

First, I would like to thank the legislators for the opportunity to comment about the budget

My name is Donna Pomroy, I live in Barnet Vermont and work in Montpelier. I am the director of Turtle Island Children's Center (TI) serves approximately 80 families, enrolling children from 6 weeks old to 5 years old. We are open 7 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. through out the entire year, catering to full time working parents.

I am here to ask that you support the Governor's proposal to increase finding for CCFAP.

While the Governor's proposal to increase funding by \$7.5 million is significant, unfortunately due to chronic underfunding, tuition rates have not kept pace with how much providers need to charge. This leaves a gap between how much tuition assistance covers and the actual cost of tuition.

So to put this in perspective; If a family received 100% Child Care Financial Assistance, that means for a 3 STAR program CCFAP would pay \$775.85/mo. for infant care. The cost for infant care is \$1153/mo., leaving the family to pay \$377/mo. This is a family who's income is at or below \$1680/mo or \$20,160/year (family of 3).

Let me talk for a minute about the flip side of that problem.

There ^{have} ~~has~~ been many initiatives through out the past few years to increase the quality of childcare in Vermont
Better training and higher education for our Early Ed. Teachers
Clean, safe, child friendly environment
Age appropriate materials and equipment, etc

For quality teachers, we need quality pay
The average child care worker in Vermont earns less than \$25,000 annually, which is not a livable wage.
To hire and retain quality teachers, we need to increase wages and benefits, so while we struggle to keep our tuition affordable, we also realize the need to bring in enough revenue to ensure we provide the best care we can with the best staff that we can hire.

Even though we try to keep our tuition cost down, it is still out of reach of too many families.

realize the importance of
We ~~enjoy~~ providing care for all our families, but sometimes it seems like the children who can benefit from being here the most are the ones we lose because the parents or parent can no longer afford to keep the child here, even with 100% tuition assistance. These are hard working people who want to continue to work and also keep their children safe, happy and well cared for.

Everyone deserves high quality care, please hear us and help us make that possible.

Please, help these families and support the Governor's proposal to increase funding for CCFAP.