



<http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/>



www.northernlightscdc.org

PRINCIPLES of Vermont's Professional Development System **For early childhood and afterschool professionals**

GUIDANCE

3-11

The Principles are used to develop, evaluate and enhance the professional development system for early childhood and afterschool practitioners. This document offers suggestions for how they could be used, details each of the guiding principles, and provides examples.

- I. Use of the 7 Principles**
- II. History of the development of the Principles**
- III. The Principles in Detail**
- IV. Principles worksheets and completed examples**

I. Use of the 7 Principles

The seven Principles outline the key elements of an effective professional development system. Organizations, agencies and programs that support or provide professional development to early childhood or afterschool professionals can use the principles when considering the system or "big picture" of their work.

Who might use the Principles?

- Starting Point network leaders
- Resource Development staff in Community Child Care Support Agencies
- For profit and not for profit agencies that sponsor professional development such as Stern Center, VT Center for the Book, the Arts Bus, VT – VSA, Prevent Child Abuse Vermont, VT Institute of Natural Sciences, etc.

- Agencies and programs that address systems of services such as the Professional Preparation and Development Committee (PPD), Northern Lights Career Development Center, Child Development Division, Department of Education, Center for Afterschool Excellence etc.
- Program Directors with their staff, planning their professional development offerings and identifying opportunities for the coming year
- And others....

Why would they use the Principles?

- To review their work of the past year and plan their work for the next year
- As part of a strategic planning process
- To collect evaluation information about their program from consumers, staff and partners

How would they use the Principles?

- A sponsor adds questions related to the Principles “clear and known”, “accessible” and “relevant” to their participant evaluations of workshops and courses: *How did you find out about this workshop? Why did you pick this time/location to attend? Why did you choose this topic? How will you apply this information?*
- A regional council uses the 7 principles to review their early childhood and afterschool professional development opportunities and activities as part of their annual review and goal setting for the next year.
- An organization hosts a focus forum with people who use their services and organization staff, to consider how the organization is meeting each principle and what they could do better in the coming year.
- Practitioners working with children birth to 5 years old with special needs, uses the 7 principles to review their professional development activities and identify gaps.
- Sponsors and instructors use the 7 principles to guide/plan professional development activities.
- Funding proposals require grantees to address these 7 principles.

The process of discussion and reflection on each principle is most effective if consumers (such as child care providers, families, or other service partners) participate together with program, agency or organization staff.

A *Principles worksheet* found at the end of this document guides organizations to consider each of the principles in depth, using three questions:

- what do we do now to meet this Principle?
- what gaps or questions do we have about how we are meeting this Principle?
- What might we do to better address this gap or meet this Principle?

This process naturally leads to identifying clear outcomes and an action plan (what, who and when) to guide next steps of the organization, program or agency.

Completed Samples of the *Principles Worksheet* are attached to illustrate how the Principles have been used for professional development planning and assessment purposes.

II. History of the development of the Principles

The professional development system principles were first drafted by the Think Tank committee in August 2008 in response to an identified need to have one set of guiding principles to use to make policy decisions by the Child Development Division (CDD) concerning Professional Recognition Bonuses. The committee examined the differences between principles, mission and vision. They reviewed and consolidated ideas from diverse groups in the state and nationally, and perspectives of the workforce, Department of Education and CDD administrators, and others. By September 2008 four guiding principles were identified. These were reviewed and changed based on input from state-wide groups including the Professional Preparation and Development Committee (PPD), the board of the Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children and Vermont Child Care Industry and Careers Council, Afterschool Professional Development Framework committee and others. This became DRAFT 6; it was posted on the Northern Lights website and used until April 2010. At that time the Think Tank reviewed the draft principles and compared them with the NAEYC Policy Blue Print guiding principles. Based on feedback from the PPD and the Think Tank a new draft was created, which was further revised by the Think Tank until October 2010. It was then presented to the PPD in the fall of 2010 for review and revisions, with the final version completed by the Think Tank in early 2011.

Please contact Northern Lights to share how you used the worksheet, or to provide feedback or suggestions about their use.

Northern Lights Career Development Center

PO Box 489; Montpelier VT 05601

www.northernlightscdc.org

III. The Principles in detail

<p>1) <u>Clear and Known</u> Practitioners know there is a professional development system that is available to them.</p>	
<p><i>Explanation:</i> All aspects of the professional development system are presented in a variety of formats and delivery systems, so that individuals seeking to join the field and those already in the field recognize how to find and use information that supports and recognizes their professional growth.</p>	<p><i>Current and potential uses of this principle:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple organizations provide consistent information through diverse channels about professional development and career pathways. - Practitioners get information about the professional development system in a variety of venues: in their college course work, through e- newsletters from their region and state –wide, in community-based workshops and conferences, on websites, in “welcome to child care” visits, in starting points networks, from colleagues, and as part of new employee or new director orientations,. - A practitioner who has achieved the Level I Certificate actively seeks trainings identified as counting for the Level II certificate. - A growing number of practitioners recognize that their workshops, their IPDP and the documentation forms are all linked to core knowledge areas and competencies. - A practitioner understands how to create an effective Individual Professional Development Plan, and aligns it with known professional development opportunities and career options. - The practitioner uses the BFIS course calendar and understands how the BFIS Quality and Credentialing section can support/document his/her progress. - Career coaches from variety of roles including higher education, program directors, instructors, and others, share accurate information and make referrals about the professional development system. - The number of instructors in the registry continues to grow and the Registry is used by all sponsors of professional development. - The number of professional development sponsors using BFIS and related documentation, continues to grow.

<p>2) <u>Supportive of Professional Growth</u> Learning opportunities build upon knowledge and skills in systematic and meaningful ways. Professionals who attain enhanced knowledge and skills are recognized and compensated for their achievements along their professional career pathways.</p>
--

<p><i>Explanation:</i> Career pathways are built on attainment of agreed upon competencies. Competency is developed through experience, education and application. The identified markers of achievement (career ladder and pathways) are appropriately timed and flexible so that every individual can see realistic and achievable growth. Specialty areas of knowledge marked by credentials, endorsements etc. clearly complement and link to the ladder and pathways. Financial incentives are designed in ways to increase rewards with increased knowledge and skills. Advancement is valued, recognized, accessible, clear, and connected.</p>	<p><i>Current and potential uses of this principle:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are numerous options to achieve each level of the career ladder and afterschool pathways - Recognition, including financial compensation when appropriate, is gained at each level of professional achievement. - Level II content builds on Level I Fundamentals content; and each build on common competencies. - A person achieving a Level I certificate receives a \$100 recognition bonus; a person who achieves Level IV bonus receives a \$1,200 recognition bonus. - Afterschool professionals at entry-level complete a Foundations Certificate as a way of demonstrating a baseline of competency in the field; - A person achieving the Vermont Afterschool Professional Credential receives a \$500 bonus - Professional knows where they are on the career ladder and can identify pathways to move to the next level. - Program directors use the Career Ladder to develop salary scales. - Individuals recognize themselves as professionals in the field. - Professionals who work in the early care and education and afterschool fields, who do not work in child care can be recognized and achieve certificates on the career ladder and pathway.
---	---

<p>3) <u>Research-based and Relevant</u> Useful professional development content and instructional practices are based on recognized and effective standards that support best practice.</p>	
<p><i>Explanation:</i> Professional development opportunities are based in standards or competencies across different professional systems (Department of Education, Early Childhood and Afterschool competencies, etc.) and are delivered by effective professionals. Competency is developed through experience, education and application. Current research and models of effective practice are sought and used to update professional development opportunities and support application</p>	<p><i>Current and potential uses of this principle:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are consistent core competencies and related competencies used throughout the state. - Researched based curricula (such as FEL, PCAN etc.) is offered and data on its effectiveness is collected and reviewed. - Competency is developed through experience, education and application and there are clear processes to assess and recognize achievement of competency. - Formal Apprenticeship and other on-the-job mentoring supports applying knowledge to practice. - Research-based instructor competencies are the foundation of the Instructor

<p>into practice. New professional development system practices are tested and validated before full implementation and regularly throughout implementation.</p>	<p>Registry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Curricula and competencies are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect new practices and information. - Competency-based self-assessments are integrated into coursework and supervision; used to develop Individual Professional Development Plans and to assess competency for credentials. - A growing number of practitioners recognize that training is linked to core knowledge areas and competencies. - Provide information about research-based practices in regional and statewide newsletters. - STARS and Northern Lights use research- based practices to establish guidelines.
--	---

<p>4) <u>Integrated and Aligned</u> Professional development is articulated so that it is recognized and meaningful across different systems and work settings.</p>	
<p>Professionals have opportunities to follow clear career pathways regardless of work settings or roles. Professional development is articulated so that it is recognized and meaningful across systems- both in community-based organizations and in higher education institutions. The professional development system logically supports diverse professional needs such as in regulated child care, the program quality rating and improvement system (STARS) application, credentials, degrees and related services such as Children’s Integrated Services.</p>	<p><i>Current and potential uses of this principle:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborative committee structures are inclusive of community agencies, higher education institutions, direct service programs, and other partners. - Regular systems of communication are established and maintained among partners. - Completed professional development activities can meet requirements of multiple programs: child care program licensing requirements, Department of Education continuing education requirements, Career Ladder requirements, STARS or accreditation standards, and individual Professional Development Plan goals. - The competency based course, Fundamentals for Early Childhood Professionals, has become the required course for newly hired staff in licensed programs who have not completed other child development coursework. - A competency-based course for Afterschool professionals is being developed and piloted by Vermont School Age Care Network. - Contracted courses through the Child Care Apprenticeship program, are recognized by all higher education institutions, - Community-based classes can be bundled to achieve CDA and other credentials, and also translate to college credit, which may lead to a degree. - Classes are aligned and articulated at all levels of the career pathways. - Career ladder is used to develop sample salary scales.

<p>5) <u>Accessible</u> Professional development opportunities and pathways are designed with a variety of delivery options and are available to diverse populations and skill levels.</p>	
<p><i>Explanation:</i> The professional development system includes a range of options to achieve and advance along a common career pathway. Professional development opportunities are fully accessible regardless of location; are inclusive of diverse populations and levels of skill, abilities and knowledge; and are offered through multiple formats.</p>	<p><i>Current and potential uses of this principle:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional development opportunities are offered thru multiple modalities: on-line courses, traditional classroom settings, community-based trainings, mentoring, and Webinars. - Advising resources are available and connected to each phase of professional development. - Credentials, certificates, on-the-job training opportunities, and other coursework exist to support all levels of professional development. - The system adapts to changing professional needs and new developments in best practices. - Coursework is offered on a regular basis, through both higher education institutions and community-based settings. - Fundamentals course is available in every region- and also offered in other formats such as online segments with a coach or mentor. - Professional development opportunities are open to providers, parents and community members equally for little or no charge.

<p>6) <u>Financially supported</u> Sufficient and dependable funding, both public and private, is available to support quality professional development that reflects these principles and related practices.</p>	
	<p><i>Current and potential uses of this principle:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are clear ways in which funders and other supporters may contribute to the system. - There is the financial commitment to sustain management of a responsive professional development system. - Scholarships are offered as incentives to courses linked to the professional pathways. - Financial incentives are offered for achievements (credentials, on-the-job training). - Achievement of standards is equated with compensation parity. - Financial resources are used to integrate access to quality, effective professional

	<p>development opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding opportunities (TA grants, collaborative grants etc.) require alignment with these principles and related practices. - The integrated professional development system is financially sound. - Non-profit community based organizations that provide professional development for the field, use both public and private funds to support best practice. - CDD is a dependable source of federal and state funds to support professional development. - CDD grants related to professional development require evidence of meeting these principles or efforts toward alignment with them.
--	--

<p>7) <u>Evaluated on all of the above criteria</u> These principles are used to evaluate professional development activities and the system as a whole in order to ensure an increasingly proficient workforce.</p>	
<p><i>Explanation:</i> A comprehensive system evaluation plan based on clear, measurable outcomes is designed and used. Data is regularly collected from each component of the system over time and used to assess progress towards the outcomes. Results are analyzed to both inform and upgrade the effectiveness of the professional development system.</p>	<p><i>Current and potential uses of this principle:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback mechanisms are built into each component of the system: evaluation of courses, evaluation of application processes, instructors, trainings, etc.. - Data is collected from participants in the system to measure retention and career development. - Periodic needs assessments of the field are conducted. - A common evaluation plan is designed and used, based on these principles for early childhood and afterschool professional development systems.

IV. Principles worksheets

On the next pages are

- A blank worksheet to use as guidance when applying the Principles (by programs, groups or organizations)
- Examples of two completed worksheets

Please contact Northern Lights to share how you used the worksheet, or to provide feedback or suggestions about their use.

Professional Development PRINCIPLES WORKSHEET

Project/Organization: _____ **Date:** _____

Purpose of this project/Organization: _____

	WHAT WE DO NOW	QUESTIONS/ISSUES/GAPS	WHAT WE COULD DO- OUR PRIORITIES
<p>1) Clear and Known Practitioners know there is a professional development system that is available to them.</p>			
<p>2) Supportive of Professional Growth Learning opportunities build upon knowledge and skills in systematic and meaningful ways. Professionals who attain enhanced knowledge and skills are recognized and compensated for their achievements along their professional career pathways.</p>			
<p>3) Research-based and Relevant Useful professional development content and instructional practices are based on recognized and effective standards that support best practices.</p>			
<p>4) Integrated and Aligned Professional development is articulated so that it is recognized and meaningful across different systems and work settings.</p>			

	WHAT WE DO NOW	QUESTIONS/ISSUES/GAPS	WHAT WE COULD DO- OUR PRIORITIES
<p>5) Accessible Professional development opportunities and pathways are designed with a variety of delivery options and are available to diverse populations and skill levels.</p>			
<p>6) Financially supported Sufficient and dependable funding, both public and private, is available to support quality professional development that reflects these principles and related practices.</p>			
<p>7) Evaluated on all of the above criteria These principles are used to evaluate professional development activities and the system as a whole in order to ensure an increasingly proficient workforce.</p>			