

Early Childhood Educators

Office of Professional Regulation, Vermont Secretary of State
Sunrise Review Assessment: Title 26, Chapter 57

Topic	Tab #	Page #	Quick Summary
Summary of Findings and Sunrise Process	OPR found that without appropriate government oversight there is significant risk of harm to children and subsequently found that qualifications-based licensure was appropriate to protect the public		
	1		3-Page summary of findings, conclusions and recommended licensure structure
	5	p.19	OPR Sunrise process; including legal standard and extensive stakeholder and public outreach
	11	p.42	Licensure is necessary because young children are vulnerable, child care staff are autonomous and often unsupervised, and qualifications are required
Harm to Children	Quality early education delivered by a prepared workforce benefits children, supports their brain development and overall physiology, and prepares them for school.		
	7	p.26	Unregulated practice creates a risk of harm for children
		p.27	Cognitive and behavioral foundations are established in early life through the architectural development of the brain
	8	p.30	Low quality care has long-lasting negative impacts
		p.28	Quality early care and education is not babysitting; it is skilled and complex work
		p.28	Research demonstrates that quality early education for young children creates long-lasting benefits and reduces harm
		p.30	Quality early education results in increased readiness for public school and reduces the achievement gap
		p.30	Persistent stress caused by unstable environments or unprepared staff harms infants, toddlers and young children
		p.31	Unstable environments change a child's brain development and physiology
		p.31	Excessive stress damages children's developing bodies and leads to higher rates of disease
p.32		Lack of quality early education results in higher drop-out rates	
Educated Workforce's Impact on Children's Welfare	When Early Childhood Educators have appropriate education and training, they gain the knowledge to create informed curriculum, implement enriching activities, and adhere to quality standards. Professional preparation promotes stability in programs and benefits children.		
	7	p.26	High turnover and inadequate staff preparation create poor quality in child care
	6	p.25	Qualifications in the current early education system are fragmented
	8	p.28	Professional training and preparation for early educators are critical to ensure quality
p.33		Stable workforce in early education programs improves outcomes	

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		p.32	Education and preparation of early care and education workforce is critical to support children
Harm to Vermont's Economy	Quality child care is necessary to maintain a vibrant workforce in Vermont and appropriate oversight is necessary given Vermont's long-term investment in Early Childhood Education.		
	2		Vermont workforce challenges in the early childhood care and education sector
	8	p.32	Low wages lead to poor working conditions and high turnover, which harms children
	10	p.39	High-quality early education saves the government money
p.39		Vermont business leader: Professionalization protects vulnerable children and creates careers for the workforce	
Benefits of Regulation	Regulation at OPR creates an effective and transparent system of licensure for Early Childhood Educators. This system will streamline requirements and provide the ability for the State to remove or condition individuals who commit unprofessional conduct.		
	7	p.26	Current system lacks transparency for families and accountability for educators
	9	p.34	Gaps in the current system prevent families from knowing qualifications and prior bad conduct of individuals in facilities and child care homes
		p.35	Individual licensure at OPR closes gaps - public will know qualifications and conduct history of individuals
		p.34	2023 case – facility had many violations including abuse and maltreatment of infants; individual was in childcare for two decades
		p.35	2024 case – facility had more than 40 violations, including serious violations, and no information available in the Bright Futures database
	11	p.35	The Board can temporarily suspend a license in an emergency after a hearing
		11	p.40
	p.40		Individual accountability for unprofessional conduct will reduce harms
Support to Educators	Support for Educators to obtain required qualifications already exists in the State and the workforce is utilizing them. Additionally, S.206 creates transitional pathways to ensure that current workforce makes the transition into the four license types.		
	12	p.45	Transitional measures (*S.206 includes additional pathways to bridge qualifications of the current workforce and incoming workforce)
	14	p.53	Associate's degree cost and financial supports
		p.53	86% of ECE students at CCV graduate debt free
		p.54	Prior Learning Assessment Programs are free for many households
p.54	ECE students at Vermont State Universities receive substantial support from the State		

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		p.53	Cost of educational programs for the workforce
Stakeholder Feedback during Sunrise Process	The sunrise process requires stakeholder engagement. OPR sought feedback from all relevant groups and individuals. There was overwhelming support for licensure of this profession.		
	4	p.18	The early education workforce wants professional recognition and accountability through licensure
	13	p.48	Stakeholder and Public Feedback
		p.48	Majority of stakeholders and public members who participated support licensure
15	p.66	Public Comments - summaries	
Legislative History on Early Childhood Education	Vermont has taken a long-term and historic approach to improving child care in this state because we recognize the importance of quality for our children and our economy.		
	3	p. 7	Vermont's 10-year effort to provide all families with access to high-quality early education
		p.8	Act 58 (2015) Blue Ribbon Commission findings: brain science is clear that high-quality early education is critical.
		p.9	Building Bright Futures 2017 Summit Report supported professionalization of early educators with accountability structures, scopes of practice, standards and competencies
		p.11	Act 45 (2021) provided financial supports for early educators to increase their education
		p.12	Act 45 Systems Analysis Report concluded early childhood educators should be governed at a new agency, not the Agency of Education or Department for Children and Families
		p.13	2023 Early Care and Education Financing Study by the Rand Corporation modeled the cost of high-quality early education to include increase qualifications of the workforce at the ECE I, II, and III levels
		p.14	Act 76 (2023) invested substantial public funds in early education through a steady stream from payroll tax to improve quality, workforce wages, and affordability for families.
		p.15	2024 Vermont Early Childhood Education and Afterschool Workforce Report – workforce is the key to improving quality, workforce with educational degrees has increased steadily and substantially since 2018