



Vermont Newsletter

November 2024

We've Come a Long Way, But There's Still Work to Do

As we head into the final months of 2024, I feel a bit frustrated that we have come so far and we are still not quite there. Like a bored child in the backseat, my inner voice is whining “Are we there yet?” Everyone has worked so hard this year – making sure that Act 76 lives up to its potential, keeping child care businesses afloat, helping families navigate this post-pandemic world, starting or planning new businesses, changing pricing structures to make child care affordable for families, the list goes on – but we are not there yet.

I am hopeful and optimistic about all that we have accomplished. Public investment. Acknowledgement of the importance of the industry. More families eligible for financial support. More young people interested in the field. More child care available to families. Increased compensation in the field. All of this is to be celebrated – but we are not there yet.

If you are like me, we are in that moment where we are tired and can't quite see the

finish line. But seeing so many of you at conferences and meetings these past few weeks has been like the roar of a crowd, reminding me that we are making history, and it is worth it to get to the finish line. You inspire the FCF team, and I hope that you feel inspired by the support of the FCF team, too. Read on for some inspiration!

Erin Roche, Vermont Director, First Children's Finance

Need to Access Capital?

It's been an exciting couple of months with our VT Planning Grant Project and Make Way for Kids Infant/Toddler Capacity Grant both getting under way.

So far, seven projects have been selected for our Planning Grant Project. These projects include community centers, child care businesses, non-profits and employers. Each applied for funds to explore building or renovating a space for child care in their community. If you want to read more about one of the projects participating in this grant, check out our [media release featuring Craftsbury Saplings](#).



In our second year administering the infant/toddler capacity grant, we received 37 applications for funds – at least one from every county in the state. This grant program supports increased spaces for infants/toddlers in regulated child care in Vermont. FCF administers this program in partnership with the Child Development Division of the Department for Children and Families.

There are additional funding opportunities for both the Planning Grant and Infant/Toddler Capacity Grant. If you have big ideas for your business, reach out to vtgrants@firstchildrensfinance.org to learn more. You can also visit our [Vermont Grants webpage](#). And follow us on Facebook to see successful projects made possible by infant/toddler capacity grant projects.

Outside of funding for early care, VT Afterschool Grants are designed to expand afterschool and summer programs for K-12 aged youth, particularly in underserved areas. There are two distinct application tracks; program grants for innovation/expansion and/or small-scale start-ups and center grants to support the creation/sustenance of single-site comprehensive centers. Learn more [HERE](#).

FCF News!

The FCF Team was a sponsor/exhibitor at the Vermont Afterschool Conference

on October 25 and the VTAEYC Conference on October 28-29. We made connections with Early Childhood Educators, Partners and community members, and we got to spend some quality time together as a team. Key takeaways about leadership, quality engagement, the workforce and the impact we can all make will continue to be a driving influence for the work that is being done.

Most importantly, the team had fun bringing our “inner game show host” and prize spin wheel, a staple instrument for future conferences. Thank you to all who visited us at both conferences!



Business Sustainability

Training Opportunities

We have a few more training opportunities left in our fall calendar; learn more and register on the Northern Lights Training Calendar.

- “Managing your Enrollment in your Child Care” on Thursday, November 7
- “Separating your Family Child Care Finances from your Personal Finances” on Tuesday, December 10
- "Listening to Your Child Care Business" on Thursday, January 23.

Register for
Trainings!

Business Leadership Cohorts

Our last 2024 Business Leadership Cohorts are wrapping up. In our Business Leadership Cohorts, center directors and family child care owners learn about business related to their child care program. If you are interested in becoming a business leader, 2025 cohorts begin in January.

Our first Business Plan Cohort participants will wrap up their business plans in January and the application for our next Business Plan Cohort will be available in November. If you want more information about our cohorts, send a quick email to infovt@firstchildrensfinance.org.

Many of our cohorts feature a hybrid approach to learning and additional cohort opportunities are available this winter. See some feedback from Business Leadership Cohorts participants here:

- “I liked the open and friendly conversations as well as the opportunity to share

- thoughts.”
- “It’s good information that everyone in a leadership role should have.”
- “I like that we were given concrete tasks and opportunities to give direct feedback or input in the discussion.”

Do You Have Questions About Your Business?

- Are my classrooms self-sustaining?
- How many students do I need to breakeven?
- How much revenue do I need to be able to afford to offer health insurance for your staff?

These questions and more can be determined by completing a Financial Analysis with one of our Business Development Specialists. We work with you to gather information about your business and make certain all the information is accurate. We work to understand your business and challenges you’re experiencing. When we have all the information, we prepare a report for you that highlights what is working well and identifies areas for improvement.

Your analysis will include a set of recommendations to consider, strategies to put the recommendations into practice and we can show you exactly how those improvements can impact the bottom line of your business. Reach out today to learn more: infovt@firstchildrensfinance.org

Extra, Extra!

In partnership with VTAEYC and SPARQS, SharedServicesVT has some new resources for you! Join FCF VT Staff and VTAEYC for a Shared Services Webinar on Tuesday, December 17 at 6 pm for PD Credit. The 45-minute webinar includes a tutorial about how to use Shared Services and a deeper dive with a case study on a specific and useful topic. [REGISTER HERE](#).

SharedServicesVT is your resource HUB for all things child care and ECE. You need a membership, but it’s free! [Sign-up now](#).

Register for the
Webinar!

Cost of Child Care: Is there something that you wish everyone else understood about how much it costs to care for young children? Do you have a moment to help us understand how your costs of providing care have changed? First Children’s Finance has partnered with the Vermont Department for Children and Families Child Development Division to update the Vermont child care cost model. Please help us by answering a few questions about your costs in [THIS 5 MINUTE SURVEY](#).

Take the 5-Minute Survey!

Vermont Saves Webinar: Please join the Vermont State Treasurers Office for a

webinar about Vermont Saves, the state's publicly administered retirement program. This program will launch in December, and employers with five or more employees who do not offer an employee retirement plan will be required to sign up by the end of February 2025.

The VT Saves Webinar will be held on Thursday, November 21 at 1 pm. The webinar will focus on the needs of child care and early education centers, as well as medical service providers. [REGISTER HERE](#).

Register for the Vermont Saves
Webinar!

It's Riddle Time!

You made it to the end! Now, it's time for the FCF monthly challenge!

First, thanks to everyone who sent in an answer to the previous riddle, and congrats to our winner, Mackenzie Witzgall! Last month's riddle was "What has many keys but opens nothing?" The answer was piano, but we were impressed with folks who thought outside of the box and came up with Florida/Keyboard. Genius!

For this month, do you know the answer to this riddle?

- *What has one eye, but can't see?*

First person to reach out to infovt@firstchildrensfinance.org with the correct answer will win a prize!

The Vermont Business and Technical Assistance Program (BTAP) provides expert business training, technical assistance and consulting to help start, sustain, and grow child care businesses. The BTAP is made possible through a grant to FCF by the Vermont Agency of Human Services, Department for Children and Families, Child Development Division. The Vermont BTAP is a partnership between [First Children's Finance](#) and [Let's Grow Kids](#).

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Get In
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