



Vermont 2020 Legislative Session Investments in Child Care

The Administration and Legislature took important steps in 2020 to avert catastrophe in the child care sector in Vermont, affirming what Vermonters have known for years: **Child Care is Essential**. Here's a recap of investments made to shore up child care during the COVID-19 pandemic and heading into 2021:

DURING STAY HOME, STAY SAFE:

- Emergency child care for essential workers (new program) – estimated \$1.45m for emergency care AND stabilization payments per week during Stay Home, Stay Safe
- Stabilization Payments for programs that were closed (new program)
- Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) continued payments to programs when children weren't attending (already budgeted payments from DCF to programs on behalf of families) – estimated \$750,000 per week
- Act 166 continued payments for children enrolled in private partner universal pre-K programs but not attending (already budgeted payments through school districts)

JUNE:

- Restart Stipends (new program from one-time federal funds) – \$6m
 - Formula grants to child care programs that committed to reopening by July 6 (\$3 million for child care, \$3 million for afterschool and summer programs)

AUGUST:

- Operational Relief Grants (new program) – \$12m
 - Funds can be used by DCF for: restart grants for child care, summer camps, and afterschool programs; parent-child center costs related to COVID-19; Children's Integrated Services costs related to COVID-19; and, if funds remain, a new early childhood education workforce stabilization program.
- Temporary Child Care Hubs (new program from one-time federal funds) – \$12m
 - To establish a network of temporary child care hubs for school-age children on remote learning days.

SEPTEMBER:

- Frontline Workers Hazard Pay Program extended to more categories of people who worked during Stay Home, Stay Safe, including those providing child care to children of essential workers (new program from one-time federal funds).
- Increases in state budget (not from federal CARES Act funds) – estimated \$2.75m:
 - CCFAP investments:
 - Increase to bring reimbursement rates for preschool and school-age children to align with 2015 market rate survey
 - Increase in eligibility to the 2020 Federal Poverty Level



- Grants to increase child care capacity for infants and toddlers – \$800,000
- Early care and education workforce supports – \$150,000
- Waiver for universal pre-K private partner programs that lose their licensed teacher – this waiver would allow programs that were prequalified as of March 15, 2020 to continue participating under Act 166 through the '20–'21 school year even if they cannot rehire a licensed teacher.