

Professional Development Survey of the Field Summer 2025

Each year, Northern Lights at CCV surveys members of the early childhood and afterschool workforce to better understand their professional development needs and preferences. This document includes a summary of key results from this survey. (n=200)

How likely are you to take the following trainings in the next year?

Percentages below combine responses of "Likely" and "Extremely Likely." (n=200)



Indicates advanced-level training is desired for this topic or CKA

Child Development and Learning

- 73%** Social + Emotional Learning + Development 
- 73%** Trauma Informed Practices 
- 59%** Five Domains of Child Development 
- 58%** Pyramid Model and Early MTSS

Frequently Mentioned in Open Responses:

Children with Disabilities
Physical Development
Autism and Neurodivergent Learners

Family and Community Partnerships

- 66%** Strengthening Families Framework + STRONG
- 66%** Advanced Specialized Care trainings
- 58%** Supporting Families Impacted by Substance Use

Developmentally Appropriate and Inclusive Practices

- 82%** Responding to Challenging Behaviors 
- 74%** Strategies for Support + Inclusion of Every Child 
- 71%** Developmentally Appropriate Practices
- 58%** Differentiated Instruction

Frequently Mentioned in Open Responses:

Challenging Behaviors
Classroom Management

Curriculum and Learning Environments

- 56%** Curriculum + Environments for Multi-Age Groups
- 54%** Universal Design for Learning
- 53%** Using and Embedding the VELs
- 48%** Curriculum + Environments for Infants/Toddlers

Frequently Mentioned in Open Responses:

Nature-Based / Outdoor Learning
STEAM

How likely are you to take the following trainings in the next year?

Percentages below combine responses of "Likely" and "Extremely Likely." (n=200)



Indicates advanced-level training is desired for this topic or CKA

Observation and Assessment

- 53%** Conducting Child Observations
- 47%** Program and Classroom Assessments
- 45%** Developmental Screening Tools
- 38%** Teaching Strategies GOLD

Professionalism and Ethical Practice

- 72%** Effective Communication with Families + Colleagues
- 69%** Reflective Practice 
- 62%** Leadership 
- 59%** Professionalism and Ethics
- 59%** Advocacy

Frequently Mentioned in Open Responses:

Mitigating Burnout
Leadership

Youth Engagement, Voice, and Choice

- 44%** Creating and Implementing Student-Led Programming
- 44%** Practical Strategies to Gather Child/Student Feedback

Safety and Wellness

- 69%** First Aid and CPR
- 58%** Nutrition and Physical Activity
- 41%** Water Safety

Program Planning and Development

- 58%** Continuous Quality Improvement
- 53%** Staff Supervision and Support 
- 27%** Child Care Business Startup, Sustainability, and Transition Planning 

Also Mentioned in Open Responses:

Coaching and Mentoring Adults
Training Adults / Adult Learning Theory

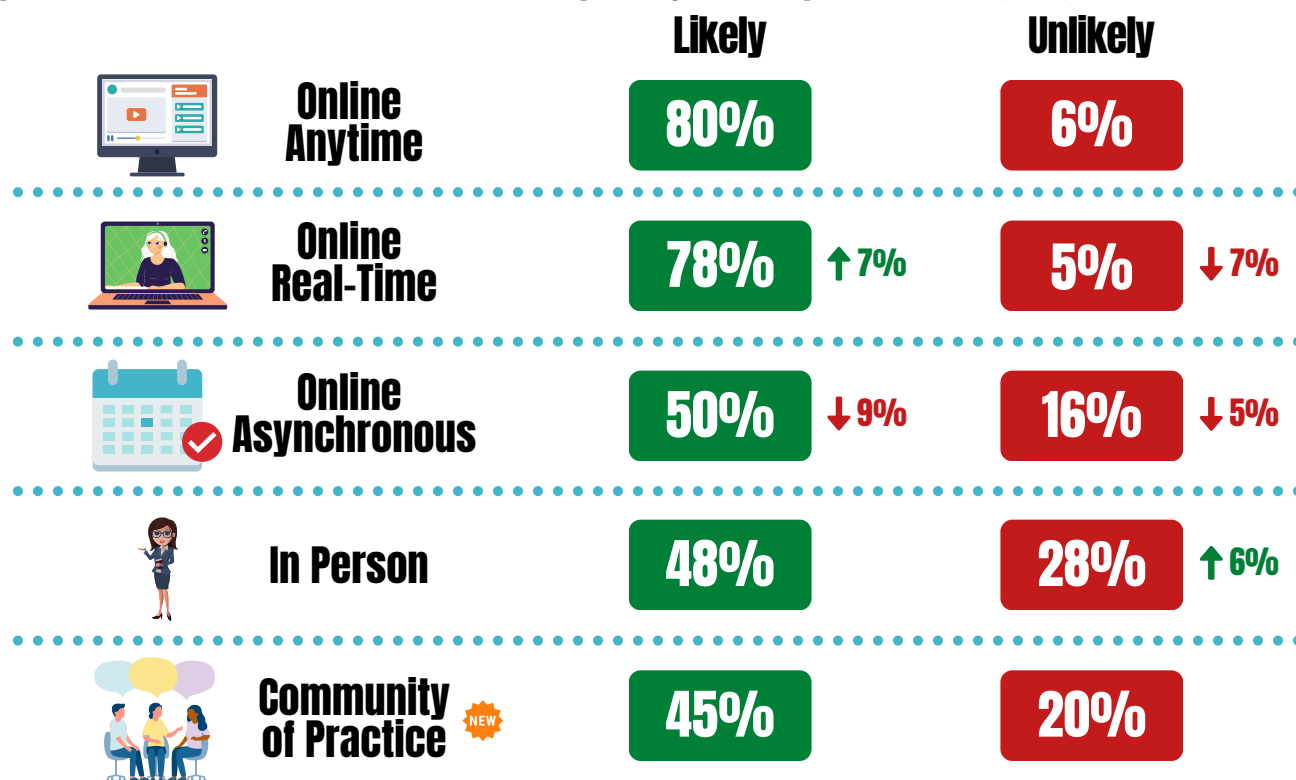


Top Five Training Topics Requested:

- 82%** Responding to Challenging Behaviors
- 74%** Strategies for Support and Inclusion of Every Child
- 73%** Social and Emotional Learning and Development
- 73%** Trauma Informed Practices
- 72%** Effective Communication with Families + Colleagues

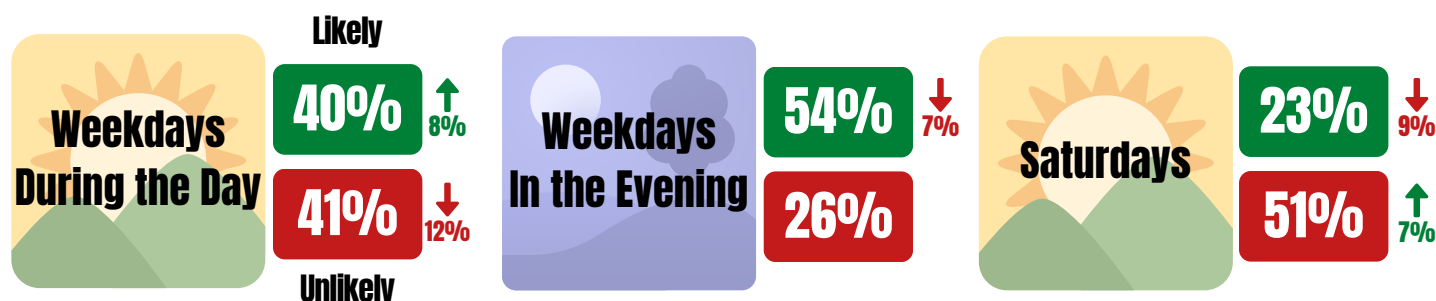
How likely are you to participate in each of the following in the next year?

"Unlikely" combines responses of "Unlikely" and "Extremely Unlikely." "Likely" combines responses of "Likely" and "Extremely Likely." Responses of "Feel Neutral" and "N/A or Don't Know" have been omitted. Green arrows indicate an increase in the percentage when compared to 2024 data. Red arrows indicate a decrease in the percentage when compared to 2024 data. (n=187)



How likely are you to participate at the following times in the next year?

"Unlikely" combines responses of "Unlikely" and "Extremely Unlikely." "Likely" combines responses of "Likely" and "Extremely Likely." Responses of "Feel Neutral" and "N/A or Don't Know" have been omitted. Green arrows indicate an increase in the percentage when compared to 2024 data. Red arrows indicate a decrease in the percentage when compared to 2024 data. (n=187)



Please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following:

"Agree" combines responses of "Agree" and "Strongly Agree." "Disagree" combines responses of "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree." Responses of "Feel Neutral" and "N/A or Don't Know" have been omitted. Green arrows indicate an increase in the percentage when compared to 2024 data. Red arrows indicate a decrease in the percentage when compared to 2024 data. (n=187)

Agree	Disagree	
56% ↑ 4%	10% ↓ 5%	I am able to find the trainings I need
54% ↑ 3%	16% ↓ 4%	I am able to find trainings that meet my professional level
58% ↑ 5%	10%	I am able to find trainings that appeal to my interests
51% ↑ 4%	10% ↓ 5%	My career support needs are being met
67% ↑ 4%	7%	I have met or made progress on my career goals in the past year

Frequently Mentioned in Open Responses:

- Would like to see more trainings for experienced staff members and those with advanced degrees
- Interested in low or no cost opportunities for afterschool professionals
- Interested in attending professional development, but don't have the time

How do you find out about professional development opportunities?

63% ↓ 11%	I search the Northern Lights Training Calendar
52%	I receive direct emails from trainers and training organizations 
51% ↑ 17%	My director or colleagues
43% ↑ 6%	The Child Development Division
34% ↓ 12%	My Vermont Early Childhood Network

How do you plan which professional development trainings you will take in a year?

65%	I choose trainings that are available for free 
60% ↓ 4%	The day and/or time of the training
54% ↓ 13%	I look for trainings on topics that are new to me
53%	I choose trainings I can take online on my own schedule 
49% ↓ 8%	I choose topics related to the goals on my IPDP
48% ↓ 11%	I watch the training calendars and sign up when something interests me
47% ↓ 10%	I look for trainings that focus on the age group I teach

Before completing this survey, were you aware that Northern Lights offers an array of high quality, low- or no-cost trainings and communities of practice (CoPs) to the early childhood and afterschool workforce?

Other 2%

Yes 82%

No 16%

If you have experienced barriers to your participation in a Northern Lights training or CoP, please check all that apply (n=163)

- 41%** The scheduled times didn't work for me
- 39%** I have not experienced barriers to participation
- 21%** NL options repeated trainings I have taken before
- 10%** NL options were not at my level
- 7%** I prefer in-person trainings
- 6%** NL training topics did not apply to me or my work
- 6%** Registration process was confusing
- 2%** NL trainings were too expensive

Please tell us about support you received from Northern Lights Resource Advisors:

"Agree" combines responses of "Agree" and "Strongly Agree." "Disagree" combines responses of "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree." Responses of "Feel Neutral" and "N/A or Don't Know" have been omitted. (n=57)

Agree

Disagree

88%

4%

The responses were timely

90%

2%

I was listened to and my needs were understood

90%

2%

Things were explained clearly to me

88%

4%

My needs were adequately addressed

Which of the following are reasons you did not receive support from Northern Lights Resource Advisors in the past year? (n=161)

40%

I didn't need any career support this year

30%

I already know how to meet the job requirements for my role

29%

I didn't need any support finding trainings or other PD

Current Role (check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 50% Early Childhood Educator | 6% Afterschool Staff |
| 30% Early Childhood Director or Administrator | 6% CIS Professional and/or Home Visitor |
| 14% Early Childhood Assistant, Aide, or Paraeducator | 2% MATCH Professional (mentor, advisor, coach, consultant) |
| 9% Afterschool Director, Site Leader, or Administrator | 2% Specialist (OT, PT, SLP, etc.) |
| 9% Instructor, Trainer, or Facilitator | 22% Other (please specify): |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Child Care Owner / Provider (9 responses) • PreK / Act 166 Teacher (4 responses) • Mentor / Coach (4 responses) |

Current Program Type (check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 44% Center-based program | 19% Universal Prekindergarten program |
| 29% Family Child Care program | 9% I do not currently work in a child care program or school |
| 11% Public or Independent school | 6% Other |
| 13% Afterschool or OST program | |

What age groups do you typically work with? (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 52% Infants and Toddlers (ages 0-2) | 18% Third Grade |
| 68% Preschool (ages 3-5) | 15% Older Elementary Grades |
| 28% Kindergarten | 6% I do not currently work directly with children |
| 20% First Grade | 6% Other |
| 18% Second Grade | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teens / High School (4 responses) • Middle School (3 responses) • K-5th Grade (2 responses) |

How long have you been in the field?

- | |
|-----------------------------------|
| 6% ↑5% 0-1 years |
| 19% ↑11% 2-5 years |
| 11% ↓3% 6-10 years |
| 25% ↓4% 11-20 years |
| 39% ↓9% 21+ years |

Which is your Closest CCV Center

