



Good afternoon members of the House Committee on Human Services,

On behalf of the Vermont Parent Child Center Network, I thank you very much for the invitation to speak with you today about **Act No. 150 (S.91), An act relating to the Parent Child Center Network.**

I am delighted to be here and look forward to hearing your suggestions and questions. Before I begin, though, I want to extend our deep appreciation to this committee for including \$2 million for the Parent Child Centers in your request to the House Appropriations Committee, to help address salary and benefits gaps. Thank you!

My name is Christie Binzen, and I am the Coordinator for the Vermont Parent Child Center Network, a part-time position piloted last year.

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/ACTS/ACT150/ACT150%20As%20Enacted.pdf>.

Act 150, which updated previous PCC legislation, set in place a new funding relationship between the Parent Child Center Network and the Agency of Human Services, along with some additional expectations. The Act can be thought of as focusing on four themes: Finances and Funding, Quality Assurance, Parent Leadership, and Governance and Accountability.

Let's begin with the funding procedures:

The Act states that The Secretary of AHS will disperse a joint allocation for all parent child center services to the Network, which shall distribute funding to each authorized PCC.

Status: This is planned to occur in January 2024.

- The Integrated Grant has not yet begun to run through the Parent Child Center Network.
- A number of unanticipated structural requirements needing to be in place in order for the Integrated Grant to go through the Network were identified at the start of the process. Neither the PCCN nor CDD had been aware of these impediments.
- It was mutually agreed that for 2023, AHS would continue with individual agreements with each PCC, and that the Network would implement a process to develop the structures required to transition properly by the end of 2023. (Note: The Integrated Grant runs on a calendar year, which is why the dates are January to December, rather than the fiscal year dates.)

Further: VPCCN will then disperse the funds to the authorized PCCs, ensuring accountability and collaboration among all Centers. To be eligible, a center must

- Receive some funding from one or more private, local, or federal source
- Qualify for tax exempt status from the IRS
- Represent a designated geographic area

Status: All PCCs meet this standard

Next, Quality Assurance:

To be eligible, a center must:

- ◆ Complete a Peer Review every three years, conducted by the PCC Network

Status: VPCCN is on track to complete 5 Peer Reviews in 2023. One has been conducted; one is scheduled for April.

- ◆ Provide each of the 8 Core Services directly or through formal community partnerships:
 - Home visits
 - Early Childhood Services
 - Parent Education
 - Playgroups
 - Parent Support Groups
 - Concrete Supports
 - Community Development
 - Resources and Referrals

Status:

- All PCCs offer the 8 Core Services, building upon a common philosophy of family-centered practice.
- The PCC Network is the member organization for Vermont with the National Family Support Network. Across the state, PCCs are implementing the Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support, which are research-based and evidence-informed.
 - Leadership for all 15 PCCs are informed and guiding implementation of the Standards
 - 11 PCCs have developed diverse teams for Self-Assessment
 - 10 PCCs have held first Self-Assessment discussion
 - 9 PCCs have conducted Orientation Training
 - 9 PCCs have completed their initial Self-Assessment
 - 6 PCCs have completed the Self-Assessment Summary tool
 - 7 PCCs have completed their Action Plan based on feedback
 - 4 PCCs are having regular team check-ins on implementing the Program Action Plan
 - 4 PCCs have completed their first annual Self- Assessment Tool and are working on their second
 - 4 PCCs have had new staff complete Orientation Trainings
- The Network is currently supporting 2 staff from each center to be trained in the Standards.
- Standards Self-Assessment results are being utilized in Peer Reviews.
- Quality Rubrics for each Core Service, that connect to the Standards, have been drafted by the Network and are being reviewed.
- The PCCs are holding an Innovation Conference for staff to network and cross-pollinate ideas and inspirations, May 23 and 24, supported by the A.D. Henderson Foundation.

Third, there's Parent Participation and Leadership. The Act expects that each PCC will:

- ◆ Have parent representation on its Board of Directors, whose membership reflects the growing diversity of Vermont's children and families.

Status:

- Currently 13 out of 15 PCCs have parents serving on their Boards of Directors.

- ◆ Have an Advisory Committee that meets regularly and provides input, guidance, and feedback to the Board of Directors on programs and services provided by the PCC.

Status:

- Currently 4 PCC's have initiated Parent Advisory Committees and 11 are in the start-up/implementation phase of the process. Several are trained in and utilizing the Developing and Sustaining Parent Advisory Committees guidance from the National Family Support Network.

Lastly, there's Governance and Accountability

- ◆ AHS will consult with the Network to develop appropriate measures and methods of accountability for authorized members of the Network.

Status:

- The Network has established an Infrastructure Workgroup to lead this work and has agreed with their proposal to hire a consultant to explore options for a new Network leadership structure and a process for determining allocations across the PCCN.

- The Network Co-Chairs recently met with the consultant and developed a proposal, which has been sent to the full Network for review and consensus. Key aspects of the proposed plan include 2 phases, to be completed by July 1, 2023.

- Phase 1: Recommendations on a Fiscal Management model for the Network:
 - Research and outline what fiscal model options best support the network goals, and meet Act 150 requirements including an independent auditing structure, as outlined by Act 150.
 - Options must include a proposed budget and annual budget-making process that includes: A proposal for an updated dues structure, and recommendations on structures for making allocation decisions across the PCCN.
- Phase 2: Detailed Recommendation Report with at least 2 Infrastructure Recommendations, an Implementation Plan, and Timeline including:
 - Conflict of Interest policies
 - Governance policies
 - Organizational structure outline, with internal coverage of priorities
 - Sustainable structure for network-wide data collection and reporting processes

- The timeline is: mid-March through June, 2023.

- ◆ The Network and its members shall provide any previously agreed upon information to enable the Secretary to evaluate the services provided through grant funds, the effect on consumers, and an accounting of expenditures.

Status:

- The Network continues to engage CDD and the business office to ensure necessary structures and agreements are in place for the transition of the Integrated Grant over to the PCCN by the end of 2023.
 - CDD leadership join quarterly Network meetings.
 - The new Director of Statewide Systems, Dr. Dawn Rouser, attended our March meeting.
 - We are looking forward to working with new Deputy Commissioner, Janet McLaughlin, with whom we have had informal communications already.

- Grant Reporting: The Network is close to completing a common report form for program and data collection to ensure consistent, comprehensive information will be gathered for each

Integrated Grant reporting cycle beginning with the 2nd half of the current contract year, July-December 2023.

→ Board Development:

- There is interest in creating materials for PCC Boards to ensure they have common knowledge of the expectations and implementation of Act 150.
- Also of interest, is developing practices that support parents in moving into leadership positions in the PCC decision-making structure.

In Summary:

Act 150 provides a robust and comprehensive pathway for the Parent Child Centers and the PCC Network to mature. We are very grateful for all you have done to provide this opportunity and are excited to be moving forward in this way. Thank you.

