

The Vermont Career Ladder for early childhood professionals



"I applied to Northern Lights to receive a certificate when I completed a level on the career ladder."

On the Northern Lights website:

- *Career Advising Guide* including the booklet
- *Planning Your Professional Development* about Individual Professional Development Plans (IPDP)
- *Afterschool* course information and Career Pathways
- *Resources* including colleges with related fields and coursework
- *Career Ladder*
 - Detailed information & applications for each level
 - How college courses align with the levels
 - How the levels align with STARS points and the Recognition Bonus

What is the Career Ladder?

It is a tool for tracking and planning professional growth. The Ladder organizes coursework, credentials, degrees and licensure into one Northern Lights (NL) Professional Development System. Each of the six levels requires: education, a current Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) and professional experience with children and families. Levels I - III also require the applicant to be observed working with children. You can start at any level.

Vermont Northern Lights Career Ladder

Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Level V	Level VI
1. Fundamentals for Early Childhood Professionals course (45 hours) OR 2. NL approved portfolio with 45 hours of instruction & documentation OR 3. 3 related college credits in child development & other requirements	1. Current Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential OR 2. NL approved portfolio with 120 hours of instruction & documentation OR 3. 12 related college credits in at least 2 VT Core Knowledge areas & other requirements	A) 1. Completed Vermont Child Care Registered Apprentice OR 2. CCV's Child Care Certificate OR 3. Highly Qualified Paraprofessional OR 4. 21 related college credits in at least 3 VT Core Knowledge areas & other requirements B) 1. Associate's degree in early childhood education or a related field OR 2. Any Associate's degree with 21 related college credits in at least 3 VT Core Knowledge areas	A) 1. Bachelor's degree in early childhood education or related field OR 2. Bachelor's degree with 30 related college credits in at least 3 of the VT Core Knowledge Areas B) Above with VT Department of Education teaching license with endorsement in early childhood, early childhood special education or elementary education	A) Master's degree in early childhood education or related field	Doctoral degree in early childhood education or related field
Experience one year or more	2 years or more	2 years or more	2 years or more including student teaching	2 years or more	2 years or more

Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center

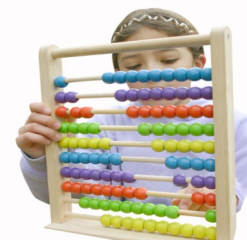
<http://northernlightscdc.org>

Phone: (802) 828-2876

See the reverse side for information on the Vermont Northern Lights Career Ladder

The Vermont Career Ladder for early childhood professionals

(continued)



"When I found myself on the Career Ladder and Lattice, I could trace my career path and get an idea of where I might go next."

Where do I fit in?

There are many different paths to take in the development of your career and each person's path is unique. Some professionals start at Level I, some at Level IV. Each person completes a level at his or her own pace. The Career Ladder is a guide.

What are the "related fields and credits" and "Core Knowledge Areas" referred to in the Career Ladder?

Related Fields refer to degrees with a major or concentration in one of the following areas: Early Childhood; Child or Human Development; Education (early childhood, elementary or special education); or Child and Family Studies

If your degree was NOT in any of these fields you can still use college coursework in the areas above or in psychology, mental health, sociology, human services, social sciences, social services, or business administration (related to early childhood or afterschool program management) to reach a Level on the Career Ladder.

5 Vermont Core Knowledge Areas include: Families and Communities, Child Development, Healthy and Safe Environments, Teaching and Learning, Professionalism and Program Organization. These areas relate to the *Core Competencies* for early childhood and afterschool professionals.

What does achieving a Level mean?

You have achieved a milestone in your career pathway! You may also benefit from achieving: a financial recognition bonus from the Child Development Division (CDD); a higher score in the Vermont Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS) staff qualifications arena; a child care licensing requirement; or a Department of Education teacher licensing requirement.

How long do I have to achieve a Level?

You may take as long as you need to meet the Level requirements and you can apply for a Level certificate any time after achieving the education and experience listed. However, there ARE time limitations for gaining the other benefits described above.

What is the Career Lattice?

The Career Lattice shows how the Career Ladder connects with different work settings. It is a frame of reference that gives general examples of which jobs tend to be at each level of the Ladder. You can find the Career Lattice in the *Career Advising Guide* and on the Northern Lights website.

Did You Know...?

- People with a Bachelor's Degree often have more job options than people without.
- Northern Lights will forward your Level application on to CDD for consideration of a bonus.
- *The Core Competencies for Afterschool Professionals* have three levels that also relate to jobs in afterschool programs.
- Northern Lights reviews and approves all applications and related documents of those applying for the Career Ladder.

More Resources

STARS website

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

<http://northernlightscdc.org>

Phone: (802) 828-2876

Northern Lights Career
Development Center
CCV—PO Box 489
Montpelier, VT 05601