

S.206 Testimony

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

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Education as a Profession
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Defining Early Childhood Education and Who We Are Regulating



“We call some programs child care and we call some programs preschool or pre-k, but **early childhood education is what happens in every quality program, no matter where it is set or what ages are taught.”**

The ECE Profession Bill would create individual licensure through Vermont's Office of Professional Regulation (OPR) for early childhood educators in non-public (home- and center-based) child care programs.

8,000 Vermont early childhood educators work in non-public child care programs.

Home-Based



Center-Based



Public School-Based



Individual Regulation:
None. Proposed through ECE Profession Bill

Individual Regulation:
AOE Educator License



Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children

Why A License to Practice?

- **Clarity and career pathways:**
Lessons learned from the nursing profession
- **Accountability and public investment:**
With public funding (through Act 76) comes public accountability
- **Increased qualifications lead to improved child outcomes**



Increased Qualifications→Improved Child Outcomes

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



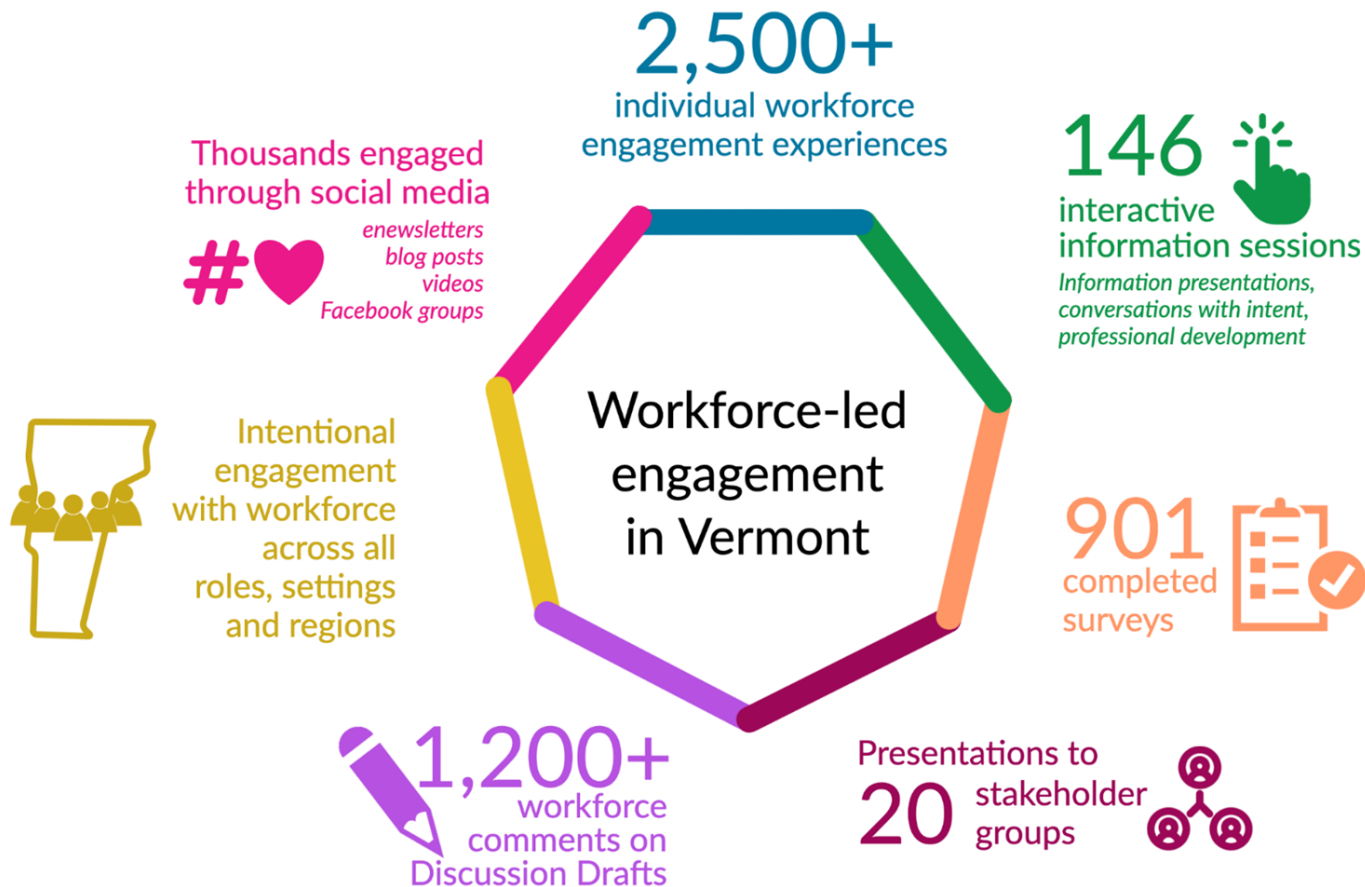
**Commission on
Professional Excellence
in Early Childhood Education**

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.

Image: CommissionECE.org

Workforce Engagement in Developing Recommendations (2018- 2022)



How Does The ECE Profession Bill Align With Workforce Recommendations?

Vermont Workforce Recommendations

Professional Identity:

Early Childhood Educator
Early Childhood Education

Three Designations with Aligned Preparation Pathways:

ECE I: Preparation program of minimum 120 clock hours
ECE II: Associate degree in early childhood education
ECE III: Bachelor's degree in early childhood education

Phased-in Implementation:

The current workforce must be supported. We advocate for flexible and supportive policies that give credit for expertise, phase in the new profession over time, and provide access to the supports and resources educators say they need to be successful.

Individual License to Practice:

Individual regulation through licensure allows for reciprocity across states and creates a system of accountability.

Professional Compensation:

Compensation will be funded through a supportive system that recognizes early childhood education as a public good.

Bill Language

Bill defines "Early childhood educator" as an individual licensed to provide early childhood education.

ECE I: Preparation program of minimum 120 clock hours
ECE II: Associate degree in early childhood education, or associate degree in any other field with minimum 21 credits in ECE core competency areas
ECE III: Bachelor's degree in early childhood education, or bachelor's degree in any other field with minimum 21 credits in ECE core competency areas
Family Child Care Provider: Legacy license; apply by 1/1/2029

Bill includes a transitional license for teachers and directors who do not meet the ECE II and III educational and experiential licensure requirements.
These transitional licenses are valid for 2 years and may be renewed up to 3 times, for a total of 8 years.

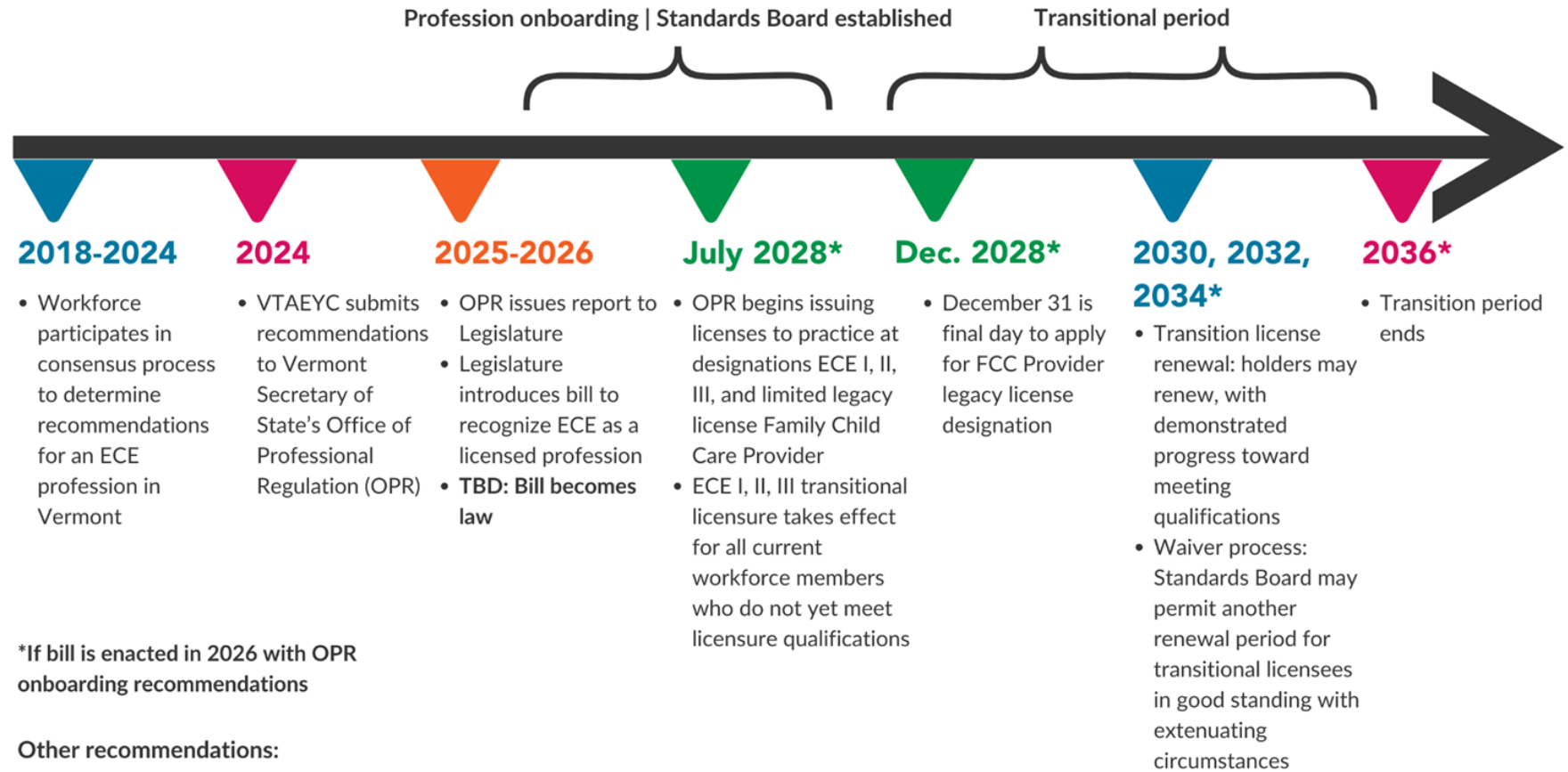
Bill establishes that a licensed early childhood educator shall provide care and educational instruction to children from birth through 8 years of age in CDD-regulated family child care home and center-based child care and preschool programs.

Bill does not address this directly.
Act 76 mandates that a report is due on professional compensation in 2026.
This is in line with the timeline outlines in the bill.

Honoring Our Workforce





Implementation Timeline



*If bill is enacted in 2026 with OPR onboarding recommendations

Other recommendations:

-  Career Ladder incorporated in licensure qualification (timeline TBD)
-  Waiver of national assessment requirement for ECEs working in a licensed or registered program (as of a specified date; TBD)



Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children 7/2025

Supports are Working

- **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
- Youth Apprenticeship program expanded from **19 to 31** youth apprentices, thanks to additional funding in FY2026 budget

“New qualifications aren’t a concern when we have time and supports to reach them. Family child care educators want to be their best – they just need clear pathways that show their efforts will pay off. The better we are at our jobs, the better our kids are.”

- Chris Nelson, North Troy

VTAEYC Supports S.206



“...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*

Thank You!

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