

Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) Fact Sheet

An Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) is written by you to guide your continuing professional growth. It is an action plan that describes an ongoing process. It has four parts:

- **SELF ASSESSMENT** – What are my current interests, knowledge, and skills? What do I want to learn more about or what skills do I want to develop?
- **GOALS** – What specific, measurable activity will I do?
- **STRATEGIES** – How will I do this, and what resources will I need to make it happen?
- **TIMELINE** – When will I meet each of my goals?

Why is an IPDP important?

The quality of children's experiences depends largely on the knowledge, experience, skills, and attitudes of the people who work with them. Working with children and families is a demanding job requiring a wide range of skills and knowledge. Your IPDP is a process as well as a document. It guides your professional growth and reflects changes over time.

Who needs an IPDP?

Everybody who works in a Child Development Division (CDD) regulated early childhood or afterschool program needs an IPDP. This includes people who work in family child care and center-based programs, schools, and community programs. Professionals are required to submit their IPDP when they apply for certificates, credentials, or Child Development Division grants.

Programs applying for Vermont's Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS) must have a current IPDP for each staff person. NAEYC program accreditation also requires staff to have a professional development plan.

What will my IPDP look like?

One common framework uses the Early Childhood Core Knowledge Areas:

- **CHILD DEVELOPMENT** – Promoting child development and learning
- **FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES** - Building Family and Community Relationships
- **OBSERVING AND ASSESSING** - Observing, Documenting and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families
- **HOW WE TEACH** - Using Developmentally Effective Approaches
- **WHAT WE TEACH** - Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum

- **HEALTHY SAFE ENVIRONMENTS AND NUTRITION** - Ensuring Healthy Safe Environments and Good
- **PROFESSIONALISM** - Growing as a Professional
- **PROGRAM ORGANIZATION** - Managing and Administering Programs

A meaningful IPDP includes self-reflection. Reflective practice shows you are curious, that you consider what has occurred, and why and how to respond. Through reflection you will outline new ideas to keep learning.

When should I update my IPDP?

You should review and update your IPDP based on your IPDP timeline. IPDPs submitted with a grant or Level Certificate application must be current within the last 3 months. Child Care program licensing regulations require staff to update their IPDP annually.

Who can help me with my IPDP?

Think about the people that you already know in the field, and select someone to help you. Consider someone you trust, who is sensitive to your needs, such as colleagues in similar jobs, Instructors or Trainers, Directors or Supervisors, Consultants, Mentors, or Career Advisors. Northern Lights Resource Advisors are available to help you understand how to create your IPDP.