



Johnson Group Consulting, Inc.

175 Red Pine Road Hinesburg, VT 802.482.3005

EARLY CHILDHOOD DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE

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Message from: Kay Johnson, President,
Johnson Group Consulting, Inc.

Support Funding Increase for Children's Integrated Services (CIS)

Vermont's Children's Integrated Services (CIS) initiative is unique in the nation and represents more than a decade of commitment from three governors and the legislature. CIS was designed to reduce duplication of services, increase efficiency, and deliver effective services to at-risk families with young children in an integrated, community-based approach.

CIS maximizes children's health, development, and learning by giving families access to a range of supports, including: parenting education, nursing, specialized instruction, and the expertise of mental health clinicians. CIS plays a role in Vermont's education, home visiting, mental health, and family support systems.

What is the need?

CIS efforts are currently hampered by flat funding. As caseloads and costs have increased, level funding is effectively a cut.

Supporters of CIS are requesting an increase of funding for CIS, both from Medicaid Global Commitment dollars and from additional General Fund dollars. This would ensure continued progress on family safety and stability, optimal child health and development, and community-based supports.

Where does this issue stand currently in the legislative process?

The Governor's Recommended FY'18 Budget provides the same funding level for CIS as last fiscal year. The House Human Services Committee has recommended to the Appropriations Committee that CIS funding be increased, if resources are available. It is hoped that the Appropriations Committee will agree to an increase in CIS funding before the March 24th deadline for finalizing their budget.