

# Otter Creek Child Center

“Celebrating 30 years of helping children discover their love for learning”

Otter Creek Child Center was founded in 1984 in a turn-of-the-century farmhouse and strives to maintain the homelike atmosphere it provides. A private, non-profit organization, the center serves children ranging in ages 6 weeks to 5 years. Otter Creek is committed to providing high-quality early care and education for all families. We believe diversity is an essential part of any community of learners.

## Mission Statement

To support young children and families in achieving their goals by providing high-quality early care and education.

## Our Vision

- Each child is an individual who deserves to be treated with love and respect at all times.
- Feeling loved, cared about, and safe are the most important aspects of good development.
- Children will let us know what they need to learn.
- In our very hurried world, children need time to be children in an unhurried way.
- Helping children grow into healthy adults is a very important aspect of shaping the future of the world.
- Discipline is an attitude, not just a variety of techniques one uses with children.
- Diversity is essential to a healthy developmental experience.
- Family is the foundation of a child's well-being.

## Enrollment:

- License Capacity: 45 children per day
- Enrolled: 48 Students (21 Preschoolers, 27 Infants/Toddlers)
- 38 Families
- 40% of families receive some level of CC FAP funding
- 74% of families receiving CC FAP are receiving 100% CC FAP funding
- 27% of children are eligible for Free or Reduced lunch
- Serving 18 towns in Addison, Rutland, and Chittenden Counties

## Funding Gap:

The following are tuition figures for the 2018-19 School Year:

Age	100% Subsidy Rates	Full Time Tuition Rates	Weekly Difference	Monthly Gap
Infants (under 2)	\$210.51	\$274.78	\$64.27	\$267.80
Toddlers	\$192.41	\$244.51	\$52.10	\$217.00
Preschoolers	\$186.88	\$233.75	\$46.87	\$195.29

Scholarships offered due to the funding gap:

17/18 School Year: \$27,856

Projected 18/19 School Year: \$30,964

We budget roughly 4% of our operating budget to go toward scholarships to cover the gap between tuition rates and CC FAP payments.

Scholarships are raised through grant writing, fundraising (including petitioning for Town Funds), and earmarking year end funds towards scholarships. OCCC is fortunate to have a Board of Directors that is dedicated to serving a diverse socio-economic population and to supporting families through scholarships.

**Teachers:**

- 12 Full Time teachers, 3 per classroom
- Average salary is \$29,163; \$14.02 per hour
- Benefits include
  - 20 CTO days, maxing at 30
  - Short Term Disability
  - Tuition Reimbursement Program, \$500 a year
- 2 BAs, 3 AAs, 7 meeting Licensing Regulations for Assistant Teacher or Trainee
  - 2 receive TEACH scholarships for AA at CCV
  - 1 received TEACH scholarship for classes at VT Higher Ed Collaborative to obtain ECE Teaching License

**Wait List:**

Age	Total Number*	Total asked to Stay on as of Feb 2018	Spots to fill for the 18/19 school year
Not Born	21	14	
Under 1	28	18	4
1 year olds	44	36	2
2 year olds	63	25	2
3 and 4 year olds	104	22	0

\*We do not remove families from the wait list unless they ask us to or the children age out.

**What do these families do if they never make it off our wait list?**

There are very few openings in programs in Addison County; only four center based programs take children under 18 months. Otter Creek receives multiple calls each day from families already on the wait list who are desperate for a spot and requesting updates, and we also add around three new families to the wait list each week. In 2017, a family moving to Vermont from out-of-state considered declining job offers because they could not find child care. We have heard of families taking their children to work with them or having family members move to Vermont, and settling for care that does not meet their quality standards.

The demand study being discussed is something that we have been talking about in our community, so we may have better data about where families are going when they can't get into our programs, and better information about what families' preferences would be for additional child care options.

**What if there wasn't a funding gap?**

If there was no funding gap and OCCC didn't need to reserve 4% of our budget toward scholarships for families receiving CC FAP funding we could:

- Increase salaries
- Improve our benefit package
- Hire one additional teacher
- Have lower ratios in our preschool classroom
- Consider expansion to serve more children, with a budget that we could easily balance
- The ED could spend more time mentoring teachers instead of raising funds

- Support families who do not qualify for CC FAP funding but are still struggling to make ends meet
- Make improvements to our building and grounds

The list of things we could do with that nearly \$31,000 in funds is endless.

An investment into CC FAP is a win/win/win. Families win, programs win, and Vermont wins. Families would have better access to higher quality programs without the worry of paying upwards of 40% of their income for child care. Programs would receive payment for the true cost of care, allowing them to make program improvements, increase salaries to attract qualified teachers, and much more. Vermont wins because studies have estimated a return to society of between \$7 and \$12 for each \$1 invested in Early Childhood.

Please prioritize early childhood care and learning by supporting increases to CC FAP, supporting a demand study, and supporting funding for TEACH.