



Guidance for Virtual Observation of the Practitioner

Released 1/25/21

An observation of the practitioner is required 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 training series. 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 their role in the classroom
3. Consider the role of the observer in guiding their practice, and
4. Reflect on the effectiveness of their 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. The observer may not be related by blood, partnership, or other legal relationship to the practitioner, nor can they be a relative of a child currently in the care of the practitioner.

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.
- If you submitted a Level Certificate application between March 1, 2020 and January 22, 2021 and you were unable to complete the Observation of the Practitioner due to Covid-19, you may be eligible for an extension of the observation deadline. Contact northernlights@ccv.edu for more information.

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 without written permission from the child's parent/guardian.
- 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.
- Because a virtual observation takes place using either video conference technology or a video recording, it is critical to obtain parent/guardian permission in advance from all families whose children may appear in the observation.

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



For Fundamentals participants, your trainer can help you identify a qualified professional to complete your observation; for others 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.

Part 1: Planning and Reflection Checklist

- Decide if you will be observed using online real-time technology like Zoom or by recording a video of the observation and then sending it to your observer.
- Secure written permission from the parents / guardians of all children who may appear in the observation. Talk with your director (if applicable) to see if the program has permission already on file for an outside individual to observe you working with children.
- Work with your observer to select the time and activities for your 30-minute observation.
 - Make sure this timing will work for your co-teachers and director if applicable.
 - If you plan to record a video and send it to the observer, the video should include at least 30 minutes of interactions between you and a group of children. This can be recorded all at once or in two 15-minute segments.
- Complete the “Planning and Reflection” portion of the Observation of the Practitioner form. This is an opportunity to think about how you are currently supporting children’s learning and identify areas you would like to receive feedback from the observer.

Part 2: Completing the Observation Checklist

- Test the technology and Internet connection before the observation to be sure it will work. If possible, set up your device using a tripod or other stationary mount placed to be able to view interactions between you and the children.
- Provide your observer with your completed responses to the “Planning and Reflection” portion of the Observation of the Practitioner form before the observation begins.
- For a Real-Time Video Observation:**

The observer will complete a running record observation in real time.
- For a Recorded Observation:**

Once the recording is complete, provide your observer with access to view the observation video using a secure file transfer method. The observer will complete a running record observation when they view the recording.
- Work with your observer to select a time for a 30-minute video meeting to discuss the observation.



Part 3: Observer and Practitioner Virtual Meeting Checklist

- Meet with your observer for a 30-minute virtual meeting via Zoom or another method to discuss the observation.
- Together with your observer, complete the “Post Observation Review” section of the Observation of the Practitioner form.
- Be sure both observer and practitioner receive a completed, signed copy of the form. Fundamentals participants should bring the signed Observation of the Practitioner form to their Fundamentals trainer. All other practitioners will include the form with their level certificate application materials as evidence of the completion of the Observation of the Practitioner requirement.

Documents can be submitted from your [Northern Lights Account](#)

Documents can be mailed to: Northern Lights at CCV PO Box 489 Montpelier, VT 05601.

Please be sure to include a signed Verification Cover Sheet with all document submissions.