

Quality Credentials for Vermont Child Care Programs

There are many ways to identify a quality child care program. This quick guide will help you understand the most common quality credentials awarded to high quality child care programs in Vermont. Contact your local VACCRRRA member agency for more information.

(CDA) Child Development Associate- National Credentialing Council for Professional Recognition (202) 265-9090 or (800) 424-4310 www.cdacouncil.org

The CDA program is designed to provide performance-based training, assessment and credentialing of early childhood professionals working with children, birth through age five. Competency Standards, statements of the skills needed to be a competent caregiver and the basis upon which caregivers are assessed, are the core of the CDA program. In addition to 480 hours of experience working with children, candidates must document 120 clock hours of formal child care education within the past five years prior to being assessed. Credential is valid for three years, then may be renewed for five year periods.

(NAEYC) National Association for the Education of Young Children www.naeyc.org/accreditation

NAEYC administers a national, voluntary accreditation system to help raise the quality of all types of preschools, kindergartens and child care centers. NAEYC's reinvented early childhood program accreditation system, effective September 2006, requires programs to complete four steps to achieve NAEYC Accreditation.

(NAFCC) National Association for Family Child Care (800) 359-3817. www.nafcc.org/accreditation/accreditation.asp

NAFCC is the only national accreditation system for family child care providers. Each program goes through the in depth accreditation process requiring training, health assessments, criminal background checks, as well as an observation verifying compliance with the Quality Standards for NAFCC Accreditation standards.

VT Early Childhood Program Director Credential- Kate Giusti (802) 828-0124.

This credential program offers a three-step sequence of college-level courses (20 total credits) for directors in the field or those interested in becoming a new director. The experience offers participants the opportunity to engage in relevant coursework during evening or weekend hours. As a result, participants will have an opportunity to implement new learning in their professional settings and develop collegiality with peers from across the state.

VT STep Ahead Recognition System (STARS) Child Development Division (800) 649-2642 Learning Partners, Inc. (802) 479-5261 www.starssteahead.org

STARS is a VT initiative designed to expand the ways providers are recognized and rewarded for program quality. Achieving STARS recognition indicates that an early care, education or school age program has gone above and beyond basic regulatory standards. STARS recognition is determined by completing a self-assessment, and submitting supporting documentation. Certificates are valid for one year and must be renewed to continue participation.