

Theresa Utton-Jerman

Subject: FW: Dorset Budget Meeting Testimonial

From: Sharon Turner

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Thank you for your support for Early Childhood Development in the 2020 budget.

My name is Sharon Turner from Danby. I am a parent of a special needs adult who is thriving. Why? Because we and early childhood education met her needs and helped to grow her brain in the birth to 5 years.

I was struck the other day when I saw a sign at the gas station that said help wanted \$13 to \$15 an hour. I just met an early child care educator who was the custodian and I found out she made \$12.80 an hour as a worker at a daycare center, no benefits, and had to work this second job to get by.

Oh no! We could lose our really good hardworking early childhood educators who are motivated to help our children, to the gas stations and other jobs because they aren't paid enough. There is a shortage. I've heard 8 months wait times for quality birth to 5 childcare, or no quality early childcare education centers near where they need to be. How can we fill this void at that wage? And I have heard from parents, they cannot afford to pay any more.

In order for our birth to 5-year olds to thrive as adults, not be unemployed, or homeless, or in prison and stay in Vermont, we need to support early brain development with the best experiences possible. We need to support T.E.A.C.H. scholarships, student loan forgiveness, and wage breaks for early childhood educators

Thank you for your time and consideration of birth to five early educators.

The best to you,

Sharon Turner
Danby, VT 05739