



Vermont Association for the  
Education of Young Children

## **Advancing Early Childhood Education as a Recognized Profession**

### **Three Designations with Aligned Preparation Pathways**

#### **Consensus Document (brief) – April 2021**

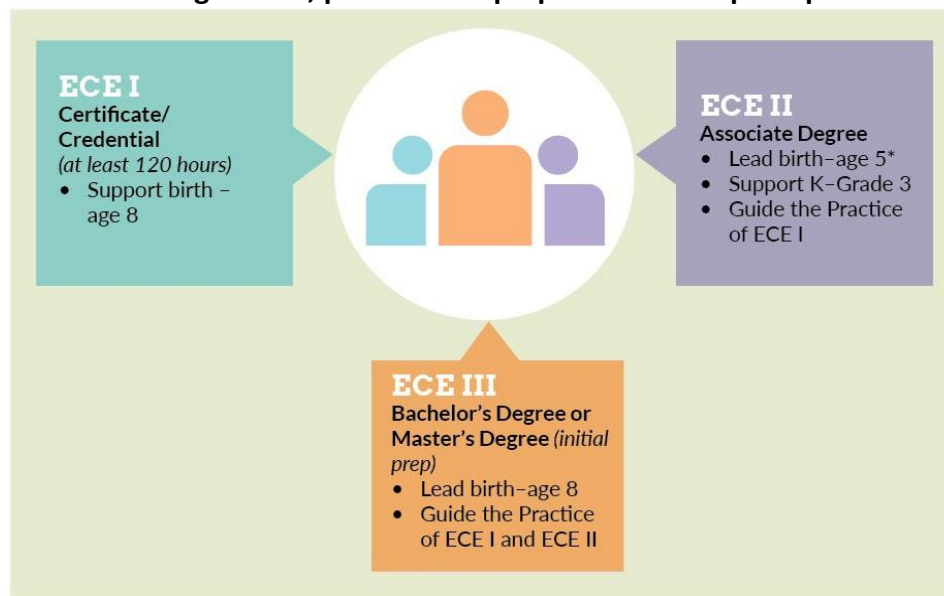
### **INTRODUCTION**

The VTAEYC Task Force leading this exploration of advancing early childhood education (ECE) as a profession is charged with learning: “To what extent might Vermont choose to align with Power to the Profession’s unifying framework?” This [Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession](#) is the basis for Vermont’s initiative because it is research-based, it proposes a national profession and it emphasizes the profession itself taking the lead. The process invites broad engagement from Vermont’s ECE workforce, using presentations, conversations and survey feedback. Consensus, in which all perspectives are heard and understood in reaching an agreement, is central to moving forward.

In the Discussion Draft upon which this Consensus Document is based, the Task Force described *Unifying Framework* recommendations for one profession with three distinct designations and aligned preparation pathways. In addition, the Task Force shared recommendations for:

- Phased-in implementation
- Short-term exemption policies and flexible ways for the existing workforce to demonstrate competencies
- The profession itself taking the lead in defining what supports are needed

### **Three designations, professional preparation & scope of practice**



\*\* In states with state-funded preK programs provided in mixed-delivery settings and explicitly aligned with the K-12 public school system, ECE III plays a lead role and ECE II plays a support educator role.

### **WORKFORCE OUTREACH**

A total of 318 members of the ECE workforce participated in professional development sessions that included a presentation and facilitated conversation on the recommendations. Following this, 203 participants (63%) gave their feedback by completing a survey. Extensive outreach efforts, including a 15-minute video available to those who could not attend, ensured the opportunity to participate, despite the challenges presented by COVID-19. Participants were well-distributed across a variety of workforce roles and settings. Survey responses were quite consistent across subgroups (family child care, center-based, level of education, years of experience).

## RESULTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the feedback, the Task Force understands the consensus of the workforce as follows:

1. Support for the **three designations**
  - a. ECE I, II, and III (98%)
  - b. Prepared to work as a team with specific roles to support, lead, guide (96%)
  - c. With compensation and responsibilities increasing as expertise increases (96%)
  
2. Support for the **aligned ECE preparation pathways**
  - a. 120 clock hours (e.g. CDA), Associate degree, Bachelor's degree (91%)
  - b. Eliminating barriers to higher education, encouraging innovative programs (95%)
  
3. Support for the **implementation commitments**
  - a. A "bridge" that honors the existing workforce (98%)
  - b. Funding for supports and for compensation; realistic implementation timelines, recognition of challenges family child care providers and community-based programs face (98%)
  
4. Key **questions and concerns** must be addressed
  - a. The important role of experience in determining a designation
  - b. Support for the particular challenges faced by family child care providers
  - c. Along with the three designations, a plan for a "pipeline" and also a plan for how ongoing professional development and expertise will be recognized

Sustaining workforce support for recommendations around "Three Designations with Aligned Preparation Pathways" will depend on how everything unfolds. Beyond the words of this Consensus Document, planning and the details will matter going forward. The Task Force recommends that:

- a. To be workforce-led, the voices of the current ECE workforce must be central in implementation design, so that their questions and concerns inform planning.
- b. Design work should begin soon on the "bridge that embraces the future workforce and honors the existing workforce," to bring clarity to those words.
- c. In developing an exemption policy, include experience and professional growth of the existing workforce in assessing competency and determining professional designation.
- d. Respondents in various roles express concern about family child care providers fitting into the new system, indicating a valuing of Vermont's mixed delivery system. Tap family child care providers for their knowledge about helpful supports for moving forward.
- e. In considering anything beyond three designations, access guidance from NAEYC and also look at what other states are doing, to ensure alignment as a national profession.

**For a complete understanding of this work, please read the full Consensus Document.**