



Date: April 27, 2023

To: Rep. Emilie Kornheiser, Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means

From: Sarah Kenney, Chief Policy Officer, Let's Grow Kids

Re: Expansion of CCFAP Eligibility

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Thank you for the opportunity to share Let's Grow Kids' ideas on how the state can expand family eligibility for Vermont's Child Care Financial Assistance Program. In the short term, we recommend expanding the current established service needs, specified in the program's regulations, to open the program to more families. In the long-term, we recommend that CDD explore how best to provide child care financial assistance to the majority of Vermont families.

## Immediate CCFAP Established Service Needs Amendments

### Section XX. RULEMAKING; CHILD CARE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

The Department for Children and Families Child Development Division shall amend the regulations governing the established service needs for Vermont's Child Care Financial Assistance so that they address the following needs:

1. Amend the employment established service need to allow a primary caretaker who may be involved in an activity that is exempt from receiving hourly compensation commensurate with the Vermont minimum wage, such as agricultural workers, to only demonstrate that they receive wages for their activity and not demonstrate wages equal to minimum wage;
2. Amend the training and education established service need to include postgraduate or second bachelor's degree education courses, research fellowship, or practicum at an accredited or recognized institution of higher education offering postgraduate studies;
3. Create a new established service need for families receiving refugee resettlement services so that these families are eligible for child care financial assistance benefits for one year after enrollment in the Program, regardless of other established service needs. The Commissioner may renew a family's refugee status eligibility for up to one additional year at the Commissioner's discretion;
4. Expand the protective services established service need to continue to provide no-cost child care to families who adopt a child through the foster care system;
5. Create an established service need for kinship caregivers in line with the protective or family services established service need to provide no cost child care to children in kinship care arrangements;
6. Create an established service need for children from families in which a primary caretaker is providing caregiving for a child in the family or another close relative; and
7. Expand the seeking employment established service need's rules so that families need only apply every 6 months.

# Studying the Feasibility of Moving to Income-Only Eligibility Determination for Child Care Financial Assistance

Section XX. Child Care Financial Assistance Expansion Implementation Plan

On or before January 1, 2024, the Commissioner for the Department of Children and Families, in consultation with Building Bright Futures and other stakeholders, shall submit an implementation plan to the House Committee on Human Services and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare regarding how to provide child care financial assistance to Vermont families so that the public-facing determination for assistance is based solely on income. The Department shall consider options that allow for the continued use of federal Child Care Development Block Grant funds and other federal sources currently allocated to the Child Care Financial Assistance Program in addition to state funds.