

TO: Senate Committee on Health and Welfare
FROM: Nicole Miller, Executive Director, Vermont Afterschool
DATE: February 22, 2023
RE: S.56 and Afterschool

S.56 Impact on Afterschool, Summer, and School Age Children

I am writing to support sections 69-80 of S.56. While much of the intent of S.56 focuses on early childhood and prekindergarten children, we are hopeful that the proposed changes would also impact school-age children and their families.

Child care programs are a key component of the afterschool and summer landscape in Vermont, along with 21st Century Community Learning Centers, schools, nonprofits, youth-serving organizations, municipalities, and other entities that collectively support Vermont's children and youth. Within the regulated system, many types of the providers defined by the Child Development Division are serving school-age children and youth including family home providers, licensed center-based programs, and licensed afterschool programs.

As with our early childhood providers, we continue to see challenges both with the overall capacity within the system, cost to families, and challenges with the level of professional compensation for afterschool and summer program providers, including child care providers serving school age youth.

As such, Vermont Afterschool agrees with the measures proposed in Sections 69-80 of S.56, as they work to address the cost of child care on families of children up to the age of 13 (and older with certain eligibility), compensation for the field of child care providers including those serving early childhood and school age-youth, and ensure that all families living in Vermont can access financial support for the cost of childcare.

Ensuring the stability and expansion of the child care system along with the above-mentioned priorities is essential as we work towards Universal Afterschool and Summer in Vermont. This effort is focused on ensuring that every Vermont youth and their families who want to access a high-quality, free or low-cost afterschool and summer program have access to one, regardless of where they live, their family economics, their age, disabilities, and any other factors.

I support sections 69-80 of S. 56.