



## Guidance for Observation of the Practitioner

An observation of the practitioner is required in order to achieve an Early Childhood Career Ladder level 1, 2, or 3A certificate using the college credits option, and to complete the Fundamentals for Early Childhood Professionals course. Level 1 and Fundamentals require one observation of the practitioner, Levels 2 and 3A require two observations.

### The Purpose of an Observation of the Practitioner is for the practitioner to:

1. Gain experience being observed while teaching (Fundamentals and Level 1)
2. Increase thoughtful planning about her/his role in the classroom;
3. Consider the role of the observer in guiding his/her practice; and
4. Reflect on the effectiveness of her/his practice and ways to improve.

### Qualities of the Observer:

The individual completing this observation must be knowledgeable about best practices in working with young children and able to provide clear, supportive feedback based on the practitioner's questions, skills, strengths, and needs. These knowledgeable observers might be supervisors, mentors, coaches, partner teachers, or other individuals who can complete an objective observation using a running record and can provide guidance and feedback to the individual being observed.

### Requirements:

- Observations should be completed using the Northern Lights Observation of the Practitioner Form. If you use a different form to complete the observation, please be sure it includes the same information required by the Northern Lights form.
- For Career Ladder levels that require two observations (Levels 2 and 3A), the two observations should be completed during two different activities. They may be completed on one or more days.
- Career Ladder level certificate observations must be completed within one year of the date the practitioner applies for the level certificate. The documentation from the observation must be submitted with the Career Ladder level certificate application.

### Important Guidelines:

- The Observer and the Practitioner must maintain confidentiality about the children and their families. Specific information about the children present during the Observation of the Practitioner should not be shared
- The Observer and the Practitioner are both mandated reporters. If any suspected signs of child abuse or neglect are observed, they must be reported as per mandated reporter requirements.



For support completing an observation or for support finding a qualified individual to conduct an observation, please contact Northern Lights at (802) 540-8168 or [northernlights@ccv.edu](mailto:northernlights@ccv.edu)

### **Each observation includes three parts:**

- Planning and reflection;
- 30 minute running record observation; and
- Post-observation review and reflection

#### **Part 1: Planning and Reflection**

Note: For Fundamentals participants, your instructor will identify a qualified professional to complete your observation; for other practitioners who need an observation, you can ask a qualified professional or contact your Northern Lights Resource Advisor for support finding someone to complete your observation.

- Practitioner works with their co-teacher and director (if applicable) to find an appropriate time for the Observer to complete the Observation of the Practitioner. Practitioner notifies the families in their program that they will be observed and that no confidential information about the children will be shared with the Observer.
- Practitioner contacts their Observer to confirm the location, day, and time they will complete the observation. Practitioner should plan for the observation and follow up conversation to take about one hour (the observation itself will take at least 30 minutes).
- Practitioner completes the Observation Planning and Reflection form before the Observer comes to complete the observation. This is an opportunity to think about how they are currently supporting children's learning, and identifying areas they would like feedback from the Observer.

#### **Part 2: During the Observation**

- When the Observer arrives, Practitioner shares their Planning and Reflection form with them. Practitioner should also keep a copy for their records.
- Observer completes a 30 minute running record observation of the Practitioner. Observer will do their best to remain unobtrusive during their observation.

#### **Part 3: Post-Observation Review and Reflection**

- Practitioner and Observer discuss the observation, then read and sign the Observation of the Practitioner Form.
- Practitioner completes reflection section at the end of the Observation of the Practitioner form. Fundamentals participants bring this to their Fundamentals instructor. All other Practitioners include the form with their Level Certificate Application materials as evidence of completion of the Observation of the Practitioner.