



128 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05633
802-828-2363 | sos.vermont.gov

State of Vermont
Office of the Secretary of State
Office of Professional Regulation
89 Main Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05633-3402

Sarah Copeland Hanzas, Secretary of State
S. Lauren Hibbert, Deputy Secretary

Jennifer B. Colin, Director

January 21, 2026

To: Hon. Virginia Lyons, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Welfare

From: S. Lauren Hibbert, Deputy Secretary of State
Jennifer Colin, General Counsel, Office of Professional Regulation

Re: S.206, An act relating to licensure of Early Childhood Educators by
the Office of Professional Regulation

Dear Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony regarding S.206 regarding licensure of Early Childhood Educators by the Office of Professional Regulation. As part of a Sunrise Review application submitted by the Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children (VTAEYC), OPR researched this topic, conducted outreach and public meetings, and submitted to the Legislature the [Early Childhood Education Sunrise Review Assessment](#) in January 2025.

Overview

In our testimony today, we will:

- Summarize Vermont's work in the last decade to provide access for all Vermont families to high-quality, affordable early childhood education (pp.2-4);
- Review key findings from OPR's sunrise report, including the following (pp.5-6):
 - The risk of harm to young children, our most vulnerable population, falls into two categories: (1) abuse, neglect, and maltreatment by care providers in regulated settings; and (2) children lacking access to quality early education provided by professionally prepared individuals who design and implement early education curriculum that is based on the science of brain development;
 - The long-term consequences of both categories of harm to young children include poor learning and developmental outcomes, lower high school graduation rates, and higher rates of law enforcement involvement, addiction, and mental health issues;

- Current child care regulatory system does not require providers or teachers to meet well-established professional standards in early education;
- Current regulation at the child care facility or child care home level leaves significant gaps where individual accountability for unprofessional conduct is not addressed at the individual level through a publicly accessible process with disciplinary action readily accessible online;
- Children and families, as consumers of the services, have a significant interest in the qualifications of early educators who bear primary responsibility for the care and education of young children in non-public settings;
- Licensure for early childhood educators with increased educational requirements will ensure the workforce is prepared to provide high-quality education and meet professional standards that align with public school;
- Other forms of occupational regulation do not provide adequate safeguards to ensure early educators meet the necessary qualifications for providing high-quality early education in regulated child care settings;
- Discuss OPR's recommendations that Early Childhood Educators (ECE) should be a recognized profession for individuals who are the primary educators working in state-regulated settings, including ECE I, II, and III, with stackable preparation pathways and defined scopes of practice (pp.6-7);
- Identify the benefits of regulating early childhood educators at the Office of Professional Regulation (OPR) (pp.8-9), which include:
 - Assurance of quality by competent early educators who have met increased educational qualification;
 - Reduction of harms caused by lack of access to high-quality early education;
 - Unifying early education practice standards across settings, both public and private;
 - Individual accountability for unprofessional conduct through a public disciplinary process;
 - Protecting the Act 76 investment of public dollars into the early education system.
- Review features of S.206, including transitional measures to minimize the potential for reduction in workforce, such as a phased and lengthy implementation period (p.7); and
- Discuss areas of agreement and support, as well as differences, among stakeholder groups and ways S.206 mitigates those concerns (pp.9-12).

10 Years of Vermont Initiatives to Increase Quality of and Access to Early Childhood Education for All Vermont Families

In the last decade, Vermont has extensively studied early childhood care and education and reported on ways to increase access, quality, and affordability for all Vermont families.

Summary: Vermont studies and reports have demonstrated that Early Childhood Education is not babysitting. Early Childhood Education is curriculum-based, educational programming beginning in infancy that is rooted in the science of human brain development. The lack of

families' access to high-quality Early Childhood Education in Vermont has a profound impact on both our educational and financial systems.

- **2015, Act 58:** Established *the Blue Ribbon Commission on financing high-quality, affordable child care for all Vermont Children*
- **2016 Blue Ribbon Commission Report:** *Financing High Quality, Affordable Child Care*
 - The Blue Ribbon Commission reported that early care and learning is critical to the economic and community wellbeing of Vermont. Every dollar spent on high-quality early care and learning programs yields a return on investment ranging from \$4-\$9.
- **2017 Building Bright Futures Report:** *Building Vermont's Future from the Child Up*
 - Recommended the professionalization of early childhood education workforce including scopes of practice, professional standards, and accountability structures.
- **2018 Building Bright Futures:** *Vermont Early Care and Education Household Survey*
 - Data analysis from the survey showed:
 - Employment is the reason people seek child care;
 - Regulated home-based care is critical in Vermont;
 - Families pick child care based on cost and quality;
 - Availability of child care impacts how much parents can work.
- **2020 Building Bright Futures Report:** *Vermont Early Childhood Needs Assessment*
 - Highlighted 1,000 cases of child abuse and neglect (in all settings, not necessarily child care) from the previous year, identified accessibility and affordability as continuing challenges, and acknowledged "the importance of child care as an essential part of the state's economy."
- **2021, Act 45:** implemented financial supports for the child care workforce and increased child care subsidies for families.
 - Identified the General Assembly's intention to invest supports to "ensure that all families with young children have affordable access to high-quality child care and early education, and that Vermont's early educators are fairly compensated and well-supported...."
 - Required an independent report on Vermont's child care and early education systems analysis.
- **2022 Analysis Report (Per Act 45):** *Vermont Childcare and Early Childhood Education Systems*
 - Concluded "Vermont's current system of early childhood governance is fundamentally broken" and must change structurally to meet the State's goals articulated in Act 45 for the success of children and families.
 - Found that while both the Agency of Education (AOE) and CDD express support for early childhood, early childhood governance should not be housed at either the Agency of Human Services (parent agency to CDD) or AOE.
 - Recommended a new state agency be formed to govern quality and oversight of early childhood providers, unify definitions of quality, and provide consistent expectations.

- **2022 DCF Report: *Early Childcare Capacity Building***
 - Identified a top priority of its Child Development Division (CDD) as “ensuring an adequate supply of high-quality, regulated, childcare slots are available for Vermont’s children.”
- **2023 Rand Corporation Report: *Vermont Early Care and Education Financing Study***
 - Laid the groundwork for Act 76, projected costs of achieving a high-quality ECE system with increased wages for a well-compensated workforce, as well as potential revenue to provide increased subsidies for families.
 - Cost projections assumed increased qualifications at the Early Childhood Educator I, II, and III levels, as proposed in S.206.
- **2023, Act 76:** Increased public funding of early childcare and education through expanded financial assistance for families so that facilities and child care homes can charge tuition rates consistent with the actual cost of care. Also provided financial supports for professional development for staff and increasing wages.
- **2024 Report: *Vermont Early Childhood Education and Afterschool Workforce Report***
 - Identified declining workforce in family child care providers based on 2022 data
 - Found increased percentages of individuals who have Associate’s, Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees.
- **2024 Report: *Stalled at the Start: Vermont’s Child Care Challenge, An Analysis of the Supply of and Demand for Regulated Child Care for Children Birth through Five in Vermont***
 - Identified a shortage of 2,314 new early childhood educators to address the lack of access to early child care and education, as well as 10,500 child care slots needed to meet then-current (2023) demand.

OPR Sunrise Review Process

In 2024, the Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children (VTAEYC) applied for a preliminary sunrise review assessment: *Recognizing Early Childhood Education as a Licensed Profession in Vermont*. Upon receiving the Application, OPR engaged in the following efforts as part of its thorough review of the proposed regulatory program for Early Childhood Educators working in non-public settings:

- Engaged in significant research;
- Engaged with stakeholders in numerous meetings and communications, including VTAEYC, AOE, Let’s Grow Kids, DCF and its Child Development Division, Building Bright Futures, CCV, Northern Lights at CCV, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC);
- Accepted public comments, which yielded 30 written comments;
- Noticed two public hearings to over 1,000 FCCH’s and CBCCPP’s in the Building Bright Futures Database, stakeholder organizations DCF/CDD, NAEYC, BBF, Head Start, National Commission on Professional Excellence in Early Childhood Education, and AOE (AOE also included the public hearing information in a newsletter to their licensees);
- Conducted two hybrid public hearings (four hours total) where over 100 stakeholders and interested parties attended in person, via phone, or online; and
- Reviewed and considered the written comments and oral testimony from stakeholders and interested parties.

Sunrise Review Criteria

Vermont law requires OPR to assess through statutory criteria whether occupational regulation of a profession is necessary to protect the public. This process is called a “Sunrise Review.” The criteria are found in Chapter 57 of Title 26. In this review, professional regulation is appropriate if:

- Unregulated practice clearly poses harm or endangers the public health, safety or welfare;
- The public can reasonably be expected to benefit from an assurance of initial and continuing professional ability; and
- The public cannot be effectively protected by other means.

26 V.S.A. § 3105(a). If, based on those factors, regulation is appropriate, then the analysis proceeds to consider **the least restrictive form necessary to protect the public** – either registration, certification, or licensure. See 26 V.S.A. §§ 3105(b), 3107. Sunrise reviews can be triggered by a directive from the legislature or by petition filed by an individual or professional organization.

Findings: Two Types of Recognizable Public Harm

OPR has determined there are two types of recognizable public harm caused by the unregulated practice of early childhood education that warrant professional regulation at the individual level: (1) physical and emotional abuse, maltreatment, and neglect of children; and (2) poor educational, developmental, and health outcomes for children caused by low-quality care and lack of access to high-quality early education.

1) Young children ages 0-8 are Vermont’s most vulnerable population. They may be subject to physical abuse, emotional abuse, maltreatment, and/or neglect by staff at regulated child care facilities or homes.

Recent examples:

- Rutland childcare facility that was shut down in October 2025 after CDD determined physical abuse of children occurred, as well as staff cursing and making threats of harm to the children;
- Hyde Park childcare facility that was also closed in October 2025 after CDD determined maltreatment of children, including covering the faces of sleeping infants.
- In 2023, a Barre Town child care facility was shut down after CDD found many violations, including that young children were shaken, that an infant was tossed onto a changing table hitting the baby’s head, pinching a baby’s nose to make it drink out of a bottle, denying infants sleep time, cursing at children, and waiting significant time before attending to crying infants. **News reports of the abuse noted that the perpetrator, the director of the infant room at the facility, had been in child care for two decades.**

Individual regulation through OPR will:

- Allow the removal of individual bad actors from the marketplace through a well-established disciplinary process that includes investigation, prosecution and adjudication;
- Permit the families and the public to know the education and training of regulated individuals, as well as when regulated individuals have been disciplined for violating conduct or practice standards, through an individual licensee look up on our website.

2) A lack of provider competency in early childhood education standards results in lower quality child care outcomes that impact young children into adulthood.

- Studies have shown that young children who do not have access to high-quality early education have a 25% higher rate of dropping out of school and not graduating high school.
- Special needs and early indicators of learning disabilities are not assessed in low-quality child care environments because providers do not have adequate education and training, which means the children go without early interventions that reduce the long term impacts.
- Infants, toddlers and young children who do not have access to high-quality early education have higher rates of law enforcement involvement, mental health issues, and addiction.

Individual regulation through OPR will:

- Ensure education and training based on the science of brain development;
- Establish the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards of practice as the standards across all early education settings;
- Require competency in observing, documenting, and assessing children's learning and development; and
- Require competency in curriculum development and implementation so that children receive high-quality education that promotes cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional growth, which means the skills young children gain in literacy, mathematics, self-regulation, and behavior makes them more prepared to enter public schools.

Conclusions:

OPR's recommendations and S.206 are consistent with Vermont's efforts over the last decade to achieve access for all Vermont families to high-quality early childhood education.

1. To increase both quality and access, Vermont must professionalize the Early Childhood Education workforce who are educating young children (ages 0-8) by:

- Requiring professional training and education;
- Offering streamlined preparation pathways that are stackable;
- Establishing standards of practice across settings in early childhood education that are consistent with public schools, i.e., standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC); and
- Enforcing standards of practice and conduct on an individual basis.

Regulation of individual early childhood educators in CDD-regulated, non-public settings, with clearly articulated qualifications and standards, will positively impact the health, growth, and development of Vermont’s infants, toddlers, and young children.

2. Licensure (mandatory credential with qualifications) is the appropriate form of regulation as opposed to certification (voluntary with qualifications) or registration (mandatory without qualifications).

OPR supports S.206, which provides the following structure of licensure:

ECE I	ECE II	ECE III	Family Child Care Provider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Teacher • Supervised by ECE II or III 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Teacher • Supervises ECE I • Receives guidance from ECE III 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Teacher • Supervises ECE I • Guides ECE II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legacy Provider in a Family Child Care Home
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HS Diploma/GED + • 120 hours of training/education in early childhood knowledge areas (to be determined by Rule) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HS Diploma/GED + • Associate's Degree (60 credits) from approved program in early childhood education or related fields (to be determined by rule) OR • Associate's Degree in unrelated field plus 21 college credits in early childhood education core knowledge areas (to be determined by rule) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HS Diploma/GED + • Bachelor's degree (120 credits) in early childhood education or related field (to be determined by Rule) OR • Bachelor's degree (120 credits) in unrelated field plus 21 college credits in content consistent with the core knowledge areas identified by Rule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HS Diploma/GED + • Operating licensed or registered Family Child Care Home in good standing with the CDD (no provisional registrations/licenses)
Field Experience Required (details to be set forth in Rule)	Field Experience Required (details to be set forth in Rule)	Field Experience Required (details to be set forth in Rule)	Demonstration of current (no later than 1/1/29) CDD approval to operate a Registered Family Child Care Home

Phased implementation and transitional measures, such as transitional licenses for those who do not initially meet qualifications, will be critical to provide current practitioners sufficient time to satisfy licensure requirements.

Transitional Measures

The most significant concern expressed in the sunrise process was retention of family child care homes and center-based child care facilities. In recent years, the number of family child care homes and providers has decreased, though the impacts of Act 76 have shown promising reversal of that trend. For our rural state, family child care homes are a critical part of the early education system in Vermont.

To mitigate retention concerns, OPR recommended transitional measures that are vitally important to the legislation, namely:

- Implementation Phases:
 - Bridge with up to 8 years of transitional licensure for all those currently in the workforce who are working toward, but may not meet, increased qualifications;
 - Incorporation of Community College of Vermont Career Ladder into assessment of qualification for the full (not transitional) ECE licenses for a specified initial time of the OPR licensure program;
 - Waiver process available at the end of three 2-year transitional license periods for documented extenuating circumstances and demonstrated progress toward meeting qualifications.
 - Allowing Educational Programs that recognize and count experience toward educational requirements, i.e. multiple/flexible pathways to enter the profession.

Benefits of Regulating Early Childhood Educators in Non-Public Settings Regulated by CDD

- Ensured quality (evidence-based curriculum and developmentally enriching learning activities) resulting from increased educational and experiential requirements
- Reduced short- and long-term harms of low-quality early care on young children, increased effective outcomes in education, health and well-being
- Return on investment of \$4-\$9 for every dollar spent on early education
- School readiness for children, higher graduation rates, higher educational/professional achievement
- Professionalizing the workforce requiring adherence to the same professional standards across all early childhood settings, in public schools and private state-regulated family child care homes and center-based facilities
- Increased pay and benefits for the early education workforce resulting in greater workforce stability and attracting professionals who want a career
- Increased access to early childhood education
- Transparency for consumers and program providers to see individual qualifications and disciplinary history through a publicly accessible system, providing greater confidence to families
- Increased workforce for all Vermont businesses resulting from greater access to quality early education and increased workforce stability in the early education sector
- Streamlined preparation pathways for the early education workforce to ensure necessary minimum qualifications to provide quality education
- Potential future license portability to other states
- Improved workforce health, reduced burnout, healthier professional environments
- Individual accountability for unprofessional conduct through a public disciplinary process

Benefits of Regulating at OPR

- Experience in establishing and administering occupational regulation with the help of professional boards comprised of licensees that will assist in developing and overseeing the regulatory program
- Expertise in licensing with established IT system and easily accessible data
- Well-established enforcement processes through publicly accessible hearings and OPR's experienced in-house team of investigators, prosecutors, case managers, legal staff, docket clerk, and administrative law officers
- Efficiency achieved through streamlined licensure and enforcement processes
- Stakeholders supporting the regulation prefer the regulatory program to be at OPR

Workforce Support and Impacts

The licensure qualifications represent an increase in current educational and experiential requirements. Approximately 7,000 individuals work in regulated, non-public early education settings. The application filed by VTAEYC is the culmination, to date, of the movement led by the early educator workforce to gain licensure and thereby increase quality and access to early childhood education. In recent years, the number of early educators in private settings achieving degrees has significantly increased. Early education degree programs have substantial scholarship assistance and financial support, and many graduates complete their degrees with no debt. According to VTAEYC's application, approximately 30% of the current field would not qualify for immediate ECE licensure, which is the reason we offer numerous transitional measures and a lengthy on-ramp. We hope this committee will schedule testimony by VTAEYC and other interested stakeholders because their efforts in this workforce-led movement have been ongoing for many years, and they can provide additional information and unique perspectives from within the workforce.

Stakeholders and members of the public who participated in the review process through public hearings, public comment and stakeholder meetings largely supported regulation through licensure at OPR.

It is also important to note that OPR's sunrise review and recommendations do not pertain to:

- After School Program Staff;
- Universal Pre-K Teachers in private and public settings;
- Active AOE Licensees with endorsements in Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Special Education, or Elementary Education (No mandatory dual licensure from the OPR side, meaning if you are an AOE licensee, you would not be required to obtain an OPR license to work in a state-regulated setting. However, this is not reciprocal. If an OPR Early Childhood Educator wants to be an educator in a public school, AOE licensure would be required);
- Individuals whose child care homes are exempt from DCF's Child Development Division ("CDD") requirements (serving no more than 2 families in addition to their own); or
- Settings exempted from CDD regulation (hospitals/churches).

Concerns/Objections Expressed by Stakeholders and Participants

- **Cost of early child care and education:** We heard concerns that individual regulation will raise cost. Licensure alone will not directly increase the cost, as the maximum yearly fee for the license is \$138. However, one of the goals of Act 76 was to increase the wage for the early childhood education workforce to a livable wage with benefits. In projecting the cost of a high-quality early education system in Vermont, the 2023 Rand Corporation Early Education Financing Study took increased cost of service resulting from increased wages and benefits into account. The Financing Study assumed that the workforce qualifications would increase to the ECE I, II, and III levels recommended in S.206.
- **Financial Burden on Providers:** Concerns have been raised about the resources required of providers to meet increased qualification requirements. Though some providers acknowledged the substantial financial assistance available to mitigate the cost of achieving degree/educational requirements, others expressed frustration regarding the perceived cost of education, as well as the time investment required to achieve a degree.
- **Title protection:** A concern has been raised about using the term “educators” because some people argue that term should be limited to AOE-licensed educators with endorsements in Early Childhood Education and Early Childhood Special Education. A few AOE-licensed educators, the Vermont NEA, and the public school administrator associations expressed that AOE statutes protect the title of educator and non-AOE licensed individuals should not be able to use the titles “teacher” or “educator” because they have not achieved the qualifications required by AOE. OPR intentionally used the term “Educator” in its report to connote formal education, qualifications, standards, and preparation enabling an individual to participate in the professional educator workforce. We determined that OPR-licensed Early Childhood Educators would be required to meet the very same VTAEYC/NAEYC competencies and standards used for AOE-licensed educators with the various endorsements. Regulation of Early Childhood Educators working in CDD-regulated settings as proposed promotes consistency in competencies and standards for early education across the board, irrespective of whether that education takes place in public or in private programs.
- **Licensure confusion:** We heard concerns that having early educators licensed in two places, AOE for public schools and universal pre-k and OPR for private settings, will cause confusion for potential applicants and the public about which entity regulates public school educators versus educators in CDD-regulated settings. While the requirements for licensure for the ECE III credential and AOE educator license with endorsements, are the same, OPR thinks that with public outreach, support from CDD, and mandatory disclosures for educators licensed by OP this concern is mitigated.

Amendments made Last Session to the Previous Bill to Address Concerns

There were numerous revisions to S.119 before it was added to last year's OPR bill and passed off the Senate Floor. Those changes are a result of OPR's continued engagement with members of the workforce, the Child Development Division of the Department for Children and Families, the Agency of Education, the Vermont NEA, public school administrator associations, and professional associations supporting this workforce.

Notable changes include:

- Revision to the chapter name to include reference to programs regulated by the Child Development Division.
- Creation of a fourth credential for Family Child Care Providers who do not want to earn an Associate's Degree or make the transition to ECE II. This compromise measure is a legacy pathway only and will not be offered to practitioners entering the field.
- Increase in transitional licensure availability from six years to eight years under documented extenuating circumstances.
- Exemption for AOE educator licensees with endorsements in Early Childhood Special Education and Elementary Education.
- Exemption for After School Programs and programs exempted from CDD regulation.
- Increase in professional pathways to include Associate's degrees and Bachelor's degrees in unrelated fields; and
- Disclosure to current and prospective families that will identify the different license types and qualifications for each, what type of credential the practitioner has, and where to make complaints about OPR licensees, Universal Pre-K teachers (AOE), and the Facility or Program (CDD).

License Titles Using "Educator"

OPR has had meetings and conversations with AOE, Vermont NEA, and the public school administrator organizations about their concerns with the use of "Educator" in the title. Also, AOE Secretary Saunders submitted written testimony expressing the same concern. Our understanding of the issue is that state and federal law use the term "educator" to mean AOE-licensed educator with an endorsement in early childhood education or early childhood special education in public settings and that having "educator" in the title of the OPR-regulated license could cause confusion. Also, one or two participants expressed the perspective that allowing individuals who did not go through AOE's process for licensure to be called "educator" disrespects and insults those who did.

The S.206 uses the licensure title of "educator" intentionally to convey:

- Increased professional preparation, education, and training;
- adherence to the same professional standards used in public school;
- professionalizing of the workforce, as requested by the workforce;
- accountability for high quality and protection of the public investments of Act 76;
- Identity of these licensed professionals as Educators.

OPR's strong preference remains to keep the titles as they are proposed in S.206 to not disrupt the national movement to professionalize the workforce. It is important also to note that the National Education Association (NEA) supports this legislation and has been a driving member of the Commission on Professional Excellence in Early Childhood Education. We worked with Legislative Counsel on S.206 language revisions to ensure practice settings in the legislation are crystal clear and to avoid any potential confusion.

ECE III Credential

During this process, we have heard from the public educator associations that the ECE III credential should not exist and the workforce in private settings with bachelor's degrees should go through AOE for licensing and endorsement. However, AOE does not have the authority, currently, or the capacity at this time to take on licensure of the group of individuals this bill professionalizes.

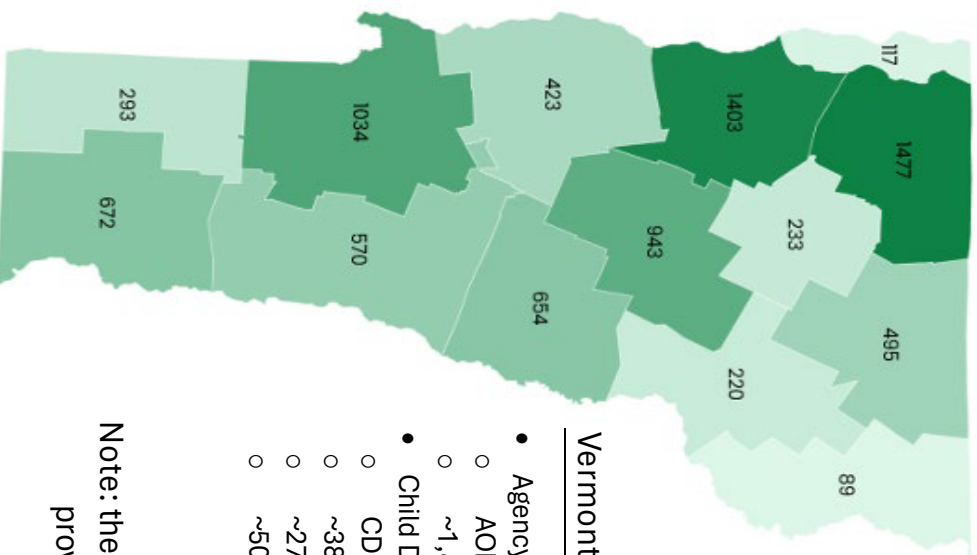
As OPR expressed in its Sunrise Review Report, the ECE III designation is not duplicative. The Agency of Education licenses educators for public schools PreK - Grade 12. The licensure structure proposed in S.206 is intended for educators in CDD-regulated private settings and programs who do not want to teach in public schools and who will not get the benefits of teacher retirement, union representation and collective bargaining, pay steps, summers off and the like. Furthermore, OPR will have a hard stop in the ECE license applications at the beginning of our forms that ask the question: "do you want to teach in public school or in a universal pre-k program." If the answer is "yes," the applicant will be given a message that they need to go to AOE for licensure and the application will terminate.

ECE III is a designation the workforce is asking for in Vermont and nationally because many practitioners with bachelor's degrees in early education fields are devoting their careers to education in private settings and not the public education system. Throughout OPR's year-long process learning about this field and engaging with the workforce, we have learned that overwhelmingly these practitioners want to be licensed, they want accountability, and they want to be licensed at OPR and not AOE.

Conclusion

The Office of Professional Regulation takes to heart the role of conducting sunrise reviews and resulting recommendations. We firmly believe in limited governmental intrusion into the marketplace unless risk to public health and safety demands our oversight. The Office recommends licensure for Early Childhood Educators having affirmatively answered that public health and safety require regulation for this profession. A licensing structure would provide the public, children, families, employers, and the profession with clear qualifications for entry into the profession, established standards to follow, and transparent accountability for when standards are violated. The Office, understanding that this is a significant and consequential transition, recommends immediate stakeholder engagement and rulemaking before requiring licensure. And, when licensure is required in 2028, bridge licensing must be created to ensure that Vermont does not lose providers and, instead, builds up this critical workforce.

Vermont's Current Regulated Childcare Landscape



Vermont's Childcare Accessibility Crisis

- According to VDH population data, in 2024 there were approximately 26,800 children younger than 5 years of age
- According to First Children's Finance (FCF):
 - The demand for full-time childcare services is increasing
 - In 2026 the proportion of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who need full-time, full-year care will be 40%, 70%, and 69%, respectively
 - Vermont needs 8,623 additional childcare slots to meet current demands

Vermont's Childcare Regulators

- Agency of Education (AOE)
 - AOE is responsible for public school settings
 - ~1,853 licensees with ECE endorsement
- Child Development Division (CDD)
 - CDD regulates private childcare programs
 - ~380 Registered Family Child Care Homes
 - ~27 Licensed Family Child Care Homes
 - ~501 Center-Based Child Care and Preschool Programs

Note: there is no regulation of childcare settings with 3 or fewer families, including the provider's own family.

New full-time childcare slots needed to meet demand (FCF).

Vermont's Current Regulatory Framework on the Childcare Workforce

CDD Minimum Staff Qualifications

OPR Proposed ECE Credentials

Registered Home Care Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GED; - 45hr Fundamentals for Early Childhood Professional's Training Series (FECPTS); - 9hr orientation/safety training 	<div style="text-align: center;">ECE II</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A.D. in ECE or related field, or A.D. + 21 core ECE credits identified in rule; - Experience identified in rule
Licensed Home Care Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GED; - 12 ECE college credits; - 12 months' experience; - 9hr orientation/safety training 	<div style="text-align: center;">ECE II</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A.D. in ECE or related field, or A.D. + 21 core ECE credits identified in rule; - Experience identified in rule <p style="text-align: center;">(Or... Legacy Credential)</p>
Home-Based Care Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GED; - 45hr FECPTS within 12mos.; - 9hr orientation/safety training 	<div style="text-align: center;">ECE I</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GED; - 120hr training in areas identified in rule; - Experience identified in rule
Center-Based Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B.A. in ECE, or B.A. + 30 ECE credits; - 12 months' experience; - 9hr orientation/safety training 	<div style="text-align: center;">ECE III</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B.A. in ECE or related field, or B.A. + 21 core ECE credits identified in rule; - Experience identified in rule
Center-Based Teacher Associate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VTECE Apprenticeship, or 21 ECE college credits; - 12 months experience; - 9hr orientation/safety training 	<div style="text-align: center;">ECE II</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A.D. in ECE or related field, or A.D. + 21 core ECE credits identified in rule; - Experience identified in rule
Center-Based Teacher Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GED; - 45hr FECPTS within 12mos.; - 9hr orientation/safety training 	<div style="text-align: center;">ECE I</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GED; - 120hr training in areas identified in rule; - Experience identified in rule