VERMONT

A Statewide Approach to Building Shared Services
Let’s Grow Kids: Who We Are

• Our Vision: Vermont is the BEST place to raise a family.

• Our Mission: Affordable access to high-quality child care for all Vermont families by 2025.
Let’s Grow Kids: Our Theory of Change

Vision
Vermont is the BEST place to raise a family

Mission
All Vermont families have affordable access to high-quality child care by 2025

Campaign Objectives

Access:
By 2025, 100% of Vermont families with children ages birth to five have access to high-quality early care and learning opportunities that meet their needs.

High Quality:
By 2025, 100% of Vermont child care providers are participating in VT’s quality recognition system, STARS, and 80% are performing at the highest levels of quality within & beyond STARS

Affordability:
By 2025, child care is affordable for 100% of Vermonters.

Change Drivers
Develop High-Functioning Child Care System Ready for Investment

Expand and Fund Child Care System through Policy Change

Develop Champions

Annual Goals
Increase High-Quality Child Care Slots
Strengthen Early Childhood Workforce
Develop Public Policy Bill
Ramp Up Health Care Impact
Ramp Up Business Impact
Get Supporters to be Stronger Supporters
Secure Funding to Fuel the Work
Let’s Grow Kids: Develop High-Functioning Child Care System Ready for Investment

- **Increase High-Quality Child Care Slots**
  - Make Way for Kids Grant Program
  - Moving toward 1,300 additional high-quality child care slots in Vermont

- **Strengthen Early Childhood Workforce**
  - ECE licensure support
  - Recruitment
  - Development of director/administrator coursework
  - ECE as a Profession conversations in partnership with VTAEYC
Let’s Grow Kids: Focused on Viability

A strong, sustainable, viable system of child care programs equipped to meet the needs of Vermont children for generations to come is critical to our success.
Viability: Vermont’s Child Care Landscape

• **Small programs:**
  - Vermont’s average program size is 40 (national average = 60)

• **Mountain rural:**
  - Not only is Vermont rural with a population of only 626k, travel is dictated by mountainous geography

• **Family-based**
  - 50% of Vermont’s child care programs are independent family-based programs
Viability: Opportunities and Challenges

Vermont’s child care landscape presents some unique opportunities and challenges:

• **Opportunities:**
  - Vermont is solution-sized
  - 75% of Vermonters think high-quality child care is important
  - Close-knit communities
  - Good old-fashioned Vermont grit

• **Challenges:**
  - Communication and collaboration
  - Independent programs have independent admin infrastructure
  - Technology is out of date and under utilized
We are working to support Vermont’s child care program viability at both the statewide and regional levels.

• **Statewide:**
  • Shared Services website
  • Smartcare management software pilot
  • Professional networks
  • Job Fairs, college fairs, connections with regional technical centers

• **Regional approach:**
  • Develop regional networks of child care programs
Let’s Grow Kids: **Statewide Viability**

Child Care Program Sustainability Heat Map

**Technology Solutions:**
- Customized web platform for resources and discounts (users)
- Child Care Management Software App

**Community Networks:**
- Early Educator Prof. Networks
- Shared Services hub & spoke models under development
Statewide Viability: SharedServicesVT.org

FREE to all early educators who participate in STARS, Vermont’s QRIS, www.sharedservicesvt.org is a one-stop shop for early educator resources, including:

- Local and national resources
- Local engagement
- Early educator jobs board, earlychildhoodjobsvt.org
SharedServicesVT.org: The Data

- 1,317 users
- 77% conversion rate
- 1/3 of users log on every 30 days
- 5:45 minutes per visit
Find and Retain Employees!

This FREE workshop will give you a highly effective, concrete, and easy to follow method for finding, interviewing, and retaining employees who will enhance your brand, your culture, revenues and profitability. Includes a one-to-one Strategy Session!

More Info ▶

How To Find And Retain Great Employees

A Business Strategy Workshop
Presented by Sam Markewich, Business Coach
Wednesday, April 17, 8-9:30am
Montpelier City Hall Memorial Room
Free | Pre-Registration Required
Contact: director@montpelieralive.org
SharedServicesVT.org: Local Engagement

We highlight professional development and local engagement opportunities, like:

• Teacher licensure support
• Rally for Kids at the State House
• VT Developmental Screening Registry
• Local deals on educational experiences
• New program toolkits
SharedServicesVT.org: Early Educator Jobs VT

A FREE job board designed to support Vermont early educators find and advertise for early care and learning positions.

• **Job seekers** can seek and apply for jobs at **no charge**.

• **Employers** participating in STARS can advertise jobs at **no charge**.

• **All postings** automatically appear on EarlyChildhoodJobsVT.org and on other major job sites.
Smartcare software is designed to increase child care program efficiency and quality by streamlining administrative tasks including:

- Billing
- Parent teacher communications
- Scheduling
- Admissions
Statewide Viability: Workforce Development

Support for a strong statewide professional network

- **Collaborating** with VTAEYC and the VT Child Care Providers Association to identify opportunities to join forces.

- **Partnering** with VT’s Child Development Division to support regional early educator networking.
Statewide Viability: Emerging Initiatives

- Substitute pool
- Statewide staff benefits
- Statewide retirement benefits
Let’s Grow Kids: Regional Viability
Enabling small early care and education businesses to become stronger, more financially sound and efficient, and better equipped to offer high-quality services to families with young children in Vermont.
High rates of poverty and lack of access to high-quality affordable child care make Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom a prime target for a regional Shared Services network:

- **Funding** from a 2018 USDA rural development grant created opportunities
- **Collaborative** of 4 licensed centers and 2 family child care programs joined forces
- **Hub selection** launched with support from Opportunities Exchange
- **Northeast Kingdom Learning Services** chosen as hub
To address the lack of child care, we needed to leverage all sectors and approach the issue from multiple angles.

Regional Viability: Northeast Kingdom Early Childhood Cooperative

Northeast Kingdom Learning Services saw the connection between their work supporting young adults through adult basic education and other services, to the need for a strong child care system in the region.
Regional Viability: NEK ECC

NEKLS, a trusted and capable community-based organization will support business operations and pedagogical leadership with the goal of maximizing efficiencies and promoting best practice. Activities include:

• Development of Network Governance Documents
• Back office solutions through the use of data-sharing technology, Smartcare, and a shared staffing infrastructure
• Pedagogical Leadership resources to support best practices for providers participating in the network.
• Financial support and technical assistance to enable providers to transition their operations and professional development practices to a Shared Services approach.
Our Approach

• Increase capacity in the region by opening a child care program
• STep Up to Child Care - a project developed with a DOL grant in partnership with the local career center
• Connect to local businesses to offer support to network members

And develop immediate services for network members:
• Grant writing services
• Fiscal agency for member programs
• Professional development opportunities
Regional Viability: What’s Next?

- NEK ECC continues to develop and strengthen services
- Two additional areas of the state begin network development
- Groundwork is laid throughout the state to either:
  - Begin one or two additional networks; or
  - Expand the reach for services of existing networks
Let’s Grow Kids: What We’ve Learned

We still have a long way to go, but here’s what we’ve learned so far:

• Progress is slow, and patience is a virtue
• Changing long-ingrained habits take time
• The easy stuff is easy, and the hard stuff is hard
• We are on our way!
Let’s Grow Kids: We Believe

We all do better when we do right by our kids.

And together, we can give all kids the opportunities they deserve.