



Thursday, February 15, 2018

To: House Committee on Appropriations
From: Anna Brouillette, Policy Analyst, Let's Grow Kids

**Testimony on Vermont's Child Care Financial Assistance Program and
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Vermont**

Good afternoon. My name is Anna Brouillette and I am the Policy Analyst for Let's Grow Kids. Thank you for all your work for Vermonters, especially in this another tight fiscal year, and for allowing me to speak with you today regarding two important issues for children and families: Vermont's Child Care Financial Assistance Program, also known as CCFAP, and T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Vermont.

We respectfully request a funding increase of \$9.2 million to bring CCFAP reimbursement rates in line with 2015 market rates. As you know, Vermont's Child Care Financial Assistance Program provides child care financial assistance to families that meet certain work, education, income and/or health criteria and children in foster care. Let's Grow Kids is committed to ensuring that all children, birth to five, have access to high-quality, affordable early care and learning programs, and we appreciate your commitment to a funding increase for the program last year through a new grant program. However, due to chronic underfunding, the program still faces a significant funding gap between how much the Child Care Financial Assistance Program reimburses child care providers and how much providers currently charge for their programming. These reimbursement rates are currently based on how much early care and learning providers were charging for their programs in 2008 and 2009 – meaning that some rates are now 10 years out of date. This leaves families to make up the difference, and some families who receive assistance from the program are spending more than 40% of their income on child care. In order to ensure the program works as intended, Let's Grow Kids, in coalition with the Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children, the Vermont Child Care Providers Association, and members of the Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance are requesting a funding increase of \$9.2 million for the program to fix the current funding gap.

Additionally, we respectfully request \$320,000 to support the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Vermont program. Let's Grow Kids supports the Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children's request to allocate \$320,000 for state fiscal year 2019 to support the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Vermont program. This critical program helps current members of Vermont's early care and learning workforce who are non-traditional students seek education in early childhood beyond a high school degree. This appropriation would support the program's current cohort of 50 Associate's degree students and 20 teacher licensure participants while the program undergoes a funding and partnership transition.

We greatly appreciate this committee's support of early care and learning issues and thank you for your time and consideration of increasing funding for Vermont's Child Care Financial Assistance Program and the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Vermont program.