

The Vermont Career Ladder for early childhood professionals



"I applied to Northern Lights to receive a Level certificate when I completed college course work. I put the certificate on the wall, I got a higher score on my STARS application and a Recognition Bonus from the Child Development Division!"

On the Northern Lights website under CAREER PATHWAYS

- Early Childhood Career Ladder with live links, details and applications for each level
- Career Advising Guide
- Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)
- VT Core Knowledge and Competencies
- College and University coursework and pathways
- Teacher Licensing

What is the Career Ladder?

It is a tool for tracking and planning professional growth. The Ladder organizes coursework, credentials, degrees and licensure into one Northern Lights (NL) Professional Development System. Each of the six levels requires: education, a current Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) and professional experience with children and families. Levels I - III also require the applicant to be observed working with children. You can start at any level.

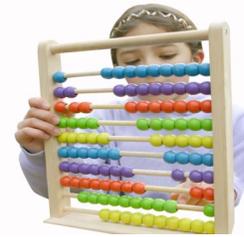
Vermont Northern Lights Career Ladder

Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Level V	Level VI
<p>1. <u>Fundamentals for Early Childhood Professionals</u> course (45 hours)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>2. <u>3 related college credits (1 course)</u> in child development, approved observation of the practitioner & workshops: Basic Specialized Care and Introduction to child care licensing regulations</p> <p>OR</p> <p>3. <u>NL approved Level I Portfolio</u> with documented evidence, 45 training hours, and approved observation of the practitioner</p>	<p>1. <u>Current Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential</u></p> <p>OR</p> <p>2. <u>12 related college credits</u> (4 courses) in at least 2 VT Core Knowledge areas & approved observations of the practitioner</p> <p>OR</p> <p>3. <u>NL approved Level II portfolio</u> with documented 120 training hours</p>	<p>A)</p> <p>1. <u>Completed Vermont Child Care Registered Apprentice</u></p> <p>OR</p> <p>2. <u>CCV's Child Care Certificate</u></p> <p>OR</p> <p>3. <u>21 related college credits (7 courses)</u> in at least 3 VT Core Knowledge areas & approved observations of the practitioner</p> <p>B)</p> <p>1. <u>Associate Degree</u> in early childhood education or a related field</p> <p>OR</p> <p>2. Any Associate Degree with 21 related college credits in at least 3 VT Core Knowledge areas</p>	<p>A)</p> <p>1. <u>Bachelor Degree</u> in early childhood education or related field</p> <p>OR</p> <p>2. Bachelor Degree with 30 related college credits in at least 3 of the VT Core Knowledge Areas</p> <p>B) Above with <u>VT Educator License with endorsement</u> in early childhood, early childhood special education or elementary education</p>	<p>A)</p> <p><u>Master Degree</u> in early childhood education or related field</p>	<p><u>Doctoral Degree</u> in early childhood education or related field</p>
Experience one year or more	2 years or more	2 years or more	2 years or more including student teaching	2 years or more	2 years or more

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

See the reverse side for information on the Vermont Northern Lights Career Ladder

The Vermont Career Ladder for early childhood professionals (continued)



"When I found myself on the Career Ladder and Lattice, I could trace my career path and get an idea of where I might go next."

Where do I fit in?

Some professionals start at Level I, some at Level IV. Each person completes a level at his or her own pace. The Career Ladder is a guide. A Level Certificate recognizes your accumulated skills and knowledge. There are many different routes to achieve a Level.

What are the "related fields and credits" and "Core Knowledge Areas" referred to in the Career Ladder?

Related Fields refer to a college degree with a major or concentration in one of the following areas: Early Childhood, Child or Human Development, Education (early childhood, elementary or special education), or Child and Family Studies.

Related Credits are college courses in fields such as the ones above or psychology, mental health, sociology, human services, social sciences, social services, or business administration (related to early childhood or afterschool program management). They must ALSO directly relate to one or more of the Core Knowledge Areas listed below, to earn a Level on the Career Ladder.

5 Vermont Core Knowledge Areas include: Families and Communities, Child Development, Healthy and Safe Environments, Teaching and Learning, Professionalism and Program Organization. The *Core Competencies* for early childhood and afterschool professionals describe each of these Knowledge Areas in detail.

What does achieving a Level mean?

You have achieved a milestone in your career pathway! You may also benefit from: a Professional Recognition bonus from the Child Development Division (CDD); a higher score in the Vermont Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS) staff qualifications arena; meeting a requirement in the child care program regulations.

How long do I have to achieve a Level?

You may take as long as you need to meet the Level requirements and you can apply for a Level certificate any time after achieving the education and experience listed. However, there ARE time limitations for gaining the other benefits described above.

What is the Career Lattice?

The Career Lattice shows how the Career Ladder connects with different work settings. It is a frame of reference that gives examples of which jobs tend to be at each level of the Ladder. You can find the Career Lattice in the *Career Advising Guide* and on the Northern Lights website.

Did You Know...?

- Northern Lights staff review applications, and issue the Level certificates. We forward your Level application to the Child Development Division (CDD) for consideration of a Recognition Bonus.
- When you complete college coursework you need to request a transcript from the college registrar to attach with your Level application. It can be official or unofficial.

More Resources

STARS website

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

VT Agency of Education:
Educator Licensing

[http://
education.vermont.gov/](http://education.vermont.gov/)

<http://northernlightscdc.org>

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