

PLANNING YOUR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

for Early Childhood and Afterschool Professionals

A Step-By-Step Guide to Creating Your Individual Professional Development Plan



***Vermont Northern Lights
Career Development Center***

Of the Community College of Vermont and the Vermont Child Care Industry and Careers Council.
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Please visit the Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center website for updates and to download copies of this document: <http://northernlightscdc.org>

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PLANNING YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: AN OVERVIEW

Why is my professional development important?

Children deserve the very best we can provide for them. They deserve to be in the best possible environments. They deserve to be surrounded by opportunities and materials that support their optimal development. Most important, they need to be in relationships with caring, responsive, and knowledgeable adults.

The quality of children's experiences depends largely on the knowledge and experience, skills, and dispositions of the people who work with them. Everyone who works with children and their families needs to understand early childhood education, and afterschool professionals must understand their special context as well. As your professional interests and the demands of these fields change, it is important to expand your knowledge and skills. This document can help you to prepare and carry out a personalized professional development plan to attain your goals.

What is an IPDP?

An Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) is a thoughtfully developed guide designed by you to increase your knowledge, skills, and expertise for working with children and their families over a period of time in any setting.

In your well-designed IPDP, you will do four basic things:

1. Assess your current interests, knowledge, and skills.
2. Prioritize specific areas for growth.
3. Clarify strategies and identifying resources and your plan of action.
4. Reflect on your progress and professional growth.

Your investment of time and money in professional development will be most effective when you know what you want and need to learn. Since no two people are identical in their interests, skills, knowledge, or professional situation, no single plan for professional development will work for everyone. For this reason,

you must create your own professional development plan. Furthermore, the IPDP is a process as well as a document. It guides your professional growth and reflects changes over time as you achieve your goals.

How do I get started?

There is no single approach that works for everyone. Some people have certain frameworks or formats in mind for developing their plans, while others look for examples to give them ideas. If you are starting from scratch, here are some steps to make this process easier and more useful for you. Find some worksheets later in this booklet that also will help you.

First, prepare to write your IPDP:

1. Think about what you do now and what you would like to do in the future professionally. (For example, see the Vermont Early Childhood Career Lattice, page 11.)
2. Find a mentor or knowledgeable colleague to guide and support you. (See "Finding a Mentor" on the following pages.)
3. Find out if your employer or program uses a particular IPDP format, or select a framework to guide your thinking and professional development choices. (See "Professional Development Frameworks" section in this booklet, page 5.)

Then, write your IPDP by following these steps:

1. Assess your current knowledge and skills.
2. Prioritize what you want and need to work on.
3. Clarify your strategies and timeline, and identify the resources you need.
4. Implement your plan.

Finally:

- Reflect on and document your new learning and growth.
- Periodically revise your IPDP to reflect your growth, new professional interests, and needs.

What are the different frameworks that I can use to structure my IPDP?

There are several options available to you. You may already have a framework that you are using that you can continue to use. However, your setting and employer may require one particular framework. If you don't have one already, there are several different choices. Three of the more common frameworks are listed below:

Core Competencies for Early Childhood and Afterschool Professionals

Designates five Core Knowledge Areas. Within these, there are specific core competencies across all levels of professional development, from Level I (entry level) and beyond. The core competencies are an all-encompassing framework for professional development, appropriate for early childhood and afterschool professionals in Vermont. Download the full text of the core competencies at <http://northernlightscdc.org>.

Child Development Associate (CDA)

Designates eight competency goals that are common to all early childhood settings including home visiting and classroom settings, with children birth to pre-kindergarten. This framework comes from the CDA Council for Professional Recognition, the national organization that awards the CDA credential. This credential is used by Head Start programs and is a logical step in the Vermont Child Care Apprenticeship Program and Career Level II in the Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center system. A similar national credential is in the early stages of development for afterschool professionals. Find more details about the CDA at <http://www.cdacouncil.org>.

Five Standards for Vermont Educators from the Vermont Department of Education

Highlights the five standard areas for obtaining or maintaining a license to teach in the Vermont public school system, including public-private partnerships with other early childhood programs. These five areas are Learning, Professional Knowledge, Collegueship, Advocacy, and Accountability. Early childhood or afterschool professionals at the Bachelor's degree level or above are strongly encouraged to seek teacher

licensure with endorsement in early childhood education, early childhood special education, elementary education, or related fields. Find more information at <http://education.vermont.gov>.

What will my IPDP look like?

Some individuals are part of programs or organizations that are already using their own goal-setting and professional planning formats. Others may choose to use one that corresponds with the three frameworks listed above. Many formats are acceptable when you assess, prioritize, clarify, and reflect in your IPDP.

Why should I create an IPDP?

Your professional practice is the way that you go about working with children and their families on a daily basis. Professionals strive to apply the most current knowledge of the field in realistic, effective, and creative ways. The ongoing improvement of your professional practice is necessary for yourself and for the children you work with. It keeps the work interesting!

Reflective practice is a term used to describe the way professionals approach the successes and challenges in their careers. When you engage in reflective practice, you show a commitment to problem-solving. This means that you are willing to admit that there may be problems, and then investigate the issues. You decide what to do in situations based on all of the information, past experiences, resources, and knowledge available to you, and follow through with your decisions. You seek changes in yourself, in others, and in the systems in which you work. Reflective practice is the hallmark of professionals.

Your IPDP helps you to hone your professional practice. Even the most masterful teachers benefit from the process of writing and maintaining their own IPDPs. To provide children with the best, it is important that we strive for the best in ourselves, personally and professionally. Your IPDP serves as a map, but it alone will not take you to your destination. It is simply an important tool to support your ongoing growth and contributions to children and families. The rest is up to you!

MAKING THE MOST OF A MENTOR

A mentor can be any person whom you, the protégé, see as a mentor. You are the best-qualified person to choose your mentor. If you imagine that your professional development is a journey, then your mentor is a guide who knows the lay of the land.

Who will make the best mentor for me?

As in your work with children and families, meaningful mentoring depends on high quality relationships. Some people who have had successful mentoring relationships have said that mentors have these qualities:

- Knowledge, skills, or experience in an area about which you want guidance, or want to learn more;
- Good communication and listening skills;
- Sensitivity and caring toward others, especially adults;
- Helpfulness: the ability to offer guidance and support when you want it, in a way that works for you and helps you grow;
- Respect for you, and the ability to challenge you to learn more and to develop professionally;
- Flexibility and time to work with you, and the responsibility to do what they say they will do.

So where do I find such a person?

Think about the people you already know in the field. Generally, a potential mentor will be someone with more experience and expertise than you. Mentors may be

- Colleagues in similar jobs
- Course instructors and workshop presenters
- Supervisors and other managers and administrators
- Specialists, such as child care trainers, resource development specialists, special educators, and licensing specialists
- Consultants and others

If you cannot think of a potential mentor, ask other early childhood and afterschool professionals for suggestions. Mentors can be found through:

- Your local community child care support agency
- Professional organizations, such as
 - Your regional Building Bright Futures Council (also known as your Early Childhood Council)
 - The Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children (VAEYC)
 - Vermont Out-of-School Time Network (VOOST) and Vermont School Age Care Network (VSACN)
 - The Vermont Childcare Providers Association
- Enrolling in the Vermont Child Care Apprenticeship Program
- Other child care provider support networks, such as Starting Points Networks
- Early childhood and afterschool programs in your community including preschools, schools, parent child centers, other child development centers, Head Start, and so on.
- The Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center.

Find the contact information for these resources beginning on page 26.

You can make initial contact and then continue to communicate with your mentor in person, by mail, by email, by phone, or any combination. Consider how you prefer to communicate and learn. If you would rather meet face-to-face, find a mentor who lives or works nearby. If you like reading and writing, then email or letters can be effective. Your mentor can be across the state (or anywhere!). If you learn best by talking things through, you may want someone with whom you can meet regularly, or someone who likes to use the phone.

What should I do first?

Take some time to ask yourself these questions:

- What specifically do I want to learn from my mentor, and what are my goals and expectations?
- How will I know when I have met my goal? Are there specific tasks I want to complete?
- How often can I reasonably hope to connect with my mentor?
- What is the best way for me to connect and communicate with my mentor?
- What is the best way for me to learn (by reading, by doing, by talking, by thinking, by observing, and so on)?

Now you are ready to talk with the person you think could be your mentor. Tell him or her what you are looking to accomplish and the kind of commitment you are seeking. This is an interview. Both you and your potential mentor are deciding if this is a good match.

Once you've taken this step, it is critical to decide on the time commitment and the responsibilities. Both of you must believe you can fulfill these. Remember that travel also takes time. Some mentor relationships fail when people cannot keep up the time commitment. Also keep in mind that a good mentoring relationship is flexible. As the process unfolds, you both may need to adjust and re-negotiate your expectations.

How do I maintain and end the mentor relationship?

It is important to check in with each other periodically about how you are doing in meeting your goals. As the protégé, you have a responsibility to tell your mentor if something is not working for you.

If you are clear at the beginning about what your goal is in working with your mentor, then when you

accomplish that goal, that part of the relationship is over. Some people, though, have an evolving mentoring relationship, which continues for years with different projects that change and grow. Others have a short-term relationship around a specific project. These are decisions that you make with your mentor.

A note on reflective practice

Your professional practice is the way that you go about working with young children and their families on a daily basis. However, it is much more than day-to-day survival to meet your immediate needs in your work setting.

Professionals strive to apply the most current knowledge of the field in the most realistic, effective, and creative ways possible. Your on-going improvement of your professional practice is necessary for yourself and for the children you work with. It keeps the work interesting!

When you engage in reflective practice, with a sense of curiosity you show a commitment to problem-solving. This means that you are also willing to admit that there may be problems, and then investigate them. You decide what to do in situations based on all of the information, past experiences, resources, and knowledge available to you. You seek changes in yourself, in others, and in the systems in which you work. Finally, you follow through with your decisions.

Reflective practice is often helpfully complemented by a mentoring relationship. Reflection is an important part of the professional practice of early childhood education; reflective practice is the hallmark of seasoned professionals.

Three frameworks for writing your IPDP
**CORE COMPETENCIES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD
AND AFTERSCHOOL PROFESSIONALS**

The core competencies for early childhood and afterschool professionals are the foundation for Vermont’s unified system of professional development. Note that these are two separate, but related, sets of core competencies.

Five core knowledge areas describe the knowledge needed by professionals to work effectively with young children and in afterschool settings. Core competencies refer to the observable skills and dispositions needed to provide high quality early care and afterschool education. Competencies are concrete, achievable and observable, and establish standards of practice that strengthen the professions. Ultimately both core knowledge areas and core competencies are used to define the content and goals of professional development, and assess professionals’ skills and learning needs.

The core knowledge areas and core competencies are relevant to professionals working with children in a variety of settings such as family child care homes, child care centers, public preschools, Head Start, and diverse afterschool programs. They are relevant for a variety of positions including teacher, teacher assistant, provider, director, site coordinator, playgroup leader, home visitor, early interventionist, early childhood special educator, recreation specialist, paraprofessionals, and others. The core competencies also form a good base of knowledge and skills for people in these positions and others who serve young children and families with mental health needs.

Core competencies may be acquired in a variety of ways, such as:

- Participation in workshops, in-service training, and seminars
- Individual courses or a planned program of academic study
- Work experience and reflection on your experience
- Supervision and mentoring

For complete and current information on core competencies, please visit <http://northernlightscdc.org>.

These specific core competencies fit within the following core knowledge areas:

For early childhood professionals:

Child Development

Early childhood professionals have an understanding of how children develop physically, cognitively, socially and emotionally, as well as how children acquire language and other forms of communication. In addition, professionals need to know about various factors that influence child development, and how individual children’s development can vary. Early childhood professionals use their understanding of child development combined with their knowledge of each child as an individual to support children’s overall development.

For afterschool professionals:

Child and Youth Development

Afterschool professionals have an understanding of how children and youth develop physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally, as well as how children improve and use language skills and other forms of communication. In addition, professionals need to know about various factors that influence child development, and how individual children’s development varies.

For early childhood professionals (contd):

For afterschool professionals (contd):

Families and Communities

Early childhood professionals understand that children are members of a family and a community. They need to know, understand, and value the importance and complexity of children's families and communities. With this understanding they are able to develop strong relationships that support and empower families, communicate respectfully, share information and expertise, and involve families as partners in their child's development and learning. Families and communities contribute their strengths and resources to children and to early childhood programs as well.

Teaching and Learning

Early childhood professionals understand that the substance of teaching and learning is in the combination of interactions, routines, and experiences in children's daily lives. Teaching and learning with young children is complex. It includes a variety of strategies that are designed to match the child's unique approach to learning, depends on a thorough knowledge of the content of early childhood education, and is dependent on observation and reflection to plan and develop curriculum and to assess children's learning.

Healthy and Safe Environments

Early childhood professionals use practices that protect children's health, keep children safe, and promote healthy growth and development. This includes knowledge of good nutrition and the importance of physical activity.

Professionalism and Program Organization

Early childhood professionals ensure that children and their families receive comprehensive, high quality early care and education and child development services. They maintain a code of ethical conduct, articulate a philosophy of early care and education, work collaboratively with colleagues, mentors, families, and organizations, maintain a solid work ethic, and implement sound business practices such as budgeting, administration, and evaluation.

Families and Communities

Afterschool professionals understand that children and youth are members of a family and a community. Afterschool professionals work respectfully in partnership with families and communities. They value the diversity of and their unique relationships with children and youth, families, and communities. They also share information and resources with children and youth and their families that support their well-being.

Curriculum and Learning Environment

Afterschool professionals understand that learning occurs through the combination of interactions, structures, and experiences in children's and youth's daily lives. A balanced program promotes life skills and enhances cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. A variety of strategies are needed to match children's and youth's interests and unique approaches to learning.

Healthy and Safe Environments

Afterschool professionals use practices that protect children's and youth's health, safety, and development. This includes having knowledge of good nutrition, the importance of regular physical activity, personal decision-making, and relationship-building.

Professionalism and Program Organization

Afterschool professionals ensure that children, youth, and their families receive high quality, developmentally appropriate services. They maintain a code of ethical conduct; articulate a vision of afterschool care and professional development; work collaboratively with colleagues, families, and organizations; maintain a solid work ethic; and implement sound administrative practices such as budgeting and evaluation as applicable.

For early childhood professionals (contd):

Levels of the Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals

The Vermont Northern Lights core competencies for early childhood professionals currently address three of the six levels of the professional development system.

Level I competencies include the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for entry-level professionals, working under supervision or with support from networks or organizations. (Level I training would include the Fundamentals for Early Childhood Professionals course offered through the community child care support agencies, programs of study at the technical centers, and so on.)

Level II competencies include Level I plus the knowledge, skills, and dispositions associated with the Child Development Associate credential or an accumulation of 12 credits in early childhood education, or its equivalent. (Level II training would include CDA study, comprehensive training in the Vermont Early Learning Standards, some college-level coursework, and other professional development activities.)

Level III competencies include Levels I and II plus the knowledge, skills, and dispositions associated with completion of the Vermont Child Care Apprenticeship Program; or the Child Care Certificate from the Community College of Vermont; or an associate degree in early childhood education or a related degree; or the equivalent.

For afterschool professionals (contd):

Levels of the Core Competencies for Afterschool Professionals

Inside each competency area, there are three Levels (1, 2, and 3) that measure progress and learning needs. Additionally, the document includes four Indicators (Awareness, Development, Achievement, and Not Applicable) that are a way to further focus the individual's assessment process.

There is another set of core competencies:
Core Competencies for Early Childhood and Family Mental Health

Core competencies for early childhood and family mental health align with and enhance the core competencies for early childhood and afterschool professionals. These core competencies are used to assure qualified personnel have expertise for providing services to young children and their families. The competencies are arranged by these domains that are highly interrelated:

- Philosophy and Professional Orientation
- Child Development
- Family Systems
- Assessment
- Addressing Challenges
- Systems Resources

The competencies are organized further by levels: Foundational, Intermediate, Advanced, and Specialist.

For complete and current information on all of the different core competencies, please visit <http://northernlightscdc.org>.

Three frameworks for writing your IPDP CHILD DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE (CDA)

Early childhood professionals in Career Levels I and II in the Vermont Northern Lights system who are CDA candidates, or who need to renew their CDA credentials, may select the CDA framework for their IPDPs. Though a related national credential is planned for afterschool professionals, it is not established yet.

A Child Development Associate is an individual who has successfully completed a CDA assessment and has been awarded the CDA credential. The CDA is a national credentialing program administered by the Council for Professional Recognition in Washington, DC, and it is designed to enhance the quality of early care and education. The national standards used to evaluate a caregiver's performance with children and families are divided into six goals and thirteen related functional areas which are common to all early childhood settings. These goals describe the major tasks and skills for a caregiver to demonstrate.

CDA candidates first engage in at least 120 hours of training. The training topics must fall into the following eight subject areas:

1. Planning a safe, healthy environment to invite learning
2. Steps to advance children's physical and intellectual development
3. Positive ways to support children's social and emotional development
4. Strategies to establish productive relationships with families
5. Strategies to manage an effective program operation
6. Maintaining a commitment to professionalism
7. Observing and recording children's behavior
8. Principles of child development and learning

The CDA credential is awarded for three different child care settings:

- Center-based for which candidates receive endorsements to work with infants and toddlers or preschool children
- Family child care
- Home visitor

The process of becoming a CDA takes time. It is a stimulating and worthwhile experience that requires you to take stock of your professional development, document your knowledge, and sometimes get more professional development. It is best done with the support of a mentor, other CDA candidates, or both.

The eight subject areas are a good framework for your IPDP, and can guide how you prioritize your time as you work toward a CDA. There are local supports available to help you achieve your CDA. Ask your supervisor, contact your resource development specialist at your local community child care support agency, or contact the Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center. Refer to the Resources section beginning on page 26.

For complete information about the CDA, visit <http://www.cdacouncil.org>.

Three frameworks for writing your IPDP

FIVE STANDARDS FOR VERMONT EDUCATORS

Educators who teach in the public school system or who are in partnership with a public school must be licensed by the Vermont Department of Education. In this system, there are two levels of licensure and endorsement for educators, Level I (beginning) and Level II (experienced). Each level centers around the *Five Standards for Vermont Educators*. Grounded in best practice and responsive to state and local initiatives, the *Five Standards for Vermont Educators* provide the foundation for professional preparation and continuing professional development for educators seeking or maintaining teacher licensure.

Early childhood or afterschool professionals in Career Level IV or beyond in the Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center system who will obtain or maintain teacher licensure in early childhood education or related fields may consider using the Department of Education framework for their IPDPs. Once employed, work with your local (school) or regional Standards Board to review your IPDP.

These are the Five Standards for Vermont Educators:

1. LEARNING (Expertise in the Endorsement Area)

Each Vermont educator is knowledgeable about the content requirements of his/her endorsement(s). Each educator continues to acquire new learning in the content area of his/her endorsement(s) and reflects this new learning in professional practice.

2. PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE (Methodology and Pedagogy)

Each Vermont educator continues to acquire knowledge in best practices in teaching and the learning process, so as to improve learning opportunities for all students.

3. COLLEAGUESHIP

Each Vermont educator works collaboratively with colleagues at local, state, and/or national levels to improve student learning through implementation of national standards, the Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS), Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities, district goals, school goals, and/or action plans.

4. ADVOCACY

Each Vermont educator works to improve the educational health of Vermont learners, and promotes fairness and equity for all students and members of the educational community. The educator engages the family and the community in partnerships to promote student learning.

5. ACCOUNTABILITY

Each Vermont educator carries out professional responsibilities ethically. Each educator demonstrates professional growth over time in each of the *Five Standards for Vermont Educators* and in the competencies for his/her endorsement(s). This growth is documented through a professional portfolio that includes evidence of rigorous professional development, reflective practice, and adaptation of practice to improve student learning. In addition, a portion of each educator's Individual Professional Development Plan and professional portfolio is connected to his/her school's initiatives for improving student learning.

Licensed educators also need specific endorsements to practice. Three relevant endorsements include Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Special Education, and Elementary Education. Specific competencies are outlined in endorsement requirements and are helpful in developing IPDPs.

Each school district may have a unique format for how the IPDP is constructed. It is a good idea to check with your local district to learn about any expectations they may have.

The Five Standards are further defined by quality indicators and principles. Contact the Licensing Office of the Vermont Department of Education for additional information. 802-828-2445; <http://education.vermont.gov/>

THE VERMONT EARLY CHILDHOOD CAREER LATTICE

The Career Lattice includes the six Career Levels of early childhood professional development. A career lattice or pathway for afterschool professionals is being developed and will be available in the near future. Each Career Level combines education and experience, increasing from Career Level I (entry level) up to Career Level VI. Individuals may enter the profession at different Career Levels. For example, someone with a year of experience who graduates from a four year college with a Bachelor's degree in early childhood education enters at Career Level IV.

The Career Lattice expands the Career Levels with examples of types of employment associated with that Career Level. Specific position requirements can vary, so check with any organization offering a position. Many people have a higher level of education than their job requires; the Career Lattice is a frame of reference for informational purposes.

	<i>Level I</i>	<i>Level II</i>	<i>Level III</i>	<i>Level IV</i>	<i>Level V</i>	<i>Level VI</i>
<i>Summary of education and experience</i>	Fundamentals for Early Childhood Professionals course + one year of experience	CDA and/ or completion of Level II courses + 2 years of experience	Associate degree + 4 years of experience	Bachelor's degree + 1 year of experience	Master's degree + 3 years of experience	Doctoral degree + 3 years of experience
<i>Early childhood program licensing regulations</i>	Teaching assistant	Teaching associate	Teaching associate	Teacher	Master teacher	
<i>Home business</i>	Registered family home child care provider; Subsidized and legally exempt child care provider	Registered family home child care provider	Peer mentor Registered family home child care provider	Independent consultant; Advisor; Mentor; Registered family home child care provider	Independent consultant; Advisor; Mentor	
<i>Licensed child care facility</i>	Teaching assistant	Teaching assistant	Teacher; Peer mentor; Director	Director; Early childhood special educator	Early childhood special educator; Special services coordinator	
<i>Elementary school</i>	Volunteer		Paraeducator; Teaching assistant	Teacher; Early childhood special educator	Principal; Special services coordinator; Early childhood special educator	
Common Settings	<i>Parent Child Center/ Family Center</i>	Volunteer	Teaching assistant		Program coordinator; Outreach worker; Teacher; Early childhood special education aide	Director; Early childhood special educator
	<i>Head Start</i>	Volunteer	Teaching assistant	Home visitor; Family services worker; Teacher	Director; Manager; Site director; teacher	Early childhood special educator, State collaboration coordinator
	<i>Community Child Care Support Agency</i>	USDA food program specialist	USDA food program specialist	USDA food program specialist	Program director; Resource development, referral, and subsidy specialists	Executive director
<i>State Offices</i>		Licensing technician; Consumer concern line operator	Licensing specialist; Family child care home assessor	Licensing supervisor; USDA food program coordinator	Child Development Division and Dept. of Education administrators and consultants	Child Development Division and Dept. of Education administrators and consultants
<i>Other Common Settings</i>	Subsidized legally exempt child care provider	Subsidized legally exempt child care provider		Community health nurse; CDA advisor; FITP interventionist; Early childhood council coordinator	Adjunct faculty at some colleges; FITP social worker; Early childhood and family mental health consultants	Faculty at colleges and universities

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PART TWO: Blank Forms for your IPDP

An Individual Professional Development Plan is a thoughtfully developed plan that you design to increase your knowledge, skills, and expertise for working with young children and their families.

An IPDP documents your professional development plan in terms of:

- Assessing your current skills and abilities
- Prioritizing the skills and abilities you wish to gain
- Clarifying how you are going to accomplish this plan and within what timeframe
- Reflecting on how you have met your goals.

For sample IPDPs, visit the Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center website.

The forms in this section provide more structure for you as you develop your IPDP. This section contains five forms that you can use for five different purposes:

- 1.) An **IPDP Cover Page**, suitable for everyone to use.
- 2.) **A form for Self-Assessment, plus the Plan of Action**

Select **one** framework for your IPDP.

- **Core Competencies:** Early childhood and afterschool professionals are encouraged to utilize the Core Competencies for the IPDP. However, those professionals with the goal of obtaining teacher licensure can also refer to the *Five Standards for Vermont Educators*.
- **Child Development Associate (CDA) Subject Areas:** Those pursuing or renewing their CDA credential should use the CDA framework. You must have documentation of professional development in each of the eight subject areas as part of your CDA application.
- **Five Standards for Vermont Educators, Vermont Department of Education:** Those pursuing or maintaining teacher licensure should use the Standards for Vermont Educators to write their IPDP, and refer to the Department of Education for up-to-the-minute information about further requirements.

On these two forms, name your priorities and develop these priorities into statements of your goals, then develop the rest of your plan of action.

- 3.) The **Timeline for Professional Development**, suitable for everyone to use.
- 4.) The **Documentation of Professional Development** form is used for all professional development activities in which you participate. It is a two-page form and you should receive it from the instructor or sponsoring agency. If not, ask for it, or prepare one yourself. The second page is a series of questions for you to answer about the experience. Answering these questions will help you remember what you learned. Keep this completed documentation in your personal files.
- 5.) The **Log of Professional Development Activities** forms, suitable for everyone to use. The Log is intended to help you organize your professional development experiences using pen and paper. While this log is a suggested organizational tool, the most important thing is that you keep track of what you have done, and that you thoughtfully plan for the future.

Alternatively, the Bright Futures Information System (BFIS) Course Calendar events are regularly entered into participants' individual online resume. For more information, visit <http://northernlightscdc.org> and click on "BFIS" on the left toolbar.

Vermont child care licensing requires you to keep track of your professional development, so use the system that best works for you. The Department of Education also requires you to track your professional development for re-licensing purposes.

In sum, these are the basic pieces of your IPDP. You can get them and use them in a few different ways:

- You can write in your copy of this booklet, or make photocopies of it to work on.
- You can download more copies of this booklet from the Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center web site, <http://northernlightscdc.org>, and find an interactive version of this with forms that you can type on.
- You can find an interactive, online IPDP within the Bright Futures Information System at <http://brightfuturesinfo.org>. Log into your Quality/Credentialing account to find it in your Resume. This IPDP will be saved in your Quality/Credentialing account.

INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Cover Page

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Current Position _____

Place of Employment _____

Date(s) IPDP developed _____

Work Phone _____ BFIS Quality/Credentialing Case ID _____

In five years, what would you like to be doing professionally?

What resources do you have to help you accomplish this?

Who do you consider your mentor or advisor?

- Framework Choice for IPDP:
- Core Competencies (pages 16-17)
 - Child Development Associate (CDA) (pages 18-19)
 - Five Standards for Vermont Educators (pages 20-21)
 - Other: _____

PLANNING YOUR *Professional Growth*

Core Competencies: Self-Assessment

Read the Core Competencies for Early Childhood or for Afterschool Professionals carefully (online at <http://northernlightscdc.org>). Focus on the specific core competencies that you have. Then, think about the core competencies that are new for you. Write down some of these as “Areas for Growth.” Select which things you will work on first. Indicate those under “Priorities.” Alternatively, afterschool professionals can work from the tool in the Core Competencies for Afterschool Professionals document to do a more specific self-assessment.

Core Knowledge Area	Current Skill and Knowledge Level <i>List specific core competencies.</i>	Areas for Growth <i>What do I want or need to know, or do better? List specific core competencies.</i>	Priorities <i>What will I do first?</i>
Child Development, or Child and Youth Development			
Families and Communities			
Teaching and Learning, or Curriculum and Learning Environments			
Healthy and Safe Environments			
Professionalism and Program Organization			

PLANNING YOUR *Professional Growth*

Core Competencies:
Plan of Action

Core Knowledge Area	Goals	Strategies	Resources Needed	Timeline	Status
Child Development, or Child and Youth Development					
Families and Communities					
Teaching and Learning, or Curriculum and Learning Environments					
Healthy and Safe Environments					
Professionalism and Program Organization					

PLANNING YOUR *Professional Growth*

Child Development Associate (CDA): Self Assessment

<http://www.cdacouncil.org>

Core Area	Current Skill and Knowledge Level <i>What do I know? What can I do?</i>	Areas for Growth <i>What do I want or need to know, or do better?</i>	Priorities <i>What will I do first?</i>
1. Safe and Healthy Learning Environments			
2. Physical and Intellectual Development			
3. Social and Emotional Development			
4. Relationships with Families			
5. Program Management			
6. Professionalism			
7. Observing and Recording Behavior			
8. Child Growth and Development			

PLANNING YOUR *Professional Growth*

Child Development Associate (CDA): Plan of Action

<http://www.cdacouncil.org>

Core Area	Goals	Strategies	Resources Needed	Timeline	Status
1. Safe and Healthy Learning Environments					
2. Physical and Intellectual Development					
3. Social and Emotional Development					
4. Relationships with Families					
5. Program Management					
6. Professionalism					
7. Observing and Recording Behavior					
8. Child Growth and Development					

PLANNING YOUR *Professional Growth*

Standards for Vermont Educators of the Department of Education: Self-Assessment

<http://education.vermont.gov>

Core Area	Current Skill and Knowledge Level <i>What do I know? What can I do?</i>	Areas for Growth <i>What do I want or need to know, or do better?</i>	Priorities <i>What will I do first?</i>
Learning			
Professional Knowledge			
Colleagueship			
Advocacy			
Accountability			

PLANNING YOUR *Professional Growth*

Standards for Vermont Educators of the Department of Education: Plan of Action
<http://education.vermont.gov>

Core Area	Goals	Strategies	Resources Needed	Timeline	Status
Learning					
Professional Knowledge					
Colleagueship					
Advocacy					
Accountability					

DOCUMENTATION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Title: _____ Instructor: _____

Date: _____ Location: _____ Length: _____

Single Session Course Site Visit Mentor Meeting Lecture/Presentation Other: _____

Description:

Core Knowledge Areas

(Check all appropriate areas)

- Child Development **or**
Child and Youth Development
- Families & Communities
- Teaching & Learning **or**
Curriculum and Learning
Environments
- Healthy & Safe Environments
- Professionalism & Program
Organization

Child Development Associate (CDA)

- _____ 1. Planning a safe & healthy environment
- _____ 2. Physical & intellectual development
- _____ 3. Social & emotional development
- _____ 4. Productive relationships with families
- _____ 5. Effective program operation
- _____ 6. Commitment to professionalism
- _____ 7. Observing & recording behavior
- _____ 8. Principles of child growth &
development

Five Standards for

Vermont Educators

(Check the appropriate areas)

- 1. Learning
- 2. Professional Knowledge
- 3. Collegueship
- 4. Advocacy
- 5. Accountability

Core competencies addressed/ assessed:

For example: CHILD DEVELOPMENT

How Children Develop

1. *Describes principles of growth and development*

Participant's Name: _____ Instructor's Signature: _____

REFLECTION ON THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

Describe new learning and knowledge, and your reactions:

How will you apply this new learning?

What questions do you have or what was confusing?

What other resources do you need to follow-up?

New vocabulary and notes:

RESOURCES REFERENCED IN THIS DOCUMENT

Please visit the Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center website (<http://northernlightscdc.org>) for sample IPDPs, including the paths of these professionals:

- Richard's use of the Core Competencies framework
- Rosa's use of the Child Development Associate framework
- Maeve's use of the Five Standards for Vermont Educators framework

While online, please look at the other career advising tools available at

- CDA Council for Professional Recognition: <http://www.cdacouncil.org>
- Vermont Department of Education: <http://education.vermont.gov>
- The Vermont Principals' Association (VPA) and the Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA) jointly publish a comprehensive "Vermont Education Directory" which includes Vermont listings for: public schools, private/independent schools, supervisory unions and districts, technical centers, post-secondary institutions, Vermont education organizations, and Vermont Institutes. To purchase a copy, call the VPA at 229-0547 or the VSA at 229-5834.
- Bright Futures Information System (BFIS): <http://brightfuturesinfo.org>
- Vermont Out-of-School Time Network (VOOST) and Vermont School Age Care Network (VSACN): <http://www.voost.org>
- Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children (VAEYC): <http://www.vaeyc.org>
- Vermont Child Care Apprenticeship Program: <http://www.vermontchildcareindustry.org>
- Vermont Child Care Providers Association: no web site available; e-mail: wells_cheryl@hotmail.com

Your professional development is a journey worthy of the time it takes to plan for it. Remember that there are many sources of support for you. Enjoy the process and have fun!

LOCAL RESOURCES

County/ Region	Community Child Care Support Agency with Resource Development Specialist	Regional Building Bright Futures Council, also known as the Early Childhood Council
Addison	Mary Johnson's Children Center 388-4304	388-4304 referral@mjcvt.org
Bennington	Bennington Child Care Association 447-6485	442-1515 bennSX6@sover.net
Caledonia/ Essex	Kingdom Child Care Connection at Umbrella 748-1992	751-8408 maryannh@vtlink.net
Chittenden	Child Care Resource 863-3367	652-5138 ecc@sover.net
Franklin/ Grand Isle	The Family Center of Northwestern Vermont 524-6574	527-5426 alisharadams@yahoo.com
Lamoille Valley	Lamoille Family Center 888-5229	888-1400 LV SX6@successbysixlamoille.org
Orleans/Essex	Northeast Kingdom Community Action 334-4072	766-5331 Julie.mulroy@verizon.net
Rutland	Vermont Achievement Center 747-0033	438-4424 rutlandecc@yahoo.com
Springfield	Springfield Area Parent Child Center 886-5242	885-8707 riverconnect@vermontel.net
Washington Area	The Family Center of Washington County 828-8765	476-2135 cvecc@fcwct.org
Windham County	Windham Child Care Association 254-5332	258-2273 ctarail@sover.net
Windsor/Orange	Child Care Project 603-646-3233	295-4126 christieb@wpgate1.ahs.state.vt.us



Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center

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CCV-Wasson Hall • PO Box 120 • Waterbury, VT 05676 • (802) 241-4661 • <http://northernlightscdc.org>