



Vermont Association for the  
Education of Young Children

## Advancing Early Childhood Education as a Recognized Profession Discussion Draft #3 - **PROFESSIONAL COMPENSATION** - January 2021

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### **Advancing ECE as a Profession in Vermont**

In 2019, VTAIEYC's Advancing ECE as a Profession Task Force (see page 4) formed with the charge to engage the ECE workforce in answering: *To what extent might Vermont choose to align with NAEYC's Power to the Profession (P2P) recommendations for a recognized early childhood education profession?*

In 2019-2020, the Task Force studied P2P's [Professional Identity & Boundary](#) and put a Discussion Draft forth for consideration. With workforce feedback, the Task Force published [Consensus Document #1: Professional Identity](#), reporting that Vermont would likely choose to align with these P2P recommendations, specifically for:

- Name of the professional: Early Childhood Educator
- Name of the profession: Early Childhood Education
- Detailed description of Role & Responsibilities
- A clear distinction between the Early Childhood Education Profession and the Early Childhood Field

Next, the Task Force studied P2P's [Pathways, Preparation and Compensation](#). Given the complexity of this set of P2P recommendations, the Task Force decided to split them into two Discussion Drafts:

- Fall 2020, [Discussion Draft #2: Three Designations with Aligned Professional Pathways](#) was put forth to the workforce. The Task Force expects to publish a Consensus Document in early 2021.
- Now in January 2021, [this document](#) - *Discussion Draft #3: Professional Compensation* - is being presented for workforce consideration. The Task Force looks forward to your feedback.

For more information on this work in Vermont, please visit [VTAIEYC's website](#).

### II. P2P: PROFESSIONAL COMPENSATION

Excerpts from [Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession](#) p. 20-24

#### **Why does professional compensation matter?**

- *We care about compensation because we care about the well-being of children and educators, about the supply of care, and about the quality of early childhood education.*
- *Research confirms that better-paid teachers provide better-quality care and that educator shortages are driven by lack of compensation.* (Kashen, Julie, Halley Potter and Andrew Stettner. "Quality Jobs, Quality Child Care." The Century Foundation. June 2016)
- *No educator should earn a wage insufficient for sustaining a family.*
- *Parents, directors, superintendents, economists, business leaders, and scientists all say they want to pay educators more.* (*Pathways, Preparation, and Compensation*, p. 20)

- *It's an investment in our nation's essential infrastructure. Investing in people is not cheap--but failing to invest in them comes with its own set of costs.*
- *Moving forward, we need increased investments in early childhood education, directed primarily to the workforce, as the best means of prioritizing quality and increasing the supply of it.*

**Where are we now?** *Early childhood education is undervalued, underfunded, and inequitable.*

**Where are we going?** *Our audacious vision is that each and every child, beginning at birth, has the opportunity to benefit from high-quality, affordable early childhood education, delivered by an effective, diverse, well-prepared, and well-compensated workforce.*

**What is being recommended?**

***Establish comparable compensation, including benefits, for comparable qualifications, experience, and responsibilities.***

**1) Compensation will be comparable for early childhood educators with comparable qualifications, experience, and job responsibilities, regardless of their setting.**

*The nature of the work with young children is consistent across the variety of early care and education settings. As such, and as a matter of equity, early childhood educators with similar experience and qualifications will be comparably compensated regardless of whether they work in a community-based center, elementary school, or family-based child care home.*

**2) Compensation will include the provision of an adequate benefits package.**

*All early childhood educators in any work setting should have access to benefits. Benefit packages for full-time work may be negotiated, but their existence should be non-negotiable. Studies on educator wellbeing show that early childhood educators who are satisfied with their jobs and whose individual and family members' health is protected are more likely to convey positive feelings, to give their utmost attention to their work with children, and to remain in their positions for longer periods of time.*

**3) Compensation will increase commensurate with increased preparation and increased competency.**

*The simplified structure of ECE I, II, and III establishes the foundation for a stable wage growth over time that parallels professional advancement. In this framework, entry-level early childhood educators will have multiple opportunities to grow in their careers in working with children over the long term, as they increase their qualifications and their competency.*

**4) Compensation will not be differentiated on the basis of the ages of the children served.**

*Historically, there has been a wage penalty affecting early childhood educators working with infants and toddlers. Focusing only on comparable compensation for those working in pre-K settings with three- and four-year-olds will deepen this inequity. Compensation earned by those working with the youngest children must be a priority to reflect the vital importance of their work to society.*

**What is the standard for comparability?**

*We recommend that the early childhood education profession look to the public schools as the minimum benchmark for comparable compensation, assuming comparable qualifications, experience, and job responsibilities. We also recommend that early childhood educator salary and benefits packages ultimately be determined following a review for members of other professions who care for children in the same age range and for those with similar functional responsibilities, such as nurses, school psychologists, children’s librarians, speech and language pathologists, etc.*

### **TASK FORCE RESPONSE: Professional Compensation**

We wholeheartedly agree that Professional Compensation must be a central part of the future system of early childhood education.

We see the P2P recommendations as contributing to:

- Equity across settings for educators, children and families
- Equity across age groups birth through age eight
- Recruitment of early childhood educators
- Retention of early childhood educators
- The well-being of those in the profession
- Clear career paths and continuing professional learning for those in the profession

We see these recommendations as the broad, guiding principles for how Professional Compensation will be structured. We believe it is important to have workforce voices at the table as details and logistics are figured out.

**Task Force Consensus: Put forth to the workforce these P2P recommendations on Professional Compensation, as written.**

### **III. P2P: PUBLIC FINANCING TO SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL COMPENSATION**

*Excerpts from [Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession](#) p. 33-34*

#### **How does P2P see compensation being funded?**

- *Our vision includes the unwinding, reorientation, and realignment of some existing systems, to free up the funding and the focus that can then be redirected toward the factor that makes the biggest difference in driving access and quality: the workforce.*
- *To that end, states will be responsible for:*
  - *Ensuring public funding is available to enable compensation commensurate with education and early childhood education designations for all educators in all settings*
- *The federal government will serve as the financing backbone for the early childhood education system, protecting and investing in early childhood education as a public good. As such, it is responsible for:*
  - *Providing necessary financing to address the true cost of quality, which includes adequate compensation for the profession, and to resolve inadequate supply and unmet demand failures in the child care market;*

### **TASK FORCE RESPONSE: Public Financing to Support Professional Compensation**

We appreciate P2P's naming of state and federal financing responsibility and acknowledge that the "audacious vision" will take big changes in funding sources and increases in public financing.

We believe that the future system cannot be built on:

- What families can afford
- The backs of the workforce

Public financing is critical, not only for compensation, but also for other parts of the future system:

- Scholarships and supports for current and prospective educators to attain credentials
- Financial support for recognized professional preparation programs
- Funding that addresses the true cost of quality programs

We are encouraged by the national work on policy and funding that NAEYC is embarking on. We recognize that the development of a national profession will strengthen that effort.

We are encouraged by recent Vermont actions and proposals regarding compensation, including:

- Financial support of early care and education during COVID-19
- Vermont Early Childhood Action Plan (2020)
- Let's Grow Kids Legislative Agenda (2021)

**Task Force Consensus:** *Our final document on Professional Compensation must include the topic of public financing.*

### **VTAEYC Advancing as a Profession Task Force Members**

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