

2020 IMPACT REPORT

LET'S GROW KIDS
CHILD CARE IS ESSENTIAL



Your support
is **essential.**

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Photo: Miss Robin's Nest, Montpelier, VT

Dear Friend,

Supporters like you have been on my mind as I reflect on 2020. I've been thinking about how it's often in times of hardship that we are pressed to do our best work. And I've been thinking about how, thanks to you, we were able to accomplish a lot last year for Vermont's children and families.

For example, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Vermonters can now see clearly what you've known all along: child care is essential. And during perhaps the most challenging year of our lives—a year of loss and reckoning—you have remained a steadfast supporter of our movement. Thank you.

You've probably heard me talk about this time as a "moment" for child care in Vermont. It's one of those times when you can feel you're on the precipice of tremendous change.

But what makes this more than a moment is the power of our movement. And that movement is YOU. Thousands of supporters like you who wake up every day and say YES to child care.



WE'RE READY FOR THIS MOMENT BECAUSE OF YOU.

In the next few pages, you'll read about some of the challenges we faced together in 2020. But you'll also read about how, time and again, supporters like you rose to meet those challenges.

You've been with us through 2020, perhaps the *hardest* year of our movement, and your support has led us to 2021, the *biggest* year for our movement. Can you feel the momentum?

In 2020, your support:

- Told the story of our movement, and the promise of Vermont's children, to policymakers, business owners, and decision-makers statewide
- Shored up Vermont's child care system in the midst of a global pandemic
- Fueled our work so that we can reach our goal in the next five years



2020 was also the year that we affiliated with the **Let's Grow Kids Action Network**, which will help drive the political change we need to secure a sustainable, equitable child care system. **The Let's Grow Kids Action Network will ensure that all of the progress we've made together can become reality for Vermonters in the next five years.**

In this report, we will share updates from 2020, but we'll also describe a clear roadmap for where we're headed together. I've never been more grateful for supporters like you as we forge ahead together toward a sustainable, equitable child care system.

With gratitude,

Aly
Aly Richards | CEO

Your Impact: PEOPLE

You are an integral part of our movement! In the work we do every day, you are at the center. You're making real change for our child care system, and you're inspiring more Vermonters like you to take action to solve our child care crisis.

YOU ARE COMMITTED VOLUNTEERS:

-  **12** ACTION TEAMS IN **14** COUNTIES ACROSS VERMONT
-  **981** NEW SUPPORTERS TAKING ACTION
-  **1,199** CONTACTS TO LEGISLATORS
-  **512** LAWN SIGNS AND ACTION TOOLKITS DISTRIBUTED IN **124** VERMONT TOWNS

YOU ARE DIGITAL ORGANIZERS:

2020 turned our in-person organizing efforts upside down. But your help meant we could quickly adapt to connecting with supporters online. **Moving to online events has created more opportunities to connect statewide.** We keep in touch with supporters like you to make sure you've got the information you need to advocate for a sustainable and equitable child care system.

 **84** ADVOCACY EVENTS ATTENDED
(all but 4 happened virtually!)

 **5,915** PERSONAL PHONE CALLS & EMAILS TO SUPPORTERS

 **27,221** TEXT MESSAGES SENT & RECEIVED

YOU ARE POLITICAL ADVOCATES:

2020 also saw the creation of the **Let's Grow Kids Action Network**, a 501(c)(4) sister organization to Let's Grow Kids. That means that the Let's Grow Kids Action Network is now a powerful tool for change in our child care movement.

Get connected to the Action Network at LGKAN.org and read more about it on the next page!



YOU CAN HELP: Tell Your Story!

Visit: letsgrowkids.org/tell-your-story



Photo: Bolton Valley Early Care and Learning Center, Bolton, VT

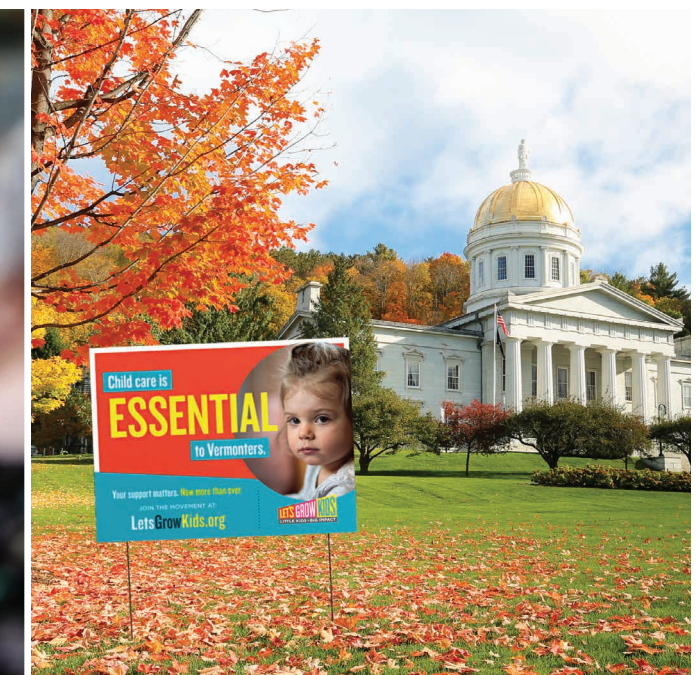
What is an ACTION TEAM?

An Action Team is a group of volunteers who meet monthly with others from their county. Led by a member of the Let's Grow Kids Field Team, Action Team members receive updates about the progress of our shared movement, work together to inspire others in their county to join in, and get support from staff to share their stories and call for change.

Read more about Action Teams on [Page 6](#) from volunteer Abby Skidmore!



Photos: 2019 Advocacy Conference at the State House, Montpelier, VT



ABBY SKIDMORE

shares why she's a committed Action Team member:



My name is Abby Skidmore. I live in Manchester and I am the proud single mother of a beautiful little girl. I love being her mom! Every day is filled with learning experiences—for my daughter and for me—and it brings me such joy to see the positive changes happening in her life. But it's not easy. Every day is a challenge. And I'm not talking about temper tantrums and tummy aches!

As most parents know—especially single parents—raising a child is expensive. And for many Vermont families, money is tight. Food, gas, and rent take up most of our paychecks before we can even think about paying for child care, let alone saving money to provide our children with a college education.

SO FOR A LOT OF VERMONTERS, IT'S NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO GIVE OUR CHILDREN WHAT THEY NEED FOR A STRONG START IN LIFE WITHOUT HELP.

Without being able to send my daughter to child care, I wouldn't be able to work. Thankfully, she and I qualify for tuition assistance through the Child Care Financial Assistance Program. But not everyone is that lucky.

In my county, **72% of infants likely to need child care don't have access to high-quality child care.** Sadly, this problem isn't confined to my hometown. This is Vermont's child care challenge and this is why I joined my local Action Team.

Action Teams are where committed volunteers—parents, early childhood educators, business owners, and community members—come together to develop their personal skills as advocates for high-quality, affordable child care. We are child care champions!

WE STAY BUSY DOING THINGS LIKE:

- Encouraging Vermonters to share their personal child care stories with local media, our legislators, and our neighbors
- Organizing trainings and community events
- Registering people to vote and getting engaged voters to the polls
- Keeping high-quality, affordable child care on the political agenda

Through my Action Team, I have realized that sharing my own personal story with others can be powerful for the entire movement. **I am hopeful for my daughter's future knowing that I'm having an impact in making real, positive, lasting change for my family and for other Vermont families.**

**THANK YOU, ABBY,
for your commitment
to your daughter's
future and to every
child's future!**

Join your local Action Team
at: LGKAN.org

LET'S GROW KIDS Action Network

What does **LET'S GROW KIDS ACTION NETWORK** do? We sat down with board member **Alyssa Schuren** to answer your questions:

WHAT'S MY ROLE IN THE ACTION NETWORK?

The Action Network represents every person like you who supports Vermont's child care system. Together, we will do the hard (and necessary) work of ensuring our elected officials invest in and fund an equitable child care system. **We will be supporting child care champions in public office, and we'll also be making sure advocates like YOU have all the tools you need to be part of the solution.**

HOW IS MY SUPPORT OF THE ACTION NETWORK DIFFERENT FROM MY SUPPORT OF LET'S GROW KIDS?

Let's Grow Kids is still working directly in communities across Vermont to improve the quality and sustainability of child care—and you can read more about that in the section of this report called "Programs." And as you'll read in the section of this report called "Policy," Let's Grow Kids also conducts research, analyzes and develops the best child care policies possible, and supports lawmakers to advance child care legislation.

So, Let's Grow Kids Action Network is a tool in the Let's Grow Kids toolbox to support and recruit volunteers like you, and then to flex our collective muscle to ensure our elected officials vote to support our children. Let's Grow Kids Action Network is a key component of our child care campaign. Together, we will help turn the progress that Let's Grow Kids is making for Vermont's children into reality for our communities.

HOW DOES THIS IMPACT ME?

You'll continue to hear from us. Now, you'll get emails from both Let's Grow Kids and Let's Grow Kids Action Network.

But most importantly, with every contact you make to an elected official, personal story you share, Action Team meeting you attend, donation you make, or friend or family member you tell about our movement, you'll be bringing us one step closer to collective system transformation for our children, our families, our early childhood educators, and for all of us. We can't do it without you—**our movement is you!**—and that's why we're so grateful for your support.

ALYSSA SCHUREN is a partner at The Management Center, a Washington, D.C.-based firm that supports social change organizations (like this one!)

Alyssa lives in Montpelier with her husband and son.



Your Impact: POLICY

As a supporter of our policy work, you are courageous and you are visionary. You can see how, together, we can make immediate change for Vermont's children, families, and early childhood educators—while at the same time, we can secure a bright future for our state, benefitting all of us forever. Your generous support is advancing early childhood education policies that make child care equitable, affordable, accessible, and high-quality for children and families.

Because of advocates like you sharing your stories and advocating, legislators understood that child care is essential—to you and to your communities.

In 2020, the Vermont Legislature invested more than \$50M—a record-setting amount—to stabilize our child care system, including through federal CARES Act funds. These funds helped child care programs provide essential child care, recoup lost revenues, pay staff, prevent closures, and reopen with health and safety measures in place.

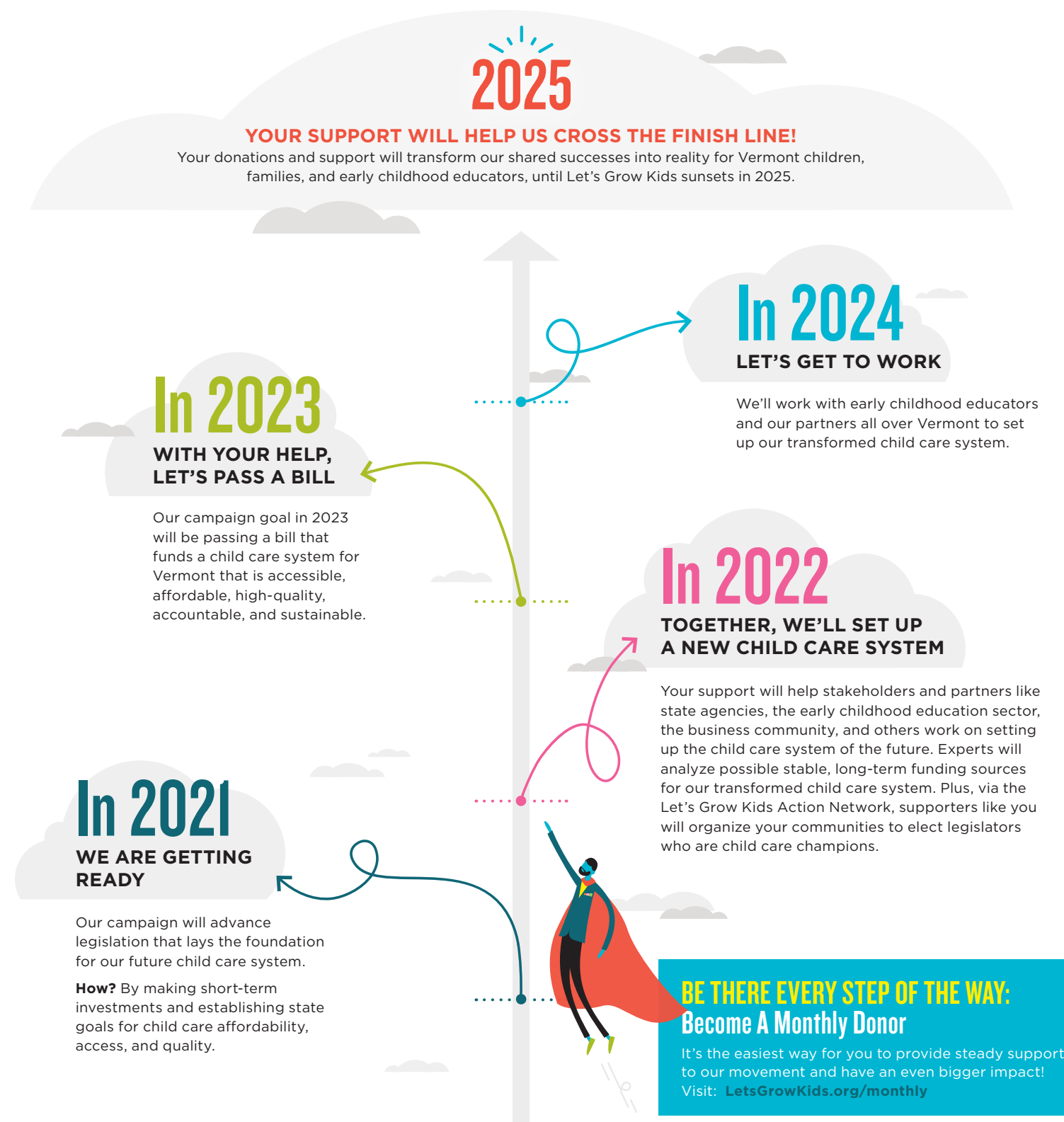
These funds were instrumental in shoring up Vermont's child care system, helping to solidify policymakers' commitment to investing in child care, and helping to launch the next phase for our state—and our movement—to achieve our mission for an equitable and sustainable child care system by 2025.



Photos clockwise from left: King Street Youth Center, Burlington, VT; Georgia's Next Generation, Georgia, VT; Dad's Guild at ECHO in 2018, Burlington VT

ON THE ROAD TO 2025

YOU'RE HELPING BUILD A CHILD CARE SYSTEM THAT WORKS FOR EVERY CHILD, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY. [HERE'S THE PLAN:](#)



**BE THERE EVERY STEP OF THE WAY:
Become A Monthly Donor**
It's the easiest way for you to provide steady support to our movement and have an even bigger impact!
Visit: LetsGrowKids.org/monthly

Voices from the virtual STATE HOUSE...



“Our already fragile child care system was severely impacted by COVID-19. **This commitment to Vermont families is essential to getting our economy back on track.**

Representative ANN PUGH
Chair, House Committee on Human Services | South Burlington, VT

Photos from top: Brattleboro Center For Children, Brattleboro, VT; Miss Robin's Nest, Montpelier, VT



“We especially have heard a lot of concerns [about the difficulty of finding and affording child care] over the past 10 months. **That is why child care will be one of the most important priorities for the Legislature this year.**

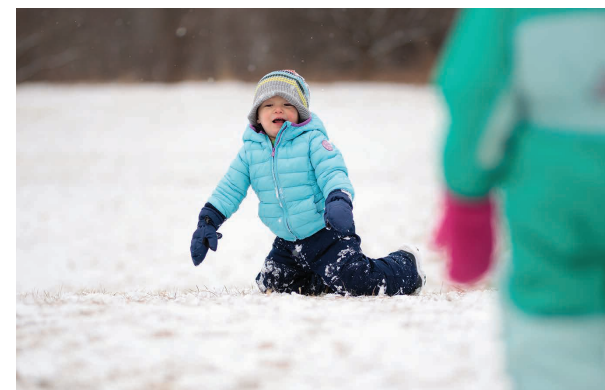
Speaker of the House of Representatives JILL KROWINSKI
Burlington, VT

“We know **child care is a key to economic and workforce development in Vermont.**

Representative MIKE MARCOTTE
Chair, House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development
Coventry, VT

“Giving our children the best care we can is the right thing to do educationally and economically, but also a **critical moral imperative. We have to give every child in Vermont the opportunity to have a great start in life.**

Senate President Pro Tempore
BECCA BALINT
Brattleboro, VT





Photos clockwise from top: King Street Youth Center, Burlington, VT; Ascension Childcare, Shelburne, VT; Bennington Early Childhood Center, Bennington, VT

Your Impact: PROGRAMS

You are strengthening child care quality, capacity, and sustainability by directly supporting early childhood educators and organizations working within Vermont's child care system. While simultaneously advocating for the policy investments you read about in the last section of this report, your support made sure that early childhood educators had what they needed to provide essential care throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and that educators were represented in the political process.

YOU HELP CHILD CARE BUSINESSES:

Your support strengthens Vermont's child care system by making sure that early childhood educators can create enough high-quality child care for families in need.

-  **\$2,231,082** DIRECTLY TO HELP **75 CHILD CARE BUSINESSES** START UP AND EXPAND
-  **228** CHILD CARE BUSINESSES RECEIVED COACHING AND SUPPORT
-  **633** NEW CHILD CARE SPACES CREATED FOR FAMILIES IN NEED



Photos clockwise from left: Bolton Valley Early Care and Learning Center, Bolton, VT; Bennington Early Childhood Center, Bennington, VT; King Street Youth Center, Burlington, VT







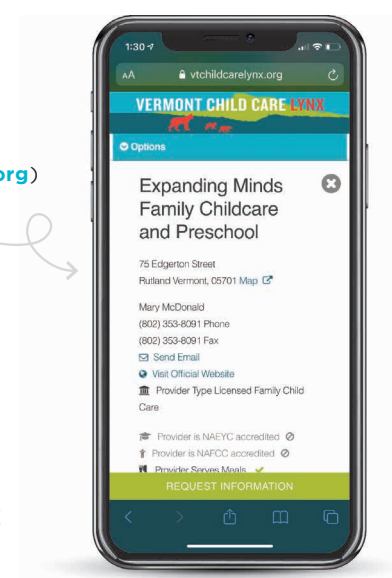
Photo: Bennington Early Childhood Center, Bennington, VT

YOU HELP EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS:

As a supporter of our movement, you know that our child care system is only as strong as our workforce of superhero early childhood educators. The child care workforce—made up of mainly women—has traditionally been undercompensated and undervalued, and their businesses operate on thin margins because of the high cost of providing high-quality care.

Your support sends a clear message that early childhood educators are essential.

-  **VERMONT CHILD CARE LYNX** WAS LAUNCHED— A SOFTWARE TO HELP PARENTS FIND CHILD CARE AND TO HELP PROVIDERS PROMOTE THEIR PROGRAMS (See it in action at: [VTChildCareLynx.org](https://vtchildcarelynx.org))
-  **374** EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS CONNECTED TO THEIR PEERS THROUGH **VERMONT EARLY CHILDHOOD NETWORKS**
-  **293** EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS PARTICIPATE IN **WEBINARS** WITH LET'S GROW KIDS STAFF
-  **4,206** EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS, OR **60% OF THE WORKFORCE** IN VERMONT, ARE CONNECTED TO THE MOVEMENT





YOU HELPED DURING COVID-19:

YOU SPRANG INTO ACTION WHEN THE PANDEMIC HIT. Overnight, hundreds of early childhood educators needed emergency supplies and you helped fulfill each urgent request. Then, your gifts helped child care businesses partner with local suppliers for ongoing distribution.

Thanks to your support, child care businesses could provide a safe environment for children throughout the pandemic.

Between March and April 2020, **126 ESSENTIAL EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS** could offer emergency care to **800 CHILDREN** because you provided them with:

-  **100** THERMOMETERS
-  **2,000** ROLLS OF TOILET PAPER
-  **240** BARS OF SOAP
-  **100** BOTTLES OF HAND SANITIZER
-  **420** CANISTERS OF SANITIZING WIPES



Photos: Mountain View Child Care, North Troy, VT

FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS WITH LOVE:



“ I am so very thankful for all you have done to make the legislators know just how essential child care is in Vermont. **I feel so incredibly valued. And so appreciate living in the only state that is helping providers by covering their lost income due to mandated closure from COVID-19.** We WILL have a stable child care system when we return from this mess, which will help folks get back to work that much faster.

ELSA BOSMA
Puddle Jumpers Child Care | Shelburne, VT

“ Thank you so very much for my cleaning supplies. This is better than Christmas!! **You rock!**

MICHELLE MYERS-PROUTY
Myers Prouty Children's Campuses
Shaftsbury, VT

Photo: Mountain View Child Care, North Troy, VT

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

share why their work is essential...



“THIS IS ABOUT MOVING THE ENTIRE FIELD OF EARLY EDUCATION FORWARD IN A COHESIVE, RESPONSIBLE AND STRUCTURED WAY. WITH CLARITY AROUND HOW WE TEACH OUR YOUNGEST CITIZENS, AND CARE FOR THEM, AND SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES, WE’LL BE BETTER ABLE TO EXPLAIN OUR PURPOSE IN SUCH A WAY THAT OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS TRULY RECOGNIZE THE NEED TO SUPPORT OUR PROFESSION FULLY.”

-Vermont Early Childhood Educator

Photo: Ascension Childcare, Shelburne, VT

“

As the director of a high-quality early childhood education center, I witness the financial struggles of parents, staff, and administrators on a daily basis.

Early childhood education has been an underfunded system subsidized by its own workforce for far too many years.

With Let’s Grow Kids advocating for improvements to the system of early care and education, and VTAEYC taking on the task of advancing the early childhood profession, I finally feel as though people are starting to take notice, and positive changes are on the horizon.

ALYSON GRZYB

Director, Bennington Early Childhood Center; Task Force Member, Early Childhood Educators Advancing as a Profession | VTAEYC



ALYSON GRZYB



Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children

“ADVANCING THE FIELD WOULD BRING ALL OF THOSE INVOLVED IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TOGETHER TO FORM A MORE COHESIVE WORKFORCE, WHICH WOULD PROVIDE MORE ACCESS TO EQUITABLE CARE, PUBLIC FUNDING, PROFESSIONAL COMPENSATION, AND MORE.”

-Vermont Early Childhood Educator

“EARLY EDUCATION IS CURRENTLY A FRAGMENTED FIELD, WHICH MEANS THAT MANY ASPECTS OF THE FIELD VARY, LIKE DESCRIPTIONS OF WHAT WE DO, DIFFERENT SETTINGS, AND EVEN DIFFERENT TITLES FOR OUR EDUCATORS!”

-Vermont Early Childhood Educator



Photos from top: Georgia’s Next Generation, Georgia, VT; Miss Robin’s Nest, Montpelier, VT

“

Given that the most important determinants of high-quality, accessible early childhood education are the individuals who work with young children—early childhood educators—**this collaboration between Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children (VTAEYC) and Let’s Grow Kids to advance early childhood education as a recognized profession in Vermont is very exciting!**

VTAEYC plays a central role as the professional organization for the workforce. Let’s Grow Kids brings resources and experience in research, capacity-building, and advocacy to the table. And, both organizations recognize the importance of this being a workforce-led initiative. I’m honored to be involved in such a powerful partnership.

SUSAN TITTERTON

Project Coordinator, Early Childhood Educators Advancing as a Profession | VTAEYC

Financials

FUELING THE MOVEMENT

Your donations make our work possible. Your support is not only strengthening our child care system in every corner of the state, but you are also inspiring and motivating lasting policy change.

Thank you!

2020 REVENUE: \$2,504,850.93

INDIVIDUALS	29%
FOUNDATIONS	21%
CORPORATE	1%
GOVERNMENT GRANTS & CONTRACTS	49%
	100%

2020 EXPENSES: \$7,743,033.00

DEVELOPMENT	7%
OPERATIONS	9%
PEOPLE	19%
Let's Grow Kids Action Network	0.4%*
Lobbying	1.2%*
PROGRAMS	53%
POLICY	12%

*Percentage of total expenses 100%

ON THE WAY TO 2025...

Thanks to you, here's our fundraising progress so far—and where we're headed:



Ask Lucia:

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT WHY LET'S GROW KIDS IS FUNDRAISING, OR WHAT WE'RE FUNDRAISING FOR?

LUCIA CAMPRIELLO, CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, IS HERE TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS. LUCIA LIVES WITH HER FAMILY IN BURLINGTON.



I THOUGHT LET'S GROW KIDS HAD RAISED THE MONEY YOU NEEDED. WHY ARE YOU STILL FUNDRAISING?

I'm so glad you asked! This is a common misconception about our movement. In fact, donations from people like you are exactly what make our work possible.

In 2015, the Stiller Family Foundation made a lead, ten-year commitment of \$20 million to Let's Grow Kids that launched our fundraising campaign. This was the Stiller Family Foundation's most generous commitment to date. The Stiller Family Foundation's support builds upon the longtime leadership from our foundation partners including the Turrell Fund, the A.D. Henderson Foundation, the Johnson Family Foundation, High Meadows Foundation, and others. This seed funding represents the start of our campaign, but not the end of it. In fact, we've got about \$15 million remaining to raise to make sure we can accomplish our goal for Vermont children and families.

WHAT DOES MY DONATION ACTUALLY DO?

Your donation (of any amount!) supports all the work you read about in this report, and so much more. Whether it's making Action Teams possible in every corner of the state, or supporting our staff who are working one-on-one with early childhood educators to create more child care spaces, your donation is fueling our people-powered movement.

IF OUR GOAL IS A WELL-FUNDED, EQUITABLE CHILD CARE SYSTEM SUPPORTED BY THE STATE OF VERMONT, WHY DOES LET'S GROW KIDS RELY ON MY DONATION?

You're right! Our end goal is a child care system by, and for, Vermonters. But the work that it takes to get there is what your gifts support. In fact, as a donor, you are demonstrating to Vermont's elected officials that child care is important to you.

No matter what size donation you make, the magic of your gift is that you're not only keeping our movement running—you're also sending a clear message to Vermont's leaders about the power of participation in creating the child care system we wish for—and desperately need. Thank you!

HAVE MORE QUESTIONS? WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!

Please reach out to LUCIA CAMPRIELLO at lucia@letsgrowkids.org, or visit LetsGrowKids.org/give to see more ways to give.

THANK YOU!

We are especially grateful to...



LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

You are generous supporters who have committed to supporting our movement over a multi-year period. Thank you!

For more information about becoming a member of the Leadership Circle, please contact Lucia Campriello at lucia@letsgrowkids.org.



CHAMPION CIRCLE

You are committed monthly donors to Let's Grow Kids and Let's Grow Kids Action Network. Your support every month means we can count on you every step of the way.

To give monthly, visit www.letsgrowkids.org/donate and select the monthly giving option.

2021 LET'S GROW KIDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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DAVID G. RAHR*
Founding President, Vermont Community Foundation

CORNELIUS "CON" HOGAN*
Former Secretary, Vermont Agency of Human Services

**deceased*



What inspires you?

WE ASKED YOU TO SHARE WHY YOU GIVE TO OUR MOVEMENT. **HERE'S WHAT YOU SAID:**

“Emily at Let's Grow Kids helped me so much in my first year as a child care program director. The resources and support have been monumental. And, **I love being connected to advocacy that's organized for our shared goal. I'm proud to be a part of the movement.**”

LAURA GOLDBLATT | Brattleboro, VT

“I give because **I was a kid once too.**”

JOEL WHITING
Bennington, VT

“We have grandkids in Vermont, and we've seen how our granddaughter's preschool made such a difference for her.”

We want to support Let's Grow Kids because early care and learning is so important.

CHRISTINE & HARRY HARRISON
New Port Richey, FL

“I give in honor of all **early educators.**”

ALLISON GARDNER
Colchester, VT



“I give in honor of **my three grandchildren.**”

KATE BALDWIN
Burlington, VT



Photos clockwise from top: Georgia's Next Generation, Georgia, VT; King Street Youth Center, Burlington, VT; Rainbow Playschool, Woodstock, VT

WE'LL SUCCEED THANKS TO YOU.



YOU ARE OUR MOVEMENT!

HERE ARE JUST SOME OF THE WAYS YOU STAY INVOLVED.
THANK YOU!

Joining A Local Action Team

Planning legislative actions and organizing events—you are the fuel for our movement.

Contacting Your Legislators

To let them know why child care is essential to you and that it's time to invest in what's essential.

Sharing Your Story

Your personal stories touch hearts and change minds.

Giving Gifts

Your donations go directly to help build a just and equitable child care system for all Vermonters.

Telling Your Friends

Engaging others and inspiring positive, lasting change for Vermont children.

Supporting Your Employees

Working with other business leaders to advocate for access to child care as an economic development and workforce growth strategy.



YOU ARE THE FORCE BEHIND CREATING
A SUSTAINABLE & EQUITABLE
CHILD CARE SYSTEM
IN VERMONT

IT ALL HAPPENS AT:

LetsGrowKids.org



Photo: Robin's Nest, Burlington, VT
Cover photo: Georgia's Next Generation, Georgia, VT



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BURLINGTON, VT 05401

[LetsGrowKids.org](https://lets-grow-kids.org)

