

Vermont's Child Care Campaign

2023 IMPACT REPORT

LED BY LET'S GROW KIDS IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH LET'S GROW KIDS ACTION NETWORK





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Photos clockwise from top left: The Courage to Care Rally, Montpelier; Su White, Quarry Hill Preschool, speaking at the Rally; Robin's Nest Children's Center, Burlington; Mountain View Child Care, North Troy

My friends,

To say that 2023 was a good year for Vermont's Child Care Campaign would not do justice to the monumental gains made for children, families, and early educators. **The passage of Act 76 is proof that when a group of thoughtful and dedicated citizens organize around a common goal, we can make history.** Thanks to you, accessible, affordable, quality child care is becoming a reality for Vermont's children, and all our futures are brighter because of it.

Last April, over 1,000 of you joined us on the State House lawn for the Courage to Care Rally. Alongside educators, parents, business leaders, and children of all ages, we sang our songs, held our signs high, and made sure our message was heard: **Child Care is Essential.** It was a powerful watershed event for our movement – and it inspired our lawmakers to rise to the urgency of the moment.

Just a few months later, with widespread support across the political spectrum, Act 76 was signed into law. This robust child care legislation makes us a national leader, and it promises to:

1. Expand child care tuition assistance,
2. Increase funding to bolster program capacity and quality, and
3. Invest sustainably in compensation and professional development for early childhood educators.

I AM GRATEFUL BEYOND MEASURE FOR WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED SO FAR TOGETHER — AND WE ARE NOT DONE YET!

Now is the time to put this bold new legislation to work, and to make sure it works for us all.

Thank you for being a critical part of this movement.

Onward!



Aly Richards

CEO, LET'S GROW KIDS

BOARD CHAIR, LET'S GROW KIDS ACTION NETWORK



Our Impact

By the numbers...

With your support in 2023, we made history for Vermont, becoming a national leader on child care. **Vermont passed Act 76 (the 2023 Child Care Bill), a first-of-its-kind comprehensive child care bill, making Vermont's child care system one of the most expensive in the nation.** United around a shared vision of affordable access to quality child care, we helped transform Vermont's child care system, and we've never been closer to realizing our mission.

IN 2023, OUR PARTNERSHIPS WITH VERMONTERS HELPED...

People Power



INSPIRE 2,123 NEW SUPPORTERS to join the campaign for a **TOTAL OF 40,625 CAMPAIGN SUPPORTERS.**

MAKE 13,464 CONTACTS TO LEGISLATORS to encourage support for public investment in child care.

1,384 VERMONTERS SHOWED POLICYMAKERS THAT CHILD CARE IS A TOP ISSUE by attending statewide events calling for and celebrating transformational change.

Policy Change



PASS ACT 76 AND SECURE \$125 MILLION in sustained annual investments for Vermont's child care system.

CELEBRATE THE 142 OUT OF 180 VERMONT LEGISLATORS who voted to pass the 2023 Child Care Bill.

SUPPORT 47 BUSINESS LEADERS, PARENTS, EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS, AND NATIONAL EXPERTS to take action in support of affordable access to quality child care.

Program Sustainability



ESTABLISH 1,250 NEW, QUALITY CHILD CARE SPACES throughout the state in partnership with First Children's Finance.

PROVIDE 293 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS with business and technical assistance in partnership with First Children's Finance.

ENGAGE 1,184 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS in the campaign, ensuring their voices are represented in shaping the future of Vermont's child care system.



WHAT DOES ACT 76 MEAN FOR VERMONTERS?

AFFORDABILITY: By the end of 2024, over 7,000 additional Vermont children and their families may be eligible for tuition assistance.

ACCESSIBILITY: Readiness payments, higher Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) reimbursement rates for programs, and capacity and quality incentives will help bolster child care program staffing and increase programs' capacity to serve more children.

QUALITY: The historic ongoing investment will lead to increased investment in Vermont's early childhood education workforce.



ACT 76 IS ADVANCING A MORE EQUITABLE CHILD CARE SYSTEM THROUGH:

- Higher CCFAP reimbursement rates for center-based programs and family child care homes to increase access to child care and meet families' needs.
- Introducing noncitizen CCFAP eligibility so more Vermonters have access to affordable care.
- Sets the stage for minimum pay standards for early childhood educators in the future.
- Asks the state to restructure the grant program for children with specialized needs enrolled in child care.

Photos clockwise from top left: Robin's Nest Children's Center, Burlington; Cheers to Child Care Celebration, Isham Family Farm, Williston; Robin's Nest Children's Center; Bennington Early Childhood Center, Bennington; The Courage to Care Rally, Montpelier

People Power

Your advocacy resulted in a quantum leap forward in Vermont's child care system. **In 2023...**

2,123 new supporters joined Vermont's child care campaign, for a total of 40,625 campaign supporters. This included **137 employers, joining a statewide coalition of 330** employers who agreed to the value proposition of "a public financing mechanism that will fund a statewide system of child care that caps family costs at no more than 10% of annual income and ensures fair compensation for early childhood educators."

On a windy day in April, over **1,000 people attended the Courage to Care Rally on the Vermont State House lawn**, uniting in a call for policy change and increased public investment in child care. Throughout the legislative session, Vermonters continued to call for change, **making 13,464 contacts to legislators to encourage support for public investment**, including approximately 4,000 in anticipation of the veto session! This incredible collective action led to the passage of Act 76.

But we didn't slow down. In the fall, Let's Grow Kids drove 370 miles across the state for the Courage in Action Child Care Tour, **celebrating the early success of Act 76 with over 250 attendees, including 29 legislators**. The tour stopped in South Burlington, St. Johnsbury, Stowe, Rutland, Thetford, Hartford, Brattleboro, and Wilmington, and featured 5 child care programs who, thanks to Act 76, increased compensation for staff and added a cumulative 202 new child care spaces.

Photo: The Courage to Care Rally, Montpelier



Scan to see the
Employers who affirmed
their support!



“

As a small family-owned BIPOC business, it is important for us to support our team—we're all in this together. **Rising tides.**”

GEOFFREY SEWAKE

Whirligig Brewing | Caledonia County

“

I've seen a lot during my career. So much has changed but the child care crisis continues. **And now we're on the brink of real, lasting change. Right here, right now. We are leading the way!**

SU WHITE

Teaching Director, Quarry Hill School | Addison County

“

I'm a mother of two, and it was easier to open two restaurants than it was to find child care. And every day, my restaurant is impacted by the instability of our child care system. From a business standpoint it would be incredibly beneficial to have a stable child care environment. We need to ask, 'why aren't we doing this? Why aren't we taking the necessary steps to fix this issue?'"

CARA CHIGAZOLA-TOBIN

Chef Owner, Honey Road & Grey Jay | Chittenden County

“

I spent evenings and weekends phone banking and emailing my representatives. We were saying, 'we're not going to stop advocating for this until it happens!'"

ILIA GILLIGAN

Parent Advocate, Early Childhood Educator, Families of Color Advisory Group Facilitator | Chittenden County



Policy Change

Your participation helped secure transformational public investment in Vermont's child care system. **In 2023...**

Vermont passed Act 76, a first-of-its-kind comprehensive child care bill, **making Vermont's child care system one of the most expansive in the nation.**

This legislative victory, accomplished with cross-partisan support, was a result of decades of strengthening the child care system, building public and political will, and supporting legislative child care champions.

Leading up to and during the legislative session, Let's Grow Kids engaged 1,184 early childhood educators and partnered with families of color and families with children with specialized needs to center their experiences in our policy agenda, which informed Act 76. We also supported 47 business leaders, parents, early educators, and national experts who testified in support of long-term public investment in quality child care and helped legislators see the need for change and the direct impact this legislation would have on families, early childhood educators, businesses, and communities.

After many months of thoughtful work and collaboration to shape the bill, on the last day of session, **118 out of 150 representatives and 24 of 30 senators voted in favor of the 2023 Child Care Bill.** This overwhelming support from across the political spectrum was tested when Governor Phil Scott vetoed the bill. During the veto override session, 116 representatives and 23 senators voted to override the veto (98 and 20 votes were needed respectively). With this vote, Act 76 made history, transforming Vermont's child care system.

Photo: Courage to Care Rally, Montpelier



“

The public demand for child care legislation in Vermont is loud and clear and legislators heard that cry. When the public demand meets the political will, elected officials can overcome obstacles to lead the way on child care.”

JULIE KASHEN

Director for Women’s Economic Justice and Senior Fellow at The Century Fund¹

“

This child care bill represents the Legislature’s unwavering commitment to transforming Vermont’s child care system, making child care more accessible and affordable for thousands of Vermont families and improving compensation for early childhood educators. **This is what people-powered politics looks like.**”

PHIL BARUTH

Vermont Senate President Pro Tempore

“

Vermont showed that you can have a bold vision, cultivate a broad base of support, persevere through budget battles and pandemics, and make the state a better place for those who don’t have a voice in politics. **The hard part is not the policy—it’s the strategy, and the patience.**”

HELENE STEBBINS

Executive Director of the Alliance for Early Success²



“

For far, far too long families across Vermont have struggled to balance taking care of their children and earning a paycheck. **But this year we took a huge step to ensure every family has access to high-quality and affordable child care.** With the passage of this bill our state will be more prosperous, there will be greater opportunities for Vermonters, and we have shown the rest of the country what a state that supports families truly looks like.”

JILL KROWINSKI

Speaker of the Vermont House of Representatives

¹ Gale, Rebecca. “Vermont Makes Child Care History with a Bipartisan Veto Override.” Early Learning Nation, June 27, 2023

² Cohen, Rachel. “One state just became a national leader on child care. Here’s how they did it.” Vox, May 22, 2023

Photo: Vermont lawmakers and their families at the Cheers to Child Care Celebration, Isham Family Farm, Williston

Program Sustainability

Your partnership strengthened Vermont's current child care system, preparing for new public investments. In 2023...

We continued to support program quality and accessibility, working closely with system partners to ensure programs were prepared for increased public investment. As Let's Grow Kids moves closer to its sunset, collaboration with sustainability partners including First Children's Finance and the Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children (VTAEYC) is essential to ensure sustained system success.

A quality child care system depends on its workforce. With grant support from Let's Grow Kids in 2023, our partners at VTAEYC were able to make strategic operational expansions, so that they are well-positioned to support a current workforce with advancement opportunities and increased wages, while fostering the future workforce. With Let's Grow Kids' support, VTAEYC's workforce-led Early Childhood Education Advancing as a Recognized Profession initiative has made Vermont a national leader in working to secure fair compensation for early childhood educators.

Developing leadership within the system remains a top priority for Let's Grow Kids. Our Early Childhood Educator Leadership Circle closed out the year with more than 50 members. Members of the Leadership Circle participate in storytelling and public speaking workshops and commit to advocating meaningfully for their sector across various forums. In 2023, we elevated the voices of 202 early childhood educators advocating for change through testimony, writing op-eds, and speaking engagements. The Vermont Early Childhood Network (VECN), a peer networking, professional development, and mentorship program, was co-funded by Let's Grow Kids and advised by Let's Grow Kids' programs team for 10 years. Today, VECN boasts 355 members across 24 networks in 12 regions. In 2023 Let's Grow Kids provided bridge funding to VTAEYC as they assumed leadership of this impactful network.

FLOOD RESPONSE

On July 9, 2023, heavy rain began to fall on Vermont and it did not stop for two days. The damage caused by the resulting floods was significant, and child care programs were not immune to the impact of this catastrophic weather event. Let's Grow Kids responded by gathering and delivering supplies, supporting staff in volunteering with clean-up efforts, and providing \$70,000 in emergency grants to child care programs that were impacted by the storm.

MAKE WAY FOR KIDS



From its inception in 2018 through 2023, Make Way for Kids granted \$8.8M to child care programs, creating over 6,700 spaces in all 14 counties.

Let's Grow Kids launched Make Way for Kids with an annual goal of creating 500 high-quality spaces through high-touch technical assistance coupled with grants. With philanthropic funding and programmatic expertise, this program created 1,304 quality child care spaces by December 2019. Based on this demonstrated success, in 2019 the State granted \$2.2 million to Let's Grow Kids for child care capacity building and quality improvement, expediting the impact of this critical initiative and demonstrating the transformative effect of public investment alongside philanthropic support.

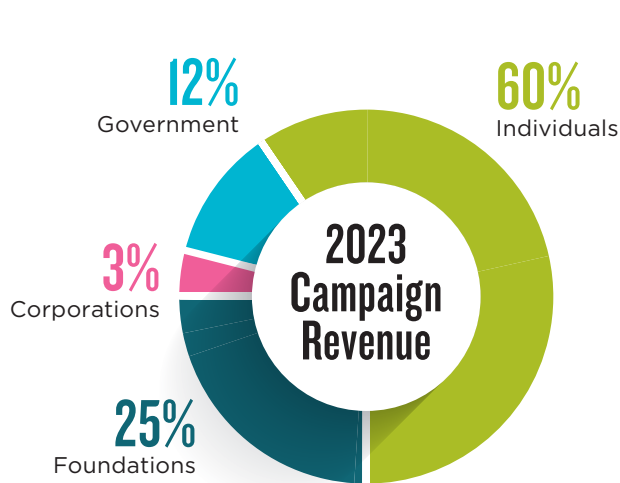
In partnership with the State, this program continued to grow, creating new spaces even during the pandemic and following turbulence. At the end of 2023, the Make Way for Kids grant program transitioned to First Children's Finance through a contract with the State. Let's Grow Kids provided technical assistance during this transition. In December 2023, First Children's Finance granted \$1.5M to 44 projects, creating approximately 1,050 spaces, 229 new jobs and 19 new child care businesses in 13 counties.

Make Way for Kids is a testament to the power of philanthropy modeling the impact of public investment, and the critical nature of the work preparing the child care system for public investment.

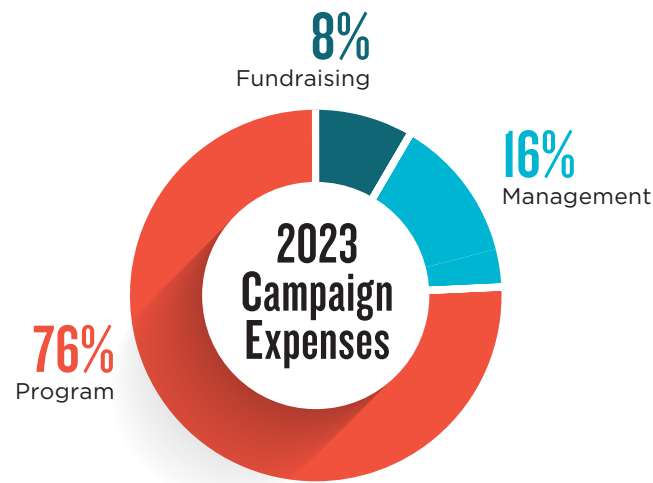
Financials

Thank you to the many donors who committed multi-year and one-time campaign gifts in 2023 and in years prior. The financial detail below reflects campaign revenue and expenses across both Let's Grow Kids (501c3) and Let's Grow Kids Action Network (501c4) campaign activities.

In 2023, campaign revenue totaled \$7,808,719 of which 7% was raised for support Let's Grow Kids Action Network (501c4) campaign activities. In 2023, campaign expenses totaled \$6,291,227, of which 6% supported Let's Grow Kids Action Network (501c4).



INDIVIDUALS	\$4,696,236
FOUNDATIONS	\$1,974,983
CORPORATIONS	\$180,427
GOVERNMENT GRANTS & CONTRACTS	\$957,073
TOTAL	\$7,808,719



FUNDRAISING	\$476,812
MANAGEMENT	\$1,003,872
PROGRAM	\$4,810,543
TOTAL	\$6,291,227

Expenses by Impact

IN 2023, EXPENSES BY IMPACT AREA WERE AS FOLLOWS:

- 29%** - People Power
- 23%** - Policy Change
- 48%** - Program Growth & Sustainability

In 2023, Let's Grow Kids directed approximately \$1.6 million to Vermonters through grants, small incentives, sponsorships, and contracted services; 89% of which went to Vermont women and/or small businesses.



“

We know there is more to do and there's still a lot of hard work ahead to fully solve the child care crisis, but **we are already seeing positive impacts from this legislation and our state's children, families, and economy will be much stronger for it.**”

HEATHER SMIRES & TAYLOR BRINK
ABC & LOL Child Care Center and Preschool
| Caledonia County



VERMONT'S CHILD CARE CAMPAIGN HAS NEVER BEEN CLOSER TO ACHIEVING ITS MISSION, THANKS TO YOUR GENEROSITY, VISION, AND COMMITMENT.

“

The early care and education community has historically been underfunded and under resourced. **Let's Grow Kids offered us in the philanthropic community an unprecedented opportunity to build on the good work and good will of Vermont's early educators to demonstrate what a robust system can look like with long-term, sustainable public funding.**”

EDDIE GALE
Program Director, The A.D. Henderson Foundation



Photos clockwise from top left: Act 76 Symbolic Bill Signing, Montpelier; Isham Family Farm, Williston; Symbolic Bill Signing, Montpelier

Thank you!

We will succeed because of you...



2025 CIRCLE

Donors who have committed generous, multi-year pledges that fund campaign operations through 2025.



GIVING CIRCLE

Scan to view members!



CORPORATE CIRCLE

Donors who are supporting Let's Grow Kids with corporate sponsorships.





Photos clockwise from top left: Robin's Nest Children's Center, Burlington; The Courage to Care Rally, Montpelier; Act 76 Symbolic Bill Signing, Montpelier

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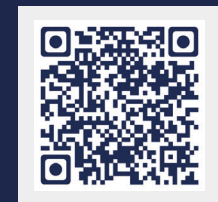
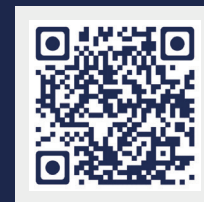


Front Cover photo: Courage to Care Rally, Montpelier
Back Cover photo: Robin's Nest Children's Center, Burlington

Vermont's Child Care Campaign

CHILD CARE IS ESSENTIAL.

Scan QR codes with your camera app
to make a gift today:



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