Early educators are underpaid.

- A lead preschool teacher in a center-based child care program must hold a teaching license, with advanced training and endorsement in a field related to early childhood, or have 12 months of experience working with young children combined with a bachelor’s degree.

- The median annual salary for a lead preschool teacher is $34,410 (or $16.54 per hour). This is far lower than the median salary of $59,560 for a Vermont kindergarten teacher, and less than what Vermont estimates is the basic wage needed for a single adult to live on their own ($16.94 per hour), let alone to support a child ($27.77 per hour).

(US Bureau of Labor Statistics and Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office)

This predicts more attrition in the field, when we already have a shortage.

- 84% of early educators across the country, who want to make early childhood education a long-term career, say low pay is a serious barrier to staying in the field. (Rutland Herald, “Time for VT early educators to get more recognition, compensation,” Aug. 24, 2019)

- Before COVID-19, Vermont had about 2,700 child care workers. It’s estimated that to meet the demand for care in Vermont we need another 2,100. That’s a 78% increase. (Access: The Need for More Early Childhood Educators in Vermont, 2020, Let’s Grow Kids.)

Child care is essential to getting Vermont back to work.