

Addressing Vermont's Early Childhood Educator Workforce Crisis

While chronic low wages are the ultimate culprit behind the current early childhood education workforce crisis, COVID has pushed child care programs to their breaking point. A recent survey reported that over 70% of Vermont's center-based child care programs are experiencing staffing shortages, leading to reduced hours and closures that impact Vermont's already fragile economy.



JESSE COUTRAYER | Assistant Director
Robin's Nest Children's Center | Burlington

“My plan was to be a high school teacher, but when I had the opportunity to work with young children, I just fell in love with it. I wish I could say ‘...and I have never looked back,’ but the financial realities of being an early childhood educator weigh heavily on me. I have a second job as a basketball coach that helps to make ends meet, but I worry about whether I will be able to support my own family in Vermont someday.

High-quality early learning opportunities are SO important during the early years, but beyond that, it feels incredibly important to me that children in my community have the opportunity to share their formative years with someone who looks like me – a male caregiver of color. It is rare in a lot of places, and particularly in Vermont, but I feel privileged to be able to do this work and provide this model for the children and families in my community.

Child care is my career and my calling – but right now, especially with the added stress of COVID, my future in this field feels uncertain.

I have hope, but as a state, as a society, we need to think about early childhood education differently and better support early educators.”



Learn more about the
2022 Child Care Transformation Plan:
www.letsgrowkids.org/transform
802-232-2512
19 Marble Ave, Ste 4, Burlington, VT 05401



vt aeyc
Vermont Association for the
Education of Young Children

In Order to Stabilize the System, We Must Invest in Recruiting & Retaining Early Childhood Educators

To address Vermont's early childhood educator workforce crisis, we propose the following initiatives to retain current early childhood educators and recruit new early educators to the field.

- » **\$125,000 to establish and fund an early childhood education recruitment campaign** at the Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children.
- » Embed early childhood education recruitment into all state workforce development programs.
- » **\$19.6M to issue quarterly retention bonuses** for early childhood educators currently in the field.
- » **\$11.1M for premium assistance** to ensure all early childhood educators working in Vermont have access to health insurance they can afford.
- » Develop a short-term, multi-faceted recruitment and retention strategy to attract early childhood educators to relocate to Vermont and retain the current workforce.
 - **\$5.7M to expand Vermont's student loan repayment** support program for early childhood educators.
 - Provide no-cost child care for the children of early childhood educators working in regulated programs.
 - Fund additional, creative benefits that acknowledge the importance of early childhood educators to our communities.



"All across Vermont, child care programs are having to close classrooms, cut hours, and shut their doors permanently due to staffing shortages. The ripple effects are felt across communities — as working parents can't get to their jobs, businesses can't hire, and children miss out on key early education opportunities. It feels like our child care system is on the edge of collapse."

STACI OTIS | Springfield

Owner | Little All-Stars Childcare and Preschool



"Young people are discouraged from joining the profession because people don't see early childhood education as a realistic career. And if you do decide to join the field, you have to accept that there will be sacrifices. You have to choose between your passion and a living wage. I chose my passion, but many people aren't able to make that same choice. Until we change these dynamics, it will continue to be hard to recruit new educators in Vermont."

TATIANNA LEBLANC | Milton

Lead Teacher | Next Generation

Early Childhood Educators are essential. It's time to invest in what's essential.



Vermont Association for the
Education of Young Children