



Investing in Vermont's Future Community Conversations with House Speaker Jill Krowinski and Senate President Pro Tem Becca Balint

Speaker Guide & Talking Points:

- Legislators want to hear your truth. Think about how you want to share your own child care crisis story, and how it is impacting your business, the children in your care and their families, your kids, and the future of Vermont.
- Be succinct and brief. Aim for 2–3 minutes. Practice ahead of time.
- Present urgency, a clear solution, and a call to action:
 - Vermont families are in crisis and cannot wait. We need bold action from our elected officials to lead the way.
 - Vermont needs a child care system that ensures affordable, equitable access to high-quality child care for all Vermont children and families and pays early childhood educators a fair wage.
 - Child care is essential to Vermont's children, working families, workforce, economy, and future. We need to invest state and federal funding in child care as the essential infrastructure that it is.

A Few Supporting Data Points:

- **Access:** Child care is not available for Vermont working families when and where they need it—3 out of 5 of Vermont's youngest children don't have access to the care they need.
- **Child Care is Unaffordable for Vermont families:** Families are spending more than 30% of their income on child care, even with financial assistance. The average cost of child care for a family in Vermont is over \$20,000 a year—more than the cost of full-time, in-state tuition at a Vermont State College—making Vermont an unaffordable place to live and raise a family.
- **Early Childhood Education Compensation:** The majority of early childhood educators do not earn a livable wage or have access to basic benefits like health care. This is leading to a workforce shortage for teachers across the state. Early childhood educators are deeply undervalued. Of all college graduates, early childhood educators earn the least, nationwide, making on average \$16,000 less than kindergarten teachers. Without a livable wage, early childhood educators can't afford to stay in the field.

Additional Background on Community Conversations:

Vermont has a once in a lifetime opportunity to make significant investments that will transform and shape the future of our state. Thanks to federal stimulus funds, a surge in state revenues, and more potential federal funds on the way, the Vermont Legislature is positioned to make historic investments in Vermont's pandemic recovery, address critical infrastructure needs, support Vermonters' health and well-being, and strengthen Vermont's communities, businesses, environment, and climate.

This opportunity must be informed by the voices of Vermonters and the experiences of their day-to-day lives. Throughout the fall, Speaker of the House Jill Krowinski and Senate President Pro Tem Becca Balint are reaching out to people across the state to listen to Vermonters on the



issues that they care about, what they struggle with in their communities, and what they envision for Vermont's future. These discussions will be used to inform policy and budgetary work when the Legislature convenes in January.

The Speaker and Senate Pro Tem are holding these conversations to hear from you and what is most important to Vermont communities as decisions are being made about these investments. Your voice on child care matters and leaders are looking to you in this important moment.

Community Conversation Dates:

- Windham County Conversation, Tuesday, Sept. 28, 5:30–6:30 PM – [Register here](#)
- Grand Isle County Conversation, Saturday, Oct. 2, 2021, 1:00–2:00 PM – [Register here](#)
- Rutland County Conversation, Monday, Oct. 4, 5:30–6:30 PM – [Register here](#)
- Bennington County Conversation, Wednesday, Oct. 6, 5:30–6:30 PM – [Register here](#)
- Franklin County Conversation, Tuesday, Oct. 12, 5:30–6:30 PM – [Register here](#)
- Caledonia County Conversation, Thursday, Oct. 14, 5:30–6:30 PM – [Register here](#)
- Essex County Conversation, Saturday, Oct. 16, 2021, 1:00–2:00 PM – [Register here](#)