



Vermont Newsletter

August 2025

Mama, tell me a story. One of the most exhausting phrases a mom can hear at bedtime, and now, it's the memory that is most likely to make me weepy. One of the greatest privileges I get from my job is being trusted to keep and tell the stories of child care entrepreneurs, of the impact of historic public investment, of how child care can change communities.

The stories of FCF's work are also the stories of the people we work with, and I take seriously the trust and responsibility on all of us to share the heart, the meaning, the truth of the story without breaking confidences or bringing embarrassment. I also recognize that many people want to tell their own story; FCF is here to help you use your voice.

Whether they are written in reports, recorded in public testimony, shared in meetings or offered as advice, stories are how we have learned about the world since we were young children. As I write my funder reports, I am so inspired by you and the story you are living. I hope you have the same pride in what you are doing that I have for what you do.

Reach out to us at infovt@firstchildrenfinance.org

Need Access to Capital?



Most Make Way for Kids Infant/Toddler Capacity grantees are finishing up their projects to increase child care capacity. The application for these grants will be open again next month – read on for some stories from this year's grantees:

"By having access to start up funds I was able to open without having to ask families for additional materials fees and I didn't have to bear the weight of purchasing everything needed for a high-quality program on my own. Our local community will benefit from this grant for many years to come, and we are so appreciative of the support in creating a special home away from home for these little ones and their families." -Laura B.

If you have questions about access to capital for your child care business, about upcoming grant opportunities, or would like to be on the list for the next grant cycle reach out to vtgrants@firstchildrensfinance.org.

Or, if you need more flexible capital than the Infant/Toddler grants, there are loan funds available. [First Children's Finance](#) and the [Vermont Community Loan Fund](#) can help.

First Children's Finance Loan Fund is a national nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), and there are loans available in Vermont. For more information, see the [business loan inquiry](#) site.

Reach Out Here with Questions about
Grants

Business Sustainability

It's August, the Sunday of summer if you think about it. While the school year is fast approaching and ECE programs are continuing their work, the FCF VT team has been engaging with our final group of Business Planning Cohort members. The group of 20 are working towards their goals of expansion, creating a new space or other big plans that will take their careers and their ECE ambitions to the next level. You can see feedback from some of our past BPC members below.

"The process of writing a business plan was new for me, so that was a great skill set to grow through this process." Laura G.

"The BPC helped me focus and prioritize my vision for my business as we go through a period of transition. It also gave me so many resources to support new learning, and new skills, as I put together a new business plan and budget." Carol E.

We're excited to bring back some of our most popular trainings this fall! Find them on the Northern Lights Training calendar. All of our business services—including trainings, consulting, financial analysis, and business leadership cohorts—are available at no cost.

See What's Coming Up this Fall:

- September 9 and September 16 | Start up Child Care Business Boot Camp
- October 7 and October 9 | Quality Staffing for your Child Care Center
- October 8 | Board Governance
- November 6 | Leveraging Technology

Register for
Trainings

Speaking of business sustainability, our Business Development Specialists often travel throughout the state to visit programs. We see first-hand the hard work that is being dedicated to programs in Vermont. Hear what our BDS crew love about their job:

"I am really proud of the work I do with programs in crisis, knowing that my efforts offer hope and strength."

"The thing I enjoy most about my work is meeting people where they are at, on their terms. I love building bonds of trust so that we can explore the current situation and map out the next goal on their financial journey."

"I'm most proud of the work I do with new-to-FCF programs, whether that be a start-up or a program that's been around for decades. The work these entrepreneurs do is incredible."

Questions about how FCF VT can help your business? Reach out to infovt@firstchildrensfinance.org or watch this fun video about [FCF in VT](#).

From Our Partners!

Vermont Provider Survey

- Child Trends, a non-profit research organization, is partnering with the Vermont Child Development Division (CDD) and the City of Burlington's Early Learning Initiative (ELI) to understand providers' experiences with programs such as Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) and First Steps Scholarships in Burlington, that help families pay for child care in Vermont
- [Survey Here](#)

Quality and Capacity Incentive Program, The Child Development Department

- The Child Care Quality and Capacity Incentive Program is designed to support child care providers in improving their program quality and increasing their program capacity
- **Applications open August 15**, more communication will come from the CDD

Playmaker University from VTAEYC

Full day, in-person workshop boosts morale and reconnects staff with the power of play. Through a keynote and two hands-on sessions, participants gain tools to support kids—and themselves—through joyful, healing play.

- Saturday, August 16 | [Register here](#)

Vermont Early Childhood Networks Leadership Academy

- 7 sessions from August 21-October 6, 6-8 pm
- [Register Here](#)

Vermont Business for Social Responsibility Workplace Wellbeing Series

- Continues on Wednesday, September 17
- Session 2: Aligning People & Purpose: HR Assessments for Strategic Growth
- Organizational leaders assess effectiveness of their HR, Operations and Administrative function
- Register and learn more [HERE](#)

Extra, Extra!

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

Resource of the month: Business Insurance Resources

Business insurance helps protect you, your staff, the children you serve, and your assets. It reduces your risk and gives you peace of mind as you manage your program. [Learn more on Shared Services](#)

SharedServicesVT is your resource HUB for all things child care and ECE. You need a membership, but it's free!

Sign Up for Shared
Services

FCF News!

Where did July go? Here we are in August and we are ready to hit the ground running when Fall officially

begins. We have been planning and preparing to make sure we continue to impact the ECE field in a positive and meaningful way.

The FCF VT team participated in a storytelling training in early July, focusing on the importance of storytelling, recognizing how to tell a story effectively and tying it into the work that we do, where much of our impact

does come from identifying meaningful stories about the folks we work with and what they are doing for their communities. Maybe you will see some more storytelling in the future, and we can't wait!



The FCF Vermont team enjoyed a wonderful lunch with our friends from CCA Global, who lead the Shared Services platform. We were thrilled to celebrate the incredible LouAnn Beninati and honor her dedication and hard work in the early childhood education field. Thank you, LouAnn, for everything you've done and continue to do—you've made a lasting impact! (pictured above).

Last but not least, our fun staff spotlight is back for round THREE and this story is a great one! We've asked each of the FCF VT team to tell a little story and then answer the question "what would licensing say". Next up spreading a little laughter is our Business Development Manager, Jen Severance.

[Hear Jen's Story!](#)

[July Feature: Erin!](#)

[June Feature:
Tess](#)

It's Riddle Time!

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

We had a handful of entries for our last riddle. The answer to what has to be broken before you can use it? An egg! Our winner for fastest correct entry was Muffy Kashkin-Grolier. Well done!

Here is this month's challenge:

- *What kind of band never plays music?*

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

Find Where You Need to Go!

[FCF Website](#)[Shared Services](#)[SPARQS intake Form](#)[Request Consulting/TA](#)[Inquiry Form](#)[Northern Lights](#)

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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