



<https://vtparentchildcenternetwork.org/>

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

Good afternoon, thank you for the opportunity to testify before your committee today.

My name is **Claire Kendall, Co Director, Family Center of Washington County in Montpelier and Co Chair for the Vermont Parent Child Center Network.**

The Parent Child Center Budget request is for an Increase base funding for the Parent Child Center Integrated Grant by \$721,945 to cover health insurance cost increases and support PCCN administration.

With the passage of Act 150 the Parent Child Center Network was recognized and codified as a partner working with the State to provide our 8 core services and supports. This statute has facilitated the strengthening of the State-PCCN partnership and the PCCN has been working to ensure the Network and each PCC can meet the requirements outlined in the statute. Legislative support has been critical to the strengthening of the Parent Child Center Network, thus giving the PCCs the ability to ensure consistent, high-quality, family focused services across the state.

Last year, the legislature supported an increase in base funding for FY2024 for the PCCs Integrated Grant, which is spread across the 15 Parent Child Centers to deliver services to all families with young children in Vermont. Thank you! This increase has been applied directly to staff compensation in order to address the gap we have had between our compensation packages and market rates. These changes were welcomed by our staff! 100% of Parent Child Centers across the state increased their salary/benefit package. As a result the Family Center has demonstrated success in recruitment and retention, we have been able to fill 4 positions leaving 2 vacant positions which results in increased services to families and reduced wait lists. However, almost immediately after increases wages and benefits we learned of 12%-14% increases in health insurance rates.

We are asking for an increase of \$721,945 to directly address these two costs- Network Administration - to ensure we are aligned with Act 150 & Health Insurance cost increases- so that we do not have to cut into direct services or dial back any new benefits for our staff. Our Integrated grant will now run through the PCCN, which is both exciting and new, and in order to address the small admin expense for the PCCN grant, we are asking for a one-time base increase so that the programming portion of the integrated grant is not affected.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your committee today.

Claire Kendall