



DEVELOPING YOUR DIGITAL VOICE

DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS TO
SUPPORT YOUR BUSINESS & ADVOCACY GOALS



Welcome!

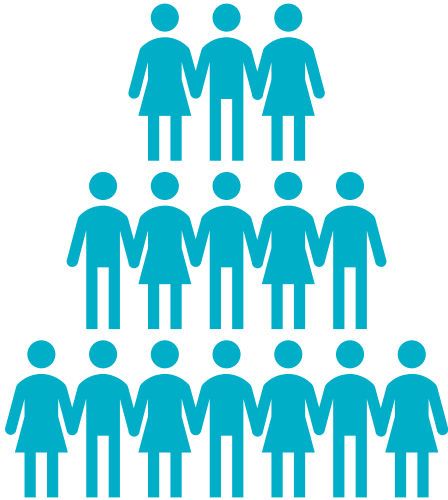
Goal: This training is specifically designed for early childhood educators. Learn how to use digital tools, like email and social media, to become a stronger child care advocate within your existing networks and create meaningful connections with families in your program.



Vermont Association for the
Education of Young Children

THE POWER OF DIGITAL ADVOCACY

Advocacy Campaigns Thrive on Volume



- When large swaths of supporters from different walks of life post on social media or talk with their friends online about the issue, it helps to spread the word with our individual networks and get more people involved to address the child care crisis in Vermont.
- Sharing personal stories is the best way to show your social media followers, or friends that you email with, why you care about an issue and share ways they can get involved, too. Make it yours!

Unique Voices in Alignment = IMPACT



Each of us have a unique voice and platform with our own social media channels. We also have unique online communities and networks that include people that may not know about Vermont's child care crisis or the work we're all doing to address it. We can all use our own social media channels to reach more Vermonters, and let them know why it's so important to advocate for child care transformation in Vermont.



To make Vermont's Child Care Campaign take off online, it's important that all supporters are aligned on language, hashtags, and social media best practices. In the following slides, you'll learn what each social media platform is used for, what sorts of posts perform best, and how to engage with LGK/AN content. Whether you want to make your own posts, share photos, invite your neighbors to events in your area, or share out our content, there's a way for you to use social media!

Cultivate the Power of “We”

SEPARATELY - early childhood educators and families of young children are advocates.

TOGETHER – you are unstoppable.

By working, standing, advocating together, we can demand a strong and stable child care system that meets the needs of all Vermont's children, families, ECE, businesses and economy.



THE ROLES OF SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

Social Channels Roles

Channel	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
In a nutshell	The townhall	The magazine	The newsroom
How to show up and when to use it.	<p>Use Facebook for sharing links to relevant news articles, photos from events or from volunteers or staff, and longer posts.</p> <p>Facebook is great for elevating personal stories, providing context for why an issue is so important, or sharing your organization's purpose and mission.</p> <p>Facebook posts reach larger audiences and make it easy to share your story or why you are supporting Vermont's Child Care Campaign with a link for your followers to easily join the campaign themselves.</p>	<p>Since Instagram is a visual-focused medium, it's best to use photos or videos from your real life with information on why you are involved in Vermont's child care campaign, how the child care crisis has impacted you, and providing ways for your followers to get involved.</p> <p>Instagram is also great for spreading the word to your own followers by sharing content on your Instagram story that is from LGK or LGKAN.</p>	<p>Twitter is great for providing quick updates or actions for your followers to take. Just like the other platforms you can easily share why you are involved in the campaign and provide a link for your followers to join Vermont's child care campaign as well.</p>
Best Practices	Links work super well, as well as longer-form stories.	Photos of real people perform best. And don't forget to use Instagram stories to share content!	Shorter is key! This is also a great place to repost our content or quote tweet it.

SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES

Social Media Best Practices & Examples

- **Tag our accounts and use our hashtags.** When you post about child care in Vermont, make sure to tag us on the appropriate platform: @LetsGrowKids & @LetsGrowKidsAN on Twitter and @LetsGrowKids and @LetsGrowKidsActionNetwork on Facebook & Instagram. For hashtags, we use #InvestInWhatIsEssential and #VTChildCareCampaign.
- **Share your story!** Social media is a great place to share why YOU advocate for affordable, equitable, and accessible child care in Vermont. Use photos and quote tweet our posts to share your story on your own social media pages.
- **Share our posts on Instagram stories.** If you like a photo or graphic on Instagram, please share it to your story so we can reach a wider audience!
- **Include a call to action.** Whenever possible, include an action with your post. This can be a call to volunteer, donate, sign on to our agenda, or email your lawmaker. Check the links in our Instagram bios to see what our most up-to-date actions are.
- **Find our accounts!**
 - **LGK:** [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#)
 - **LGKAN:** [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#)

Sharing your story: best practices for recording content

Recording a selfie video on your cell phone or computer and posting it to your social media pages can be a great way to spread the word and get other people involved in the campaign. **Here are a couple tips for recording your own video:**

Prompts: When thinking about sharing your story, think about the answers to these questions:

- *What is Vermont's child care crisis? How has it impacted you?*
- *What needs to be done to address Vermont's child care crisis?*
- *Why did you join Vermont's Child Care Campaign? Why should others join as well?*

Recording Tips:

- Try to shoot in a quiet room with minimal sound or wind and take care to consider sounds you typically overlook. These include: TV, radio, air conditioning, ceiling fans or heating units. These will create a hum or buzz.
- Pick a room or location that is well lit to avoid shadows and ensure that we can see your face easily while speaking
- Shoot horizontally
- Try to sound as conversational and unscripted as possible. If you are using a script, be sure to say it out loud a few times before you shoot so your cadence and rhythm sounds more natural and even trying talking a little slower than you normally would

When you post: Be sure to tag Let's Grow Kids and Let's Grow Kids Action Network on whichever platforms you are posting on and include an actionable link such as the [Let's Grow Kids Action Network Action Center](#) so your followers can join the campaign!

EMAIL BEST PRACTICES

Email Best Practices



Email is a great way to communicate with the parents in your child care programs. These are folks who are deeply affected by the child care crisis, and we need ALL voices and perspectives represented if we want to successfully advocate for a sustainable, affordable, and high-quality child care system in Vermont.

How can you use email to invite parents into VT's child care movement?

1. Create a regular newsletter to share photos, events, announcements, opportunities and campaign updates with your families. Or add a campaign update section to your existing newsletter to share the latest from the campaign with your families. LGK will send updated content for you to copy and paste monthly.
2. Encourage your families to join the campaign and take action.

Email Best Practices

Best practices:

- **Speak from experience:** You're here because you're already involved in Vermont's Child Care Campaign – YOU are a community organizer and advocate. Explain how you are affected by the crisis, and implore the parents in your program to join you in becoming a child care advocate, too. If you've attended a child care event with LGK or LGKAN or are a member of Vermont's Child Care Campaign – share your experience in your email newsletter, include photos from events you've attended, or invite the parents in your program to reach out to you directly if they'd like to attend an event with you in their area.
- **Give folks the option to opt-in or out of advocacy updates:** When you first introduce yourself as an advocate for child care, it's possible that not all parents will be interested – but we guarantee that *some* will! Consider asking parents in your newsletter directly if they'd like to join you and get involved in advocating for child care. You can do this by including a line in your emails; "If you want to join me or learn more, feel free to reply directly to this email or talk to me at drop-off or pick-up!" Then for future emails – only include parents who've expressly asked to get involved.
- **See Messaging Watchouts on Slide 25 for topics or messaging to avoid.**

CHILD CARE CAMPAIGN MESSAGING PILLARS

The Child Care Crisis: Access and Affordability

- **Access:** Even before the pandemic, 3 out of 5 of Vermont's youngest children did not have access to the care they needed – which means too many Vermont children are missing out on the strong start they need and deserve. COVID-19 has only exacerbated already pressing challenges for families and early childhood educators. Vermont needs an additional 8,700 child care spaces to meet demand.
- **Family affordability:** I know Vermont families (just like yours) are struggling to pay for child care. Many families are spending more than 40% of their income on child care, some pay over \$20,000 a year—more than the cost of full-time, in-state tuition at a Vermont State College. I know this means many families are forced to make tough choices.
- **Program affordability:** While parents (like you) can't afford to pay more, early childhood educators (like me) can't afford to earn less. Compensation for ECEs (who are mostly women) ranks in the bottom 2% of all occupations nationwide. Without a livable wage, early educators/I struggle to stay in this field that I love.

The Early Years: Brain Development & Equity

- **The early years are essential to ALL children.** From birth to age five, children's brains are developing rapidly, forming over 1 million new neural connections every second, establishing the social, emotional, and academic foundation they will build upon over the course of their lives.
- **High-quality early childhood education supports a more equitable future.** Reimagining child care systems is an important step in the process of addressing inequity and dismantling systemic racism in our communities. Equitable access to high-quality child care provides the academic and social-emotional supports children need to reach their full potential.
- **All children have the right to equitable learning opportunities that help them achieve their full potential as engaged learners and valued members of society.** Thus, all early childhood educators have a professional obligation to advance equity. They can do this best when they are effectively supported by the early learning settings in which they work and when they and their wider communities embrace diversity and full inclusion as strengths, uphold fundamental principles of fairness and justice, and work to eliminate structural inequities that limit equitable learning opportunities. (NAEYC's Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education Position Statement)

Child Care is Everyone's Business: The Economic Consequences

- **When families can't find or afford child care, Vermont's workforce and economy suffer.** Vermont's labor force shrank to its lowest size in nearly 30 years in 2021 and employers of every industry cite a lack of affordable, quality child care as one of their biggest recruiting challenges. Our ability to thrive as a state, broaden the tax base, and maintain the workforce our businesses need to succeed, relies on retaining and recruiting families to live in Vermont. Without access to affordable child care, Vermont will continue to be an unaffordable place to live and raise a family.
- **The model is broken.** Child care is a public service that has been forced to function as a private business for too long. The system is set up to fail, and that's exactly what it's doing – failing to meet the needs of Vermont's children, families, early childhood educators, employers, communities and economy.

The Annual Economic Impact of a Comprehensive Child Care System in Vermont

Meeting the Need for Children & Families



Indirect Economic Impact



**CHILD CARE IS
EVERYONE'S BUSINESS**

VERMONT'S CHILDREN & FAMILIES

8,752 additional children have equitable access to the care they need for a strong start in life

5,000 additional parents (especially mothers) are able to participate in Vermont's workforce

VERMONT'S CHILD CARE INDUSTRY

676 new child care businesses will be established

2,500 additional early childhood educators are employed and earning professional wages



ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT
ON VERMONT'S ECONOMY:

\$99.1 million in savings for families when they pay no more than 10% of their household income on child care

\$212.8 million in child care industry growth including new revenue, jobs, and increases in annual wages for early childhood educators

TOTAL:
\$311.9 million

\$375 million boost to the economy when parents are able to enter or re-enter the workforce and businesses are able to hire the workforce they need to grow and expand

\$68.8 million in economic spillover effects as a result of child care industry expansion, including increased buying power with increased number of businesses coming online or expanding

TOTAL:
\$443.8 million

Total:
\$474.1 million

Total:
\$281.6 million

TOTAL:
\$755.7 million

The Bottom Line: Whether you're looking for short-term gains or long-term solutions—public investment in child care is one of the most important investments we can make as a state for a stronger, brighter, more resilient future for all Vermonters. Other economic impacts that we will see when we pull the lever and make public investment in child care:

- Reverse our aging demographic and expand our tax base;
- Gain a 3-1 return over the lifetime of each child; and
- Long-term savings in K-12 system, healthcare, criminal justice, special education, and so much more. **When we invest early in children, everyone wins!**

Priceless... Child care becomes a sustainable industry that supports the healthy development of Vermont's youngest children AND contributes to the economy as the workforce behind the workforce.

Child Care is Everyone's Business: The Economic Impact

When we invest in early childhood education, there is an immediate impact on Vermont's economy.

- **8,752 additional children** have equitable access to the care they need for a strong start in life.
- **5,000 additional parents** (especially mothers) are able to participate in Vermont's workforce.
- **\$99.1 million annually** in savings for families when they pay no more than 10% of their household income on child care.
- **\$212.8 million annually** in child care industry growth including new revenue, jobs, and increases in annual wages for early childhood educators.

Whether you're looking for short-term gains or long-term solutions — public investment in child care is one of the most important investments we can make as a state for a stronger, brighter, more resilient future for all Vermonters.

www.letsgrowkids.org/economic-impact

Child Care Is a Problem We Can Solve: Here's How

The solution requires investment: In order to fully solve the child care crisis, we need to make long-term public investments in a strong and stable child care system that is affordable and equitably accessible for all Vermont's children and families, and that fairly compensates early childhood educators for their essential work.

2023 Child Care Ask: In 2023 Let's Grow Kids will continue pushing for policy change and sustained, dedicated investment to achieve a child care system that meets the needs of all Vermonters. The 2023 child care bill will propose a fully funded child care system that ensures:

- Children have access to high-quality child care when and where they need it
- Families spend no more than 10% of their household income on child care
- Early childhood educators are well compensated and supported for their essential work.

An unprecedented Opportunity: Vermont is on track for a historic level of turnover in the Legislature this year, which means we have an unprecedented opportunity to shape the next generation of leaders in Vermont's state house who will invest in a child care system that works for all Vermonters in 2023.

A Bright Future for Vermont

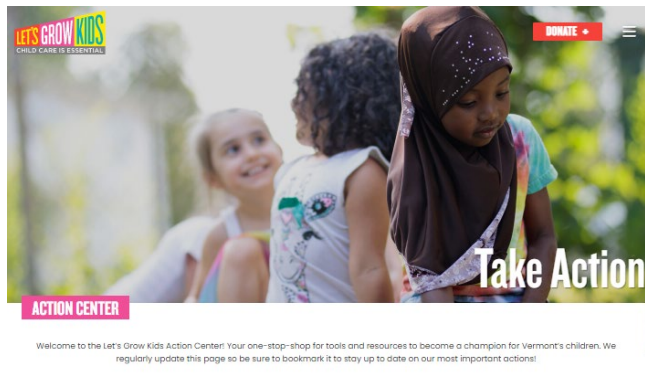
- We have a rare chance to invest in society's most vulnerable and valuable asset – children birth to five. Vermont can lead the way.
- By investing in early childhood education, we ensure all families are able to make the best choices for themselves, businesses are able to hire the talent they need to grow and thrive, and all of Vermont's children have the opportunity to succeed individually so that we can live, work, and thrive collectively.
- By working together, we can create the conditions that enable every one of us, from childhood to adulthood, to live up to our fullest potential, to become thoughtful, engaged citizens, and help build a better future for Vermont.

Key Calls to Action We're Elevating This Summer:

- Join the Child Care Campaign
- Attend a campaign event
- Contact your legislative candidates/support child care champion candidates
- Give a gift to support the campaign

All of these things can be accomplished from either the LGK or LGKAN Action Centers.

Taking Action



SIGN OUR PETITION

Sign our petition to join Vermont's Child Care Campaign and become a champion for Vermont's children. Once you sign, share with 5 friends and ask them to do the same!

SIGN



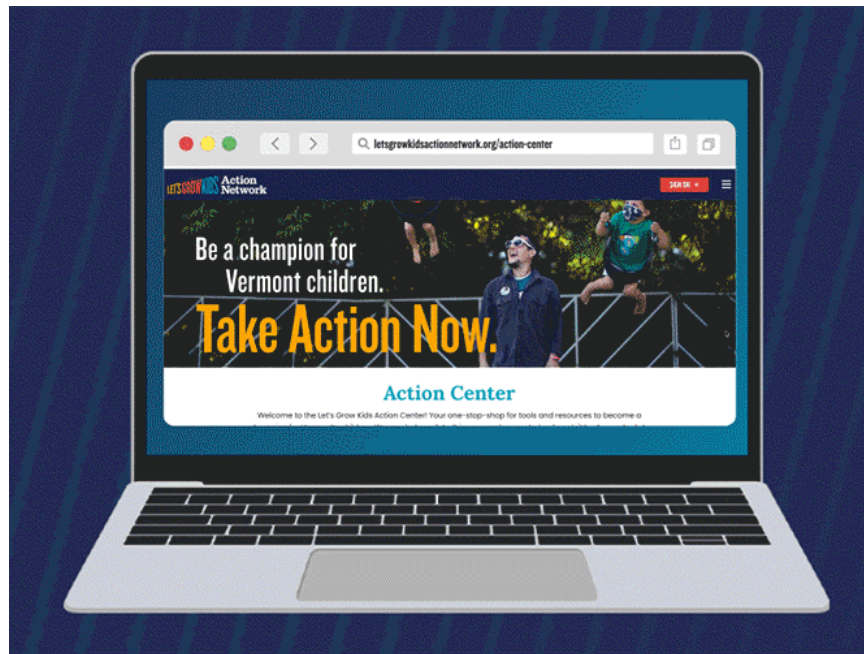
JOIN US FOR AN EVENT

Whether in-person or virtually, join us for an event. No matter how you get involved, you are taking part in Vermont's Child Care Campaign!

JOIN

**3/5 OF VERMONT'S YOUNGEST CHILDREN
CAN'T ACCESS THE CARE THEY NEED**

letsgrowkids.org/action-center



letsgrowkidsactionnetwork.org/action-center

Messaging Watch-Outs:

1. **Avoid overtly partisan language:** In order to ensure all Vermonters feel represented in the Vermont Child Care Campaign, it's important to focus on the similarities and shared experiences that bring us together and transcend traditional party lines.
2. **Use accessible language:** All messaging should be comprehensive and easily digestible across audiences regardless of educational attainment.
3. **There is no villain, only potential heroes:** The focus is on the need for investment to solve this crisis and build a better future, not on calling out or placing blame on any single person or entity.
4. **Ground compensation messaging in data, equity, and positivity.** Early childhood educators should be well-compensated on par with other professions and in accordance with our skill, education, experience and to the essential role we play in our education system, our society, and our economy. Early childhood educators are the workforce behind the workforce. Positively framed messaging focused on needs and solutions out-perform negative messages.
5. **Consider the messenger:** It's important to understand the difference between 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(3) messaging. For example:
 - a. 501(c)(4) organizations may speak to general education, awareness and persuasion without directly calling out elections or making endorsements.
 - b. 501(c)(3) organizations may encourage citizens to participate in the electoral process **in a nonpartisan manner**, but generally should stick to serving their main purpose, whether that is educational or service-oriented in nature.

IN PRACTICE / QUESTIONS

Digital Advocacy in Action:

- A word from a couple of current ECE digital advocates

Q & A:

- What questions do you all have?
- What else do you all need from us to be a successful digital advocate?

NEXT STEPS

Next Steps:

- Look for email tomorrow with links to this presentation, recording, toolkit, etc.
- Start advocating & organizing!
 - Add an advocacy paragraph to your next program newsletter
 - Share an advocacy post (or two) on your social media channels
- Join the LGK Early Educator Facebook Page
 - Share & engage
- Stay tuned for summer campaign events and other opportunities to support child care candidates this election season.



Thank you!

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions or if you need support along the way.

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