



Burlington's Early Learning Initiative

Rebecca Reese
Early Learning Initiative Manager
City of Burlington



The Early Learning Initiative

Launched in 2017, ELI is Mayor Weinberger and the City of Burlington's response to a lack of support and funding for our youngest residents – infants and toddlers.

First Steps Scholarship

Capacity Grants



Limitations of the Child Care Financial Assistance Program

- Application process and **time requirements**
- Reimbursement rates do not take into account the **true tuition costs**
- **Service needs are limited** and do not consider extenuating circumstances, especially seen in marginalized communities





First Steps Scholarship Program **supports families to both find and pay for care** for infants and toddlers.

- Designed to layer **additional support** and funding on top of the Child Care Financial Assistance Program
- We partner with high-quality providers to **reserve enrollment spaces**
- **No family pays more than 5% of their income** in weekly copays



First Steps Scholarship

Who We Serve

Our families meet qualification requirements:

- **Burlington residents**
- Families with **income at or below 80% AMI**
- Families **enrolled in the State Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP)** or willing to apply
- Families looking to be enrolled in **full time care** (min. 26 hours/week) at a high-quality child care program



First Steps Scholarship Program Results since 2019

50% growth
from Year 1 to Year 3.

90% of applicants have
been **offered spaces**.

89% of those offered
spaces have been **enrolled**.

86% of scholarship recipients
have **stayed enrolled**.

73% of families **need childcare
to stay or find employment**.

\$716,000 in scholarships will be
awarded in addition to **\$1.36M** in CCFAP.

Why This Works

Personalized support to navigate child care system

- CCFAP application, finding enrollment options, attending program tours, comprehensive guidance

Inclusive Practices and resources

- ELI website hosts accessible application
- Website is fully translated for 8 different languages
- Fully translated flyers



Language Access Grants

Expanding support for diverse populations without adding more costs to the child care programs.

\$800 reimbursement grants offered to **all Burlington providers** and First Steps Scholarship partner programs to cover translation/interpretation costs.



Capacity Grants

The Capacity Grant Program is built to **create more space** in quality child care programs, and **ensure existing spots remain** in the community.

- **\$785,300** awarded since 2018
- **46% increase in capacity** in Burlington
 - **3** new child care centers
 - up to **120** new high-quality spots, of which **92** are infant/toddler
 - stabilize **166** spots at high-quality centers
- **Expanding to support educators**
 - Early Multi-Tiered System of Support social-emotional training course
 - Early Childhood Educator training program pilot with Let's Grow Kids

Requirements for Success

Inclusion

Language support to reach all communities

Simplicity

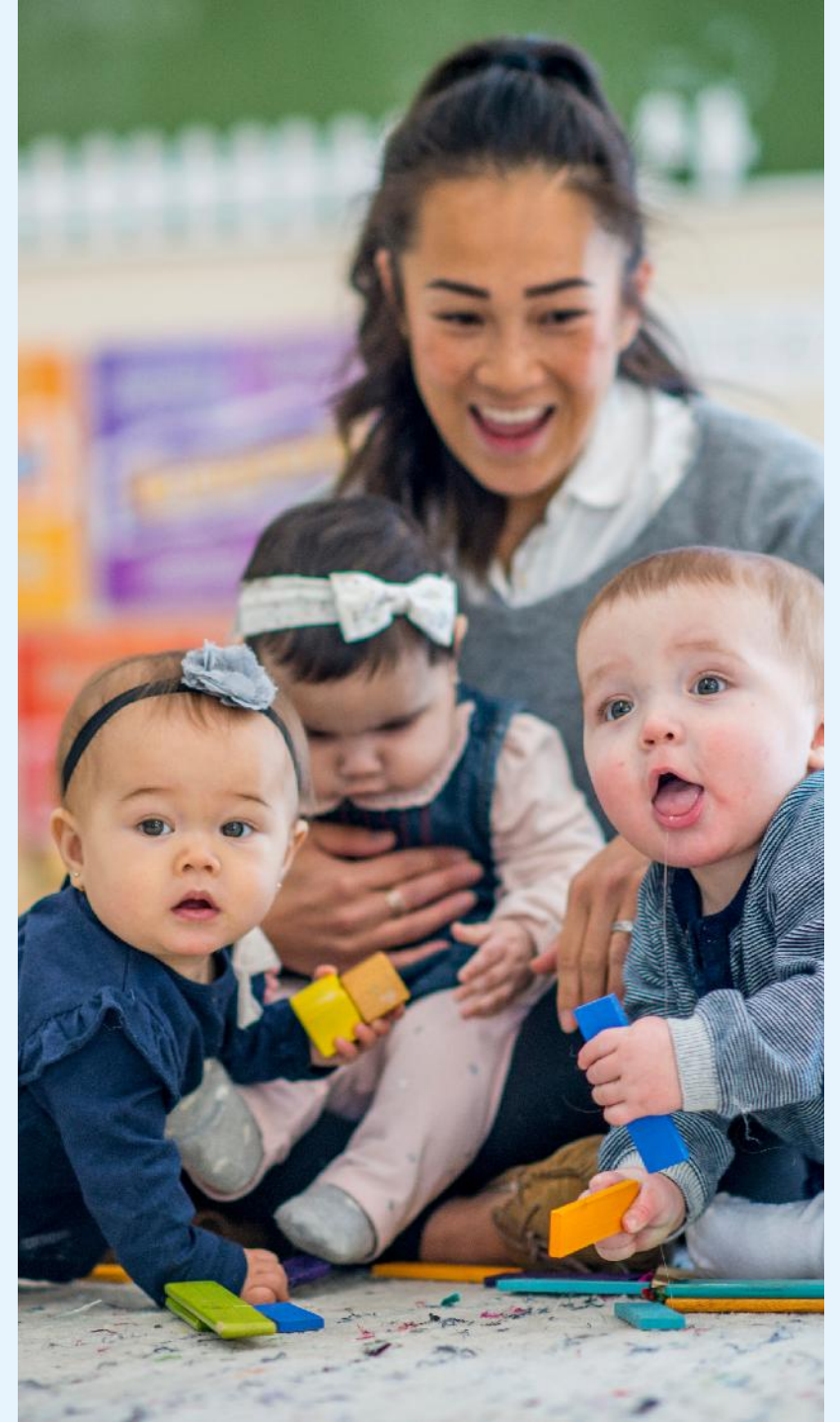
No application deadline and efficient processes

True Affordability

Increased scholarship funding and expanded income requirements

Personalized Support

One-on-one support from start to finish



Get in Touch

Rebecca Reese

Early Learning Initiative Manager
City of Burlington

rreese@burlingtonvt.gov
802.865.7533

