This bill means programs like ours can offer more spots to more families. It means financial relief for families who attend our school. It also means stability, as we can pay teachers closer to a living wage and retain our talented early childhood educators.

CHRISTINA GOODWIN | Executive Director, Pine Forest Children’s Center

As a working professional and parent, I know first-hand how hard it is to find quality, affordable child care. After spending months commuting two hours a day for child care, my daughter is now attending a program in our community, and we are only driving 15 minutes down the road. I’m already more productive and present at work, as is my husband, who runs a general contracting business.

NIKKI TETRAULT | Lamoille County Parent & Director of Marketing and E-Commerce, Instrumart, Campaign Endorser

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CHRISTINA GOODWIN | Executive Director, Pine Forest Children’s Center
A QUANTUM LEAP FORWARD

In June, the Vermont Legislature made history by passing the 2023 Child Care Bill (now Act 76) into law with overwhelming support from across the political spectrum. This law makes Vermont’s child care system one of the most expansive in the nation with long-term, sustainable public investment in Vermont’s early childhood education system. It will stabilize our workforce and economy, shape future generations, and create a more affordable Vermont.

Act 76 means:

» AFFORDABILITY: Nearly 7,500 more children and their families will have access to child care financial assistance because of expanded eligibility.

» ACCESS: Increased state funding will help bolster child care programs’ staffing and capacity through readiness grants, higher reimbursement rates, and other financial incentives to programs.

» QUALITY: Sustainable funding will lead to increased investment in Vermont’s early childhood education workforce and sets the stage for minimum pay standards for early educators.

Act 76 moves us closer to achieving Vermont’s Child Care Campaign goals of:

» AFFORDABILITY: No family spends more than 10% of their household income on child care.

» ACCESS: 100% of children ages birth to five have access to child care that meets their needs.

» QUALITY: 100% of children ages birth to five are taught by prepared early childhood educators who are fairly compensated.

IMPLEMENTATION & SUSTAINABILITY

Let’s Grow Kids is working to ensure successful implementation of the new law in partnership with state agencies, early childhood educators, and other system stakeholders. We continue to support immediate system needs through child care business and workforce development initiatives and capacity building grant programs. In December 2022, Senator Patrick Leahy directed $10 million in funding to augment Let’s Grow Kids’ 6-year child care capacity building program. Let’s Grow Kids is in the process of securing and regranting this funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to strengthen Vermont’s child care infrastructure.