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To the Senate Appropriations Committee:

To introduce myself, the work of the VT Child Care Industry and Careers Council, a non-profit organization, focuses on professional development for the child care workforce and has done so since the Vermont launch of the Child Care Apprenticeship Program in 2000.

I was very happy to hear Governor Scott mention (more than once) directing/adding support dollars to the state budget specifically to address the need of incumbent child care professionals to access higher education. A few factors are in play with my support for his proposal. National research documents that the quality child care results from children being in the care of teachers with credentials and degrees. The State of Vermont approved new Child Care Licensing Regulations, with an increase in staff qualifications. The workforce is working to meet these challenges while they live and work here, in Vermont. The child care workforce is striving to meet these demands in addition to full time employment caring for children, meeting the needs of their own families and on top of this, working to improve their education and skills needed to provide this quality of care. This industry has faced many challenges over the years and one item that does not change, is the need for staff to begin or continue their journey into higher education. Vermont children, and those who care for them, deserve no less.

We ask that you appropriate General Fund Dollars in the amount of \$120,000.00 to support increased access to higher education for Vermont's child care workforce.

Thank you for your consideration. Please be in touch if I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

Sue Ryan
Director of Programs