

Guide to Creating an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)



Child Development Division (CDD)
Department for Children and Families (DCF)
Vermont Agency of Human Services (AHS)

An individual professional development plan represents a personalized design for improving one's knowledge and skills by addressing specific aspects of professional growth. The following information describes key aspects of a professional development plan. Understanding them will be helpful in completing the IPDP required for the Child Development Division grant applications.

Assessing

This includes a review of the record of trainings attended, a self-assessment of knowledge and skills and possibly an external assessment of knowledge and skills (by a supervisor, director, mentor, parent, trainer, licenser, colleague, etc.) The assessment should address an inclusive and broad range of topics essential to having a balanced and comprehensive base of knowledge and skills. The Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center www.northernlightscdc.org core areas of knowledge and the related competencies or the eight CDA competency areas can provide useful frameworks for assessing knowledge and skills. Other competency frameworks include the Early Childhood and Family Mental Health Competencies, the Healthy Babies, Kids and Families' Nursing or Family Support Competencies, or Family, Infant and Toddler Program priority areas.

Prioritizing

An assessment of knowledge and skills should help you identify specific areas that you would like to target for improvement. A targeted area

might be an area of knowledge that you feel you need to enhance because it is important to your daily work. When you review your overall list of areas you would like to improve you may choose this one as a priority. This process of prioritizing will help your plan be manageable and meaningful. The CDD application asks for three items you have prioritized, then asks you to describe your goals and some of the strategies you have planned to carry out these goals.

Clarifying

Once priorities are established it is time to be clear about your strategies. Strategies in an IPDP should include identifying resources (written materials, tools, people, organizations and agencies) which will be used to accomplish your goals. Strategies also include descriptions of action steps that may include participating in specific learning experiences. Listing the tasks to achieve a stated goal and then following through with them is critical to a successful IPDP.

Reflecting

It is important to thoughtfully ensure that an individual knows when she or he has actually grown in skills and knowledge. To address this, you can include documentation that verifies that your knowledge and skills have indeed grown. This can include personal statements of reflection and/or obtaining formal feedback from supervisors, parents, directors, colleagues, trainers, licensers, or mentors. Many models exist to encourage reflection, evaluation and assessment. Also, learning about them can be part of an IPDP!