

COVID-19, CHILD CARE, AND VERMONT'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY

"I graduated with a degree in Early Childhood Education in 2016 and 3 years later I was experiencing burnout.

I can remember crying in the parking lot during my lunch break. I would then go back and hold the children as they woke up. I spent my days holding them, wiping their noses, wiping their tears, changing their diapers. We get sick every time they do. We don't all have healthcare, we don't all have paid sick days and even if we do we don't have the support to take them.

Three years later I left the classroom. It wasn't sustainable."

—Franklin County Resident, August 2020



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.*



MORE INFO:

Build Stronger: letsgrowkids.org/build-stronger

COVID-19 Crisis & VT Women: women.vermont.gov