



Building Bright Futures
600 Blair Park, Suite 306, Williston, VT 05495
802-876-5010 | buildingbrightfutures.org

BBF Families & Communities Committee
Thursday, April 4, 2024 10:00-11:30 am

VECAP Goal 2: Families and communities play a leading role in children's well-being

F&CC Mission Statement: The families and communities committee empowers families to participate in designing collaborative early childhood systems that represent the diverse needs of all families in Vermont. We prioritize and elevate parent and caregiver voices while strengthening connections, providing leadership development opportunities, and offering mutual support by building a statewide community.

Facilitators: Jen Fortman, Sarah Morrison

Note Taker: Tanya LaChapelle

Parents/Caregivers: Annemieke Thoolen, Amber Hewston, Sarah Morrison, Jen Fortman, Jocelyn Emilo, Korinne Harvey, Laura Young

Organization Representatives: Tanya LaChapelle, Anna Brouillette, Courtney Hillhouse, Teresa Haskins (AOE), Ali Dieng, Michele Johnson

(13 participants/ 7 parents and 2 agencies represented)

Agenda:

Time	Agenda Item
10:00-10:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Introductions & Welcome Question: What's blooming for you?
10:20-11:25	<p>*A major storm brought heavy snow, ice and widespread power outages. Agenda shifted from planned speaker to open floor for updates and announcements.</p> <p>Updates/Announcements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Shout out to Amber Hewston who was officially voted in as a State Advisory Council parent representative. Congratulations Amber!● Opinion Piece on Paid Leave written by Amber Hewston was recently published in the Brattleboro Reformer, Valley News and VT Digger. Thank you for raising your voice Amber! VT Digger - Paid Leave Shouldn't Be a Privilege of the Few● Building Bright Futures Family Leadership Inventory Project: BBF is working with an advisory group to create an inventory of opportunities across the state that allow families to influence system-level decisions about early childhood services and policies. The inventory (or directory) will be published later this year as a

	<p>resource for organizations and family leaders to learn about the landscape of family leadership in Vermont.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jen and Tanya are traveling to California in April to attend two national conferences. They will spend one day at the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP). Then two days at the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) annual meeting. We hope to make connections and learn more about family engagement, collaboration and systems building. ● It Takes a Village event on Saturday, May 11 from 12-4pm on the State House lawn in Montpelier. This event is hosted by Good Beginnings of Central VT and features an information fair, food trucks, live music, kids' activities, car seat safety check, a raffle and a "listening wall" for those wishing to share their postpartum experiences. ● Jen, Sarah and Tanya presented to the State Advisory Council in February to outline the work and accomplishments of the F&CC. Recording is below in the resource section. ● Building Bright Futures Regional Council Priority Setting: Over the next two months the regional councils will be collaborating with members to generate the regional priorities that will guide their council efforts for the next two years. These meetings are a great opportunity to elevate the lived experiences of VT families. What are the issues or challenges that most impact your family? If you are interested in bringing your voice to the table, please find the list of regional meetings and regional managers at the bottom of these notes. Or, contact Tanya for assistance. ● Ali Dieng highlighted data from the State of Vermont's Children. Almost 60% of VT children are not reading proficiently by 3rd grade. Ali prompted a rich discussion where members openly shared about their experiences parenting evolving readers. ● Currently, there is a bill, S.204, that just passed in the Senate and is moving on to the legislature. It is an act related to reading assessment and intervention. Seven Days recently published an article about the bill: Senate Advances Literacy Bill ● If you want to learn more about your child's literacy development PBS KIDS for Parents has some great resources. ● We also had a robust discussion sharing experiences and thoughts about the choice to homeschool. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Home Study - Agency of Education ○ VT Home Education Network ● Family Fun Day at Green Mountain Tech & Career Center, Hyde Park. Friday, April 12 from 9-11am Features a teddy bear health clinic (bring your bear), corn pool, art activities, free snacks, free books, giveaways and more!
11:25-11:30	<p>Closing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New Membership Form: Join the F&CC Network Form ● Upcoming meetings schedule: ● Fill out hour submission form

Parenting Wellness Resources:

- [15 Self-Care Strategies for Parents \(verywellfamily.com\)](#)
- [Why Self-Care is Essential to Parenting - Child Mind Institute](#)

Committee Documents:

- Membership Form: [Join the F&CC Network Form](#)
- Parent Hour Submission Form: <https://forms.gle/hAp7unyA36D4Hu8PA>
- August Training: [Advocacy: Sharing Your Story to Create Change](#)
 - Parent training recorded version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7iPuwc2u6s>
- 2022 Family Needs Assessment:
 - Report: <https://vermontkidsdata.org/2022-family-needs-assessment/>
 - Briefing Recording: [Family Needs Assessment Briefing](#)

Upcoming Learning Opportunities and Events:

- Help Me Grow National Forum: <https://helpmegrownational.org/our-affiliate-network/annual-forum/>

Building Bright Futures News & External Links:

- BBF Facebook page - follow to keep up to date with upcoming events & shared resources
 - <https://www.facebook.com/BuildingBrightFutures>
- To receive the BBF newsletter sign up here: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/oucvs03/BBF>
- Recording of the latest State Advisory Council Meeting:
 - [February State Advisory Council Recording](#)
 - State Advisory Council Meetings are open to the public. To receive monthly announcements and registration for State Advisory Council meetings please sign up for the BBF newsletter above.
 - The State Advisory Council (SAC) formally endorsed the Policy Recommendations of the Vermont Early Childhood State Advisory Council Network for 2024:
 - [2024 Policy Recommendations](#)
 - [2024 Policy Playbook](#): The playbook explains what the recommendations mean, why they matter, and some of the ways they can be put into action.
- Learn more about the \$23 million federally funded Preschool Development Grant (PDG) that Building Bright Futures received. <https://buildingbrightfutures.org/pdg>
 - Watch the webinar recording: <https://youtu.be/miXPLtfiOaU>
- Recording: [The State of Vermont's Children: 2022 Year in Review Briefing](#)
 - Link to the Report Document: <https://buildingbrightfutures.org/state-of-vermonts-children/>

Community Resources & News:

- **Prevent Child Abuse Vermont (PCAVT):** [Family Support Programs](#) PCAVT offers ongoing free virtual parent education classes and support groups.
- **VSAC College funding** - Learn about VSAC-assisted grants for adult Vermonters who do not yet have a bachelor's degree and who are interested in pursuing post-secondary education or training programs. Contact: Harka Khadka, khadka@vsac.org, 802-598-6626 or [Schedule a free appt](#)
- **Red Cross Support:** Received a message from the American Red Cross that you may be eligible for flood relief support? Call them back at 1-800-RED-CROSS to see if you are eligible for up to \$1,200 in assistance

Upcoming Regional Council meetings:

Region	Meeting time/month	Time	Zoom link	Facilitator/ Regional Manager
Addison	2nd Friday	10:30am-12pm	Link	Darla Senecal
Bennington	2nd wednesday	11am-12:30pm	Link	Darla Senecal
Caledonia & So. Essex	3rd Monday	1-2pm	Link	Linda Michniewicz
Central VT / Washington	2nd Friday	9-10am	Link	Kelly Hayes
Chittenden	1st Thursday	2-3:30pm	Link	Ali Dieng
Franklin Grand Isle	3rd Thursday	1-2:30pm	Link	Ali Dieng
Lamoille Valley	2nd Tuesday	1-2pm	Link	Kelly Hayes
No. Windsor & Orange	1st Wednesday	1:30-2:30 pm	Link	Courtney Hillhouse
Orleans & No. Essex	1st Monday	1-2pm	Link	Linda Michniewicz
Rutland	3rd Thursday	10:30am-12pm	Link	Darla Senecal
Southeast VT	2nd Wednesday	4-5pm	Link	Courtney Hillhouse
Springfield Area	1st Wednesday	9-10am	Link	Courtney Hillhouse

Ali Dieng - adieng@buildingbrightfutures.org

Courtney Hillhouse - chillhouse@buildingbrightfutures.org

Darla Senecal - dsenecal@buildingbrightfutures.org

Kelly Hayes - khayes@buildingbrightfutures.org

Linda Michniewicz - lmichniewicz@buildingbrightfutures.org