

Good morning.
My name is Paul Gibeault.

I'm the clinical director for Easterseals Vermont, here today to support level funding for Adoption Post Permanency Services Programs. Mostly, I'd like to say "thank you" to the House and to the Governor for including us in their FY26 budgets. Last year, the legislature increased Post-Permanency funding by \$300,000...the first increase in over 12 years.

Post Permanency services are available to any Vermont family formed by adoption or legal guardianship. The focus is family preservation: preventing adoption dissolution, promoting family resiliency, and increasing the stability of adoptions and guardianships. In a recent FY, post-permanency programs served 500 families, paid for respite and support groups, provided over 500 family and community partner consultations, ultimately touching about 1,300 families.

- PPSP services work to prevent health problems, educational challenges, behavioral issues, DCF involvement, and out-of-home placement.
- Issues include normative adoption themes, early childhood trauma and abuse, attachment complexities, or challenging kinship relationships.

Children are adopted by aunts, uncles, grandparents, siblings, teachers, daycare providers, family friends, foster parents, great-grandparents and more. And while adoption is an act of commitment and love, the work often begins after the papers are signed.

Adoptive parents can feel overwhelmed and isolated as they try to connect with and understand their children. Previously successful parenting techniques may not work well, or at all. Disturbed attachment and early trauma can make life confusing, maddening, scary and stressful for the parent and child alike. A dysregulated child needs a well-regulated adult, and that adult sometimes needs some help.

You may find a post-perm worker in a school. Or at an Act264 meeting. Or at the Parks and Rec department. Or on the phone with a therapist, or pediatrician, or equine therapy program or summer camp. Or at the town clerk's office helping a child get a copy of their birth certificate. But mostly, you'll find us in the homes of adoptive families, where we listen with empathy, provide evidence-based education and support, and work closely with families when things are the most difficult.

Again, I'm mostly here to say "thank you" on behalf of Easterseals Vermont, and to support continued level funding of the Adoption Post-Permanency Services Program.