



UPDATE: Summary of Oct. 1, 2015  
Meeting of the Blue Ribbon Commission

In their second meeting on Oct. 1, members of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Financing High Quality, Affordable Child Care mapped out the broad questions that will be the focus of their early meetings as they assess the child care landscape in Vermont. Commissioners also set a standing meeting time—the third Thursday of every month from 10 a.m. to 12:30—beginning in November, and discussed how and when to get broad public input on their work.

Commissioner Charlotte Ancel, who has been designated as chair by Agency of Administration Secretary Justin Johnson, began the meeting by describing her personal experiences as a human services provider early in her career, an attorney, a non-profit board member and a parent. Ancel then led the group through a discussion of questions raised in the initial meeting in September—questions that will set the agenda for upcoming meetings. These include issues around:

- The funding and cost of child care.
- The return on investment in children and the broader impact of these investments on Vermont's economy.
- The definition of quality and what it means on the ground around the state.
- The current needs and opportunities of early childhood care and learning programs in Vermont, including best practices and what can be learned from other states and nations.
- Supply and demand for child care in Vermont.
- How Vermont compares with other New England states and nationally.

The commission agreed that Ancel and Agency of Administration designee Jessica Gingras would map out a meeting plan based on these and other key questions.

“In my experience with commissions, what you lead with determines where you go,” said Ancel. “So I think it’s important that we start by framing our aspirational questions to drive our work.”

Commissioners also discussed hiring an administrator to provide support for the commission. Gingras said that the search for the administrator will begin as soon as possible.

After laying out their work schedule, commissioners revisited the proposal from their first meeting that they would gather community feedback. Several commissioners suggested that it would be best to take at least two more meetings to establish shared understanding of key concepts around child care and develop a plan for public engagement. Commissioners also agreed that the public should be encouraged to participate in the process through the commission’s website (temporarily located on the Governor’s website at <http://governor.vermont.gov/blog-gov-shumlin-blue-ribbon-commission-child-care>) and through reports from interested organizations such as Let’s Grow Kids.

In addition to reporting on the progress of the BRC through e-mails and web updates, Lets Grow Kids is live-tweeting BRC meetings from @LetsGrowKids.