

Vermont Early Childhood Career Ladder

Level IV

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 IV?

You reach Level IV when you have at least two years' experience working with young children, a current Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP), and completed education through college course work.

Level IVA education requirement is

- Bachelor's degree in early childhood education or related field OR
- Bachelor's degree with at least 30 related college credits in at least 3 of the Vermont Core Knowledge areas.

Level IVB includes one of the above with Vermont Department of Education educator licensure with an endorsement in early childhood, early childhood special education, or elementary education. Your student teaching can count as part of your two years' work experience.

Why is completing Level IV important?

Reaching Level IV is a significant accomplishment in your career showing your commitment to your profession. Many people who achieve Level IV are in charge of their own classroom, oversee the work of other staff, or are directors of programs. By achieving Level IV, you have more job opportunities and will likely earn a higher wage.

How do I apply for a Level IV certificate?

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



"I have over 60 credits and am more than half way to my Bachelor's degree. I think I want to get my teaching license too, because it will give me even more options."

Resources:

On Northern Lights' website:

- see *Career Ladder* for the application and other Level IV resources
- see *Core Competencies*
- see *Instructors* to learn about the Instructor Registry
- see *Planning Professional Development- IPDP*
- see *Program Directors* to learn about the Program Director Credential
- see *Resources: college and universities* for lists of institutions that offer related course work, educator licensure, and for peer review information

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

See the reverse side for more information on Level IV

Vermont Early Childhood Career Ladder Level IV (continued)

What do I get when I achieve Level IV?

You are seen as a professional with a commitment to the field with many opportunities for employment.

- You may earn a bonus from the Child Development Division if you are working in the field of early childhood and earn your Bachelor's degree.
- Head Start and other programs specifically look for staff with a Bachelor's degree.
- Your degree is more valuable to programs seeking accreditation or recognition such as STARS (Step Ahead Recognition System), NAEYC accreditation, National Afterschool Association (NAA) and National Association of Family Childcare (NAFCC).
- With a Vermont teaching license, you may choose to work for the public schools or in partnership with public schools.

How do I pay for college courses?

There are grants, scholarships, loans and low cost courses. 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.

How do I get an educator licensure from the Vermont Department of Education?

You can achieve educator licensure in one of two ways. One way is to graduate from a college or university that is approved to recommend you for educator licensure. The second is to submit a professional portfolio for peer review to the Department of Education. Every licensed educator also has one or more endorsements, which defines the age group or topic that you can teach. To achieve a Level IVB certificate you will need an endorsement in early childhood, early childhood special education or elementary education. See the Vermont Department of Education website for information on educator licensure, endorsements and peer review.

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Did you know...?

- The college courses you take may also help you achieve the Program Director Credential.
- If you have a Bachelor's degree and experience teaching adults, you may apply to the Northern Lights Instructor Registry.

More Resources:

VSAC

www.vvac.org

Child Development Division
grants

[http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/
grants](http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/grants)

Vermont Department of
Education

[http://
education.vermont.gov/](http://education.vermont.gov/)

STARS (Step Ahead
Recognition System)

[http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/
stars](http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/stars)

see Arena: *staff qualifications
and annual professional
development*

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