

# Early Care and Development Grant March 2018 Report



*This grant is a great way to close that gap between cost of program and subsidy awards. It makes a difference in enabling us to continue serving these families.*

*~ Grant Recipient*

The Vermont Legislature and Governor appropriated \$2.2 million dollars in the 2018 State Fiscal Year Budget to fund Early Care and Development Program (ECDP) Grants. The Child Development Division (CDD) is responsible for administering these grants.

ECDP Grants are meant to:

- Support early care and development programs serving low income families and young children in Vermont, particularly those serving infants and toddlers.
- Reduce the burden of co-payments on families and providers participating in the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CC FAP)
- Help early care and development programs provide quality services that promote children's development and well-being and strengthen families

## Programs Receiving Grants

465 child care programs received a grant in October and/or January, and an average of 4,750 children receiving Child Care Financial Assistance were served by these programs. Of the programs receiving a grant 148 were center based and 317 were family child care homes. A list of the programs receiving grants is available at <http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/providers/grants/ecdp>

Grants to center-based programs varied from \$617.50 to \$17,372.33, while grants to family child care homes ranged from \$202.50 to \$1,653.75.

## Summary of Reports

91% of the programs receiving a grant completed the required report on how they spend the funds between January and March 2018. Those programs spent the funds in a variety of ways. The most common way the funds were spent was on equipment and materials for the child care program. Additional ways include, ensuring a balanced budget, making improvements, helping families financially, and supporting staff.

**83% of programs used the grant to purchase equipment or materials for their program.**

44% of programs indicated in the report that they used the funds to reduce families' co-payments. However, approximately 50% more programs indicated in comments or through conversations with the grant manager that they typically discount their tuition for families receiving Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFAP). Since these programs lose money in that discount they often do not have the funds to pay staff well or buy necessary supplies. These grants enabled the programs to purchase some of those necessities. In addition, three programs indicated that without these grants they would have closed their programs this year due to lack of funds.

*The grant was a greatly appreciated stress reducer. We were able to add some quality items in our environment. Also, we were able to provide care to one family with special services without a copay.*

*~ Grant Recipient*

# Early Care and Development Program Grant Report Details

## Programs Eligible

Center Based Child Care and Preschool Programs (Centers) and Family Child Care Homes (Homes) that participate in VT STARS (at any STAR level) and provide services to a high number of CC FAP eligible children, particularly CC FAP eligible infants and toddlers are eligible to receive funds. The number of grants and how much programs get is limited by available funds and determined by applying the same formula to all qualifying programs every three months. Participation in other grant programs does not have any effect on eligibility for these grants. A list of the programs receiving grants is available at <http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/providers/grants/ecdp>

## Fund Distribution

CC FAP data indicates that 70% of children participating in CC FAP are enrolled in Centers and 30% are enrolled in Homes. Therefore 70% of available funds are granted to Centers and 30% of available funds are granted to Homes.

## Program Selection

Using CC FAP billing data and licensed capacity, a formula is applied to all qualifying programs to create a score. This score is used to determine where on the list a program falls for receiving a grant. The highest score is the program who has priority to receive a grant, and so on. The grants are paid out to programs based on priority until the money allocated for the quarter is spent.

A formula is applied across all qualifying programs every three months that includes these weighted factors:

- Percent of CC FAP children attending to licensed capacity of the program (70%)
- Average number of CC FAP children attending (15%)
- Average number of infants and toddlers attending (15%)

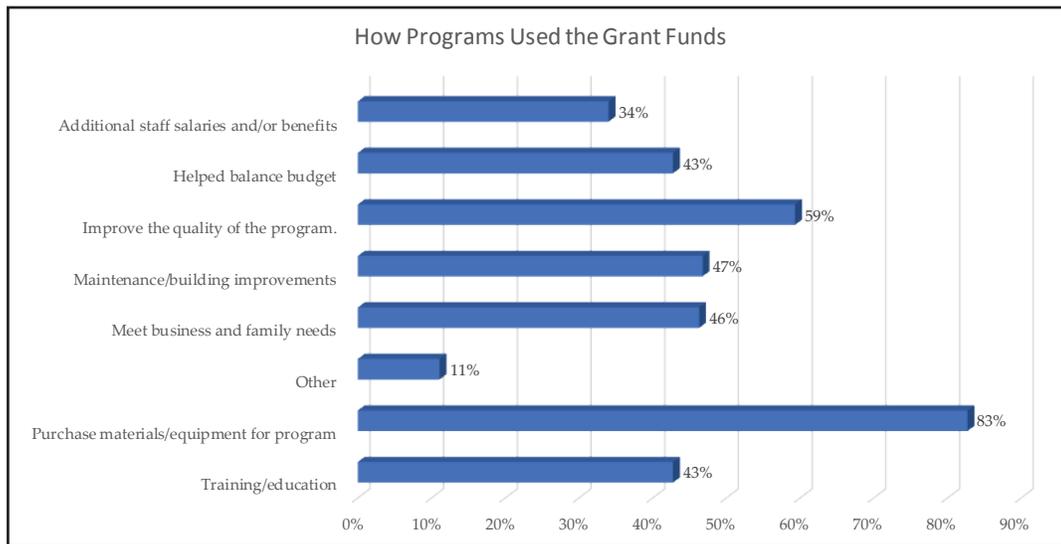
## Grant Report Details

Child care programs who received a grant in the first half of the fiscal year were required to submit a report in January 2018 by answering a simple survey. 433 child care programs received a grant in October, and 406 programs received a grant in January. 423 of the programs completed the report, of those 142 of the 148 licensed center based programs who received a grant reported and 281 of the 317 family child care homes who received a grant reported.

## Survey Results

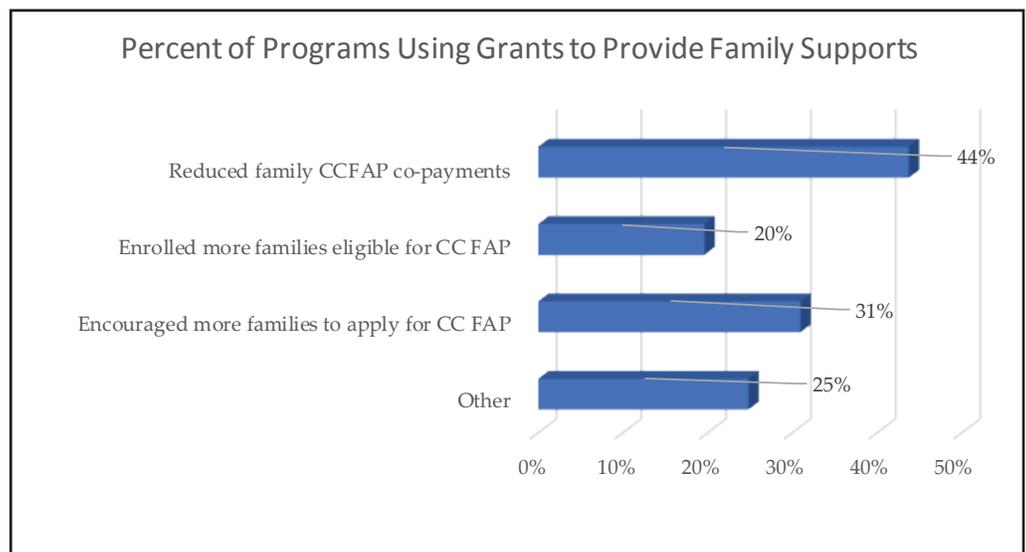
There were no restrictions on how the funds could be spent for programs. Most programs used the funds in 3 or more ways. Most activities were used to support families and to maintain or improve the quality of their programs.

Programs also indicated the money was spent in additional ways including paying for liability insurance, expanding their program to serve more children, purchasing gifts and supplies for children in their care, offering family events, and providing some tuition assistance for struggling families.



### Ways Programs Used Funds to Help Families

201 programs indicated that the grant funds helped families in some way, including enrolling more families eligible for CC FAP and reducing co-payments for families. Programs indicated they used the funds in additional ways the funds helped families, including:



- Added staff to reduce the ratio of students to teacher and improve quality.
- Three programs - Because we didn't lose money last year 2017 we were able to remain open. We serve up to 59 children 46% of whom are on subsidy. If our program didn't meet budget, we might not have been able to stay open.
- Four programs indicated the funds helped obtain the necessarily supports and equipment needed for children with special needs.
- Purchased high quality winter gear/clothing for children in care whose families could not afford it.
- Five programs indicated the funds eliminated the need to increase the program's rates charged to families
- Three programs used the funds to incorporate some changes needed to obtain more stars, which has lowered the co-payments for families.
- Eight programs indicated the funds helped offset the loss taken by the program when families cannot pay the co-payment.

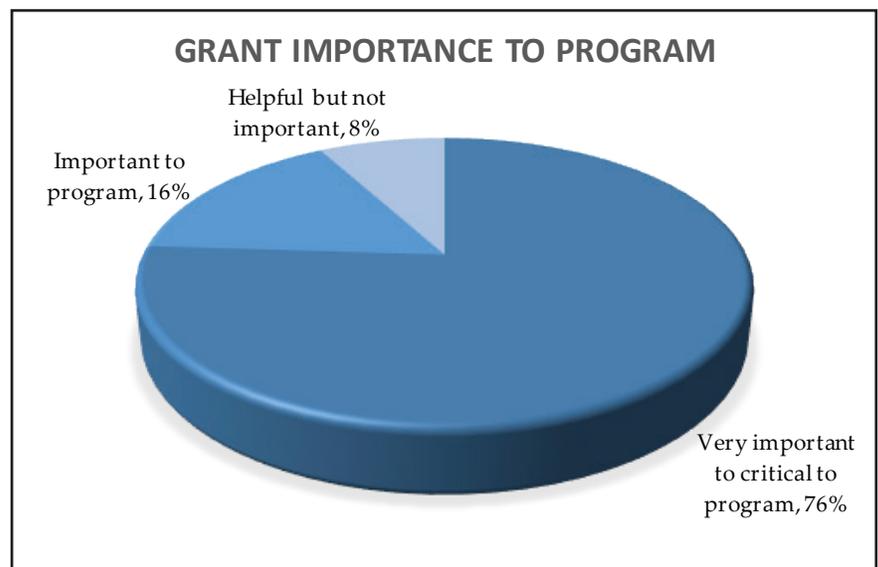
- Two programs - Provided transportation for families who were unable to get their children to child care.
- Two programs indicated they held family activities in the evening to support families.

*Many programs that did not indicate using the funds to reduce co-payments, indicated that the funds were used to purchase materials or fund activities they would not have been able to afford because they are keeping rates low for the families in their care.*

### Importance of Grant to Programs

Programs were asked to rate the grant funds in importance to their program on a scale of one to ten, with one being helpful but not important, and 10 being critical to helping the program. The average rating was 7.85.

- 321 programs (76%) indicated that the grant was between very important and critical to their program.
- 69 programs (16%) indicated that the grant was important to their program.
- 33 programs (8%) indicated that the grant was helpful but not important or somewhat important to their program.



## Comments from Family Child Care Home Grantees

- It was very helpful to replace some toys that needed to be replaced.
- The grant was a wonderful and helpful surprise.
- This was a great surprise and helped improve materials and the childcare environment.
- This grant was wonderful to receive. I used this grant in order to purchase some things that are needed for my daycare.
- I was very thankful for the grants my program received. We provided the children with a new cubby setup and a bunch of educational games as well as improvements to the home.
- The grant made it possible for me to purchase materials that helped to provide more educational experiences for children in my care.
- The funds are super great at helping me better my program quickly ! Thank you.
- My daycare kids and myself are very thankful and are enjoying all the new materials.
- Thank you for supporting us in what we do!
- Was able to upgrade for the needs of the child care, and children with special needs and I would not have been able to afford otherwise. Was able to use the money for the co-payment for the family that was struggling. Child care subsidy does not pay enough for child care provider's to have the support families in the ways that they need it. Grants are nice.
- Very helpful with all the extra cost that went out this summer with the new regs
- It is an amazing thing for providers to help them be able to give back to the kids in ways we can't normally.
- I appreciate these funds, to help increase the quality of my program and allow me to enrich my space and program with more items for my children and families. THANK YOU SOOOO MUCH.
- Thank you for helping improve my home daycare. I am grateful and appreciative.
- The grant really helped families and allowed to develop our natural playscape playground.
- Thank you so very much it was very much needed.
- Without the co-payments money, its hard to spend a lot of money for new toys, books, puzzles etc. It is also helpful to help pay for trainings that are not longer free. I put out \$575.00 for training in 2017 compared to less then \$100.00 in 2016.
- Any money we get from grants to help parents who have a hard time paying the co payment helps them and myself. Thank you.
- The grants are extremely helpful and appreciated. Not only can the funds help providers in smaller in home facilities to maintain a higher quality of care/education to the families, it can help eliminate some of the copay to the more financially in need.
- It was a nice surprise. I have only been open for two years so it was nice to have additional funds to build the materials. I was able to get a new play kitchen set.
- The grant is helping me stay open as opposed to closing. The new regulations have made it hard to stay open and are costly for me as a single parent to maintain my business.
- The grant was so appreciated by families, and being able to cut cost even a little was extremely helpful to them.
- It will help to pay some of the bills and help buy materials for my business in the future.
- It was very helpful.
- The grants make it possible for my program to grow!
- The grant money helps my business tremendously. I am very grateful.
- The grant is a wonderful and critical resource that will encourage more programs to enroll lower income families and will reward existing programs for their participation.
- This was a nice suprise for my families during the holiday season. It helped them by reducing their payments and I was still able to purchase some new materials! Thank you.
- Very much needed as I reopened at a new location and helped update playroom and supplies needed.
- They were a great help to my program and my families!
- Start up costs for our program were a big expense for 2017, so the October grant definitely helped replace some of my family's funds that were used to get us up and going.

- I was able to use this money to purchase materials to enhance my science area, which was a goal I identified on my Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP). I also used this money to purchase books about feelings and social and emotional skills, which I believe to be of high importance.
- This grant has helped me plan for new materials and replenishing materials for my program. Thank you.
- This is my first year open, the grant helped me with toys and books, equipment such as table and chairs, nap mats and gates, and helped me with office items needed for business. I love what I do and hope to run my business for years to come. Thank you for your help and support.
- I'm always looking to improve the lives of children, from just a little smile and wave to a crying child at the grocery store or a hug and high five to an attempt at potty training at their home or mine. Each little act of love makes a huge difference.
- It helped with supplies and helped the families with their co-pays.
- It was wonderful to get some much needed extra money!!!
- Any extra help is always needed as our programs require a lot of new equipment and supplies as we use a lot each day to teach the children
- It help me buy supplies for my daycare and some new toys inside and outside.
- It was very helpful , I was able to buy more supplies. It also helped with my families co-payments.
- It will help a parent who is behind in co-payments and purchase a couple needed items for the childcare.
- I used funds to pay off the co-pays that are always left unpaid.
- The grant also allowed me to buy new easy access shelving unit for toys and craft materials.
- It was nice to receive the grant, this time it helped with fuel and there are new things I would like for outside.
- Thank you for this opportunity to assist families.
- I used the funds to purchase much needed educational products and replace worn toys.
- I would not have been able to offer variances in co-pays without this grant. Thank you.
- It is a wonderful thing. I believe it should be used to help the families in need. Thank you so much.
- It help my families a great deal with payments.
- I thought it was awesome to qualify for the families that are subsidy. Most times families can't pay the full amount for child care, so this enabled me to put money into the child care.
- This grant was a total surprise to me. A happy surprise. I will be able to use these grants to purchase much needed supplies for my program or help pay bills like daycare insurance.
- Wish we did not have to claim these grants on our taxes.
- I hope they continue because they are very helpful, especially programs that don't charge the co-payment to families.
- It's wonderful that the state wants to help out home day care with extra funding, we work very hard and it's nice to be appreciated
- I was able to buy a copier. So now I am able to send home a daily schedule of activities, meals served and additional comments about their child's day and their progress.
- Grants allows providers to buy new materials. Large ticket items can be purchased and older equipment replaced.
- This is a way to fund much needed supplies or help to improve my program.
- Thank you.
- The grant made it so I was available to provide evening care.
- Thank you for providing programs with these grants.
- With the cost of living rising in all aspects of life. These funds helped me to continue my business with my families with no increase in rates to my families.
- I was thankful I could help this family out during a difficult time and it didn't impact my own personal financial needs for my business.
- I greatly appreciate the grant, as it is going to help make my childcare better.
- It's always beneficial to receive grants to help our programs succeed.
- The additional funds helped with individual furniture.
- Helping families meet the copay has been a great help to the family and me.

- It was very helpful in providing the children with extra supplies. It was greatly appreciated by the families.
  - The grant money was a nice surprise and did help me redo my play room Thank you !
  - It was a very nice surprise and appreciated.
  - The funds were very helpful in reducing the financial burden of my in-home child care to meet the new state regulations. The quality of my program has increased and the children have benefited immensely.
  - Very helpful for the families in my program. Also helpful to do maintenance on the house that needed to be repaired.
  - It was very beneficial as it helped us buy new supplies for the program. Outdoor clothing such as mittens for children.
  - Thanks for the grant, it helped me run my program and help parents out and get new supplies.
  - The grant helped me to improve the quality of my program for the families and children.
  - Thank you. This grant helped in ways you will never understand.
  - Grants are very helpful to maintain a quality program for all the children.
  - It helps to have the extra money for supplies, professional development, and larger purchases for my childcare program.
  - I was so thrilled with the grant money I received. It came in at the perfect time where money was tight for a lot of people. I was disappointed that I'm not receiving it in January because nothing changed as far as children in care.
  - These grants help me to keep my rates down for all families. By getting the bonuses I don't have to charge more to the families that pay full tuition.
  - It was really nice to receive, Thank you!
  - I find this to be grossly unfair to those programs who need the help financially and through no fault of their own do not currently have families on subsidy. I currently have no families receiving subsidy they out grew my program. The families I have do not qualify however cannot afford a tuition increase and I am financially struggling to meet my bills, let alone purchase extras for the program. If the state is going to give out quarterly grants/bonuses then everyone should get it based on STARS, regulatory history and years of service.
- I have been around long enough to have seen this type of program before it was unfair back then and it is still unfair.
- Very thankful for the grant and the help. Very appreciated.
  - This grant was definitely appreciated. Quite excited to receive this. Grant has/will help improve my business.
  - Getting this grant helps me purchase tools for my program to ensure quality materials for children and also helps parents with co-pays.
  - My playground needs a serious upgrade and these funds will allow me to introduce a more diverse array of activities to meet the needs of "all ages" in my care.
  - With this grant I was able to purchase more materials for my children to grow and learn.
  - Very much appreciated with purchasing new items.
  - Child care professionals always have many areas in their budget where they can use financial support. For instance, my VT Educators License is due for renewal, self-employment taxes are always high for self-employed people because we don't have an employer paying a portion of our taxes, the cost of having social gatherings so parents can connect and feel a part of a community, the cost of maintain our homes to look like the home of a 5 Star provider (lead free) etc. All of these expenses add up, so receiving any type of funds to support our business is a blessing. Thank you!
  - This grant was very helpful to my program.
  - This grant allowed me to purchase or replace supplies and equipment for my child care program because it also allows me to off set the co-pay for some of the parents who are not able to afford the co-pay amount.
  - Thank you! Every bit of help is needed for me to stay above water. I'm a single income family.
  - It helped me get school size chairs and table for my home daycare.
  - Supported bringing my program in compliance with new regulations.
  - Amazing, I have been able to purchase more fresh fruits and vegetables for my families and help my families with co-pays, which are hard on many families.
  - This is much needed help for childcare programs

to help us stay a float and get through the improvements we need make for the new regulations. Thank you so much for this.

- This was a wonderful program. It really helped. Thank you.
- It helped improving my play area with which I was struggling.
- I used the grant funds to help purchase new age appropriate activities.
- These grant funds helped so children in my care could have a healthy hot meal in a timely manner without having to wait.
- I think this grant(s) was a excellent idea to help support our child care needs, for making sure us providers can give back what all our children need to help them grow before they begin there journey into the school years.
- These funds were able to reduce the copays for families in care, and help my program balance our budget. These funds were very appreciated.
- It was wonderful receiving the extra funds. Unfortunately, my one family no longer can receive childcare financial help.

- It help our program to help me to buy things for my families, also it help to buy more educational things for my program. I want to thank you so much.
- Wanted to add sink for washing hands closer to where we are all day, this helped me accomplish that.
- Thank you for this opportunity of receiving this grant so that I could purchase much needed materials for my program. As well as furthering my professional development.
- Helpful to receive the payment to help families who need financial assistance.
- I just want to say thank you very much. It is nice to know that the State of Vermont does think about us and the work we do for our families.
- Very grateful for the additional funds.
- Thank you.
- I only wish there were grant funds to help the families who are NOT qualified for CCFAP. Other than that I feel this is a GREAT asset to help families!!

## Comments from Center Based Child Care and Preschool Program Grantees

- This is a great program that I hope to see continue!
- Thank you for this support. We have been able to maintain the number of CCFAP enrolled children and to maintain a low staff/child ratio so we can work to meet each child's needs.
- These grants have been super helpful as infant and toddler care is so expensive to provide but so crucial for our families.
- The grant was amazing and absolutely helped our center. Thank you.
- Thank you!
- Every dollar matters. The cost of running a high quality program far exceeds subsidy amounts. Thank you for these grant funds!
- The grant was a surprise and it was a huge help. The second one is giving me the courage to give raises. I've been wanting to but nervous because once I do, I can't go back. Between this grant, the prek partnership money and managing to maintain 4 STARS this year, I'm feeling that I can raise the pay rates for all the teachers in the program. Thank you for your help.
- These funds help us to close the gap between subsidy payments and what it costs us to run the quality program.
- Receiving this grant was a very welcomed surprise. We rarely charge our subsidized families any co-payments; so this truly helped, especially since we seem to be getting more families on CC FAP.
- Because the reimbursement rate for CCFAP is not up to the current market rate the grant has helped reduce that burden on the program. We have families that were at 100% CCFAP and then due to employment have gone down to 30% CCFAP and our program does not charge a co-pay. Thank you for providing these grants to help maintain quality and to support families.
- These grant funds are unexpected and so appreciated. We used 50% of the first check for staff bonuses and materials needed to satisfy ITERS/ECERS (environmental rating scale) requirements. Have not yet received the second check.

- Thank You!
- These funds help to offset any losses for cost of care from families that receive state assistance.
- Every dollar matters. The cost of running a high quality program far exceeds subsidy amounts. Thank you for these grant funds!
- These funds help us to close the gap between subsidy payments and what it costs us to run the quality program.
- Our parents try to pay for child care but any family “emergency” taps their funds and they quickly fall behind. Once a back balance starts it is almost impossible for them to catch up and many just give up, knowing that they will not lose their slot with us for non-payment. We have used these funds to establish a voluntary program in which the family contracts to pay a certain amount on a regular basis. After 3 on-time payments, they will have earned a free “payment” that they can use immediately or bank to use later when a family “emergency” might arise. This seems to relieve a huge burden for them.
- Thank you.
- Much appreciated by both owner and families with special situations which we were able to assist with financially.
- It was nice to be able to purchase much needed materials without having to stress about our budget.
- This grant is a great way to close that gap between cost of program and subsidy awards. It makes a difference in enabling us to continue serving these families.
- This grant really helped during a tight time during the holidays for our program. Thank You.
- These grant funds have come at such a critical time for my business. These funds have truly helped keep our program operating at the high quality level we have been committed to for the past 20 years. My business is extremely grateful for the opportunities afforded to us by accessing these monies. Thank you!
- This grant helped us balance our budget for this upcoming year. Increasing our staff salaries and continuing to offer medical and dental benefits has been an important and necessary need, but one that is often financially difficult to do without raising tuition costs. This grant has been so valuable and much appreciated.
- It certainly helps!
- State funding to cover the gap between CCFAP or tuition families pay on our sliding scale are essential. This grant is very small compared to that gap ( over \$350,000 each year) and it isn't a set amount, so it is difficult to figure out how to build it into our budget. It's a great start though!
- The funds we received were tremendously helpful for professional development of staff.
- Thank you!
- These funds were used mostly to purchase materials and furniture for our classrooms that was very much needed and not necessarily budgeted for because we were not sure we could afford them.
- The grant funds allowed for important improvements in small ways in several areas of need that we have had to put off because of availability of funds. We are rarely able to charge co-pays, our families simply cannot afford them. We must offer a sliding scale for several of our private pay families. The grant funds have been a genuine blessing to our program!
- This grant is critical to the Family Center in many ways: 1) Allows for additional staffing to provide heightened levels of interaction for the 8 infants we serve that all meet higher risk definitions under our Contracted Spaces agreement with CDD. 2) Allows greater interaction (social connections) between staff and parents which builds parental resiliency. 3) Affords the Family Center the ability to provide excellent infant care balanced with administrative demands.
- Thank you!
- This was so helpful for those families in need, they, and we, were so grateful for this grant.
- We paid out \$2200 in bonuses at Christmas, and \$928 in Professional Development in December and covered a stone step with wood for \$700.
- These funds enabled us to establish a program for our families where they can earn “free” weeks of care for making a set number of payments on time. This helps when they encounter family emergencies and don't have funds to pay the co-pay one week.
- The fact that these funds come to us without having to spend time completing an application or writing an onerous grant report is very much appreciated!
- The grant funds were very important to helping our program not take a financial loss for tuition

that we lose out on when copays are not paid and 2 weeks is not given when children in DCF custody are relocated from the program.

- The eligibility algorithm and criteria are so important to this field. I appreciate this movement, and as a non-profit this has been important!
- Thank you very much, the extra funds are welcomed and always benefit the center, in different ways. We are working very hard to give our staff competitive pay, so once they have what the state now requires for education, we don't lose them to the school system. We are slowly creeping up the pay scale, and my opinion as a director, will help keep our center in business. The extra grant funds, release other funds so that we have been able to increase hourly wages a bit.
- This grant was very helpful in helping families, staff, and business needs! Thank You.
- We are very appreciative of this additional funding as we continue to hire quality teachers to provide high quality care to our most vulnerable populations.
- Thank you!
- Thank you for sharing these funds with us to make quality improvements.
- Thank you for supporting our work with young children. It would be helpful to know the formula that is used to calculate the grant funds disbursement across Vermont so we can understand how the amount we received was determined. Thank you again.
- It was a big help to our families, with families with co-pays.
- The grant came at a critical time in our program, where I can honestly say we may not be operating today if we had not received it. It's incredibly expensive to keep a licensed center running and still try to charge affordable rates for working parents, and keeping co-pays very small for people relying on CCFAP
- With this funding we are able to put it towards improving our playground structure and outdoor space, which is crucial to meet all child's needs here.
- This grant provided our program additional opportunities we would have otherwise missed out on. Thank you!
- I truly appreciated getting these funds. It was great to be able to improve our classroom

environments and buy new equipment\ materials for the children to use! Without these funds these improvements would not have happened. Thank You!

- Helps keep payroll up so employees can live better and further their education.
- These funds are very helpful to defray the additional costs of paperwork for these programs, and for the additional time, support, and experienced staff that families need.
- We were very appreciative to receive this money. It is always a struggle to make ends meet and pay our staff decently. Every extra penny helps!
- Times have been tough and without this grant I'm not sure where we would be at this time without it.
- THANK YOU! This was a godsend as I couldn't have met my tax liabilities that time around without it. Given the regulated child/adult ratios, making ends meet is often hard. Ours is not a business that can adjust costs to account for financial challenges. We can't cut staff, turn down the heat, cut grocery costs or charge more, like other businesses can. My next check will probably help me pay the salary increases I just had to give across the board just because I couldn't give my least trained staff an random raise and not my other staff. I don't even make minimum wage myself because I only get paid if we make profit and that rarely happens.
- The grant funds are critical. We had hoped to use them for bonuses or raises for staff, but with the challenges in the industry, it was critical to making sure that we operated at a loss that was under \$10k for the year instead of over that amount. We are struggling to retain and attract staff, whether qualified or not, we are struggling to keep classrooms open which hurts all families--not just those receiving support from CCFAP, and we are losing preschoolers to the public school programs who are then finding the remaining hours they need care in unregulated settings. This is the first year we have operated with openings in both of our preschool classrooms, and the leading cause has been families moving to the public school for pre-k.
- Thank you for making this investment in the infants and toddlers in our program.
- Very surprised to get with no notice of getting it but was very helpful and useful to support quality improvement and staff and families

- This has been such an amazing gift, and we wish to express our gratitude for the opportunity. Every single dollar counts in the field of ECE, and the extra funds enabled us to accomplish much more than our original budget would have allowed. Though an unexpected blessing, the impact has been measurable in many ways. We thank you!
- This is a wonderful step ahead in improving quality childcare in Vermont. Thank you for your commitment to Vermont's children.
- The grant helps us to maintain our "STARS" program for our families!
- Anything that helps offset the very real costs of providing care to 100% CCFAP families, and helps us to continue to serve infants and toddlers is of critical importance.
- We appreciate the support from the grant to improve our program by allowing us to buy materials that support the developmentally appropriate needs of our families. Also to open the door to more students being able to have access to a quality early education program. Thank you for acknowledging the importance of what we do.
- All the current staff were able to get a 3% raise. My staff had not had raises in many years. I have only had one raise in the past 7 1/2 years. Another 2 of our staff who has been here for 7 1/2 has had also only one raise. Other staff member here for 4 years, 3 years and 2 years had not had an increase in their pay since they started.
- More than 80% of our families currently benefit from CCFAP. This grant has allowed us to continually support them by not putting them in a position where they need to decide between reducing their child's attendance hours (leading to a loss of socialization and education), and being able to afford their co-pay. We were able with this grant to support families with transportation to and from our center, we were able to build a supply of gross motor equipment that all our classrooms can utilize during the cold winter days. We also have been able to support our employees with adjusted deserving rates to remain competitive. Professional development opportunities were also exposed and granted to our teachers and families, as they were not before this grant. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts...from: Our staff, our children, our families!!
- These funds were a huge asset to our facility and program. It enabled us to add more benefits for staff, add program equipment, keep our bus in good maintenance, continue serving fresh meals to all of our families, regardless of income, purchase a new staff computer and more. We are so appreciative.
- This unexpected grant was a huge benefit to our center, staff, and families! We thank you!!
- These grants are best served to fund community based programs and registered home providers vs. public schools and Head Start programs that are already heavily publicly funded by property taxes and the federal government. Community based programs often have no access to these funds, and struggle to pay teachers a competitive wage, compared to the public schools. The biggest threat to the sustainability of community based programs is the ability to attract and retain teachers with competitive compensation packages in a dual climate of low unemployment rates and decreased number of early ed graduates coming into the workforce. Future grants from the legislature should acknowledge this critical piece of the early childhood system.
- We are very appreciative of this additional funding as we continue to hire quality teachers to provide high quality care to our most vulnerable populations.
- Our center appreciated this grant. Thank you!
- This grant was helpful to families because it helped reduce their copayments. The business does provide scholarships to families in need but it allowed us to extend these services and took some of the burden off the program.
- Given the new licensing regulations, we are having a difficult time finding & retaining qualified employees. Through this grant, we were able to offset the training costs for those employees who were not yet qualified, and provide bonuses to those who are.
- It was a wonderful way to help those who needed the extra help with co pays. As an owner I can not express how crucial this can be and how much it is appreciated
- This was very helpful. Every penny counts in providing quality programming
- We are very grateful for any extra grants and funding for my program. Any extra helps in the area that I can't do on my own. Thank you!
- Much needed.
- Struggling families really appreciated the help this

grant gave to relieve the financial burdens they previously had.

- Grateful. This article addresses the challenge: <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2018/01/09/magazine/why-are-our-most-important-teachers-paid-the-least.html?referer=https://www.google.com/>
- Extremely appreciative as I have never received financial support for equipment in the past.
- This grant was both unexpected and very appreciated. We are grateful as providers as well as community members for the ability to open a second classroom as well as have the ability to take on more children in the age group our community needed most.
- The grant I received was critical to keeping my business open, I take many families who get subsidy and can't afford to pay a copay.
- Very helpful to retain quality of this program at a very critical time as programs are trying to maintain STARS, high quality and staff retention.
- The funds were such a huge help to the program, to bonus staff and show an appreciation, which in the long run will help to eliminate turn-over (we have had zero turnover in staff since we grew into a center 2 years ago!) And taking the burden of the co-payment off of those families just after the holidays who were struggling to make ends meet was a gift to them and to our program to actually receive payment for the amounts we were not receiving!!!! We are very grateful for this grant!!!!!!
- The grant funds are a welcome and unexpected gift for the families and children of our program.
- These grant funds have been very helpful for our program and the continuing success of our program to be able to help families in need.
- Thank you! We hope to see an increase in funding to help close the gap in child care cost and funding.
- This grant was used to purchase equipment that was needed to improve our facility. We were able to add equipment that we would not have been able to. Thank you so much!
- Our center was open for less than a year when we received our first grant payment. This money was used in many areas of the program to help us grow and support our families.
- Thank you, we appreciate it!
- This grant has allowed us to continue making strides forward. With the grant we purchased new equipment, helped parents pay up co-pays,

treated my staff to a mental health day. Fantastic opportunity for us :)

- Thank you very much!
- This has been very helpful to us to be able to provide our staff with raises and pay for professional development while being able to help parents whom are unable to pay their full co-pays.