

Career Pathways for Afterschool Professionals: Phases & Related Professional Development Opportunities

Professionals employed in afterschool settings work mostly part-time within a wide range of diverse contexts and programs types. Their job titles also vary greatly. As a result, there is not a “typical” afterschool professional. Employment opportunities include home and community-based child care settings, schools, youth centers, recreation programs, 21st Century community learning centers, and more. Within such diversity, there are three common career tracts: (1) child care, (2) youth work, and (3) education. The information below provides a general career development framework for prospective and current afterschool professionals working in these tracts. The framework has the three overlapping learning phases: *awareness, developing, achievement*. The pathways and scenarios below, illustrate how professionals working in these career tracts might connect to the many available afterschool professional development opportunities in Vermont.

Awareness Phase	Developing Phase	Achievement Phase
Focuses on building entry-level, basic skills and knowledge.	Extends basic skills and knowledge and may include college credits and specialty certification.	Explores leadership, community, and administration.
Required Experience: Within the first two years of working as an afterschool professional.	Required Experience: Three years or more of working with school-age children; a minimum of 500 hours of direct work in a program.	Required Experience: A minimum of three years working in the field as a program director or other leadership capacity.
Professional Development Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vermont Afterschool Foundations Certificate • Afterschool Essentials • On-the-Job Training Certificate* • Highly Qualified Paraprofessional • VT Program Director: Step One certificate 	Professional Development Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-the-Job Training Certificate * • Highly Qualified Paraprofessional • Vermont Afterschool Professional Credential (VAPC)* • VT Program Director: Step Two Certificate • Vermont Department of Education Teacher License 	Professional Development Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly Qualified Paraprofessional • Vermont Afterschool Professional Credential (VAPC) * • Vermont Program Director Credential, Step Three * • Vermont Department of Education Teacher License <p><i>Other related opportunities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Lights Instructor Registry • Mentors for Quality • Coaching for Program Directors
Related Education: High School Diploma/GED, college and Vocational/Technical students, associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s degree	Related Education: college students, associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s degree	Related Education: associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s degree

**Bonuses are available when additional requirements are completed.*

Afterschool Career Pathways: Glimpses from the Field

Vermont’s afterschool professionals can enhance their knowledge, skills and work experience by pursuing various career pathways. Here are four professional development scenarios to consider as examples.

Glimpse 1: Child Care Professional

Evelyn started working as an aide in a licensed summer program for school age children. She then moved into a year-round, part-time position with a center-based afterschool program in her community. During her first year there, she received the Afterschool Foundations Certificate and was moved into a group leader position. She then enrolled in the college-level courses required for the Vermont Afterschool Professional Credential and continued to consolidate her training and workshop hours into a portfolio, as required for the Afterschool Credential and Step 1 of the Program Director Credential. Evelyn’s long-term goal is to be a site director and to finish the coursework required for all Steps of the Program Director Credential.

Glimpse 2: Child Care Professional

Karen owns and operates a licensed family child care home. She has a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential and completed Step 1 of the Vermont Program Director Credential. The age-range of the children in Karen's care has changed from serving 2 to 4 year olds to 3 to 9 year olds. Karen wanted to build on her early education background and gain knowledge in school-age development. She contacted her local Resource Development Specialist, who recommended several trainings, including an on-line course, *Introduction to Afterschool Education and Care*. Karen successfully completed the course and applied for the Vermont Afterschool Foundations Certificate. She is now working towards the Afterschool Professional Development Credential as well as completing Step 2 of the Program Director Credential.

Glimpse 3: Youth Work Professional

David began as a volunteer tutor with an afterschool program after finishing high school. He went on to earn a Bachelor Degree in physical education while interning at a mental health center. After earning his B.A. he was hired as a behavioral health specialist at the center, where he specializes in designing and running programs for youth ages 12 to 18 years old. He is currently completing the requirements for the Vermont Afterschool Professional Credential. His long term goal is to seek a Master Degree in counseling psychology and gain further experience as a youth case manager and mental health counselor with a continued focus on physical education.

Glimpse 4: Educator

Sylvia has an Associate Degree and is a highly qualified paraprofessional in her school district. For the past two-and-a-half years, she has tutored math in several afterschool programs where she works primarily with fourth and fifth graders. Now she's pursuing her B.A. and simultaneously applying her college credits to meet the requirements for the Vermont Afterschool Professional Credential. She wants to enhance her career and be recognized for her skills and experience with the afterschool setting. Her long-term goal is to become a licensed math teacher.