



WE SAY "YES!" TO FAMILIES!

Transportation Testimony
March 2024



Our Network is comprised of **15** Parent Child Centers across Vermont dedicated to supporting and strengthening families every day. Our strengths-based, multi-generation approach serves both children and their caregivers through our 8 Core Services and then some! We fill a vital role in our communities by meeting families where they are and cultivating deep relationships at critical moments.

We served **18,656** children
and **17,696** parents*

8 Core Services

...AND THEN SOME!



94%

of parents reported **feeling stronger and more confident as a parent** after working with a PCC in 2023 and

98%

of parents feel they received the help they needed and **that was right for them.**

Impact Stories

 **15,800**
Home Visits



It's one of the things I have on my weekly plate right now that I actually look forward to. It's like, that's really going to make me feel better about everything I'm dealing with.

Dad's Group Participant,
The Family Place

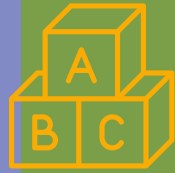


Brooke and her son, Logan
with the key to their new apartment!

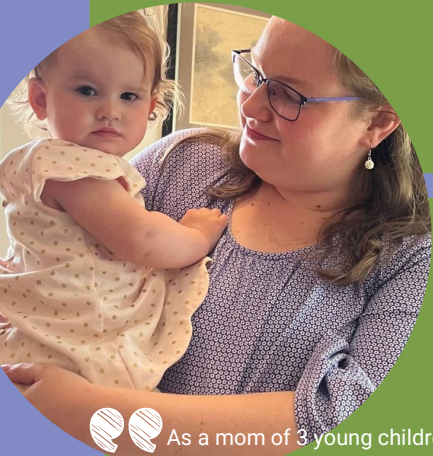


Food

The cost of food has increased significantly this year, resulting in more families who face food insecurity. Parent Child Centers offer families food access, cooking classes, and support in utilizing benefits that help keep nutritious food on the table.



787
Playgroups



As a mom of 3 young children I've been using the services provided by the family center for as long as I've walked my parenting journey. I am oh so grateful for the services that you all offer our community. I've been going to baby chat and breastfeeding group since 2017 when my oldest was born. The connection made and the support given made the walk into new momhood something that was easier to do. When my child got a little older we added playgroups and it was such a joy to watch his skills grow. The parent classes joined, which falls under my self care part of parenting. It is so amazing to have the opportunity to learn something new and know that the kids have a fun and safe place to play or join in the class.

Mom, Lamoille Family Center

99%

of parents feel their PCC had a positive impact on their family



Housing

Lack of affordable housing continues to impact youth and families resulting in increasing homelessness. Providing stability and essential needs becomes more difficult. PCCs walk alongside families in navigating the housing market and meeting personal, employment, and housing goals.



Montpelier



Crisis Relief

Parent Child Centers stepped up to help Vermont families who were affected by this summer's historic flooding. We brought food and essentials to FEMA sites, helped displaced families secure temporary shelter, sponsored food and clothing drives, and connected families to resources to muck out, repair, and restore their damaged homes.



Having this opportunity will help my daughter and myself with basic needs but also will open whole new doors for me to attend college and work, and to offer my daughter a solid start.

I can't thank everyone enough for making this miracle come true.



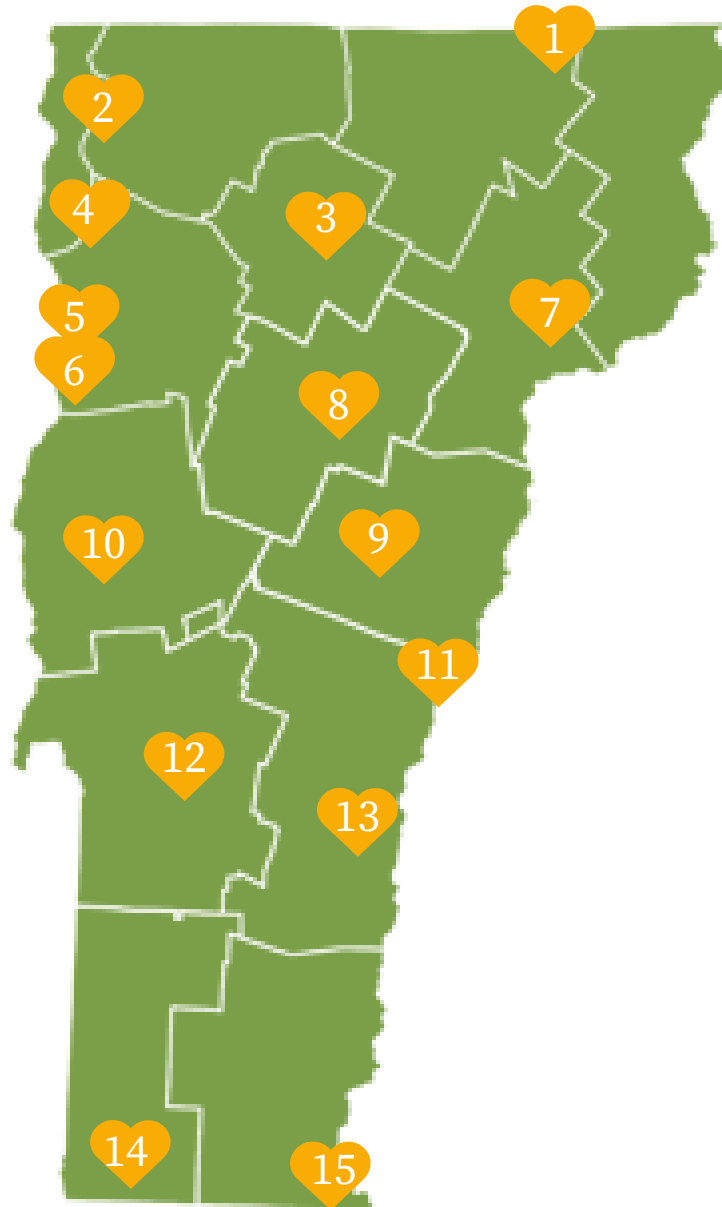
Sheridan Family Center
Vehicle Recipient



Responding to Community

Parent Child Centers

Supporting Vermont's Parent Child Centers through leadership, advocacy and collaboration with key partners to achieve the best outcomes for families.



- 1 NEKCA Parent Child Center North
Newport, VT
- 2 Parent Child Center of Northwestern
Counseling & Support Services
St. Albans, VT
- 3 Lamoille Family Center
Morrisville, VT
- 4 Milton Family Community Center
Milton, VT
- 5 Janet S. Munt Family Room
Burlington, VT
- 6 Lund Parent Child Center
South Burlington, VT
- 7 NEKCA Parent Child Center South
St. Johnsbury, VT
- 8 Family Center of Washington County
Montpelier, VT
- 9 Orange County Parent Child Center
Tunbridge, VT
- 10 Parent/Child Center of Addison County
Middlebury, VT
- 11 The Family Place
Norwich, VT
- 12 Rutland County Parent Child Center
Rutland, VT
- 13 Springfield Area Parent Child Center
Springfield, VT
- 14 Sunrise Family Resource Center
Bennington, VT
- 15 Windham Southeast School District
Early Education Services
Brattleboro, VT

TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Public Transportation is not adequate or accessible in many areas of the state

- Public transportation is more accessible to families living in urban areas of the state. Transportation resources are sparse for rural areas.
- Public Transportation often has a very rigid and infrequent schedule at times that are not convenient for families utilizing it for work or child care.
- Public Transportation is not door to door service, which is what is needed for families with young children, especially where streets and roads are not within safe walking distance of a destination. Busy roads with no sidewalks or rural areas with no crosswalks are treacherous with toddlers.
- Medicaid rides are appointment specific so you cannot bring your child unless the appointment is for them
- 90% of PCCs report that public transportation is not available to get to other parts of the state.

Transportation Barriers for Children and Families

The cost to own and operate a private vehicle is too expensive

- The cost to inspect, register and provide insurance for a private vehicle is prohibitive for many families
- Vehicle owners often report driving without these requirements
- The cost of gas and limited access to gas stations in rural areas is a challenge for many families
- Vehicle repair costs are one of the top requests for financial assistance for families
- Many families live on rural roads that are not well maintained, causing damage to vehicles and making driving impossible if a family does not have winter tires or all wheel drive

Examples

- A mother and her child are participating in Families Learning Together at their local Parent Child Center. The transportation system is rigid about making any extra stops and will only drop off caregivers with small children down the road instead of at the center, making it dangerous to utilize since drop off is on a busy road. The Center director has complained about this to the bus agency and tried to negotiate a better drop off point, but once the weather turned cold, the young mother and her child chose not to participate in the program. The PCC suspects they have other possible Learning Together participants in the region who cannot attend the center-based program because of lack of transportation.
- A family living in Strafford has Medicaid and needs dental care for their three children. The closest dental care center that will accept new Medicaid clients is in Barre, a 40-minute commute. The dentist can only see two children on one day, so the father has to arrange for childcare for the other child so that he can use a Medicaid ride for the children who have an appointment. It is challenging to schedule the ride because the road to their house is muddy, so he has to arrange for a neighbor to bring him and his children to a central meeting spot.

How do PCCs support children and families with their transportation needs?

- We provide gas cards to families so they can get to medical appointments, early education programs, work, and other agencies
- Many PCCs provide van transport to families for medical appointments, services and programs
- Family Financial Assistance funds are granted to families to cover the cost of car repairs, licenses, registration, inspections, and insurance
- We assist families with securing bus passes, Medicaid rides, and other forms of alternative transportation

How can you support children and families with their transportation needs?

- Support expanded bus routes in rural areas and between towns and cities
- Support expanded bus services to include earlier and later hours, more stops along the routes, and operation outside of regular work/school hours
- Invest in infrastructure that improves roads and pedestrian travel to increase safety for young children and families who are walking/biking
- Continue to provide no-cost bus passes to families and advocate for low-barrier access to passes and bus rides
- Provide options that support the affordability of owning a private vehicle