

August 2009

Fundamentals or Level I credential requirement**Observation of the Practitioner with children*****Guidance for the practitioner and the observer***

The purpose of having an outside professional observe you and document what he or she sees while you work with children, is to give you experience being observed. It is also can help you plan and reflect on what you are doing as a teacher of young children, and to get feedback on your practice from someone with greater expertise and experience.

This observation is a requirement for successful completion of Fundamentals or a Level I certificate. It is usually completed between the middle and end of the course. In general the observer will be at your program for about an hour. This includes: some time to meet you and settle in, about 30 minutes to observe without interacting with you or the children, and then some time to discuss the observation together and complete the form.

Important guidelines to remember:

- You and the observer are both mandated reporters, and so are required to report any suspected signs of child abuse or neglect.
- You and the observer are both required to maintain confidentiality about the children and their families. You should not share any specific information about the children being observed.
- If there are any questions about child care licensing regulations, they should be referred to the Vermont child care consumer concern line: 1-800- 540-7942
- The document, including the last two pages describing the observation, will be shared with the Fundamental's instructor. It may also be shared with Northern Lights Career Development Center, for purposes of planning future courses.

Our signatures below indicate that we have read, understand and will follow the guidelines above.

 Practitioner

 Date

 Observer

 Date

For the observer: Name of observer: (print please) _____

Conflict of Interest Statement: *read and sign*

With my signature below, I attest that I am not a relative or related by blood or partnership, or other legal relationship to the candidate; and that I am not a relative of a child currently in the care of this practitioner. I am also not a co-teacher working on a regular basis with the same group of children as this practitioner.

Signature of observer: _____ Date: _____

Before the Observation:

- The Instructor of the Fundamentals course and the regional Resource Development Specialist (or other course sponsor) together identify a professional to come and observe you. They will help you – but you are responsible for making it happen.
- Prepare for the observation:
 - Think about some possible times (about an hour total) in which the observer can come to your worksite or place you volunteer with children. Think about what will be happening during the time the observer is there and what you will be doing.
 - Read the *Observation of the Practitioner* form. Complete the sections for the practitioner (you!), including checking off and describing how you are supporting children's learning in different areas. Write down what you want the observer to notice and give feedback on.
- Contact your observer: confirm when he or she will be at your program (it should be about an hour). Tell the observer what you think you and the children will be doing while he or she is observing. You might also need to give the observer directions to get to you.
- Inform the families (and supervisor in your program if you have one) that you will be observed by a professional, as part of the class you are taking. No confidential information about the children or families will be shared with the observer.

During the observation

- When the observer arrives, give her or him all the pages of the *Observation of the Practitioner* to read and to complete.
- Try to relax (!) and ignore the observer.

After the observation:

- Talk with the observer about the observation. How did it feel to be observed? What did the observer learn from watching you and the children? Did the materials and arrangements you made, support the children's learning as you planned? What did the observer see as your strengths? Are there any suggestions that the observer can make to help you grow as a professional? (The observer will write the highlights of this discussion on the form.)
- Read and have the observer and yourself sign the *Observation of the Practitioner*.
- If the observer has a stipend form you will need to also sign it.
- Complete all the sections of the *Observation of the Practitioner* (pages 3-5) including the reflection section at the end of the form. **MAKE A COPY FOR YOURSELF.** Bring it to the Fundamentals class by the deadline. If you are applying for Level I certificate using an approved equivalency for Fundamentals, include a copy of this completed form with your application.

Observation of the Practitioner

✧ Practitioner completes

✪ Observer completes

✧ Date: _____ of observation. Program: _____

✧ Your Name (practitioner being observed): _____

✧ Time of Observation: _____ to _____. Age range of children observed: _____
of children _____

✧ Setting of the observation: _____
(*outdoor playground, circle time, transitioning, free choice, small group activity, etc.*)

✧ **When the observer is there-**

a) Describe how have you set up the space and materials to support children's learning in at least two of these areas. (use additional paper if needed)

- Problem solving and thinking

- Social and emotional development and guidance

- Language, literacy and communication

- Creative expression

- Physical development

- Health and Safety

- Connections with family or community

b) What would you like the observer to especially notice or provide feedback about?

