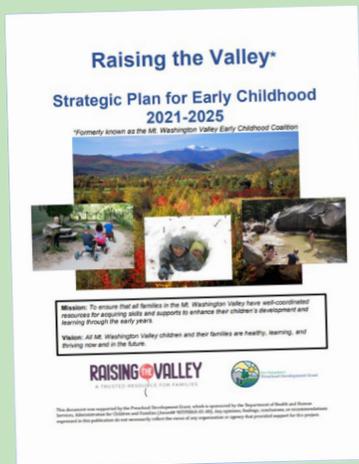




# Children Unlimited



**RAISING THE VALLEY**  
A TRUSTED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES



***“Raising the Valley ensures that all families in the Mt. Washington Valley have well-coordinated resources for acquiring skills and supports to enhance their children’s development and learning through the early years.”***

Children Unlimited offers a variety of programs and services for Mt. Washington Valley children and families, including early childhood care and education, Family Connections Resource Center, and a therapeutic clinic. An initiative of Children Unlimited, Raising the Valley is a group of community stakeholders including school, healthcare, social service, early childhood educators, parents and other interested partners working towards the vision that all Mt. Washington Valley children and their families are healthy, learning and thriving now and in the future.

## **Funded Project: Strategic Plan for Early Childhood**

Preschool Development Grant funding allowed Raising the Valley to embark on a strategic planning process to create a family-informed, effective, comprehensive, and well-coordinated early childhood system. An 11-member Leadership Team representing community organizations and bringing family voice worked with an expert facilitator to guide the process.

Informed by community needs assessment data and stakeholder input, Raising the Valley aligned its local strategies with other Mount Washington Valley initiatives and the statewide Strategic Plan for Early Childhood goals:

- 1. Positive Learning Experiences:** Effective learning opportunities are provided in all settings, including the home, child care and after-school programs, preschools and elementary schools.
- 2. Healthy Children and Families:** Children and families throughout the Mt. Washington Valley have access to the best opportunities for early and life-long health.
- 3. Strong Families:** Families have the skills, basic resources, and supports to promote their children’s development and learning before birth and continuing through age five and beyond.
- 4. System Coordination:** MWV young children and their families have the benefit of well-coordinated early childhood programs and services that work effectively together on their behalf.

Grounded in the belief that parents and caregivers are a child’s first and best teacher, Raising the Valley aimed to build a system of supports that addressed family needs while simultaneously building the capacity of all families to be a part of that system of supports. Furthermore, Raising the Valley ensured all strategies and actions outlined in the plan were inclusive, responsive, efficient and evidence-informed.



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## Impact of Preschool Development Grant Funding

The Raising the Valley team witnessed the tireless dedication among diverse stakeholders who prioritized the strategic planning process amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Community providers and family members happily pivoted to virtual meetings and remote communications to ensure they participated in this important process. What resulted was the creation of a family-informed roadmap for Mount Washington Valley partners to Create Positive Learning Experiences, Healthy Families, Strong Families and Early Childhood System Coordination.

The strategic planning process catalyzed to rebrand the Mount Washington Valley Early Childhood Coalition as Raising the Valley, with an updated family-friendly website providing resources on childcare and early education, public schools, healthcare, services for children with special needs, family and community support, and statewide partners.

Undoubtedly, Preschool Development funding helped Raising the Valley build its capacity across the Mount Washington Valley. As a result, Children Unlimited was well-positioned to expand its geographic focus by serving as the Regional 7 lead, in partnership with the Coos Coalition for Young Children and Families and the SOUTHERN Carroll County Early Childhood Coalition.



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