

Dear Chair Pugh and members of the House Committee on Human Services,

Greetings. First, thank you for your tireless service to our state. As you know, childcare in Vermont is in scarce supply on a good day. Covid 19 has had an extremely negative impact on this already essential professional resource and those who provide it. UVM has just announced the permanent closure of the Campus Children's School. UVM has had an early education lab school for more than 80-years with 70 plus childcare spots. Though it has never been large enough to accommodate all the staff and faculty needs for childcare, it had provided an important 70 childcare spots, provided employment for 13 people, allowed for early-childhood research, and brought in millions of training dollars for early childhood education.

I am asking each of you for your support. Please invest a portion of the \$1.25 billion stimulus package into UVM's childcare center, the Campus Children's School (CCS). Without your support we will be sending 70 families into the already overcrowded childcare desert, we will lose the tax dollars of these employees and potentially even more tax-paying parents if they cannot find childcare, and critical federal research dollars. Despite the fact that UVM somehow has 90 million for athletic needs, and a large endowment, the administration has wrongly chosen to balance its budget on the backs of children, and their teachers. This is wrong-headed leadership in these unprecedented times. Please push UVM to look deeper and partner with you to provide funds for this multifaceted resource and partner with you so there are not 70 families crowding into an already tight childcare market. Please also support our request for COVID funds. We have to come up with \$550,000 per year in bridge funding.

Although my children are well beyond the childcare age, I remember those days. The fear of not finding daycare. The need for high quality childcare for my children. I was not one of the lucky ones who got a spot at CCS. Nonetheless, I understand the tremendous need for this resource and value the teaching and research that has taken place there.

With gratitude for all you do, respectfully,

Susan A. Comerford, Ph.D.