

Otter Creek Child Center

“Celebrating 35 years of helping children discover their love for learning”

March 1, 2019

Dear Members of the House Appropriations Committees,

As the director of Otter Creek Child Center, in Middlebury, I'm writing to you today to ask you to please *support allocating 1.2 million dollars for the T.E.A.C.H. program which includes expanding T.E.A.C.H. with a Bachelor degree model to ensure the workforce has a pathway from associates to bachelors to licensure. Minimally, a \$550,000 appropriation for T.E.A.C.H. in the FY20 budget would sustain the current Apprenticeship, Associates and Teacher Licensure programs.*

Since the beginning of T.E.A.C.H. in Vermont Otter Creek has been involved with the scholarship program with huge success, we currently have 1 teacher accessing the program to achieve an Associates Degrees in Early Childhood Education. In the past we had one 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, T.E.A.C.H., has allowed for our teachers to pursue higher education when they otherwise would not have been able to afford it. We love the T.E.A.C.H. 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 T.E.A.C.H. 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; T.E.A.C.H. has allowed this to occur on a college level. As Vermont strives to provide high quality care to children and family the T.E.A.C.H. program has allowed dedicated educators to rise to a higher standard and I am so grateful for that opportunity.” -Jacquelyn Prime

“T.E.A.C.H. 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 T.E.A.C.H. 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 T.E.A.C.H. has made me feel about college and love the way T.E.A.C.H. has given me this chance!” -Kelsey Coleman

T.E.A.C.H. dollars make a huge difference not only in the lives of the recipients but in the programs the recipients work. T.E.A.C.H. helps recipients achieve higher education which in turn helps programs meet licensing regulations for staff qualifications for an Associate Teacher.

Expanding the T.E.A.C.H. program to allow a pathway for teachers to receive a bachelor degree in early childhood education would help programs to meet licensing regulations for staff qualifications for a Lead Teacher, which requires a B.A. or higher in Early Childhood Education or related field. So I ask again that you please *support allocating 1.2 million dollars for the T.E.A.C.H. program which includes expanding T.E.A.C.H. with a Bachelor degree model to ensure the workforce has a pathway from associates to bachelors to licensure. Minimally, a \$550,000 appropriation for T.E.A.C.H. in the FY20 budget would sustain the current Apprenticeship, Associates and Teacher Licensure programs.*

Sincerely,

Linda January
Executive Director
Otter Creek Child Center