

# Vermont Early Childhood Career Ladder

## Level IV



### What is the Career Ladder?

The Career Ladder identifies the six career levels of early childhood professional development. It serves as a basis for tracking and planning your 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 Knowledge Areas and Competencies provide the foundation for this system.

### What is Level IV?

You reach Level IV when you have at least two years' experience working with young children, a current Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP), and completed education through college coursework.

Level IVA education requirement is ONE of these:

- Bachelor Degree in early childhood education or related field OR
- Bachelor Degree with at least 30 related college credits in at least 3 of the Vermont Core Knowledge Areas.

Level IVB includes one of the above with Vermont Agency of Education professional educator's licensure with an endorsement in early childhood, early childhood special education, or elementary education. Your student teaching may count as part of your two years' work experience.

### Why is completing Level IV important?

Reaching Level IV is a significant accomplishment in your career showing your dedication to the profession. Many people who achieve Level IV are in charge of their own classroom, oversee the work of other staff, or are directors of programs. By achieving Level IV, you have more job opportunities and will likely earn a higher wage.

### How do I apply for a Level IV certificate?

Please submit a completed Level IV application, current IPDP and a copy of your transcript as issued by the college registrar to Northern Lights. Applications are on the Northern Lights website.



*"I have over 60 credits and am more than half way to my Bachelor Degree. I think I want to get my teaching license too, because it will give me even more options."*

### Resources On the Northern Lights website

#### Career Pathways

- *Early Childhood Career Ladder* and links
- *College and University Pathways*

#### Training and Coursework

- *College and University Coursework*
- *Financial Assistance*

#### Roles - find related careers

- *Program Directors* and the Program Director Credential
- *Instructors* and the Instructor Registry
- *Mentoring, coaching, consulting (MATCH)*

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

See the reverse side for more information on Level IV

# Vermont Early Childhood Career Ladder

## Level IV (continued)



*"The college courses I took also helped me achieve my Program Director Credential."*

### More Resources:

VSAC

[www.vsac.org](http://www.vsac.org)

Child Development Division grants  
<http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/grants>

Vermont Agency of Education  
<http://education.vermont.gov/>

STARS (Step Ahead Recognition System)  
<http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/stars>

see Arena: *staff qualifications*

### VT Early Childhood Core Knowledge Areas

Child Development  
Families and Communities  
Teaching and Learning  
Healthy and Safe  
Environments  
Professionalism and Program Management

### What do I get when I achieve Level IV?

You are seen as a professional with a commitment to the field and many opportunities for employment. Head Start and other programs specifically look for staff with a Bachelor Degree. Your degree is more valuable to programs seeking national accreditation or recognition such as STARS (Step Ahead Recognition System). With a Vermont teaching license, you may choose to work for the public schools or in partnership with public schools. Also, you may earn a bonus from the Child Development Division for earning a Level IV certificate and an additional bonus for earning a teaching license with related endorsement (IVB).

### How do I pay for college courses?

There are grants, scholarships, loans and low cost courses. The Child Development Division offers grants for college courses. There are a number of options to earn college credits by documenting learning through experience. Talk with the college you are planning to attend, and the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) about financial aid. Also, check with your employer.

### Can I earn a Level IV certificate if my Bachelor Degree was not in education?

Yes! Northern Lights reviews your transcript and if you have successfully completed 30 credits in three or more Core Knowledge Areas (see side bar) you have met the education requirement for Level IV. This may include credits earned after you achieved your degree.

### How do I earn an educator licensure from the Vermont Agency of Education Standards Board?

You can achieve educator licensure in one of two ways. One is to graduate from a college or university that is approved to recommend you for educator licensure. The second is to submit a professional portfolio for peer review to the Agency of Education. Every licensed educator also has one or more endorsements, which defines the age group or topic that you can teach. To achieve a Level IVB certificate you will need an endorsement in early childhood, early childhood special education or elementary education.

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**Northern Lights Career Development Center**  
660 Elm St, PO Box 489  
Montpelier, VT 05601