

Proposed testimony on Holcombe amendment on H.248

[H.248~Rebecca Holcombe~Holcombe Amendment~4-30-2025.pdf](#)

While the Department for Children and Families' Child Development Division shares the goal of providing high-quality prekindergarten education in a cost-effective manner, we are not supportive of the amendment proposed to H.248 by Representative Holcombe.

- 1) It is premature to make decisions about SFY27 especially in a time with significant uncertainty in state and federal funding. It does not seem likely that the Child Care Contribution Special Fund will have sufficient revenue to fund Universal Prekindergarten Education for students who attend community-based private or nonprofit prekindergarten programs ("private programs") over time.
- 2) It is also premature to make significant changes to key elements of the design of Universal Prekindergarten without a larger discussion on the broader goals and trajectory of UPK in Vermont, especially within an educational framework and funding structure undertaking major changes. Within Act 76 and through the work of the PreK Committee, the state has already started the work of considering how to strengthen PreK in Vermont - programmatically and administratively - and any changes should be considered in that wider context.
- 3) The amendment includes language that would prohibit children in private settings from accessing both UPK and CCFAP despite successful implementation of this policy in both public and private settings during the program's history. The combination supports families who need full-day, year-round care for their children while also ensuring that most Vermont children enter kindergarten with the benefit of a high-quality prekindergarten education experience.
- 4) Processing enrollment and payments for the majority of children enrolled in Universal Prekindergarten in private programs would be a significant new undertaking for the Child Development Division. There are many children enrolled in UPK at private programs who are not currently enrolled in CCFAP – either because their family is not eligible, or the family doesn't access more than the publicly-funded ten hours of UPK.
- 5) While an administrative change may be able to leverage the systems and relationships that CDD has, it is also likely to reduce the partnerships between local schools, families, and private PreK programs that benefit children's learning in PreK and in their transition to Kindergarten.