



2019 INVESTMENTS ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

2019 was a great year for Vermont's children, their families, and early childhood educators. The state increased its investment in early care and learning—but we still have further to go.

Making child care more affordable: investments in CCFAP are paying off

- **Initial estimates indicate that at least 3,000 children benefited from [rate increases in the 2019 legislation](#).** For example: before new investments, a single parent earning \$15/hour with two young children in child care was paying \$250 a week with financial assistance. Thanks to investments made by the Legislature and Administration in 2019, that weekly copay has been reduced to about \$150. That's around \$400 a month the family will be able to spend on other essentials. And yet, even with these gains, too many are still paying more than they can afford.
- New investments also supported the first phase of developing a modern IT platform that will make future administration and expansion of CCFAP possible. Work on the new system is progressing, but **significant additional investment is needed to complete the development and implementation of the IT system.**

Supporting early childhood educators

- **2019 investments will support nearly 100 early childhood educators currently enrolled in Vermont's T.E.A.C.H. program**, administered by the Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children. T.E.A.C.H. provides scholarships and robust supports to individuals currently working in early care and learning programs who are participating in a child care and early education apprenticeship through the Vermont Child Care Industry and Career Council, seeking an associate's degree in early childhood education, or working toward teacher licensure or endorsement through the Vermont Agency of Education.
- The Legislature also created a new initiative to **support technical education centers** around the state to offer consistent programming for students interested in pursuing careers in early childhood education. The project is just beginning, with some promising models emerging across the state.

Increasing child care capacity

- The Legislature and Administration established two new grant programs, totaling \$1.8 million, to increase the supply of high-quality child care across the state. Let's Grow Kids is partnering with the Child Development Division and other colleagues to distribute these funds through our Make Way for Kids grant program. Applications for the first round of funding are currently being reviewed with even more expected; **we anticipate around 400 new slots just based on the initial applications.**



2020 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

In 2020, we must continue to invest in Vermont's early childhood educators, strengthen Vermont's Child Care Financial Assistance Program, and engage employers to be part of the solution. **Here are our legislative priorities for 2020.**

Priority 1: Invest in Vermont's Early Education Workforce

- Vermont's early childhood educators are the most critical resource in our early care and learning system, but they are currently vastly undervalued. Without a robust, well-supported early childhood education workforce, early care and learning programs cannot provide high-quality early experiences for Vermont's children.
- We're asking the Legislature to:
 - o Invest in Vermont's T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program;
 - o Launch a student loan repayment assistance program for early childhood educators; and
 - o Create a temporary wage support program for early educators.

Priority 2: Strengthen Vermont's Child Care Financial Assistance Program

- Vermont's Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) is an important resource that helps lower- and middle-income families access and afford quality early care and learning programs, but it reimburses families at levels that are lower than the rates currently charged by early care and learning programs.
- We're asking the Legislature to align all CCFAP reimbursement rates with the most current rate information and to require that this adjustment happen automatically in the future.

Priority 3: Engage Vermont Employers

- Employers are critical partners in addressing Vermont's child care challenges. Child care is often the family support that makes it possible for parents or guardians to go to work, and it is the foundation on which businesses expand, recruit, and retain employment.
- We're asking the Legislature to work with executive branch agencies and private companies to establish collaborative initiatives to support and strengthen Vermont's early care and learning system.