



## First Children's Finance

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Media Contact:

Erin Roche, 802-341-0368, [erinr@firstchildrensfinance.org](mailto:erinr@firstchildrensfinance.org)

### **First Children's Finance Awards \$50,000 Grant to Craftsbury Saplings, Supporting Statewide Expansion of Child Care**

*Vergennes, Vermont* — First Children's Finance VT (FCF) is proud to announce the first recipients of the Vermont Planning Grant Project, an award designed to expand child care capacity across the state. Among the awardees is [Craftsbury Saplings](#), which received a \$50,000 grant to plan a new child care facility in Craftsbury, Vermont. These grants are part of a broad effort to strengthen Vermont's child care infrastructure and increase access to affordable, high-quality early childhood education.

Craftsbury Saplings, a non-profit community child care center, serves families in Craftsbury and its surrounding towns. With its current facility at capacity and a lengthy waitlist, the \$50,000 grant helps lay the foundation for a new 7,100-square-foot building that will nearly triple current capacity, from 19 children to 54.

"This grant is critical for planning our program expansion," said **Melissa Jacobs**, Executive Director of Craftsbury Saplings. "With the support of First Children's Finance and our additional partners, we can finally address our long waitlist and provide the care and early childhood education that so many families and businesses need. Our expansion project supports the future vitality of our community: ensuring that families have access to quality child care where they live and work."

Vermont Planning Grants—made possible through partnership with Let's Grow Kids and with funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development—provide in-kind professional services, child care business assistance, and a financial stipend to support planning a capital construction project for new or expanded child care operations. With at least 15 more grants expected to be awarded through 2025, the project builds on the momentum created by Act 76, Vermont's historic public investment in its child care system.

“Access to capital is key to growing child care programs across the state,” said **Erin Roche**, Director of First Children’s Finance. “As Act 76 continues to shape Vermont’s child care landscape, funding like the Vermont Planning Grant Project encourages business sustainability and improvements. It also supports our larger goals of economic resilience, workforce development, and equity in Vermont.”

**Jim Drummond** of [Black River Design, Architects](#) – who is consulting on the project’s planning – said, “Projects like this go beyond just designing a building: it’s about creating spaces that serve as foundations for strong, vibrant communities that are great places for kids to grow and thrive. This program provides much needed support for child care in Vermont and we are delighted to be part of it.”

In addition to Craftsbury Saplings, other grant recipients include:

- Edgar May Community Center, Springfield
- Neck of the Woods, Waitsfield
- First Roots – Wild Roots, Hinesburg
- Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union (FNESU), Enosburg
- Valley Hub Inc., Rochester
- Clubhouse Kids, Morrisville
- Pittsford Village Farm, Pittsford

Funding is still available for planning projects and will be awarded on a rolling basis. For more information about the Vermont Planning Grant Project or to apply for future funding opportunities, [visit this link](#).

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### **About First Children’s Finance**

First Children’s Finance’s mission is to grow the supply and business sustainability of excellent child care. First Children’s Finance helps start, sustain, and grow child care businesses by providing business resources and access to capital. The organization works in partnership with the State of Vermont, Let’s Grow Kids, and other statewide agencies. Business resources are offered at no charge to child care businesses. Learn more: [www.firstchildrensfinance.org/vermont](http://www.firstchildrensfinance.org/vermont)