

Professional Standards: Competencies



What are professional standards?

Professional standards describe what someone in the profession needs to know or do to work in their field. Standards are also called competencies. Vermont Department of Education defines the teacher licensing standards. Vermont's core competencies for early childhood professionals and for afterschool professionals overlap with these standards. Core competencies are the foundation which can lead to other specialty licensure, endorsements, credentials, or certificates.

Who uses Vermont early childhood core competencies?

All people in the field of early childhood use competencies: practitioners working with children and families; mentors and supervisors who support staff; instructors and people who plan professional development.

How are competencies useful?

Competencies establish common expectations. When we agree on what supports quality relationships and experiences for children and their families, we make the early childhood field stronger.

Competencies can be used in many different ways.

To guide your own professional growth by:

- assessing your skills and knowledge in the field of early childhood
- identifying your professional goals
- organizing your learning experiences

To help supervisors and those who plan adult instruction to:

- develop and guide job descriptions and supervision of staff
- identify needed training and plan staff professional development
- create courses or workshops based on the competencies



"I used the core competency booklet to see what I knew and wanted to learn next, and then was able to create my Individual Professional Development Plan."

Resources

all competency documents
<http://northernlightscdc.org>
See: *core competencies*

VT Department of Education
licensing standards
<http://education.vermont.gov/>

"I use the competencies to create objectives for the training I offer. I also mark on the attendance certificate which competency areas were covered in the training."

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

See the reverse side for more information on core competencies

Professional Standards: Competencies (continued)

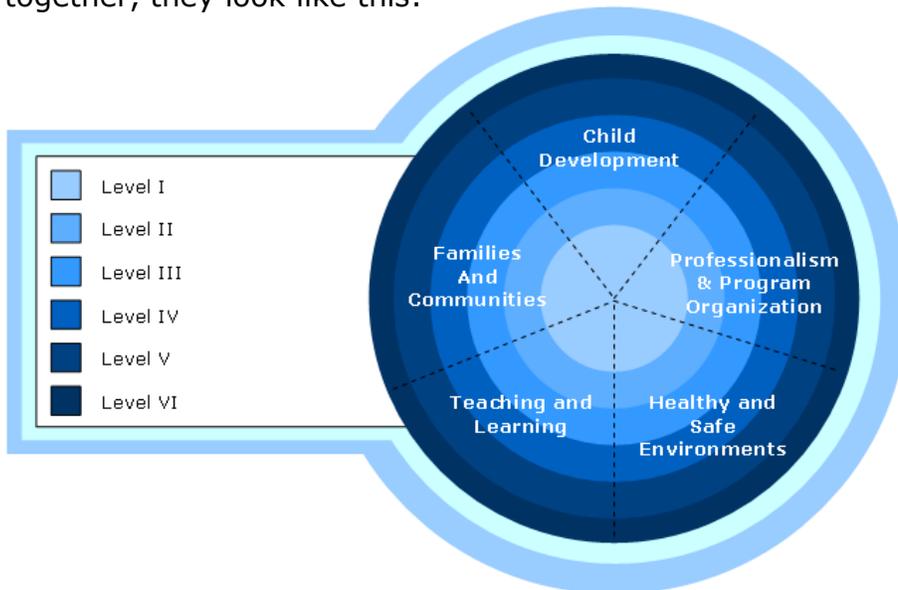


What makes up a competency?

There are five core knowledge areas that include all of the Vermont early childhood and afterschool core competencies. They are:

- Child or Youth Development**
- Families and Communities**
- Teaching and Learning Environments/Curriculum**
- Healthy and Safe Environments**
- Professionalism and Program Organization**

Competencies are also organized into six levels, from entry to more advanced levels. Levels build on each other. Level II includes Level I; Level III includes level I and II. All together, they look like this:



Each core knowledge area is divided into subheadings. An example of a subheading under **Child Development** is:

Influences on Child Development.

Within each subheading is the list of competencies, a statement that describes what you do. An example is:

Describes principles of growth and development.

Staff show their competencies every day when working with children. For example a professional might say:

I have been observing and taking notes so I can see how a toddler is interacting with the others.



"Relationships professionals have with young children have a profound impact on children's development. The quality of those relationships is based on the skills, knowledge and attitudes of the professional."

Did you know...?

- The course, *Fundamentals for Early Childhood Professionals* is based on the Level I competencies
- There are 8 training modules that cover the Level II competencies
- The first two years of college course work relate to Level III competencies
- Level IV-V core competencies align with the VT Department of Education teacher licensing standards.
- The *Northern Lights Career Ladder* describes each level. You can find it on the Northern Lights website.

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