



March 30, 2010

<ELECTED TITLE> <FIRST NAME> <LAST NAME>
<ADDRESS>
<TOWN>, VT <ZIP>

Dear <Elected Title> <Last name>:

It has come to the attention of Vermont's early educators that legislators are considering the elimination of the Starting Points' grants. As local Starting Points Network leaders, we ask you to protect this successful initiative that fosters leadership, professional development, and support for early educators - all of which make us better teachers for children in the crucial years before they enter kindergarten.

Early education is a field with high rates of turnover and burnout. Contributing factors include low pay, minimal benefits, isolation, few opportunities for career advancement, and a lack of respect for early educators as professionals. The Starting Points initiative was begun in 1996 to encourage the formation of Network groups to help counteract some of these factors. By coming together as colleagues, early educators have grown to be strong leaders, advocates, mentors, and professionals.

Currently each region is awarded its own grant money; decisions are made locally about how to make best use of the funding. Individual Starting Points Networks may provide different activities, but all have the same goal: to ensure the quality of early care and education in Vermont.

Over the last four months, early educators have joined together on an unprecedented scale. Changes and budget cuts at the state level are affecting our profession in many ways, all of which impact our ability to deliver quality care to the children and families who count on us so they can go to work each day. The Starting Points' Networks will be even more important as we navigate an early education system that is underfunded and can offer fewer resources.

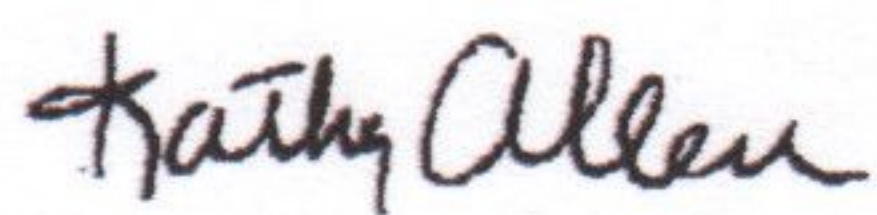
Although in previous years the Starting Points' grants sustained budget cuts, early educators made sacrifices to keep our Network groups running. If we eliminate this vital program, children and families, as well as early educators, will be harmed.



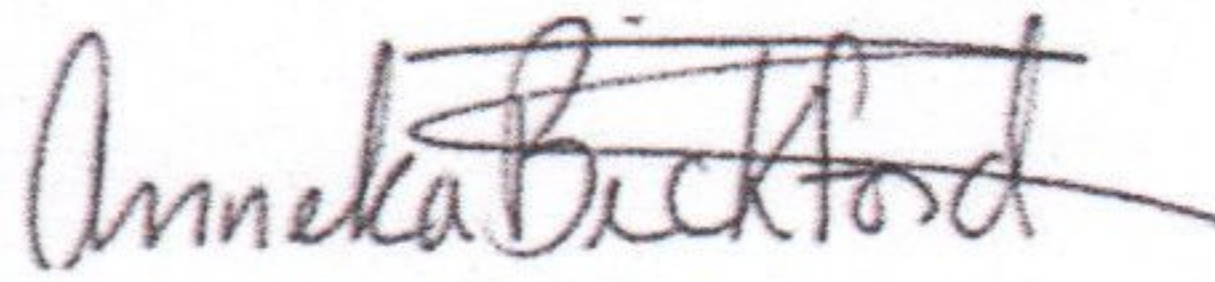
We urge you to protect the Starting Points' funding.

Respectfully,

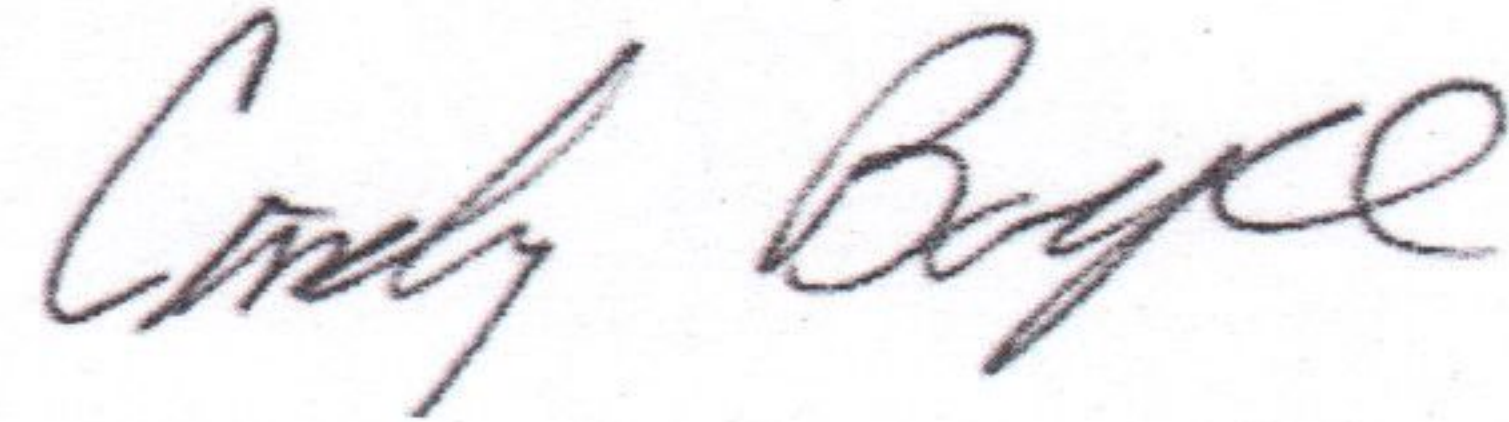
Vermont Starting Points Network Leaders



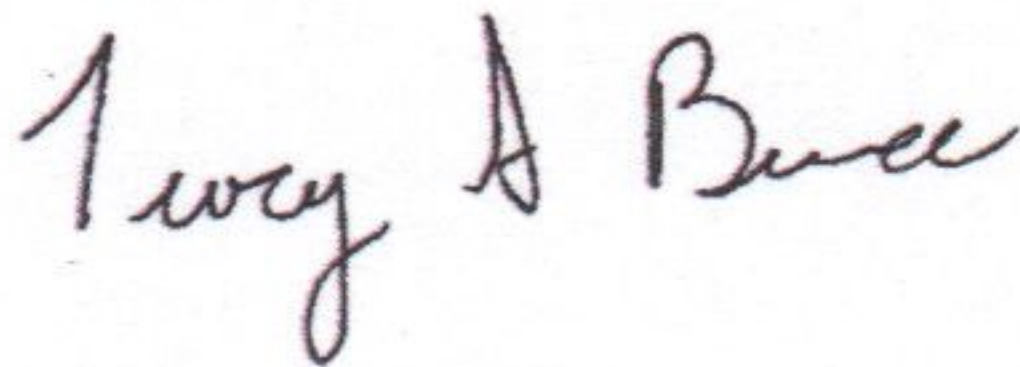
Kathy Allen, Rutland
Childcare Providers Network
of Rutland



Anneka Bickford, Lyndonville
Lyndonville Childcare Network



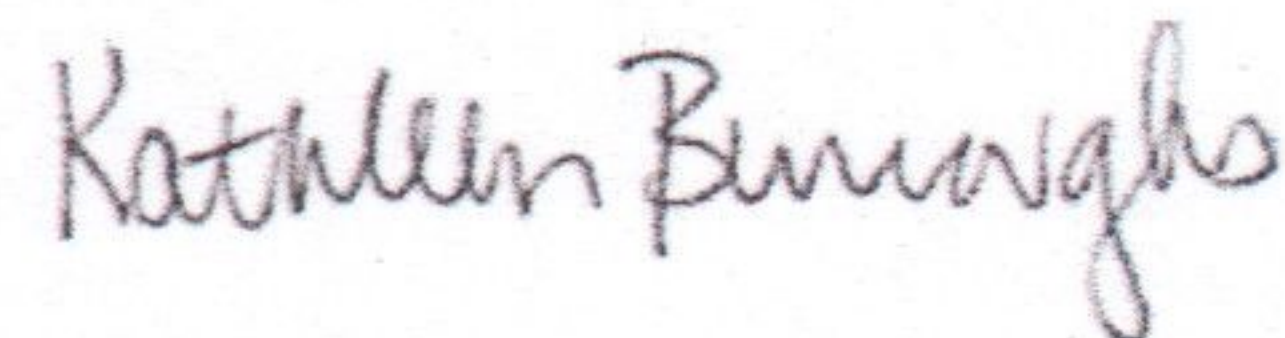
Cindy Boyce, Wells River
Starting Point Network-
Caledonia/Essex Counties



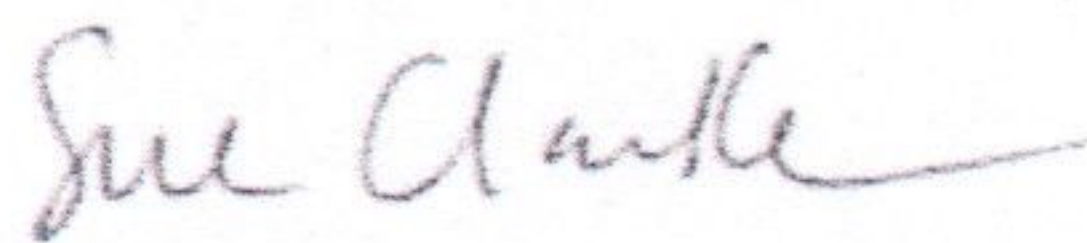
Tracy Bruce, Brandon
Brandon Area Providers
Network



Barbara Burnham, Derby
Northeast Kingdom Providers
Group



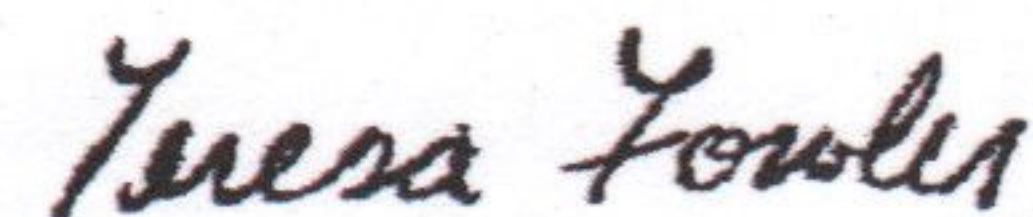
Kathleen Burroughs, Northfield
Montpelier Provider Group Leader



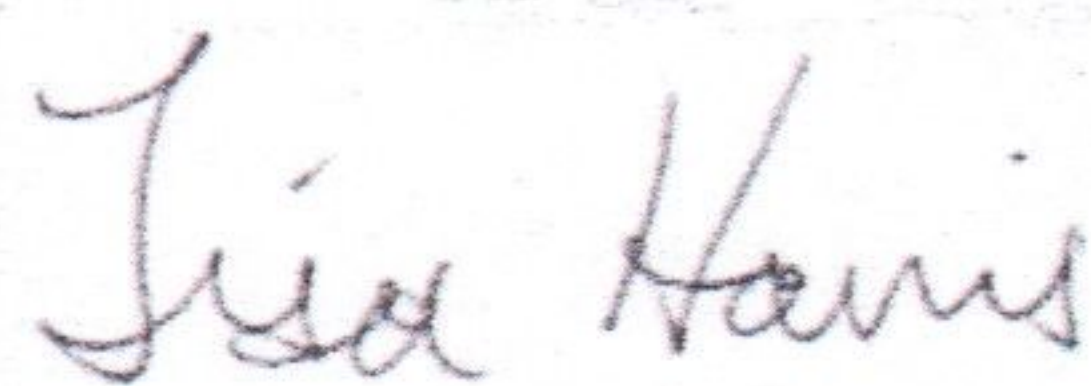
Sue Clarke, Brattleboro
Early Childhood Educators'
Network of SE Vermont



Jennifer Crocker, Danville
Danville Walden Peacham,
Barnet Network



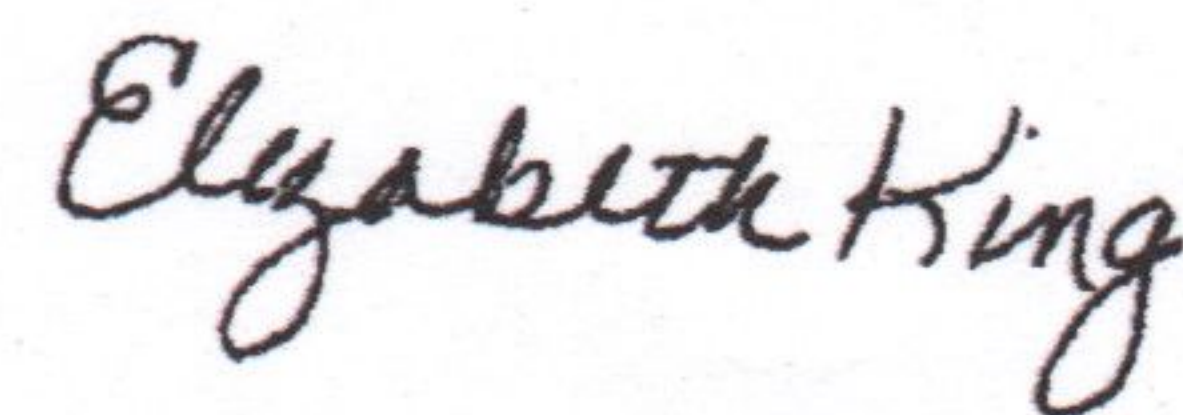
Teresa Fowler, Castleton
Castleton Area Child Care Providers
Network Co-Lead



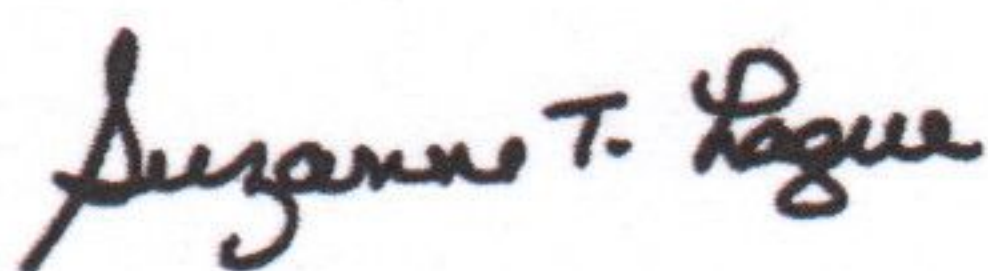
Lisa Harris, Newfane
Early Childhood Educators'
Network of SE Vermont



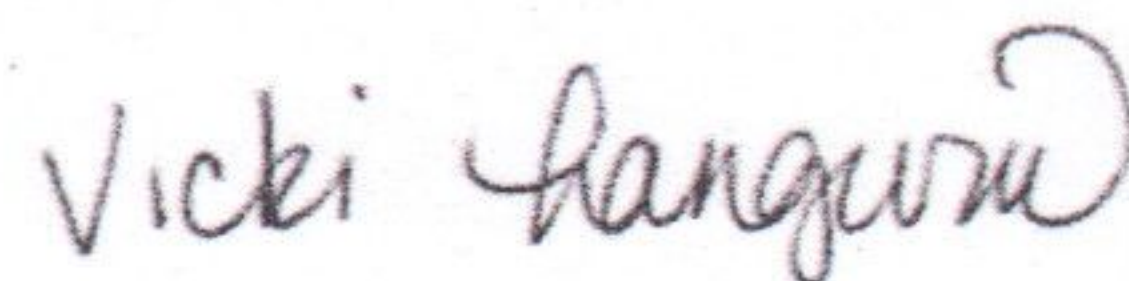
Ellen Indelicato, Wilmington
Deerfield Valley Starting Points



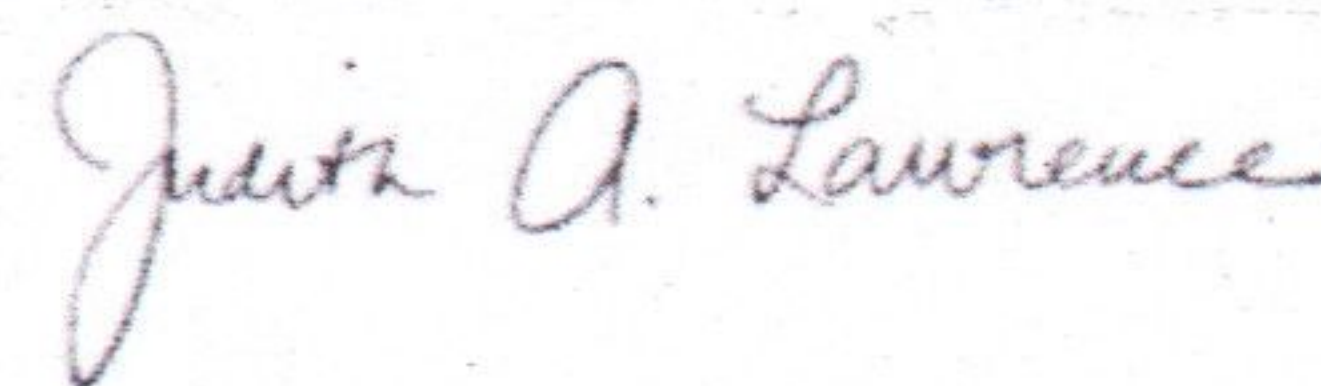
Liz King, Rutland
Childcare Providers Network of
Rutland



Suzanne T. Lague, Johnson
Eden, Johnson, Hyde Park
Starting Points Lead



Vicki Langevin, Barre
Barre Area Provider Group
Leader



Judy Lawrence, Brattleboro
Early Childhood Educators'
Network of SE Vermont



A Union of Professionals

Vermont
Early Educators
United



Gail LeBlanc

Gail LeBlanc, Hardwick
Hardwick Area Day Care
Network

Heather Newell

Heather Newell, Williamsville
Deerfield Valley Starting Points

Valerie Pineo

Valerie Pineo, Jeffersonville
JCW Childcare Providers
Network

Judy Rosner

Judy Rosner, Vernon
Early Childhood Educators'
Network of SE Vermont

Nancy Russell

Nancy Russell, White River Junction
Windsor County Child Care Providers
Association

Meri Saladino

Meri Saladino, Bradford
Connections Child Care

Sharyn A. Salls

Sharyn A. Salls, Hardwick
Hardwick Area Day Care
Network

Stephanie Simpson

Stephanie Simpson, East Concord
Concord Providers

Theresa Stevens

Theresa Stevens, St. Johnsbury
St. Johnsbury Starting Points
Network

Tasha Tobey-Pike

Tasha Tobey-Pike, Dover
Deerfield Valley Starting Points

Johanna Vaczy

Johanna Vaczy, Middlebury
Directors Network in Addison County

Joyce K. Wheeler

Joyce K. Wheeler, East Montpelier
Washington Central Provider Group
Leader

Pamela White

Pamela White, W. Braintree
CVECEPN Orange County/Washington County
Randolph, Brookfield, Braintree