

VPCCN FY27 Budget Public Hearing Written Testimony

Hello, House and Senate Committees on Appropriations,

My name is Kim Laroche, and I am the Director of Parent Child Center Services at Lund, serving Chittenden County. I am writing on behalf of the Vermont Parent Child Center Network (VPCCN) to respectfully request support for an increase of \$1.88 million to the Parent Child Center Integrated Grant in FY27, for a total appropriation of \$8,909,750 for Vermont's 15 Parent Child Centers.

The Vermont Parent Child Center Network is a partner with the State of Vermont and represents 15 Parent Child Centers across the state, providing in-home and community-based services to families with young children. Through the Integrated Grant, PCCs deliver eight core services that strengthen families, support child development, reduce economic stress, and help prevent child maltreatment.

The VPCCN fiscal request focuses on three critical areas that reflect what families and providers are experiencing across Vermont today.

1. Concrete Supports: \$180,000 increase

Concrete supports are one of the required PCC core services and provide immediate, practical assistance that stabilizes families and prevents crises. These supports reduce economic stress, address urgent needs, and build trust with families who may otherwise not engage in services. Additional funding would allow PCCs to help more families with essentials such as:

- Diapers and formula
- Preventing evictions and utility shutoffs
- Clothing for children and working caregivers
- Transportation
- Other stabilization supports

These relatively small investments prevent much larger downstream costs and help keep families safely together.

2. Benefit Navigators: \$1.2 million increase

PCCs already help families access benefits. This funding would ensure each center has trained staff dedicated to helping families apply for and maintain access to critical programs such as Medicaid and SNAP. These federal programs bring significant safety-net resources into Vermont and are essential to family stability. Loss of access can be devastating for families with young children.

Benefit Navigators would help families:

- Complete screenings, applications, and recertifications
- Access housing supports

- Connect to additional community resources

3. PCC Staff Capacity and Workforce Stability: \$500,000 increase

The Integrated Grant was level funded in FY2026, leaving PCCs without resources to cover salary and health insurance increases. As a result, positions remain open and centers struggle to offer competitive wages. At the same time, families are presenting with more complex needs, including:

- Economic hardship
- Mental health challenges
- Substance use
- Housing instability

Additional funding would allow PCCs to retain skilled staff and serve more families while meeting statutory service requirements.

Parent Child Centers are Vermont's front line for primary prevention. PCCs work with families early before challenges become crises, helping to strengthen parenting skills, get connected to resources and supports, and helping to prevent involvement in more costly systems later. Investing in PCCs is an investment in:

- Healthy child development
- Strong families
- Community stability
- Long-term cost avoidance across systems

On behalf of Vermont families and the staff who serve them, I respectfully ask you to support an increase of \$1.88 million to the Parent Child Center Integrated Grant in FY27. Thank you for your time, your service, and your commitment to Vermont children and families.

Warmly,

Kim Laroche

Director
Parent Child Center Services

