



Vermont Newsletter

March 2026

Did you know that I started my career as a market researcher? One project that stands out to me was asking people (in 1990) who should be the next spokesperson for Gatorade. We asked people to choose from a list of famous athletes. Watching the Gatorade campaign of the 1990s, it seemed obvious that we all wanted to “Be Like Mike,” but in 1990 Michael Jordan was not quite a household name yet and that was an insightful choice made in part by good research.

At First Children's Finance, we believe that good data is the basis for good decision making. Whether it's reviewing your financial data or the statewide supply/demand data, having good information can help you make the best choices for your business. If you are not sure what the data means, FCF can help!

In the meantime, please take a few minutes to complete our annual child care business survey. We use these results to guide our offerings for next fall. We share the results with policymakers and legislators to help them make well-informed decisions. And we share them with YOU so you can understand the trends in your industry.

Take the VT Child Care Business Survey

We are here to help! Reach out to infvot@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 are well under way, and we are excited to announce our second-round grantees in the coming weeks.

Are you interested, or know someone who would like to start a new program or expand to increase infant/toddler capacity at their program? The next round of MWFK grant application will open on March 16. You can view the [guidelines here](#).

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). See more about our Loan Fund [HERE](#).

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 it 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

As we head rapidly toward sunny Spring, FCF VT is focusing on offering professional development opportunities that will support you and your career goals. Are you interested in investing in yourself to develop new

skills, increasing your leadership capabilities or supporting resiliency within your program?

See a few of our upcoming professional development opportunities below:

- **March 12** | Developing a Marketing Plan for your Child Care Center
- **March 18** | Policies and Practices for Family Child Care Providers
- **April 3** | Planning for the Future: Budget and Cashflow for Child Care Centers
- **April 9** | Licensing Panel Q&A



Later this spring, we will offer the Business Leadership Cohort for Child Care Centers. The BLC provides center directors and other program leaders with the opportunity to learn about the basics of business related to their child care program. This program includes four virtual group cohort sessions focusing on enrollment management, marketing, financial management and more. [Register and learn more here](#)

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

From VTAEYC: Why Recognition Matters and Career Supports. Professional development workshop provides essential background for early childhood educators who are curious about or just learning about the ECE Profession Bill which would establish professional recognition for early childhood educators. Two sessions are offered: [March 10 from noon-1:30 pm](#) and [March 11 from 6-7:30 pm](#)

The CDD is hosting the 2026 Vermont Kindergarten Conference and registration is open! “Play, Inquire and Imagination: How Early Learning Shapes Lifelong Thinkers.” The conference takes place on March 25. [See more & register](#)

Vermont Afterschool has a handful of professional development opportunities coming up; Youth Thrive workshop & Purposeful Pause. See their full [event calendar here](#)

Community College of Vermont is offering ten 30-minute virtual workshops to help business partners enhance their hiring and retention

practices. [Learn more here](#)

Child Trends, a research organization partnering with the CDD to conduct a state-wide early care and education workforce survey about education wants to hear from you. Learn more and [take the survey here](#). *Please note, this survey is different from the FCF VT State of Child Care Business Annual Survey, please take both if you are able!*

Extra, Extra!

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

Resource of the month: Tax Tips for Family Child Care Home Providers

- Tax resources and content updated for 2025 tax year. Get help finding a tax professional, understand your income, business expenses and shared expenses. Find all the resources and templates you may need and take the mystery out of tax filing! [Shared Services VT |Tax Tips](#)
- Shared Services is also hosting a workforce benefits webinar on April 8. Learn about affordable benefits and where to find them on the platform [Shared Services VT |Buried Treasure Webinar Series](#)

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

The State of Vermont Child Care Survey is now open. First Children's Finance administers the State of Child Care survey annually to gain valuable feedback on child care businesses in Vermont to improve our programs and support providers better. Share how economic conditions, workforce challenges and public funding impact your business.

- The survey will be open until March 20 and we have some great prizes to giveaway each week! When you complete the survey, you're name will be entered into a weekly drawing for one of the prizes.

Week Two Prize donated by [Community Playthings](#)
[Wood Firetruck](#)

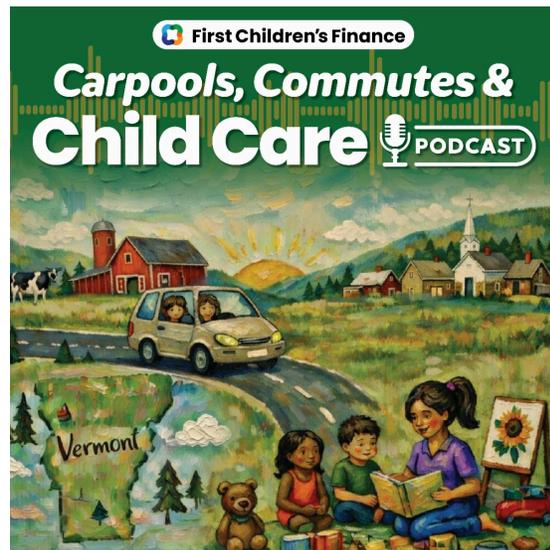


Take the VT Child Care Survey [HERE!](#)

Big News Alert

Have you been searching for a new podcast? Look no further; First Children's Finance VT has started your next favorite pod: **Carpools, Commutes and Child Care**.

Hear from FCF VT Director Erin Roche as she connects with ECE professionals, thought leaders, and pioneers about all things ECE and other joyful, fun life topics. We will also share our monthly newsletter podcast style, so stay tuned for that.



Our first intro episode gives listeners an idea of what's to come. Stream the quick intro on Spotify, keep your eyes peeled for the next episode to drop and get excited -- because we are, so make sure you jump in! Spoiler alert, our first full episode features an ECE pioneer, and we can't wait for you to listen in to the conversation. Follow us on Spotify so you don't miss an episode!

[Listen on Spotify](#)

Don't have Spotify? We have you covered!

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:

A lot of great entries for our last riddle; "What can fill a room but takes up no space." Our top three answers that fit were air, light and laughter (so fun and true). Our winner for fastest correct answer was Jody Smith. Well done!

Here is this month's riddle:

- *Where does today come before yesterday?*

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.



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