



480 Cady's Falls Road · Morrisville, VT 05661 · www.lamoillefamilycenter.org

Carol Lang-Godin
Executive Director
Lamoille Family Center
(802)888-5229 ext. 124
clang-godin@lamoillefamilycenter.org

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My name is Carol Lang-Godin. I serve as Executive Director of Lamoille Family Center in Morrisville and as Chair of the Vermont Parent Child Center Network. Thank you for the opportunity to speak, and for your commitment to making Vermont a place we can all be proud of.

We respectfully request an increase of \$500,000 to the Vermont Parent Child Center Network's Integrated Grant appropriation, for a total of \$7,529,750 to support Vermont's 15 Parent Child Centers. This request reflects the very real and rising costs of delivering our eight core services.

We are concerned that this \$500,000 request was not included in the House budget. Parent Child Centers are established in statute, and it is notable that other statutorily recognized providers have received cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) in the House budget. If this request is not funded, it will mark the third consecutive year without a COLA for PCCs—an unsustainable situation for our statewide workforce of more than 475 employees, especially amid sharp increases in heating, food, and housing costs.

This funding increase would provide approximately \$33,000 to each of the 15 centers and would go a long way toward stabilizing staffing. Our work is fundamentally relational—human-to-human support—and cannot be done effectively without a stable, well-trained workforce.

Parent Child Centers are often the trusted support system for caregivers who lack extended family or other resources. We serve as an early safety net, helping families build social connections and support networks. Our staff act as referral specialists, guiding young parents to quality childcare and financial assistance. We are developmental educators, supporting families as they navigate difficult news, such as a child's autism diagnosis. We are home visitors delivering diapers and food to families without transportation. We are early childhood experts leading playgroups that foster both child development and parent connection. We are case managers helping families navigate housing instability. Above all, we are community hubs—

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meeting families where they are and providing immediate support, resources, and reassurance during times of crisis.

None of this work is possible without our dedicated and highly trained staff across all 15 centers. At Lamoille Family Center, we recently celebrated an employee's 40th anniversary—an extraordinary example of commitment to Vermont's families. Yet without increases in state funding, offering competitive salaries and benefits remains an ongoing challenge and a growing risk for nonprofit organizations delivering state-contracted services. PCCs cannot continue to operate with level funding for a third consecutive year.

In FY26, Lamoille Family Center alone will spend nearly \$325,000 to provide health insurance for 90% of our staff—an increase of \$45,000 from the previous year. Maintaining this level of support for our employees will not be sustainable without additional funding.

We respectfully request a \$500,000 increase to the Vermont Parent Child Center Network's Integrated Grant appropriation, bringing the total to \$7,529,750. This investment will allow each center to strengthen staffing capacity, retain qualified employees, and continue delivering the eight core services that Vermont families rely on. Most importantly, it will help ensure we do not have to reduce services due to staff vacancies at a time when families need us most.

We also respectfully ask you to support the \$180,000 that was allocated in the House Budget for Concrete Supports, which is one of our 8 Core Services, and one of the services where we see an increasing need from those we serve.

Thank you again for your time today and for your ongoing dedication and service. What you do makes a difference.