

Dear Representative Gregoire,

I'm writing today to tell you a little about my experience and ask for your support of H.171, the child care bill. Child care is essential to our community and the state's economic recovery. Child care is important to me personally because it is my livelihood. I have been a child care provider for 13 years. I work hard to provide quality experiences for kids in the community.

I am currently going to school at Community College of Vermont through TEACH and Lets Grow Kids grants and I am close to getting my associate's degree. Credentials are important because we know from research that the training and education of early childhood educators is the best predictor of outcomes for kids and program quality. I think it's important for child care providers to have these credentials because it allows them to provide better care but it's also expensive and many providers can't afford to get them. This is why the TEACH program is so important – it lets providers access the credentials they need to stay in the field and continue to develop their skills. I hope to continue on to get my bachelor's degree and teaching license. I have put in the effort to obtain 3 STARS and have reached out to the STARS office so I can work on my 4th Star. Stars are important to the families I serve because they rely on subsidies (CCFAP) to attend my home program, and the higher the STARS a program has, the more the family receives in subsidy. Families in my program struggle to pay tuition. It would be so much better if more families received help and if state support went further to help families afford child care. If families have more access to subsidies I believe it will help families pay for quality, registered child care instead of trying to piece together child care or using unregulated child care. There are a lot of good people running unregistered child care in Fairfield. Maybe this will prompt them to get registered and get the basic training, like CPR and first aid, professional development and support they need to care for children in their homes.

Please continue to invest in home providers like myself to continue education, become better child care providers and community partners. It would also be helpful if you could send this email on to the members of your committee as you discuss the bill. You can reach out to me if you have questions or want to talk more about this, I am happy to help.

Sincerely,

Meg Marshall
Egypt Rd, East Fairfield