

Testimony to House and Senate Appropriations Committees
February 25, 2019, Springfield Town Hall
Nancy Bloomfield, Executive Director, The Family Place Parent Child Center

My name is Nancy Bloomfield, representing The Family Place Parent Child Center. Thank you for hearing my testimony. I am here to ask for your help in ensuring that Parent Child Centers can continue as the hub of services for families with young children.

I have two specific requests.

First, I ask that you increase base funding for Parent Child Centers.

PCCs are delivering essential state services through grants and contracts with the Department for Children and Families. However, we have been under-funded for decades. Our request for Fiscal Year 2020 is to increase the PCC Master Grant base by \$1.5 million. We also request \$1.5 million in one-time funding to catch up on deferred maintenance expenses that have been delayed.

Second, please do not allow the administration to end the PCC Reach Up Case Management Contracts.

PCCs should be the home for supports and services for Vermont families. Co-location of Reach Up Case Management and early childhood services ensures that parents can easily access resources and opportunities that support their children's well-being during the critical early years in their development.

I'd like to tell you about one young family who is receiving RU through The Family Place. Mom, Dad and their two children are at our Center four days/week as part of our Learning Together program. Each morning, staff picks them up from their home a half hour from our center. After settling their children in their classrooms, the parents walk across the driveway to get breakfast in our kitchen before moving on to work sites or academics. The father is working toward his high school diploma in our on-site high school. The mother is getting support to prepare for a cashier position and is practicing for her driver's test. Both parents participate in weekly parenting activities as part of our program. This is a family with an open case with DCF-Family Services.

This is just a snapshot of the support this family is receiving through Reach Up and The Family Place and the hard work these parents are doing on behalf of their family. But the outcomes so far speak volumes:

Outcomes:

Infant has access to high-quality early care

Toddler is back on track in his development before 3rd birthday

Mother is demonstrating increased job skills and self confidence

Father is making progress on his diploma

Both parents are spending time in environment where healthy parent-child relationships are supported and modeled

Whole family has access to 2 nutritious meals/day

Family maintaining RU benefit

Family has remained in tact and is addressing the concerns that led to Family Services involvement.

This is what support looks like for many families at The Family Place and at Parent Child Centers across the state.

Thank you for hearing my testimony today and supporting this work to continue.



Parent Child Centers are the Answer Legislative Platform 2019



Parent Child Centers (PCCs) are a network of 15 community-based non-profit organizations, serving all of Vermont. PCCs were created through Vermont Statute, and the purpose of each PCC is to provide “prevention and early intervention services such as parenting, education, support training, referral and related services to prospective parents and families with young children, including those whose children are medically, socially, or educationally at risk.” PCCs are essentially the hub of services for families with young children – an actual place in the local community where families are always welcome and can always get the support they need, regardless of economic status or family status.

Budget Request:

Increase state funding for Parent Child Centers providing essential state services

All PCCs deliver critical & essential state services to families with young children, through their Master Grant and other grants and contracts with the Department for Children and Families. The Master Grant is an ongoing effort between the Parent Child Centers and the Department for Children and Families to build consistency in service delivery and outcomes measurement across Vermont for the essential state services the PCCs are delivering on behalf of the state. However, the Master Grant *does not adequately fund* the state services that it requires the PCCs to deliver.

Parent Child Center staff wages and benefits are continually *30% below market rates* to comparable positions in education and state government. If PCCs are expected to continue to provide high quality state services, *PCC wages and benefits must sustain the highly skilled people who do the work.*

Parent Child Centers Core Services Home Visits Early Childhood Services Parent Education Playgroups Parent Support Groups Concrete Supports Community Development Information & Referral

Master Grant funding must increase by \$8,000,000 to close the salary and funding gap. Total PCC Master Grant funding must be \$10,000,000. PCCs are requesting a 3-year phased approach to get to the goal of \$10million/year for the PCC Master Grant.

- ⊕ **Our request for FY2020 is to increase the Master Grant base by \$1.5million**
- ⊕ **We also request \$1.5million in one-time funding to “catch up” on deferred administrative and maintenance expenses that have been delayed as we have dealt with continued under-funding for decades.**



Research has proven that prevention services targeted at reducing and treating ACEs can dramatically reduce long term health care costs. The PCCs use a family-centered, multi-generational, strength-based approach that both treats and prevents ACEs in families.

Parent Child Centers also support the following Legislative Agendas:

- FaMLI Coalition
- Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance
- Reach Up Coalition
- Let's Grow Kids

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