

Otter Creek Child Center

"Celebrating 30 years of helping children discover their love for learning"

February 12, 2018

Dear Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees,

As the director of Otter Creek Child Center, in Middlebury, I'm writing to you today to *Please support allocating \$320,000 in the FY19 Department for Children and Families budget to sustain the current level of support that TEACH currently provides early care and education professionals seeking degrees and credentials.*

Since the beginning of TEACH in Vermont Otter Creek has been involved with the scholarship program with huge success. We currently have 2 teachers accessing the program to achieve Associates Degrees in Early Childhood Education. In the past we had 1 other teacher access the program for her A.A. in Early Childhood Education and another access the program while she was taking classes through the Vermont Higher Ed Collaborative in order to be eligible for an Early Childhood teaching license through Peer Review.

In all cases, TEACH, has allowed for our teachers to pursue higher education when they otherwise would not have been able to afford it. We love the TEACH program and here is why:

"Scaffolding children's learning and nurturing their individual development is my passion. My unconventional college journey would have never been possible to continue without TEACH. As any early educator I am committed to provide the best that I can for the children and families in my community. I continue to educating myself and maintain a commitment to higher learning, TEACH has allowed this to occur on a college level. As Vermont strives to provide high quality care to children and family the TEACH program has allowed dedicated educators to rise to a higher standard and I am so grateful for that opportunity." -Jacquelyn Prime

"TEACH has helped and benefited me in many ways. I never thought I would be able expand my education in the career I love in the ways that TEACH has provided me. I can go to work, school, and do extra activities without having the weight of finance everyday on my shoulders. When I found out that there was an opportunity to gain affordable knowledge, I was ecstatic and applied right away! I love the way TEACH has made me feel about college and love the way TEACH has given me this chance!" -Kelsey Coleman

TEACH dollars make a huge difference not only in the lives of the recipients but in the programs the recipients work. TEACH helps recipients achieve higher education which in turn helps programs meet high licensing staff qualifications. So I ask again that you *please support allocating \$320,000 in the FY19 Department for Children and Families budget to sustain the current level of support that TEACH currently provides early care and education professionals seeking degrees and credentials.*

Sincerely,



Linda January