

# Vermont Early Childhood Career Ladder

## Level II

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. The Career Ladder may be used by early childhood professionals for tracking and planning 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 a Level II Certificate?

Level II is the step beyond entry level knowledge and skills. To earn a Level II certificate, submit a completed Level II application to Northern Lights with documentation of: 1) at least two years' experience working with young children in a group setting; 2) a current Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP); and 3) documentation of successful completion of any one of these three education options:

- current Child Development Associate Credential (CDA), OR
- 12 related college credits (4 courses) in at least 2 Vermont Core Knowledge Areas and two documented observations of you working with children OR
- Northern Lights approved portfolio with 120 hours of verified training

### Why is completing Level II important?

As you prepare your Level II certificate, you will gain knowledge and skills. A CDA credential is recognized across the nation. When you earn a Level II certificate you are recognized for your accomplishment, and you may also be eligible for a Recognition Bonus from the Child Development Division. In addition, your program may earn a higher score on the Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS) application. The CDA and Level II certificate also help meet staff qualifications in the child care licensing regulations.



*"I have learned so much while getting my CDA. I see myself as a professional now."*

### Resources:

#### Northern Lights Career Development Center

- *Competencies and Standards* the VT Core Knowledge Areas
- *Early Childhood Career Ladder* the Level II application and details
- *Resources* to find your local Resource Development Specialist
- *Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)*
- *College and University Pathways*

#### Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS)

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

see *Arena: staff qualifications and annual professional development*

**Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center**

<http://northernlightscdc.org>

**Phone: (802)828-2876**

*See the reverse side for more information on Level II*

# Vermont Early Childhood Career Ladder

## Level II (continued)



### Gaining Training Hours

Each of the Community Child Care support agencies offers coursework called *Beyond the Fundamentals*. These modules are based on the Core Knowledge Areas and Competencies for early childhood professionals and the CDA credential subject areas. They include:

- Observing and Recording Children's Behavior
- Social and Emotional Health and Development
- Introduction to Learning Standards for Young Children
- Relationships with Families
- Nutrition and Physical Activity
- Professionalism and Program Planning: Policy Development
- Child Development and Learning

### What is the Northern Lights approved portfolio?

One way to complete the education requirement for Level II is to create a portfolio with: 1) documentation of your attendance at 120 hours of training across the five Core Knowledge Areas; 2) documents that show what you know and how you use the Level II core competencies; and 3) two documentations of you being observed while teaching. The portfolio is then reviewed and approved. This option is useful if you have not taken college courses, have collected many hours of training over several years and like to write and organize your learning. You must contact Northern Lights before you plan to apply.

### What about College Credit?

When you work in child care, there are many resources to help you take college courses free of charge or at low cost. On your way to you a college degree, you can earn a Level II certificate by completing 4 courses (12 credits) in at least two of the Core Knowledge Areas.

### What is the required Observation?

If you complete the education requirement for Level II either by taking college courses or by creating an approved portfolio, you will need to be observed twice by an experienced mentor, while you are working with children. Your local Resource Development Specialist can help you find the person to do this observation. The observer gives you supportive feedback about what she sees.



*"When I was ready to apply for my CDA, I also applied to the Child Development Division to pay the application fee. When I got my CDA I applied for a Level II certificate and also got a Recognition Bonus!"*

### More Resources:

Bright Futures Information System:

<http://brightfutures.dcf.state.vt.us/>

See *Course Calendar* to find Beyond the Fundamentals modules

Child Development Associate Credential (CDA): Council for Professional Recognition  
<http://cdacouncil.org/>

The Vermont Child Care Industry and Careers Council sponsors free or low cost college courses  
<http://vtchildcareindustry.org/>

Community College of VT  
<http://www.ccv.edu/>

<http://northernlightscdc.org>

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