

Dear Legislators and interested parties,

My name is Rhianna Kendrick, and I live in Brattleboro with my partner and our 3 young children, ages 8, 4, and 3. I'm writing to express significant concern about the proposal to reallocate funding intended for childcare.

Childcare is near and dear to my heart, as I work as a Clinical Social Worker in private practice, serving an at-risk population of children and young adults, most of whom utilize Medicaid for their health insurance. My partner is new to the school system this year, teaching Art in our local middle school. Although our son is school aged, he also has complex needs, and one of the very limited supports we are able to access is childcare subsidy so that he can join area afterschool programs and camps that are designed to meet his needs. Our daughters attend a local childcare program, that we would not be able to afford without childcare subsidy, and which enables us to provide crucial services and support to others within our community.

I urge you to do everything in your power to ensure that Vermont uses every dollar allocated under Act 76 for its intended purpose: solving Vermont's child care crisis. The support of Act 76 has made such a difference for my family, and I want to see the program grow so that other families can have the same experience. We need more child care spaces, and more families eligible for tuition assistance. We know that investments in early childcare lead to better long term outcomes for adults, and at a time when our state is in crisis with growing rates of homelessness, substance use disorder, and young people leaving our state, we need to use every tool that we can to create multi-generational change. Act 76 is a significant leap in the right direction, and we can't stop now!

Thank you so much for your hard work, and time, and I deeply appreciate you considering my feedback as you move forward.

Sincerely,
Rhianna Kendrick