

Dear Senators:

I have worked in the field of Early childhood education for 45 years in VT and at the State and Federal level. I am currently visiting programs across Southern Vermont to conduct assessments needed for the STARS recognition system. I see early educators in action in all types of programs - Public PRE K , Head Start and Early Head Start, centerbased child care programs and family child care homes. AND I see the complexity and confusion caused by our disjointed early childhood system. I am so proud of our Brave little State for passing Act 76 and being the second state in the nation to take bold steps to solve the child care crisis in our country. Part of the crisis we face is confusion about the diversity of programs and the options that families must evaluate and compare. S 119 seeks to level the playing field and create a professional license for all who work in the field. EC Educators would carry this credential with them to whatever type of program they choose to work in - their own homes, or center based programs. Families would be able to see the qualifications of those caring for their children and the State would be helping to protect children by assuring that EC Educators meet standards for practice.

S 119 has been carefully researched and crafted with input by those in the field. It is a critical step forward to help elevate the field of early educators and lead to parity with other educators. The first 5 years of life represent a rapid period of brain development that creates a foundation for learning and life. We cannot afford to leave this period to chance. I am proud to support it S 119 and I urge you to pass the bill.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Efinger, MS.Ed.
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