



Programs, Services,
& Supports

“After 7 years of fighting budget cuts to Taylor’s services and education within California, as well as fighting for his inclusion, I decided to move to a place where he would not only be fully included and accepted, but would have the necessary resources available to him should he need them. After over a year of tireless research, I happened upon Vermont Family Network and our journey all of a sudden didn’t seem so long from California to Vermont. We had found an extension of our own family. We are incredibly grateful to Vermont Family Network for making our transition to Vermont so seamless and for welcoming us both with professionalism, warmth, and grace!” —KIM

“We’ve had the pleasure of accessing services through VFN for both of our daughters. Everyone that we’ve worked with has been professional, knowledgeable, and super duper sweet and kind. We love VFN!” —BETH RYAN

“When our daughter was about 18 months old, her speech began to regress. We called our daughter’s pediatrician and reported our concerns. We were referred to Vermont Family Network for speech therapy and learning assistance. Within the span of six months, she went from speaking a total of 30 words to speaking in clear sentences. The transformation was amazing to see, and hear. It has provided us with the gift of being able to communicate with our child. We are so thankful for the support provided to our family by Vermont Family Network.” —PARENT

Children’s Integrated Services – Early Intervention Program

VFN’s Chittenden County Children’s Integrated Services-Early Intervention program (CIS-EI) is part of Vermont’s statewide system of coordinated services for pregnant women and young children. CIS-EI:

- serves children ages 0-3 years old with developmental delays or health conditions which may lead to developmental delays
- provides coordinated services in natural environments, such as homes and early care and education programs where children without disabilities also participate
- facilitates parents’ or caregivers’ ability to integrate play-based developmental interventions, that are interesting and functional, into the daily routines of their children
- connects families to community resources to enhance the safety, education, and well-being of their children

AUTISM PROGRAM CONSULTING

The Autism Program Consultant provides statewide consultation, training, and program planning assistance for regional Early Intervention staff to ensure high quality supports and services for young children who have or are suspected of having autism spectrum disorders.

CONTACT US – WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

Our office is open Monday through Friday from 9 am to 4:30 pm. If you have a question or concern about you or your child’s health, education, or well-being, call us at 1-800-800-4005.

You may also access information about our services and supports 24 hours-a-day on our website: www.VermontFamilyNetwork.org.



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Family Support Program

Family Support

Family Support Consultants respond to concerns parents and family members have by phone, email, or in person. Our staff members are parents themselves and are trained to respond to a variety of needs including:



- connecting families to a network of community resources
- informing and guiding parents about the education and health systems, transition through the lifespan of their child, mental health services, and more
- responding to family needs during early stages of their child's diagnosis, during the adjustment to the dynamics a child with special needs brings to the family, or at any other time of change, challenge, or transition
- assisting families in preparing for school, Act 264, and other meetings about their child as well as attending meetings with families
- offering support groups around the state

Visit www.vermontfamilynetwork.com for more details.

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND AUTISM

VFN provides individuals with developmental disabilities, including Autism, and the people who support them with up-to-date, accessible information and assistance including referral to other agencies if needed. VFN also has a large section of its website devoted to developmental disabilities and Autism resources. Topics covered range from information on Autism, events, recreation, providers and programs, education, funding, insurance, legislation, medical home, safety, screening tools for ASD, studies, surveys, support groups, and much more.

VFN can help families and individuals to navigate systems of care by answering questions and connecting them with resources. Our goals are to:

- provide families and individuals with the support they need to advocate for appropriate services and systems change
- bring parents of children with disabilities of all ages together for mutual support and to gain information on important topics such as education, healthcare, and employment

FAMILY FUNDING

This program provides resources directly to parents and families to enhance their well-being and knowledge. Some examples of family funding include:

- support group funds which help parents with start-up costs of launching a support group in a specific geographic area or by diagnosis
- funds which help pay for respite, conferences, equipment, and other expenses for their child with special needs

TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

Our Family Support staff also provides information and assistance to parents of youth and young adults with disabilities, including youth with emotional disabilities who are in the process of transitioning to adulthood, to help them better understand the supports available during this important and often challenging time.

VERMONT HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM

Vermont Family Network supports Vermont schools statewide to ensure that homeless students have:

- equal access to the same free, appropriate, public education (including public preschool) provided to other Vermont children
- the opportunity to meet the same challenging state content and student performance standards as other students

The McKinney-Vento Act supports the education of homeless children and youth, and VFN provides technical assistance to schools on this act. It is designed to address the problems that homeless children and youth have faced in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school.

WWW.GETATSTUFF.COM

This website is an online "classified" where you can donate or locate new and used Assistive Technology (AT), durable medical equipment, and vans. Anyone can post AT "Items Available," search or post "Items Needed," or call nation-wide, toll free 888-827-2714 for direct services.

PARENT MATCH

Our Family Support Consultants offer peer parent matches to parents who have children, youth, or adults with special needs, and have concerns they want to share with other parents. The matches can be based on diagnosis, treatment, experience, family interactions, or other specific questions.

PARENT TRAINING AND INFORMATION CENTER AND FAMILY-TO-FAMILY HEALTH INFORMATION CENTER

VFN serves as Vermont's federally funded Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) and Family-to-Family Health Information Center. We assist families of children with special needs in learning how to effectively navigate the special education and health care systems. We offer information on laws, best practices, and parents' rights, in addition to many other important resources. Through telephone assistance, referrals, parent meetings, printed materials, and trainings, VFN provides family-friendly information and support to parents and others regarding these often complex systems of support. VFN also works to support schools in their efforts to build strong partnerships with parents and assists families to actively participate in their child's education.



Education & Professional Development

PUBLICATIONS, WORKSHOPS, AND TRAININGS

Throughout the state, Vermont Family Network sponsors workshops, webinars, presentations, and community events for parents, children and youth, and professionals on a wide variety of topics, including navigating the special education process, the transition to adulthood for youth with special needs, how to address bullying, and many others.

We provide opportunities for professionals to learn about family-centered care, parent involvement, and parenting a child with special needs. We have more than 1,000 books in our lending library to inform families and professionals about a variety of topics.

VERMONT FAMILY NETWORK ALSO:

- offers more than 25 publications that are easy to read, and useful tools for parents, youth, and professionals
- disseminates an e-newsletter to keep families and professionals informed about opportunities through VFN
- offers SibShops, fun, interactive workshops for siblings of children with special needs
- holds an annual conference for parents, youth, families, and professionals

FAMILY FACULTY

VFN's Family Faculty Program provides an opportunity for families to share their insights, experiences, and knowledge with students and providers in undergraduate, graduate, and medical school programs. Offering a variety of ways for families to participate, the options vary from small group discussions, large classroom panel presentations, a home visit with a student, or an intensive 40-hour student experience with one family. Our core purpose is to share the key elements of Family-Centered Care practice with future providers and educators in our schools and health care systems.



Advocacy

FAMILY VOICES

VFN hosts the Vermont Chapter of Family Voices, a national initiative that advocates for system change and provides health care information to families. It is driven by a grassroots network of families and professionals who are advocates for health care services that are family-centered, community-based, comprehensive, coordinated, and culturally competent for all children and youth with special health care needs. Through public awareness efforts, we promote the inclusion of all families as decision makers at all levels of health care, develop family leadership, and support essential partnerships between families and professionals.

SYSTEMS AND LEGISLATION

VFN advocates with local, state, and federal agencies to improve services, funding, and education for children, youth, and adults with special needs. We keep families informed of federal and state policy changes, and connect parents to legislators and policymakers.

VFN also collaborates with other advocacy groups, including the Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights and the Early Childhood Alliance, to improve services and achieve systems improvement for children, youth, and adults with special needs.