

# S.206: Early Childhood Educator Profession Bill

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: Do early childhood educators support this bill?**

**A: Yes. Early childhood educators are asking for this.**

- Over nearly 10 years, over 1,000 of them helped shape this bill: people at all stages of their careers, from every region, and including family child care, child care center directors and staff, school district child care coordinators, and people who prepare the workforce through high school career programs and higher ed.
- S.206 creates individual licensure and a governing board of early childhood educators, allowing room to simplify or streamline existing regulations over time.
- Early childhood educators have supported professional recognition in workforce outreach, the Office of Professional Regulation's (OPR) public comment period, and committee testimony.
- Early childhood educators are essential to all Vermont communities. They are committed to our children and families, and know best how to strengthen their own workforce.

**Q: Who does this impact, and who does it not impact?**

**A: S.206 is for early childhood educators working in center-based and home-based child care programs regulated by the Child Development Division.**

- Educators in public schools are licensed through the Agency of Education (AOE) and are not impacted.
- Educators in any child care setting who have AOE teacher licensure are exempt.
- This bill doesn't change current law, which allows someone to care for up to two other families' children, in addition to their own, without regulation. In fact, that's a no-barrier way to try out child care as a career. If that caregiver decides to expand into a family child care business or work at a center, there are supports to help them enter the regulated system.

**Q: Will S.206 make it harder to hire if there's a workforce shortage?**

**A: No. S.206 addresses factors that contributed to this workforce shortage:**

Lack of individual licensure creates high turnover, since early childhood education is specialized work, and people unprepared to do it do not stay long. Lack of career pathways causes well-prepared educators to leave the field entirely for jobs with clear career advancement.

- S.206 connects preparation to career pathways, with more ways to enter the field.
- Act 76 created a mechanism to stabilize and help increase compensation. S.206 introduces accountability for this public investment through licensure.
- Retention provisions mean everyone now working in the field is included in the new profession.
- S.206 recognizes infant/toddler educators on par with other early childhood educators, strengthening the specialized area where Vermont needs the greatest gains in workforce.



Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children

An Affiliate of **naeyc**



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**Q: Will S.206 improve child care access in rural communities?**

**A: A strong, supported workforce means better access for rural families.**

Families in rural areas depend on family child care and small centers. Parents need access to programs that work for their families. S.206 helps make family child care an attractive, respected career choice.

- The bill has a special, permanently renewable license for current family child care owners.
- S.206 gives educators the career flexibility to move from running a family child care to opening a center, so they can respond to their community's needs.
- S.206 helps more people enter the workforce and start programs to serve their small communities. This supports locally driven solutions that reflect local realities.
- This grows early childhood educator jobs and makes it easier for rural families to work.

**Q: How else does S.206 help families and all Vermonters?**

**A: Families need reliable access to quality child care so they can go to work.**

They want their children to be safe and supported, and for the people caring for their children to be prepared and accountable.

- Most parents who provided feedback to OPR and on S.206 were surprised that there is not already a system of individual regulation for people working in child care.
- S.206 builds trust and transparency, stabilizes turnover, and helps the early childhood education workforce grow and strengthen.
- This makes child care more accessible to all families, expanding options without increasing costs.
- Reliable child care means reliable workers for Vermont businesses. S.206 creates accountability for the public investment of Act 76. It requires only a small start-up investment (\$262,000) with no new taxes.

**Q: How do we know S.206 will strengthen the workforce?**

**A: People want good careers in early childhood education.**

Certificate, degree, apprenticeship, and prior learning assessment programs are well-enrolled. Scholarships and career resources are well-used. Act 76 investments are working to retain and grow a workforce that shows pride in their skills and professionalism. All this is supported by recent data:

- 8.5% workforce growth between 2022-2024 ([CDD](#))
- 22.4% increase in workforce members with a verified college degree ([CDD](#))
- 57 family child care home programs opened between 2022-2024 ([Building Bright Futures](#)), with net increases trending up ([CDD](#))—in contrast to continuing decline in other states, and in spite of Vermont's housing pressures and aging demographics
- The Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education is among the top three highest enrolled programs at Community College of Vermont (614 in 2024-2025) ([Johnson testimony](#)).
- Scholarship enrollment is growing. 2025 TEACH scholarship recipients represented all 14 Vermont counties. Half were first-generation college students ([VTAEYC](#))
- Apprenticeship enrollment is growing. Youth apprenticeship programs through Career and Tech Ed centers are so popular the Legislature expanded funding in FY26 (VTAEYC)