

# Vermont Early Childhood Career Ladder

## Level III

LEVEL I LEVEL II **LEVEL III** LEVEL IV LEVEL V LEVEL VI

### What is the Career Ladder?

The Career Ladder identifies the six career levels of early childhood professional development. It serves as a basis for tracking and planning your professional growth. You may enter the Career Ladder at any level, and there are many different paths to take to develop your career. Each level combines education and experience. The Northern Lights core competencies provide the foundation for this system.

### What is Level III?

There are two stages to Level III. Both include having at least two years' experience working with young children, a current Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP), and completed education through college course work.

Level IIIA education options include:

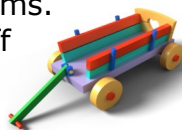
- Completed Vermont Child Care Registered Apprenticeship OR
- Community College of Vermont's (CCV) Childcare Certificate Program OR
- Highly Qualified Paraprofessional certificate from a public school OR
- Twenty-one related college credits in at least three Vermont Core Knowledge areas.

Level IIIB education options include:

- Associate's degree in early childhood education or related field OR
- Associate's degree with 21 related college credits in at least three Vermont Core Knowledge areas.

### Why is completing Level III important?

It means that you value yourself as a professional. It shows you are dedicated to early childhood and know how important your professional development is to your career. Many people who achieve Level III are in charge of their own classroom or are directors of small programs. An Associate's degree is a requirement for staff working in Head Start and other programs.



*"First I met with the advisor at the college and then I planned what college courses I would take. Now I bring what I am learning in college to my work and I bring lots of examples of real life experiences to my classes."*

### Resources:

Northern Lights Career Development Center  
<http://northernlightscdc.org>

Community College of Vermont (CCV)  
<http://www.ccv.edu/>

The Vermont Child Care Apprenticeship Program  
<http://vtchildcareindustry.org/>  
802-985-2700

**Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center**  
**<http://northernlightscdc.org>**  
**Phone: (802)828-2876**

See the reverse side for more information on Level III

# Vermont Early Childhood Career Ladder Level III (continued)

## What do I get when I achieve Level III?

Completing college course work in your field can lead to better job opportunities and higher pay. When you achieve your Level III certificate, you may be eligible for a bonus from the Child Development Division. Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS) also recognizes Level certificates. An Associate's degree is recognized across the country and can support NAEYC or NAFCC program accreditation. The college courses you take may also help you achieve your Program Director Credential (see the Northern Lights website).

## How do I apply for a Level III certificate?

Please submit a completed Level III application to Northern Lights. Applications can be found at the Northern Lights website or contact us to request one.

## How do I pay for college courses?

There are grants, scholarships, loans and low cost courses. Many are only for people currently working in the field of early childhood. The Child Development Division offers grants for college courses. Talk with the college you are planning to attend and the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) about financial aid. The Vermont Child Care Apprenticeship program sponsors low cost or tuition-free courses at the Community College of Vermont in many parts of the state. Also, check with your employer.

## Can I get college credit for what I have learned based on experience?

College credits may be earned either through Course Challenge or Assessment of Prior Learning (APL) at the Vermont State Colleges Office of External Programs. For either option, you must be an enrolled student. You request Course Challenge if you are seeking a degree or credential and think you have already met the objectives of a course. APL is a three credit college course that helps you create a portfolio showing what you learned and how it relates to college courses. Your portfolio is then reviewed by a panel of experts who recommend how many college credits you should receive. Some other private colleges also offer credit for learning from experience.



## Did you know...?

- Over 1000 early childhood professionals have taken at least one course sponsored by the VT Child Care Apprenticeship Program.
- You can find help to create your IPDP (Individual Professional Development Plan) on the Northern Lights website: *Planning Professional Development – IPDP*.

## More Resources:

VSAC

<http://vsac.org/>

Child Development Division grants

<http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/grants>

Assessment of Prior Learning and Course Challenge

<http://www.ccv.edu/apl>

Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS)

<http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/stars>

see Arena: *staff qualifications and annual professional development*

<http://northernlightscdc.org>

Phone: (802)828-2876

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