

CORE KNOWLEDGE *and* COMPETENCIES

— *For Early Childhood Professionals* —



**Vermont Northern Lights
Career Development Center**

2017

...of the Community College of Vermont and Funded by the Child Development Division,
Department for Children and Families of the Agency of Human Services

EARLY CHILDHOOD CORE KNOWLEDGE AREAS *and* SUBHEADINGS

— *For Early Childhood Professionals, 2017* —

CHILD DEVELOPMENT - Promoting Child Development and Learning

- A. How Children Develop
- B. Influences on Child Development
- C. Individual Variance

FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES - Building Family and Community Relationships

- A. Relationships
- B. Communication with Families
- C. Community Involvement and Resources
- D. Welcoming all Families

OBSERVING AND ASSESSING - Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families

- A. Objective Observation and Documentation
- B. Assessment
- C. Including all Children and Families in the Assessment Process

HOW WE TEACH - Using Developmentally Effective Approaches

- A. Interactions
- B. Learning Environments
- C. Developmentally Appropriate Teaching

WHAT WE TEACH - Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum

- A. VELs Area 1: Developing Self - Approaches to Learning
- B. VELs Area 1: Developing Self - Social and Emotional Development

C. VELs Area 1: Developing Self - Growing, Moving and Being Healthy

D. VELs Area 2: Communication and Expression

E. VELs Area 3: Learning About our World: Mathematics, Science and Social Studies

HEALTH, SAFETY, NUTRITION - Ensuring Healthy, Safe Environments and Good Nutrition

- A. Healthy Environments and Health Needs
- B. Safe Environments
- C. Nutrition
- D. Physical Activity

PROFESSIONALISM - Growing as a Professional

- A. Professionalism
- B. Ethics and Professional Development
- C. Leadership
- D. Collegueship

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION - Managing and Administering Programs

- A. All Staff Including Directors:
 - 1. Program Organization and Regulations
 - 2. Staff Contributions
- B. Directors, Administrators, Owners:
 - 1. Administration
 - 2. Management of Personnel and Hiring
 - 3. Legal and Fiscal Management

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This entire document can also be downloaded at no cost from the Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center website: <http://northernlightscdc.org>. The core knowledge and competencies (section 2) is also available as a separate document on the website. • The 2017 Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals are in effect as of August 1, 2017. Generously supported by the Child Development Division, Department for Children and Families, Vermont Agency of Human Services.

INTRODUCTION

*Core knowledge
and competencies
provide the
foundation of
Vermont’s professional
development
system.*

Welcome to the Northern Lights Career Development Center’s Core Knowledge and Competencies for Vermont’s Early Childhood Professionals. This book includes the knowledge and competencies and describes their development and uses.

The Northern Lights Career Development Center is part of the Community College of Vermont. The Center is the hub of Vermont’s unified system of professional development for early childhood and afterschool professionals. A primary goal of the professional development system is to maintain and enhance a comprehensive, quality, statewide professional development system that:

- provides evidence-informed professional development opportunities for the workforce led by skilled instructors, mentors, or coaches;
- aligns with program and professional standards, requirements, and regulations; and
- recognizes accomplishments of professionals in the field.

The professional development system aims to be consistent, accessible, and responsive to the needs of early childhood and afterschool professionals from entry to advanced levels. Core knowledge and competencies provide the foundation of Vermont’s professional development system. They strengthen the system by creating common language and expectations for the professionals working with young children.

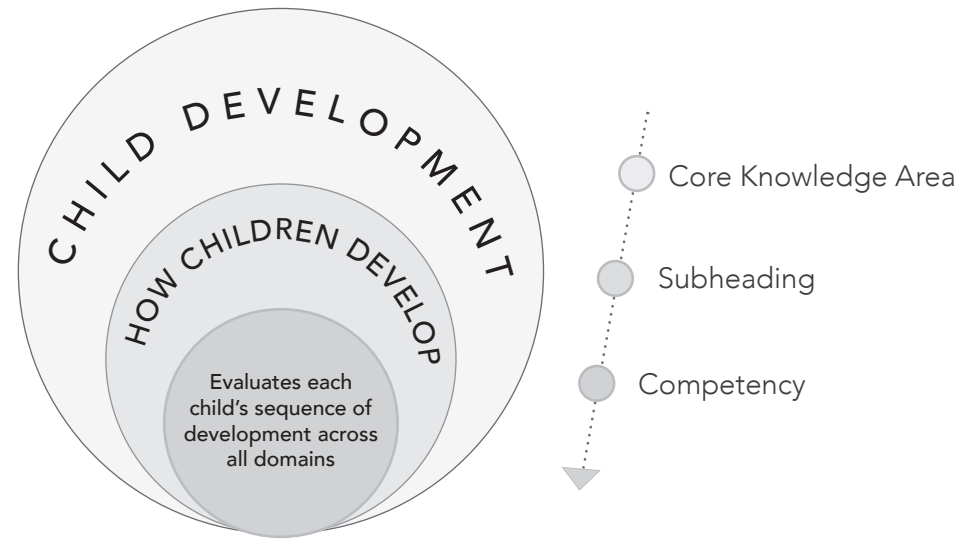
A. What are Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals?

The core knowledge and competencies are the basis or core of what early childhood practitioners should know and do. They are a primary tool for professionals supporting services to children age birth to age 8 (or grade 3) and their families. They provide a framework for career pathways, coursework and training content, professional development planning, and documentation of achievement. They are used by professionals already working in the field and individuals preparing to enter the field.

Core knowledge areas define eight broad areas of knowledge essential to early childhood professionals. The 2017 early childhood core knowledge areas align with the Vermont Agency of Education teaching standards for an early childhood endorsement (2015) and with the National Association of Young Children (NAEYC) Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation (2010).

Subheadings break the core knowledge areas into smaller chunks. They describe the components that make up each core knowledge area.

Core competencies are the smallest component. Each subheading has multiple competencies that describe concrete, observable skills needed by professionals to provide quality services. This booklet also includes examples of core competencies in practice. Competencies are also called standards of practice.

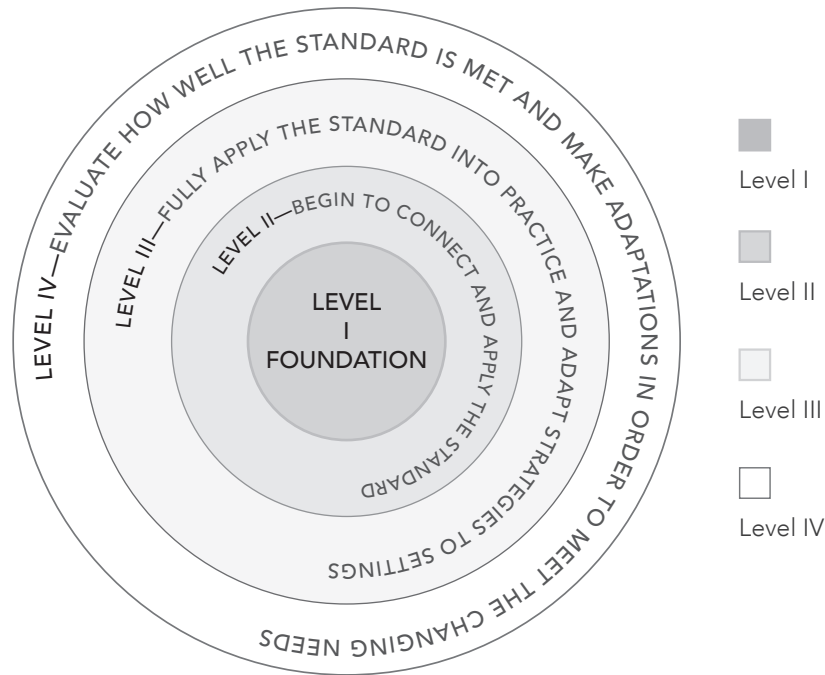


In addition to categorizing the knowledge and related skills, the core knowledge and competencies define the expectations from foundational through advanced levels. There are four levels, I - IV, in the Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals. They build on each other: level IV includes all of the other levels, level III includes levels I and II, and level II includes level I.

The competencies, or standards of practice, define the progression of the levels.

- Professionals meeting level I have a foundational understanding of professional requirements and meet essential standards for child engagement, health, and safety.
- Professionals meeting level I and II begin to connect and apply the standard to working with children and families.
- Professionals meeting level I-III fully apply the standard into practice and adapt strategies to different settings and situations
- Professionals meeting level I-IV evaluate how well the standard is met and make adaptations in order continually meet the changing needs of children, families, and colleagues.

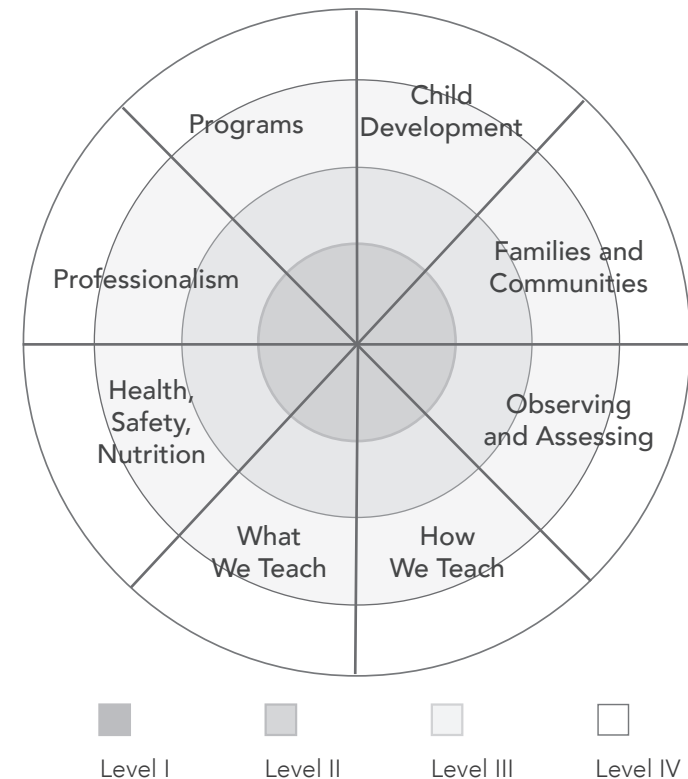
It is possible for an individual to be at different levels within each core knowledge area. Professional growth depends on three things: experience, education, and quality supervision or mentoring. It is important to develop and grow professional skills and knowledge throughout one's career.



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Together, the core knowledge and competencies and the levels create a career pathway that enables early childhood professionals to assess their skills and identify next steps in their professional development.

The early childhood core knowledge and competencies can provide a base for a range of professionals. Specialized professionals, such as home visitors, nurses, or mentors, need to gain additional competencies related to their discipline.



B. What are dispositions?

For the first time, the Vermont Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals include dispositions. The 2014 Vermont Agency of Education teacher standards also include dispositions. Professional dispositions are attitudes, beliefs, or values that professionals demonstrate while working with children, families, and colleagues. Dispositions impact each of the core knowledge and competencies. Dispositions are both integrated and distinct from the core knowledge areas and competencies.

Dispositions Defined

Lillian Katz first described dispositions specific to early childhood educators in 1979. She defined them as “a tendency to exhibit frequently, consciously, and voluntarily a pattern of behavior that is directed to a broad goal. Habits of mind (rather than mindless habits).”

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) defines professional dispositions in their glossary as: “professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues, and communities. These positive behaviors support student learning and development.”

Dispositions can be taught to educators along with knowledge and skills. Teachers’ dispositions impact and influence the children and families they serve.

Developing positive dispositions can make work in the early childhood field rewarding and fulfilling.

Dispositions can be used in many ways to support one’s own or other’s professional reflection, assessment, behavior, and development. Here are a few ideas that you can do on your own or with a group of colleagues.

- Rate yourself on a scale of 1-3 on how well you meet each of the dispositions listed. Identify one or two you might want to work on and why. Plan how you would regularly practice this disposition.
- Consider each of the dispositions. How do you know when someone has this disposition? What might an early childhood teacher do when demonstrating it? How would an instructor demonstrate it? Or a program director? Or a mentor?
- We learn best when we are recognized for what we do well. How might you recognize or praise someone who demonstrates one of the dispositions? How else might you support the development of positive dispositions in others?

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Vermont's Early Childhood Professional Dispositions¹

1. Delights in and is curious about children and how they grow and learn
2. Appreciates and supports the unique and vital role of families in their children's lives
3. Is eager to learn new knowledge and skills that will support young children's development and learning
4. Models the attitudes and behaviors that she/he values in children
5. Values and celebrates the diversity found among children and their families and in the world around them
6. Is willing to ask for help, learn from others, and accept constructive criticism
7. Reflects on the personal beliefs and values that influence her/his own actions
8. Shows respect for children, families, and colleagues by maintaining confidentiality
9. Communicates clearly, respectfully, and effectively with children and adults; responds to challenges and changes with flexibility, perseverance, and cooperation
10. Expresses her/his own emotions in healthy and constructive ways
11. Values and nurtures imagination, creativity and play, both in children and in herself/himself
12. Demonstrates responsible professional and personal habits in working and interacting with others
13. Has a collaborative attitude

¹Adapted from the Expanded Glossary in the Pennsylvania Core Knowledge Competencies for Early Childhood and Afterschool Professionals; January 2014; Office of Child Development and Early Learning; PA Department of Education and Department of Public Welfare.

A teacher may have the skills to change a child's diaper correctly, but does he or she also have the disposition to appreciate the interaction with that child?

Core Knowledge Area: CHILD DEVELOPMENT — Promoting Child Development and Learning

CHILD DEVELOPMENT — Promoting Child Development and Learning
 Early childhood professionals understand how children develop and the multiple interacting influences on development and learning. They recognize the knowledge base is ever expanding and continue to be informed by current research. They use their understanding of child development, combined with their understanding of each child as an individual, to support every child's development and the development of the group of learners together. Early childhood educators use child development as the foundation for assessing children, designing positive and responsive learning environments and interactions with children, and as a common language in their communication with families and other professionals.

Sub-headings:
 A. How Children Develop addresses the principles and process of physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development, developmental norms and milestones, birth to grade 3.
 B. Influences on Child Development includes the biological, genetic, environmental, cultural factors and experiences that play a role in development.
 C. Individual Variance includes the factors within the child that play a role in development, including temperament and resiliency.

	Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Example
A. How Children Develop	1. Describes important principles and concepts of children's growth and development.	Describes major theorists and theories of child development.	Applies principles and concepts of child development theories in working with children.	Uses specific and current theories of child development to analyze and explain child development and learning.	I noticed how Chloe's play has changed over time after she started to talk as a phone, instead of the top phone. This is an important step in her development.
2. Identifies different domains of child development (physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional) through grade 3 and how they link to the VT Early Learning Standards (VELS).	Describes how the domains and milestones in the sequence of child development, are addressed in the program setting and linked to the VT Early Learning Standards (VELS).	Evaluates each child's sequence of development across domains.	Evaluates to what degree the domains are fully addressed and adapted to the needs of each child.	There is a section on social development in the program. I refer to it throughout the year when we look at particular children's development or if a teacher has a concern.	
3. Identifies how healthy brain growth impacts development and learning.	Names a variety of practices that support healthy brain development.	Applies knowledge of brain development to facilitate children's (continued)	Applies knowledge of brain development to facilitate children's (continued)	Analyzes how effective practices support brain development and (continued)	

16 | VT Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies

Core Knowledge

Level

Subheading

Core Competency

Example

- Colleges and other organizations providing professional development
- Professionals or organizations that develop or review courses, credentials, or degrees
- Instructors of early childhood professionals
- Mentors, career advisors, or coaches of early childhood professionals
- Supervisors or directors of programs
- Policy makers and administrators addressing early childhood professional development systems

Here are examples of how the early childhood core knowledge and competencies can be used:

Practitioners and professionals working directly with children and families use them to assess their own skills and to identify their learning needs and strengths to create Individual Professional Development Plans (IPDP).

Supervisors, administrators, and advisors use them to develop job descriptions, performance evaluations, and staff orientations. They also can be used to assess learning needs and inform recommendations and plans for professional development of staff or students.

Instructors and those who sponsor or plan professional development use them to design and evaluate course content and to organize professional development opportunities across core knowledge areas.

Curricula evaluators use them to assess relevance of course/workshop content related to program licensing regulations or degree requirements.

C. How does one use the Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals?

The core knowledge and competencies are a useful reference for anyone who wants to learn about the knowledge and skills needed to work in a program serving children ages birth to grade three and their families.

Audiences include:

- Child care providers in center based, family child care, or afterschool programs
- Public school teachers and paraprofessionals working with children ages birth to grade three and their families
- Students, volunteers, and others interested in learning about this profession

D. How do Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals connect to other quality standards?

Standards are a way to measure whether we are providing quality services. In a service system, standards give us a common way to talk about what we mean by quality and how we know when we reach it.

When we provide care and education to young children and their families, we are providing a service. There are three basic parts to any service system:

- the program that delivers the service;
- the people who receive the service;
- and the people who provide the service.

Standards of quality relate to these three parts. Like gears, these different standards need to connect in order to function effectively.

The program that delivers the service is guided by PROGRAM STANDARDS. These standards define answers to questions such as: is the environment safe and healthy; are the staff prepared and ready to care for the children; are families welcomed and involved in the program; is the budget balanced?

In Vermont, program standards are set by Vermont Child Care Program Licensing Regulations. Vermont also has a program quality and improvement system based on state child care licensing regulations. The STep Ahead Recognition System (STARS) defines standards for

licensed and registered child care and afterschool programs. National organizations such as the National Head Start Association, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), National Association of Family Child Care, and Council on Accreditation also define program standards. These different program standards are used to rate programs and recognize programs of quality. Directors, owners, and administrators use these standards to assess and improve the quality of their own programs.



The people who receive services are consumers. In the world of early childhood education, the consumers are children and their families. **LEARNING STANDARDS** for children can be used to guide our expectations for children and assess the quality of the services provided. For example, early childhood learning standards measure whether children are engaged in play that is helping them develop their skills and knowledge; are using a variety of ways to express their own ideas; and are engaging with others.

The Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS) are for young children ages birth to grade three.

These standards include the Agency of Education Common Core standards for children in kindergarten through high school as well as national mathematics and science standards. Professionals use learning standards to guide curriculum, frame learning plans for individual children, and inform families and others about children's development.



Finally, standards that guide **people who provide services** are **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**. There are many professionals in the early childhood and afterschool field including teachers, childcare providers, and directors. All influence children's development and growth and have a responsibility to seek to meet the standards of the profession. Professional standards help teachers and their supervisors consider required skills and knowledge such as setting accurate expectations of children, knowing and using community resources,

setting up engaging environments for young children, and working effectively in a team with other adults.



The Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals are the foundation of professional standards for the early childhood field. They provide a common language to define the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that professionals strive to develop. The 2017 early childhood core knowledge and competencies align with the Vermont Agency of Education teacher standards for early childhood endorsement and the NAEYC teacher preparation standards.



These three types of standards work together. Like gears, they are inter-dependent. Together they help define goals, identify a path to quality, and measure how well we are doing.

The Core Knowledge and Competencies align and integrate with the other Vermont standards.

- They serve as the foundation from which other professional standards branch such as the program director or infant toddler competencies.
- The core knowledge areas and levels frame the Early Childhood Career Ladder and related level certificates. These certificates are recognized in Vermont’s child care program licensing regulations and STARS (STep Ahead Recognition System).
- The knowledge areas and subheadings define the related training

hours and credits that meet the child care program licensing regulations, early childhood certificates, and credentials.

- The knowledge areas form the framework for a common Individual Professional Development Plan required by staff working in regulated programs.

I use the core competencies to plan the course I am teaching college students, and I also know the Vermont Early Learning Standards and STARS program standards – since I plan to teach about these to my students.

I use program standards as a program assessment so my child care is a high quality program. I use professional standards to help my staff grow, and learning standards to plan the curriculum.

E. Where do the 2017 Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals come from?

The first Vermont Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals were developed in 2005 based on work begun by the Vermont Professional Preparation and Development committee and printed in 2006 by Northern Lights Career Development Center. They were aligned with the NAEYC professional standards at that time. In 2008 they were reviewed by a broad range of stakeholders over nine months, re-written, and re-printed. The 2008 standards detailed three levels, with a crosswalk to the Vermont Agency of Education teacher standards for higher levels. In 2013 the narrative of the booklet was updated.

Multiple updates and changes have impacted the current revision of the Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals.

- In 2010 the NAEYC core teaching standards were revised.
- In 2015 the Vermont Agency of Education teacher standards for an early childhood endorsement were updated and aligned with current NAEYC teacher preparation standards.
- In 2015 Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation was published by the National Academies Press, Institute of Medicine and National Research Council. This book provided a detailed summary of the status of the workforce, results of research, and recommendations for change. Chapter 7 focused on knowledge and competencies.
- In 2015 the Vermont Early Learning Standards were updated and, for the first time, fully included age birth to grade 3. They incorporated

the Common Core standards as well as other national learning standards.

- In 2016 the Vermont Child Development Division completed the revision of the child care program licensing regulations incorporating new federal health and safety regulations for programs and staff.

These changes, current models from other states, collected feedback from the field about the 2013 Core Knowledge Areas and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals, and the work of a 2016 workgroup and review team in Vermont informed the revisions of the 2017 Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals.

See the References and Resources section of this booklet for a detailed list of resources used.

The 2017 Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals:

- Are based on the foundation of the Vermont Child Development Division regulation requirements for staff working in Vermont child care programs, particularly in the areas of health and safety;
- Fully include staff working with children ages birth to grade three in diverse group settings;
- Align with the Vermont Agency of Education teacher standards for an early childhood endorsement and include two additional NAEYC professional teacher preparation standards: program management and health and safety. There are now eight core areas instead of five;
- Specifically reference the 2015 Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS) in the “What We Teach” knowledge area;
- Distinguish program management competencies needed by a) all staff, and b) owners, directors, and administrators;
- Clarify and deepen competencies in the “Healthy and Safe

Environments and Nutrition” by fully including physical activity (in “Healthy Safe Environments and Nutrition” and also “What We Teach”); naming nutrition in the core knowledge area title; enhancing focus on current standards of health, safety, and nutrition aligned with new federal standards; separating mental health from the health and safety knowledge area to fully include it in child development and curriculum areas;

- Add and strengthen current evidence-based content including dual language learners; use of technology; cultural competence; full inclusion of children and families; impact of trauma; advocacy; self-care; self-reflection; and specific roles of director, instructor, mentor, leader;
- Include new content defining level IV, which aligns with the Vermont Agency of Education teacher standards for early childhood endorsement;
- Define and describe the consecutive progression from levels I - IV using a new format presenting the levels together; and
- Include professional dispositions.

F. Acknowledgements

The following groups and individuals were particularly helpful in the development of the 2017 Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals.

Members the Building Bright Futures – Early Childhood Action Plan committees:

- Professional Preparation and Development Committee
- Early Childhood Wellness Committee

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CHILD DEVELOPMENT — Promoting Child Development and Learning

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		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
CHILD DEVELOPMENT	A. How Children Develop	1	Describes important principles and concepts of children’s growth and development	Describes major theorists and theories of child development	Applies principles and concepts of child development theories in working with children	Uses specific and current theories of child development to analyze and explain child development and learning	<i>I noticed how Chloe’s play has changed over time. She is now using a block as a phone, instead of the toy phone. This is an important step in her development.</i>
		2	Identifies different domains of child development birth through grade 3 and how they link to the VT Early Learning Standards (VELS)	Describes how the domains and milestones in the sequence of child development are addressed in the program setting and linked to the VT Early Learning Standards (VELS)	Evaluates each child’s sequence of development across all domains	Evaluates to what degree the domains are fully addressed, and adapted to the needs of each child	
		3	Identifies how healthy brain growth impacts development and learning	Names a variety of practices that support healthy brain development	Applies knowledge of brain development to facilitate children’s development <i>(continued)</i>	Analyzes how effective practices support brain development and <i>(continued)</i>	

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples
CHILD DEVELOPMENT	A. How Children Develop (Continued)			learning, development and self-regulation	learning, and how teachers use these to guide and support children	
	4	Identifies the role of play in children’s overall development, and the stages of children’s play development	Explains how exploration and play is a driving force in children’s development and the construction of knowledge	Provides play environments, activities, and experiences that foster children’s active exploration, communication, and problem solving	Evaluates environments, experiences, and activities which facilitate the construction of knowledge and skills through play	<i>I understand from the brain research that letting children repeat favorite activities helps their learning.</i>
	B. Influences on Child Development			Supports children in creating healthy attachments with families, staff, peers and other community members	Examines how classroom practices support child development through reciprocal relationships and positive interactions with each person the child encounters	
	1	Identifies how child development depends on the child experiencing healthy attachments, and supportive and reciprocal relationships	Explains different patterns of attachment, and models reciprocal and supportive relationships with children			<i>I feel Tyrone and I have developed a strong attachment. I think it lets Tyrone feel safe enough to leave my side to go off and play and come back to check in with me occasionally.</i>
	2	Lists conditions and policies that impact child development and learning such as poverty, inclusion, diversity, safety, etc.	Recognizes the impact of conditions and policies such as poverty, inclusion, diversity, safety, etc. on the children’s development	Employs strategies that support and optimize children’s development	Designs policies and strategies to address conditions that impact child development and learning	<i>I noticed after Jamie’s grandfather died he would sometimes be really quiet and seem sad, and at other times he would be angry and run around. We read a book I found about loss and grief, and how it makes you feel.</i>
	3	Identifies factors in the environment that impact development including prenatal factors, pollutants, media, and contaminants	Describes specific ways that environmental factors impact development including prenatal factors, pollutants, media and contaminants	Works with others to identify environmental factors in the classroom and in homes, that can impact development	Participates in community activities and advocates for healthy environments for children and families	
	4	Recognizes that stress resulting from trauma, <i>(continued)</i>	Identifies possible behaviors of children <i>(continued)</i>	Identifies and uses various strategies to <i>(continued)</i>	Analyzes behavioral changes as possible <i>(continued)</i>	

Core Knowledge Area: **CHILD DEVELOPMENT** — Promoting Child Development and Learning

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
CHILD DEVELOPMENT	B. Influences on Child Development (Continued)	loss, abuse, neglect, and other factors influences development and behavior in different ways	who have experienced stress from trauma, abuse, neglect, loss and other factors, and the causes of those behaviors	assist children who experience stress from trauma, abuse, neglect, loss and other factors	indicators of the presence of stress, trauma, abuse, neglect, loss, etc. and takes appropriate action		
	C. Individual Variance	1	Defines temperament and the role it plays in how children respond to people and the environment	Considers temperament when explaining children’s development, and behavior to families and specialists	Recognizes the relationship between temperament and parenting/caregiving/teaching and provides guidance to respond to all temperaments	Collaborates with families and others to develop a good fit between expectations and a child’s temperament	<p><i>John has better expressive language than receptive language, which is different from what I expected. The speech pathologist is helping me understand John’s unique way of learning and communicating.</i></p> <p><i>Ben is a feisty, active kindergartener. I value how he goes after what he wants. I share observations and stories about Ben with his family, to help them understand his temperament and value the way he reacts to the world around him.</i></p>
		2	Describes how individual children develop and learn at different rates and in various ways	Applies knowledge of child growth, development, and learning to establish appropriate expectations, with adaptations for individual children	Tailors the learning environment and experiences to each child based on information about his or her development, learning, needs, and interests	Researches and updates information on typical and atypical child development to provide to other adults and families	
		3	Describes the ways that children’s age, development, culture, language, and ability differences influence early development	Identifies strengths, needs, and interests of each child and develops strategies to support each child’s development and learning	Tailors activities, interactions, environment and experiences to reflect the children’s ages, development, cultures, languages and abilities in the context of the group	Assesses and modifies as needed decisions made in the selection of materials, groupings, staffing, and environments to best meet the individual needs of the child	

Notes

FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES - Building Family and Community Relationships

Early childhood professionals understand that children are members of a family and that both the family and the program are part of a community. They work in partnership with families and understand the complex characteristics and relationships found in both families and communities. They use this understanding to create respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families.

Subheadings:

- A. Relationships** addresses the central role of the family and the importance of relationships with and between families, recognizing family culture and family strengths.
- B. Communication with Families** addresses communication practices that build respectful, reciprocal relationships that integrate family methods and styles of communication.
- C. Community Involvement and Resources** addresses the role of the early childhood program in working with community teams, providing resources to the staff, and connecting the family with community and program resources.
- D. Welcoming all Families** acknowledges the cultural, linguistic and other unique characteristics of each family, and using strategies that effectively support and welcome each family in the program.

A. Relationships

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples				
1	Describes qualities of programs that are accessible, inclusive, respectful, and welcoming of all families	Partners with families to develop healthy behaviors and routines for children, taking into account family preferences	Employs strategies to build networks among families in the program and community, while maintaining confidentiality	Facilitates and monitors others in choosing strategies to build networks among families in the program and community	<p><i>We had children describe their families' three favorite foods and made a recipe book from the responses. The kids illustrated it and each family got a copy of it. They were so proud, and the family's loved contributing.</i></p> <p><i>I listen to what is important to the parents when I talk with them about their child. I believe what matters to them, matters to me.</i></p>					
						2	Describes why it is important to build strong reciprocal relationships with families and other adults in the child's life. Identifies strengths in family members and family units	Actively fosters family members' ability to notice and appreciate their and their child's development and individuality	Supports families at risk and assists them in getting resources they want	Coordinates or facilitates local or state teams assisting children and families
						3	Describes strength-based, (continued)	Identifies and values family (continued)	Models and practices a strength- (continued)	Promotes a strength-based, family- (continued)

Core Knowledge Area: **FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES** — Building Family and Community Relationships

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples
FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES	A. Relationships (Continued)	resilient, family-centered practices, and identifies key ways these is demonstrated when partnering with families	resilience, using a family centered approach	based, anti-bias perspective for families, children, and staff	centered perspective that uses practices that support family resilience	
	B. Communication with Families					
	1	Identifies different ways to communicate with families (verbal, non-verbal, written, etc.)	Describes effective, respectful, reciprocal strategies and techniques for communication with families and community members	Selects and models the most effective and respectful communication techniques and methods from a variety of options	Evaluates communication strategies and promotes the most appropriate and effective communication techniques	<i>I attended a workshop on anti-bias curriculum. I never knew there was so much to consider in having an inviting, diverse program.</i>
	2	Identifies and explores one's own personal beliefs, values, and biases and their impact on others	Identifies and recognizes the home cultures, values, and languages of the families in the program	Explores with the families their preferred ways of communicating with the program, being aware of community cultures, values, and languages	Partners with families and staff to integrate children's home cultures and languages into the program as appropriate.	
	3	Examines the various ways one communicates, assessing whether it is culturally sensitive and generally effective	Monitors relationships with families and recognizes the strategies and resources that provide reciprocal, respectful, and effective communication	Selects and uses various strategies that enable reciprocal, respectful involvement of all families, including providing feedback from families to the program	Evaluates relationships with families and facilitates culturally sensitive, respectful, and reciprocal communication by all staff	<i>Maya's family came from another country, so I want to get to know what their life was like before moving here. I pay close attention, and once I asked for their forgiveness in advance, because I thought I might offend them. The more I learn about their family, the more I can understand why Maya does the things she does.</i>
4	Identifies the strengths and limitations of various technologies used to share information with families, to assure confidentiality, and to follow legal practices	Describes appropriate uses of various conferencing tools and technology to communicate and share information with families	Employs and manages appropriate conferencing tools and technology to communicate effectively with each family, as they prefer	Evaluates and selects appropriate technology for effective communication with each family		

Core Knowledge Area: **FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES** — Building Family and Community Relationships

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES	C. Community Involvement and Resources	1	Identifies local, state, and national resources that support children and families such as health and safety services, economic assistance, adult education, English language instruction, services to children with a range of special needs, etc.	Provides families with current information about community based services and other resources that address families' identified needs and interests, and helps them access those services	Collaborates with families in the program and with service providers to deliver and coordinate services that meet family needs	Creates and participates in teams that partner with families in the program to provide services for their children and themselves	<i>I keep an updated list of information and fact sheets about a wide range of resources for families to use, and if families need it, I help them connect to the services.</i>
		2	Identifies resources and services that can help meet program standards, develop and maintain program quality, and fully include all children and families.	Seeks out specific agencies, organizations, or services to provide needed support and information to staff, children, and families in the program	Establishes collaborative partnerships with service providers and agencies that support program quality and meet the needs of children and families	Maintains oversight of mentors, consultants, specialists, and community teams that support the program, staff, children, and families	<i>Families are a great source of ideas for resources and they have great community connections. We ask about that on our intake form.</i>
		3	Identifies the value and importance of establishing and maintaining collaborative, positive working relationships with other service providers and programs	Describes strategies to create and implement collaborative, positive working relationships with other service providers and agencies	Develops active, positive collaborations with agencies and community resources to meet the needs of the program as well as the children and families who attend	Designs policies and maintains practices that sustain confidentiality and enhance useful community partnerships in support of the program, staff, and families	<i>I am a part of the school IEP team for a child in my program.</i>
	D. Welcoming all families	1	Recognizes a broad definition of family, and the importance of family as the child's primary teacher and partner with the program	Identifies family members and other key people in each child's life	Actively supports family members and other key people in each child's life to partner with the program as they are able, in support of the child's development	Ensures policies are defined and enacted that embrace ethical responsibilities, and strength-based, family-centered practices	<i>I want a good connection with the families. They each have their own values, traditions, and goals, so I make sure that I am aware of what works best for each family.</i>
		2	Uses a variety of strategies to <i>(continued)</i>	Works with families to welcome <i>(continued)</i>	Incorporates each child's home <i>(continued)</i>	Promotes and models welcoming <i>(continued)</i>	

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples
FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES	D. Welcoming all Families (Continued)	respectfully learn about each families' structure, values, history, culture, language, traditions, etc.	them, and link their interests, values, language, and traditions to the program's traditions and practices	context, cultures, and languages into the program as appropriate.	and respectful behavior toward each family by staff and community members	<i>When I am troubled by a family, I ask myself why the family might do that, and I know I need to learn more about them.</i>
	3	Identifies family involvement practices and ways to encourage participation from each family as appropriate	Examines family involvement techniques to evaluate and suggest changes if they are not effective	Actively promotes family participation and engagement in parent conferences and curriculum planning	Designs and implements, with staff and families, multiple strategies that enhance family involvement in the program.	<i>I asked the public health nurse to help me find menus written in Spanish and English.</i>

Notes

OBSERVING AND ASSESSING - Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families

Early childhood professionals understand the importance of regularly observing and assessing children from different perspectives and in various settings. They recognize and use an observation, assessment, and documentation system that is grounded in child development and effective teaching practices in order to collect accurate and useful information about each child. They use the results to understand the child’s development, interests, needs, and changes over time, and to share this information with families. They also use it to design learning opportunities and positive interactions with the child that support the child’s growth and learning experiences. Observation and assessment is part of an ongoing evaluation process that may include other professionals. The process helps define child learning goals, curriculum planning, and program effectiveness. The early childhood professional recognizes the benefits and uses of an effective observation and assessment system for the children, staff, families, and the program.

Sub-headings:

- A. Objective Observation and Documentation** addresses planning, implementing, and evaluating the use of objective observation systems to meet child, family, curricula, and program goals
- B. Assessment** addresses the use of formal and informal child assessment tools appropriately, and using them to plan curricula, enhance child learning and development in partnership with families
- C. Including all Children and Families in the Assessment Process** addresses authentic partnerships with families to learn about their child and how best to support the child’s development and learning

OBSERVING AND ASSESSING

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples
A. Objective Observation and Documentation	1	Identifies purposes of ongoing observation of children. Practices recording objective observations. Differentiates inference and different types of observations	Recognizes the importance of ongoing observation and documentation of children’s development; practices various observation techniques; and begins to keep regular observation-based records	Uses both formal and informal observation strategies in different contexts	Plans, implements, and evaluates a regular schedule of effective observation and documentation strategies	<i>I noticed that Alex is interested in whales. I brought in books and we found a video online with live whales. After he watched the video I noticed him asking about periscopes- so we all made some out of cardboard. My observations helped me understand and follow his interests.</i> <i>I am careful to write exactly what I see rather than what I think might be happening.</i>
	2	Identifies several strategies and methods appropriate for observation and documentation, including the use of technology, that is free of bias, (continued)	Chooses and implements observation and documentation strategies that provide information on each child’s development, needs, and interests, (continued)	Creates and maintains an ongoing system to collect and categorize observations and documents for each child over time	Evaluates the use of observation and documentation strategies to determine the effectiveness of staff behavior with children and of the (continued)	

Core Knowledge Area: **OBSERVING AND ASSESSING** — Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples
OBSERVING AND ASSESSING	A. Objective Observation and Documentation	<p>culturally and linguistically sensitive, and recognizes the abilities of each children</p> <p>3 Identifies and gathers artifacts such as child work, photos, etc., that document children's growth and development as part of the assessment process</p>	<p>which is free of bias and culturally and linguistically sensitive</p> <p>Shares documents and recorded observations with other staff and families, while respecting confidentiality, in order to understand individual children's ways of communicating, and their interests and needs</p>	<p>Uses information from systemic observation and documentation to plan curricula, learning activities, daily routines, any intervention strategies, and as part of regular family communication</p>	<p>learning environment</p> <p>Analyzes and interprets child observation and documentation data to inform program planning and provide evidence of how well curriculum and program goals are met over time</p>	<p><i>I use different observation techniques like running record, time sample, and language samples depending on what I want to learn about the children.</i></p>
	B. Assessment	<p>1 Identifies the types of valid and reliable child assessment tools and their purposes</p> <p>2 Describes the components of a quality assessment process including the role of families</p> <p>3 Describe how screening and assessment tools can provide information that will identify possible developmental delays</p>	<p>Identifies the assessments specialists use and when to refer to a specialist, following the appropriate referral process</p> <p>Works with others to analyze different assessment methods and selects the one that is most appropriate for the desired purpose</p> <p>Uses appropriate screening, criterion-referenced and play-based assessment tools, with support from consultants, special educators, supervisors, etc.</p>	<p>Includes assessment as part of the process of obtaining information about individual children's development and learning</p> <p>Monitors own child assessment process to ensure quality standards are met</p> <p>Uses appropriate screening, criterion-referenced, and/or play-based assessment tools regularly as part of child evaluation</p>	<p>Implements formal assessment tools, when trained and as appropriate, to evaluate individual children</p> <p>Monitors the selection of child assessment tools and the assessment techniques used over time to ensure they follow quality assessment practices</p> <p>Incorporates analysis of various assessment results into the program review and planning process</p>	<p><i>Another teacher commented that Ben is always running around and not focusing. I spent time observing him and found out that he only did this at transition time. We were able to change how we move from activity to activity and his running behavior has stopped.</i></p> <p><i>The early childhood special education teacher did an assessment of a child to determine if he was developing typically. The parents and the school district wanted me to attend the team meeting to learn the results of the evaluation.</i></p>

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples
OBSERVING AND ASSESSING	B. Assessment (Continued)	4. Describes ways to use information gained from child assessments to set up the learning environment and plan learning experiences	Participates in learning about the results of assessments and how they are used to better understand and enhance children’s development and learning	Identifies child challenges and strengths based on the assessment results. In partnership with families and other professionals, plans and makes appropriate modifications to maximize children’s learning	Evaluates and adjusts professional practices based on results of assessments	<i>I observe Sarah’s eye contact with others. My notes tell me how much Sarah looks at others, and when. I shared that with her family at the parent conference.</i>
	C. Including All Children and Families in the Assessment Process	1 Partners with families to learn about their cultural and linguistic context and preferences, and their child’s development, learning, interests, and behavior across settings	Collaborates with families seeking the help of specialists to assess, understand, and address their concerns about their child	Engages families with other professionals in the child assessment process, including sharing and interpreting the results to demonstrate children’s development, interests and achievements	Updates policy and practices to ensure the assessment process includes family engagement and follows confidentiality standards	<i>We recently enrolled a child who uses a wheelchair. We talked with his family and observed him at home to learn more about the best ways to ensure he could be fully included. We worked with a mobility specialist who helped us identify modifications to the room to allow him to move freely.</i> <i>The family agreed that I could visit them in their home to learn more about what they want for their child, how the child acts at home, what the family does together, and what is important to them.</i>
	2 Ensures the observation and assessment process is free of bias and culturally and linguistically sensitive, recognizing the abilities of each child	Arranges and modifies the environment to provide opportunities for gathering authentic information about the ways in which children develop, learn, and progress	Participates with families on teams to develop, implement, and evaluate child/family education plans and intervention services ensuring they are responsive to family goals	Evaluates assessment techniques and modifies them if necessary to ensure cultural and linguistic sensitivity, reduce bias, and recognize the abilities of each child		
Notes						

HOW WE TEACH - Using Developmentally Effective Approaches

Early childhood professionals understand that developmentally appropriate approaches means that while there is a common developmental path, each child’s growth and development is influenced by his or her unique biology, experiences, environment, temperament, culture, relationships, and more. Therefore, effective learning experiences need to be framed by standards and also responsive to each child. Early childhood professionals understand the complexity of this dynamic and the importance having and using a wide range of effective approaches, strategies and tools.

Sub-headings:

- A. Interactions** addresses the positive relationship and supportive interactions adults have with young children
- B. Learning Environments** address the appropriateness of the setting, location, and surroundings to encourage active learning and engagement of children
- C. Developmentally Appropriate Teaching** addresses how early childhood educators consider each child’s age, development, culture, family and community context, and other factors when engaging children in learning experiences.

HOW WE TEACH

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples
A. Interactions	1	Demonstrates warm, positive, nurturing, and respectful interactions with children	Encourages children to develop independence by providing physical and emotional security, opportunities to master new skills, experience success, and safely take risks	Identifies when to encourage children to develop independence and when they need more emotional security to feel safe before trying new things	Uses the results of ongoing assessment to make accommodations that support each child’s developing level of independence, opportunity to master new skills, experience success and safely take risks	<i>Most of the time in the classroom is designed for children to make choices of things to do during the day and interact with each other. We also limit the number of transitions so children can move have more choices of how they use their time.</i>
	2	Recognizes the importance of building trusting relationships with children so they feel safe, secure, and valued	Identifies a variety of positive guidance strategies that respect children and teach appropriate social skills	Selects from and uses a variety of positive guidance strategies appropriate for the specific situation or child	Practices ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of positive guidance strategies used and makes changes in one’s own behavior and strategies as needed	<i>I often talk for the infants, expressing what I think they feel or want. It helps the other adults in the room connect to the babies and helps me communicate responsively, too.</i>
	3	Recognizes and values children’s <i>(continued)</i>	Provides opportunities for children <i>(continued)</i>	Promotes positive, pro-social <i>(continued)</i>	Balances the needs of the group <i>(continued)</i>	

Core Knowledge Area: **HOW WE TEACH** — Using Developmentally Effective Approaches

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples		
HOW WE TEACH	A. Interactions (Continued)		relationships with each other, and is aware of the ways they communicate with each other	to listen, interact, and communicate freely with other children and adults	relationships among children and helps each child feel accepted in the group	and the needs of each child in order to build a positive community of learners	<i>When the children want me to join their pretend play, I am careful to participate while following their lead.</i>	
		4	Identifies individual and social interests of the children, using them as opportunities to connect the children to the group and to learning	Monitors the tone of the whole group of children while interacting with an individual child or small group	Responds to children's play by observing, facilitating, or participating as needed without taking over the activity	Effectively de-escalates emotional and behavioral situations between children by facilitating their resolution of the conflict and keeping the children safe		
		5	Identifies developmentally appropriate strategies to help a new child be welcomed and join the program	Describes how to transition children into and out of the program, with the support of their families	Uses a consistent procedure, in partnership with families, to transition children into and out of the program	Plans and implements a consistent procedure, in partnership with families and the receiving program, to transition children into and out of the program		
	B. Learning Environments	1	Describes the components of a responsive learning environment (setting, space, materials) and how they support the needs and interests of the learner	Chooses and provides materials that create a responsive learning environment in a specific setting or part of the day, based on the ages, abilities, home culture, interests and needs of the children	Arranges a responsive indoor and outdoor learning environment (setting, space, materials) based on ages, abilities, home culture, interests, and needs of the children	Evaluates and adapts the components of the learning environment (setting, space, materials) to ensure it is responsive to and meets the needs and interests of the individual children		<i>The schedule of the day is posted using pictures on the wall where children can see it, touch it, and talk about it. I also show it to children to help them get grounded and feel comfortable about what is happening in our classroom and what is coming up.</i>
		2	Observes how the routines, schedule, and transition practices enhance or restrict child learning and positive interactions	Identifies a schedule and strategies to promote positive interactions and learning during daily routines and transitions for each child	Implements a schedule and uses strategies and routines to promote positive interactions and learning during daily routines and transitions for each child and the group	Assesses how effective the routines, schedules, and transition practices are in enhancing positive interaction and learning, and makes changes as needed		

Core Knowledge Area: **HOW WE TEACH** — Using Developmentally Effective Approaches

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
HOW WE TEACH	B. Learning Environments (Continued)	3	Defines how both indoor and outdoor spaces and materials support development and learning outcomes	Selects materials in the indoor and outdoor spaces to enhance the learning of individual children and groups of children	Plans and implements arrangement of indoor and outdoor physical spaces to support comprehensive learning outcomes linked to the VT Early Learning Standards	Designs indoor and outdoor spaces and selects materials that support each child's development and learning outcomes	<p><i>The infants and toddlers are able to move around freely throughout the day with very little restriction. We have soft ramps to climb on, mirrors for them to look at, various textures for them to touch, and interactive boxes secured to the wall and other solid surfaces.</i></p> <p><i>We noticed how some children's behavior changes between the outdoor and the indoor environments. We are assessing how well each environment meets the sensory needs of these children.</i></p>
		4	Describes ways that the prepared physical environment promotes positive behavior and encourages supportive relationships (such as visual cues, temperature, acoustics, accommodations for diverse learners, etc.)	Plans and arranges part of the physical environment to promote positive behavior and encourage supportive relationships using visual cues, temperature, acoustics, adaptations and accommodations for diverse learners, etc.	Designs and arranges the physical environment to promote positive behavior and encourage supportive relationships using visual cues, temperature, acoustics, and accommodations for diverse learners, etc.	Practices ongoing assessment and correction of the physical environment to ensure it promotes positive behavior and encourages supportive relationships	
		5	Identifies how the environment can match a child's needs (biology, temperament, age, physical needs, etc.) and to promote positive learning outcomes	Designs the environment (materials and space) to meet the child's needs and to promote positive learning outcomes for that child	Provides a consistent yet flexible environment that matches the child's needs over time, promoting positive learning outcomes	Analyzes if the child's learning needs are met in the environment and makes changes as needed to promote a continuous positive learning environment	
	C. Developmentally Appropriate Teaching	1	Defines curriculum as it applies to infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school age children	Creates learning experiences in each domain that are appropriate to the age, developmental level, and interests of each child and of the group of children	Reviews and adapts the strategies and tools used to ensure the curricula is integrated across domains and effectively supports each child's learning	Analyzes effectiveness of strategies and tools over time, and makes changes to support each child's learning	<p><i>I review all of screen time options before I offer them to the children and monitor what the school age children are using. We don't use any screen time when the toddlers and babies are awake.</i></p>

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
HOW WE TEACH	C. Developmentally Appropriate Teaching (Continued)	2	Recognizes the value of positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of work with children	Creates positive relationships and uses supportive interactions among children, staff, and families	Models and encourages positive relationships and supportive interactions among children, staff and families	Monitors interactions among children, staff, and families in order to encourage positive and supportive relationships	<i>We constantly collect observations, art work, transcripts of conversations, and photos in the classroom. We use this and information from families to help us develop as complete a picture as we can about each child. We then plan our curricula in response to that child, at that time, in the context of the group's interests and developmental needs. The curriculum is always emerging and changing based on this.</i>
		3	Identifies developmentally appropriate teaching and learning practices	Practices using developmentally appropriate teaching and learning practices	Models and encourages a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate teaching and learning practices	Researches current evidence based practices for effective developmentally appropriate teaching and uses them	
		4	Lists media and technology-based resources that support children's learning, and identifies the regulations covering screen time	Identifies media and technology-based resources that can be used with other teaching tools to effectively reinforce children's learning	Integrates effective and developmentally appropriate media and technology-based resources with other teaching tools, as useful	Designs and provides learning experiences for children using appropriate media and technology in combination with other teaching tools	

Notes

WHAT WE TEACH - Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum

Early childhood professionals understand how to design, implement, and evaluate young children’s experiences in order to promote development and learning. They use research-based standards as the framework, which in Vermont are the Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS)*. This framework, combined with their own knowledge, experience and other resources helps them design, implement, and evaluate meaningful, challenging curriculum that promotes learning for every child.

Sub-headings:

- A. VELS Area 1 – Developing Self: Approaches to Learning** addresses the value of play and using the child’s own curiosity and problem solving to plan and implement curricula.
- B. VELS Area 1 – Developing Self: Social and Emotional Development** addresses responding to and enhancing the child’s range of emotions and developing self-regulation in the context of relationships.
- C. VELS Area 1 – Developing Self: Growing, Moving and Being Healthy** addresses providing opportunities for the development of fine and gross motor skills, as well as ensuring the child environment is healthy, safe, and provides nutritious food.
- D. VELS Area 2 - Communication and Expression** addresses enhancing learning and development of language, literacy, communication, and self-expression through the arts.
- E. VELS Area 3 – Learning About our World: Mathematics, Science and Social Studies** addresses identifying opportunities and providing developmentally appropriate learning experiences that incorporate math, science, and social studies concepts.

* V.E.L.S. stands for Vermont Early Learning Standards (2016). They guide adults in defining experiences that children ages birth to grade three should have and what children should know and do to succeed in kindergarten and in life. Find them on the VT Agency of Education Website: <http://education.vermont.gov/student-support/early-education/vermont-early-learning-standards>

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
WHAT WE TEACH	A. VELS Area I - Developing Self: Approaches To Learning	1	Demonstrates awareness of VELS as a resource for observing children’s development of play, initiative, and problem solving	Uses VELS-Approaches to Learning as a guide to make observations while children play and explore	Uses VELS-Approaches to Learning to inform child observations and assessments	Collaborates with others using ongoing child observations to design individualized curricula that builds children’s learning experiences through exploration, problem solving, and reflection	<i>I learned the stages of play development and observe each child to understand what kind of play the child uses, with what materials and toys. This helps me plan what materials to have and how to help each child grow their play skills.</i>
		2	Explains the benefit of VELS and how it is not a curriculum or a prescribed set of teaching (continued)	Applies VELS as a curriculum guide for daily activities that promote social play, problem solving, and (continued)	Sets up environments that encourage exploration, using a mix of teacher-guided and child- (continued)	Supports others in using VELS - Approaches to Learning, to connect with children’s interests, cultures, and (continued)	

Core Knowledge Area: **WHAT WE TEACH** — Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
WHAT WE TEACH	A. VELs Area I - Developing Self: Approaches To Learning (Continued)		practices	self-initiated exploration	initiated experiences, with an emphasis on playful learning, problem solving, and discovery by the child	prior experiences.	<i>At the parent conference I explain how valuable play is because it is the main way children learn. I share what I learned about their child and what I do and say to help them keep developing using play to explore, solve problems, and build their skills.</i>
		3	Uses VELs to describe the value of play, exploration, and problem solving, and as a tool to learn about each child	Explains the differences in types of play (solitary, parallel, associative, cooperative, rule-based, etc.) and how these can inform the design of daily activities for infants to children in grade 3	Designs opportunities that enhance individual children's problem solving, initiative, and exploration through play at each developmental level	Collaborates with other professionals to align curricula that promotes problem solving, child-initiative, and play based learning at each developmental level	
	B. VELs Area I - Developing Self: Social and Emotional Development	1	Recognizes each child's range of emotions and responses in social situations	Recognizes the importance of emotional expression, positive social interactions, and opportunities for children to explore their ideas and feelings safely	Identifies and uses regional resources and specialists to understand and address children's social and emotional behavior and challenges	Collaborates with families and other professionals to identify and use the most effective strategies to enhance children's social and emotional development and address challenges	<i>I noticed how Nya uses lots of different strategies to make friends and is especially skilled at doing that with new kids. I use this information to help me invite new children to join in groups.</i>
		2	Recognizes children's preferences and interest in a variety of people, activities, and experiences	Recognizes how temperament and culture influence children's response to people and situations	Offers daily activities that teach social skills and emotional regulation	Designs curriculum, daily routines, and activities that integrate understanding of children's emotions and how to enable children to safely express them	<i>We have lots of pictures around the room of people with different feelings. The children also created books about how they deal with strong feelings and what they do to calm themselves down. We talk about and use these throughout the day, and kids now use them to help other kids.</i>
		3	Identifies children's strengths and the strategies they use to develop relationships with peers and adults	Identifies environmental and behavioral supports for children's growing ability to establish friendships and other relationships while respecting differences	Provides strategies that assist children in establishing positive relationships with peers and adults and regulate their strong emotions towards others	Works with staff and families to assist children in developing a community while recognizing their cultural values, individual social (continued)	

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
WHAT WE TEACH	C. VELS Area I - Developing Self: Growing, Moving and Being Healthy <i>(see also Ensuring Healthy, Safe Environments and Good Nutrition)</i>	1	Identifies appropriate portion size and developmental eating skills of children birth to grade 3	Offers opportunities for children to create healthy snacks and meals, recognizing the different value of each food group	Links opportunities for children to learn about healthy habits and how their body grows, to their physical and nutrition activities	Integrates opportunities for the development and practice of health and nutrition knowledge and skills into the developmental curricula and throughout the day	<i>At snack time we talk with the kids about how much food their tummy needs and how much food to take from the platter to match that. The kids are getting good at making good matches – in proportion to their hunger.</i> <i>We have identified a wide range of ways to help children develop hand and finger strength and dexterity – so we have lots of different ways for them to practice throughout the day, using eye droppers and basters, clothes pins, play-dough and modeling clay, as well as cooking and art activities.</i>
		2	Supports children to learn and participate in self-care routines such as toileting, handwashing, use of tissues, etc.	Incorporates maintenance of hygienic and safe environments, and self-care practices into the daily curricula and routines with children	Identifies and recognizes barriers to children practicing independent self-care and addresses them with each child, as needed	Evaluates the opportunities for children to independently practice self-care and safe behavior, and makes changes as needed	
		3	Identifies stages of fine and gross motor development in children birth to grade 3	Provides opportunities for daily fine and gross motor practice that meet individual interests	Integrates opportunities for individualized fine and gross motor practice into many curricula areas and routines throughout the day	Works with staff and other professionals to notice, plan and integrate opportunities to develop fine and gross motor skills with each child	
		4	Identifies resources to observe and assess the level of fine and gross motor development of each child	Recognizes if there are any barriers preventing a child from fully using their motor skills to explore, problem solve, socialize, and learn, and identifies strategies to address the barriers	Tailors fine and gross motor opportunities to stimulate developmental challenges for individual children, paired with their interests	Works with other professionals to evaluate the effectiveness of the fine and gross motor opportunities for each child, and makes changes as needed	

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
WHAT WE TEACH	D. VELS Area 2: Communication and Expression	1	Identifies the different components of language development as defined in VELS, and the different ways they express themselves	References sections in VELS - Language Development to help plan curricula for children to develop and practice language, listening, and communication skills	Identifies opportunities to explore and enrich language, listening, and communication as part of the daily curriculum based on the development and interests of each child	Describes and uses strategies throughout the day to increase developmentally appropriate listening, language usage, and communication with each child	<p><i>We make sure all of the kids have a hearing and eye test and we know the resources to refer their families to if there is any question about their child needing further tests or glasses.</i></p> <p><i>After we hear a story, we expand the ideas in it, by having the characters available as puppets or toys for the kids to use, or we act out the story by creating the setting in the classroom, or sometimes we write and illustrate our own books about what else might happen in the story. Each child finds their own way to express their knowledge of the story and extend it- and now they are creating their own stories.</i></p>
	2	Is aware of resources in the community that provide screening and identify concerns in a child's speech, language, communication, or hearing	Helps plan and address delays in a child's language, communication, speech, and/or hearing with the family, and refers to community resources and specialists	Is familiar with the range of options that can support a child's development of communication such as pictures, technology, etc.	Participates in collaborative teams to provide a range of services, including the use of technology, to enhance the development of a child's language, speech, hearing and/or communication		
	3	Identifies the home language(s) and written language(s) of the families in the program and how to learn more about their cultural contexts	Recognizes myths and facts about dual language learners and their families, and effective strategies staff can use to support development of children's languages	Observes dual language learners across a variety of settings or activities. Contributes to curriculum planning that acknowledges children and families' diverse linguistic and cultural experiences	Designs with families and integrates appropriate curricula for dual language learners including print and appropriate technology as developmentally appropriate		
	4	Uses VELS to identify the scope and depth of reading and storytelling opportunities that should be available for children	Demonstrates how reading a variety of literature and words to children, listening to children read, and offering various writing opportunities increases literacy	Identifies the different interests, strategies, approaches, and skills that children use in their reading and tailors reading opportunities to match their needs and preferences	Plans, selects, and uses a variety of books, print material, reading opportunities and strategies throughout the day that best support each child's development of reading		

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
WHAT WE TEACH	D. VELS Area 2: Communication and Expression (Continued)	5	References VELs to explain the progression of writing from scribbling to letters to words to sentences to planned expression of ideas	Sets up areas of interest for writing using a variety of tools including computers and other appropriate technology for older children	Identifies the different strategies and skills that children express through their writing and tailors writing opportunities to match their preferences and enhance their development	Integrates regular opportunities for writing practice and development throughout the curriculum, supporting each child's development of writing skills	<i>We have fiction and non-fiction books with a wide range of reading levels in our room. In addition to reading on the computer, the children also read and write charts, cookbooks, signs, symbols, and more throughout the day.</i>
		6	Uses VELs - Creative Arts and Expression to identify the scope and variety of tools and range of arts that can be available to children	Identifies opportunities to use all of the expressive arts in the curriculum, while reflecting the children's interests. Shares the value of creative arts and the importance of the creative process with families, in appreciation of their child's self-expression	Regularly integrates opportunities for creative expression through movement, acting, music, and visual arts throughout the curriculum, while providing opportunities for individual child choice	Advocates and promotes creative arts curriculum throughout the facility or school. Defends the importance of arts programs to decision makers	
	E. VELs Area 3 - Learning About Our World: Mathematics, Science and Social Studies	1	References VELs to identify the development, range, and scope of children's development of math, science, and social studies concepts	Identifies opportunities to integrate math, science, and social studies content in conversations, the classroom environment, and the natural world	Provides opportunities that engage children in actively investigating numbers, quantity, counting, shapes, measuring, comparing, etc. as well as to explore, ask questions, analyze, observe, and evaluate their physical environment both during planned activities and daily routines	Extends children's mathematical ideas, scientific thinking, and social contexts through questions, provocative play environments, guided analysis, and continued practice both inside and outdoors	<i>I am catching myself when I asked closed questions like "what color is this?" or "how many are here?", and change instead to an open ended question like, "I wonder if there are enough? How will we know?" or "What do you think could happen next?" The conversations are much more interesting, now.</i>
		2	Identifies where math, science, and social studies <i>(continued)</i>	Extends appropriate information and vocabulary <i>(continued)</i>	Designs the physical environment – outdoors and inside, <i>(continued)</i>	Helps families recognize math, science, and social studies <i>(continued)</i>	

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples
WHAT WE TEACH		learning happens in the classroom and the surrounding outdoor environment	using a variety of sources including conversations with community members, non-fiction books, and appropriate media related to math, science, and social studies content	to actively engage children and extend their daily experiences with mathematics, science, and social studies investigations	content in their daily activities, and how to support their children's learning in these areas	
	3	Notices the development of children's math, science, and social studies interests over time	Asks open-ended questions and presents materials that match the individual interests and development of each child	Identifies and uses a range of strategies and materials to address individual child interests and questions related to math, science, and social studies	Integrates regular observation and documentation of the development of children's math, science, and social studies knowledge, skills, and interests to share with families and use in curricula planning	<i>I am noticing that math is everywhere! It is on the wall clock, when they put one coat on each hook or one plate at each chair, when we notice how what people wear is similar or different, and when we have to decide if there is enough to go around. I now am noticing what math skills different kids have, and what to help them with next.</i>

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HEALTH, SAFETY, NUTRITION - Ensuring Healthy, Safe Environments and Good Nutrition

Early childhood professionals use practices that protect every child and promote good health, including good nutrition and physical activity. They are aware of multiple factors that contribute to the health, safety, and nutrition of all children. They often partner with health professionals and families to ensure they work together to provide healthy, safe environments and good nutrition for the children in their care.

Sub-headings:

- A. Healthy Environments and Health Needs** addresses use of policies and practices to ensure environments are free from health hazards for the group and for each child, as well as working in collaboration with community health resources.
- B. Safe Environments** addresses strategies to create and maintain environments that are free from safety hazards with respect to the age and abilities of the children, knowledge of and collaboration with community safety resources, and practices to meet the safety needs of children.
- C. Nutrition** addresses the development of eating skills, standards of nutritional needs, and serving size for different ages, safe and age-appropriate food service, and knowledge of and collaboration with community resources regarding food and nutrition.
- D. Physical Activity** addresses the role of accessible physical activity and rest in children’s growth and learning, and collaborating with families to support children’s physical needs.

HEALTH, SAFETY, NUTRITION

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples
A. Healthy Environments and Health Needs	1	Reads and follows the program’s licensing regulations concerning minimum healthy environments for staff and all children including children with chronic health issues and children with special health needs	Recognizes potentially unhealthy practices and acts to correct them	Documents illness. Works with others to evaluate the facility and equipment to meet state and federal standards for health and safety	Implements and monitors written policies and procedures to ensure a healthy environment for children and adults	<i>Our staff learned about and use the online immunization reporting and documentation system, found on the Northern Lights website, to help us work with families around immunizations of their children</i>
	2	Follows universal precautions to avoid the spread of infectious illness and bloodborne pathogens	Encourages routine hygiene practices (brushing teeth, combing hair, washing hands)	Monitors opportunities for children to brush teeth, comb hair, wash hands, and other practices that promote personal health	Ensures adherence to health and safety requirements and maintains necessary records following state codes and regulations for children and adults	

HEALTH, SAFETY, NUTRITION

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples
A. Healthy Environments and Health Needs (Continued)	3	Follows procedures to reduce contamination and spread of infectious diseases such as hand washing, washing tables, and while diapering, toileting, etc.	Reviews health policies including exclusion and readmission of sick children	Creates collaborative, cooperative relationships with parents regarding sick children and explains the program's health policies	Ensures health policies and procedures are current and maintained	<p><i>We review the child care program regulations related to health and safety and update our policies and practices to make sure they align. I call the licensor of the day when I have questions.</i></p> <p><i>All of the staff use gloves when wiping up body fluids (blood, feces, urine) and dispose of them correctly.</i></p>
	4	Identifies local health care professionals, health services, and health resources available to children, their families, and staff	Receives and shares information from health and mental health professionals about healthy growth and development and current health practices	Keeps informed of current recommended health policies and practices in addition to program regulations	Partners with community health care professionals, program staff, and families to address health needs appropriately and communicates with public agencies about outbreaks of communicable disease when necessary	
	5	Practices appropriate health information documentation procedures according to the program and licensing regulations for employees, children, and families	Provides information to families about the development of children's health needs (toileting, feeding, dental/doctor visits, immunizations, etc.)	Works with families to maintain accurate immunization records, health history, and emergency contact information. Keeps information confidential	Ensures health and safety procedures are implemented and on display, if appropriate	
B. Safe Environments	1	Identifies characteristics of safe environments for all children, including children with chronic health issues and children with special health needs. Monitors children to prevent injury and avoid health hazards such as choking, burns, etc.	Teaches simple safety precautions and rules to children and enforces rules consistently (including emergency procedures such as fire drills)	Reviews safety policies and makes recommendations for changes, if appropriate	Follows procedures for when and how to communicate with public agencies about safety concerns	<p><i>Before the children arrive, I look around the playground to see if everything is in good working order and if anything needs to be repaired.</i></p>

B. Safe Environments (Continued)

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples
2	Is aware of child care safety regulations including: safe sleep, reporting child abuse and neglect, medication administration, avoiding shaken baby, and understanding and meeting the special health care needs of children		Reviews how the program follows the regulations and identifies signs of when they are followed and when they are not	Monitors implementation of health and safety regulations and suggests changes when there are gaps	Creates and implements policies that ensure all staff follow health and safety procedures that meet regulations	<i>I created an emergency preparedness plan using information from a training and from emergency services in the area. The materials are ready, I inform all families, and I review and update the plan annually. I feel safer having the plan.</i>
3	Has current knowledge of CPR and First Aid and is prepared to implement techniques. Responds to injuries using appropriate first aid techniques		Conducts periodic safety assessments of the program and environment and makes recommendations for changes or modifications	Inspects indoor and outdoor toys and equipment and notifies appropriate person to keep them in safe condition	Ensures all staff have current training and can follow safety procedures, which may also be displayed	
4	Identifies environmental hazards (for example, broken toys, choking hazards, second hand smoke, etc.) and removes them		Offers information to families about safety and injury prevention for children and adults such as toy and equipment recalls, car seat usage, etc.	Assesses safety and preparedness when planning for both on site and off site activities	Monitors compliance for environmental safety issues	<i>At our school, we are always vigilant in supervising the kids, and are alert to anything that could be harmful to any child.</i>
5	Is aware of the program's emergency operations plan and individual responsibility		Checks that materials are ready and responsibilities known in order to implement the emergency operations and evacuation plan	Helps inform staff and families of the emergency operations plan	Ensures the program has and follows a current emergency operations plan, including policies and procedures, staff training, maintenance of supplies and equipment, and the continuation of services	<i>All administered medicines are recorded, checked, and stored in a safe and secure place</i>

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples
C. Nutrition	1	Follows program standards, licensing regulations and Child and Adult Food Program meal patterns, intended to ensure safe food preparation and good nutrition for all children including infants, children with special health needs, and children with chronic illness	Identifies community programs and federal nutrition benefits to supplement family food resources	Offers families information on federal and state resources such as WIC, food banks, 3 Squares VT, etc.	Supports families seeking help to assess, understand and provide appropriate food choices and preparation	<i>My program's enrollment form asks the family if the child has any food allergies or special dietary needs, and asks how we can make our program responsive to the culture and traditions of their family.</i>
	2	Identifies individual family routines and preferences related to food choices and eating. Follows individualized schedules for infants' eating, taking into consideration family routines. Recognizes that adults are responsible for what and how food is presented; children are responsible for whether and what they eat	Supports cultural preferences of families related to mealtimes, and specified dietary and feeding needs of individual children	Partners with families and others to assist children in developing eating skills. Works with families to address special dietary needs, and successfully meets eating and nutrition challenges of children	Plans and evaluates menus, and ensure appropriate, nutritious portions for all ages of children. Monitors specified dietary and feeding needs of children	<i>We eat family style: children serve the food themselves and decide how much of the food they want to eat. I eat at least one food that the children are eating.</i>
	3	Identifies food allergies of children, signs of allergic reactions and how to address them	Monitors food environment to ensure food allergies are not triggered and safe alternatives are available	Balances individual nutrition and dietary needs of children with an awareness of group needs for safe and healthy food choices	Plans the eating environment to avoid exposure to allergic foods, without excluding children	<i>We have a space where mothers may breastfeed that is away from the children, and has a rocking chair and running water.</i>
	4	Provides nutritious meals and snacks in accordance with licensing regulations and Child <i>(continued)</i>	Lists components of a healthy diet and portion size for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, <i>(continued)</i>	Teaches children about healthy food choices, and offers opportunities for children to <i>(continued)</i>	Involves families in activities promoting good nutrition and hygiene, and <i>(continued)</i>	

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples
HEALTH, SAFETY, NUTRITION	C. Nutrition (Continued)					
	5	and Adult Food Program meal patterns, including family style meal service if provider chooses. Provides drinking water both indoors and outdoors throughout the day Follows appropriate storage and preparation of breast milk, in partnership with the parent so their child has breast milk while in the program	and school-age children Describes why breast milk is nutritionally superior for infants	create healthy snacks and meals. Maintains current information on breastfeeding that is available to breastfeeding parents	refers families to community resources and references as appropriate Provides space and options for breastfeeding and refers breastfeeding parents to community resources and references as appropriate	<i>We have a garden that all of the children enjoy working in. We also work with local farmers to learn about our food. We follow recipes and some of the kids experiment with changes to ingredients.</i>
	D. Physical Activity					
	1	Recognizes the importance of and provides time and space for vigorous physical activity as well as quiet play for all children, including children with chronic health issues, special health needs, and infants, in support of their development. Follows individualized schedules for sleeping, taking into consideration family patterns	Identifies appropriate activities and equipment based on the needs of individual children, and ensures there are opportunities for all children to participate	Develops and implements a variety of age appropriate ways children can have active and quiet activities throughout the day	Evaluates and modifies the environment and schedule to ensure all children have opportunities for regular, vigorous physical activity, and each child's individual physical needs are met	<i>We use "I Am Moving, I am Learning" (IMIL) to teach about nutrition and physical activity.</i>
	2	Recognizes the health risks of extended periods of screen media and other passive activities. Follows program standards (continued)	Limits children's exposure to screen time and other passive activities. If used, provides developmentally appropriate (continued)	Works with families to provide information about risks of passive activities while respecting cultural preferences, including (continued)	Develops program policies related to physical activity, and screen time. Uses collaborative problem solving to (continued)	<i>On those days we can't go outside we still get lots of exercise. Sometimes, we make body-bridges and kids role the ball or the trucks under us, or we chose from different kinds dance music and make up moves, or we make and follow an obstacle course. Those days are fun!</i>

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples
HEALTH, SAFETY, NUTRITION	D. Physical Activity (Continued)	and program licensing regulations related to screen time and physical activity	educational programs and games	educating families about limiting screen time during meals at home. Shares information about appropriate alternatives	help families and others follow best practices for physical activity	<i>We encourage children to rest or enjoy quiet time as needed. Infants nap on their own schedules.</i>

Notes

PROFESSIONALISM - Growing as a Professional

Early childhood professionals understand they have the responsibility to provide services that meet or exceed standards of practice and support positive outcomes for children, families, and professionals—including themselves and their colleagues. They recognize the potential for professional growth, recognition, advocacy, and leadership in the field. They are aware of and use ethical standards of the profession, and follow and promote professional guidelines and standards.

Sub-headings:

- A. Professionalism** addresses the knowledge, skills, and characteristics necessary to uphold the profession as an early childhood educator. Additionally, it acknowledges the reflective practices involved in being a professional.
- B. Ethics and Professional Development** addresses the knowledge and experiences needed to support professional growth and recognition, as well as following essential ethical practices.
- C. Leadership** addresses the ability to create, maintain, and advance leadership and advocacy skills, as well as mentoring and teaching of other professionals.
- D. Colleagueship** addresses how early childhood professionals support each other, maintain respectful and reciprocal communication, and foster and promote teams within the program and with other professionals.

Abbreviations used in this section:

N.A.E.Y.C. stands for the National Association for the Education of Young Children. It is a national professional membership organization for early childhood professionals. <https://www.naeyc.org/>

B.F.I.S. stands for Bright Futures Information System. It is the Vermont child care data system that includes both publically accessible and password protected information, which aligns with the child care program licensing regulations. BFIS holds and tracks data about early childhood programs and professionals. <http://www.brightfutures.dcf.state.vt.us/>

M.A.T.C.H. stands for Mentoring, Advising, Teaching, Technical assistance, Coaching, Consulting, Helping. It is Vermont’s term for the recognition and coordination of these professional services for early childhood and afterschool professionals and programs. The professionals who do this work are connected to a larger M.A.T.C.H. system. <http://northernlightscdc.org/your-role/match-consultants/>

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
PROFESSIONALISM	A. Professionalism	1	Demonstrates self-awareness and takes care of oneself	Reflects on own emotional well-being, its impact on children and peers, and takes steps to be mentally healthy and avoid burn-out	Recognizes own strengths, growth, and opportunities for change, and responds to helpful feedback by monitoring and changing behavior	Models for others ways to care for self in order to better care for others	<i>I keep a journal that helps me notice when something's bothering me so I can address it.</i>

Core Knowledge Area: **PROFESSIONALISM** — Growing as a Professional

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
PROFESSIONALISM	A. Professionalism (Continued)	2	Demonstrates good work habits and a professional appearance as appropriate to program practices	Identifies and follows professional policies, codes, guidelines, regulations, and standards that define the early childhood field	Models effective communication (spoken, written, sign language, or assistive technology) and professional interactions with families and colleagues	Establishes and supports effective communication and decision making structures with program staff and stakeholders	<p><i>I read a lot and talk to my peers about how to notice our own biases and to stay curious about people who are different. It is like a fish noticing the water it swims in- it is hard but really important.</i></p> <p><i>I am using my computer more: reading research updates from Harvard, learning to use Publisher for our newsletter, and using BFIS for me.</i></p>
		3	Identifies and acknowledges one's own cultural values, beliefs and biases	Defines and assesses one's own cultural competence in educational and child care programs	Engages in cross-cultural collaboration with families and colleagues in order to improve learning outcomes for children	Transmits cross-cultural knowledge, skills and dispositions through modeling, mentoring, and motivating others in support of children and families	
		4	Has or is gaining useful technology skills to support professional and program goals	Uses technology skills to meet program and professional goals appropriately (using BFIS, communication with staff and families, data collection, etc.)	Uses technology skills to increase skills and knowledge of the field, including researching professional topics, determining what is appropriate technology to use with children, etc.	Helps develop program policy regarding appropriate content and use of media, software, and technology based on research	
	B. Ethics and Professional Development	1	Identifies current knowledge and skills as an early childhood professional and selects areas for development, with the support of a mentor or supervisor	Completes a comprehensive professional development plan based on a self-assessment with specific measureable goals, related strategies and resources, and timelines	Uses and updates one's professional development plan as a tool for ongoing professional growth, ensuring it is current, comprehensive, and relevant	Supports others to develop and use an individual professional development plan effectively	<p><i>I use the core knowledge and competencies to identify what I know and what I want to learn.</i></p>
		2	Identifies opportunities (such as workshops, research, or planned experiences) <i>(continued)</i>	Participates in learning opportunities (such as coursework, research, <i>(continued)</i>)	Selects and participates in opportunities for professional growth at the regional, <i>(continued)</i>	Practices continuous professional growth, identifying new challenges <i>(continued)</i>	

Core Knowledge Area: **PROFESSIONALISM** — Growing as a Professional

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
PROFESSIONALISM	B. Ethics and Professional Development (Continued)		to develop professional confidence, knowledge, and skills, with assistance of colleagues	colleagueship, or planned experiences) above the minimum requirements to meet one's own professional development goals	state, and national level using a variety of venues	and strategies to successfully meet them	<i>I use the BFIS course calendar to find out what workshops are being offered, and the Northern Lights website to learn how I can be recognized, find \$ to pay for courses, and career options.</i>
		3	Defines the dispositions for working in the early care and education field and considers one's own development of them	Identifies the roles available to professionals in the early care and education field, and potential pathways to achieve them	Uses the Vermont professional development system and tools to seek, document, and track professional development activities, gain recognition, and meet professional goals	Informs and explains to others the professional development tools, recognition system, resources and strategies in Vermont and nationally	<i>We use the NAEYC code of ethical conduct in staff meetings when we need to resolve a difficult situation with a family. The Code provides a great framework.</i>
		4	Reads the NAEYC Code of Ethics and recognizes when ethical issues come up	Identifies ethical conflicts and uses the NAEYC code of ethical conduct and the program policies and protocols to maintain ethical practices	Maintains high standards of professional competency and integrity related to oneself, children, families, and colleagues	Explains to coworkers and families how the NAEYC code of ethics can be used for making professional decisions and contributes to group problem solving of ethical dilemmas	<i>I don't discuss any children or family issues or name names at drop off, pick up time, or at the store, since other people are around.</i>
		5	Reviews policies and standards that address confidentiality and sharing information with families, staff, and the public	Recognizes situations when a potential breach of confidentiality could occur in written or oral form	Follows confidentiality practices; acknowledges and refuses to participate in a potential breach of confidential information	Monitors and trains others to follow confidentiality policies and practices	
	C. Leadership	1	Defines characteristics of effective mentoring and coaching	Uses a mentor or coach to improve skills and practice self-reflection; reviews the M.A.T.C.H. self-assessment for mentors or coaches	Provides mentoring support to beginning and developing teachers; completes training on adult learning and development	Provides mentoring or coaching to colleagues as part of the Vermont M.A.T.C.H. system, to support quality and improvement	<i>As a mentor, I share stories to broaden my protégé's perspective. I don't impose my own judgment, persuade her or do the work for her.</i>

Core Knowledge Area: **PROFESSIONALISM** — Growing as a Professional

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
PROFESSIONALISM	C. Leadership (Continued)	2	Identifies effective group facilitation and presentation skills using the Vermont Instructor Knowledge and Competencies	Describes one's own skills and challenges in facilitating or presenting to a group, and identifies resources to gain skills and address challenges	Practices planning and implementing presentations or group facilitation with the support of a skilled colleague / instructor	Facilitates or instructs groups regularly, using supportive feedback and evaluations to continue to develop skills and identify areas for growth	<p><i>After I went to a great workshop, I asked my group of family child care providers if I could share what I learned. I was nervous, but I planned ahead what I would present and thought about how they might learn what I learned. Their feedback afterwards told me what worked, and what I could do better next time.</i></p>
		3	Identifies responsibilities of leaders, advocates, and administrators in the field of early care and education	Identifies models of effective leadership, resources to increase leadership knowledge, and opportunities to practice	Seeks and secures opportunities to serve in a leadership role while gaining feedback on one's effectiveness as a leader	Articulates own leadership style, assumes a leadership role, and practices ongoing reflection and improvement	
		4	Recognizes and defines how the early childhood field and the profession impact children, families, staff, employers, and communities	Identifies local advocacy initiatives, their purpose and activities; and begins to participate	Engages in strategic advocacy activities on the local or state level	Advocates for the field and educates community leaders, boards, and other agencies about the impact and needs of early care and education system and services	
	D. Colleagueship	1	Recognizes the characteristics of respectful and disrespectful working relationships with colleagues and families	Establishes professional boundaries with children, families, and coworkers, and uses respectful communication	Seeks opportunities to practice and assess effective collaboration and problem solving with colleagues. Participates in assessing one's own communication and behavior with other staff members.	Employs effective group process and communication skills in support of building a team and resolving conflicts	<p><i>When I have a difficult situation with a co-worker, I think about what is bothering me, and my supervisor helps me with ideas on how to work things out in a positive way.</i></p>

Notes

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION - Managing and Administering Programs

Although the roles may vary, early childhood professionals understand they are not alone in working to administer and manage an effective and accountable program that meets standards of service. Early childhood professionals seek to maintain quality, affordable and accessible programs for children and families. In addition to these professional standards for all individuals working in programs, there are more specific standards for program directors, administrators, or owners.

Sub-headings:

A. All Staff Including Directors addresses how every employee and volunteer understand and uphold the regulations, maintain the organization and contribute to the program.

1. Program Organization and Regulations

2. Staff Contributions

B. Directors, Administrators, or Owners addresses the oversight of the program, and responsibility for being accountable for the program's overall quality and effectiveness. It also addresses supervision, hiring and guidance, and support of all staff. In addition, it addresses knowledge of and ability to meet legal and fiscal responsibilities.

1. Administration (not all Director competencies will be relevant depending on the setting and type of program)

2. Management of Personnel and Hiring

3. Legal and Fiscal Management

Abbreviations used in this section:

STARS stands for Step Ahead Recognition System. It is Vermont's program quality and recognition system. It recognizes programs that have met quality standards above the minimum program licensing standards. <http://dcf.vermont.gov/childcare/parents/stars>

B.F.I.S. stands for Bright Futures Information System. It is the Vermont child care data system that includes both publically accessible and password protected information, which is aligned with the child care program licensing regulations. BFIS holds and tracks data about early childhood programs and professionals. <http://www.brightfutures.dcf.state.vt.us/>

I.P.D.P. is an Individual Professional Development Plan. It is required by all staff, including directors of regulated programs. It includes a self-assessment, specific professional goals, strategies and resources to meet those goals, and a timeline when they will be met.

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
PROGRAM ORGANIZATION	A. All Staff Including Directors	1	Follows state regulations, contracts, and policies appropriate to the program	Reviews regulations, guidelines, handbooks, and policies in order to follow and reference them	Works with others, including families, to share and ensure compliance with policies, handbooks, and regulations, as appropriate. Works to correct issues as appropriate	Maintains compliance with state regulations, ensures policies and handbooks are current	<i>I reviewed the child care program regulations and how they apply to my classroom and me.</i>
	A.1. Program Organization and Regulations	2	Participates in program evaluation to ensure continuous program improvement	Uses program assessment tools to evaluate program improvements in order to meet program goals	Reflects on program effectiveness including using data from assessments and evaluation results to ensure continuous program improvement toward meeting program goals	Collaborates in strategic planning and goal setting; selects assessments and procedures to evaluate program effectiveness and make modifications as needed	
		3	Reviews and notices how information on national program accreditation or STARS relates to the program	Supports program acquisition or maintenance of national accreditation or STARS	Participates in program obtaining or maintaining national accreditation or STARS	Promotes adherence to standards set by national accreditation or STARS and participates in seeking a higher level in STARS as appropriate	<i>We partner with Children's Integrated Services in our region to support the children and families we both serve</i>
		4	Identifies components of Specialized Child Care Services as defined by the Child Development Division; meets requirements as a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect	Meets requirements for the program to be designated as a Specialized Care Provider and completes the appropriate training	Monitors compliance with the Specialized Child Care requirements including children's progress, attendance and challenges. Reports to supervisor or appropriate agency	Participates in team meetings for children served through Specialized Child Care and encourages other staff as appropriate	

Core Knowledge Area: **PROGRAM ORGANIZATION** — Managing and Administering Programs

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
PROGRAM ORGANIZATION	A.1. Program Organization and Regulations (Continued)	5	Recognizes safe, effective technology that supports the children, families, staff, and program	Articulates procedures for the use of safe, effective technology with children, families, and staff	Maintains procedures for the use of safe, effective technology with children, families, and staff	Monitors and designs procedures for the use of safe, effective technology with children, families, and staff	
	A.2. Staff Contributions	1	Identifies ways to personally engage in self-reflection and self-care	Identifies strategies and resources that support ongoing self-reflection and self-care	Assists colleagues in practicing self-reflection and self-care	Models strategies, provides opportunities, and supports staff to engage in self-reflection and self-care	<p><i>I took the Basic Specialized Care training because we are a Specialized Care Program and I wanted to know more.</i></p> <p><i>I reviewed the program policies, and realized I needed to be more careful about what I said about the program when I was standing in line at the grocery store.</i></p>
		2	Reviews program policies and procedures; describes characteristics of ethical and confidential practices	Identifies when and how program policies and procedures should be followed	Ensures own behavior adheres to ethical and confidential policies and other program policies and procedures with families, staff, and the public	Supports others to follow policies and procedures including ethical and confidential practices with children, families, staff, and the public	
		3	Identifies and fulfills staff orientation, annual training requirements, and staff qualifications to meet licensing regulations for the position	Identifies requirements, and related strategies and resources to advance to a higher staff qualification level	Works with others to continue to meet and develop staff qualifications as required by the staff role, STARS, and Specialized Child Care status	Help others use professional and financial resources to meet staff requirements, professional standards, and continue to grow professionally	
B. Directors, Administrators, or Owners	1	Presents program policies to parents, staff, and other adults as appropriate	Identifies local, state, and national organizations that advocate for children and families	Participates in advocacy with families and children at local or state level	Advocates with families and children at the local, state, or national level		
B.1. Administration	2	Describes the purpose, goals, and mission of the program	Reviews and updates the program mission and goals with families, staff, and board	Aligns program practices and policies with program mission and goals	Reflects on how the program's mission, goals, policies, and practices align, and <i>(continued)</i>		

Core Knowledge Area: **PROGRAM ORGANIZATION** — Managing and Administering Programs

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
PROGRAM ORGANIZATION	B.1. Administration (Continued)	3	Uses the VT Program Director Knowledge and Competencies to self-assess skills and knowledge as a director	Identifies administrator goals, strategies, and related resources such as mentors, colleagues, content experts, business organizations, coursework, etc.	Implements, reviews, and updates professional action plan continually to develop and meet professional goals as an administrator	<p>continues to meet current effective practice standards</p> <p>Reviews professional action plans of staff to identify staff training needs, opportunities for mentorship, and performance evaluations</p>	<i>I used the VT program director knowledge and competencies as a self-assessment. Then I identified the areas I needed to know more about and put them in my IPDP. I think I will work toward my Program Director Credential.</i>
	B.2. Management of Personnel and Hiring	1	Develops systems to maintain staffing patterns that meet regulations and provide consistency and continuity of care for children	Implements systems to maintain staffing patterns that meet regulations and provide consistency and continuity of care for children	Shares planning and decision making with staff about staffing patterns, and includes their input in implementation	Regularly reviews and updates staffing patterns based on regulations, staff qualifications, schedules, and best practices for children's care	<i>The Director's group in our area gives me so much support and so many ideas; we find solutions to challenges together. We decided to advocate for mentors for all new program directors.</i>
		2	Develops job descriptions that meet regulations and include qualifications, essential responsibilities, other duties, who they report to, and salary range	Implements personnel recordkeeping system that includes job descriptions, documentation of qualifications, financial forms, etc. and meets program regulations and human resource management practices	Maintains personnel record keeping system, including updating BFIS to ensure records are current and confidential	Frames job descriptions with the core knowledge and competencies and aligns them with a salary scale, professional development plans, performance evaluations, staffing patterns and program regulations	<i>I made sure our job descriptions tie in with the titles in the child care licensing regulations, with the performance evaluation I use, and with the professional development plans my staff and I create annually.</i>
3		Identifies program and staff strengths and needs in order to develop a supportive and proactive work environment	Identifies and uses strategies that support staff to work positively as a team, including professional development opportunities	Seeks and uses feedback from staff, families, and the board to enhance employee satisfaction, teamwork, and productivity	Reviews and updates administrative practices and policies, staff environment, and staff activities to maintain and enhance a supportive and proactive work environment for staff and volunteers		

Core Knowledge Area: **PROGRAM ORGANIZATION** — Managing and Administering Programs

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
PROGRAM ORGANIZATION	B.2. Management of Personnel and Hiring (Continued)	4	Develops written personnel policies that cover staff and volunteers' appearance, performance, hiring, recruiting, and termination that comply with applicable laws, regulations, and best practices	Implements written personnel policies that comply with applicable laws, regulations, and best practices	Uses personnel policies in staff orientation, performance reviews and staff discipline procedures as needed	Reviews and updates personnel policies to ensure they remain in compliance with current laws, regulations and best practices	<i>I created a packet with our policies for volunteers and new staff. I review it annually based on research, input from staff, and other directors.</i>
	B.3. Legal and Fiscal Management	1	Identifies main sources of income and projects budget trends	Identifies possible additional sources of funding from partnerships in the community	Implements fundraising plan with staff and families, driven by program needs and philosophy	Assess effectiveness of fundraising activity in meeting goals	<i>Having monthly team meetings is a priority. That is where we review policies and plan fundraisers. The families take turns providing the food!</i>
		2	Develops and operates within a balanced budget	Projects budget needs and identifies additional state and federal funding sources	Meets requirements to gain additional funds	Secures, manages, and submits reports to funders and policy makers as needed	
		3	Articulates the program's policies and state regulations for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect	Follows the program's policies and state regulations for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect	Partners with staff, families, and VT Department for Children and Families to effectively report suspected child abuse and neglect while supporting the family and child appropriately	Monitors the program for compliance in reporting suspected child abuse and neglect while addressing family and staff needs	<i>I went to a training that the Chamber of Commerce offered and got some good legal and budget planning resources; I liked being with other business professionals.</i>

		Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Examples	
PROGRAM ORGANIZATION	B.3. Legal and Fiscal Management (Continued)	4	Completes and submits required documentation for employee, local, state, and federal government program administration	Recognizes and complies with program policy, liability, and licensing regulations	Ensures current policies and practices align and meet required regulations, documentation, codes, and laws applicable to program administration	Identifies and adheres to all applicable federal and state laws, codes, and regulations including child custody, Americans with Disability Act, OSHA, religious exemptions, cyber safety, etc.	<i>I refer to the Northern Lights website for information about financial support for professional development, and support my staff to apply for those grants</i>

Notes

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Notes

Northern Lights (NL) Early Childhood CAREER LADDER (<http://northernlightscdc.org>)

COMPLETED EDUCATION:

Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Level V
<p>1. Fundamentals for Early Childhood Professionals course</p> <p>Or</p> <p>2. NL approved 3 related college credits in child development including early childhood + workshops: basic specialized care, introduction to licensing and 1 approved observation of the practitioner</p> <p>Or</p> <p>3. NL approved Level I Portfolio with documentation, 45 hours of verified professional development and 1 approved observation of the practitioner</p>	<p>1. Current Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential</p> <p>Or</p> <p>2. NL approved Level II Portfolio with documentation, 125 hours of verified professional development and 2 approved observations of the practitioner</p> <p>Or</p> <p>3. NL approved 12 related college credits in at least 2 VT Core Knowledge areas and two approved observations of the practitioner</p>	<p>A)</p> <p>1. Completed Vermont Child Care Registered Apprentice</p> <p>Or</p> <p>2. Community College of VT Child Care Certificate</p> <p>Or</p> <p>3. NL approved equivalent: 21 related college credits in at least 3 VT Core Knowledge areas and two approved observations of the practitioner</p> <p>B)</p> <p>Associate Degree in early childhood education or related degree</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Associate Degree with 21 related college credits in at least 3 VT Core Knowledge areas</p>	<p>A)</p> <p>1. Bachelor Degree in early childhood education or related degree</p> <p>Or</p> <p>2. Bachelor Degree with NL approved 30 related college credits in at least 3 VT Core Knowledge Areas</p> <p>B) Above with VT Agency of Education teaching license with endorsement in early childhood, early childhood special education or elementary education</p>	<p>A)</p> <p>Master Degree in early childhood education or related degree</p> <p>B) Above with VT Agency of Education teaching license with endorsement in early childhood, early childhood special education or elementary education</p>
EXPERIENCE:				
1 YEAR or more	2 YEARS or more	2 YEARS or more	2 YEARS or more, may include student teaching	

* **Related college credits** include content specific to working with young children birth to grade 3 and their families, within core knowledge areas: child development, families and communities, observing and assessing, how we teach or what we teach, healthy safe environments and nutrition, professionalism or program organization

* **Related college degree:** child development, child and family studies, early childhood or elementary education including special education for ages birth to grade three

* To earn a Career Ladder certificate, submit a completed application with documentation of how education and experience are met, and submit a current **Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)**



**Vermont Northern Lights
Career Development Center**

Northern Lights Career Development Center website:

northernlightscdc.org