



## LET'S GROW KIDS ISSUE BRIEF: CREATING A STRONG, EQUITABLE, AND SUSTAINABLE CHILD CARE SYSTEM IN VERMONT

COVID-19 has made even more Vermonters acutely aware of the critical role that child care plays in our society. It has become clear to all that child care is not an economic accessory; it is essential infrastructure for a thriving, equitable society and a strong economy. Investments in early childhood education yield important outcomes for children and communities, including reductions in criminal justice interventions, health disparities, special education costs, and more.

The pandemic has laid bare a stark reality that has plagued our state for decades: child care is inaccessible to over half of Vermont's youngest children. It has exposed the inequities in this fragile system and exacerbated the child care crisis Vermonters were already facing.

To support children, families, employers, and our state economy, we must come together to build an equitable and sustainable child care system. As [Vermont's Blue Ribbon Commission on Financing High Quality, Affordable Child Care](#) and subsequent [information-gathering](#) and [think tank](#) reports have outlined, **Vermont needs a high-quality child care system that is accessible to all families, universally affordable, and values early childhood educators for their expertise.**

Here's our vision:

### Accessible:

- Child care capacity is expanded so that high-quality care is available to all Vermont children who need it.
- Vermont's universal prekindergarten program, one of the highest utilized publicly-funded pre-K programs in the nation, is expanded.
- Employers—who have a vital stake in employees' access to high-quality, affordable care—are supported to be part of the solution.

### Affordable:

- Vermont's Child Care Financial Assistance Program is transformed to make high-quality child care truly affordable so that no family pays more than 10% of their income for care.

### High-Quality:

- Early childhood educators are valued as the heart of a child's early childhood education experience and essential to providing high-quality care. The early childhood education workforce is skilled and stable because educators are being compensated in accordance with their expertise and supported with student loan repayment support programs and scholarships.
- The system is supported by a governance and regulatory structure that truly stewards public dollars and supports high-quality in child care, from nutrition to preventative health services.

In order to achieve this vision, policymakers and Vermonters must be dedicated to making it happen. Learn more and join the movement for change at <https://letsgrowkids.org/>.

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