



Fundamentals for Early Childhood Professionals *Updated 8/30/21*

Fundamentals for Early Childhood Professionals is a 45-hour training series that builds a foundation of knowledge and best practice skills for early childhood professionals working with groups of children birth to age eight. The training series is designed to provide introductory content from Vermont's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals¹.

The core knowledge areas covered in the series are:

1. Child Development
2. Families and Communities
3. Observing and Assessing
4. How we Teach: Using developmentally effective approaches
5. What we Teach: Building meaningful curriculum
6. Health, Safety, and Nutrition
7. Professionalism; and
8. Program Organization.

Effective delivery of the Fundamentals for Early Childhood Professionals training series requires the instructor is well-versed in current research in early childhood development and in providing quality instruction grounded in adult learning principles. Instructors are expected to:

- Match instruction to participant abilities and needs
- Connect training content with participants' experiences working with children and families
- Connect participants to resources and systems of support, and
- Model and support reflective practice.

Each participant should have regular experience working with young children birth to age 8 during the time they are participating in the Fundamentals training series. This may be paid or volunteer work. Observation and reflection are embedded in many different sessions of the course in order to provide on-going practice and a foundation for developmentally appropriate practice.

Each participant will also be required to be observed by a qualified professional while working with young children. Observation of the Practitioner resources are available on the Northern Lights website at <https://northernlightscv.org/career-development/early-childhood-career-ladder/> (see the right column for related documents). If a participant needs support identifying a qualified observer to observe them in the workplace, they should contact their Northern Lights Resource Advisor.

On completion of the training series, each participant is provided with a letter of completion or incompleteness signed by the instructor or sponsor of the training series. Participants who successfully complete the training series who have one year of part- or full-time work in the field should be encouraged to apply for an Early Childhood Career Ladder Level I certificate.

¹ <https://northernlightscv.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/CKC-Competencies-Tool-9.26.18.pdf>



Some participants may experience extenuating circumstances that do not allow them to complete all requirements by the end of the training series. In these cases, the participant may request an extension of up to 6 months for certain required components at the discretion of their Northern Lights Resource Advisor. The participant is responsible for making these arrangements and with maintaining contact with their Resource Advisor about their progress toward completion.

The benefits of successfully completing Fundamentals for Early Childhood Professionals include:

- Meeting the education requirements² for Teacher Assistant staff qualifications for child care licensing (other requirements also apply)
- Meeting the education requirements for Level I on the Early Childhood Career Ladder
- It includes the six-hour Basic Specialized Care training required for all Specialized Child Care Programs
- It includes Introduction to Child Care Licensing; and
- It aligns with the Child Development Associate (CDA) and can contribute 45 hours toward the 120 training hours required to obtain a CDA as well as practice writing competency standards and collecting resources.

² This is one of multiple possible ways to meet the education requirements. See the relevant child care regulations for details.



Modules and Suggested Course Sequence

Fundamentals for Early Childhood Professionals includes twelve, 3-hour modules plus Basic Specialized Care and Introduction to Licensing, totaling 45 training hours. Northern Lights recommends all instructors follow the sequence listed below, but the instructor or sponsor may choose to adjust the module order to meet the needs of their teaching style and the needs of participants.

Basic Specialized Care is a six-hour training required for staff working in Specialized Child Care programs. If a participant’s BFIS Quality and Credential account shows they have successfully completed this training previously, they are not required to take the training again as part of Fundamentals. Introduction to Licensing is a two-hour training required for individuals seeking the Early Childhood Career Ladder Level I certificate and is a required component of the Fundamentals training series.

Basic Specialized Care and Introduction to Licensing can be inserted anywhere in the module order listed below based on the preferences of the instructor and the availability of special guests. Northern Lights recommends scheduling both to take place at some point after completion of FECP Module 3.

Module	Module Title	Hours	CKAs ³
FECP 1	Introduction to Fundamentals	3	4 and 7
FECP 2	Early Childhood Learning Environments	3	4 and 6
FECP 3	Introduction to Observation and Assessment	3	3
FECP 4	Building a Meaningful Curriculum	3	5
FECP 5	Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices	3	4
FECP 6	Social and Emotional Development A	3	1
FECP 7	Social and Emotional Development B	3	1
FECP 8	Cognitive Development	3	1
FECP 9	Physical Development	3	1
FECP 10	Language and Literacy	3	1
FECP 11	Family-Centered Practice	3	2
FECP 12	Professionalism, Leadership, and Ethical Practice	3	7 and 8

Additional Modules	Hours	CKAs
Introduction to Licensing	3	6 and 8
Basic Specialized Care	6	1, 2, and 8

At the conclusion of the training series, Fundamentals participants will be asked to complete an evaluation of the series. Instructors should share the evaluation link during the final training session and ask them to complete it.

³ See page 1 for corresponding Core Knowledge Areas



Guidelines for Completion⁴

Successful completion of Fundamentals for Early Childhood Professionals is based on meeting the following requirements:

1. Attend and participate in at least 39 of the 45 hours of class time [participants are strongly encouraged to attend all 45 hours whenever possible]
 - a. Participation includes making every effort to arrive on time, stay for the duration of every session, remain attentive during class, and engage in respectful communication.
2. Attend the six-hour Basic Specialized Care training.
 - a. If a participant’s BFIS Quality and Credential account shows they have successfully completed this training previously, they are not required to take the training again as part of Fundamentals.
3. Attend the Introduction to Licensing training module.
4. Satisfactorily complete all assignments including two reaction papers, reflections, a final project or presentation, and two written observations of children.
 - a. Satisfactory completion includes making every effort to demonstrate effective reading and writing skills including ensuring written work uses accurate spelling and grammar.
5. Document an Observation of the Practitioner completed by a qualified observer.
 - a. If a participant needs support identifying a qualified observer to observe them in the workplace, they should contact their Northern Lights Resource Advisor.
6. Complete and submit all required components by the last day of the training series. Participants may request an extension of up to 6 months for certain required components at the discretion of their Northern Lights Resource Advisor

Requirement	Instructor Notes
Attend at least 39 of 45 class hours (2 absences max)	
Complete Basic Specialized Care training	
Complete Introduction to Licensing module	
Complete two written observations of children	
Complete an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)	
Complete all assigned journal writings, reflections, reaction papers, readings, etc.	
Complete final project / presentation	
Submit written observation of participant by a qualified observer (Observation of the Practitioner)	
Date all required components submitted	

⁴ A copy of this document is available as a standalone PDF and should be provided to all participants at the beginning of the training series.



Fundamentals Series' Offered by Sponsors Other than Northern Lights at CCV

In Vermont, career and technical education centers or other groups may choose to implement the Fundamentals for Early Childhood Professionals training series. In order to offer the series, the following requirements must be met:

1. The instructor must be a member of the Northern Lights Instructor Registry at the Certified or Master level (or is willing to become a member)
2. The sponsor must be a Northern Lights-approved sponsor with a current signed sponsor agreement on file at Northern Lights
3. The sponsor and instructor must use the Fundamentals curriculum as outlined in the curriculum materials on the Northern Lights website
4. The sponsor must contact Northern Lights in advance to request a Fundamentals Agreement which details responsibilities and sets expectations, and
5. The sponsor and instructor must maintain contact with Northern Lights throughout the implementation of the training series.

Sponsors who wish to offer the training series should contact Northern Lights at least three months before their intended start date. There are a variety of documentation and logistical steps that must be completed in advance and throughout the series for successful implementation. Your Northern Lights Resource Advisor can support you with any questions about implementation. Sponsors are responsible for:

1. Submitting training detail to Northern Lights in advance of the training start date. For open trainings, Northern Lights will post your series publicly on the Northern Lights training calendar and the BFIS course calendar
2. Submitting attendance for each module to Northern Lights for entry into individual BFIS Quality and Credential accounts. This can be batched and submitted at the conclusion of the full series, if desired
3. Providing participants with detail about their successful completion of the course or (where appropriate) the incomplete letter detailing the items they have not yet completed
4. Submitting completion letters to Northern Lights for entry into individual BFIS Quality and Credential accounts
5. Providing Documentation of Professional Development (DPD) forms to participants based on the modules they attend, using the Northern Lights template.

Basic Specialized Care and Introduction to Licensing:

Northern Lights Resource Advisors can show you how to search for an approved Basic Specialized Care trainer, but you will be responsible for contracting with them to offer the training. Alternately, you can encourage your participants to attend one of the BSC trainings offered regularly by Northern Lights at no cost to participants. Contact your Northern Lights Resource Advisor for support scheduling the Introduction to Licensing training – please do not contact Child Care Licensing directly. You are encouraged to have your participants attend one of the standalone Introduction to Licensing trainings offered quarterly by Northern Lights at no cost to participants.