



<https://vtparentchildcenternetwork.org/>
Supporting Vermont's Parent Child Centers
through **leadership, advocacy** and **collaboration**
with key partners to achieve the best outcomes
for families.

2.12.26 Budget Hearing Testimony

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

My name is **Claire Kendall, Executive Director, Family Center of Washington County in Montpelier and my testimony today is on behalf of the Vermont Parent Child Center Network.**

The Vermont Parent Child Center Network Budget request is for an increase to the Vermont Parent Child Center Network's Integrated Grant Appropriation by \$1.88 million for a total appropriation of \$8,909,750 for Vermont's 15 Parent Child Centers.

The 15 Parent Child Centers located across the state are service hubs for families with young children – an actual place in the local community where families are always welcome and can get the support they need, regardless of income or family circumstances. Families are coming to our PCCs with more complex needs that include economic challenges, mental health issues, substance use and housing instability, in addition to the support they need with their children.

Losing Medicaid and/or SNAP is devastating for families. Helping people apply for benefits is a critical role that PCCs play now and want to do more of. These federal programs bring critical safety-net funding into the state to support Vermont families most in need. PCC staff trained in benefits navigation are available to help families navigate Medicaid and SNAP including screening, applications and recertification, finding affordable and subsidized housing, and identifying other supports and services.

The Family Center has 3 staff trained as VT Medicaid Assistants through VT Health Connect. We have direct experience in helping families we work with apply for Medicaid. One family was currently homeless in our Family Supportive Housing Program with no regular address for mail so lost Medicaid and we were able to help the father reapply for Medicaid including support with getting in all the required documentation. We are working with a family who has NH Medicaid and have been getting their application in for VT Medicaid. We successfully helped someone who lost employer insurance apply for Medicaid, all through the VT Health Connect Portal. **We are not being paid by the state additional funds to provide this service, we offer it because our families and community need it, and we only see demand increasing.**

Please increase the Vermont Parent Child Center Network's Integrated Grant Appropriation by \$1.88 million for a total appropriation of \$8,909,750 for Vermont's 15 Parent Child Centers.

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

Claire Kendall