



June 9, 2020

Dear families,

We hope that you and your loved ones are weathering the many changes that have come with the COVID-19 pandemic, and that you are doing well as we continue to serve you remotely. I am writing to tell you about a change that will be coming for all Vermont Family Network (VFN) Children's Integrated Services Early Intervention (CIS EI) families at the end of this summer, and to let you know that we are doing all we can to make this change a positive one.

Over the last year or so, Vermont's Agency of Human Services has been going through the process of payment reform which includes the funding for Children's Integrated Services (CIS) throughout Vermont. Through this reform, we were told that Chittenden County would receive a decrease in funding. To be sure that all CIS services could continue with the funding cuts, the Chittenden County CIS contractor, the Howard Center, put all the CIS subcontracts (for Early Intervention, Specialized Child Care and Strong Families Vermont Nursing and Family Support Home Visiting) out to bid. VFN submitted a proposal for the Early Intervention subcontract, one that VFN has held for over 30 years. We have been informed by the Howard Center that we were not the successful bidder and that the new CIS Early Intervention subcontract will be awarded to our sister CIS provider in Franklin & Grand Isle counties, Northwestern Counseling and Support Services (NCSS). As of September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, NCSS will begin providing the Early Intervention services for the Chittenden region, collaborating with the other CIS subcontractors in Chittenden County. NCSS will build on the successful CIS EI services they already provide in the communities of northwestern Vermont. VFN's dedicated CIS EI providers will work closely with NCSS in the coming few months to provide a smooth transition for all children and families.

Transition conversations have begun. We are in the process of planning with NCSS and Chittenden CIS partners to make sure that VFN families have a good transition of services, supports and documentation. For children and families there will most likely be a change in the person who provides service coordination and developmental education. NCSS provides a blended model of early intervention, different from VFN's Family Resource Coordinator as an experienced parent-to-parent service coordinator paired with a Developmental Educator skilled in Early Childhood Special Education.

More information about your ongoing service coordination will be sent to you in the coming weeks. In most cases, families' specialty providers, which include Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists and Speech Language Pathologists, among others, will likely remain the same.

VFN will continue to follow the VT Department of Health COVID 19 guidance and offer telehealth visits to your child and family until the transition process to NCSS is complete. Your Family Resource Coordinator, Developmental Educator and direct service providers are committed to supporting your family through this transition. It has been our honor to support all of you through your journey in Early Intervention, and we hope that you will remain connected with VFN through our other programs and services for families of children with special needs, should your family require those resources in the future.

If you have questions regarding this transition and change in service providers, please contact:

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Thank you,



Rachel Boyers  
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