

Memorandum

To: Vermont Joint Fiscal Committee
From: Sean Brown, DCF Commissioner
Re: CRF Request for Remote Learning and School Age Care
Date: August 17, 2020

Total Amount Requested: \$11,997,322. The Department for Children and Families (DCF) is seeking funding to expand childcare capacity for school age children on remote learning days and cover the budgetary shortfall in the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) associated with increased school age care need.

The Department for Children and Families proposes to expand current school age childcare capacity to meet the needs of hybrid and remote learning models with the following funding mechanisms:

1. **Regional Hub Grant (\$6,970,040)** – DCF will support the development of regional childcare hubs for school age children to receive childcare on remote learning days. Regional hubs will allow for flexibility based on a regions' remote learning model (i.e. all remote; 4/1; etc.). DCF proposes that regional hubs be set up in workplaces, school buildings, recreational buildings, municipal buildings, and summer camp buildings to leverage existing spaces that historically care for children. DCF will provide the start-up funding to launch the regional childcare hubs and tuition paid by families using the hubs will provide the weekly revenue required for their operating expenses.
2. **Community Lead Grant (\$220,000)** – DCF will provide grant funds to a community partner to support the regional hubs with assistance in leadership, project management, and operational implementation of sites throughout Vermont.
3. **CCFAP Caseload Increase (\$4,807,282)** – As CCFAP families with school age children utilize childcare on remote-learning days, their CCFAP certificates will increase from part-time (afterschool care) to full-time to accommodate the additional hours. This increase will result in an increase to the CCFAP subsidy budget and full-time school age caseload.

Response to the Pandemic: The multiple return to school models being pursued throughout the State because of COVID-19 creates a significant need for school age childcare on remote learning days. As families attend work, they are seeking care for their school age children when they are not attending school in person.

Urgency of Request: Children will be returning to school on September 8th, thus, there is an immediate need for funding to establish this increased childcare capacity.

