

Theresa Utton

From: Nancy Bloomfield <NancyB@the-family-place.org>
Sent: Tuesday, January 22, 2019 9:52 AM
To: Theresa Utton
Subject: BAA comment re: Reach UP caseload savings

To whom it may concern:

I am reaching out today on behalf of the staff, Board and families connected with The Family Place, the designated Parent Child Center in northern Windsor County.

We urge you to reject the concept of "caseload savings" in the Reach Up program and reinvest every penny available into the benefits for families with children. As you know, the Reach Up benefit is currently well below the statutory goal of a basic needs budget, which even at 100% would only be subsistence survival for a household. When fewer families with children need Reach Up, the funds allocated should be used to increase the benefit for the current and future recipients.

The cost (and availability of) housing continues to be a significant challenge for families in our region, particularly for those who are experiencing poverty. Cost and availability of quality child care is a concern for the families we work with as well. We know that in order for parents to have success and stability in their employment, maintaining housing and child care is essential.

Reach Up is fundamentally a program designed to ensure that children are safe, warm, sheltered, clothed and fed. Scooping "caseload savings" out of the budget is essentially taking much needed funds away from children living deep in poverty. The UN Declaration on the Rights of a Child declares that "mankind owes to the child the best that it has to give." We believe this is the state of Vermont's commitment and aspiration, and so we ask that you reject the Reach Up caseload savings and direct DCF to direct every available dollar to increasing benefits for Reach Up recipient families.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Nancy Bloomfield

Nancy Bloomfield
Executive Director



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