

Date: April 15, 2026

To: Members of the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs

From: Beth Wallace, Director of Engagement, Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children (VTAEYC)

Re: S.206 and VTAEYC Outline of Scholarship and Financial Supports

Additional Materials:

[2026 TEACH Impact Report](#)

[Higher Ed Landscape Analysis Report](#)

[Higher Ed Landscape Analysis Summary Document](#)

Overview of VTAEYC scholarship and career resource programs

The following scholarships, grants, bonuses, and other career resources to make early childhood education qualifications more affordable reflect only those administered by VTAEYC and do not include those offered through VSAC, federal programs, or other scholarships or aid.

Financial Support Programs and Scholarships Available to Early Childhood Educators Working in Non-Public, CDD-Regulated Programs* and Administered by VTAEYC			
Program/Scholarship	Who is eligible?	Financial Impact	Notes
TEACH Early Childhood Vermont Scholarship Program	Individuals working in early childhood education programs pursuing an associate, bachelor's, AOE licensure and Registered Apprenticeship	College tuition and a stipend for educational materials	Paid release time, counseling, mentoring and a completion bonus or pay raise upon completion are also key components of this program
College Tuition Grant	Early childhood educators working in a CDD-regulated program and taking early childhood education coursework for college credit	Up to \$1,250 per student, per semester	
Youth Apprenticeship	High school juniors and seniors enrolled in Career Technical Education	\$15/hr up to 10 hrs/week for field placement; 3-12 college credits with	Mentorship in a field placement is a key component

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		tuition covered by Fast Forward	
Education GAP Grant for Early Childhood Educators	Individuals working in a CDD-regulated program pursuing higher education; must have a financial need	Up to \$1,000 annually	Funded by an anonymous donor to address barriers to continuing education (examples include technology, paying down outstanding debt preventing students from re-enrolling, fees)
Student Loan Repayment Assistance Program	Early childhood educators working full-time in a CDD-regulated program with college debt related to gaining an associate, bachelor's or master's degree in early childhood education or a related field; income cap of \$60,000	Up to \$4,000 annually	This is Vermont's first student loan debt relief program for early childhood educators. It was originally established in May 2021 when Vermont Act 45 was signed into law.
CDA Assessment Fee Grant	Individuals working in Vermont regulated child care/early childhood programs to assist with the cost of the CDA credential fees for a first CDA, and/or the second setting credential fee.	Up to \$425	
GED Assessment Grant	Early childhood educators working in a CDD-regulated program or who have an application to establish a regulated program in process	Up to \$120 (\$30 per test)	
Early Childhood	Early childhood educators	Bonuses range from	Career Ladder

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Professional Recognition Bonuses	working in CDD-regulated programs who attain a new Career Ladder Certificate (individuals are eligible at each new level they attain)	\$300 (Level 1) - \$3,500 (Level 5A)	Levels and Bonuses
New: Foundation Forward ECE Scholarship Pilot	Early childhood educators wishing to begin their college experience with Assessment of Prior Learning (using experience to gain college credit)	Course tuition covered; the average completer earns 30 college credits based on their experience; mentoring and technology included	This pilot began January 28, 2026 with fourteen enrollees in the early childhood cohort

*These programs are funded using a combination of State and philanthropic dollars. Additional funding opportunities outside of VTAEYC can be found [here](#).

Vermont has invested heavily in making ECE preparation programs financially accessible and developing pathways to support each educator where they are. Lack of clear professional pathways has meant that historically educators take professional development that doesn't lead to college credit, and take courses for credit that don't lead to a degree. In an effort to prepare the system for its professional future and to make coursework more affordable, accessible, and practical for educators, the Vermont Higher Ed Collaborative has been working to align Vermont's preparation programs to the same national standards and competencies supported by the proposed ECE Profession as well as AOE's requirements for its ECE endorsement.

Recent landscape analysis surfaced where preparation programs have opportunities to shore up systems, such as clarifying transfer agreements between institutions. Ongoing dialogue with the workforce also leads to new pathway developments. One of these, the new Foundation Forward Pilot, is a cohort model specifically designed to support experienced early childhood educators gain college credit for their on-the-job experience through Community College of Vermont's Prior Learning Assessment. A family child care apprenticeship model is also currently under development.

Some recent data shows these scholarship pathways, grants, and bonuses serve and strengthen our workforce. In 2025:

- **135 early childhood educators accessed TEACH Early Childhood® Vermont scholarships as first-generation college students.** 96 of these first-generation scholars teach infants and toddlers—the age group where Vermont has the greatest need for child care. Every single bachelor's degree graduate was a first-generation college student.

- Increased qualifications led to wage growth: TEACH scholars experienced wage increases of nearly 15% with an associate degree, and more than 17% increase with a bachelor’s degree.
- **836 early childhood educators were awarded grants and bonuses for work to increase qualifications**, or 30% more early childhood educators than in 2024.

In FY2026, so far:

- **237 individual scholarships** (including TEACH, Registered Apprenticeship, Youth Apprenticeship, College Tuition Grant, and Education GAP Grant) have been awarded.
- **512 individual grants and bonuses** have been awarded.
- **42 individuals** have been awarded Student Loan Repayment Assistance (SLRAP) for Early Childhood Educators.

In addition to financial support offered to individual early childhood educators, there are also [program grants and bonuses](#) available. These are of specific note for the impact on family child care home programs, which are small businesses run by sole proprietors. Program bonuses for increasing and demonstrating quality directly impact family child care owners’ income. Program grants and bonuses include incentives for increased STARS levels, for achieving Specialized Care status, and for accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Offering responsive supports that stack, are transferable, and align with professional framework is a significant factor behind CDD’s finding in early 2026 that the number of people in Vermont’s early childhood educator workforce with verified degrees increased between 2022 and 2024 by more than 22%— a stunning increase in just a few years. Vermont has invested in early childhood educators, making it possible for the ece workforce to earn early childhood education degrees with little to no student debt, and educators are accessing supports at higher rates than ever before. The system is prepared to support individual early childhood educator licensure.