



**2019  
IMPACT  
REPORT**

**LET'S GROW KIDS**  
LITTLE KIDS • BIG IMPACT

**Your Support  
In Action.**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CHILD CARE IN VERMONT

PG 3 The Child Care Crisis

PG 5 A Message from Aly

### PROGRAMS

PG 6 Children & Families

PG 10 Early Educators

PG 14 Communities

### FINANCES

PG 18 Fueling the Movement

PG 19 Income/Expenses

PG 22 Let's Grow Kids Board of Directors

PG 24 How You Can Help

Photo: King Street Youth Center, Burlington, VT

### THE CHILD CARE CRISIS:

**3 out of 5 of Vermont's youngest children** don't have access to the child care they need.

.....

**But with your help, we're changing all of that. We're building a child care system that works for children, for families, for early educators, and for Vermont.**

**We are Let's Grow Kids.  
And YOU are our movement.**

## Thank you for **leading the way...**

Dear Supporter,

I want to tell you a story. It's the story of how an entire state—and the people who lived there—came together to build something extraordinary.

No, we're not building an enchanted castle, or a yellow brick road, or even a world inside of a giant peach. (Though I could tell you those stories, too!)

**We're building a future where every child in Vermont, from birth to five, has what they need to blossom.**

**I know I don't have to tell you about the problem.** Children and families who need child care, but can't access or afford it. Early educators struggling to make ends meet. Vermont's shrinking population. Our struggling economy. Our workforce crunch. *You know that this crisis impacts all of us.*

**But I also want you to know this: Vermont's child care challenge is also our greatest opportunity.**

Now's our chance to write the end of this story. At Let's Grow Kids, we've made a plan to set up a child care system where every child, family, and early educator can thrive—by 2025. With your support, I know we will succeed.

You see, this story is really about you. Because you've said yes. YES to the promise of a child. YES to investing in our children during their first five years. YES to all the good things that come as a result: a strong workforce, vibrant communities, a thriving economy. YES to our shared future.

You made 2019 a powerful year for our movement. I can't wait to share with you all that we've accomplished, with you at our side every step of the way.

With gratitude,

  
Aly Richards | CEO



# You're leading the way for CHILDREN & FAMILIES

**BECAUSE EVERY CHILD DESERVES A STRONG START AND A BRIGHT FUTURE.**

**THE PROBLEM:**

**3 out of 5 of Vermont's youngest children don't have access to the child care they need.**

**THE SOLUTION:**

**Thanks to you, our staff provide direct support to child care programs statewide. Through grants and expert coaching, we worked with 24% of all child care programs in Vermont in 2019.**

**IN 2019, YOU HELPED PROVIDE:**

- 415 new child care spaces
  - 388 high-quality child care spaces
  - 245 child care programs statewide with *free* technical assistance and support from our staff
  - \$401,849 directly to 20 child care programs to expand their capacity and improve their quality
- THAT'S 803 NEW & IMPROVED CHILD CARE SPACES

**WHAT IS A CHILD CARE SPACE?**

A child care “space” refers to an early educator caring for an infant, toddler, or preschooler during one day or night. We use spaces to track the availability of child care. Not every family needs child care for a full day, so many spaces are shared between families who use part-time child care.



## YOUR SUPPORT AT WORK

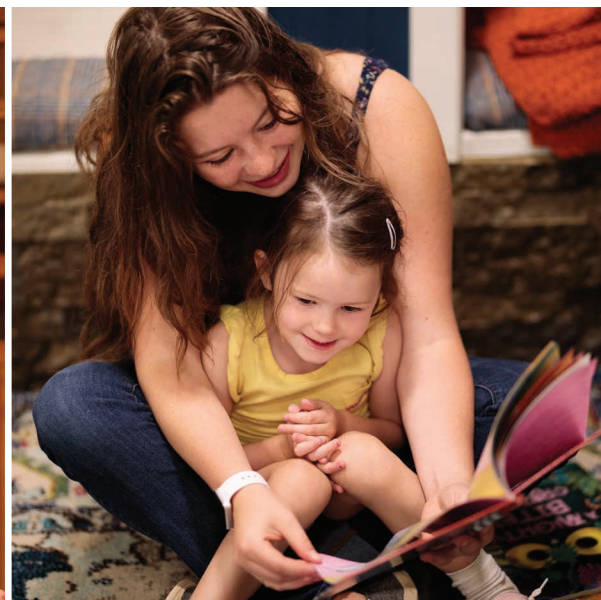
In 2019, inspired by Vermonters like you calling for public investments in child care, the State of Vermont allocated **\$2.2M to help child care programs build more spaces and improve their quality.**

Let's Grow Kids was honored to have been chosen to implement those public funds, beginning in 2020, alongside your generous philanthropic support.

In 2020, we will use those state dollars to expand our grantmaking—to create more child care for Vermont families, sooner.



Photos clockwise from far left: Robin's Nest, Burlington, VT; Rainbow Playschool, Woodstock, VT; Miss Robin's Nest, Montpelier, VT; Bennington Early Childhood Center, Bennington, VT



Photos: Georgia's Next Generation, Georgia, VT

SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS

# Georgia's Next Generation

GEORGIA, VERMONT

Sara LeBlanc, an experienced early educator, started dreaming about creating Georgia's Next Generation—a child care center to serve her community—in March 2018.

For several months, Sara and her husband Dan worked tirelessly to make her dream into a reality: they found and rented a former pizza shop on a busy commuter road and transformed it into a high-quality child care for eight infants and 10 preschoolers.

But the need in Georgia, and in Franklin County, was greater than Sara could provide. "On average, we see 4-5 inquiries a day," she says.

Sara reached out to Jen Severance, a Let's Grow Kids staff member, for help expanding her child care program. Together, they created a proposal to add 24 new child care spaces.

**Thanks to your generosity,** Jen has been working with Sara every step of the way, from the planning stages to crossing the finish line.

**In addition to Jen's technical assistance, Sara and Georgia's Next Generation received a grant of \$27,000 through our Make Way for Kids program to help fund their expansion.**

Today, Georgia's Next Generation's 42 child care spaces are full, and the program still has a waitlist. Because of your support, and lots of hard work, Sara and her team transformed Georgia from a child care desert into a child care resource.

## WHAT IS MAKE WAY FOR KIDS?

Make Way For Kids is a Let's Grow Kids program that provides grants and specialized technical assistance to help child care programs open, expand, and improve their quality.

Since 2018, we've helped child care programs add 1,304 high-quality spaces for Vermont's children through this program.

# Your support helps EARLY EDUCATORS lead the way.

## EARLY EDUCATORS ARE LEADERS FOR CHANGE.

### THE PROBLEM:

Early educators make a median of \$29,430 yearly, often without benefits.

There are approximately 7,000 early educators in Vermont.\* But to fill the gaps for children and families who need child care, we'll need an additional 2,090 people to join this workforce.

### THE SOLUTION:

High-quality early educators make child care possible.

### IN 2019, YOU HELPED:

- 136 early educators pursuing teacher licensure get assistance and support from Let's Grow Kids staff
- Child care programs create 98 new jobs across Vermont

\*According to estimates produced by Vermont's Child Development Division

## YOUR SUPPORT AT WORK

Thanks to you, the Let's Grow Kids staff works with high schools, career and technical centers, and higher education partners to inspire learners to make early childhood education their profession. We also partner with colleges and professional organizations so that early educators can continue to hone their skills, gain credentials, and earn degrees.

### What is advancing as a recognized profession?

Vermont's early educators are uniting both statewide and nationally to define and lead their profession. In 2019, 715 early educators participated in this work with Let's Grow Kids and the Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children.



Photos clockwise from bottom left: Georgia's Next Generation, Georgia, VT; Robin's Nest, Burlington, VT; Ascension Childcare Inc, Shelburne, VT



Photos: My Second Home, Bradford, VT

SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS

# My Second Home

BRADFORD, VERMONT

Meri Carpenter-Saladino is an early educator and a lifelong learner. She has been running My Second Home, a high-quality licensed family child care program in Bradford, for 32 years. In 2019, Meri was honored as Vermont’s Early Educator of the Year—because of her professional commitments and her heartfelt commitment to our children.

Meri was drawn to the profession because she saw that she could offer support to families and children in her community.

But Meri also understands the great responsibility she has as an early educator. She has worked hard over many years to earn her college degrees. And with support from Let’s Grow Kids and lots of hard work, Meri earned her Vermont early educator teacher license.

In her words, “Continuing education is mandatory. If you don’t do professional development and training, you aren’t doing justice to the children. If we don’t take trainings [on trauma, on special needs], we’re not serving them.”

Meri knows, too, that she’s not alone in her dedication to the early learners in her program. Meri is a leader among her peers and colleagues. **“Many of us work with children and families 50+ hours a week. We wake up in the night strategizing ways to help. It takes all of us. That is why this award is not about me, it’s about we.”**

Thank you, Meri, for upholding excellence as an early childhood educator and leader.



**We had a little girl chasing a grasshopper the other day through the grass. When she got to the sand, she stopped and said, ‘is it still a grasshopper?’**

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MERI, VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

[www.LetsGrowKids.org](http://www.LetsGrowKids.org)

# You're leading the way for our COMMUNITIES

## BECAUSE CHILD CARE MAKES VERMONT WORK.

### YOU ARE...

- **1,201 active volunteers** lending your voices, stories, time, and talent to lead this movement.
- **281 business champions** advocating for your employees' child care needs, and receiving support from our team of experts, including human resources specialists and coaches, who are here to help.
- **62 health care leaders** bringing child care to the forefront of your work.
- **290 donors** investing generously in our movement across 20 US states.

### YOU PUT THE "MOVE" IN MOVEMENT.

- You made 607 contacts to Vermont's legislators, calling for change (and 197 very heartfelt thank-you notes).
- You shared 236 stories and opinion pieces.

**Thank you!**



**Child care is a crucial issue for our workforce. When our employees' child care needs are met, we strengthen our own businesses and we create a legacy of change for Vermont.**

**MICHAEL SEAVER**  
People's United Bank



## YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

In 2019, 30,000 supporters, including you, helped our movement by:

- Sharing Your Story | Writing a Letter to the Editor
- Testifying in the Vermont Legislature | Making a Donation
- Changing Workplace Child Care Practices
- Advising Our Staff | Contacting Your Legislators
- Sharing Your Support with Friends & Peers
- Joining the Conversation | Attending Events
- Visiting the State House
- Joining a Let's Grow Kids Action Team
- Signing Our Petition | Engaging on Social Media



Photos clockwise from left: 2019 Rally For Kids Event, Montpelier, VT; Red Hen Bakery, Middlesex, VT; 2019 Rally For Kids Event, Montpelier, VT





Photos: 2019 Rally For Kids Event, Montpelier, VT

“

I had zero experience and not a lot of confidence. Let's Grow Kids taught me that my passion and willingness to try new things could go a long way. They believed in me. Slowly, I began to believe in myself, and that real change was possible.

DAWN IRWIN | Owner/Director of Growing with Wonder  
LET'S GROW KIDS ACTION TEAM MEMBER, ADVOCATE & SPOKESPERSON

**SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS**

**In 2019, the Vermont Legislature and Governor Phil Scott invested a historic \$8.8M in the state budget for new ways to support child care and early educators.**

**THIS WAS A 30% INCREASE IN STATE FUNDING FOR CHILD CARE—THE LARGEST INCREASE OUR STATE HAS SEEN.**

**This didn't happen by accident.** It happened because you shared your story. Because you lent your voice to this movement. Because you shared the vision that you have for our state—to be one where our children can live up to their fullest potential, become thoughtful and engaged citizens, and help build our shared future.

The state's child care investments received unanimous, tri-partisan support in the Vermont House of Representatives—an unprecedented showing of support. Securing this money in the state budget means a lot.

**IT MEANS THAT:**

- Thousands of families have more financial assistance to pay for child care.
- More high-quality child care programs will be able to open and expand.
- Early educators will get more support to advance as a profession.
- Technology upgrades will make future expansion possible.

**We're energized to see this work through with you, our donors, supporters, volunteers, early educators, families, and children, as we look ahead to 2020 and beyond. THANK YOU!**

# Fueling the Movement

Your generosity fuels our movement. Your investments allow Let's Grow Kids to model a successful child care system, and it's your philanthropy that will inspire and motivate lasting policy change.

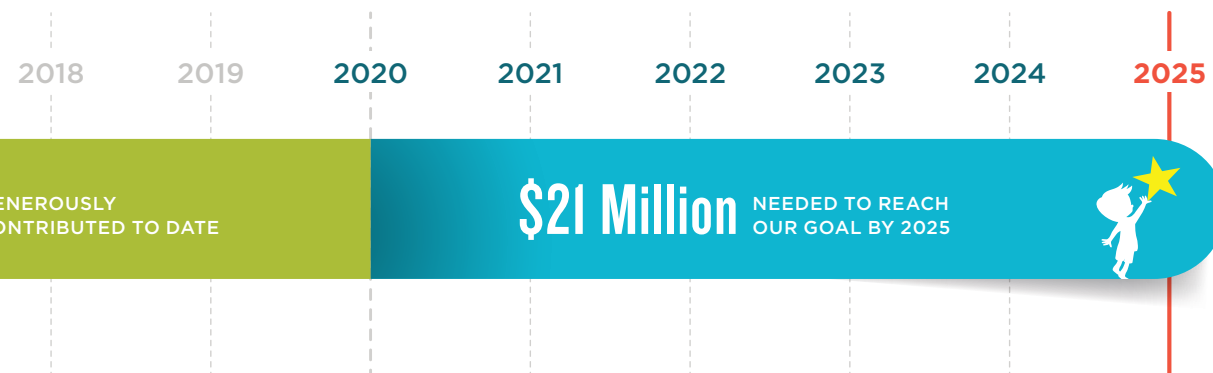
Donors like you across the country make our work possible. When you donate to Let's Grow Kids, you are saying YES for children and families, early educators, and Vermont communities—leading the way to a brighter future for all. Together, we are building a child care system that works for children, for families, for early educators, and for Vermont.

Thank you!

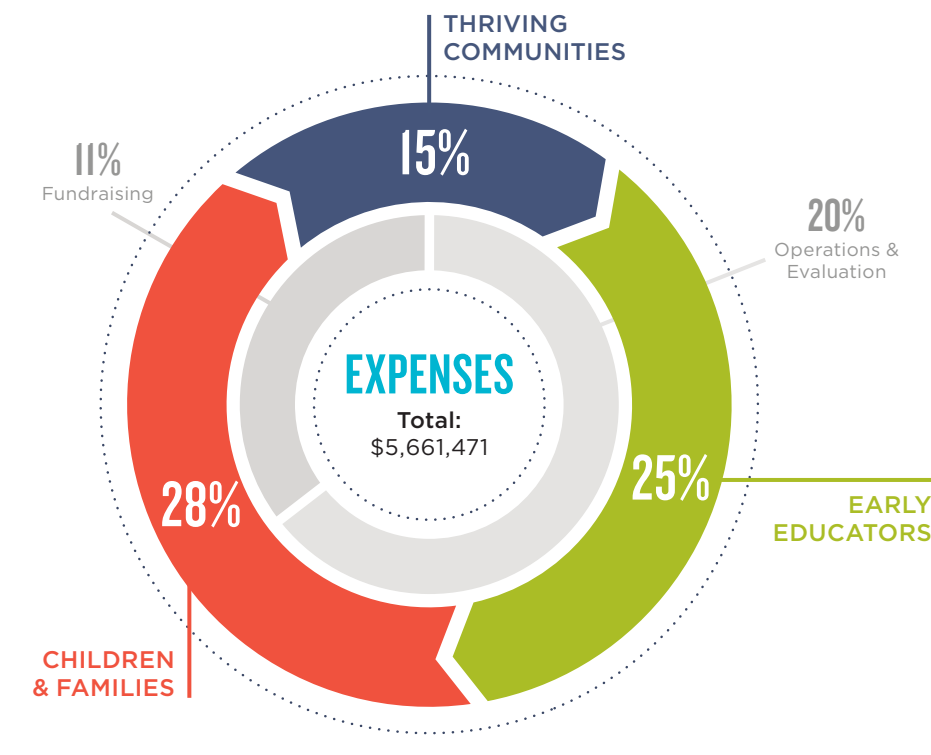
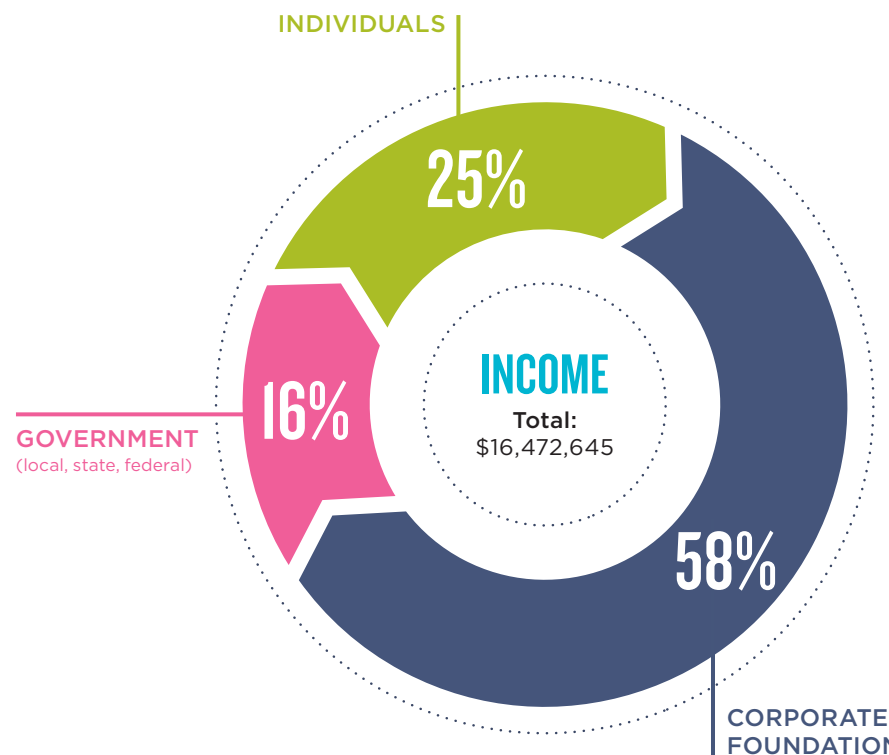
## A GOAL OF \$56 MILLION BY 2025

Hundreds of generous individuals, foundations, and government partners have contributed \$35 million to create and model a successful child care system for Vermont. We're so grateful for your support.

To accomplish our mission, we are raising an additional \$21 million...



# 2019 Income and Expenses



## LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

The Leadership Circle is a community of 26 generous Let's Grow Kids supporters who have committed to funding our movement in multi-year pledges. Your generous philanthropy ensures that we fulfill our mission by 2025. Thank you for leading the way.

If you would like to learn more about joining the Leadership Circle, please contact:  
**LUCIA CAMPRIELLO** | [lucia@letsgrowkids.org](mailto:lucia@letsgrowkids.org) | 802-391-0079



Bob and I are proud to support Let's Grow Kids' work to create equal educational opportunities for all Vermont children. **We believe in Let's Grow Kids' ability to succeed not only in Vermont, but to develop a national model to benefit all states' educational endeavors.**

**CHRISTINE STILLER**  
President | Stiller Family Foundation  
LET'S GROW KIDS LEAD PARTNER AND  
HONORARY CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIR



Photo: Robin's Nest, Burlington, VT



I give to Let's Grow Kids because they are at the intersection of government partnerships, philanthropy and advocacy. **I have been in the field of early childhood education for 50 years and I have never seen an organization working in such a useful way—it makes so much sense.**

**DANA WHITNEY BERRY**  
MEd, MSW



Photo: Brattleboro Centre for Children, Brattleboro, VT

## 2019 LET'S GROW KIDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**RICK DAVIS**  
President

**JENNIFER ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS**  
Vice President

**TOM MACLEAY**  
Treasurer

**DAN SMITH**  
Secretary

**LYNETTE FRAGA, PhD**

**ALAN GUTTMACHER, MD**

**CHERYL MITCHELL**

**BUZZ SCHMIDT**

---

### EMERITUS BOARD MEMBERS

**TOM JOHNSON**  
President | The Johnson Family Foundation

**CARL FERENBACH**  
Co-Founder | Let's Grow Kids  
Chairman & Co-Founder | High Meadows Foundation  
and High Meadows Fund

**DAVID G. RAHR\***  
Founding President | Vermont Community Foundation

**CORNELIUS "CON" HOGAN\***  
Former Secretary | Vermont Agency of Human Services

*\*deceased*

THANK YOU FOR LEADING THE WAY  
TO A NEW REALITY WHERE...

~~3 in 5 of~~ Vermont's youngest children ~~don't~~ have access to the child care they need. That means ~~too many~~ children are ~~missing out on~~ getting a strong start in life. Families ~~cannot afford child care,~~ and early educators are ~~not~~ making a living. Communities are ~~struggling to be~~ healthy and vibrant, and **our shared future is not bright.**

Photo: Rainbow Playschool, Woodstock, VT

# How You Can Help:

---

## **DONATE TODAY**

Your support makes our work possible.

## **SHARE YOUR STORY**

Your voice is the heart of this movement.

## **CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATOR**

Share your vision for Vermonters.

## **JOIN AN ACTION TEAM**

In every corner of the state.

## **GET IN TOUCH & STAY INFORMED**

Email: [info@letsgrowkids.org](mailto:info@letsgrowkids.org)

Visit: [letsgrowkids.org](https://letsgrowkids.org)



19 MARBLE AVENUE | SUITE 4  
BURLINGTON, VT 05401

---

**Let's Grow Kids.org**

Cover photo: Robin's Nest, Burlington, VT