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To Whom It May Concern,

As an Early Educator, I have many hats that I wear. Besides being a parent of three children I am also a Family Child Care Provider, PreK Act 166 Partner, Starting Points Leader, and Washington County Grant Coordinator for Starting Points. I have been running my Family Child Care program for over eleven years. My program is four STARS and has been an Act 166 Preschool Collaborative for the last five years. I am responsible for caring, educating, and instilling healthy morals and values to young children. Currently, I have children who are three years to age thirteen. In addition to providing a wonderful balance of a nurturing and educated program to children, I also help guide families through their child's difficult growing periods. I do this by providing support with educational articles, solutions, and strategies.

As the House of Human Services discusses the changes of Act 166, I ask that you consider maintaining oversight of AOE and CDD to both public and private programs. The fear is that if AOE has sole oversight of public programs then regulations for teacher/child ratio and the number of hours for programming will no longer exist. While expanding public preschool would be ideal for some families with children between the ages of 3-5, it would create a huge hardship for many more families with children under the age of two years old. If private family childcare providers only provided care to children under two years of age then they would be regulated for a total of three children. In order to have a sustainable program, the tuition rate would have to rise 200%; a level that would be unattainable by most families. Dividing oversight of public and private programs would lead to more private providers going unregulated in order to sustain a financial business model. Already we have an infant childcare crisis in Vermont, by dividing the oversight of public and private programs this crisis will continue to get worst before it gets better.

Looking ahead, we need to be encouraging and supporting early education for all children in our state and recognizing that the varied programming is important to all Vermonters for a variety of needs. By providing a mixed delivery system in Vermont we will be meeting the needs of all children and families creating healthy Vermonters.