Your IPDP
(Individual Professional Development Plan)

Planning Your Professional Growth

Vermont Northern Lights
Career Development Center
Of the Community College of Vermont and the Vermont Child Care Industry and Careers Council.
Funded by the Child Development Division, Vermont Agency of Human Services.
Individual Professional Development Plans (IPDPs) are documents that provide a framework connecting various professional development experiences to each other and to the common core of knowledge and professional standards for early education professionals. Individual professional development plans are designed to create a holistic approach to building an early childhood professional’s capacities and to ensure that individuals remain current regarding knowledge and practices in the field. Individual professional development plans promote professional advancement. They can address career opportunities for those with a goal of pursuing different roles or positions in the field. Individual professional development plans require and support individuals taking responsibility for mapping their own professional development and career pathway.

- Individual professional development plans can be developed in one of two ways:
  1. at the workplace level with review and approval by a supervisor, based on needs and strengths of the individual as identified through self-reflection, performance appraisal, and other information, including program evaluation and improvement processes; and
  2. at the individual level with guidance from an advisor, consultant, mentor, or other TA provider, with a focus on mapping one’s own professional development and career pathway.

- Individuals use their IPDPs on an ongoing basis to remain focused on their professional goals and needs.
- IPDPs are reviewed and revised as necessary on at least an annual basis, or as professional goals, development needs, or PD resources or opportunities change.

Individuals review their plans as they reflect on their knowledge, practice, professional development endeavors, and goals—with guidance from an advisor or other TA provider, adult educator, and/or the administrative leadership of the individual’s workplace.

All early childhood education professionals should have IPDPs to assist in developing or articulating their career goals, and to guide and inform desired career advancement and decisions regarding PD opportunities.
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June 2011
Northern Lights Career Development Center for Early Childhood and Afterschool Professionals.

Generously supported by the Child Development Division, Department of Children and Families, Vermont Agency of Human Services.

Visit Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center www.northernlightscdc.org to view and download a copy of this document and other related resources. The IPDP forms in this booklet are also available on the website as writable PDF documents.
Chris’ Story

An IPDP has four parts. Here is an example of how one teacher, Chris, got started.

It is the end of the workday and the kids have gone home. As I cleaned up the room I thought about Ben and his dad. Ben’s dad seemed very rushed when he came to pick Ben up today. It was hard for Ben to leave the program and his dad clearly needed to go right away. Ben either clung to me or ran away.

We tried many different strategies, yet Ben was clearly upset and confused. It took a long time for Ben to settle down, focus, and go with his dad. I could hear him whining as his dad held his hand down the hall. I remember that earlier in the afternoon, when I reminded the children that some parents would arrive soon, Ben started to have a hard time focusing. I also noticed this is somewhat of a pattern with him, and a few of the other children. End of the day goodbyes can be difficult. How can I make this transition easier for children and families?

This is the first step: self-reflection. What do I do well and what do I want to learn more about, or improve? The Core Competency self-assessment tools can also help Chris identify what other skills and knowledge he wants to strengthen.

I will see how I can make this transition work better for the children and families.

This is the second step: goal setting. Chris identified a specific goal to reach, and described what success would look like: afternoon pick-up transitions would work better.

I wonder how I could learn more about what’s not working, and find some strategies that would work. I realize I don’t know how families feel about the pick-up transition - what they like and what they might need. I also need to know more about how the kids feel. I’ve seen the other teacher with kids and families, and their transitions seemed to go better. Now that I think of it, there’s an article about transition in the last issue of that professional magazine in the office.

This is the third step: creating strategies and resources. Chris identified a lot of ideas to help him reach his goal.

My days are so busy. Unless I set some time frames, I’ll never get to read that article, talk to families about transitions or talk to my colleague. I need to set up some time to get this done. I’ll check my progress in one month. I think by then I will have the information I need to make some changes— and if I reach my goal before that, great! Meanwhile, I could tell my co-teacher what I’m working on, and she could also observe the kids.

This is the fourth step: setting a timeline. Chris set one month as his timeline. At that point, he’ll check how he’s coming along on his goals to do some research and generate some strategies to try.
Introduction

Professionals in the afterschool and early education field affect the emotional, intellectual, and social development of the children and adults they encounter. This is not an accident, or coincidence. Professionals in these fields are continually learning how to become better teachers, mentors, and administrators. One way to do this is to develop a plan.

What is an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)?

An Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) is a thoughtfully developed written plan designed by you that follows a four-step process for continuing your professional growth. The process is ongoing, and includes:

1. **Self-Assessment** (What are your current interests, knowledge and skills?)
2. **Goals** (What would you like to learn more about?)
3. **Strategies** (How will you do this, and what resources will you need to make it happen?)
4. **Timeline** (How much time will you need to complete each goal?)

How to use this book:

You can use this as a workbook to develop your own IPDP, or you can use it as a resource if you are supporting others in developing their IPDPs. As you read each section, you will see guidance, examples and blank spaces for you to fill in your own information.

Why is an IPDP important?

The quality of children’s experiences depends on the knowledge, experience, skills, and dispositions of the people who work with them. As your professional interests, and the demands of the field change, it is important to expand your knowledge and skills. Your IPDP is a tool to help you in this growth. It is a process as well as a document. It guides your professional development and reflects changes over time.

Who needs an IPDP?

Everybody who works in a regulated early childhood or afterschool program and anyone who is a licensed teacher or a professional needs an IPDP. IPDP’s are required by child care licensing, for level certificates and grants, and are part of Vermont’s Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS).

Throughout this book we will be following Chris as he develops his Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)
Step One: Self-Assessment

Chris’s begins a self assessment: Chris reflects on his current practice of dealing with Ben’s emotional well-being and asks himself some important questions.

It was hard for Ben to leave the program and Ben’s dad clearly needed to go. We tried many different strategies. Ben was upset and even confused about what to do. It took a long time for Ben to settle down, focus and go with his dad, and even then I could hear him whining as his dad held his hand down the hall. I remembered that earlier in the afternoon, when I reminded the children that some parents would be arriving soon, Ben started to have a hard time focusing. I also noticed this is somewhat of a pattern with him and some of the other children - that end of day goodbyes can be difficult. How could I make this transition easier for children and families?

Self-Assessment Requires Self-Reflection

Only you can answer these and other questions, about yourself as a professional. Ask yourself:

- What do you do well and what have you accomplished?
- What challenges you or what do you want to learn more about?
- What does your performance evaluation or supervisor say are your areas of strength and areas to progress?
- In what areas of your job description do you think you’re very competent, and what areas do you want to improve?
- What do you want to gain in your career or education?

Your self-assessment should consider your knowledge and skills in the field of early childhood or afterschool care and education. Your supervisor or mentor may also guide you in this process. Your job description, performance evaluations and past IPDPs can help you develop your self-assessment. However, it is important to take the time to think and feel, are important in this process.

Walking Through the IPDP
Core Competency or Standards Guide Your Self-Assessment Process

The competencies or standards of the field are important tools in the self-assessment process. For your convenience, the Core Competency documents include a self-assessment checklist. When using core competencies or standards as a guide to assess yourself, there are four common formats that can be used. You should use the format that fits you. If you are unsure use the Core Competencies. All of these formats are available on the Northern Lights website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals</th>
<th>Core Competencies for Afterschool Professionals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child development</td>
<td>Child and youth development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and learning</td>
<td>Curriculum and learning environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families and communities</td>
<td>Families and communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy and safe environments</td>
<td>Healthy and safe environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program organization and professionalism</td>
<td>Program organization and professionalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following two formats should be used for specific circumstances. The Child Development Associate (CDA) credential subject areas should be used when a goal is to either obtain or renew a CDA credential. The Vermont Department of Education (VT DOE) should only be used by DOE licensed educators or administrators. The full IPDP required by the DOE can be found on their website. The shorter IPDP explained in this booklet and available on the Northern Lights website, is useful if you are doing an annual IPDP update (as required by STARS, to obtain a Level certificate, etc.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential: Competency Subject Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Planning a safe, healthy learning environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Steps to advance children’s physical and intellectual development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Positive ways to support children’s social and emotional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Strategies to establish productive relationships with families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Strategies to manage an effective program operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Maintaining a commitment to professionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Observing and recording children’s behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Principles of child development and learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Vermont Department of Education (DOE): Five Standards for Vermont Educators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning</th>
<th>Expertise in the endorsement area (such as early childhood or child development)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional knowledge</td>
<td>Methodology and pedagogy (teaching process, teaching environments and how children learn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagueship</td>
<td>Improve children’s learning through Vermont’s Frameworks For Standards and Learning Opportunities and school district goals, strategies and plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Engaging family and community in partnerships to promote student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Professional responsibilities and ethics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Chris’ Self-Assessment**

Vermont Early Childhood and Afterschool Core Competencies – Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)

1. SELF-ASSESSMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>What do I already know and what skills do I have?</th>
<th>I plan to increase my knowledge or skills in each of these areas:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child &amp; Youth Development</strong></td>
<td>I understand child development and the importance of secure relationships for children.</td>
<td>Documentation and use of child observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I also understand that social interaction is important to children’s development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Families and Communities:</strong></td>
<td>I understand how to make a welcoming environment for families and children, and know of community resources that support children.</td>
<td>How to make afternoon transition time less stressful for families and kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching, Curriculum and Learning Environment:</strong></td>
<td>I understand the importance of children’s play, and support children’s learning across all domains. I try to incorporate multicultural materials in the classroom.</td>
<td>Learn more about how families perceive pick up time and what would help it be less stressful for them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Healthy and Safe Environments:</strong></td>
<td>I understand the licensing regulations, and general health information. I have taken CPR and First Aide. I use procedures set out by the program to ensure learning materials are safe and appropriate.</td>
<td>Check playground safety requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professionalism and Program Organization:</strong></td>
<td>I am following the program's policies and procedures, and have revised them in my Program Management class. I have completed my associate's degree.</td>
<td>Continue working to complete my bachelor's degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The self-assessment checklist (in the Competency Document) helped me recognize what I already know and do well and what I want to learn more about.
Chris: I will make afternoon pick up transition smoother for children and families.

Step Two: Goal Setting

This is one of many goals Chris would have on his IPDP. In doing the self-assessment process, you will identify many possible goals. Now it is time to review your self-assessment, prioritize and select your specific goals. You can determine your goals by asking yourself questions such as these.

- What do you want to learn more about?
- What is challenging for you that you need to address?
- What did your supervisor suggest?
- What are you excited about?

It is manageable to choose two to five professional development goals to tackle over the next six months or longer. You might have long-term goals (get your bachelor’s degree), and short-term goals (learning about health and safety regulations). Goals may cover more than one standard or core knowledge area. For example, Chris’s goal falls under “Families and Communities” and “Teaching and Learning”. The process of writing down goals and telling others about them makes you more likely to meet them.

Chris considered these guidelines when writing goals for his IPDP:
- Start with the words “I will…” so that you are stating a commitment
- Set a goal you actually have control over
- Be specific so you know when you have reached your goal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Strategies to accomplish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. I will examine and adapt the afternoon transition so that it works better for children and families | a) Talk to families by phone about what works well and what doesn’t when they pick up their child. Find out about how it is going now.  
 b) Observe the children at afternoon transition and document the behavior. Consider a time frame of several days. Consider a 24-hour period.  
 c) Talk to Sue about how it is going now.  
 d) Find and read the article on transitions. |
| 2. I will complete my bachelor’s degree | a) Talk to my advisor at the department or college advising office (other articles too?) on transitions.  
 b) Get my log in information to register for classes online.  
 c) Register for classes online.  
 d) Talk to Sue about being my mentor.  
 e) Call VSAC to find out if funding is available. |
| 3. I will learn and implement strategies on how to make our playground safer. | a) Research playground safety inspectors from the National Playground Safety organization.  
 b) Get a list of safety inspectors.  
 c) Have a playground safety inspector look at our playground. |

Chris’ Goals

Vermont Early Childhood and Afterschool Core Competencies – Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)
Below are some examples of clear goals compared with goals that are hard to measure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific goals: you know when you’ve succeeded!</th>
<th>Vague goals: it’s not clear when you’ve reached them!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• I will learn more about children with special needs and effective ways to include them</td>
<td>• Be patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I will graduate with my associate’s degree</td>
<td>• Communicate better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I will learn about and use the NAEYC code of ethics in my program</td>
<td>• To take trainings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I will implement Creative Curriculum</td>
<td>• To be more empathetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I will learn more about the cultural traditions &amp; values of the families in my program</td>
<td>• Do better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learn about culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes to myself: ________________________________________________________________

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My goal was to be better at my job, but I changed my goal to “I will learn about integrating children with special needs into the group.”
Step Three: Strategies & Resources

I have a lot of ideas of how to reach my goal. I can interview or survey parents, observe the children as they leave, talk with Sue, read the article about transitions and find other articles on the same topic. I think these things will give me ideas for new strategies. Before I decide what to do, I think I should find out if I can take some time at work to plan the survey, and ask the director if that’s a good way to find out what parents think. Can I get some time to talk with Sue? Is there money available to buy a bulletin board, and is it OK with the building to put it up?

How to reach your goal:

When developing strategies and resources, practitioners need to ask themselves two things:

1. *How do you learn best?* To answer that consider what learning experiences had the biggest impact on you. How did that experience support your learning? Remember, taking a course or workshop is only one way to learn.

2. *What are the many options to achieve your goal?* You may need to do some research to pinpoint how to reach your goals. You could do research on the internet or ask other professionals in order to identify what options and resources will help you meet your goals. For example, when and where is that class offered that you want to take? Will your program let you put up a bulletin board?

The answers to these and other questions help you decide which strategies and resources will work for you.

**Examples of Strategies and Resources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you learn best? (Strategies)</th>
<th>What resources might you need?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Watching others interact with children</td>
<td>- Internet, magazines, lending library, movies, catalogues, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reading or researching</td>
<td>- Mentors, supervisor, advisors, colleagues, resource and referral staff, parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interviewing professionals or parents</td>
<td>- Other agency staff (mental health, health, other social services, chamber of commerce, financial experts, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Practicing the skill</td>
<td>- Time to meet with staff, colleagues, director; child care to attend trainings, meetings, do homework, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Discussing ideas</td>
<td>- Financial assistance – help to apply for scholarships, grants, loans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teaching others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Planning, modeling or drawing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Being observed and getting feedback</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Having the idea or skill explained to you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once you know the options, you need to determine which ones you will put in your IPDP. The more specific the strategy the more likely you will do it! Ask yourself what you need to be successful with this goal.
## 2. GOALS, STRATEGIES, TIME LINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Strategies to accomplish this goal</th>
<th>What do I need to accomplish my goal? (Resources)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. I will examine and adapt the afternoon transition so that it works better for children and families | a) Talk to families by phone or at pick up about what works well and what doesn’t when they pick up their child. Find out what they think about how it is going now.  
 b) Observe the children at afternoon transition and document the behavior of each child over several days. Consider a checklist?  
 c) Talk to Sue about how she has planned the afternoon transition and why.  
 d) Find and read the article that I saw in the office (other articles too?) on transitions. | - Sue in the other classroom  
 - The article on transitions and check online for more articles.  
 - Time to meet with Sue, talk with families and time to read the article  
 - Help with observations of afternoon transition |
| 2. I will complete my bachelor’s degree | a) Talk to my advisor at the state college to determine what classes I need to take to complete the degree  
 b) Get my log in information to register for classes online.  
 c) Register for classes online  
 d) Talk to Sue about being my mentor.  
 e) Call VSAC to find out about what financial aid is available. | - Time to call my college advisor  
 - Computer and internet access  
 - Sue  
 - Time to call VSAC |
| 3. I will learn and implement strategies on how to make our playground safer. | a) Research playground safety online.  
 b) Get a list of safety inspectors from the National Playground Safety organization  
 c) Have a playground safety inspector look at our playground. | - Time to research online, to call safety inspectors, and meet with them  
 - A computer and internet access |

### Notes to myself:

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**Name:** Chris  
**Date:**

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Step Four: Timeline

My days are so busy, unless I set some time frames, I'll never get to read that article, talk to families about transitions or talk to my colleague. I also realize I could tell my co-teacher about what I'm working on, and she could also observe the kids as they leave. I'll check my progress on tasks I set for myself, in one month.

Setting a timeline is a great way to help yourself meet your goals.

When will you do this? Be realistic. An IPDP is a working plan, so target dates should be specific, realistic and answer one or more the following questions.

- When will you check in with yourself?
- When will you complete this task?
- When will you finish the second or third step?

Set reasonable dates to reach for each goal. If you are taking a course that will not start until next semester then you might have one timeline to sign up for the course, and another based on when the class ends. If you plan to observe and record children’s behavior, consider how long will it take to do this - a month? Three months?

When most or all of the IPDP dates are passed, then the IPDP is no longer current and should be updated. As you grow professionally you may find that you need to amend your IPDP or add additional goals more often. Remember this is a working document.

A new child with a genetic disorder just joined my group. I want to learn more about her disorder to help this girl be successful in my program. I am going to add this as a goal. I’ll do some research and talk with her family about how to get more information. This will help me find resources, strategies and decide on a timeline for my new goal on my IPDP.

Updating your IPDP

It is a good rule of thumb to check your IPDP regularly. You might do this by putting the check-in dates on your calendar or in your phone to remind you. You can review your IPDP when you meet with your supervisor, or after you have accomplished a professional goal. At least annually you should review your entire IPDP to determine whether you have completed your goals, to update your status and create new goals. Some programs require the supervisor to regularly review and sign the IPDP.

Always remember to date your IPDP and your status check-in, in order to track your progress. If your IPDP is in your BFIS (Bright Futures Information System) online Quality and Credential Account, you can update the status bar for each goal.

Be sure to review and update your IPDP just before you apply for a credential, certificate or your program applies for recognition from STARS or NAECY. A current IPDP is part of the application.
**Chris’ Timeline**

**Vermont Early Childhood and Afterschool Core Competencies – Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IE LINK</th>
<th>Name: <em><strong>Chris</strong></em>_____________________ Date: <strong>00/00/0000</strong>________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Strategies to accomplish this goal</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I will examine and adapt the afternoon transition so that it works better for children and families.</td>
<td>a) Talk to families by phone or at pick up about what they think doesn’t when they pick up their child. Find out what they think about how it is going now. b) Observe the children at afternoon transition and document the behavior of each child over several days. Consider a checklist? c) Talk to Sue about how she has planned the afternoon transition and why. d) Find and read the article that I saw in the office (other articles too?).</td>
<td>November 1 – read articles, talk with Sue, families and collect data on children Nov. 15 – review data with colleagues, decide what to change Dec 30 – finish observing the morning transition with the changes, and see how it worked!</td>
<td>11/10 – I have read two articles on transitions that I received from the local Child Care Resource Development Specialist. I met with Sue on 10/31, and have a collection of observations of the children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I will complete my bachelor’s degree.</td>
<td>a) Talk to my advisor at the state college to determine what classes I need to take to complete the degree. b) Get my log in information to register for classes online. c) Register for classes online. d) Talk to Sue about being my mentor. e) Call VSAC to find out about what financial aid is available.</td>
<td>November 1 – Call advisor &amp; VSAC December 1st – Sign up for classes for Spring semester December 15th – Talk to Sue.</td>
<td>11/10 – I have talked to the advisor at the state college and have a list of the classes I need for my degree. I called VSAC and found out that most of my classes can be covered with grants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I will learn and implement strategies on how to make our playground safer.</td>
<td>a) Research playground safety online. b) Get a list of safety inspectors from the National Playground Safety organization. c) Have a playground safety inspector look at our playground.</td>
<td>January 1st – Complete research online, talk to the safety inspector March 15th – Develop a plan to improve the playground</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Notes to myself:**

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**Chris’ Completed IPDP**

Vermont Early Childhood and Afterschool Core Competencies – Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. SELF-ASSESSMENT</th>
<th>Name: <strong>Chris</strong>____________________________ Date: <em>00/00/0000</em>_______</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What do I already know and what skills do I have?</strong></td>
<td><strong>I plan to increase my knowledge or skills in each of these areas:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child &amp; Youth Development</strong></td>
<td>I understand child development and the importance of secure relationships for children. I also understand that social interaction is important to children's development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Documentation and use of child observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Families and Communities:</strong></td>
<td>I understand how to make a welcoming environment for families and children, and know of community resources that support children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How to make afternoon transition time less stressful for families and kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching, Curriculum and Learning Environment:</strong></td>
<td>I understand the importance of children's play, and support children's learning across all domains. I try to incorporate multicultural materials in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learn more about how families perceive pick up time and what would help it be less stressful for them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Healthy and Safe Environments:</strong></td>
<td>I understand the licensing regulations, and general health information. I have taken CPR and First Aid. I use procedures set out by the program to ensure learning materials are safe and appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Check playground safety requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professionalism and Program Organization:</strong></td>
<td>I am following the program's policies and procedures, and have revised them in my Program Management class. I have completed my associate's degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continue working to complete my bachelor's degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2. GOALS, STRATEGIES, TIME LINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Strategies to accomplish this goal</th>
<th>What do I need to accomplish my goal? (Resources)</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. I will examine and adapt the afternoon transition so that it works better for children and families | a) Talk to families by phone or at pick up about what works well and what doesn’t when they pick up their child. Find out what they think about how it is going now.  
  b) Observe the children at afternoon transition and document the behavior of each child over several days. Consider a checklist?  
  c) Talk to Sue about how she has planned the afternoon transition and why.  
  d) Find and read the article that I saw in the office (other articles too?) on transitions. | • Sue in the other classroom  
  • The article on transitions and check online for more articles.  
  • Time to meet with Sue, talk with families and time to read the article  
  • Help with observations of afternoon transition | November 1 - read articles, talk with Sue, families and collect data on children  
  Nov. 15 - review data with colleagues, decide what to change  
  Dec 30 - finish observing the morning transition with the changes, and see how it worked! | 11/10 – I have read two articles on transitions that I received from the local Child Care Resource Development Specialist. I met with Sue on 10/31, and have a collection of observations of the children. |
| 2. I will complete my bachelor’s degree                                 | a) Talk to my advisor at the state college to determine what classes I need to take to complete the degree  
  b) Get my log in information to register for classes online.  
  c) Register for classes online  
  d) Talk to Sue about being my mentor.  
  e) Call VSAC to find out about what financial aid is available. | • Time to call my college advisor  
  • Computer and internet access  
  • Sue  
  • Time to call VSAC | November 1 - Call advisor & VSAC  
  December 1st - Sign up for classes for Spring semester  
  December 15th - Talk to Sue. | 11/10 – I have talked to the advisor at the state college and have a list of the classes I need for my degree. I called VSAC and found out that most of my classes can be covered with grants. |
| 3. I will learn and implement strategies on how to make our playground safer. | a) Research playground safety online.  
  b) Get a list of safety inspectors from the National Playground Safety organization  
  c) Have a playground safety inspector look at our playground. | • Time to research online, to call safety inspectors, and meet with them  
  • A computer and internet access | January 1st - Complete research online & talk to the safety inspector  
  March 15th - Develop a plan to improve the playground | |
IPDP Tools

Self-Assessment Tools
This page and the next outline the tools and documents that can guide you as you create your IPDP.

The following documents include self-assessment forms and are found on the Northern Lights website:

- Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals
- Core Competencies for Afterschool Professionals
- Competencies for Early Childhood and Afterschool Program Directors
- Early Childhood and Family Mental Health Competencies.

“IT’S NEVER BEEN EASY FOR ME TO PUT MY THOUGHTS INTO WORDS. THE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL GAVE ME THE LANGUAGE THAT I NEEDED TO HELP ME WRITE MY GOALS.”

IPDP Formats
There are a number of IPDP format options available to you. You may already have a form that you have been using, or your employer may have provided you with an IPDP form. Whatever format you use, you should include the four basic steps as listed in this document. If you are not sure which format is best, use the one in this booklet based on the Core Competencies.

Each of these formats can be found or linked from the Northern Lights Career Development Center website. They are all fillable—meaning you can type into them then print them out. Or you can choose to print out a blank one, and write in it. You can get a glimpse of each one on the next page.

- Early Childhood or Afterschool Core Knowledge Areas
- Bright Futures Information System (BFIS) text-friendly IPDP form. This format is online in your Quality and Credential Account, on the Summary page.

The following two formats should be used if you are seeking or renewing your Child Development Associate credential (CDA); or you are a Vermont Department of Education licensed teacher or administrator.

- Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) Format
- Vermont Department of Education standards Format

“I DEVELOPED MY IPDP WITHIN MY BFIS QUALITY AND CREDENTIAL ACCOUNT. NOW, WHenever I have to submit an IPDP for STARS or apply for a Vermont certificate, I tell them to look in my BFIS account.”
IPDP Formats at a Glance

IPDP aligned with the VT Core Competencies for Early Childhood or Afterschool Professionals. Complete forms available on the Northern Lights website.

Online IPDP in the Child Development Division’s Bright Futures Information System (BFIS) Quality & Credentialing Account. Login information and links at http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd
Vermont Department of Education Standards – Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)

1. SELF-ASSESSMENT
Name: _______________________________________ Date: __________

What do I already know and what skills do I have?
I plan to increase my knowledge or skills in each of these areas:

Example: Professional Knowledge
- Perform safety checks of space indoor/outdoor
- Supervise children
- Teach and model proper hygiene
- Understanding more about children's allergies
- Renew my CPR
- Review my program's health policies

Learning

Professional Knowledge

Collegiality

Advocacy

Accountability

IPDP aligned with the Vermont Department of Education Teacher Licensure Standards. This form is available on the Northern Lights website.

Child Development Associate – Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)

1. SELF-ASSESSMENT
Name: __Chris_____________________________________ Date: __________

What do I already know and what skills do I have?
I plan to increase my knowledge or skills in these areas:

Example: Safe and Healthy Learning Environments
- Perform safety checks of space indoor/outdoor
- Supervise children
- Teach and model proper hygiene
- Understanding more about children's allergies
- Renew my CPR
- Review my program's health policies

1. Safe and Healthy Learning Environments

2. Physical and Intellectual Development

3. Social and Emotional Development

4. Relationships with Families

5. Program Management

6. Professionalism

7. Observing and Recording Behavior

8. Child Growth and Development

IPDP aligned with the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential areas. Complete forms available on the Northern Lights website.
Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)

There are a variety of IPDP formats you can use. Look at the Northern Lights Career Development Center website: www.northernlightscdc.org under PLANNING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - IPDP for other formats. Please use a format that is appropriate to your professional development goals.

Name: ____________________________________________________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________________________________________

Phone: ______________________ Work Phone: _______________________________

E-Mail: ___________________________________________________________________________________

BFIS Quality/Credentialing Case ID\textsuperscript{1} : ________________________

Current Position: ___________________________________________________________________________

Place of Employment: _______________________________________________________________________

If I need it, a person that might help me with this form is: _______________________________________

(This is especially helpful if you are new to the field.)

______________________________________________________  _______________________
Signature                 Date

IPDP Checklist

\begin{itemize}
  \item Date the IPDP was written
  \item Bright Futures Information System (BFIS) Credential Number
  \item IPDP includes reflection
  \item Timeline is updated as goals are accomplished
\end{itemize}

4 Key Components:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Self-assessment
  \item Goals
  \item Strategies & Resources
  \item Timeline
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{1} BFIS Quality Case ID: When you sign up for a Quality and Credential Case Account in the Bright Futures Information System (BFIS) at https://bfishelp.ahs.state.vt.us/ you are assigned a Quality Case ID number. A BFIS Quality and Credential account provides you with free access to a resume tool, which you can use to track training and coursework that you have completed, and to write your Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) as a child care professional in Vermont. Please check out the Northern Lights website at http://northernlightscdc.org to learn more about BFIS and what it can do for you.
### Vermont Early Childhood and Afterschool Core Competencies – Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)

**SELF-ASSESSMENT**

Name: ___________________________  Date: ______________  (Page 1 of 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>What do I already know and what skills do I have?</th>
<th>I plan to increase my knowledge or skills in each of these areas:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Example: Healthy and Safe Environments**| • Perform safety checks of space indoor/outdoor  
• Supervise children  
• Teach and model proper hygiene                                                                                   | • Understanding more about children’s allergies  
• Renew my CPR  
• Review my program’s health policies                                                                                  |
| **Child & Youth Development**              |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| **Families and Communities**               |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| **Teaching, Curriculum and Learning Environment** |                                                                                                                                                                    |
| **Healthy and Safe Environments**         |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| **Professionalism and Program Organization**|                                                                                                                                                                    |
Based on the areas you identified on page 1: Self-Assessment, identify what you will do next. These are your **goals**. They should be specific and clear. **Strategies** should be specific, such as: gathering materials, interviewing specific people, visiting specific places to observe, etc. Add **resources** such as written materials you will read, websites you will explore, funding needed to attend events, etc. Finally think about how long it will take to reach your goal. This is your **timeline** and helps you meet your goal. Put a month and year next to each goal and/or strategy showing when you expect to complete it or check in on your progress; this is the **status**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Strategies to accomplish this goal</th>
<th>What do I need to accomplish my goal? (Resources)</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: I will understand more about children’s allergies</td>
<td>• Review health policies; talk with the director about common health allergies in the program</td>
<td>• Computer time (at library)</td>
<td>December 2010</td>
<td>November 17th – called the health dept. and they are sending resources and samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Call the local health department for resources</td>
<td>• Phone number of local health department, and VT Family Network – call 211 to find these</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Go online to research the specific allergies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Call VT Family Network - find parents to talk to about their experiences with their children’s allergies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Look in BFIS course calendar for related training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.                                                                                                                                                         

2.                                                                                                                                                         

3.                                                                                                                                                         


Professional Pathways

Part of your Individual Professional Development Plan requires you to examine where you are and where you want to go in your professional pathway or career. The *Professionalism and Program Organization* section of your IPDP is the place to write down your goals and plans in this area.

Professional development should be ongoing and include continual self-reflection. The decision to remain in the field of early childhood or afterschool care, and to recognize yourself as a professional are part of an ongoing career pathway.

The *Career Advising Guide*, found on the Northern Lights website and available from the Northern Lights office, details the options along the early childhood and afterschool career paths, and the many resources to help you along the way.

There are a number of financial resources as well as recognition bonuses to support and encourage you in your professional career. The Northern Lights website describes the most current information.

---

**Early Childhood Career Ladder**

Your knowledge and skills increase as you acquire the core competencies that are embedded into each level of the career ladder. Each level on the ladder includes a combination of education and experience. To apply for a Level certificate, you will need to have a current IPDP.
Afterschool Career Pathways

The core competencies for afterschool professionals are the foundation for afterschool career planning and professional development. There are a wide range of roles and settings in the afterschool field and the career pathways encompass them all.

Both early childhood and afterschool career pathways include:

- Certificates of completion
- Credentials that recognize competencies achieved
- Academic Degrees
- Licensure and specialty endorsements

“I put my Level III Certificate in a frame and keep it on display in my classroom. It is a daily reminder that I am a professional.”
Supporting Students and Staff

Supporting the creation of an IPDP
As a supervisor, mentor, advisor or colleague you may be in the position to help a student or professional in the field to design and write her IPDP. The process can be challenging to some and can be very rewarding. You will need to customize your support to match the practitioner’s experiences, thinking patterns, writing skills and organizational skills. Take the time that is needed to allow her to tell her story. Your relationship must be based on trust in order for the practitioner to share her concerns and her dreams. When ready, determine with the practitioner whether you should be the scribe while she talks, or if she wants to do the writing. Careful listening will enable you to distinguish the key threads that may lead to a goal statement or strategy. The IPDP goals and the process of reflection cannot be imposed, yet the IPDP format itself can be a supportive guide. For some practitioners, the IPDP development process is the first time they start to feel like a professional. Creating goals that are achievable is empowering.

Supporting Self-Assessment
Chris, the caregiver highlighted in the introduction of this book, asked himself:

What is happening with Ben and his dad? What could I do differently to help both of them through this transition?

The mentor or supervisor practices careful listening and uses open-ended questions like Chris’ to identify and support the practitioner’s strengths and areas of interest. The newer practitioner especially, will need to be given specific and concrete steps to help her consider what she is doing and what more she wants to do or learn. The Core Competency booklet is a useful self-assessment tool but it may be overwhelming for some staff. Careful listening to the answers of open-ended questions like the ones below can help draw out staff feeling unsure about where to start.

- How did your day go today?
- What do you think went especially well? Is there anything about your job that you think you will worry about when you get home?
- When you picture yourself going through your workday, what do you do to help make the children safe and healthy? What do you do to plan what will happen that day? (Continue with questions related to each of the core knowledge areas.)
- If you could change anything in your job, what would it be?
- If you could obtain any education, credential or degree, what would you want?

Supporting Goal Setting:
I decided to see how I could make the afternoon transition work better for the families in my room.

One of the biggest challenges practitioners face is making the goals they write manageable, specific and clear. Sometimes the goal is too broad (learn about child development) and sometimes too limited (take a class). Some specific strategies to help practitioners develop effective goals are:

- Ask the practitioner to start the goal statement with: I will ____________
- Ask the practitioner to imagine what success will look like, then help her break it down, step by step to set a manageable goal
- Notice and follow what interests the practitioner
- If the goal is too specific, ask why she wants to do that activity
- Ask the practitioner if reaching that goal is within her control

Supporting development of strategies and resources:
I wondered how I could learn more about what was not working, and get more strategies I could use.

This step requires experience solving problems successfully. You can do this by helping the practitioner recognize a time she learned something new that made a big difference to her (first time...
she drove a car, used a computer, changed a diaper, etc.) Remembering how she learned this can help her consider how she learns other things. Attending training is only one way to gain knowledge, but implementing the new skill with the support of a colleague is more likely to change practice. Some specific strategies to use are:

- Offer possible solutions or resources based on examples from experience, rather than giving advice
- Acknowledge and recognize successes and positive outcomes
- Listen in order to gather information about the needs and interests of the practitioner
- Model and teach self-talk as a strategy to work through the planning process

Supporting development of a timeline:

When will I get started on this and when will I be done?

When the practitioner is excited about her IPDP goals and knows how she will meet them, then it is easy to identify when they will start. Setting a date of completion may be intimidating and some practitioners avoid this so they don’t miss their deadlines. Mentors can guide the practitioner by asking:

- What will you do first, next, etc. and by when?
- When will you check in with yourself to see how you’re doing?
- Where can you put your timeline and IPDP so you remember to check it regularly?
- What could you do to celebrate completing this step or goal?

How else can IPDPs be used?

Instructors, especially of entry-level courses, can introduce the IPDP tools and guide the development process with their students in order to establish a professional foundation.

Program directors can use the IPDP development process to inform and support staff performance evaluations, program reviews and annual professional development planning. Common goals are easier to establish when the core knowledge areas frame both the staff performance evaluation and the IPDP self-assessment.

After all of his staff had completed their IPDPs, one director asked them to write each of their goals as a two to three word statement and put it on a card. With different colored cards, he asked each person to write two to three word statements about a strength they had in their work. Then staff sorted all the cards by core knowledge area, to create a visual map of the program’s professional development strengths and goals. It was easy then for everyone to recognize common goals, find other staff to work with on their goals, and generate the annual training plan to meet their goals.

IPDPs are also a way to track professional growth of a program. For example, a program that infused individual mentors into their professional support system, reviewed their staff IPDPs to see what impact the mentoring relationship had on their goals and progress.
Resources

Please visit the Northern Lights Career Development Center website www.northernlightscdc.org to view and download this booklet. The website also includes:

- Fill-able IPDP forms
- Examples of completed IPDPs
- Handouts to support IPDP development
- Career ladder and pathways information for early childhood and afterschool professionals
- Resource Development Specialists and others to help you with your IPDP
- Bright Futures Information System (BFIS) access and information

Other Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bright Futures Information System (BFIS)</th>
<th><a href="http://bfishelp.ahs.state.vt.us">http://bfishelp.ahs.state.vt.us</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Get a username, password or change your password to log-in to your own Quality and Credential account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Online IPDP you can fill in and update, in your individual Quality and Credential Account (under Resume)</td>
<td><a href="http://brightfutures.dcf.state.vt.us">http://brightfutures.dcf.state.vt.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA (Child Development Associate Credential) - Council for Professional Recognition</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cdacouncil.org">http://www.cdacouncil.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Development Division</td>
<td><a href="http://dcf.vermont.gov/CDD/">http://dcf.vermont.gov/CDD/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Under “professional development” find resources including grants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Link to BFIS and your Quality Credential Account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children (VAEYC)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.vaeyc.org">http://www.vaeyc.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont Center for Afterschool Excellence</td>
<td><a href="http://vermontafterschool.org/">http://vermontafterschool.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont Child Care Apprenticeship Program in the VT Child Care Industry and Careers Council</td>
<td><a href="http://www.vermontchildcareindustry.org">http://www.vermontchildcareindustry.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont Child Care Providers Association</td>
<td><a href="http://vccpa.org/">http://vccpa.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont Department of Education</td>
<td><a href="http://education.vermont.gov">http://education.vermont.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• IPDP requirements and standards for licensed educators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning Your Professional Growth for Early Childhood And Afterschool Professionals: A Step-By-Step Guide To Creating Your Individual Professional Development Plan was created and then printed in June 2001 by the Professional Preparation and Development Committee of the Vermont Early Childhood Workgroup. In 2005 it was uploaded on to the Northern Lights website. The booklet was updated and re-printed in 2007 by Northern Lights Career Development Center for early childhood and afterschool professionals. In the fall of 2010 Northern Lights Career Development Center asked the Professional Preparation and Development committee of Building Bright Futures state council, to review and offer suggestions to improve and update the booklet. Guided by this feedback, a dedicated committee then created the current June 2011 edition.

Northern Lights Career Development Center staff wish to especially thank Heather Mattison for her work; Jackie Sprague, Ellen Drollette, Anne Gleason and Trisha Scharf for their suggestions and feedback; the Professional Preparation and Development Committee for their guidance; and the Vermont Child Development Division for their partnership and funding. Finally, we wish to thank and acknowledge the hundreds of early care and afterschool professionals who participated in IPDP trainings, submitted their IPDPs and worked with Northern Lights staff and others to develop IPDPs. Their experiences and perspectives served as the foundation for this work.