and filling critical teacher and staff positions. The briefing will provide an overview of the current system, highlight the need for continued investment to streamline processes and reduce backlogs, offer an update on the budget process and interagency improvements, and conclude with a discussion of remaining gaps and potential advocacy needs.

**Child Protection: Close the AoE Background Check Loophole, *Prevent Child Abuse VT***

The Vermont law which requires schools to conduct background checks on employees does not cover individuals hired by the Agency of Education who enter schools. This gap leaves some children less protected and creates inconsistent safety standards. In this session, Prevent Child Abuse Vermont will provide an update on their advocacy efforts to encourage the Legislature to close this loophole and create safer, more equitable learning environments.

**Fair Share for Vermont: Raising State Revenue, *Fund Vermont's Future/Public Assets Institute***

Fair Share for Vermont is a campaign to increase state revenue by raising taxes on the wealthiest Vermonters, who are receiving significant federal tax cuts under the Trump Administration. This session will focus on the scale of Trump tax cuts for the wealthiest Vermonters, details and updates on the Campaign's revenue proposals, and information on how advocates can support this effort.

**Emergency Shelter: Protect Access for Unsheltered Families, *ACLU of Vermont***

The ACLU of Vermont is working with other organizations, including the Alliance, to reduce or eliminate unsheltered homelessness by preserving and expanding access to the General Assistance emergency housing program for Vermont individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Both the funding and the outlines of the program – eligibility limits, caps on number of days, etc. – are being actively debated in the Legislature. In this session ACLU staff will provide an update on advocacy efforts to secure funding and shape the program in both the current and the coming state fiscal year.



### **Children's Integrated Services: Funding the CIS System and SAG, *Alliance***

Children's Integrated Services (CIS) delivers evidence-based and informed services to families with young children as part of a coordinated continuum of care across multiple types of providers and settings. Unfortunately, recent state investments have not substantially improved the ability of community-based agencies to retain staff and provide services. Additional funding is also needed for the critical Special Accommodations Grants (SAG) program. This session will review the latest advocacy efforts to strengthen and secure more funding for CIS, and share the messaging currently being used in discussions with legislators.

### **FY27 State Budget: Supporting Core Services, *Alliance***

While the threat of potential federal funding cuts looms over the State House, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees are undertaking a relatively normal budget development process. Pressures from property taxes and health care costs continue to create significant budget challenges, and the list of "asks" from many communities (including our own) is as long as ever. This session will provide an overview of all of these issues, as well as reviewing the basics of the annual processes used by the Legislature to write budgets and allocate funds.

## **Session B**

### **Early Childhood Education: Building on Our Child Care Progress, *LGKAN/VTAEYC***

Child care progress is transforming Vermont – since Act 76 passed in 2023, more than 100 new programs have opened, adding over 1,700 spaces and 400 early childhood educator jobs. But families still face high costs, demand still exceeds availability, and we need more qualified early childhood educators. Join VTAEYC and LGKAN for an update on this year's child care policy priorities and learn how you can raise your voice and make an impact during the legislative session.

### **3SquaresVT Funding: Ensure Access for Vermont Families, *Hunger Free VT***

Because of changes made last summer by Congress, Vermont must pay more of the cost of administering SNAP (3SquaresVT) beginning October 1, 2026. Without adequate state funding, Vermont will struggle to keep 3SquaresVT operating at its current level, putting food security and health outcomes for families with young children at risk. In this session Hunger Free Vermont will provide an update on their efforts to encourage the Legislature to allocate \$6.3 million needed in SFY27 to ensure 3SquaresVT remains available to all Vermonters who need it.



### **Federal Funding Cuts: Supporting Responses to Federal Funding Reductions, *Alliance***

As preparations for ECDL continue, we remain unclear on the status of our state's federal funding for both the current federal fiscal year (FFY26) and the coming fiscal year, which starts 10/1/26. This session will provide you with the most up-to-date information we have about the status of federal funding, what programs are being impacted, and what actions the State is taking to respond. The session will also provide an overview of the process used by Congress to develop and pass the 12 federal appropriations bills.

### **Parent Child Center Network: Supporting Families in Uncertain Times, *PCCN***

The State's 15 Parent Child Centers (PCCs) are requesting an increase in state funding to respond to the growing numbers of families experiencing financial hardship. Their legislative request builds on the PCC's capacity to assist families to receive critical federal benefits such as SNAP and Medicaid, and provide concrete supports to stabilize families in times of crisis. This session will provide an update on advocacy efforts and prepare participants to speak to legislators about the request and the services PCCs are providing.

### **Access to Doula Coverage for Medicaid Births: Implement Act 50 (S.53), *Doula Assoc. of VT***

The Doula Association of Vermont is working to provide access to Doula services for families who are covered by Medicaid. Legislation enacted last session (Act 50) begins this process by instructing the Administration to take the steps necessary to receive federal Medicaid funding for doula services. The Doula Association will provide updates on this process including work to create a voluntary certification process for doulas and challenges that they are working through related to Medicaid funding.

### **Information and Referral: Ensuring a Strong, Sustainable Vermont 211, *United Ways of VT***

For years, Vermont 211 has been promoted as the trusted, single number connecting residents to essential services and disaster support. To ensure the ongoing sustainability of Vermont 211, adequate funding is needed to support staff and operations, and investment in innovations to ensure that Vermont 211 can best serve the community's emergency services and health-related social needs. Come learn all about VT 211, our services, and our new strategic goals for growth and innovation.



### **Reach Up: Ending Child Poverty is a Policy Choice, *Voices for Vermont's Children***

Learn how perpetual under-funding of Vermont's anti-poverty income support program, Reach-Up, puts children and families at risk and drives up costs for the state. Explore how Reach Up is treated differently than other safety net programs, with no automatic adjustments for inflation, inadequate benefit levels, and arbitrary asset limits. Power up your advocacy for kids and families relegated to deep poverty by VT's policy choices.

### **Afternoon Options at the Capitol Plaza Hotel and the State House**

#### **Advocacy Seminar: Advocacy 101 – The Building Blocks (for newer advocates), *Alliance***

This session will review the basics of legislative advocacy inside and outside the State House. Topics include how a bill becomes a law; successful contacts with legislators in the State House and in their communities; relationship-building with key decision-makers; and, how to effectively communicate the needs of children and families in support of our advocacy goals.

#### **Advocacy Seminar: Advocacy 102 – The Process in Action (for more experienced advocates), *Alliance***

Get an in-the-moment tour of the State House to see how the Legislature operates in real-time. For advocates with some experience working with legislators, this tour of the State House will focus on observing various aspects of the bill development process, including committee hearings and floor sessions. Topics will include operations of committees, lobbying techniques, and bill consideration during floor sessions.

#### **Why Recognition Matters: The ECE Profession Bill and Career Supports, *VTAEYC***

The ECE Profession Bill (S.206), which would establish professional recognition for early childhood educators, is working its way through Vermont's Legislature. This session provides essential background for early childhood educators who are curious about or just learning about this bill, and will also review the robust career supports and workforce investments already in place for Vermonters navigating early childhood education career pathways.

#### **Understanding VT's Child Care Landscape: Cost of Care and Supply/Demand Reports, *First Children's Finance***

In this session First Children's Finance will present new findings from their Cost of Care Study and statewide Supply and Demand Gap Analysis, which will highlight the cost of delivering high-quality early childhood education. Participants will learn where the needs are greatest and how data can support policy, funding, and future planning.



### **Creating a Food Secure Future for All Vermont's Children by 2035, *Hunger Free VT***

In this session, participants will be introduced to the completed “Creating a Food Secure Future for All Vermont's Children by 2035” strategic plan. The session will focus on outlining all 14 strategies within the plan, with a focus on the strategies that most impact families with, and early childhood education programs who serve, young children.

### **Paid Leave: Present and Future, *Paid Leave Coalition***

Nearly everyone will need to take time off from work at some point in their lives. Despite this universal need, more than 70 percent of Vermonters still do not have paid family and medical leave through their employer. While the Legislature did not consider a paid leave bill this year, growing evidence shows that only a strong, universal paid leave program can ensure Vermont workers have access to the economic security paid leave provides. This session will examine how Vermont’s optional paid leave program falls short and review new analysis showing that universal paid leave would deliver a significant return on investment for Vermont businesses, families, and the state.

### **If You Build It: Navigating Child Care Construction Project Management, *VCLF***

You’ve got the training, the staff, the students, and the resources, but space is proving to be an issue. Curious about expanding your home or facility with a construction project, or building/renovating another? This session provides an opportunity to hear from construction experts, lenders, and business owners who have been through the process of taking on a construction project. From permits and regulations to choosing a contractor, financing and more, you’ll dive into the ever-changing world of childcare construction.