NORTHERN LIGHTS AT
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF VERMONT

**Core Knowledge Areas with Definitions and Subheadings
for Early Childhood Professionals
2017**

CHILD DEVELOPMENT - Promoting Child Development and Learning

Early childhood professionals understand how children develop and the multiple interacting influences on development and learning. They recognize the knowledge base is ever expanding and continue to be informed by current research. They use their understanding of child development, combined with their understanding of each child as an individual, to support every child's development and the development of the group of learners together. Early childhood educators use child development as the foundation for assessing children, designing positive and responsive learning environments and interactions with children, and as a common language in their communication with families and other professionals.

A. **How Children Develop**
B. **Influences on Child Development**
C. **Individual Variance**

FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES - Building Family and Community Relationships

Early childhood professionals understand that children are members of a family and that both the family and the program are part of a community. They work in partnership with families and understand the complex characteristics and relationships found in both families and communities. They use this understanding to create respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families.

A. **Relationships**
B. **Communication with Families**
C. **Community Involvement and Resources**
D. **Welcoming all Families**

OBSERVING AND ASSESSING - Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families

Early childhood professionals understand the importance of regularly observing and assessing children from different perspectives and in various settings. They recognize and use an observation, assessment and documentation system that is grounded in child development and effective teaching practices in order to collect accurate and useful information about each child. They use the results to understand the child's development, interests, needs and changes over time, and to share this information with families. They also use it to design learning opportunities and positive interactions with the child that support the child's growth and learning experiences. Observation and assessment is part of an ongoing evaluation process that may include other professionals. The process helps define child learning goals, curriculum planning and program effectiveness. The early childhood professional recognizes the benefits and uses of an effective observation and assessment system for the children, staff, families and the program.

A. **Objective Observation and Documentation**
B. **Assessment**
C. **Including all children and families in the assessment process**

HOW WE TEACH - Using Developmentally Effective Approaches

Early childhood professionals understand that developmentally appropriate approaches means that there is a common developmental path, each child's growth and development is influenced by his or her unique biology, experiences, environment, temperament, culture, relationships and more. Therefore, effective learning experiences need to be framed by standards and also responsive to each child. Early childhood professionals understand the complexity of this dynamic, and the importance of having and using a wide range of effective approaches, strategies and tools.

A. **Interactions**
B. **Learning Environments**
C. **Developmentally Appropriate Teaching**

WHAT WE TEACH - Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum

Early childhood professionals understand how to design, implement and evaluate young children's experiences in order to promote development and learning. They use research-based standards as the framework, which in Vermont are the Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS)*. This framework, with their own knowledge, experiences and other resources help them design, implement and evaluate meaningful, challenging curriculum that promotes learning for every child.

A. **VELS area 1: Developing Self – Approaches to Learning**
B. **VELS area 1: Developing Self – Social and Emotional Development**
C. **VELS area 1: Developing Self – Growing, Moving, and Being Healthy**
D. **VELS area 2: Communication and Expression**
E. **VELS area 3: Learning about our World**

HEALTH, SAFETY, NUTRITION - Ensuring Healthy, Safe Environments and Good Nutrition

Early childhood professionals use practices that protect every child and promote good health, including good nutrition and physical activity. They are aware of multiple factors that contribute to the health, safety and nutrition of all children. They often partner with health professionals and families to ensure they work together to provide healthy, safe environments and good nutrition for the children in their care.

A. **Healthy Environments and Health Needs**
B. **Safe Environments**
C. **Nutrition**
D. **Physical Activity**

PROFESSIONALISM - Growing as a Professional

Early childhood professionals understand they have the responsibility to provide services that meet or exceed standards of practice and support positive outcomes for children, families and professionals - including themselves and their colleagues. They recognize the potential for professional growth, recognition, advocacy and leadership in the field. They are aware of and use ethical standards of the profession, and follow and promote professional guidelines and standards.

A. **Professionalism**
B. **Ethics and Professional Development**
C. **Leadership**
D. **Colleagueship**

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION - Managing and Administering Programs

Although the roles may vary, all early childhood professionals understand they are not alone in working to administer and manage an effective and accountable program that meets standards of service. Early childhood professionals maintain quality, affordable and accessible programs for children and families. In addition to these professional standards for all individuals working in programs, there are more specific standards for program directors, administrators, or owners.

A. All staff including Directors:
1. **Program Organization and Regulations**
2. **Staff Contributions**

B. Directors, Administrators, Owners**:**
1. **Administration**
2. **Management of Personnel and Hiring**
3. **Legal and Fiscal Management**