

Margaret Walsh, Parent Child Center Director, Northwestern Counseling and Support Services

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify this evening. My name is Margaret Walsh and I'm the Director of the Parent Child Center of Northwestern Counseling & Support Services in Saint Albans, and the mother of a brand new 5 month old baby. I am here today to request an *increase in base funding for the Parent Child Center Integrated Grant by \$721,945 to cover health insurance cost increases and support PCCN administration.* I have worked for the Parent Child Center of NCSS for over 10 years, and strongly believe in the upstream prevention and early intervention services we provide. I've witnessed first-hand how high quality, early childhood experiences can yield long-term positive outcomes for families, which in turn, creates a healthier Vermont. All 15 Parent Child Centers are committed to delivering on our 8 core services, whether it's supporting a child with complex medical needs, helping a family access childcare, or providing support in the prenatal and postpartum period, families have options. As a new mother, I am feeling the concept of "it takes a village" more than ever....and am keenly aware that the most supportive village is one that offers a multigenerational community-based approach. By supporting our ask, you are recognizing the importance and value of providing families with critical programs during the earliest years of their child's development. In order to continue to provide state-wide essential services for families with young children in Vermont, we must have a strong Parent Child Center Network that provides adequate and competitive benefits to the staff who deliver these necessary services. That's why we are asking for an *increase in base funding for the Parent Child Center Integrated Grant by \$721,945, for network administration to ensure we are*

aligned with Act 150, and to cover health insurance cost increases. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify before your committee today.