



Dear Colleagues and Community Partners,

Happy November to all. As the final month of autumn and the month of gathering and gleaning the last of the harvest, we offer this November edition of *CSHN Connections* to all things food.

Food is so much more than water, fats, protein, and carbohydrates- which is what it's primarily made up of. Food is sustenance, energy, culture, and a significant means of bonding us to each other. The importance of food is demonstrated by the prevalence of food related idioms or expressions we share- food for thought, apple of my eye, sell like hotcakes, easy as pie, two peas in a pod. So many more but you get the idea...food glorious food. But food is also serious. Food insecurity is real, food deserts exist, feeding disorders challenge us, and the high cost of food negatively impacts millions of Americans. Food can be a source of great joy and great concern – especially for parents. If your child has feeding difficulty or intolerances, the seriousness of nutrition and growth can be a daily challenge.

We hope this edition of *CSHN Connections* provides some useful information and resources to help you support families with food and food-related difficulties.

May all of us be nourished and our mealtimes filled with love.

CSHN Connections Team

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Program Spotlight

Pediatric Feeding Disorder Screening Pilot Project

Vermont's CSHN team is the first in the nation to launch a Pediatric Feeding Disorder screening pilot. We designed a pilot project across Vermont, first by educating providers about PFD, then introducing them to the screening tool and our online data collection form. Since October 2023, we've screened almost 1100 children!

Using a screening tool from Feeding Matters (<https://www.feedingmatters.org>), we collect information about reasons for screening, pre-existing conditions, access to feeding therapists, positive/negative screens, etc. Thus far, approximately 19% of screening results are positive. Through collection of data, we hope to learn more about feeding issues our pediatric population may be experiencing and how we can help families.

Want to learn more about how you can participate in this important PFD effort? Want to learn more about PFD? You can contact our project lead, Marinell Newton, at Marinell.Newton@vermont.gov. We'd love to have you join us in our pilot!



Speaking of nutrition...**What is the CSHN Nutrition Network?**

- We provide individualized nutrition services for children with special growth, feeding, and dietary needs and their families. Specialized pediatric dietitians currently serve all regions of Vermont through telemedicine or home visits.
- We provide local teams and providers with ongoing training and consultation on a regular or as-needed basis.

How do we help children and families improve their nutrition and eating?

- We assess the child's growth and adequacy of the current diet and make practical recommendations to improve the child's nutrition status.
- We assess the feeding skill development of a child and recommend specific interventions to improve skills.
- We support families to decrease stress, fear, and anxiety within the parent-child feeding relationship and support the child's eating in all environments.
- We help the family identify nutrition and eating-related resources they may be eligible for in their community.
- We recommend foods and supplements that work best for their child and food budget.

What have we been doing lately?

- We have trained all Early Intervention intake staff &/or developmental coordinators to screen for PFD (in previous article).
- We are collecting the data in these screens (with the help of FCH/CSHN data analysts & Marinell Newton) to advocate for more training and support to develop the field of pediatric feeding therapy in Vermont. Pediatric feeding therapists are in short supply in our state, especially for children over the age of three.

[Here's a link](#) to our brochure! Please get in touch if you have questions about our program, making a referral, or other nutrition support needs for children and families you serve.

Community Partner Spotlight



Blue 211 and United Way logos on white background.

Vermont 211

Vermont 211 is the statewide information and referral system connecting all Vermonters to health and human service resources. Vermont 211 officially launched on February 11, 2005 with an easy to remember 3-digit number as part of the N-11 system. This designation diverts non-emergent calls away from the 911 system, preserving it's ability to respond to emergencies.

Vermont 211 is staffed 24/7 by trained Community Resource Specialists who can assist callers via phone, text or email. They provide an empathetic and supportive connection to critical resources every day and in times of disaster and during public health emergencies.

Vermont 211 holds national accreditation as an information and referral agency through InformUSA, as well as a thoroughly vetted and updated database used by Vermont 211 staff and available online to the public at Vermont211.org.

You can reach Vermont 211 by dialing 211 or using our 10-digit number (802) 652- 4636, texting your zip code to 898211 or email at info@vermont211.org.

CSHN Updates



Test tubs filled with blue liquid and DNA molecules.

New resource alert!

New! CSHN Genetics Funding Sources Guide

You might notice on CSHN 's website section entitled "Resources for Families and Providers" that there is a new resource called "Genetics Funding Sources". We partnered with Vermont Family Network on a soon to be published Navigating a Genetics Referral resource for families.

This companion guide provides information about various funding assistance available to families to meet the out-of-pocket costs for genetic testing and care. Check it out [here!](#)

Resources for Families



Orange hat, shoes, and scarf. Blue puffer coat.

Food resources for families:

The cost of food and recent impacts on benefits may be impacting families. In addition to the resources below, [VT211](#) has an [online directory](#) for food resources at the top of their homepage. Many communities are also coming together to provide extra resources for families who need added support during this challenging time. Please encourage families to reach out to their local food shelf to inquire about supplementary resources in their communities.

Hunger Free Vermont

[Hunger Free Vermont](#) believes no one should worry about where their next meal will come from. Food is a right — and we all deserve to have dignified, stable ways to put food on our tables every day, no matter what challenges we are facing. Visit their website for multiple resources to help stretch your food budget.

Little Free Pantry

Little Free Pantries are small boxes that look a lot like neighborhood libraries, but instead of books, they're filled with unexpired, non-perishable food. These are maintained and stocked by volunteers and free for anyone to donate or take what you need. Check out this [Mini Pantry Map](#) to see if one has popped up in your community – there are many throughout Vermont! Visit the [Little Free Pantry FAQ](#) page to find out more.

Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

If you're pregnant, a caregiver, or a parent with a child under five, you may be eligible for WIC. WIC stands for Women, Infants and Children but you don't have to be a woman to apply if you are raising young kids. WIC gives you access to healthy foods, nutrition education and counseling, breastfeeding and chestfeeding support, and referrals to other support services. Families who receive 3SquaresVT benefits are automatically income eligible for WIC and can participate in both 3SquaresVT and WIC if they meet the other WIC requirements. To find out more and get help applying, visit [WIC's website](#) or text 'APPLY' to 1-844-TEXT-WIC (1-844-839-8942).

Farm To Family Coupons

This program helps with buying fresh fruits, vegetables & herbs at farmers markets and farm stands. Participants will receive coupons for up to \$48 to use at the market. People enrolled in WIC qualify automatically and other individuals can qualify depending on income. To learn more and find out if you qualify visit the website of the Department for Children and Families following [this link](#). Any of the [regional Community Action Agencies](#) or [local Health Offices](#) statewide can also provide information and help with application.

The Vermont Foodbank

[The Vermont Foodbank](#) partners with over 300 food shelves, meal sites, and community organizations throughout the state. You can [Find a Food Shelf - Vermont Foodbank](#), including contact and location information. Many food shelves offer holiday food boxes. Contact your local food shelf today to find out if they will offer holiday boxes this year.

The Vermont Foodbank also hosts the **Veggie Van Go** program, which gives away free fresh vegetables and fruit at hospitals and schools across the state. [Click this link](#) to learn more about a Veggie Van Go event near you.

3SquaresVT

3SquaresVT (known nationally as SNAP) is a program that gives you money every month to buy food. When you use 3SquaresVT, you can shop where and when you want.

Each month, money is automatically deposited onto an EBT card, which looks and works just like a debit card. Your EBT card can be used to buy groceries at over 600 food retailers in Vermont, more than 40 farmers markets, and anywhere in the U.S. that accepts EBT. It is a program for everyone who qualifies, depending on income. Learn more about qualifying and applying for 3SquaresVT [here](#). Looking for information about changes to 3SquaresVT? [Click here](#).

Crop Cash: When spending 3SquaresVT/SNAP dollars at a farmers market, you'll receive extra money to spend on local fruits, vegetables, herbs, and culinary seeds and plant starts. Markets will match up to \$20 of your SNAP dollars per day.

Upper Valley Food Resources, for families living in the Upper Valley check out this [link for food resources](#). This is updated regularly, so check back often!

Resources for coats, winter outerwear:

[Warm the Children](#) "Providing new winter clothing for local children in need" There are programs in Barton (Orleans

County) and Bennington ([Sunrise Family Resource Center](#)). Families can reach out to the contacts below, see website for donation details if interested.

Barton: Reach out to elementary schools

Bennington: email wtcbennington@gmail.com

Kids in Coats, a program of United Way of Windham County, provides an essential service to families in Windham County by providing access to warm winter gear for children. To learn more about the Kids in Coats Program, visit [About Kids in Coats | United Way of Windham County](#) on our website or contact UWWC.

United Counseling Service Warm Clothing Drive. Stop by and grab free winter clothes and shoes. Tuesday November 18, at Spring Center, 655 Gage Street in Bennington. Contact Kellie Trottier at ktrottier@ucsvt.org for more info.

[Winter Coats and Outerwear - Upper Valley Haven](#) (White River Junction)—Call 802-295-6500 or email info@uppervalleyhaven.org for support.

[Rotary Annual Coat Drive](#) (St Albans)—See website for drop off locations around Franklin County.

Webinar for families: "The Holidays: Coping Through the Season"

Courageous Parents Network is offering this webinar to help families of children with a serious illness as they anticipate the holidays. For these families, the holidays can bring additional emotions and burdens. This event takes place on Wednesday, December 3 at 8:00pm ET. To register, please visit the CPN website: [Upcoming: In the Room: The Holidays: Coping Through the Season – Courageous Parents Network](#). (Pssst...by the way, the CPN website has a wealth of information for clinicians. Stay tuned for upcoming info about CEUs in 2026!)



Blue and white poster from Vermont Department of Health about

Please help us lower the risk of children accidentally ingesting medication and harmful substances.

We have a supply of free, lockable storage boxes, and request your support to **get the word out to families with young children and adolescents in the home** to prevent them from accidentally ingesting medications.

A [Health Department report](#) shows a rise in accidental ingestion of substances by children since 2018, based on emergency department data. For children under 4 years old and children 10 to 14 years-old over-the-counter (OTC)

medication and prescription medication were the most common substances involved in unintentional overdoses in 2022. For children 5 to 9 years old the most common substances involved in unintentional overdoses also included prescription medication.

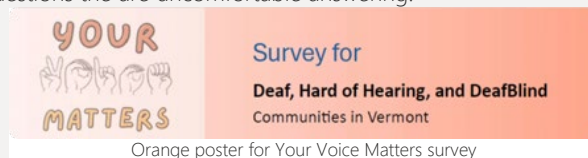
We created a [simple form](#) for your patients/clients to order a lock box, or someone in your office can order it for them. Print and share this flyer with the families you work with.

Department of Disabilities Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) wants patients and families participation

DAIL is working with a project team from Vermont Certified Public Manager program. The project team is seeking patient participation in a survey, below. We hope you can share with patients who are Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard-of-Hearing, Late-Deafened or hearing differences. Their participation is vital in shaping policy decisions and guiding future funding to meet the community's needs.

Collected information will help DAIL bridge significant gaps in our understanding and ensure that these communities receive the support they need to thrive.

The survey covers various aspects of daily life, including demographics, healthcare experiences, educational opportunities, and employment challenges. It is anonymous and only takes approximately 5-15 minutes to complete. Participants may skip any questions they are uncomfortable answering.



Orange poster for Your Voice Matters survey

Take the survey:



QR code for survey

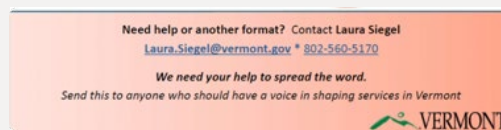
<https://link.edgepilot.com/s/eea3b18c/KKtDhMn0pUiLISEInHeu5g?u=https://rb.gy/jfwv6l>

or Take the survey here: [Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, DeafBlind Vermonters Survey](#)

Watch an [ASL Video on the Vermont Certified Public Manager Program Survey](#)

Watch an [ASL Video on instructions for taking the survey](#)

Watch an [ASL Video on further understanding for taking the survey](#)



Orange and white poster with survey information and QR code.

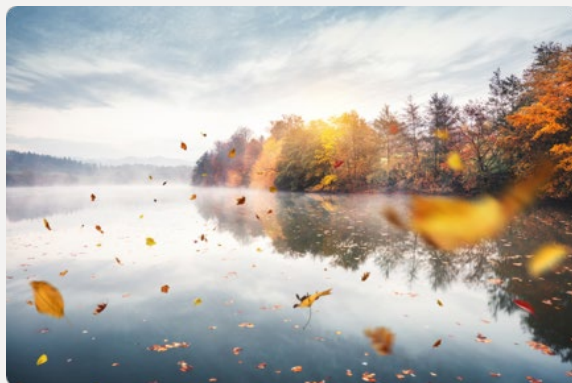
Did you know...?

Want to know **what's happening for Medicaid in Vermont**? 2026 updates for families or patients are found here: [Health Insurance Changes in 2026: Stay Informed! | Vermont Health Connect](#)

Want to reach the **CSHN Care Consultant** for your area? Local contact info is available on our website: [CSHN Service Area](#).

Please consider sharing these resources with the families you serve and others at your organizations.

Policy Corner



Lake with fall leaves blowing around, multi colored trees.

Vermont Policy Updates

GCR Final Policy 25-034 – Medicaid [Mental Health Incentive Payment Program](#). Effective April 11, 2025, this policy implements an incentive payment program for Designated and Specialized Service Agencies providing mental health services can earn incentive payment for submission of a complete Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths or Adult Needs and Strengths Assessment data to the state.

GCR Final Policy 25-092 – DAIL Conflict-Free Case Management, Developmental Disabilities Services Payment Reform, and Support Brokering. This policy relates to home and community – based services. This policy took effect on October 1, 2025. For detailed description, please refer to: [25-092-F-CFCM-DS-Reform-Support-Brokerer.pdf](#).

If you have questions about any of the GCRs above or wish to be added to **email notifications for Global Commitment waivers** please email AHS.MedicaidPolicy@vermont.gov.

Medicaid Portal and Banner

As the end of this calendar year approaches and knowing that policies and billing information ramps up after the new year...we want to remind providers to check out the **Vermont Medicaid Portal** and **Gainwell Banner**. Banners are found at the Vermont Medicaid Portal: <https://vtmedicaid.com/#/bannerMain>. Descriptive weekly Banners are under the "Full Banner" button. Once users open a Banner newsletter issue, you'll find comprehensive details about upcoming events and provider billing information.

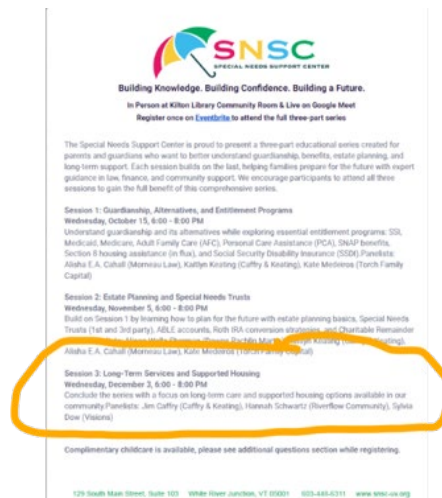
Community Happenings



Flyer for WIC and Attune 2 Food class series. Cartoon fruit placed on tan background.

Preparing for the Future...3rd educational session from Special Needs Support Center

To register for this series about helping families prepare for their future, click this link: [Preparing for the Future: A Three-Part Educational Series Tickets, Multiple Dates | Eventbrite](#)



White and colorful letters poster from Special Needs Support Center

Holiday time Sensory Friendly Opportunities:

[Sensory Friendly Hour at VINS](#)-- Next session will be January 3, 2026 9-10am at Vermont Institute of Natural Science in Quechee, VT.

[Sensory Friendly Series at Essex Cinemas](#)— Zootopia 2 on Saturday December 6 and The SpongeBob Movie on Saturday December 27.

Montshire Museum of Science—[Montshh...Montshire Sensory Hour](#), the 3rd Saturday of the month at 9am. Upcoming sessions are December 20, January 17, and February 21.

CSHN supports children with complex, chronic health conditions and/or developmental disorders, ages birth to-21, and their families, with flexible, experienced, and proactive services. If you'd like to learn more about CSHN programming and resources, please see the [CSHN Website](#).

Do you have feedback or content for this newsletter? Please [let us know!](#)



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