



Early Childhood Educator Licensure (S. 206)

Presentation to House Committee on Human Services
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Building Bright Futures: Vermont's Early Childhood State Advisory Council



Building Bright Futures' role is to:

- **Advise:** Serve as Vermont's official, nonpartisan advisor on early childhood (prenatal–age 8) to the Governor and Legislature
- **Convene & Elevate:** Bring together 500+ families, providers, and partners so real experiences shape decisions
- **Set Direction:** Guide Vermont's early childhood vision and strategic plan
- **Monitor & Inform:** Understand needs, and turn data and research into clear, actionable guidance
- **Ensure Accountability:** Track whether investments are working and flag where changes are needed
- **Strengthen the System:** Align partners and build capacity across agencies and communities



Vermont's Early Childhood Strategic Plan 2030

Vermont's Early Childhood Strategic Plan 2030

Every Vermont child thrives in safe, healthy, and nurturing environments, supported by strong families, a valued workforce, and a coordinated system that puts children at the center.



GOALS

1

All Children and Families Have Their Basic Needs Met



Economic Security
Food Security
Housing
Transportation

2

All Children Are Raised in Safe, Healthy, and Healing Environments



Mental & Physical Health Care
Safe & Vibrant Communities

3

All Children and Families Have Access to High-Quality Opportunities That Promote Child Development and Well-Being



Inclusion & Services
Access & Affordability
Child-Centered Decision-Making

4

All Children Are Supported by a Well-Prepared, Well-Supported Early Childhood Workforce



Preparation
Compensation
Recruitment & Retention

5

Our System Centers Children and Families and Is Coordinated, Well-Resourced, and Data-Driven



Family-Centered, Data-Driven Decisions
Coordinated Support
Aligned Leadership & Resources

How This Plan was Built

- Rigorous mixed-methods approach
- Nearly 200 Vermonters contributed
- Shaped by lived experience, needs and assets, evidence, data, and existing plans and recommendations.



Early Childhood Educator Licensure and S. 206

Alignment with 2026 Policy Recommendation

“Implement a licensure system for Vermont’s early childhood educators to strengthen accountability through clear quality benchmarks, consistent with recommendations from the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). Recognize and address concerns from the field and families by ensuring the transition is gradual, well-supported, and aligned across agencies, and that potential confusion with other licensing systems is minimized. Monitor workforce data to assess impacts, guide implementation, and ensure the pipeline of new early educators remains strong and sustainable. Identify strategies to help early education programs cover licensure costs for their staff to ensure accessibility and equity.”

Alignment with Vermont’s Early Childhood Strategic Plan 2030

- *3.B.3. Ensure children are educated and cared for in high-quality environments and by well-prepared early childhood educators.*
- *4.A.3. Advance a well-prepared, well-qualified early childhood workforce by developing a clear system of professional expectations, career pathways, and accountability.*



Shared Goals



- Safe, high-quality settings
- Professional recognition
- Clear pathways and defined expectations
- Individual accountability
- Clarity and transparency for families
- Support for the existing workforce
- Improved access for families



Child Care Cost: What Vermont Families Actually Experience



What families pay ≠ what child care costs

- CCFAP significantly reduces out-of-pocket costs for families
- National price comparisons don't reflect this.

Higher prices often reflect better policy, not worse

- Vermont's rates are moving closer to the true cost of quality care
- Vermont rates appear higher than other states because of this shift

Quality care costs what it costs

- Child care is relationship-driven work.
- Cost drivers aren't inefficiencies – they reflect what it actually takes to support well-qualified, well-compensated educators so they can afford to stay in this work.

We don't want child care to be cheap. We want it to be sustainable

Policy-Making and Implementation Considerations



- Hear directly from the field
- Consistent standards
- Thoughtful transition
- Supply, access, and workforce continuity



Closing Thoughts



The question isn't whether, it's how?

- Transition timelines
- Adequate supports
- Workforce monitoring
- Removal of existing barriers

