

Date: February 13, 2017
To: Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees
From: Jill Rapanotti, Chester VT
Contact: jillr@vermontel.net
RE: Children's Integrated Services

I am writing as the executive director of the Springfield Area Parent Child Center, a current fiscal agent for the Children's Integrated Services contract, as well as a past home visitor and supervisor for the program. I have been involved with Children's Integrated Services over the past 10 years. I know first-hand the value and importance of these services to the success of the families in our communities.

Children's Integrated Services offers early intervention, family support and prevention services that help ensure the healthy development and the well being of children pre-birth through age five. These services meet families where they are at using a strengths-based and family-centered approach. Goals achieved by families in this program result in lasting effects on their lives and an increased ability to meet future challenges that will arise.

Now, more than ever, families need these services in the correct dose. Addiction and increases in child custody rates have created a crisis in service delivery. Current funding makes it difficult to retain qualified staff and for families to receive adequate visits to create the deep relationships they need in order to gain necessary skills to reach their goals.

Funding for Children's Integrated Services has remained flat while work-force demands and the needs of families have increased.

It is not okay to offer mediocre services to families. Placing a band-aid on a broken bone does not heal it. If we do not address the root of the problem, we cannot impact family safety and stability, and healthy child development.

Please increase Medicaid Global Commitment dollars and additional General Fund dollars to provide necessary services to families through Children's Integrated Services.

Thank you.