



Vermont Head Start Association



February 10, 2021

Re: Governor’s Proposed Budget for SFY22

Dear Chair Mary Hooper, Chair Ann Pugh, and Members of House Appropriations and House Human Services:

On behalf of Vermont’s Head Start programs and agencies, and the children and families we serve, we are writing to express our support of the Governor’s recommended budget for child care and for additional funding needed to support the House’s child care bill, H.171, an act relating to the governance and financing of Vermont’s child care system.

Head Start programs are two-generation, child and family development programs for children and families with low income. Head Start and Early Head Start provide high quality, comprehensive, early care and education services for children ages birth to five, and social services for their families. We have seen firsthand how high quality, research-based programs with rigorous accountability such as Head Start help to facilitate positive outcomes for children and families.

Early care and education providers are essential, and this has never been more evident than in the last ten months of the pandemic. Your investment has kept critically needed facilities and programs open and available for children, families, and employers. The Governor’s budget supports the critical investment in IT modernization (\$4.5M one-time), continued support of the 5-year CCFAP redesign plan, and continuing to invest in building capacity of the system. But, there is more to do to ensure the system can meet the needs of children, families, work force, and employers. These additional investments are outlined in H.171:

- **\$4.75M for CCFAP.** The Governor’s proposal continues the CCFAP 5-year redesign plan, but it does not include funding to pay programs based on a child’s enrollment in the program, instead of paying for attendance; or to set rates based on a cost of care formula.
- **\$2.5M for Workforce Supports.** It is estimated that Vermont needs 2,000 additional early education teachers. We believe funding is needed this year for scholarships (\$500K) and a loan repayment program to recruit and retain a skilled early care and education workforce (\$2M).
- **\$225K Governance and Financing Studies.** The budget should include funding for two studies to help map the future of the early care and education system: One study to evaluate the estimated cost and a sustainable funding source for the significant investment needed to solve this problem, as well as a governance and accountability analysis for the early care and education system.

Thank you for your time and for your support of Vermont’s children and families.

Paul Behrman, Chair
Vermont Head Start Association

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