



## Vermont Newsletter

February 2025

### We're in This Together!

First Children's Finance recently conducted an employee survey to better understand employees' experiences and perceptions in their jobs. I am happy (and relieved!) to report that the Vermont team is unanimously proud of the work that we are doing and our ability to make a difference. Of course, we have some areas where we would like to do better, such as clearly communicating with and appreciating each other.

First, I want to acknowledge the real bravery needed to say a hard truth like "I am not getting what I need" especially when you are saying it to someone with power. Some of you may have even heard this team share some hard



truths with you about your business so you know what I mean!

Second, I have realized through this process that it is not up to the boss or the CEO to fix things. I look forward to rolling up my sleeves with the team and making real change at FCF VT and for child care in Vermont. Real change only happens when we work together toward a goal.

The future may seem more uncertain for many of us. I hope you can trust the FCF VT team to be honest and caring when it comes to you and your business. As much as I am worried about a lot right now, I am most optimistic about the future when I think about all of us working together for Vermont's young families.

Erin Roche, Vermont Director, First Children's Finance

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## Need to Access Capital?

If you have ideas or plans to start up or expand a child care this year, we still have a couple of opportunities for grants to support that. There is one more opportunity to apply for **Make Way for Kids Infant/Toddler Capacity Building** funds in FY25. What did last year's grantees say about their grant experience?

- *This grant will support my new business in many ways over the next year including general expenses, supplies, equipment and small projects.* - Kelsey C., Enosburgh
- *Without the Make Way for Kids Grant, there is no way we would have been able to open Spark Academy or even expand to open Baby Spark to be able to offer 51 child care spaces for children in the community of Swanton, VT.* - Vicki G., Swanton
- *Little Explorers is thankful for all of the support that FCF and the Make Way for Kids Grant has given us. Our program is flourishing and is able to support the community and families thanks to all the efforts made to provide high-quality affordable child care in Vermont.* -Taylor B., Waterford

February is the final month to submit a planning grant application. If you are in the planning stages of a child care construction project and want more information about this grant program, [please review the grant guidelines](#).

If you need capital for your child care business and these grants are not a good fit, consider our Loan Program. FCF has a limited pool of loan funds available in Vermont, especially to support borrowers of low/moderate income and borrowers of color. For more information, see the [business loan inquiry](#) site.

Grant availability questions? Email [vtgrants@firstchildrensfiance.org](mailto:vtgrants@firstchildrensfiance.org)

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## Business Sustainability

January was jam-packed with great professional

development opportunities, and February is no different. A few opportunities on the horizon:

- **February 18 |** Policies and Practices for your Family Child Care Home
- **February 20 |** Legal & At-risk Issues for Child Care Providers
- **February 25 |** Developing a Marketing Plan (and strategies to boost enrollment) for Your FCCH
- **March 12 |** Planning for the Future: Annual Budget & Cash Flow for FCCH
- **March 20 |** Separating your FCCH Finances from your Personal Finances



Head to [Northern Lights](#) for all of our offerings.

Also in March, you can join the FCF VT team for our Business Leadership Cohort. Beginning March 26, child care leaders will have the opportunity to learn about the basics of business related to their child care program, collaborate with peers and gain a better understanding of how their business can thrive.

As a reminder, all of our trainings and services are FREE! This includes technical assistance, 1-on-1 consultations, financial analysis and more. Questions about how FCF VT can help your business?

Reach out to [infovt@firstchildrensfinance.org](mailto:infovt@firstchildrensfinance.org) or watch this fun video about [FCF in VT](#).

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## Extra, Extra!

In partnership with VTAEYC and SPARQS, SharedServicesVT has some new resources for you!

**Resource of the month:** ICE & Immigration Resources [HERE](#). We compiled these resources from national and local partners to help you navigate ICE & Immigration concerns.

If you want to learn more about establishing an ECE profession in Vermont, join the **VTAEYC monthly roundtable discussions** happening throughout the spring. [Learn more here](#).

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

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## FCF News!

Thank you to everyone who engaged with us during our birthday week on social media last month. Turning two as an organization feels good, and it is in large part thanks to everyone that we work with on a daily basis. We are pleased to be

celebrating with **Wild Roots-Hinesburg** and will be sure to capture the special moments to share with you all. We are hopeful and excited to see what is in store for FCF this year!

Our annual survey, **The State of Child Care Business**, will be open from February 24–March 14.

2024 has been a transformational year for child care in Vermont and we hope you will take a few minutes to share a bit about the state of your business with us. These results are shared with the Vermont Legislature as well as the Child Development Division to inform policy. Results are also compared with results from the survey in other states and the FCF VT team uses it to develop new program offerings to best serve our child care businesses in Vermont.

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## It's Riddle Time!

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

First, thank you to all who sent in an answer to the previous riddle-- congrats to our winner Colleen Niering! What is cut on a table, but never eaten? The answer was a deck of cards! That one must have been too easy because all of our entries were correct!

Here is this month's riddle:

- *The more of this there is, the less you see. What is it?*

First person to reach out to [infovt@firstchildrensfinance.org](mailto:infovt@firstchildrensfinance.org) with the correct answer will win a prize!

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## Find Where You Need to Go!

FCF Website

Shared Services

SPARQS intake Form

Request  
Consulting/TA

Inquiry Form

Northern Lights

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*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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