

2022 POLICY AGENDA

Mid-Session Update – Child Care Transformation Plan

In 2021, thanks to the incredible work and commitment of child care champions, the Vermont Legislature passed a comprehensive bill, H.171/Act 45, which set in motion a public commitment to achieving an equitable, accessible, affordable, and high-quality early childhood education system in Vermont. Our state has never been closer to achieving this goal, but at the same time, things have also never been harder for Vermont families, businesses, or our essential early childhood education workforce.

In 2022, we must address these needs by continuing on the path laid out by H.171/Act 45 and responding to Vermont's urgent child care workforce crisis. More information on these proposals and progress to date this session can be found below.

Continue Progress Toward Transformative Solutions

☒ **ACCOMPLISHED:** Give Vermont's Joint Fiscal Office the authority to move forward with the financing study established in H.171/Act 45 to determine the cost of operating a sustainable, equitable, affordable, and high-quality early childhood education system and options for how to fund such a system.

☐ **UNDER CONSIDERATION:** Create a Child Care Capacity Development Program (H.676). Build the infrastructure to create a strong business and capacity development resource center to provide long-term support for Vermont child care programs of all types.



Support Families and Child Care Programs

☒ **PASSED THE HOUSE:** Increase funding for the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP). Vermont has made important investments in CCFAP to help more families access and afford care - this work must continue. \$4.9 million in CCFAP investments would increase reimbursement rates paid to programs, increase benefits for families, and allow more paid absences for families and closure dates for programs.



Learn more about our 2022 Child Care Transformation Plan: www.letsgrowkids.org/transform

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Address Vermont's Early Childhood Educator Workforce Crisis

Recruit & Retain Early Childhood Educators

To address Vermont's early childhood educator workforce crisis, we propose the following initiatives to retain current early childhood educators and recruit new early educators to the field.

- ☒ **PARTIALLY ACCOMPLISHED:** \$6 million of the \$19 million in quarterly retention bonuses for early childhood educators was passed as part of H.679 and signed into law by Governor Scott.
- ☐ **UNDER CONSIDERATION:** \$125,000 to establish and fund an early childhood education recruitment and outreach initiative.
- ☐ **NO ACTION:** Embed early childhood education recruitment into all state workforce development programs.
- ☐ **NO ACTION:** \$11.1M for premium assistance to ensure all early childhood educators working in Vermont have access to health insurance they can afford.
- ☐ **NO ACTION:** Develop a short-term, multi-faceted recruitment and retention strategy to attract early childhood educators to relocate to Vermont and retain the current workforce.
 - **\$5.7M to expand Vermont's student loan repayment** support program for early childhood educators.
 - Provide no-cost child care for the children of early childhood educators working in regulated programs.
 - Fund additional, creative benefits that acknowledge the importance of early childhood educators to our communities.

What about the Child Tax Credit?

H.510, which passed the Vermont House and is currently being considered by the Senate, would create a Vermont Child Tax Credit that would provide a refundable credit of \$1200 per child to low- and middle-income Vermont families. Inspired in part by the now-expired federal American Rescue Plan Act's child tax credit, it would enable eligible Vermont parents to claim a credit for each child six years old or younger. This bill would support the health, wellbeing and economic security of Vermont children and families.

While the child tax credit is good public policy that could provide much-needed help to families to cover basic needs and provide some breathing room, it is not designed to specially address child care costs, and is not a systemic solution to Vermont's child care crisis.

Vermont families need support with ongoing basic expenses AND a long-term, sustainable solution to the state's child care crisis that will make child care affordable and accessible for all families.

You Can Help Save Child Care.

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