



Date: Wednesday, February 15, 2023

To: Vermont House Committee on Appropriations
Vermont Senate Committee on Appropriations

From: Drake Turner, Government Relations Director, Let's Grow Kids

Re: Child Care and the Governor's Recommended Fiscal Year 2024 Budget

Thank you for your attention to child care issues as your committees consider recommendations for the state fiscal year 2024 budget process. The work that the Legislature has done over the years to support Vermont's early childhood education system has made child care more affordable for families, supported early childhood educators to enter and remain in the field, and given child care programs a critical lifeline to help them keep their doors open during an incredibly stressful and uncertain time.

These investments have made a difference, and yet Vermont's child care system remains in crisis. More work and investment are needed to realize the goals of Act 45 of 2021: an early childhood education system in which all families can access child care, no family spends more than 10% of their income on care, and early educators are well compensated and supported to do their critical work. We look forward to continuing our work together to realize a child care system that truly works for Vermont's children, families, early educators, programs, and employers.

The Senate and House have recently introduced child care legislation, S.56 and H.208, and S.56 is currently under consideration in the Senate Health and Welfare and Senate Education Committees. As committees of jurisdiction do their work on those bills, Let's Grow Kids requests that you support the Governor's full proposal for additional investment in the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP), including funding to extend eligibility to more Vermont families, equity payments to promote geographic equity in CCFAP, and funding to allow Community Child Care Support Agencies to support increased family eligibility reviews and referrals. We know that as S.56 proceeds, more funding will certainly be needed, but the Governor's recommended investments are an essential foundation from which to build the child care system Vermonters need, and we urge you to include them in the FY24 budget.

Thank you again for your attention to this critical matter.