

Helping Vermont Families for Over 30 Years!



News and Resources February 2020



Greetings, VFN family and friends!

February sees us very busy on our [Family Support Helpline](#), doing multiple [Puppets in Education performances](#), and seeing many infants and toddlers and their families in our Chittenden County Children's Integrated Services Early Intervention [\(CIS-EI\) program](#).

We are also hard at work on our [2020 Conference](#) and hope that you will help spread the word throughout the state! We have a new, half-day format where Sara Forward will present *The Power of Play for ALL Ages!* in 4 different locations throughout the state.

Our annual [Dine to Donate/Restaurant Raffle](#) is underway---hope you can participate in this year's fun for foodies and show us some Valentine's love! Many thanks to all of the restaurants who are taking part---the raffle drawing will be held on February 28th!

We continue to seek Developmental Educators for our CIS-EI program---check out the employment opportunities [here](#).

Our work with the [Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights](#) and the [Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance](#) is getting off the ground for the 2020 legislative session. We are seeking stories from families about the positive impact of Children's Integrated Services on young children's development, as well as how gaps in services challenge families of children with special needs. We are also looking for families of children and youth with disabilities to take part in [Disability Awareness Day at the Legislature](#), March 12, 2020. Please contact us if you are interested in sharing your story---Family voices make a huge difference in policy and budget decisions that affect children and youth with disabilities throughout Vermont.

From the heart,

10th Annual Dance Showcase to Benefit VFN *A Decade of Beauty, Grace and Strength*

Please join us for our 10th Annual Dance Showcase on Saturday, February 15 at 7:00 pm at the [Main Street Landing Performing Arts Center](#), Black Box Theater in Burlington. [Details](#) are on our website. 100% of proceeds will support our work with children and families.

Tickets are \$25 in advance and \$28 at the door. You may purchase tickets by calling Vermont Family Network at (802) 876-5315 x247, visiting the Flynn Box Office, or buying on-line at FlynnTix.org.

The Show will Feature: Aria Michaels Paradise of Boston, Di'Ahna Restry of Boston, Cult of Yes from Montreal, Marina D.Ray from Montreal, merde!, Ballet Vermont, Hanna Satterlee, Amity Alize, Alison from Bohemienne Fitness, Circurious Collective, Arunima Dasgupta, Haley Bradstreet & Robin Riley, Toby MacNutt, Champlain College Dance Team, Julie Peoples-Clark, Leanan Sidhe, Blue Moon Company, Studio 3 Dance, The Taranta Sisters, Studio Serpentine Dancers of Cobra, Bhutanese Nepali Cultural Dance Group of Vermont, HIGHSTEPPERS, Big J, and The Accaliae.

A Big Thank You to our Sponsors: The Law Offices of Fred V. Peet, Main Street Landing (host sponsor) and City Market (food sponsor).

Special Education During Legislative Session 2020

The Senate Committee on Education has launched bill S.326 to fix the State's Special Education Advisory Panel to bring it in compliance with federal law and is made up of a majority of parents of children with disabilities and individuals with disabilities. The panel advises the Vermont Agency of Education regarding the education of students with disabilities. If you have any questions, please contact [Karen Price](#) here at VFN.

Free Educational Opportunities

You can listen "live" or after the webinar is recorded and saved on our [website](#) and [YouTube channel](#). We also record our Facebook Live events and save those on our [website](#). Check the [calendar](#) on our website for new events.

Webinar - *Funding a Special Needs Trust* - Wednesday, **February 5** from 12 noon - 1 pm. Presenter: Larry Hawley, Financial Representative with The Vermont Agency. [Register here](#).

Facebook Live - Transition Assessments for High School Youth with Disabilities, Wednesday, **February 12** at 1:30 pm. Martha Frank on our Family Support staff will be interviewing Jason Capobianco, an Employment Specialist at Spaulding High School.

Facebook Live - Coordinated Services Plan (CSP / ACT 264), Thursday, **February 13** at 10:30 am. Two of our Family Support Consultants, Janice Sabett and Vickie Crocker, will be discussing the CSP process and how it can help families.

Webinar - [Vermont STABLE Savings Program](#) for People with Disabilities - **Monday, March 16** from 12 noon - 1 pm. Presenter: Kirsten Murphy, Executive Director, Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council

Facebook Live - Interview with Kirsten Murphy, Executive Director, Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council, **Monday, March 16** at 1:30 pm

Please help us by completing a [brief survey](#) when you're done watching any of our webinars. We need this information to report to our funders and to make improvements in our future offerings.

2020 Annual Conference - Registration is Open

[VFN's Annual Conference](#) will have a whole new look! We're excited about our new half-day format that will happen in 4 different locations around the state. We hope to reach more people especially those who may never have had an opportunity to attend in the past.

Thanks to all of you who completed a conference survey to guide our decision in picking a presenter and topic. We are pleased to announce that Sara Forward, LICSW with the Child Welfare Training Partnership at the University of Vermont, will guide us in a program entitled *The Power of Play for ALL Ages!* [Listen to an interview](#) with Sara as she describes what participants can expect at this interactive, fun-filled workshop.

Visit our [website](#) for Sara's bio and more information about her presentation. Only **\$10 for parents** (scholarships available) and **\$25 for professionals**.

The four dates and times are:

Saturday, **March 21** from 10 am - 2 pm at the [Holiday Inn Mount Ascutney](#)

in Brownsville

Thursday, **April 2** from 8:30 am - 1 pm at the [Delta Hotel](#) (formerly Trader Duke's) in South Burlington

Saturday, **April 4** from 9 am - 12 noon at the Old North End Community Center Event Hall (20 Allen St.) in Burlington. A big thank you to the [JSM Family Room](#) for co-hosting this event! The focus audience will be parents from New American communities; however, as with all of our other conference dates, everyone is welcome to participate!

Tuesday, **April 7** from 4 pm - 8 pm at the [East Side Restaurant](#) in Newport

What is Work-Based Learning?

Many youth in high school participate in [work-based learning](#) experiences in preparation for post-school life. These activities involve actual work experience or connect classroom learning to employment and careers. Work-based learning includes apprenticeships, cooperative work experience, internships, job shadowing, paid work, and service-learning employment. One program that can help with post-school employment for individuals with disabilities is [Ticket to Work](#). By using their "Ticket," Social Security disability beneficiaries, ages 18 through 64, can seek free employment services through their state [Vocational Rehabilitation](#) (VR) agency. Information on Ticket to Work and other resources can be found in our [Transition Toolkit for Youth with Disabilities](#).

Behavior and the IEP

If your child, who is on an Individualized Education Program (IEP), displays behavior that interferes with their learning or that of other students, the IEP Team, which includes the parent, must consider, and include in the IEP when necessary, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies, to address that behavior. The Federal Department of Education (ED) has issued [guidance](#) regarding this issue. The [Functional Behavior Assessment \(FBA\)](#) can be an important tool in the development of a positive behavior plan for your child.

If you have questions about behavior plans, the FBA, or school positive behavioral supports and strategies, please call our VFN helpline at 1-802-876-5315 and ask to speak to a Family Support Consultant.

News from the Puppets

The Puppets kicked off their Anxiety Pilot Project in Proctor, VT this month! The program, for students in grades Pre-K through 4, features tips on how to recognize when worry is a problem, and tools for how to deal with it. Audience members help the puppets with their worry and also get a chance to practice the tools that they learned during a "pass the puppet" circle time. The program is designed for small groups (up to 50 students) and will be touring throughout Vermont through June. Support from the Vermont Department of Mental Health and the National Life Group Foundation is making this project possible.

From the Adults

"I love how interactive it was!" Grade 4 Teacher

"We use some of these strategies in our home, but will use some of your other great suggestions." Parent

"I will talk to my students about things that make them feel worried or scared and review the tools." Grade Pre-K Teacher

We are excited to announce that Kate Williams has joined the Puppet Team for the winter and spring to lend a helping hand! She is a quick study and will be puppeteering very soon at a school near you! You can see our schedule [here](#).

SibShop Fun Saturday, February 8

Our next Sibshop will be on **Saturday, February 8 from 1 - 3:30 pm**. Bring your improv skills, TV-worthy personalities, and a good sense of fun! Sibshops is partnering with Lyric Theater for an opportunity to use those acting skills! The theme of this shop is Acceptance. As every Improv professional knows, no matter what happens on stage you need to say "yes", and because the show must go on. Location: Lyric Theatre, 7 Green Tree Drive, South Burlington.

For questions, scholarships, or to RSVP, please contact Molly Lawney by calling 802-876-5315 x216 or emailing Molly.Lawney@vtfn.org. Space is limited so RSVP soon!

We're Here to Help!

Our Family Support Consultants are here to help you. You can reach us by calling (802) 876-5315 or toll-free at 1-800-800-4005. Another way to contact us is to send an email to info@vtfn.org. Include your name, phone number, and a few words about your question or concern, and best times to reach you

during our office hours (Monday-Friday, 9 am - 4:30 pm) so we can have the right person on our staff return your call. We do our very best to return calls within one business day.

Join Our Closed Facebook Page

Our [closed Facebook page](#) (Vermont Families of Children with Special Health Care Needs) is for parents, family members, and people in a parenting role. The current membership is 505 and growing. This group shares ideas, asks questions, and offers support.

Did you know we have 90+ webinars on [YouTube](#)?



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