

Dear Members of the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations,

My name is Melinda Pariser-Schmidt and I am an Essex Junction mom of three kids. My husband and I both work in Chittenden County, he is an attorney supporting contracts for the Defender General's office and I am a nurse at the UVMMC Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

I'm writing to express our concerns about the proposal to reallocate funding intended for child care.

The CCFAP expansion allowed us to afford care for all three of our kids. Even with established careers and stable income above the poverty line, the cost of childcare is exorbitant. We arguably pay a second mortgage for childcare and that is acknowledging that we were fortunate enough to find high-quality childcare locally.

Prior to the expansion of CCFAP we had to balance shifts and work to accommodate part-time childcare as full-time was too expensive. Even now as we look ahead to the summer it is a battle to find full-time care over summer vacation for school-aged children. Many "camps" charge upwards of \$400 per week per child for care from 9am to 3pm, this equates to \$1200 per week (for three kids) - \$4800 per month - absolutely untenable.

We felt so much relief when Act 76 passed, knowing that our family, and others like us, would have access to the support we so desperately need to continue to be contributing members of the Vermont community.

Programs like this not only keep families in Vermont but also helps to attract new families, which grows and strengthens our economy and workforce.

Please do not reappropriate the CCFAP funds, money that is raised for childcare and appropriated for childcare should STAY in childcare.

Please protect child care funding and continue to invest in our children, our families, and our early childhood educators. We have just begun to see the positive impacts of this investment in Vermont for families, the workforce and communities.

Thank you for your commitment to listening to your communities and fully funding the child care law.

Sincerely,

Melinda Pariser-Schmidt, MSN, RNC-NIC, IBCLC Essex Junction Mother of 3 Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Registered Nurse