



Vermont Association for the
Education of Young Children

Advancing Early Childhood Education as a Recognized Profession

Professional Licensure

Consensus Document (brief version) – April 15, 2022

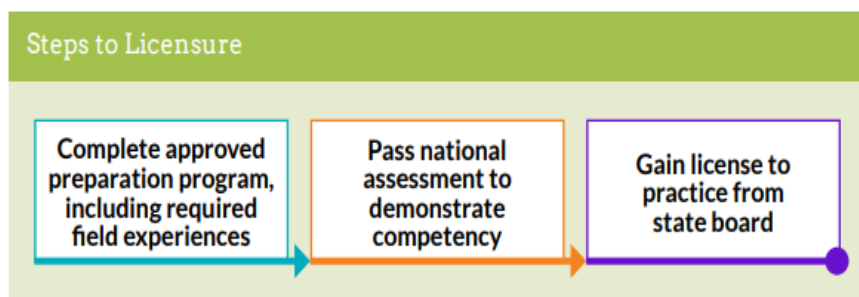
INTRODUCTION

The VTAEYC Task Force leading this exploration is charged with learning: “To what extent might Vermont choose to align with Power to the Profession’s *Unifying Framework*?” The [Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession](#) is the focus because it is research-based, proposes a national profession, and emphasizes the profession itself taking the lead. Central to the Task Force’s work is engaging Vermont’s early childhood education workforce to discern consensus about whether and how to move forward together.

In outreach to the workforce for this consensus document, Task Force members shared information from the *Unifying Framework* about **Professional Licensure** for early childhood educators (ECEs), including:

- **Professional Licensure defined** - In our current structure, licensing is about the setting, not the profession. In the *Unifying Framework*, this system is reoriented and realigned to reduce complexity and confusion, focusing trust and investment in the education and compensation of early childhood educators themselves, who make the biggest difference in driving families’ access to quality early learning and care for their children. Professional Licensure for individual early childhood educators in a mixed-delivery system, with children ages birth through eight and their families - this is a new construct.
- **Why Professional Licensure matters** - Professional Licensure supports the “audacious vision” in the *Unifying Framework*: “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.” The payoff of professional licensure extends to families and children, early childhood educators, and society at-large.
- **Recommendations from the *Unifying Framework*:**
 - Licensure will be for one of three professional designations - ECE I, ECE II, or ECE III.
 - Every early childhood educator will hold an individual professional license to practice, achieved through the Steps to Licensure. (Figure 1)
 - Licensure assessments must have multiple measures; must be affordable, equitable, and efficient; and must align with the *Professional Standards & Competencies*.
 - Professional compensation accompanies professional licensure.
 - The experience and expertise of the current workforce, in addition to their education, will be valued in the licensure process.

Figure 1: STEPS TO LICENSURE



WORKFORCE OUTREACH

Extensive outreach efforts ensured the opportunity to participate. Participants were well-distributed across a variety of workforce roles and settings. Survey responses were quite consistent across subgroups. A total of 371 members of the ECE workforce participated in professional development sessions that included a presentation and facilitated conversation on the recommendations. Following this, 216 participants (58%) gave their feedback by completing a survey.

RESULTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Support for the *Unifying Framework* recommendations for Professional Licensure

1. Interested in becoming professionally licensed as an early childhood educator 89%
2. Believe professional licensure will be a pathway to better compensation, better benefits, and greater respect for the profession 96%
3. Feel included in the commitment that anyone in the current workforce who wishes to be a part of the profession will have the resources, supports and pathways to do so 91%

Interest in a range of supports and resources to function as a “bridge” for the current workforce

- Scholarships 63%
- Increased compensation early in the process 61%
- Credit for experience & expertise 53%
- A licensure assessment - doable, affordable, equitable, & efficient 47%
- Phased-in time period; continue current role while meeting requirements 44%
- Mentor/ advisor/ coach 31%
- Grace period for current workforce members close to retirement 27%
- Equivalency process for degree in another field, experience & PD 27%
- Subsidized substitute pool 26%

Key questions and concerns from the workforce that must be addressed

1. For the current workforce, how will their experience and expertise, along with educational credentials, be valued in the professional licensure process?
2. For those working in family child care home settings, how will their circumstances and concerns be addressed in the creation of a professional licensure process?
3. What will the approved assessment for professional licensure entail and what form it will have?

For a complete understanding of this work, please read the full [Consensus Document on Professional Licensure](#).