

# CHILD CARE IS ESSENTIAL

To Vermont's children, families, economy, and recovery. Now more than ever.

Child care is essential for Vermont families, but even before the pandemic, 3 out of 5 of Vermont's youngest children did not have access to the care they need. COVID-19 has only exacerbated already pressing challenges for families and early childhood educators. Without equitable access to a high-quality and affordable child care system, Vermont cannot fully recover and grow its workforce, support young families, or set its youngest residents up for future success in school, relationships, work, and life.

**H.171**, an act relating to the governance and financing of Vermont's child care system, takes crucial steps this year to move the state toward an equitable child care system that is:

- » **Accessible:** Children from all backgrounds and abilities will have access to high-quality child care when and where they need it.
- » **Affordable:** No family will spend more than 10% of their income on child care.
- » **High-quality:** Every child will be taught by qualified early childhood educators who are fairly compensated and well-supported.
- » **Accountable:** The system will have well-coordinated and transparent governance, administrative, and accountability structures and resources.
- » **Sustainable:** Stable, long-term funding for the system will be secured.

When children have access to high-quality early childhood education, it can close or eliminate achievement gaps caused by generational poverty, structural racism, and social inequity. By investing in early education, we ensure that all of Vermont's children have the opportunity to succeed individually **so that we can live, work, and thrive collectively.**

**H.171** must pass this year in order to support Vermont families now and set the wheels in motion for long-term, transformative change.



**H.171 is sponsored by 95 members of the House of Representatives, including members across all parties and independents.**

**House committees have begun discussion of this important bill.**

Questions about this document? Please contact:

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## H.171 lays the foundation for Vermont's future child care system by advancing legislation that:

- » **Establishes** the Legislature's intent that by the end of 2025, a family will spend no more than 10% of their annual income on child care, that families with young children have access to high-quality early childhood education, and that Vermont's early childhood educators—the backbone of our economy—are fairly compensated and well supported.
- » **Continues** the transformation of Vermont's Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) to expand eligibility to more families, reduce family co-pays, and increase reimbursements paid to child care programs.
- » **Strengthens** our early childhood education workforce by increasing investment in existing scholarships for current early childhood educators and creating a new scholarship program and student loan repayment support program for new early childhood educators.
- » **Upgrades** the failing IT system used to administer Vermont's early childhood education system.
- » **Analyzes** the governance and administration of the early childhood education system in Vermont and develops recommendations on how to strengthen and streamline governance, administration, and accountability structures and resources.
- » **Creates** an interim advisory committee to advise the state on the regulation and administration of the early childhood education system and to ensure that voices of those most impacted by the system are informing the state's work.
- » **Charges** experts with identifying a stable, long-term funding source for a transformed child care system.

The time to act on child care is **NOW**. Please pass H.171.



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.**