

## Rebecca Buck

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**From:** John Mandeville <john@lamoilleeconomy.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 16, 2017 2:55 PM  
**To:** Rebecca Buck  
**Subject:** Child Care Financial Assistance Program

I was unable to attend the event at Johnson State on Monday evening but wanted to be sure and get on the record with our thoughts.

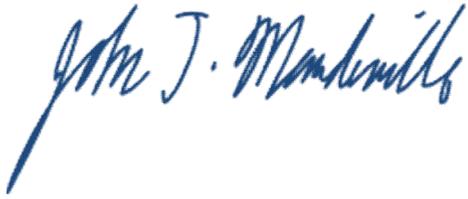
The Governor's budget proposal includes \$7.5 million in additional funding for the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP), a program that's been chronically underfunded for many years. This increase is an important step toward implementing some of the short-term recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Commission on Financing High-Quality, Affordable Child Care.

Right now, there is a fair amount of controversy over portions of the governor's proposal. Regardless of where you stand on the governor's proposed funding source, it's critical that the Legislature continue the conversation about how to support our workforce when they are at the fragile start of their careers. Middle-income families with two children spend up to 40% of their income on child care—if they are able to make their way off a child care program's waiting list. At the same time, child care providers are, on average, making less than \$25,000 per year, often without benefits. All too often, parents of young children choose to leave a job they love simply because they can't afford child care.

In Lamoille County, we are fortunate to have a rich mixture of entrepreneurial spirit and hard work, which has led to many thriving businesses growing here. If we hope to continue that trend of growth, we need to ensure that the support systems for our workforce are in place: affordable housing, strong schools and high-quality child care.

This much-needed investment will help to bring CCFAP market rates up to 2015 rates—which is critical for child care programs to be economically viable. We can't attract and retain a vibrant workforce without quality child care programs, and we can't afford to continue to lose programs year after year. In the years between 2010-2016, Vermont lost 12.5% of child care programs. I have to guess that this is in large part due to the unsustainable gap between the tuitions families can barely afford, versus the cost of providing care.

High-quality, affordable early care and learning programs serve as an economic driver, ensuring parents can continue to work and ensuring the healthy development of our future workforce. A new report from the Vermont Business Roundtable Research and Education Foundation shows that Vermont would see a \$3.08 return on every dollar invested to expand early care and learning programs. I hope you'll find a way to make significant investments in early care and learning programs so Vermont can begin to see the benefits highlighted in this report.



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*Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're probably right*