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Strong Families. Strong Futures.



Dear VFN family and friends,

It seems surreal to think that we have been working from home for almost two months now. We miss seeing you all in person, and hope that you and your families are well. VFN is continuing to serve families in many different ways, as Family Support Consultant Molly Lawney explains in this [short video](#).

In collaboration with some of our [Vermont Leadership Series](#) graduates and the [Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council](#), we were pleased to host a virtual Town Hall with the VT Department for Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living on April 21 so the nearly 200 participants could learn about the [Covid-19 Emergency Supports for Family Caregivers](#). We continue to share updates on temporary changes to the [Children's Personal Care Services Program](#) since hosting a Town Hall on April 10 with family leaders and the Vermont Department of Health's Children with Special Health Needs. Our Family Support staff have launched a virtual support group for parents called *Parent's Chat & Share* and have hosted two meetings so far. We love chatting and laughing with other parents in this informal get-together. Staying connected during this time of "physical distancing" helps keep everyone's spirits up!

You can always contact us toll-free at 1-800-800-4005/(802) 876-5315 or email info@vtfn.org. No matter where we are working from, you can depend on us for information, support, and connection. You can also follow us on [Facebook](#). If you are a parent or are in a parenting role, you are invited to join our closed Facebook group, [Vermont Families of Children with Special Health Care Needs](#). The group's 540 members share ideas, family-to-family, and offer knowledgeable support. They know first-hand what it's like to parent a child with special health needs or a disability. They understand how hard self-care can be in times like these, never mind trying to "put on our own oxygen mask first." While self-care looks different for different people, taking care of our mental health and well-being is paramount.

Since 1949, the month of May has been observed as Mental Health month. Keeping children safe is essential to their mental and physical health. In collaboration with our [Puppets in Education](#), the University of Vermont Children's Hospital has put together this [9-minute video](#) for children to learn what to do if they are experiencing abuse at home. Many thanks to Dr. Lewis First, Chief of Pediatrics at the UVM Children's Hospital! The [video](#), along with a [letter to educators](#) was distributed to all Vermont schools.

Read
More



From the heart,

Pam McCarthy, M.Ed.
CEO/President

Frequently Asked Questions

Topics covered in this week's [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) include:

[Health & Well-Being](#)

- New [9-minute puppets video](#) for children to learn what to do if they are experiencing abuse at home
- Financial assistance programs for families of children with disabilities/special health needs impacted by Covid-19
- Telehealth appointments with genetics providers
- Resources for siblings age 13+



[Students with Disabilities & Special Education](#)

- Opportunity to provide input on the [State of Vermont Special Education Rules](#) by completing our short [survey](#)

- [Tips](#) for parents to plan for and participate in virtual Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings

[Translated Resources](#)

- We've added a few new ones.

[Learn More](#)

Contact Us. We Will Listen!

Helping Vermont Families thrive for more than 30 years



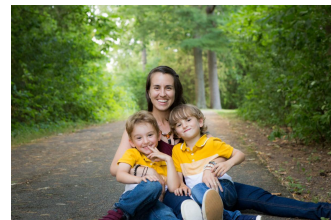
Vermont Youth Summit
5/28 with Hasan Davis

[Learn More](#)



New! Puppets Video
Keeping Children Safe

[Learn More](#)



VFN Covid-19 Updates

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Upcoming Events



Sibshop (ages 6+) - Saturday, May 16 from 1 pm - 2:30 pm

Our last Sibshop for this year is going "virtual" using Zoom! Sibshops are fun events for siblings (age 6+) of brothers and sisters who have special health needs or disabilities. We have co-hosted this national program for more than 20 years! Up until the Covid-19 pandemic, we held in-person Sibshop events in Chittenden county during the school year but now we've gone virtual. We're so excited to meet many new siblings from across our beautiful state. For information about Sibshops, please contact [Molly Lawney](#) or register on-line [here](#) for the May 16 Sibshop where sibs will have a chance to show their stuff in a virtual Talent Show!

Vermont Youth Summit - Thursday, May 28 from 10 am - 11 am

You're invited to a FREE "virtual" Youth Summit with dynamic keynote speaker and author of the book "Written Off", [Hasan Davis](#)! Here is a [short video](#) with his story.

This event was organized by the Youth Advocacy Council and is hosted by Vermont Family Network and Vocational Rehabilitation Vermont. Registration is required for both the keynote speech and the workshop.

The keynote presentation is specifically for youth and young adults, and those supporting youth in achieving their hopes and dreams are also welcome. The workshop for youth and young adults is offered on two different dates and youth can choose the one that they prefer.

Register for keynote and workshop today!

Keynote presentation on Thursday, May 28 from 10 am - 11 am. [Register here](#).

Interactive Workshop for Youth and Young Adults (Limit 35 per session) - These workshops are exactly the same so please choose only one.

May 28 from 2 pm - 3:30 pm. [Register here](#) or June 2 from 2 pm - 3:30 pm [Register here](#).

If you have any questions, need help registering, or would like to request a reasonable accommodation, please contact Martha.Frank@vtfn.org with Vermont Family Network or Nichole.Jolly@vermont.gov with Vocational Rehabilitation Vermont.

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