

Windham County

EXPANDING CHILD CARE ACCESS DURING THE PANDEMIC

In late 2020, it was announced that Mulberry Bush would be shutting down. Community partners rallied together, and with a grant from Let's Grow Kids, Mulberry Bush was able to stay open, ensuring that the 29 children attending Mulberry Bush had uninterrupted care, which was especially critical during the uncertainty of the pandemic.

The program is now licensed for 59 students, and led by Melanie Zinn, Vermont's 2018 Early Childhood Educator of the Year. Melanie shared that she and her team couldn't have stabilized the program without financial support from Let's Grow Kids. Since receiving the grant just over a year ago, they have increased enrollment, adding 30 spaces, and are looking to retrofit a space to add six infant spaces. They have also opened a new program in Vernon, which is nearing full enrollment.

In addition to providing high-quality care to over 100 families in Windham County, Melanie provides her staff with ample sick and compassionate leave time, fair salaries, and benefits. This program and its leadership are a model for the state.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR YES VOTE ON H.171!

SENATORS:

Becca Balint
Jeanette K. White

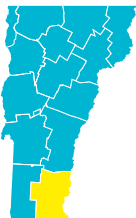
REPRESENTATIVES:

Michelle Bos-Lun
Mollie S. Burke
Sara Coffey
John Gannon

Leslie Goldman
Emilie Kornheiser
Emily Long
Michael Mrowicki

Kelly Pajala
Carolyn W. Partridge
Laura Sibilia
Tristan Toleno

WINDHAM COUNTY BY THE NUMBERS



CHILDREN LIKELY TO NEED CARE:

- 521 Infants
- 298 Toddlers
- 538 Preschoolers

CHILD CARE SPACES NEEDED TO MEET DEMAND:

- 373 for Infants
- 75 for Toddlers
- 197 for Preschoolers



“We’ve been putting off starting a family for years because child care is so expensive. I hear a lot of people talk about relying on extended family to help with child care but that’s not an option for us. I know we are not alone.”

ELISHA UNDERWOOD

Wellness Program Manager | Brattleboro

“

We were lucky to have found child care, but it’s clear that many families struggle to find and afford care, while early educators are barely earning a living and programs are struggling to stay afloat. While I’m excited to have returned to my home state, I’m saddened to think that raising a family here is such a struggle for so many. Vermont will thrive when every Vermont family is thriving, and child care is a critical piece of that equation.”



SAGE RUTH

Parent | Brattleboro