



## Southeast Vermont Building Bright Futures

Chad Simmons, Regional Coordinator  
802.451.9345 | [csimmons@buildingbrightfutures.org](mailto:csimmons@buildingbrightfutures.org)

April 13, 2016

To: Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council (SAC)  
Molly Lambert, Interim Executive Director, Building Bright Futures  
Sarah Squirrell, Incoming Executive Director, Building Bright Futures  
Building Bright Futures Professional Preparation and Development Committee (PPD)

Greetings.

Our regional council has embarked on collecting data and feedback from early care & education professionals and partner agencies in regards to professional development (PD) and program quality. Council members have both a direct and indirect interest in the outcomes of proposed updates to various aspects of early care and education systems, most notably the "Transforming the Workforce" project and upcoming RFP.

We appreciate the chance for BBF councils and partners to provide input on the professional development and quality conversations. **Our request of the SAC is to review this document, invite a discussion at an upcoming SAC meeting and consider taking action on the following questions and suggestions.**

**We think the examination of the early childhood professional development system is very worthy work.** Most of the directors of Child Care Community Support Agencies (CCCSA) agree that this should be done, especially as we support providers to reach a higher professional standard and as we advocate for better wages and working conditions for early educators and better outcomes for children and families.

With this in mind, there are some concerns related to the impact and unintended consequences of proposed processes and changes on the field and for children and families.

Below are recommendations we propose for consideration as the state moves forward with improving the early care & education professional development and quality systems:

- **The process be data driven.** Recommendations for changes to the PD system should be based on data, such as the not yet completed STARS verification project that is part of the Early Learning Challenge Grant (ELCG), and focused on measuring program quality. Susan Titterton's not yet completed VB5 funded study of the current PD landscape, would also be informative. Children's Integrated Services (CIS) PD is being reexamined at this time (ELCG Project 8) as is a data collection project to get all providers credentials verified and entered into BFIS (ELCG Project 17). There seems to be a lack of baseline data on what training and education providers already have. All of this should be the basis for proposed recommendations and improvements.



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- **Develop changes over a period of years, not months.** Incorporating improvements to the PD system is complex and needs time to effectively implement. Consider making decisions based on the above mentioned studies (and other data and input) and rolling out proposed changes over a period of years, giving professionals time and support to adapt to these improvements. This can also provide opportunities for other partners not at the table to engage.
- **Acknowledge and compensate experience and not just formal education.** Provide more help (money, resources, support, opportunities) for people to get their work experience to count as credit. Revamp core PD curriculum to meet Continuing Education Unit (CEU) criteria.
- **Efforts to improve PD and program quality must be coupled with fair compensation of the workforce.** This was recently articulated by Rhian Evans Allvin of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) during her presentation as part of the March 2016 Early Childhood Day at the Legislature. Please refer to corresponding NAEYC study [“Build it Better: Indicators for Progress”](#)
- **Examine the equity issues associated with accessing education and professional development systems.** Barriers to equitable access to formal educational and professional development opportunities exist regionally. Barriers include affordability and geographic accessibility, among others. One way to address inequities is to bolster support for the existing, local and affordable trainer infrastructure. This ensures “Core” topics, curriculum and other PD components are delivered. Investing in local PD systems is the most equitable approach and strengthens local leadership, capacity and relationships.
- **Acknowledge that the delivery system including CCCSAs and Resource Development (RD) professionals actually does deliver.** These entities are the trusted source in our community and have been for decades. CCCSAs are happy to work towards delivering a better product, but there needs to be a recognition that CCCSAs and RDs are part of the real early childhood system infrastructure.

Thank you for considering our council’s request. Please contact us with any questions.

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On behalf of the Southeast VT Building Bright Futures regional council