

Vermont Early Childhood Career Ladder

Level IV

LEVEL I LEVEL II LEVEL III **LEVEL IV** LEVEL V LEVEL VI

What is the Career ladder?

The Career Ladder identifies the six career levels of early childhood professional development. The Career Ladder may be used by early childhood professionals for tracking and planning professional growth. You may enter the Career Ladder at any level, and there are many different paths to take to develop your career. Each level combines education and experience. The Northern Lights core competencies provide the foundation for this system.

What is Level IV?

You reach Level IV when you have an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP), have earned a Bachelor degree in a field related to early childhood education or child development, and have at least one year of work experience after graduating. Experience gained during student teaching applies.

You can reach Level IV with or without gaining Department of Education licensure with an endorsement in early childhood or early childhood special education.

Why is completing Level IV important?

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

How do I apply for a Level IV certificate?

When you have completed the requirements you can get the application for Level IV from the Northern Lights website or contact us to request one.



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

Resources:

<http://northernlightscdc.org>

- see *Career Ladder*
- see *Core Competencies*
- see *Resources: higher education* for a list of college and universities with early childhood coursework
- see *Resources: standards* for information about program accreditation
- see *Instructors* to learn about the Instructor Registry
- see *Credentials* to learn about the Program Director Credential

Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center

<http://northernlightscdc.org>

Phone: 802-241-4661

See the reverse side for more information on Level IV

Vermont Early Childhood Career Ladder Level IV (continued)



Did you know...

- You can earn a bonus from the Child Development Division if you are working in the field of early childhood and earn your Bachelor's degree
- If you have a Bachelor's degree and experience teaching adults, you can apply to be in the Northern Lights Instructor Registry

More Resources:

VSAC

www.vvac.org

CDD grants

<http://brightfuturesinfo.org>

Vermont Department of
Education

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

VT Early Childhood
Educator Licensure
(VECEL)

<http://www.vecel.org/>

Higher Education
Collaborative
Contact:

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What do I get when I achieve Level IV?

You are seen as a professional with a commitment to the field and many opportunities for employment.

- Head Start and other programs specifically look for staff with a Bachelor Degrees
- Your degree is more valuable to programs seeking accreditation or recognition such as STARS - the Vermont program quality and improvement system, NAEYC accreditation, National Afterschool Association (NAA) and National Association of Family Childcare (NAFCCA)
- With a Vermont teaching license, you may choose to work for the public schools or in partnership with public schools
- Many early childhood college courses also help you achieve the Program Director Credential for early childhood professionals

How do I pay for college courses?

There are grants, scholarships, loans and low cost courses. Many are only for people currently working in the field of early childhood. Talk with the college you are planning to attend about financial aid. Also talk with the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) and the Child Development Division about funds for college.

The Vermont Early Childhood Educator Licensure project (VECEL) can support you through the process of creating your portfolio for the peer review process. This is an alternative route for achieving teacher licensure and endorsements. The Higher Education Collaborative offers reduced cost graduate courses relevant for teacher licensure with an endorsement in early childhood or early childhood special education.

What if I'm working in early childhood but have a Bachelors degree in a different field?

Your Bachelor's Degree may help you gain employment if you have also college coursework in early childhood education or child development. This is especially true for Head Start programs or if your program is seeking NAEYC accreditation or STARS program quality ratings.

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