

State Budget Testimony
Corinne Lemaire- Rutland, Vermont

My son has been attending daycare at Rutland County Parent and Child Center since he was 10 weeks old. The staff have become extensions of our family. When I drop my son off every morning I know that he will be taken care of. His diapers will be changed, he will not go hungry or thirsty, there will be plenty of activities to keep him busy and challenge his brain. And most of all I know that he is loved.

Choosing a childcare provider is one of the hardest decisions I have had to make as a parent. We looked at numerous options and many left me with a nervous feeling that I would not find a place that I would leave my child. Then we walked into Rutland County Parent and Child Center. The staff was energetic and friendly, the building was clean, they toys were in good condition, the atmosphere was joyful and bright. I immediately knew that was our place.

As expected the tuition price is high but really there is nothing affordable about childcare. For us we make it work but there is not a lot of wiggle room in our budget. Daycare costs unfortunately are a major consideration for us having another child.

Daycare tuition only goes so far. Unfortunately it cost significantly more to run a high quality program than Rutland County Parent and Child Center is able to bring in through tuition and state daycare subsidy. We are asking that the master grant be increased by 1.5 million dollars. We are asking that you not cut the case managers. And we are asking for ^{1.5 million} ~~money~~ for maintenance.

Rutland County Parent and Child Center is so much more than just a daycare. Their mission is to nurture children and families through supportive positive educational experience that enhance their success in the community. The list of opportunities and things they offer is long. They offer case management, play groups, parenting classes, early intervention, transitional living programs and so much more.

Rutland County Parent and Child Center is dedicated to providing the best and most positive experience they can. Their vision is to help all children and families in Rutland County become capable, confident and contributing community members. Every service they offer is needed in Rutland County and cutting them would be detrimental to our community.

I am here today to ask you not to cut funding but add to it for Rutland Country Parent and Child Center. They have too much to offer. The children they serve are our future and we need to do everything we can to give them the opportunities they need to be successful.