

**House Committee on Human Services**

# **S.206 Testimony**

An act relating to licensure of early childhood educators  
by the Office of Professional Regulation

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**vtaeyc**

Vermont Association for the  
Education of Young Children

An Affiliate of **naeyc**<sup>®</sup>

# Workforce Leadership in Shaping S.206



**Above:** Members of the workforce-led Task Force for Advancing Early Childhood Education as a Profession

**Right:** 2022 social media post reflecting workforce feedback about professional licensure

*What excites you about professional licensure?*

“Clear pathways. Enter here, progress from here.”

“Field wide expectations, roles and responsibilities.”

“This will really help with staffing challenges.”

“Being seen as professionals, not 'babysitters'.”

“This helps compensate teachers appropriately.”

“This is going to improve the quality of all programs.”

“This will improve how society views early childhood.”

*- feedback from Vermont early childhood educators to the Advancing Early Childhood Education as a Profession Task Force*

**Read the Consensus Document: Professional Licensure at [vtaeyc.org](https://vtaeyc.org)**

# National Context

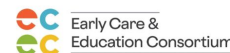


## How One State is Making Big Progress on Professional Compensation, Preparation, and Recognition

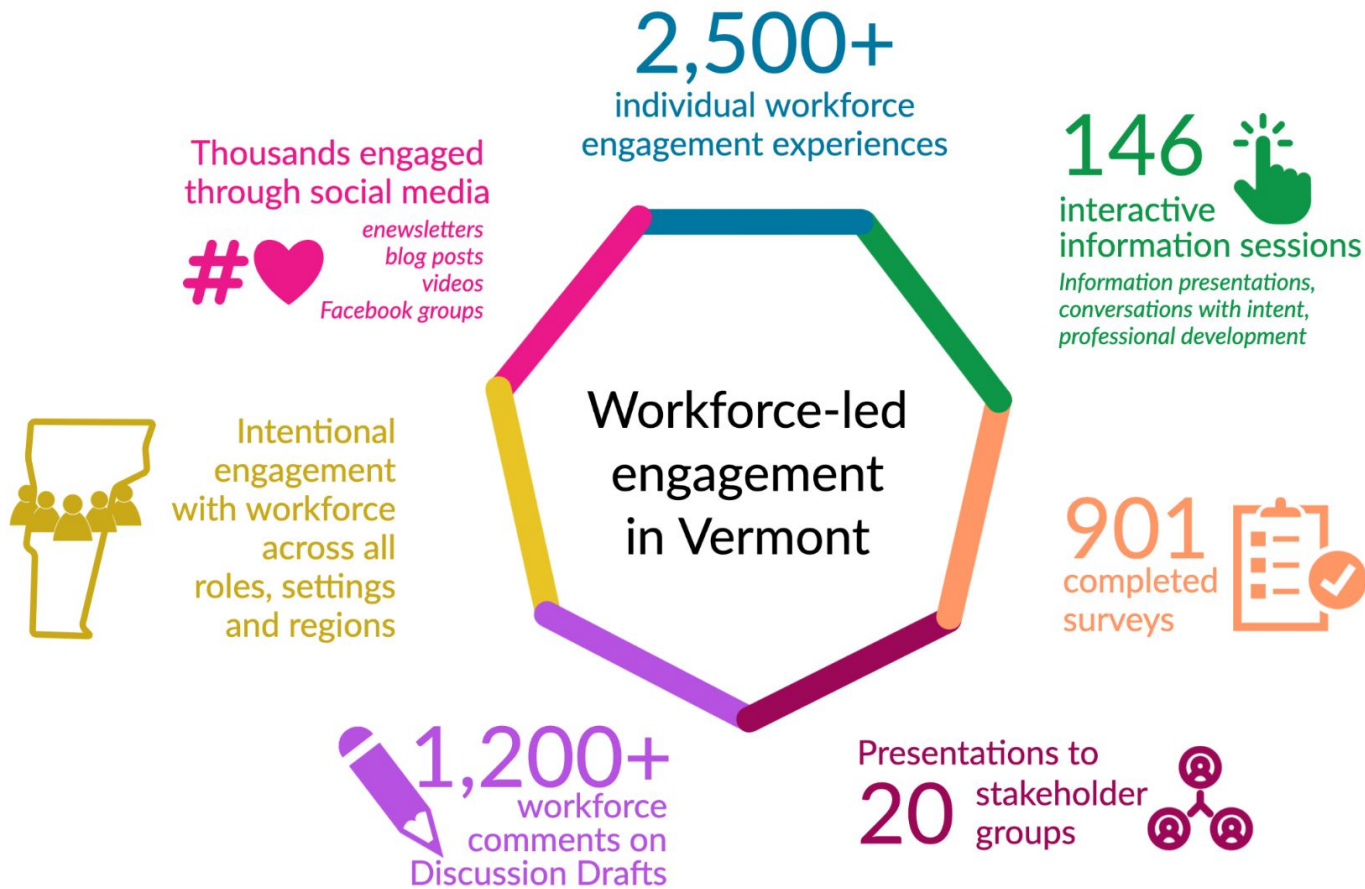
Vermont made substantial progress on their ongoing multi-year efforts to transform child care through sustainable, substantial investments, and make early childhood a recognized, licensed, compensated profession in the state.

Images: [CommissionECE.org](http://CommissionECE.org)

### Organizational Members of the Commission



# Workforce Engagement in Developing Recommendations (2018-2022)



# S.206 Lowers Costs Over Time

- S.206 does not raise costs, and it does not set the stage for raising costs in the future
- Streamlining and deduplicating the system lowers costs
- Licensing fees for educators are mitigated by Act 76 impacts to compensation, wage increases for degrees, savings through clear career paths
- Licensing reduces administrative burden and costs for centers, who may cover some licensing fees
- Philanthropic partners in conversation about covering the costs of some licensing fees

# Caregivers For Young Children: Who's Included in S.206

*Not Included:*  
**Trusted Caregiver**

Family member,  
neighbor, friend, nanny



**Individual Regulation:**

None

**Program Regulation:**

None. May serve a maximum of  
3 families, including caregiver's  
own

**Child Ages:**

0+

**Hours Served:**

Varies

**Public Funding Source:**

In certain cases, eligible for child  
care tuition assistance payments

*Included in Bill:*  
**Early Childhood Educator**

Home-Based



Center-Based



**Individual Regulation:**

**None.** Proposed through  
ECE Profession Bill

**Program Regulation:**

CDD

**Child Ages:**

6 Weeks – 5 Years

**Hours Served:**

Full time +

**Public Funding Source:**

Eligible for child care  
tuition assistance payments

**Individual Regulation:**

**None.** Proposed through  
ECE Profession Bill

**Program Regulation:**

CDD

**Child Ages:**

6 Weeks – 5 Years

**Hours Served:**

Full time +

**Public Funding Source:**

Eligible for child care  
tuition assistance payments

*Not Included:*  
**Early Childhood Educator**

Public School-Based



**Individual Regulation:**

AOE Educator License

**Program Regulation:**

AOE and CDD

**Child Ages:**

3 – 5 Years

**Hours Served:**

10+ hours/week

**Public Funding Source:**

Public education funding



*Not Included:* **Trainees**

Trainees, student teachers, and substitutes are not included in this bill.  
They would be supervised by an ECE II or ECE III licensed educator.



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# Why A License to Practice?

- Clear career pathways
- Accountability for public investment
- Increased qualifications lead to improved child outcomes



# Current Workforce: Meeting Rural Communities' Needs

## Vickie Gratton:

- Opened Family Child Care Home Program
- Used existing resources to increase qualifications
- Used existing resources to build Swanton's first child care center
- Responded to community need by tripling child care capacity



I entered the field of Early Childhood in 1997 as a Paraprofessional in a preschool, knowing nothing about child development. Never in a million years did I think this would be my career path. After having my children, I had people reach out to me for care; the need for care was great, so in 2006, I decided to open my Registered Child Care. As time passed, I became an Act 166 (VT Universal Pre-K) partner site and realized I had a true passion for educating children. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Vermont made my wildest dreams possible by providing a program where I could slowly work towards my Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education. When T.E.A.C.H. added a bachelor's degree program to their offerings, I knew I wanted to continue because of what I was learning and how I am able to apply the knowledge in my childcare. The longer I take classes, the more I want to learn to provide children with a safe, loving, and positive learning environment. Pursuing a higher education degree has helped me educate children and communicate, support, and inform families so we work as a true partnership. I am incredibly thankful for this opportunity.

– Vickie Gratton, Registered Family Child Care Home  
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Vermont Bachelor's Degree Scholar

**Licensure makes this path  
accessible to others.**



# Future Workforce: “If You Build It, They Will Come”

## Youth Apprentices

- Tripled in growth since 2020-2021 pilot year
- 75% of Youth Apprentices report being offered a summer or full-time job by sponsor program
- Programs love having a “feeder program” to recruit and train staff



**This is just one of several paths into the profession.**

# Accountability for Public Investment

**“And, just as night follows day, with significant public investment in early childhood education, so too comes accountability for educators to meet high-quality standards of practice, as well as standards of professional conduct.”**

- *p. 17, Early Childhood Education Sunrise Review Assessment, OPR*



# Increased Qualifications Lead to Improved Child Outcomes

## RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

### Children's Learning and Development Benefits from High-Quality Early Care and Education: A Summary of the Evidence

Annie D. Schoch, Cassie S. Gerson, Tamara Halle and Meg Bredeson

## Research Highlights

Child Care and Early Education Policy and Research Analysis

**“...Professional regulation of individual Early Childhood Educators working with children from ages 0 to 8 will yield substantial benefits to children.**

The benefits include improved comprehensive physical and emotional development and health as the result of well-prepared educators who demonstrate the requisite education, experience, and competencies to work in the field.”

- p. 36, *Early Childhood Education Sunrise Review Assessment, OPR*



# Supports Increase Qualifications

- **8.5%** workforce growth, **22%** increase in individuals with degrees (since Act 76)
- **836** early childhood educators received grants and bonuses for increasing qualifications (**up 30%**)
- Of **135** TEACH Early Childhood® Vermont scholarship recipients, **half** were first-generation college students, representing all **14** Vermont counties
- In 2025, Vermont TEACH scholars' wages rose **almost 15%** after earning their associate degree, and **over 17%** after earning their bachelor's degree



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Professional recognition will improve educator retention and satisfaction, and more importantly, center equity for children and families by increasing the opportunity for them to have access to highly qualified educators across settings.

*Early Childhood Educator, Nature-Based Center Program*

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# Thank You!

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