



Vermont Newsletter

February 2026

If January is the time of new beginnings and resolutions, then February is the resting place for good intentions. Whatever you hoped to do to change your world, 31 days of bringing your best self is exhausting, especially when the only person you are accountable to is you.

I've been thinking a lot about governance and leadership this past month and their importance in helping us stick with those resolutions. We've worked on goal setting for 2026 at FCF, and I think the most important thing I can do as a leader is to help my team set goals that they want to achieve and then -- not to nag them or ignore them -- but to look for time, resources and opportunities that could help them achieve those goals.

Let's face it though, when you are the leader and no one is holding you accountable, it's easy to abandon your resolutions at the first (or second or third) roadblock. It can feel lonely and exhausting to fight for something that is no one else's priority. That's why I am so pleased that my team is bringing in experts to lead workshops like Leadership Learning and Hiring Done Well, and a course in Child Care Business Administration. And we are here for you if you want someone to help you focus on your goals, whether that's strategic planning, cash flow management or making time for yourself.

Your goals for 2026 matter, and leadership and good governance matter. I'm happy to walk through the dark days of February with you so we can get to spring together.

-Erin Roche, Vermont Director, First Children's Finance

We are here to help! Reach out to infovt@firstchildrensfinance.org
All of our services are free.

Need Access to Capital?

Our first round of Make Way for Kids Infant/Toddler Capacity grant projects is under way, and we are excited to announce our second-round grantees in the coming weeks.

If you need more flexible capital than the Infant/Toddler grants, there are loan funds available. The FCF Loan Fund is a national nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). We provide innovative, flexible loans and comprehensive business assistance to child care entrepreneurs; both child care centers and family child care homes.

First Children's Finance Loan Fund

The Vermont Community Loan Fund is another great resource to help your business grow. See more about VCLF and how they can support you:

- [Vermont Community Loan Fund | Lending & Investing for a Stronger, Healthier, Happier Vermont](#)

If you have questions about access to capital for your child care business or about upcoming grant opportunities, reach out to vtgrants@firstchildrensfinance.org.

Grants and Access to Capital Questions!

Business Sustainability

2026 is under way, and we have some excellent workshops continuing through the spring. Are you interested in investing in yourself to develop new skills, increase your leadership capabilities, or support resiliency within your program? See some of our other upcoming professional development opportunities here:

- **February 20** | Planning for the Future: Accounting and Financial Statements



- **March 12** | Developing a Marketing Plan for your Child Care Center
- **March 18** | Policies and Practices for Family Child Care Providers

Keep checking the Northern Lights Training Calendar for all upcoming opportunities; we look forward to working with you!

[Register for Trainings Here](#)

More questions about how FCF VT can help your business? Reach out to infovt@firstchildrensfinance.org or watch our FCF VT Brand video [FCF in VT](#). Reminder that all of our services are FREE!

From Our Partners

Building Bright Futures recently released its “**Monitoring Act 76**” Report.

- [Read the full report here](#)

VTAEYC launches its first virtual **Policy Committee** meeting on February 12. These monthly meetings will deliver state and national updates, a forum to provide feedback and perspectives, and opportunities to take action.

- [VTAEYC Virtual Policy Committee Meeting - VTAEYC](#)

The legislative session is under way; did you miss the **2026 Child Care Agenda**? Co-endorsed by LGKAN & VTAEYC, read it here!

- [Child Care Agenda](#)

Register now for the **Spring 2026 Afterschool Essentials** session, an accelerated half-year program for afterschool staff working in licensed afterschool programs. This program covers a full range of topics including school-age child development, health and safety issues, inclusion and more.

- [Read more and register here](#)

Vermont Afterschool is hiring for an **Data & Impact Analyst**. This role is responsible for designing, collating, and reporting data to help inform and enhance the work of Vermont Afterschool as well as the afterschool, summer learning and youth-serving field.

- [Learn more and apply](#)

Do you have a job to post? Join Shared Services VT and access the ECE JobsVT platform to do so. **Vermont ECE Jobs** is an all-in-one tool for job seekers and for employers looking to hire talented ECE staff. Job posts are instantly distributed to the most popular national job posting sites.

- [Shared Services VT | ECE Jobs VT](#)

Extra, Extra!

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

Resource of the month: ECE Vermont Resource Suggestions Section

- Do you have a Vermont specific resource that should be included on the Vermont platform? We would love to hear from you. Categories for resources are; Advocacy & Public Awareness, ECE Program Support, Children & Families, Health & Wellness. Follow this link to share your thoughts [Shared Services VT |Resource Suggestions](#)

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

FCF VT is off to a fast start in 2026! As you may have seen, the newest Supply and Demand Gap Analysis was released, and if you would like to learn more about other findings from that study, head to our website to review the supplemental reports or see the links below.

- SDG Supplemental: Characteristics of Preschool Capacity [Preschool Capacity Brief](#)
- SDG Supplemental: Estimating Afterschool Supply and Demand in Vermont [Afterschool Capacity Brief](#)
- SDG Supplemental: Part time Programs in Vermont [Part-time Capacity Brief](#)

Our **Leadership Learning Series** started last month. 18 supervisors, directors & leaders came together to begin this 5-month hybrid learning experience. Participants will collaborate with one another and fine tune their supervisory skills, focusing on a different leadership skill each session. We will be excited to share more about this series as it progresses.

Another opportunity last month bolstered 28 attendees, **Hiring Done Well (and Lawfully!)**. This three-part series introduces a new topic and related practice tips and tools, participants will leave the series with action items to reinforce learning and best practices for hiring the best candidates.

Vermont providers and leaders across the state are putting in the time and effort to increase the quality of their staff and leadership capabilities, something we love to see

We had some wonderful program visits in January. Our favorite part of this work is being out there with the folks who are dedicated to support their communities. Shout out to these hard-working programs:

- ONE Arts, Berlin
- Turtle Island
- Acorn Hollow
- Curious Kids
- Turn to Joy

We look forward to seeing many of you in the coming months.

Finally, on the horizon is our annual **State of Child Care in Vermont Survey**. Feedback from providers across the state will be crucial as we move forward with providing the best services for providers & leaders that will continue to strengthen the field, plus, great prizes will be up for grabs for those who participate-keep your eyes peeled!



Interested in more news, updates and resources? Check out our Facebook page: [Facebook](#)

It's Riddle Time!

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

We had great entries for our question of “what comes down but never goes up?” The answer being rain! Only correct answers were submitted (great job) but our winner for fastest correct answer was Maeg Booska. Yay!

Here is this month's challenge:

- *What can fill a room but takes up no space?*

First person to reach out to infvot@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.



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