Evaluation of Vermont's Early Childhood Professional Development System

FINAL REPORT

PREPARED BY:

JSI RESEARCH & TRAINING INSTITUTE, INC.

December 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY . . . 3

II. INTRODUCTION . . . 6

III. METHODS . . . 8

IV. OVERVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS . . . 12

National Perspective . . . 12

Other State Examples . . . 14

- Connecticut . . . 14
- Minnesota . . . 14

Vermont's Early Childhood Professional Development System . . . 15

- Profile . . . 15
- Data Inventory . . . 16

V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS . . . 17

Focus Groups . . . 17

Key Informant Interviews . . . 23

- Vermont . . . 23
- Connecticut . . . 26
- Nevada . . . 27

Gap Analysis . . . 29

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS . . . 33

VII. SYSTEM MONITORING & EVALUATION . . . 38

Overview . . . 38

Monitoring & Evaluation Plan . . . 40

Vermont Early Childhood Professional Development System Dashboard . . . 48

Vermont Early Childhood Professional Development System Assessment Tool . . . 54

VIII. APPENDICES . . . 56

Appendix I: Vermont Early Childhood Professional Development System- System Model . . . 57

Appendix II: Vermont Early Childhood Professional Development System- Profile . . . 58

Appendix III: Vermont Early Childhood Professional Development System- Data Inventory . . . 66

Appendix IV: Focus Group Guide . . . 74

Appendix V: Key Informant Interview Guides . . . 76

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BBF	Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council
BFIS	Bright Futures Information System
CCAC	Connecticut Charts-A-Course
CDA	Child Development Associate Credential
CDD	Child Development Division
DOE	Vermont Department of Education
DSS	Connecticut Department of Social Services
EC	Early childhood
ECPDS	Early Childhood Professional Development System
Higher Ed	Higher Education
JSI	JSI Research and Training Institute, Inc.
MNCPD	Minnesota Center for Professional Development
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NCCIC	National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center
NLCDC	Northern Lights Career Development Center
PD	Professional Development
PPD	Professional Preparation and Development Sub-committee
RDS	Regional Resource Development Specialist
STARS	STep Ahead Recognition System
VCCICC	Vermont Child Care Industry and Careers Council

I

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Qualified and well-compensated early childhood (EC) providers are linked to high-quality early care and education programs. Therefore, the need for building and maintaining a well-qualified workforce of EC caregivers and educators is essential to developing and sustaining high quality programs. Professional development provides the pathway for doing this. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) defines professional development as a continuum of learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals for work with and on behalf of young children and their families, as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work, that lead to improvements in the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of EC professionals. Early childhood professional development systems (ECPDS) are intended to provide the infrastructure and supports to offer a continuum of learning opportunities to the EC workforce within a state. An ECPDS is intended to be a coordinated, integrated and comprehensive approach to providing professional development, offering a continuum of professional growth opportunities that serves the needs of a diverse EC workforce across all EC sectors, including professionals working in direct and non-direct service roles.

Vermont's ECPDS is defined as an organized and planned design to support the development and growth of individuals and the field of early childhood and afterschool. In an effort to improve and enhance Vermont's ECPDS, the Professional Preparation and Development (PPD) sub-committee of Vermont's Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council (BBF) sought an initial evaluation of the system and its offerings. Specifically, the initial evaluation was intended to inform future decision-making to develop a well-coordinated, integrated and aligned system of professional development for the EC workforce in Vermont. In July 2011, the BBF contracted with JSI Research and Training Institute, Inc. (JSI) to conduct an initial evaluation of Vermont's ECPDS, which included recommendations about on-going data collection and the development of a monitoring and evaluation plan and tools specifically tailored for Vermont's ECPDS.

JSI evaluated Vermont's ECPDS and its offerings with a utilization-focused approach that addressed the Guiding Principles of the system and involved close collaboration with members of the PPD, members of Vermont's Department for Children and Families Child Development Division (CDD), and other early childhood administrators and managers by way of an Advisory Workgroup. The Advisory Workgroup was established to work collaboratively with JSI and to provide insight and decision-making throughout the evaluation process. Additionally, JSI conducted a comprehensive review, focus groups, key informant interviews, and a Gap analysis. A framework was developed for the Gap analysis to systematically assess and identify strengths and challenges of Vermont's ECPDS. This framework outlines and defines seven elements of an ECPDS. The elements and a summary of the key recommendations within each element include:

✸ GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND ADVISORY

System Goal: ECPDS has the governance, leadership, and advisory capacity to plan, implement, manage and sustain an integrated and aligned system. System advisory is broadly representative of all early childhood sectors and stakeholders.

Key Recommendations:

- Define the governance and advisory for the ECPDS.
- Ensure system governance and advisory has adequate resources and capacity (e.g., staffing) to operate and conduct business efficiently and effectively.
- Build collaborative relationships with the Department of Education and Higher Education; include representatives in the system's advisory membership.
- Identify advisory members to act as ambassadors of the ECPDS.

✸ POLICIES, STANDARDS AND INITIATIVES

System Goal: System policies and standards for professional development integrate and align licensing, credentials, qualification requirements, and other related standards across all early childhood sectors--Head Start, child care programs, pre-kindergarten, and others. Policies and initiatives are supportive of professional growth, and are supported by articulation policies that connect institutions of Higher Education to each other and to community-based training.

Key Recommendations:

- Identify an advisory member to participate in the CDD licensing update process to ensure alignment with ECPDS professional standards and coherency.
- Work with Vermont State Colleges to 1) develop a Common Course Numbering System for EC coursework and 2) define standard articulation for a CDA credential.

✸ FUNDING

System Goal: System funding is sufficient to support the ECPDS infrastructure, administration, operations and offerings. System funding is sufficient to provide financial supports and incentives to assist early childhood providers with the costs associated with professional development offerings.

Key Recommendations:

- Prioritize resources to better support BFIS.
- Prioritize and expand funds to support a sufficient number of professional development offerings for free or at low cost.
- Prioritize and expand funds for additional financial supports and incentives offered through the ECPDS.

✸ OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION

System Goal: The ECPDS and the system resources and offerings are well communicated, clear and known.

Key Recommendations:

- Increase awareness of the system and build consumer buy-in by designing and implementing a marketing campaign to promote the ECPDS.
- Engage Regional RDS, Head Start Directors, Public School Administrators, etc. to promote and communicate the ECPDS, NLCDC and system offerings to early childhood practitioners.
- Develop effective strategies for communication and information dissemination between the system and consumers (e.g. social media and listservs).

✸ ACCESS

System Goal: The ECPDS and its offerings are affordable and available to early childhood practitioners across all early childhood sectors, providing: low cost professional development trainings, financial supports and incentives;

variety and convenience in the delivery of professional development trainings; and offerings and pathways for a diverse workforce at various skill levels.

Key Recommendations:

- Explore the creation of a virtual training center offered through the ECPDS for online delivery of professional development.
- Develop or identify an advanced level training to offer free or at low cost at least one time per year in all regions of the state.
- Monitor the offerings in BFIS to determine the distribution and frequency of offerings throughout the state and by region.
- Enhance searchability of the BFIS Course Calendar by including additional fields.
- Include all Head Start and relevant Department of Education professional development offerings into the BFIS Course Calendar.

✷ DATA

System Goal: The ECPDS has a data system in place for cross-sector early childhood workforce and professional development data. Data is systematically collected, analyzed and reported on to inform professional development systems-building and policies; to understand the early childhood workforce in Vermont; to gauge system impacts and change; and to help inform planning, evaluation, quality assurance and accountability of the system.

Key Recommendations:

- Conduct strategic planning for professional development and workforce data in BFIS.
- Support staff positions for a database programmer for BFIS.
- Merge existing NLCDC databases with BFIS.
- Develop data management, sharing and reporting policies for BFIS.
- Develop a data field in the BFIS Credential Account to track when the account was last accessed by the account holder.
- Expand workforce and education data elements collected referring to the National Registry Alliance Core Data Elements; include wage and salary data and highest degree attained.
- Develop a process to consistently tag all offerings entered into the BFIS Course Calendar by level, type/area of knowledge, and cost.
- Develop a mechanism for querying attendance of BFIS Course Calendar trainings for each episode of training.
- Design a more user-friendly BFIS public interface to encourage consumers to use the system for tracking their professional development.

✷ QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND ASSURANCE

System Goal: The ECPDS has mechanisms and processes in place to ensure quality and accountability of the system and its offerings.

Key Recommendations:

- Develop a process for evaluating instructors in the Instructor Registry.
- Consider developing Instructor Competencies for the Instructor Registry.
- Develop a training approval mechanism within the ECPDS.
- Consider developing an ECPDS Help Desk to assist consumers in navigating the system.

This Report is an overview of JSI's work, including system findings and recommendations stemming from the initial evaluation, and a monitoring and evaluation plan and tools developed for use by the PPD to conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the system.

II

INTRODUCTION

Early care and education programs have a significant impact on the development of cognitive, academic and social skills of young children, with high quality providers and programs improving school readiness and later outcomes for young children.[1,2] Most young children under the age of six in the United States and here in Vermont spend a substantial portion of their years in early care and education settings. Thus, providing high quality early care and education programs is fundamental to fostering, nourishing, and ensuring the healthy development of our children. Research also shows that qualified and well-compensated early childhood (EC) providers are linked to high-quality early care and education programs.[3] Therefore, the need for building and maintaining a well-qualified workforce of EC caregivers and educators is essential to developing and sustaining high quality programs. Professional development provides the pathway for doing this.[4]

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) defines professional development as a continuum of learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals for work with and on behalf of young children and their families, as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work, that lead to improvements in the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of EC professionals.[5] Early childhood professional development systems (ECPDS) are intended to provide the infrastructure and supports to offer a continuum of learning opportunities to the EC workforce within a state. An ECPDS is intended to be a coordinated, integrated and comprehensive approach to providing professional development, offering a continuum of professional growth opportunities that serves the needs of a diverse EC workforce across all EC sectors, including professionals working in direct and non-direct service roles.

---

[1] Phillips, D., and Lowenstein, A. Early care, education and child development. *Annual Review of Psychology. 2011; 62:483-500.*

[2] Burchinal, P., Kainz, K., Cai, K., Tout, K., Zaslow, M., Martinez-Beck, I., and Rathgeb, C. Early Care and Education Quality and Child Outcomes. *Child Trends: Research-to-Policy Research-to-Practice Brief. 2009. http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2009_5_21_RB_earlycare.pdf*

[3] Zaslow, M. and Tout, K. The Role of Professional Development in Creating High Quality Preschool Education. Child Trends. Brookings Institution, Washington D.C. 2005.

[4] Sheridan, M., Pope Edwards, C., Marvin, C., Knoche, L. *Professional Development in Early Childhood Programs: Process Issues and Research Needs. Early Education and Development. 2009: 20(3): 377-401.*

[5] National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA). Early Childhood Education Professional Development: Training and Technical Assistance Glossary. 2011. *http://www.naeyc.org/GlossaryTraining_TA.pdf*

Vermont's ECPDS is defined as an organized and planned design to support the development and growth of individuals and the field of early childhood and afterschool. Vermont's ECPDS is based upon the following Guiding Principles that were adopted to serve as a framework for developing as well as evaluating the system: 1) Clear and Known; 2) Supportive of Professional Growth; 3) Research-based and Relevant; 4) Integrated and Aligned; 5) Accessible; 6) Financially Supported; and 7) Evaluated on these criteria. In an effort to improve and enhance Vermont's ECPDS, the Professional Preparation and Development (PPD) sub-committee of Vermont's Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council (BBF) sought an initial evaluation of the system and its offerings. Specifically, the initial evaluation was intended to inform future decision-making to develop a well-coordinated, integrated and aligned system of professional development for the EC workforce in Vermont. In July 2011, the BBF contracted with JSI Research and Training Institute, Inc. (JSI) to conduct an initial evaluation of Vermont's ECPDS, which included recommendations about on-going data collection and the development of a monitoring and evaluation plan and tools specifically tailored for Vermont's ECPDS. Defined outcomes of this initial evaluation per the PPD included:

- A report on the current professional development system based on the Vermont Guiding Principles and including information about its offerings' accessibility, affordability, quality and pathways to credentials.
- Identification of needed data points that are not currently being collected and recommendations for methodologies for that on-going collection.
- Recommendations for streamlining the current data being collected on the early childhood professional development system.
- An evaluation plan and tool(s) to be used by the PDD/BFF for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of Vermont's early childhood professional development system.

This report is an overview of JSI's work, including system findings and recommendations stemming from the initial evaluation, and a monitoring and evaluation plan and tools developed for use by the PPD to conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the system.

III METHODS

JSI evaluated Vermont's ECPDS and its offerings with a utilization-focused approach that addressed the Guiding Principles of the system and involved close collaboration with members of the PPD, members of Vermont's Department of Children and Families Child Development Division (CDD), and other early childhood administrators and managers by way of an Advisory Workgroup. The Advisory Workgroup was established to work collaboratively with JSI and to provide insight and decision-making throughout the evaluation process. Additionally, JSI conducted a comprehensive review, focus groups, key informant interviews, and a Gap analysis, all culminating in two main outputs and presented here in the Final Report:

1) A report on Vermont's ECPDS, the current offerings of the system and the data currently collected; and

2) An evaluation plan, including recommended data points, data collection mechanisms, monitoring and evaluation of the system going forward, and evaluation tools for the PPD/BBF to continue with future monitoring and evaluation of Vermont's ECPDS.

Advisory Workgroup

The PPD Facilitator identified and invited potential individuals to be members of the Advisory Workgroup. The Advisory Workgroup members are listed in Table 1. JSI convened the Advisory Workgroup four times during the six month evaluation process with three in-person meetings and one teleconference call. During the evaluation process the Workgroup imparted valuable institutional knowledge and an understanding of the landscape, sub-systems, and policies feeding into Vermont's ECPDS. JSI and the Workgroup established goals, priorities, and deliverables of the evaluation and came to consensus on a final evaluation plan for the initial evaluation of the system. Furthermore, the Advisory Workgroup weighed in on identifying useful performance indicators for the system and, in general, provided guidance and decision-support throughout the evaluation process.

TABLE 1: Evaluation of Vermont's ECPDS: Advisory Workgroup Members

MEMBER	ORGANIZATION
Betsy Rathbun-Gunn	Director of Early Childhood Services United Counseling Service of Bennington County
Caprice Hover	Executive Director Rutland County Parent Child Center
Jan Walker	Director Workforce Development and Quality Enhancement Child Development Division Vermont Department for Children and Families
Kim Keiser	Interim Executive Director Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council
Mark Sustic	Consultant Vermont Community Preschool Collaborative
Melissa Riegel-Garrett	Professional Preparation and Development Committee Facilitator; Executive Director Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children
Michelle Trayah	Resource Development Specialist Northwestern Counseling Support Services
Nancy Sugarman	Director Northern Lights Career Development Center
Reeva Murphy	Deputy Commissioner Child Development Division Vermont Department for Children and Families
Sue Ryan	Coordinator Vermont Child Care Industry and Careers Council

Comprehensive Review

JSI conducted a comprehensive review to provide an informed and thorough report on Vermont's ECPDS and its offerings. The comprehensive review included two components: 1) a secondary source review to understand the thinking, best practices, and recommendations on early childhood professional development systems nationally and to look at other state systems; and 2) an environmental scan of Vermont's ECPDS to provide a profile of the system and its offerings as well as to develop a data inventory of the system.

The secondary source review included a search and review of resources (including reports, briefs, websites, toolkits, and plans) to understand current initiatives, frameworks, strategies and policies

for developing a well-coordinated, integrated and aligned ECPDS. Additionally, the secondary source review was intended to enable JSI to identify federal and state guidelines and recommendations surrounding early childhood professional development systems as well as best practices, lessons learned and effective initiatives, systems or system components implemented in other states. A sample of other state ECPDS were reviewed to provide a comparative analysis on system elements, governance, infrastructure, funding, functionality, accessibility, usability and integration with other early childhood programs and systems. Specifically, an overview of recommendations from the National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC) and NAEYC were developed and the EC professional development systems in Connecticut and Minnesota were reviewed.

The environmental scan of Vermont's ECPDS was conducted in order to map and profile the system, and to develop a data inventory of the system. The environmental scan included researching components of the system and system offerings based on information available from relevant websites, such as the Northern Lights Career Development Center (NLCDC) website and the Bright Futures Information System (BFIS) website. Additionally, JSI conversed with Kathleen Patterson, Assistant Director and Interim Director of CDD's Head Start Collaboration Office; Carol Pomeroy, BFIS Operations Manager in CDD; Nancy Sugarman, Director of NLCDC, and Sylvia Kennedy-Godin, Records Specialist of NLCDC.

Qualitative Data and Analyses

Evaluating the ECPDS based on feedback from system consumers (the EC workforce working directly with or on behalf of young children) was a central component to this evaluation to assess the accessibility, usability, reach and quality of the system from the consumer vantage. Two focus groups, each with 8-10 direct providers of EC care and education programs, and 11 key informant interviews with EC administrators and managers working on behalf of young children in Vermont were conducted. Furthermore, in order to glean insight and lessons learned from other states experiences in developing an ECPDS, key informant interviews were conducted with the Director of the Connecticut Charts-A-Course and the Director of the Nevada Registry. The focus groups and interviews were facilitated by JSI using a semi-structured approach. A focus group guide and key informant interview guides (for Vermont interviewees and for other state interviewees) were developed by JSI with inputs from the comprehensive review and the Advisory Workgroup. All guides are included in Appendices IV and V. Data collected from the focus groups and key informant interviews were analyzed using an iterative process to identify themes, relationships and patterns emerging from the data.

System Performance Measures

One strategy for measuring the performance of an ECPDS is to identify and report on a set of indicators that are linked to the outputs and outcomes targeted by the system. The system indicators are intended to describe how well the system is achieving its objectives. Based on inputs from the comprehensive review (indicators used by other states and the Vermont ECPDS data inventory), JSI identified a limited set of system indicators for which data are accessible and that reflect some of the goals of Vermont's ECPDS. Benchmarks or system goals were also identified. JSI convened the Advisory Workgroup by teleconference to review and revise the system indicators put forth. Subsequently, JSI developed the *Vermont Early Childhood Professional Development System Dashboard* for the purposes of ongoing system monitoring and quality improvement. JSI also

developed the *Vermont Early Childhood Professional Development System Assessment Tool* to track recommended system goals (or benchmarks). These tools can be found in section VII of this report: System Monitoring & Evaluation.

Gap Analysis

Building on knowledge and data from the comprehensive review and qualitative data findings, JSI conducted a Gap analysis of Vermont's ECPDS. A gap is sometimes spoken of as "the space between where we are and where we want to be." A Gap analysis is a systematic process for reviewing the strengths and challenges of a program or system. Findings from the comprehensive review and qualitative findings (from the focus groups and key informant interviews) informed the analysis in regard to "where" the system is at and "where" we want it to be. A Gap analysis checklist was developed to organize the recommended elements of an ECPDS and systematize the process for identifying strengths and challenges of Vermont's ECPDS. Recommendations were drafted to address the system challenges identified and to enhance system monitoring of outputs and outcomes to inform future decision-making around the system. The draft recommendations were presented to and vetted by the Advisory Workgroup.

IV

Overview of Early Childhood Professional Development Systems

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Nearly all states are in the process of developing or improving their early childhood professional development systems in an effort to build and sustain a well-qualified EC workforce and enhance the quality of care and learning experiences of the young children in their state. Two national organizations have taken the lead to assist states in developing, enhancing, and implementing comprehensive and integrated ECPDS for all EC professionals working with and on behalf of young children—1) the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and 2) the National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC).

In an effort to assist states in developing integrated systems of professional development that cross the early childhood sectors, NAEYC is leading system building efforts by identifying policies that connect professional development activities and align professional development system offerings. NAEYC has identified six essential policy areas intended to promote the development of coordinated, aligned, cross-sector ECPDS: [6]

- **Professional Standards** – State policies should specify the content of professional preparation and ongoing development required for all EC professionals.
- **Career Pathways** – State policies should institutionalize routes of continuous progress for EC professionals (direct service and non-direct service) in all sectors, leading towards increased qualifications, professional possibilities and appropriate compensation.
- **Articulation** - State policies should be developed to assist in the meaningful transfer of professional development credentials, courses, credits, degrees etc. from one program or institution to another.
- **Advisory Structure** – State policy should require an ECPDS have an advisory structure with some authority or link to direct authority serving as the coordination mechanism to an integrated system.
- **Data** – State policies should require the collection and sharing of cross-sector data to gauge impacts and systems change, and to inform planning, evaluation, quality assurance and accountability.
- **Financing** – State policies should support the financing needed for a professional development system to operate, including the financing of: specific areas of needs-based support for EC professionals to obtain professional development; rewards and compensation parity for attainment of professional development; and the professional development system infrastructure.

[6] LeMoine, S. Workforce Designs: A Policy Blueprint for State Early Childhood Professional Development Systems. National Association for the Education of Young Children. 2008. *http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/policy/ecwsi/Workforce_Designs.pdf*

The National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC), based out of the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF), is a national clearinghouse and technical assistance (TA) center that provides comprehensive child care information, resources and TA services. The NCCIC describes a comprehensive ECPDS as: accessible and based on a clearly articulated framework; inclusive of a continuum of training and ongoing supports; defines pathways that are tied to licensure, leading to qualifications and credentials; and address the needs of individual, adult learners. The NCCIC outlines five key elements of an ECPDS: (1) **core knowledge**; (2) **access and outreach**; (3) **qualifications, credentials, and pathways**; (4) **funding**; and (5) **quality assurance**. The matrix below (Table 2) describes the five elements:

TABLE 2: National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC) Early Childhood Professional Development System: Key System Elements

ELEMENT	DEFINITION	SYSTEM EXAMPLES
CORE KNOWLEDGE	***Core knowledge:*** The range of knowledge adults working with young children need to facilitate child learning and development.	• Core Competencies • Licensing Standards
ACCESS AND OUTREACH	The system is known, coherent, user-friendly; offerings are available and affordable.	• Online Training Calendar • Public Engagement Initiatives • Multiple Training Delivery Methods
QUALIFICATIONS, CREDENTIALS AND PATHWAYS	The system specifies qualifications required for the EC workforce based on their role; offers credentials and certificates for professional growth; and routes to obtain qualifications, credentials and professional growth are outlined in the system.	• Professional Development Registry • Career Ladder • Articulation of Community-Based Training for Credit in Higher Education.
FUNDING	Funding is available to support the operation and administration of the system as well as to support the offerings of the system.	• Grants and Scholarships for PD • Career Ladder Level Bonuses • Program Quality Awards
QUALITY ASSURANCE	QA activities and mechanisms are in place to monitor, approve, and evaluate the system and its offerings.	• Training Approval • Trainer Approval • System Monitoring & Evaluation

OTHER STATE EXAMPLES

Other state ECPDS were reviewed as part of a comparative analysis and to identify potential models for Vermont to look to when further developing their ECPDS. Connecticut and Minnesota were identified as having ECPDS with well-coordinated and aligned system elements and innovative features promoting access and use of the systems. In this section of the report a brief overview of these state ECPDS are provided along with a review of the exemplary elements and/or features of the systems.

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut Charts-A-Course (CCAC) is the statewide professional development, program improvement and registry system for early care and education in the state of Connecticut. CCAC was initiated 20 years ago and serves as a model for other states in the process of developing a comprehensive and aligned ECPDS. CCAC is primarily funded by the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) and housed within the Connecticut Community College system. CCAC operates with an Executive Director and advisement from a cross-sector steering committee. CCAC is notable for the alignment achieved within the system and its offerings.

CCAC is based on defined Core Areas of Knowledge and related Competencies for EC providers working with and on behalf of young children. The Core Areas of Knowledge were developed or revised to meet the standards put forth by several organizations and agencies including NAEYC, the Connecticut State Department of Education, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. The Core Areas of Knowledge include research-based knowledge and complement the Connecticut Guidelines for the Development of Infant and Toddler Early Learning as well as the Connecticut Preschool Curriculum and Connecticut Preschool Assessment Framework. The Core Areas of Knowledge serve as a foundation to the system and also to aligning the system offerings across EC sectors. All CCAC approved curriculum is reviewed and approved by the CCAC Training Approval Board.

Further enhancing the alignment and thereby lending to good articulation within the CCAC system and its offerings is the Common State Standard. The Common State Standard states that courses that include the study of the education or development of children less than five years of age will be credited toward the requirement of twelve education credits in early childhood or child development. The Common State Standard defines, in part, the requirements for EC classroom teachers in publicly funded programs and has been adopted by CCAC, and the Connecticut Departments of Education, Public Health, Social Services and Higher Education. These initiatives have lead CCAC to be a coherent and coordinated ECPDS that fosters seamless articulation of professional development activities and ongoing professional growth for the EC workforce. For example, the core professional development trainings offered by CCAC articulate into a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA); the CDA can be articulated in Higher Education for 6-12 course credits towards an Associates degree.

The CCAC Career Ladder highlights the alignment of the system and is designed to reflect current state and national qualifications and standards for teaching young children. It is an easy to use display of the steps in a person's professional development advancement from entry level training through the various degree programs.

MINNESOTA

The Minnesota Center for Professional Development (MNCPD) was initiated in 2007 when the Minnesota State Legislature placed into statute a policy requiring the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop and phase in the implementation of a professional

development system for practitioners serving children in early childhood and school-age programs. The MNCPD is funded by DHS and advised by the Minnesota Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC). PDAC provides system level consultation to guide and inform the Child Development Services team at DHS to effectively develop, coordinate and implement the Minnesota ECPDS. The MNCPD was designed based on the NCCIC five key elements of an ECPDS: Core Knowledge; Access and Outreach; Qualifications, Credentials and Career Pathways; Funding; and Quality Assurance. The MNCPD provides a comprehensive virtual gateway to the ECPDS in Minnesota, and career planning resources, including the MNCPD Registry, Career Lattice, Trainer and Training Approval, and learning and career guidance services.

Considering the NCCIC key elements of an ECPDS, the Minnesota ECPDS is remarkable for activities and initiatives related to the system's Access and Outreach element, and the system's Qualifications, Credentials and Pathways element. Specifically, the Minnesota ECPDS is well communicated with the MNCPD website and the many brochures and other resources developed to clearly communicate and market the system and system offerings (e.g., MNCPD Flyer and MNCPD Registry Brochure). The Minnesota ECPDS has also developed a Professional Development System Communications Strategic Plan. The first implementation step in the plan is to raise awareness about the value of professional development within the early childhood and school-age fields. This plan will serve the ECPDS well by reaching out to and further building buy-in among system consumers.

The MNCPD Registry is a highlight of the system's achievement in implementing resources and tools to assist the EC workforce in navigating career pathways and professional growth in the EC field. The MNCPD Registry is a voluntary web-based database for tracking training, education and employment in the field of early childhood and school-age care. The Registry provides professional development planning tools including a learning record, placement on the Minnesota Career Lattice, the Individual Training Needs Assessment and a function to search for trainers and training events. The trainer and training events search capabilities are notable in that they are easy to use and understand, and allow consumers to search the Registry by many fields, such as city, county, level, date, etc. Consumers can also search events and trainers by county using an interactive map of the state of Minnesota that displays each county in the state. Furthermore, data from the Registry is used to inform decision-makers about the early childhood and school-age care workforce in Minnesota.

VERMONT'S EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Profile

In an effort to develop a comprehensive understanding of Vermont's ECPDS, inclusive of professional development resources and offerings across early childhood sectors in the state of Vermont, a profile of the system was developed. This profile is organized by broad system categories and describes the identified structures and resources feeding into the ECPDS (Appendix II). An overview of the profile follows.

Vermont's ECPDS was initiated to support development and growth of individuals in the field of early childhood and afterschool. The system is primarily funded by the CDD. The system is advised by the PPD. While the system, in concept, consists of early childhood entities across sectors, the face of the system is the Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center (NLCDC). The NLCDC is housed within the Community College of Vermont and works to unify and enhance the professional development system in Vermont by serving as a central hub of the system with a virtual gateway for communicating system information and resources. The ECPDS

includes12 regional centers throughout the state (in the 12 BBF regions) known as Regional Community Child Care Support Agencies. These 12 agencies serve as a regional or local interface to the ECPDS, providing guidance, resources and professional development offerings to EC providers within their respective catchment areas. Additionally, the ECPDS spans out to incorporate many other resources, entities and organizations related to early childhood. In an effort to better define the ECPDS in Vermont, JSI drafted a working model to conceptually depict the system. This working model was reviewed by the Advisory Workgroup and revised based on their feedback. The working model currently outlines core elements of Vermont's ECPDS, with consumers of the system being the central point of the system and its offering (Appendix I). The system elements and offerings are guided and supported by the infrastructure of the system: governance, policy and funding. As the system evolves and becomes more defined, the model can be adapted to reflect changes.

The PPD and NLCDC have been working to build a coordinated, aligned and comprehensive ECDPS. In doing so, foundational components have been established, including:

- A set of Guiding Principles that were designed to serve as a framework for developing and evaluating the system. The Guiding Principles for the system are: 1) Clear and Known; 2) Supportive of Professional Growth; 3) Research-based and Relevant; 4) Integrated and Aligned; 5) Accessible; 6) Financially Supported; and 7) Evaluated on these criteria.
- Core Knowledge Areas and Competencies were developed to serve as a foundation for the system and the basis for EC professional standards.
- EC certificates and credentials have been developed based on the system Core Knowledge Areas and Competencies to support professional growth of the EC workforce.
- The system has a professional development registry and training calendar in place via the Bright Futures Information System (BFIS).
- The system has a Career Ladder in place that was developed based on the system's Core Competencies and the Vermont Department of Education Professional Standards topic areas for early childhood endorsement. A certificate is awarded for achievement of each level and is intended to serve as a tool for the EC workforce to track and plan professional growth.
- Quality assurance mechanisms are in place with the NLCDC Instructor Qualification System and Registry.

Data Inventory

Data plays a fundamental role in ECPDS to help characterize the EC workforce, and to help inform EC systems-building and policies, to monitor ECPDS outputs and system impacts, and to help inform planning, evaluation, quality assurance and accountability of the system. A data inventory was developed for Vermont's ECPDS in which three main data sources were identified: 1) the BFIS Provider/Credential Accounts and BFIS Course Calendar; 2) the NLCDC Instructor Registry; and 3) several MS Excel spreadsheets developed and used by NLCDC. The Data Inventory (Appendix III) provides a comprehensive overview of these three data sources, including a description of their purpose, a list of their data elements with descriptions of the data elements, and notes on the data elements as relevant.

Recommendations on additional data elements and data collection and management policies are included in the Recommendations section of this report.

V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

FOCUS GROUPS

Two focus groups were conducted with direct service providers of early childhood to understand the perspectives and experiences of the primary consumers of the ECPDS. Specifically, the focus group discussions were guided around how direct service providers of EC are utilizing the system; how well known, accessible and usable the system is; and whether the system is helpful and supportive to users in achieving professional development and career goals. The two focus groups were conducted in different geographic regions of the state to obtain insight on the ECPDS consumer perspective from a sample of EC providers in Chittenden County and in Rutland County. JSI worked with the Building Bright Futures Coordinator of the Rutland Region to facilitate targeted recruitment of direct service providers of EC to participate in the focus group held in Rutland, Vermont. JSI worked with the Professional Development Coordinator of Child Care Resource to facilitate targeted recruitment of direct service providers of EC to participate in the focus group held in Williston, Vermont. At each focus group a meal was provided. Participants were given an overview of the ECPDS evaluation, objectives of the focus group and the general structure of the one and a half hour period of discussion.

Although targeted recruitment efforts were intentional in trying to convene a diverse group of EC providers representing a variety of work settings and EC sectors, such as Head Start, Parent Child Centers, public pre-school, childcare centers and home providers, by and large the focus group participants were home providers. While all participants of both focus groups reported several years of experience in their profession and demonstrated a strong interest in professional development opportunities and professional growth in their field, it is notable that the participants of the two focus groups differed in age and years of experience in EC. The participants of the Rutland group were predominately over 55 years of age with a mean number of 24.5 years in the EC field. Comparatively, the participants of the Williston focus group were generally younger in age, with most between ages 26 and 45, and had a mean number of 12.3 years of experience in the EC field. The majority of participants from both groups had achieved degrees in Higher Education, ranging from an associate degree (3), bachelor's degree (8), and master's degree (2). Characteristics of the focus group participants are provided in Table 3.

The focus group guide was organized by broad topic areas related to consumer use of the ECPDS. Focus group findings are organized by themes that emerged within these broad topics.

TABLE 3: Focus Group Participant Data

PARTICIPANT DATA	WILLISTON	RUTLAND	COMBINED
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	**8**	**10**	**18**
NUMBER RESPONDENTS	**8**	**9**	**17**
AGE			
18-25	-	-	-
26-35	3	1	4
36-45	2	1	3
46-55	1	2	3
56-65	1	5	6
>65	1	-	1
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED			
High School or GED	-	-	-
Some Post High School	-	1	1
Child Development Associate (CDA)	-	3	3
Associate Degree	1	2	3
Bachelor Degree	6	2	8
Masters Degree	1	1	2
WORK SETTING/PROGRAM			
Registered Home	4	6	10
Licensed Home	1	-	1
Licensed Center	3	-	3
Parent Child Center	-	1	1
Head Start	-	1	1
Other	-	1	1
ROLE			
Director	-	1	1
Child Care Provider	2	5	7
Teacher	1	-	1
Director and Provider	1	-	1
Director, Provider and Teacher	4	1	5
Other	-	2	2

PARTICIPANT DATA	WILLISTON	RUTLAND	COMBINED
NUMBER OF YEARS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD			
Mean (Range)	12.3 (5 – 20)	24.5 (10 – 37)	18.8 (5 – 37)
0-4	-	-	-
5-9	2	-	2
10-14	4	1	5
15-19	1	1	2
20-24	1	1	2
25+	-	6	6
Aware of NLCDC			
Yes- Number (%)	8 (100%)	9 (100%)	17 (100%)
Access NLCDC			
Yes- Number (%)	2 (25%)	8 (88.9%)	10 (58.8%)
Aware of Career Ladder			
Yes- Number (%)	6 (75%)	9 (100%)	15 (88.2%)
Aware of BFIS			
Yes- Number (%)	8 (100%)	9 (100%)	17 (100%)
Use BFIS Course Calendar			
Yes- Number (%)	0 (0%)	6 (66.7%)	7 (41.2%)
Aware of BFIS Credential Account			
Yes- Number (%)	8 (100%)	8 (88.9%)	15 (88.2%)
Use BFIS Credential Account			
Yes- Number (%)	3 (37.5%)	8 (88.9%)	10 (58.8%)

Knowledge and Awareness of Vermont's ECPDS

Participants indicated they do not perceive Vermont's Early Childhood Professional Development System as a system. The reference by the JSI facilitator to "early childhood professional development system" and "system" did not resonate with the groups. Participants were aware of some of the components and resources of the system, such as the Northern Lights Career Development Center, the Bright Futures Information System, Head Start, the Child Development Division and Licensing, but clearly did not consider these components part of a cohesive and coordinated system. Rather, the terms scattered and fragmented were used to describe the components and resources that make up the ECPDS. The participants spoke positively of the many professional development offerings that are available in the state, yet searching for the offerings seems to be burdensome as the offerings are advertised in a variety

of settings, platforms, mechanisms, etc. Following on to this sentiment, participants voiced a desire for a linked and coordinated system, rather than what they consider to be a variety of components and resources that provides professional development resources and offerings. Further, participants voiced a desire for a more streamlined approach to information dissemination and communication regarding professional development and the ECPDS.

When asked specifically about the NLCDC website and whether participants have used the website, all participants indicated they are aware of the website and many indicated they have used the website. The participants of the Rutland group use it more than those in Williston, with the most common reasons for use being to access applications, such as for the Career Ladder level certificates. The general consensus from all is that the website is difficult to navigate and find what one is looking for. Participants from the Williston group also indicated they don't understand the purpose and value intended by the website.

Finding Professional Development Offerings

Most participants indicate a strong reliance (and credibility) on utilizing their respective local professional development resource(s) to learn about professional development offerings. The Rutland group all rely on their Regional Resource Development Specialist (RDS) and the Building Bright Futures Council of the Rutland Region to learn about professional development offerings in their area; email and newsletters are used by these local resources to disseminate information on local professional development offerings. The Williston group all rely mostly on Child Care Resource and their quarterly catalog of professional development offerings. Some participants note they seek out professional development offerings by a specific instructor they like and search extensively online to find additional offerings.

All participants favor email as a preferred mechanism for learning about professional development offerings. Participants of the Williston group note they like the print catalog published by Child Care Resource as well. All participants indicate that having one online resource to house professional development offerings from all sectors in the state, including national conferences, that is current and searchable by a variety of fields such as date, time, level, location, topic, etc., would be a great help. In fact, a common frustration voiced by participants is not being able to search for offerings efficiently or find what they are looking for. However, not many use the BFIS Course Calendar to search for professional development offerings even though all indicate they are aware of it. Many voice that the BFIS Course Calendar is not user-friendly and is clunky, not current and not searchable in an efficient way.

Obtaining Professional Development

Participants were queried on factors important to them in determining which professional development offerings to participate in. Cost and topic were the most salient and consistently important factors among all participants. When (day and time) professional development trainings are offered was also indicated as very important among all participants. Location of offerings was indicated to be very important among the Rutland group, but not the Williston group. The instructor of the offering was rated as important for most participants of the Williston group, but instructor was not an important factor among the Rutland group.

Cost

Cost was rated as an important factor among all participants for a variety of reasons, but the general consensus is that most feel that professional development offerings are expensive with relatively little or no financial supports available. *"I spend between $35 and $50 per training for introductory level trainings to meet my licensing requirements and that is a lot out*

of my budget several times a year."[7] In an effort to meet annual professional development requirements for re-licensure in a cost-efficient manner, several participants indicated they try to target or seek out free or low cost offerings through their local professional development resource calendars. In fact, many participants voiced they feel they often attend the same trainings over and over each year because they need to meet their licensing requirements in a way that is affordable. Some participants felt strongly that professional development required for provider licensing should be offered free and/or providers should be compensated for attending considering the need to sometimes take leave from their job (unpaid leave for many) to attend professional development trainings: *"If professional development is required for us then we should get compensation to be there".* Conclusively, participants expressed a need for financial supports to ally the costs associated with required professional development.

Topic

Building on the issue of cost, participants indicated topic to be a determining factor in their selection of professional development. Topic was indicated to be important based on personal areas of interest or where one feels they might need further education and training. The issue of repetition arose again during the conversation on topic. Participants indicated they consider the topic relative to what offerings they have already taken as well as the associated cost, but underlying these factors is their interest in seeking out variety, diversity, new topics, and advanced level offerings. In fact, a desire for more advanced offerings, beyond the basics often offered, was voiced by most all participants.
"I look for something I haven't had before, or if I have a particular issue that I haven't been educated on and I want to learn more about it, I attend those trainings."

When and Where

When trainings are offered was indicated as very important to all participants. The groups noted that generally most early childhood providers work full-time Monday through Friday and so can only attend professional development offerings in the evening or on weekends. Trainings during the weekdays during business hours are not an option for almost all unless a substitute is hired. A few participants noted they had in fact used a substitute in the past to attend professional development, but there are cost, availability and acceptability issues associated with doing so. Further, the groups indicated that in addition to the cost of paying a substitute, there is also a cost to taking the day off (and not getting paid) as well as a preference to use days off for personal leave as needed.

The Rutland group noted that the location of an offering is critically important in determining participation in professional development, expressing that if it is outside of the greater Rutland area, it is not feasible for providers in the Rutland area to attend during the evening due to the travel time. For example, if a provider in Rutland is interested in attending a training in Burlington at 6:00 p.m. on a Monday, he/she likely could not attend due to the travel time being a limiting factor. Conversely, location was not noted as an important factor by the Williston group. This difference by group likely speaks to the geographical barriers and level of saturation of professional development offerings within various regions throughout the state. The greater Burlington area has many, if not the most, professional development offerings to select from in the state, while other regions, such as Rutland, are limited in the number of offerings available.

Instructor

The Williston group, but not the Rutland group, noted instructor to be an important factor when choosing to participate in professional development

[7] Quotes from focus group participants are paraphrased to ensure clarity out of context of the original discussion.

trainings. Participants indicated they are well aware of which instructors offer high quality and interesting trainings versus those that do not. Participants indicated they select to attend trainings accordingly. Selecting offerings based on the instructor may be an option for the Williston participants considering they have many more professional development offerings to choose from than do the Rutland group. The Rutland group noted this just doesn't weigh in, likely relative to the other factors taking precedent, such as when, where and cost.

Using the System and Supporting Professional Needs

Discussions generated during the focus groups carried a general tone of frustration from participants around the system not addressing their needs or even being aware of their needs as early childhood professionals obtaining professional development. Participant comments regarding using the system resources and whether the system is supportive of their professional development needs indicated several concerns ranging from a lack of relevancy and meaning to a general lack of professional recognition. Thus, there is a lack of buy-in for the system and its offerings. For example, while most participants indicated they are aware of the Career Ladder, with some finding it easy to understand and others finding it difficult to understand, most do not see value, meaning or incentive to use the Career Ladder. Participants voiced that considering where they are at in their career (most have been in the field of early childhood for 10+ years) and their career goals, the Career Ladder is not meaningful or relevant to them. Although the participants indicated interest in continuing to obtain high quality professional development to enhance their knowledge and skill sets within early childhood, continuing to achieve additional certificates, credentials and qualifications is not always of interest. Participants indicated this lack of relevancy especially considering there is not necessarily professional recognition or consistent financial compensation (i.e., increase in wages) associated with achieving additional qualifications and credentials. Several participants noted they've been in the field for some time and don't feel the need to obtain additional credentials and degrees, and therefore the Career Ladder doesn't really speak to them. *"Why is the Career Ladder there? What is the purpose and why is it relevant?"* Participants also noted that they are being asked to do more and more by way of professional development, but there is no incentive for greater professional recognition and better wages/salary.

Similarly, the participants seemed frustrated and perplexed with the BFIS Credential Accounts. All were aware of their accounts. Some participants indicated they find it useful to access their accounts and track their professional development activities, but many don't use it, indicating it is not current, not user-friendly (both the BFIS data system and the BFIS Help Desk) and ultimately don't understand the purpose as many find themselves having to track and submit their professional development in paper format regardless of what they enter in their Credential Accounts. Furthermore, participants expressed dismay and frustration that providers' violations are listed on the public interface of the system indefinitely, yet professional development activities and credentials are not listed on the public interface of the system.

In summary, the participants expressed a lack of buy-in for the system as it seems to be designed for an introductory level workforce in regard to the professional development offerings and resources, and in regard to financial incentives. The system does not speak to the needs of professionals who have been in the field for some time and who are not necessarily interested in advancing in their credentials and degrees. Furthermore, a lack of buy-in for the system stems from a feeling that home providers don't have a voice at the table to consider their perspective and insight when designing, developing and making decisions about the system and its offerings.

Participant Recommendations for the System

At the conclusion of the focus group discussions participants were offered the opportunity to put forth recommendations for improving the ECPDS to better meet their needs. Many participants reiterated the need for the system to improve communication and information dissemination, possibly by streamlining all information, resources and offerings into one place. It was suggested and followed with consensus that it would be helpful to have information available and searchable from a statewide perspective as well as from a regional perspective.

Several participants indicated that in concept a strength of the system is the potential of the BFIS Credential Account to house and track individual's professional development activity. Making the system more user-friendly, efficient and responsive (i.e., the BFIS Help Desk) would be beneficial to realizing the potential of the Credential Account.

Provision of more financial incentives to support the cost of participating in professional development opportunities was among general consensus for improving the system.

Lastly, participants indicated that they have found tremendous value from the input, guidance and recommendations from their early childhood professional networks in navigating the system and professional development resources. These networks have been valuable resources and therefore participants indicated interest in the system developing and supporting opportunities for professional networking (e.g., sponsoring and hosting a speed dating event).

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Key informant interviews were conducted with 11 stakeholders of early childhood in Vermont and with two Directors of ECPDS from other states. The Vermont key informants were identified by the Advisory Workgroup and invited to participate in a semi-structured interview with JSI by phone. The other state interviewees were selected per recommendations from the Advisory Workgroup and their responsiveness to the request to be interviewed.

The key informant interviews captured the perspectives of and experiences with the ECPDS from administrators, policymakers, directors and managers from various early childhood sectors, including, but not limited to, interviewees representing Head Start, Northern Lights Career Development Center, the Vermont Department for Children and Families Child Development Division, Higher Education, and the Vermont Department of Education. Additionally, key informant interviews were conducted with the Director of the Connecticut Charts-A-Course ECPDS and the Director of the Nevada Registry ECPDS. Interviewees were questioned and prompted to speak to the strengths and challenges of their respective early childhood professional development systems, as well as on the advisory, funding, policies, coordination and articulation of their systems. Recurring themes generated from the interview process are outlined and described.

VERMONT

Framework versus System

Understanding the interviewees' general perception of the ECPDS relative to the coordination, integration and alignment within the system was one objective of the in-depth interviews. The majority of the interviewees indicated there is a framework, a system, system elements, or *"something"* in place, but that it is fragmented, consisting of several disparate and unlinked sub-systems and components. Positively, many interviewees indicated the system is in the process of evolving, emerging, and on the right track with many good elements such as Northern Lights Career Development Center, the Instructor Registry, Jan Walker, and the STep Ahead Recognition System (STARS). Furthermore, interviewees expressed strong commit-

ment and engagement by stakeholders working to develop and improve the system, resulting in a strong foundation that is well thought out and intentional. *"The fact that there is an effort to have a coherent system is a huge leap. Change takes time."*

System Governance and Advisory

One of the objectives of the key informant interviews was to understand the roles, responsibilities, and authority of those influencing the direction and development of the system. While it was generally known among the key informant interviewees that the Building Bright Futures Council Professional Preparation and Development subcommittee serves in an advisory capacity to the ECPDS and to the Northern Lights Career Development Center, some indicated advisement and direction from other parties as well, such as BBF, CDD and/or NL. Roles, responsibilities and authority in decision-making were not clear among several key informants: *"It's still kind of fuzzy for me"*; *"There is no overarching authority for the system". "Jan Walker is a great visionary, but to get her ideas down to the program level is challenging."*

Engagement and Representation of Early Childhood Stakeholders

Key informant interviewees indicated a lack of strong partnerships and involvement among some key early childhood sectors, including the Vermont Department of Education and Higher Education. The lack of engagement and involvement with Higher Education was voiced as a major shortfall and challenge of the system. Interviewees indicated a disconnect between Higher Education and the ECPDS. Some interviewees expressed Higher Education to be non-receptive to their efforts to reach out and engage representatives of Higher Education in the system's initiatives. Other interviewees noted a need for the ECPDS system leaders to pro-actively and strategically tap representatives of Higher Education to be at the table to weigh in on discussions and advise on how to better integrate the system with Higher Education, and to achieve alignment and articulation of offerings between the ECPDS and Higher Education.

Funding

Most interviewees agreed that the ECPDS could always use more funding: "Nobody will say we have enough money, but CDD has made it a priority to not cut budget of the Northern Lights Career Development Center and the ECPDS". Interviewees offered several recommendations for prioritizing funds or directing additional funds if available:

- Provide funds to support access to college coursework.
- Provide additional funds to support more trainings and/or needed trainings (such as in areas where there are gaps—infant toddler care) in all regions of the state. Provide additional funds to RDS to support the delivery of more local offerings.
- Offer initial or introductory level trainings free to keep the workforce engaged and inspired to move up the career ladder.
- Use funds to define and market early childhood as more than childcare.
- Provide financial bonuses to the workforce to incentivize or reward long-term retention.
- Develop a substitute system to enable the workforce to take leave from work to attend professional development offerings.

Alignment, Articulation and Connectedness

Many interviewees expressed a challenge of the system regarding alignment and articulation. Some indicated the system policies, resources and offerings are aligned in concept, but are misunderstood or misinterpreted in their use resulting in a lack of system alignment. For example, it was indicated the Core Knowledge Areas are in fact aligned with the CDD

licensing regulations, but are not interpreted consistently. Key informants stated that consumers of the system are often not clear on how the offerings of the system are aligned; how achieving credentials or obtaining professional development can translate for additional qualifications. Others noted the CDD licensing regulations to be outdated and unaligned with the system's Core Competencies and Career Ladder: *"To the trained eye, I think there is alignment. To the untrained eye, folks wonder which thing they're supposed to follow when."*

Misalignment between professional development requirements by sector and/or role in the EC workforce was also voiced. Specifically in regard to EC teachers licensed by the Vermont Department of Education relative to EC providers registered or licensed with the CDD; it was stated that requirements are not congruent.

Interviewees indicated that moving along the Career Ladder is not entirely seamless. They agreed that some translation and articulation is in place, with kudos given to the Springfield College program offering college credits to those with a CDA, but noted that additional articulation is needed, especially with Higher Education. It was indicated that there is a need for better articulation of non-credit bearing qualifications and experience to translate into college credits and a need for better articulation within the state college system (credits from one state college should transfer equally to another) and with the University of Vermont and Champlain College.

Offerings

The many offerings of the system were noted as a strength of the ECPDS, including the many trainings and courses, and the certificates and credentials available. Interviewees indicated there to be many offerings and resources available especially to those at the introductory level or initial Career Ladder levels. A gap in the offerings and resources available to those further along on the Career Ladder was voiced by most interviewees. In fact, it was indicated that a primary challenge of the system is the limited number of advanced level professional development offerings as well as a lack of infant toddler offerings. Interviewees noted that those in the EC field with advanced degrees or those who have been in the field for many years have limited options for advanced professional development trainings. Furthermore, the advanced level options that are available in the state can be burdened by barriers such as travel and cost. *"My staff has been with me for a while—many for 15+ years—and have taken a lot of professional development trainings. So, they often don't find what is offered through the system to be helpful because they have already taken the training or it is a beginner's level."*

System Communication and Marketing

A major challenge of the system indicated by the interviewees is the consumer awareness and understanding of the system resulting from communication and information dissemination about the system. Interviewees indicated a great need for: streamlining and simplifying the system; making the ECPDS more user-friendly; increasing awareness of the system; and marketing the system. Interviewees noted that the early childhood workforce—the primary consumers of the ECPDS—are not aware of how the system works and that the system is difficult to navigate, dense and *"too processy"*. Thus, consumers don't see the value or meaning of the system. *"It requires a lot of work to achieve certificates and bonuses, and it doesn't have meaningful incentive because it doesn't mean one will get an increase in salary…it's hard to encourage people to do all that work because they say "why"?"*

Interviewees also expressed the challenge that many in the early childhood workforce perceive the ECPDS to be relevant only to childcare and not all of early childhood.

System Data: Bright Futures Information System

Conceptually, it is felt that BFIS is on the right track. That is, having one database in place was noted as a strength as well as the policy to have all of regulated childcare providers in the state included in the system by coordinating with the CDD childcare licensing process. However, many concerns, challenges and frustrations were expressed about BFIS; essentially it has great capacity and potential, but it is not user-friendly and not used as intended, therefore the potential is not realized. Interviewees voiced that a lot has gone into it conceptually and foundationally, but it is designed and presented in a way that makes it inaccessible. *"It has great capacity, but it is not just unfriendly, it is hostile."* Several interviewees feel that the system is not well understood and could use funding to support marketing and outreach for the system. *"If people found value in it they would use it more."*

Interviewees noted there are gaps in the type of data that is collected as well as within the data that is collected. For example, workforce data such as wage and status are not included, and the system is not fully populated. Also, the entire early childhood workforce is not in the system. It primarily includes only childcare providers, but not necessarily Head Start and Department of Education early childhood practitioners, as they have their individual siloed databases. Key informants indicated the data information system is not capturing the data it is intended to or the data needed by the professional development system, such as workforce data and the credential and certificate data of the NLCDC.

CONNECTICUT

System

The Director of the Connecticut Charts-A-Course ECPDS and Registry described it as well established, as it was launched 20 years ago, and as a comprehensive system combining both the elements of early childhood professional development and early childhood program improvement. The Director noted the system includes a professional development registry system, a training system, a scholarship system, and offers career counseling to the early childhood workforce. The Director indicated that the longevity and stability of the program has promoted stable funding that in turn has fostered a coordinated and comprehensive system. She stated that the Connecticut system has had the same leadership over its 20 years and has had very little staff turnover. She feels the program stability and longevity has enabled the system to build a continuum of funding and this continued funding has been a major strength in growing and improving the system.

In addition to the longevity, stability and continuum of funding being identified as key to building the Connecticut Charts-A-Course ECPDS into what it is today, the Director noted that having the system housed within Higher Education has been essential to integrating the system with Higher Education and developing an aligned ECPDS. Furthermore, the Director stated she came from Higher Education and so understands the culture, the Higher Education system and who to reach out to accomplish ECPDS goals. She stated that all of this has resulted in good alignment and articulation within the Connecticut Charts-A-Course system. *"I understand the culture and I am a Higher Ed employee, so I can bring together people and I know the issues related to articulation and I know the players….allows me to maneuver the waters easier than if I lived in the Department of Social Services, for example."*

The Director explained that Connecticut Charts-A-Course is designed so once one has their CDA it can be articulated into 6-12 college credits towards an associate's degree within any state institution in Connecticut. All professional development trainings offered through the system beyond those relevant to obtaining a CDA are credit-based, so any regionally accredited college of Higher Education will accept

these as transfer credits. The Director noted that Connecticut Charts-A-Course is basically a system developed within the Higher Education system, allowing for a streamlined approach to offerings and generally seamless articulation.

System Governance and Advisory

The Director indicated that the Connecticut ECPDS is advised by a steering committee of early childhood stakeholders. The steering committee is chaired by the Director, who feels this approach to advising the Connecticut system works well. The Director indicated close relationships are established with the system funders and that while the Connecticut DSS holds the decision-making authority for Connecticut Charts-A-Course, they work together collaboratively during decision-making.

Professional Development Registry

The Director of the Connecticut ECPDS feels that having data on the early childhood workforce and their professional development, and using that data to show the system's success is essential to building and developing the system. The Director described the system's registry, indicating it is entirely online, that the data elements are standardized to match the National Registry Alliance (TNRA) core data elements, and that all data collection and management follow TNRA best practices. Registry participation is mandatory for all publicly funded early childhood programs. A series of incentives have been used to get the private sector into the registry.

The Director indicated strong benefits and value to having a well-designed and managed registry in place, stating *"The Registry is now becoming the hub of all of our activities."* The Director indicated the availability of the data allows for them to be accountable and report out on their system annually. Further, the Director stated one of the biggest lessons learned was that *"…you can't be afraid to look at your system and be accountable. If something isn't working you need to find a way to change it."* An example of this approach was the implementation of the online registry. The Director noted that she knew a paper-based registry would not meet their need and that a registry was needed in order to grow the system to be more effective and streamlined.

NEVADA

System

The Director of Nevada's ECPDS, the Nevada Registry, described the system as a no-cost, multi-faceted system of career development and recognition that supports the EC workforce by validating the professional and educational achievements of those working in the field. The Director also indicated the system is one of the statewide efforts geared toward reducing staff turnover, increasing wages, heightening professionalism and increasing advancement opportunities for EC practitioners.

The Director indicated that the system includes a career ladder, a comprehensive website that serves as a clearinghouse of information for the early childhood workforce, a statewide online training calendar, a statewide job board and professional development planning directly linked to the system's core competencies and a professional development plan.

The Director indicated the main strengths of the system to include:

- Streamlined approach to the training approval process; Nevada Registry is the sole entity responsible for the review and approval of community-based, non-college credit training in the state. All trainings taken by providers to meet licensing requirements are approved by the Nevada Registry.
- Strong relationships, partnerships and advisement from other state agencies, including child care licensing.
- Policy in place for mandatory participation in the Registry by December 2012.

Notably, the Director also described the system's searchable online training calendar, which includes many in-person Registry approved trainings throughout the state as well as distance education trainings. *"At any given time, our searchable online training calendar lists over 200 Registry-approved community-based (in-person) trainings occurring throughout the state, as well as almost 300 distance education trainings (modules, correspondence courses and internet courses) that remove some of the barriers previously experienced by providers living in rural areas."* Furthermore, the calendar is searchable by city, county, date, Core Knowledge Area and includes a way to narrow down the search to the initial health and safety courses required by child care licensing.

Primary challenges faced by the system include:

- Funding: As the system continues to grow, resources and funds remain limited. *"Despite the system being in a constant state of change in response to member needs, national trends, research and system/policy changes, we don't always have sufficient resources to make necessary changes."*
- Articulation: Need for more linkages between community-based training and college coursework and alignment between college coursework and system core competencies.
- Need for creating additional pathways for acknowledging professionals who are not on the formal degree career track and a need for more advanced level trainings to meet the professional development needs of advanced level directors, administrators, individuals as well as those who have been in the field for some time.

System Governance and Advisory

The Nevada Registry has an advisory committee with broad representation that provides guidance, advisement and recommendations to the Registry, but the Registry has final decision-making authority. Clearly defined roles, responsibilities and expectations of advisory committee members are outlined, including membership of the committee. The advisory committee includes a community member representing frontline EC providers. The Director of the Registry indicated that in addition to obtaining feedback and guidance from their advisory committee, the committee members act as advocates for the Registry with the EC community and workforce both within their own work settings and programs, and by representing the Registry at other relevant meetings they might attend. The Director notes that while it has been challenging to keep the advisory committee members well informed of the Registry mission, vision, and initiatives, and engaged with the work of the Registry, the Registry staff continually considers ways to better connect with and communicate with the advisory committee.

Alignment and Articulation

The Director explained that alignment to Core Knowledge Areas of the Nevada Registry is ensured by serving as the foundation of the career ladder, training approval system, pre-k standards, and college coursework. For example, college coursework is currently aligned with Core Knowledge Areas and is consistent with course numbering and content. The Director noted that the common course numbering for all early childhood courses assists in articulation: *"Nevada is somewhat unique in that we have common course numbering for all of the early childhood courses offered at our state Universities and Community Colleges. This makes it possible for any course taken at one college to seamlessly transfer between schools, regardless of which school an individual attends. It also allows students to look to other colleges when a course is not available at the school they are attending and results in less interruption in their coursework."*

The Director also indicated that the Registry has articulation agreements in place with Nevada's two-year early care and education degrees offered at the community college and four-year degree programs offered at the University of Nevada – Las Vegas.

Professional Development Registry

The Director noted that Nevada's ECPDS professional development registry collects demographic data including workforce and credential data (hourly wage, degrees, number of trainings attended and approved, average cost of training). Data is entered by Registry staff and is verified. The data system has detailed internal policies to manage the data and resources/programmers are available to modify the data system as needed. Further, the Director recommended to *"Make sure you have a database programmer either on staff or within reach; development is ongoing and it's imperative that someone with a technical skill set is available."*

In conclusion, the Director recommended a few important lessons learned, including to build buy -in from the EC field early on in the development stages of your system as well as to remain flexible and willing to modify processes as needed.

GAP ANALYSIS

This section of the report provides a summary and analysis of the sum of the information and data collected for this evaluation, including findings from the comprehensive review, data inventory, focus groups and key informant interviews. Considering the information and data, the system was analyzed to understand the strengths and challenges. In an effort to cross-walk the NCCIC core system elements and NAEYC policy areas while also considering the Guiding Principles of Vermont's ECPDS, the following system elements were used as a checklist to think about Vermont's ECPDS and when analyzing the data and information:

SYSTEM ELEMENTS
GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND ADVISORY ECPDS has the governance, leadership, and advisory capacity to plan, implement, manage and sustain an integrated and aligned system. System advisory is broadly representative of all early childhood sectors and stakeholders.
POLICIES, STANDARDS AND INITIATIVES System policies and standards for professional development integrate and align licensing, credentials, qualification requirements, and other related standards across all early childhood sectors–Head Start, child care programs, pre-kindergarten, and others. Policies and initiatives are supportive of professional growth, and are supported by articulation policies that connect institutions of Higher Education to each other and to community-based training.
FUNDING System funding is sufficient to support the ECPDS infrastructure, administration, operations and offerings. System funding is sufficient to provide financial supports and incentives to assist early childhood providers with the costs associated with professional development offerings.
OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION The ECPDS and the system resources and offerings are well communicated, clear and known.
ACCESS The ECPDS and its offerings are affordable and available to EC practitioners across all early childhood sectors, providing: low cost professional development trainings, financial supports and incentives; variety and convenience in the delivery of professional development trainings; and offerings and pathways for a diverse workforce at various skill levels.
DATA The ECPDS has a data system in place for cross-sector early childhood workforce and professional development data. Data is systematically collected, analyzed and reported on to inform professional development systems-building and policies; to understand the early childhood workforce in Vermont; to gauge system impacts and change; and to help inform planning, evaluation, quality assurance and accountability of the system.
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND ASSURANCE The ECPDS has mechanisms and processes in place to ensure quality and accountability of the system and its offerings.

System Strengths

Governance, Leadership and Advisory

- A committed group of stakeholders have developed a strong conceptual foundation to support the development of the professional development system. Much effort has been invested in developing an ECPDS system intended to be thoughtful, coordinated, aligned, and intentional.

Policies, Standards and Initiatives

- Vermont's ECPDS is guided by defined principles (i.e., the Guiding Principles).
- Vermont's ECPDS includes defined Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies that certificates and credentials offered through the system are based on.
- Certificates and credentials are available to support professional growth of the EC workforce.
- Some articulation policies have been implemented, including the Springfield College policy to award college credits for those enrolling in the college with a CDA credential.

Funding

- The ECPDS currently provides some financial supports and incentives:
  - CDD offers some financial supports for professional development.
  - CDD funds bonuses provided by NLCDC upon awarding Career Ladder level certificates.
  - CDD funds recognition bonuses provided by the Quality Rating and Improvement System STARS.
- VCCICC offers enrollment in select college-level early childhood courses through their Apprenticeship Program.

Outreach and Communication

- The system includes a technical assistance and resource center, the Northern Lights Career Development Center, intended to unify the ECPDS, provide professional development information and resources to the EC workforce, and enhance the coordination and alignment of the system and its offerings. The website serves as a centralized clearinghouse of information for the ECPDS. NLCDC newsletters provide updates and information relevant to the early childhood field. These newsletters are distributed via the website and by email to EC professionals and organizations throughout the state.
- The system includes well established regional "hubs" that, in general, appear to be heavily relied on and have notable credibility with consumers of the system.
- A Career Ladder is available to assist the early childhood workforce in navigating and tracking professional development and growth.

Access

- Many early childhood professional development resources and offerings are currently available throughout the state.
- BFIS includes a Course Calendar of community-based professional development offerings throughout the state.
- Free and low-cost community-based professional development offerings are funded by CDD and made available through the 12 Regional Community Child Care Support Agencies. Additional free and low-cost offerings are available through Head Start, VCCICC, DOE, etc.

Data

- A centralized information system, BFIS, exists for data collection, management and reporting on the ECPDS and policy is in place to include the entire regulated childcare workforce in the information system.

Quality Improvement and Assurance

- Quality Assurance Efforts: 1) The system includes an Instructor Registry to ensure the quality of the instructors providing professional development offerings listed in BFIS. 2) An initial evaluation of the ECPDS intended to assist with improving and expanding the system.

System Challenges

Governance, Leadership and Advisory

- The ECPDS has good advisory from the PPD, but it is not clear who the overarching authority of the system is and whether their decision-making authority is clearly outlined. Many people and entities are identified as weighing in on the decision-making (BBF, CDD, NLCDC, PPD), but not necessarily to a single authority working to unify and develop the system.
- Need for engagement, representation and partnership with the Vermont Department of Education and Higher Education.

Policies, Standards and Initiatives

- Child care licensing regulations are outdated and not aligned with ECPDS standards.
- System policies and resources are not interpreted as being aligned or not aligned in practice.
- A general lack of articulation exists between much of the community-based professional development offerings in the system.

Funding

- Limited funding supports for costs associated with professional development trainings and a lack of financial supports for the early childhood workforce to obtain professional development. Consumers demand for more free and low cost trainings.
- Funding and resources to support BFIS are inadequate.

Outreach and Communication

- The system is not perceived of as a system by the primary consumers of the system—i.e., the early childhood workforce. It is described as scattered and fragmented. It is not "clear and known" and consists of several unconnected individual professional development resources.
- Consumers of the system do not understand or perceive the purpose and value of the system.
- Consumers of the system are not using, understanding, or realizing the value of the NLCDC website, which serves as an effort to unify and streamline the ECPDS. The website is described as not user-friendly and not easy to find what one is looking for.
- The early childhood workforce has a limited view of early childhood, generally thought of only as childcare and not inclusive of early learning. Many early childhood educators perceive the ECPDS as relevant to childcare only.

Access

- The diversity in content and level of professional development offerings is limited, especially for advanced level offerings and infant toddler offerings.
- Location, time and day of professional development offerings are barriers for many early childhood providers.

- Distance learning options for professional development trainings are of interest to consumers of the system, but inadequately offered through the system.
- Consumers would like a streamlined approach to finding professional development offerings; ideally a single online resource. This is the intent of the BFIS Course Calendar, but consumers have many issues with using the Course Calendar. It is described as: not current, not easy to search, not comprehensive.
- Cost of obtaining professional development offerings in general, and especially for advanced level trainings, is a concern and barrier for the early childhood workforce.
- The system is not relevant to all consumers, such as those who have been in the EC field for some time and/or are not interested in obtaining additional qualifications and credentials. Also, for those at more advanced levels, the system is not providing relevant offerings.

Data

- BFIS is not used to capacity, not fully populated, lacking resources to support it and lacking data collection, entry and management policies.
- The BFIS data collected is not reliable (not current, not always correct, incomplete)
- The BFIS data is not easily accessible for analysis and reporting.
- No dedicated staff for BFIS database programming.
- BFIS is lacking some relevant data elements (e.g., workforce data elements such as wage and highest degree obtained).
- The BFIS consumer interfaces for the Provider/Credential Accounts and Course Calendar are not user-friendly.
- ECPDS databases are not integrated or linked; need for merging NLCDC databases with BFIS.

Quality Improvement and Assurance

- Lack of quality assurance mechanisms or processes in place to hold instructors and professional development system offerings accountable. No assessment of instructors' effectiveness and quality of trainings; limited professional development training approval in place.

VI

RECOMMENDATIONS

Governance, Leadership and Advisory

Goal: ECPDS has the governance, leadership, and advisory capacity to plan, implement, manage and sustain an integrated and aligned system. System advisory is broadly representative of all early childhood sectors and stakeholders.

Recommendations:

- Define and document the governance and advisory for the ECPDS:
  - Define who has decision-making authority for the system.
  - Define the composition of advisory membership, including roles and responsibilities.
  - Establish guidelines and processes for coordinated and collaborative decision-making.
  - Define process for implementing and operationalizing system decision, policies and initiatives.
- Ensure system governance and advisory has adequate resources and capacity (e.g., staffing) to operate and conduct business efficiently and effectively.
- Include a direct service provider of EC (e.g., home provider) on the advisory membership; define the term (e.g., 1 year, 2 year) to ensure broad representation throughout the state and a variety of perspectives on a rotating basis. See The Nevada Registry for an example.
- Build collaborative relationships with the Department of Education and Higher Education by strategically identifying representatives of each sector to be included in the advisory membership.
- Identify advisory members to act as ambassadors of the ECPDS; attend relevant meetings, workgroups, committees, etc. of the Department of Education and Higher Education in an effort to better understand their agendas, culture, goals, and ultimately establish relations to collaborate and align efforts.

Policies, Standards and Initiatives

Goal: System policies and standards for professional development integrate and align licensing, credentials, qualification requirements, and other related standards across all early childhood sectors--Head Start, child care programs, pre-kindergarten, and others. Policies and initiatives are supportive of professional growth, and are supported by articulation policies that connect institutions of Higher Education to each other and to community-based training.

Recommendations:

- Identify an advisory member to participate in the CDD licensing update process to ensure licensing regulations regarding professional development reflect and are congruent with the early childhood professional standards and competencies outlined in the ECPDS. Ensure language in the licensing regulations is coherent and clearly outlines acceptable professional development.

- Work with Vermont State Colleges to develop a Common Course Numbering System for EC coursework at Vermont state colleges and universities offering EC degree programs. Early childhood and EC-related courses with common content across colleges and universities should carry the same prefix, number, title, credits, description, competencies and outline to facilitate transfer and articulation arrangements between the colleges and universities.
- Work with the Vermont State Colleges to define standard articulation for a CDA credential; identify and standardize the number of college credits that are obtained by EC providers with a CDA credential enrolling into a Vermont state college or university degree program.
- Monitor the number of Career Ladder level achievements awarded by NLCDC to the EC workforce each year to gauge movement of the workforce towards increased qualifications and professional growth.
- Incorporate collection of the EC workforce/ provider role as part of the data collected when NLCDC awards Career Ladder level certificates.

Funding

Goal: System funding is sufficient to support the ECPDS infrastructure, administration, operations and offerings. System funding is sufficient to provide financial supports and incentives to assist early childhood providers with the costs associated with professional development offerings.

Recommendations:

- Prioritize resources to better support BFIS:
  - Support a staff position for a database programmer.
  - Support a staff position for data management and reporting.
- Prioritize and expand funds to support a sufficient number of professional development offerings for free or at low cost (including advanced level offerings).
- Prioritize and expand funds for additional financial supports and incentives to assist the EC workforce in obtaining professional development and reward ongoing professional growth.
- Develop a tracking mechanism to understand how public and private funds are expended/ invested throughout the ECPDS. Track the dollars that are directed at supporting users of the system for obtaining professional development. Data can be used to make informed decisions on targeting or earmarking funds to address gaps, priorities, and needs within the ECPDS.
- Develop a tracking mechanism to monitor funds expended on offerings that support each Career Ladder level. This information will inform the amount of funds directed to support providers in achieving Career Ladder levels and allow for informed decision-making for the future allocation of funding supports and offerings.

Outreach and Communication

Goal: The ECPDS, the system resources, and the system offerings are well communicated, clear and known.

Recommendations:

- Increase awareness of the system and build consumer buy-in by designing and implementing a marketing campaign to promote the ECPDS.
  - Define and know the ECPDS audience to determine how to design and market the system to engage and meet all audience needs.
  - Brand the system.
  - Develop a consistent and clear message about the ECPDS (note purpose and consumer benefits).

  - Reach out to all of EC to develop consumer understanding of EC being more inclusive than childcare only.

- Engage Regional RDS, Head Start Directors, Public School Administrators, etc. to promote and communicate the ECPDS, NLCDC and system offerings to EC practitioners; conduct trainings on using the system and resources to support professional development activities.
- Develop effective strategies for communication and information dissemination between the system and consumers (e.g. social media, listservs). Use social media to communicate with consumers about the system, system offerings, EC related events, policies, initiatives, etc.

Access

Goal: The ECPDS and its offerings are affordable and available to early childhood practitioners across early childhood sectors, providing: low cost professional development trainings, financial supports and incentives; variety and convenience in the delivery of professional development trainings; and offerings and pathways for a diverse workforce at various skill levels.

Recommendations:

- Explore the creation of a virtual training center offered through the ECPDS for online delivery of professional development that is recognized and articulated to meet professional development licensing requirements. Consider developing select existing community-based trainings into online distance learning opportunities offered through the virtual training center. Additionally, inventory other EC related trainings currently available via online distance learning (e.g., Higher Education courses available via distance learning) and provide a list with links within the virtual training center. See the Nevada Registry for an example.
- Develop or identify an advanced level training to offer free or at low cost at least one time per year in all regions of the state. Offer a different advanced level training annually, considering demand or interests of ECPDS consumers, or new and important topics in the early childhood field.
- Monitor the offerings in BFIS to determine the distribution and frequency of offerings throughout the state and by region. Track system offerings by region to determine whether the system is meeting the need for trainings throughout all regions of the state.
- Enhance searchability of the BFIS Course Calendar by including additional fields (level, cost, region). See the MNCPD Registry and the Nevada Registry for examples of user-friendly early childhood professional development training registries and calendars.
- Develop a process to include all Head Start and relevant Department of Education professional development offerings into the BFIS Course Calendar.

Data

Goal: The ECPDS has a data system in place for cross-sector early childhood workforce and professional development data. Data is systematically collected, analyzed and reported on to inform professional development systems-building and policies; to understand the early childhood workforce in Vermont; to gauge system impacts and change; and to help inform planning, evaluation, quality assurance and accountability of the system.

General Recommendations for BFIS:

Conduct a strategic planning process for professional development and workforce data within the BFIS (i.e., Provider Accounts and Credential Accounts) to develop the goals, objectives and activities for the ECPDS data system.

- Support staff positions for a database programmer and data manager to enhance the usability of BFIS, streamline and ensure quality data entry and management, and to report on the EC workforce and ECPDS.
- Streamline data collection of the ECPDS by merging existing NLCDC databases with BFIS.
- Develop data management, sharing and reporting policies; refer to the National Registry Alliance's best practices on data management, data sharing, and reporting as a starting point for developing policies for BFIS and the ECPDS.
- Review and revise drop down select list data fields in BFIS Credential Accounts to be comprehensive, correct, and current.
- Collaborate with the Vermont Early Childhood Comprehensive Data Reporting Infrastructure Project workgroup to ensure BFIS is included in the planning of this project.

Recommendations for Additional Data Collection:

BFIS Credential Account

- Develop a data field in the BFIS Credential Account to track when the account was last accessed by the account holder (have it auto-populate upon login to the Credential Account page). This will allow for tracking use of the Credential Account.
- Expand workforce and education data elements collected referring to the National Registry Alliance Core Data Elements, especially include wage and salary data; highest degree attained.

BFIS Course Calendar

- Develop a process to ***consistently*** tag all offerings entered into the BFIS Course Calendar by level (e.g., Level I, II, III). RDS and sponsors of trainings could potentially support this by indicating the level of the offering in the BFIS Course Calendar entry description submitted to NLCDC.
- Develop a process to ***consistently*** tag all offerings in the BFIS Course Calendar by type/area of knowledge (e.g., Families and Communities; Infants and Toddlers). RDS and sponsors of trainings could potentially support this by indicating the type of the offering in the BFIS Course Calendar entry description submitted to NLCDC.
- Develop a mechanism to ***consistently*** tag all offerings in BFIS Course Calendar with the cost of attending. Work with RDS, sponsors and others submitting trainings to the Course Calendar to include cost information. Develop a field for entering the data into BFIS and querying BFIS.
- Develop a mechanism for querying attendance of BFIS Course Calendar trainings for each episode a training is offered to have data on the uptake of offerings. This will help inform the demand and provision of future offerings.

NLCDC Data (Recommend integrating (linking or merging) with BFIS)

- Monitor the number of Career Ladder level achievements awarded by NLCDC to the early childhood workforce each year to gauge movement of the workforce towards increased qualifications and professional growth.
- Incorporate the collection of the early childhood workforce/provider role (e.g., Program Director, Teacher, Home Provider) as part of the data collected when NLCDC awards Career Ladder level certificates.

Recommendations for Improving Usability of BFIS Provider and Credential Accounts:

- Design a more user-friendly BFIS public interface to encourage consumers to use the system for tracking their professional development.

- Work with database programmer to redesign the public interface of the system.
- Support staff position(s) for responsive Help Desk support.

- Increase use and accuracy of the BFIS Credential Accounts:
  - Consider moving the licensing process to be entirely online.
  - Work with CDD Licensing to develop a process that requires the early childhood workforce to access and update their Credential Account with professional development activities and qualifications regularly (e.g., once a year with licensing renewal).

Quality Improvement and Assurance

Goal: The ECPDS has mechanisms and processes in place to ensure quality and accountability of the system and its offerings.

Recommendations:

- Monitor the number of instructors available by level and knowledge area in the Instructor Registry to understand distribution and gaps.
- Develop a process for evaluating instructors in the Instructor Registry to ensure accountability and quality in their instruction (e.g., upon instructor application renewal every 3 years).
- Consider developing Instructor Competencies for instructors included in the Instructor Registry.
- Develop a training approval mechanism within the ECPDS: 1) to ensure the offerings listed in BFIS are aligned with the core knowledge and competencies; 2) incorporates principles of adult learning; 3) ensures that learning outcomes meet the needs of the EC workforce; and 4) establishes a process for evaluating trainings. State examples to look to include: 1) The Minnesota Registry's training approval process and guide; and 2) The Connecticut Charts-A-Course Training Approval Board.
- Consider developing an ECPDS Help Desk to assist consumers in navigating and using the system.

VII

SYSTEM MONITORING & EVALUATION

OVERVIEW

Ongoing monitoring and regular evaluation of Vermont's ECPDS are essential quality assurance mechanisms for the system and play an important role in tracking system activities, outputs and outcomes; assessing the quality and impact of the system offerings; and informing planning to improve and expand the system.

System monitoring should be ongoing using defined indicators to track data related to system inputs, outputs, and outcomes for comparison with baseline data or targets. Monitoring data will help to identify strengths and weaknesses, from which lessons may be drawn and corrective action taken to improve overall system performance and decision-making. Evaluation of the ECPDS should be conducted periodically (e.g., every 3-5 years) to assess the overall performance of the system. Evaluation complements and builds on monitoring to provide an overarching analysis of the system performance and impact, as well as an offering of practical recommendations. Ultimately, monitoring and evaluation findings aim to purposefully inform decision-makers to improve system performance.

JSI has developed a monitoring and evaluation plan for Vermont's ECPDS. The monitoring and evaluation plan was developed to be implemented by the PPD or their designee. The plan uses a mixed-methods approach with quantitative and qualitative data for system monitoring and evaluation. The plan is intended to be a self-guided tool to assess the ECPDS based on the following elements: 1) Governance, Leadership and Advisory; 2) Policies, Standards and Initiatives; 3) Funding; 4) Outreach and Communications; 5) Access; 6) Data; and 7) Quality Improvement and Assurance. The plan is organized by system element. Each system element includes defined indicators to assess the characteristics of interest for each element, such as accessibility, usability, effectiveness, alignment, etc. For each indicator, a definition is included along with an initial set of related evaluation questions (additional evaluation questions can be added going forward to expand on monitoring and evaluation of the system). Following each evaluation question, a data collection process is outlined to describe what data will be collected and how. The data collection process identifies the data source and the method of data collection, and specifies a recommended timeframe for collecting the data.

Data collection outlined in the monitoring and evaluation plan includes quantitative data and qualitative data. The quantitative data to be collected are the system indicators identified by JSI and the Advisory Workgroup based on the data currently available in the system and related to system outputs and outcomes. The qualitative data collection methods include: key informant interviews, focus groups, surveys, secondary source reviews, and monitoring the status of system benchmarks using a qualitative assessment tool.

Indicators are intended to measure system inputs, outputs and outcomes against a static goal, such as baseline conditions. A dashboard of indicators is intended to give an at-a-glance overview of system outputs and outcomes. JSI has developed the Vermont Early Childhood Professional Development System Dashboard (referred to as Dashboard in the monitoring and evaluation plan) to serve as a tool to assist with monitoring the defined system indicators. The Dashboard includes a face page of five system indicators to provide an at-a-glance overview of the system outputs and outcomes per characteristics of the system (e.g., access, awareness). The pages following the face page provide additional levels and categories of the five system indicators included on the face page. The Dashboard is intended to serve as a tool to assist with implementation of the monitoring and evaluation plan; indicators tracked on the Dashboard are part of the system monitoring and evaluation plan.

A second tool developed to assist with implementation of the monitoring and evaluation plan is the Vermont Early Childhood Professional Development System Assessment Tool (Referred to as Assessment Tool in the monitoring and evaluation plan). The Assessment Tool was developed in part by cross-walking and adapting tools previously created by the National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality and the NCCIC.[8] Several recommendations were put forth by JSI and the Advisory Workgroup per system element. The Assessment Tool incorporates the recommendations that serve as system benchmarks and provides a mechanism for tracking the status of these recommendations or benchmarks from planning through implementation through sustainability or completion.

Benchmarks are a reference point or standard against which system performance or achievements can be assessed. Benchmarks can serve as targets or goals identified for the system based on other state systems, best practices or recommendations. Thus, the Assessment Tool essentially lists system benchmarks by system element and provides a simple mechanism for monitoring the status of these system benchmarks. The benchmarks defined in the Assessment Tool are interconnected with the monitoring and evaluation plan, as the evaluation questions in the plan for which the Assessment Tool is listed as the method of data collection are linked to recommendations made in the Final Report and therefore the system benchmarks. The status of the benchmarks can be monitored via the Assessment Tool to gauge progress in meeting a benchmark and to inform system planning and priorities.

[8]1.) National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality (NICHQ) Title V Program Index published in the NICHQ's *Spread of Quality Improvement for Children and Youth With Special Healthcare Needs: An Integrated Systems Strategy for Building the Title V Infrastructure. Learning Collaborative A Interim Report. December 2010.*

2.) The National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center's *A Tool to Assess the Alignment of State PD Systems and QRIS.*

VERMONT'S EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM
MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

Governance, Leadership & Advisory
ECPDS has the governance, leadership, and advisory capacity to plan, implement, manage and sustain an integrated and aligned system.
System advisory is broadly representative of all early childhood sectors and stakeholders.

INDICATOR	DEFINITION	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTION	TIMING
Identified and Defined	Governance, leadership and/or advisory structures are clearly defined.	• Are the governance/leadership role(s) and decision-making authority(ies) for the ECPDS clearly defined and documented? • Is the advisory body of the ECPDS clearly defined and documented?	**Data Source:** PPD **Method:** Assessment Tool	Semi-Annually
Representation	Governance, leadership and/or advisory structures are broadly representative of early childhood.	• Is the composition of advisory body membership clearly defined and inclusive of stakeholders from all key sectors of early childhood? • Are representatives of DOE and Higher Education included in the advisory body?		
Roles and Responsibilities	Governance, leadership and/or advisory structures are guided by defined expectations, standard procedures and protocols.	• What roles and responsibilities do the governance, leadership and advisory members have? • Are guidelines and processes established for coordinated and collaborative decision-making among governance, leadership and advisory? • Are guidelines established for implementing and operationalizing system decisions, policies and initiatives (e.g., project management)? • Do members actively participate in meetings, and in planning and implementation of system initiatives?		
Effectiveness	The governance, leadership, and/or advisory are successful in accomplishing system goals.	• To what extant do the governance, leadership and advisory of the ECPDS make progress towards system goals and objectives? • Are system initiatives implemented as intended and in a timely fashion? • To what extant do the governance, leadership, and advisory effectively guide, implement, and operationalize plans and policies of the system? • To what extant do the governance, leadership, and advisory effectively communicate goals, plans, and policies to consumers and stakeholders of the system?	**Data Source**: Advisory members, Director of NLCDC; Representatives of CDD; HS, DOE, Higher Ed, etc. **Method:** Key informant interviews; (consider focus groups as well)	Every 2-3 years.

Policies, Standards & Initiatives
System policies and standards for professional development integrate and align licensing, credentials, qualification requirements, and other related standards across all early childhood sectors–Head Start, child care programs, pre-kindergarten, and others. Policies and initiatives that support professional growth, support alignment, and support articulation that connects institutions of Higher Education to each other and to community-based training.

INDICATOR	DEFINITION	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTION	TIMING
Aligned	The system and system policies, professional standards and initiatives are coherent, easily navigable and consistent.	• Are the CDD licensing regulations and early childhood professional standards outlined in the ECPDS congruent and coherent? • Are ECPDS offerings developed to be aligned with VT licensing regulations and early childhood professional standards?	**Data Source:** PPD **Method:** Assessment Tool	Semi-Annually
		• Are the VT ECPDS policies and standards aligned with national recommendations?	**Data Source:** NCCIC; NAEYC **Method:** Secondary Source Review (review of national standards, practices, etc.)	Annually
Supportive of professional growth	Learning opportunities build on knowledge and skills in systematic and meaningful ways; achievements are professionally recognized.	Is the system supportive of professional growth? • How many people received Career Ladder level certificates? • How many people received multiple Career Ladder level certificates?	**Data Source:** NLCDC Staff **Method:** Dashboard	Annually
		• Who in the EC workforce are receiving Career Ladder level certificates?	**Data Source:** NLCDC Staff ***Note:*** *Number of people achieving Career Ladder levels by level and* ***by role*** *(e.g., program director).*	Annually once data on level awards by role are available
Articulated	Professional development offerings are transferable to be recognized and meaningful across different sectors and systems.	• Does VSC have a Common Course Numbering System for early childhood coursework in place?	**Data Source:** PPD **Method:** Assessment Tool	Semi-Annually
		• Does the ECPDS have formal articulation policy in place to translate a CDA into a standard number of college credits within the Vermont State College system?	**Data Source**: PPD **Method**: Assessment Tool	Semi-Annually

Funding
System funding is sufficient to support the ECPDS infrastructure, administration, operations and offerings. System funding is sufficient to provide financial supports and incentives to assist early childhood providers with the costs associated with professional development offerings.

INDICATOR	DEFINITION	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTION	TIMING
Supportive of the ECPDS	Sufficient and dependable funding is available to support the ECPDS core infrastructure, administration and operations of the system.	• Are resources prioritized and dedicated to support a BFIS database programmer? • Are resources prioritized and dedicated to support a BFIS data manager?	**Data Source:** PPD **Method:** Assessment Tool	Semi-Annually
		• Are adequate and stable funding streams supporting the system and directed appropriately throughout the system?	**Data Source:** PPD; Monitor system funds and expenditures **Method:** Assessment Tool	Semi-Annually
Supportive of ECPDS Offerings	Sufficient and dependable funding is available to support 1) the provision of financial supports to the early childhood workforce to obtain professional development and 2) the provision of financial incentives to reward to the early childhood workforce for ongoing professional growth.	• How many people are receiving a form of financial support through the ECPDS for professional development?	**Data Source:** NLCDC, CDD, VCCIC, HS **Method:** Dashboard; Sum of: • # of people receiving a NLCDC scholarship • # of people enrolled in VCCICC courses • # of people receiving funding support from Head Start for PD • # of people receiving CDD tuition assistance grants	Annually
		• How many people are receiving a financial incentive through the ECPDS?	**Data Source:** NLCDC and CDD **Method:** Dashboard; Sum of: • # of people receiving a CDD recognition bonus for STARS • # of people receiving a bonus from NLCDC for Career Ladder level certificates.	Annually
		• How are system funds expended to support professional development offered at each Career Ladder level?	**Data Source:** PPD ***Note:*** *Monitor funds expended to support offerings available for each career ladder level.*	Annually

Outreach and Communication
The ECPDS, the system resources, and the system offerings are well communicated, clear and known.

INDICATOR	DEFINITION	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTION	TIMING
Clear and Known	Early childhood professionals are aware of the ECPDS and its offerings; and understand the purpose and value of the system.	• Are consumers of the ECPDS accessing and using the NLCDC website?	**Data Source:** NLCDC Staff & Website analytics **Method:** Dashboard	Quarterly
		• Does the early childhood workforce indicate they are aware of the NLCDC?	**Data Source:** Consumers of ECPDS **Method:** Dashboard; Vermont Early Care and Afterschool Professional Development Survey	Annually
		• Do early childhood practitioners understand the purpose and value of the system?	**Data Source:** Direct providers of EC; RDS **Method:** Focus groups; questionnaires	Every 2-3 Years
Effective outreach & communication	A variety of outreach and communication strategies are used to reach the various consumers of the ECPDS, communicate offerings, and disseminate information on EC and the ECPDS.	• Does the ECPDS use a variety of mechanisms to communicate the offerings of the system to consumers? • Do RDS effectively communicate and promote the ECPDS on a regional level to providers? • Does the ECPDS use messaging and marketing strategies to promote the purpose and benefits of the ECPDS?	**Data Source:** NLCDC staff; PPD **Method:** Assessment Tool	Semi-Annually

Access
The ECPDS and its offerings are affordable and available to early childhood practitioners across early childhood sectors, providing: low cost professional development trainings, financial supports and incentives; variety and convenience in the delivery of professional development trainings; and offerings and pathways for a diverse workforce at various skill levels.

INDICATOR	DEFINITION	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTION	TIMING
PD Offerings are Available	The ECPDS provides a variety of PD offerings throughout the state using a variety of delivery options.	• Are adequate PD offerings available through the ECPDS by distance learning options?	**Data Source:** NLCDC Staff; PPD **Method:** Assessment Tool	Semi-Annually
		• How many professional development trainings are offered statewide and by BBF region each year?	**Data Source:** BFIS Course Calendar **Method:** Dashboard	Annually
		• Does the ECPDS provide adequate professional development offerings by level throughout the state (statewide and by BBF region) each year? • Does the ECPDS provide adequate professional development offerings by type (by content/core knowledge area, infant toddler, etc) throughout the state each year?	**Data Source:** BFIS Course Calendar ***Note:*** *Tag offerings in BFIS by level and by type to monitor frequency and distribution of offerings by level and type.*	Annually once data by level and type are available
		• How many individuals are attending the professional development offerings listed in BFIS (and by region and by level) each year?	**Data Source:** BFIS Course Calendar ***Note:*** *Tag offerings in BFIS with attendance.*	Annually once data are available.
		• Does the ECPDS provide adequate PD offerings throughout the state to meet the needs of a diverse EC workforce?	**Data Source:** Direct service providers of early childhood; RDS **Method:** Focus groups; questionnaires	Every 2-3 Years

INDICATOR	DEFINITION	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTION	TIMING
PD Offerings are Easy to Find	Early childhood practitioners can easily navigate and find professional development offerings of various levels, content, sponsors, costs, etc. throughout the state.	• Is the ECPDS' PD training calendar, the BFIS Course Calendar, comprehensive, user-friendly and searchable by many fields, including level, cost and region?	**Data Source:** CDD staff; PPD **Method:** Assessment Tool	Semi-Annually
		• Are PD offerings easy to find for EC providers throughout the state?	**Data Source:** Direct providers of EC; RDS **Method:** Focus groups; questionnaires	Every 2-3 Years
PD Offerings are Affordable	The ECPDS provides a variety of professional development offerings that are free or low cost.	• What is the average cost of the professional development offerings listed in BFIS by level? • How many free and low cost level I, level II and level III professional development trainings are listed in the BFIS Course Calendar each year?	**Data Source:** BFIS Course Calendar ***Note:*** *Tag offerings in Course Calendar by cost to monitor the cost of PD offerings by level.*	Annually once cost data are available.
		• Are the offerings of the ECPDS affordable to EC providers at various skill levels throughout the state?	**Data Source:** Direct providers of EC; RDS **Method:** Focus groups; questionnaires	Every 2-3 Years

Data
The ECPDS has a data system in place for cross-sector early childhood workforce and professional development data. Data is systematically collected, analyzed and reported on to inform professional development systems-building and policies; to understand the early childhood workforce in Vermont; to gauge system impacts and change; and to help inform planning, evaluation, quality assurance and accountability of the system.

INDICATOR	DEFINITION	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTION	TIMING
Effectiveness and Usefulness	The BFIS data system is comprehensive and streamlined, including cross-sector early childhood workforce and professional development data; achieves its intended results and is used to assess and report on ECPDS objectives.	• Is the development and enhancement of BFIS guided by a strategic plan? • Are all ECPDS databases integrated or linked with BFIS (NLCDC databases are integrated into BFIS)? • Does BFIS collect recommended early childhood demographic, workforce and professional development data points?	**Data Source:** CDD staff; PPD **Method:** Assessment Tool	Semi-Annually
		• Is BFIS user-friendly for consumers of the system, including administrators reporting on the ECPDS, data managers entering and managing data in BFIS; and EC providers accessing and using BFIS?	**Data Source:** BFIS administrators and data managers; NLCDC staff; RDS; EC providers. **Method:** Key informant interviews with administrators, data managers and RDS. Focus groups with RDS and EC providers.	Every 2-3 years
Data Quality	The data in BFIS is complete, valid and reliable.	• Does the data system have protocols in place to define data management processes and policies for collecting, analyzing, sharing, and reporting on the BFIS data as well as to ensure complete, current, and accurate data?	**Data Source:** CDD staff; PPD **Method:** Assessment Tool	Semi-Annually
Support and Stability of BFIS	BFIS is a priority with adequate funds to support its management and operations.	• Is BFIS adequately supported with essential staff, such as a database programmer and data manager?	**Data Source:** CDD staff ; PPD **Method:** Assessment Tool	Semi-Annually

Quality Improvement & Assurance
The ECPDS has mechanisms and processes in place to ensure quality and accountability of the system and its offerings.

INDICATOR	DEFINITION	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTION	TIMING
Quality Assurance & Accountability	The ECPDS has qualified instructors for delivery of PD offerings and has quality assurance mechanisms in place to hold instructors accountable.	• Is there a process is in place for regularly assessing instructors in the Instructor Registry? • Is there a process is in place for assessing the quality and alignment of PD offerings in BFIS?	**Data Source:** NLCDC Staff; PPD **Method:** Assessment Tool	Semi-Annually
		• Does the Instructor Registry have an adequate number of instructors at each level? • Does the Instructor Registry have an adequate number of instructors for each knowledge area?	**Data Source:** NLCDC Staff; Instructor Registry **Method:** Dashboard	Annually
Consumer Satisfaction	Consumers of the ECPDS are satisfied with the system and its offerings.	• How satisfied are consumers of the ECPDS with the quality of the system and its offerings?	**Data Source:** Direct providers of EC **Method:** Focus groups; questionnaires	Every 2-3 years

Vermont's Early Childhood Professional Development System Dashboard

Indicators	2011 Baseline				2012 Target				2012 Actual			
System Access: Availability Indicator												
1. # of PD offerings in BFIS **statewide** per year	1,466											
System Access: Financial Supports Indicator												
2. # of people receiving a form of financial support to assist with obtaining PD through the ECPDS per year												
System Access: Awareness & Use of NL Indicator												
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3. # of total Northern Lights website hits per quarter												
Early Childhood Workforce Qualifications and Career Pathways Indicator												
4. # of people receiving a Career Ladder Level certificate/ year												
System Quality Assurance Indicators												
5. # of instructors in the Instructor Registry (**total**) per year	297											

Indicators	2011 Baseline	2012 Target	2012 Actual
System Access: Availability Indicators			
# of PD offerings in BFIS **statewide** per year	1466		
# of PD offerings in BFIS in **BBF Barre District** per year			
# of PD offerings in BFIS in **BBF Bennington District** per year			
# of PD offerings in BFIS in **BBF Brattleboro District** per year			
# of PD offerings in BFIS in **BBF Burlington District** per year			
# of PD offerings in BFIS in **BBF Hartford District** per year			
# of PD offerings in BFIS in **BBF Middlebury District** per year			
# of PD offerings in BFIS in **BBF Morrisville District** per year			
# of PD offerings in BFIS in **BBF Newport District** per year			
# of PD offerings in BFIS in **BBF Rutland District** per year			
# of PD offerings in BFIS in **BBF Springfield District** per year			
# of PD offerings in BFIS in **BBF St. Albans District** per year			
# of PD offerings in BFIS in **BBF St. Johnsbury District** per year			
System Access: Financial Supports & Incentive Indicators			
# of people receiving a form of financial support to assist with obtaining PD through the ECPDS per year			
# of people receiving financial incentives for achieving Career Ladder Level certificates and/or a STARS recognition bonus.			

System Access: Awareness & Use of Northern Lights Indicators												
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
# of total Northern Lights website hits per quarter												
# of total hits from **Home page to Early Childhood Career** Pathways (Career Ladder)page per quarter												
# of total hits from **Home page to the Applications page** per quarter												
# of total hits from **Home page to the BFIS Training and Coursework page** per quarter												
# of respondents of the Vermont Early Care and Afterschool Professional Development Survey indicating they have heard of NLCDC	246 / 499 respondents = 49.3%											
Early Childhood Workforce Qualifications and Career Pathways Indicators												
# of people receiving a Career Ladder Level certificate per year												
# of people receiving multiple Career Ladder level certificates per year												
# of people receiving a Career Ladder **Level I** certificate/ year												
# of people receiving a Career Ladder **Level II** certificate/ year												
# of people receiving a Career Ladder **Level III** certificate/ year												
# of people receiving a Career Ladder **Level IV** certificate/ year												
# of people receiving a Career Ladder **Level V** certificate/ year												
# of people receiving a Career Ladder **Level VI** certificate/ year												
System Quality Assurance Indicators												
# of instructors in the Instructor Registry (**total**) per year	297											
# of **Affiliate I** instructors in the Instructor Registry per year	42											
# of **Affiliate II** instructors in Instructor Registry per year	6											

	# of **Certified** instructors in the Instructor Registry per year	75		
	# of **Master** instructors in the Instructor Registry per year	119		
	# of **Specialist I** instructors in the Instructor Registry per year	8		
	# of **Specialist II** instructors in the Instructor Registry per year	47		
	# of instructors, **Knowledge Area: Child Development (EC)**, in Instructor Registry per year	225		
	# of instructors, **Knowledge Area: Families & Communities (EC)**, in the Instructor Registry per year	208		
	# of instructors, **Knowledge Area: Teaching & Learning (EC)**, in Instructor Registry per year	217		
	# of instructors, **Knowledge Area: Healthy & Safe Environments (EC)**, in the Instructor Registry per year	169		
	# of instructors, **Knowledge Area: Professionalism & Program Organization (EC)**, in the Instructor Registry per year	159		
	# of instructors, **Knowledge Area: Child & Youth Development**, in the Instructor Registry per year	41		
	# of instructors, **Knowledge Area: Curriculum & Learning Environment**, in the Instructor Registry per year	47		
	# of instructors, **Knowledge Area:**	47		

	Families & Communities (After school), in the Instructor Registry per year			
	# of instructors, **Knowledge Area: Healthy & Safe Environments (Afterschool)**, in the Instructor Registry per year	39		
	# of instructors, **Knowledge Area: Professionalism & Program Organization (Afterschool)**, in the Instructor Registry per year	38		
	# of instructors in the Instructor Registry (per year) willing to train in **Addison County**	68		
	# of instructors in the Instructor Registry (per year) willing to train in **Bennington County**	58		
	# of instructors in the Instructor Registry (per year) willing to train in **Caledonia County**	67		
	# of instructors in the Instructor Registry (per year) willing to train in **Chittenden County**	120		
	# of instructors in the Instructor Registry (per year) willing to train in **Essex County**	60		
	# of instructors in the Instructor Registry (per year) willing to train in **Franklin County**	85		
	# of instructors in the Instructor Registry (per year) willing to train in **Grand Isle County**	64		
	# of instructors in the Instructor Registry (per year) willing to train in **Lamoille County**	87		
	# of instructors in the Instructor Registry (per year) willing to train in **Orange County**	68		

# of instructors in the Instructor Registry (per year) willing to train in **Orleans County**	67		
# of instructors in the Instructor Registry (per year) willing to train in **Rutland County**	63		
# of instructors in the Instructor Registry (per year) willing to train in **Washington County**	88		
# of instructors in the Instructor Registry (per year) willing to train in **Windham County**	70		
# of instructors in the Instructor Registry (per year) willing to train in **Windsor County**	66		

Vermont Early Childhood Professional Development System Assessment Tool

Aim Statement: To develop an ECPDS that is capable of creating and sustaining integrated and aligned sub-systems of early childhood professional development as indicated by the system elements.

System Elements	Planning & Preparation	Preliminary Activities	Implementation	Revising	Sustainability or Completion
Governance, Leadership & Advisory					
Governance and advisory of the ECPDS are defined and provide leadership and strategic planning for systems building; have defined responsibility and authority to recommend and implement policies and initiatives					
A diverse advisory body representing all key EC sector guides the system in working towards a mission, defined goals, and objectives to build a coordinated and aligned system; Membership, roles and responsibilities of the advisory are clearly defined					
Advisory includes representation and active participation from the Department of Education					
Advisory includes representation and active participation from Higher Education					
Governance/leadership and advisory have an established process for coordinated and collaborative decision-making					
Governance/leadership and advisory have an established process for implementing and operationalizing decisions to ensure time-bound action					
Policies, Standards & Initiatives					
CDD Licensing regulations and ECPDS professional standards are aligned					
System offerings are developed in alignment with licensing regulations and professional standards.					
Identify and standardize the number of college-credits that a CDA credential articulates into within the VSC system.					
VSC have a Common Course Numbering System for early childhood coursework at VSC colleges and universities offering early childhood education degree programs					
Funding					
Resources adequately support database programming for BFIS and the ECPDS					
Resources adequately support data management and reporting for BFIS and ECPDS					
Adequate and stable funding streams support the system and are directed appropriately					
Outreach and Communication					
Marketing strategies are used to promote awareness of and buy-in to the system					

System Elements	Planning & Preparation	Preliminary Activities	Implementation	Revising	Sustainability or Completion
Outreach and Communication					
Regional RDS and Directors and Managers from other EC sectors are fluent in the ECPDS and its offerings and promote the system on a regional level to early childhood providers.					
The ECPDS has a variety of mechanisms in place for communicating the offerings of the system to various consumers and audiences.					
Access					
Adequate distance learning options are available through the ECPDS.					
BFIS Course Calendar is comprehensive, user-friendly and searchable by many fields.					
Data					
The ECPDS data system is guided by a strategic plan to develop a cross-sector data system and professional development registry to collect and report on the system.					
Data collection is streamlined with NL databases integrated into BFIS.					
Additional recommended data points are included in BFIS.					
Protocols are in place defining data management processes and policies for collecting, analyzing, sharing, and reporting on data.					
Policy is in place requiring regular and complete updates to BFIS Credential Account.					
Staff positions for a database programmer and for a data manager support BFIS.					
Quality Improvement & Assurance					
The ECPDS has a process for evaluating instructors in the Instructor Registry to ensure accountability and quality in their instruction.					
The ECPDS has a process for assessing professional development trainings to ensure quality and alignment of offerings listed in BFIS.					

The Vermont Early Childhood Professional Development Assessment Tool was developed in part by cross-walking and adapting:

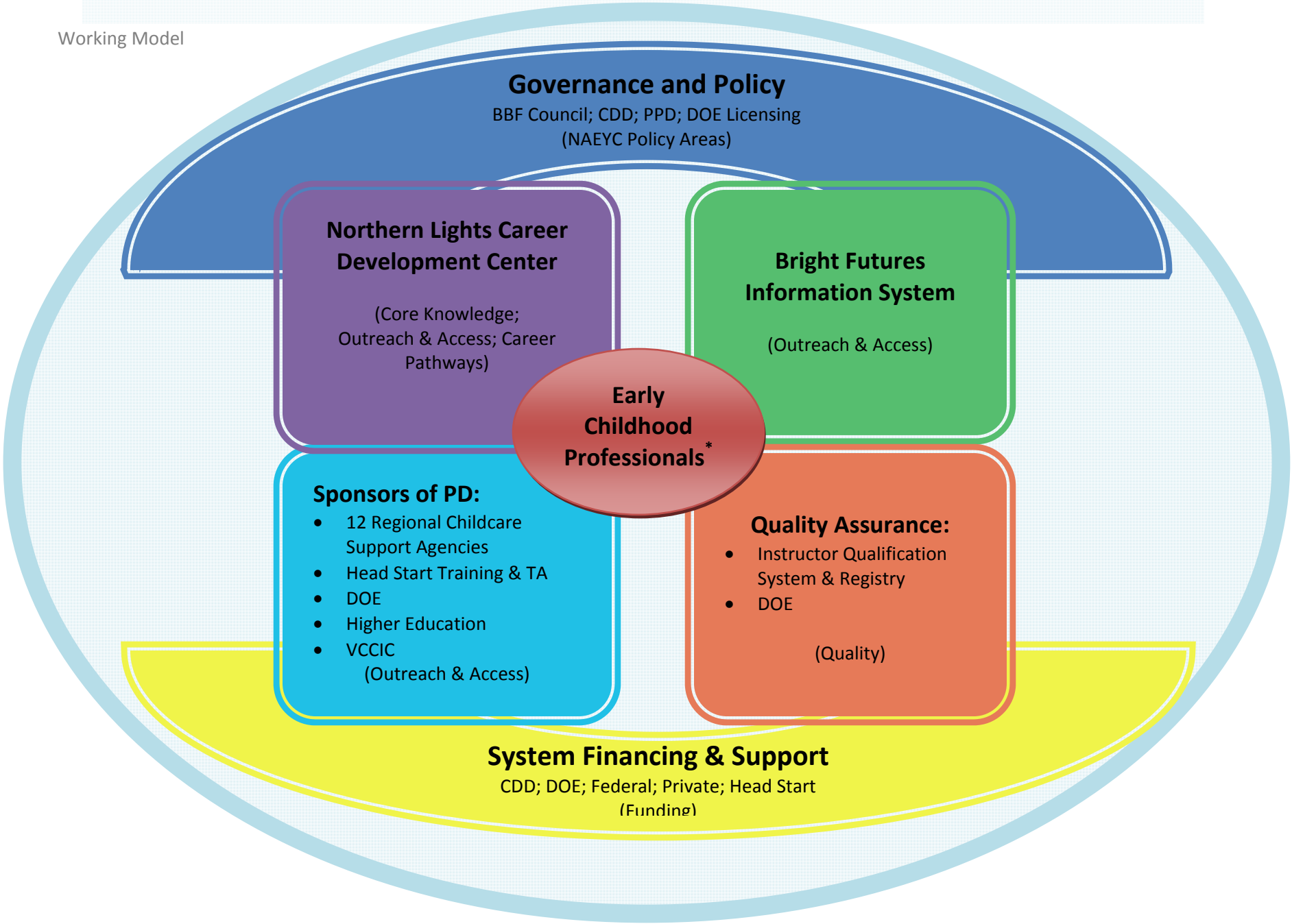
1. National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality (NICHQ) Title V Program Index published in the NICHQ's *Spread of Quality Improvement for Children and Youth With Special Healthcare Needs: An Integrated Systems Strategy for Building the Title V Infrastructure. Learning Collaborative A Interim Report. December 2010.*
2. The National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center's *A Tool to Assess the Alignment of State PD Systems and QRIS.*

Appendices

Appendix I: Vermont Early Childhood Professional Development System- System Model
Appendix II: Vermont Early Childhood Professional Development System- Profile
Appendix III: Vermont Early Childhood Professional Development System- Data Inventory
Appendix IV: Focus Group Guide
Appendix V: Key Informant Interview Guides

Vermont Early Childhood Professional Development System

Working Model



*Additional consumers of the Early Childhood Professional Development System include: afterschool professionals; parents; students, etc.

Profile of Vermont's Early Childhood Professional Development System

Governance, Advisory and Infrastructure	
Structure	*Description*
Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council	The Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council (BBF) is linked to 12 Regional councils and other state-wide committees, including the Professional Preparation and Development Committee. Together they work to create an integrated system of quality services for young children and their families in Vermont.
Professional Preparation and Development Sub-Committee	The PPD is a sub-committee of BBF. The mission of the PPD is to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated system of quality learning opportunities that gives current and prospective professionals the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need to provide quality care and education.
Child Development Division	The CDD is a division of the Vermont Agency of Human Services, Department for Children and Families. The CDD is the state agency charged with improving the well-being of Vermont's children by ensuring safe, accessible and quality services are available for every child. The CDD is responsible for several aspects of child care in Vermont - from licensing for providers and tuition assistance for families to the STARS program. CDD brings together funds and services that are designed to establish and support statewide, regional, and local partnerships which assist children and their families. Funds and services include, Parent Child Centers, Head Start Collaborative, Healthy Child Care Vermont funds and the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant. CDD also assists partnerships through policy direction, licensing regulation, research, technical assistance, and information services. The CDD provides funding to the VT ECPDS and BFIS. CDD also provides professional development (PD) funding supports to EC professionals and has a committee, the Quality Think Tank, that connects with the PPD to focus on effective strategies that lead to program quality through PD.
Northern Lights Career Development Center	NLCDC provides information and support about PD for early childhood and afterschool professionals in Vermont. The goal of NLCDC is to strengthen and align curriculum and instruction, providing individuals and agencies easy access to training and education at all levels, develop highly qualified instructors, and career advising for professionals and organizations. The goal is an articulated system of PD, instructor qualifications, and resources for those engaged in early childhood and afterschool education programs. NLCDC is funded by CDD and administered within CCV. NLCDC provides a virtual gateway to Vermont's ECPDS, serving as a clearinghouse of PD resources for EC professionals in VT. NLCDC provides career advising, issues certificates and credentials, verifies PD activities, hosts and maintains the Instructor Qualification System and Registry.
Regional Community Child Care Support Agencies	12 regional centers across Vermont are available, along with their respective Resource Development Specialists (RDS) to guide and support PD of EC professionals. Each creates calendars listing PD offerings in their area.
Head Start Training & Technical Assistance	There are 7 Head Start programs and 3 Early Head Start programs serving children and families in Vermont. Each program has centers and sites located throughout the state. Professional development trainings are offered by the Head Start Programs throughout the state.
Higher Education	Colleges offer credit and non-credit courses, and award academic degrees, credentials and certificates. Almost all of them offer some courses online in addition to traditional face to face classes. Vermont has 22 public and private colleges and 2 universities. The Community College of Vermont (CCV) is the only community college system in the state. CCV has 12 academic centers across Vermont, and awards an Associate of Arts Degree in Early Childhood, Education, Human Services and other areas relevant to early childhood and afterschool professionals. It also awards a CCV child care certificate.
Vermont Department of Education (DOE)	Vermont's DOE sets professional development standards for licensed educators in Vermont, which spans into educators of early childhood education. Professional development opportunities are also offered through the DOE.

Policies, Standards, and Initiatives	
Professional Standards	*Description*
Child Development Division Licensing Regulations	CDD is the Vermont state division that regulates all types of child care programs, including registered homes, early childhood centers, licensed homes, afterschool programs, non-recurring care programs, and public preschool programs.
Vermont ECPDS Core Knowledge & Competencies	-Core Knowledge • Families and Communities • Child Development • Healthy and Safe Environments • Teaching and Learning • Professionalism and Program Organization Core Knowledge Areas are broken down by sub-area. Core Competencies are defined for each sub-area and organized into six levels.
Vermont Department of Education	-Vermont Department of Education (5 Professional Standards) • Learning • Professional Knowledge • Colleagueship • Advocacy • Accountability
Quality Assurance Initiatives	*Description*
Bright Futures Information System	BFIS is an online data management and information system operated by CDD. BFIS has several components including Licensing, Program Profiles and Reporting, Subsidy, and Professional Development. Professional development activities are advertised, verified and tracked for providers within BFIS. A credential account houses specific demographic information, individual training, education and degree, PD, IPDP data, etc. and is intended for tracking one's PD. A statewide BFIS Course Calendar (or registry of PD trainings) is available to help EC professionals find trainings PD opportunities. Sponsors of PD can utilize BFIS to advertise their trainings. Sponsors can send required course training information to NLCDC to be posted on the BFIS course calendar.
STep Ahead Recognition System	STARS is Vermont's quality recognition system for child care, preschool, and afterschool programs. The primary incentive for participating in STARS is local and statewide recognition of your program's achievements. Other incentives include community awards and financial rewards (e.g., higher reimbursement on the child care financial assistance fee scale). STARS is aligned with Career Ladder levels.
NLCDC Instructor Qualification System & Registry	The Instructor Registry is intended to help sponsors of PD find qualified instructors of adults who support the early childhood and afterschool fields. It also recognizes qualified instructors to help develop and promote instructors of adults. The Instructor Registry is a web-based, searchable database of approved instructors teaching adults about the early childhood and afterschool fields. Instructors apply online and once approved, can choose to be listed in the public Registry.
Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)	An Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) is a written plan designed by EC professionals that follows a four-step process for continuing one's professional growth (four steps include: self-assessment, goals, strategies, timeline). IPDP's are required by Child Care Licensing, for Level Certificates, and are part of Vermont's STARS.
JSI Evaluation of VT ECPDS	This initial evaluation of the VT ECPDS will provide a report on the system and its offerings and assist with data-informed decision-making to improve and expand the system going forward as well as provide recommendations and tools for continued monitoring and evaluation of the system.

Outreach & Access	
Resource	*Description*
Northern Lights Career Development Center	-Website provides a virtual gateway to the system and its resources. -NLCDC staff do outreach to organizations or groups and different state-wide meetings (presentations, displays, etc.). -Directory/list of links to Higher Ed/degree programs -Newsletters -Social Media
12 Regional Child Care Resource Centers	-Provide a regional/community hub for early childhood PD; announce local PD opportunities via website calendars and/or newsletters.
Head Start Training & Technical Assistance	-Generally, these PD activities are offered at no cost and open to early childhood providers working within and outside of Head Start.
Higher Education	- Colleges and Universities throughout Vermont offer courses, certificates, qualifications for licensure, degrees, etc. to support the EC workforce and PD.
Vermont Department of Education	-DOE Calendar of Events; The calendar lists department-sponsored events, that, unless noted otherwise, are intended to benefit service providers, educators and administrators. -Links to Educational Services Agencies (ESAs) ESAs are regional partnerships between school districts or supervisory unions, institutions of Higher Education and service providers. ESAs provide high quality PD regionally to meet the needs of individuals, schools and/or supervisory unions to enable educators to improve schools and increase student learning.
BFIS	-Course Calendar to help EC professionals find PD opportunities statewide.

Profile of BFIS Course Calendar Offerings for 2010

Baseline overview of offerings: 1/1/2010 – 12/31/2010; 1286 items listed

Delivery/Format of Offerings

Online = 3
Conferences = 136
Multiple Sessions = 226
Single Session = 861

Topic of Offerings

Advanced Specialized Care = 239
Basic Specialized Care = 38
Introduction to Licensing = 3
Observation and Assessment = 62
First Aid = 18
CPR = 29

Offerings in Core Knowledge Areas

Child Development

- Principles of Child/Youth Development = 38
- Physical and Intellectual Development = 227
- Social/ Emotional Development = 292

Families & Communities

- Families and Communities = 308

Teaching & Learning

- Observation and Assessment = 62
- Curriculum and Learning = 497

Health & Safe Environment

- Health and Safe Environments = 292
- Nutrition = 49

Professionalism & Program Organization

- Program Management = 246
- Professionalism = 412

Focus area of offerings

Focus: Infants and Toddlers = 77
Focus: Preschool = 144
Focus: School-age = 86
Focus: Program Directors/Managers = 58
Focus: Adult Instructors = 25
Focus: Multiple Audiences = 183

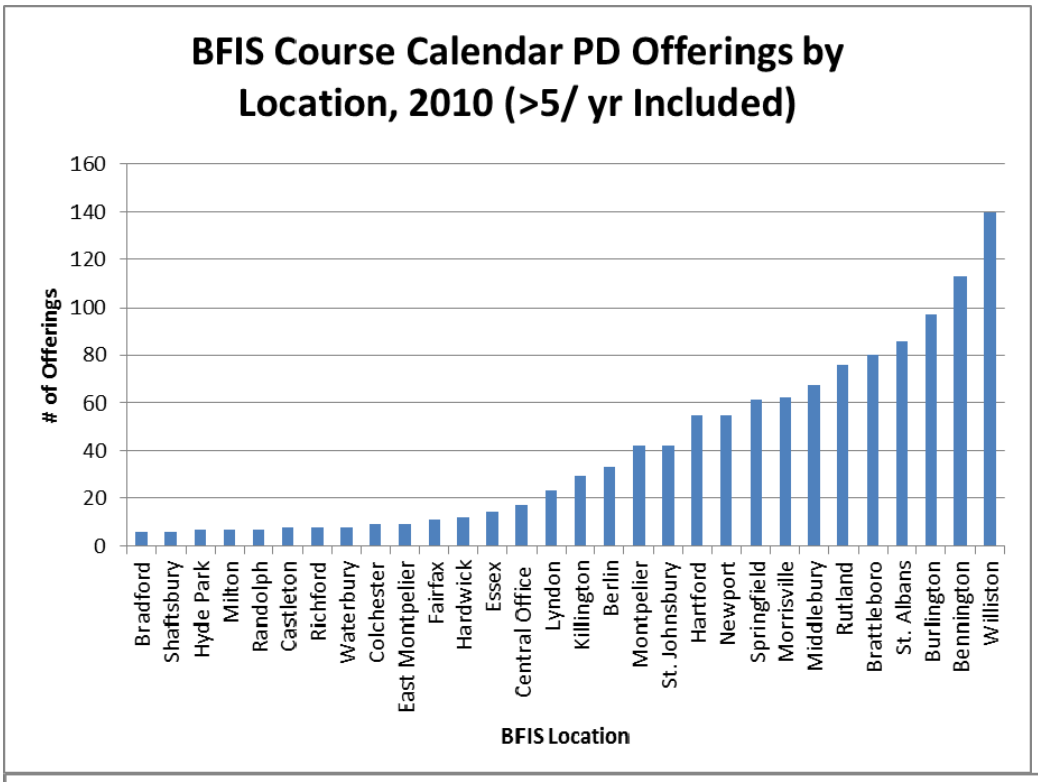
Content Level of Offerings

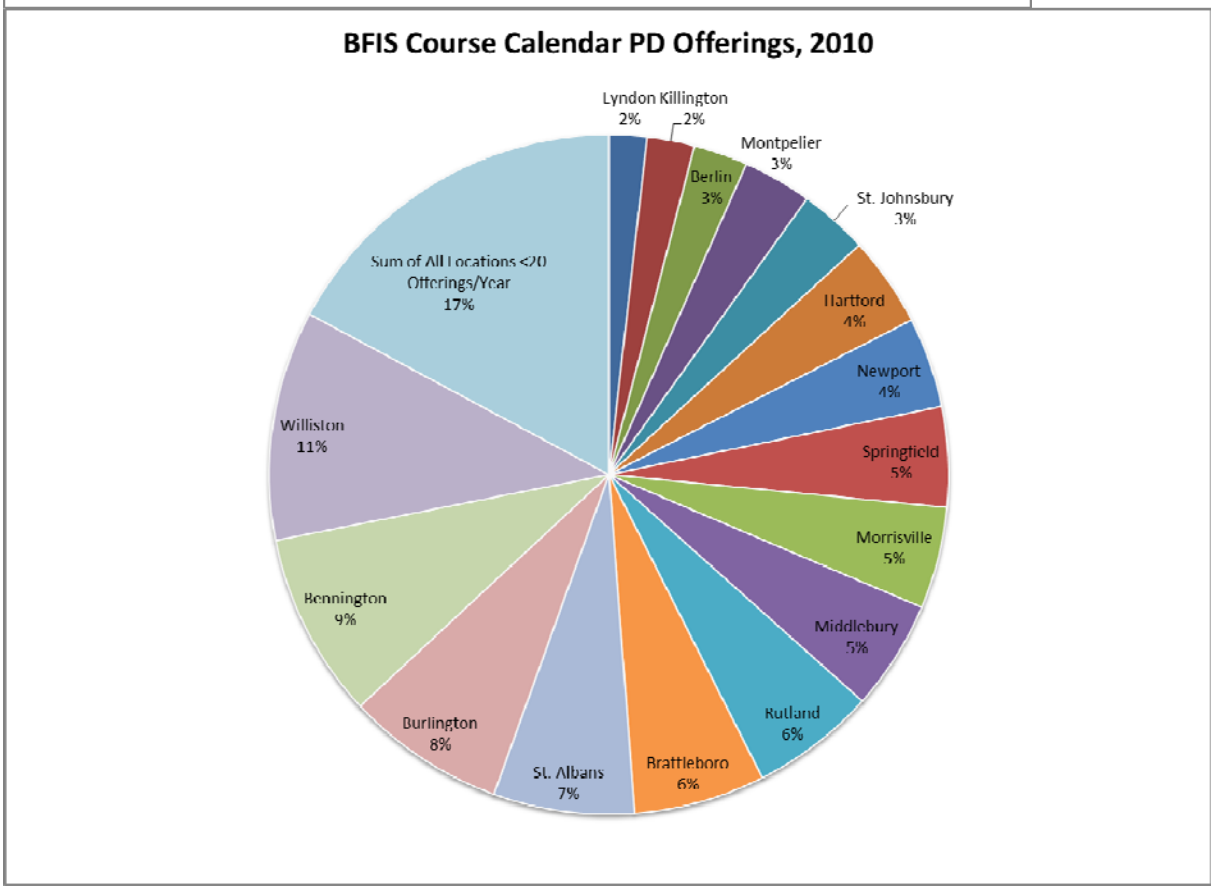
Introductory (NL Level I) = 98
Intermediate (NL Level I) = 144
Advanced (NL Level III-VI) = 42
Multilevel = 181
Fundamentals Level I = 128
Level II Curriculum = 80
Special Education/Intervention = 13

Credit/Hours of Offerings

Clock Hours = 1243
College Credit = 43

Location of Professional Development Offerings throughout Vermont





Town/Location	# courses offered in 2010	Time of day offered	Weekday/Weekend Offerings
Alburg	4	evening	Weekdays
Arlington	3	morning	Weekdays
Barre City	2	Evening	Weekdays
Barre Town	2	Morning/Evening	Weekdays
Barton	4	Morning	Weekdays/Weekends
Bennington	113	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekends
Berlin	33	Morning /Evening	Almost all weekday
Bradford	6	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekends
Brandon	2	Evening	Weekdays
Brattleboro	80	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekends
Brighton	1	Evening	Weekday
Bristol	1	Evening	Weekday
Burlington	97	Morning/Afternoon/Evening	Weekdays/Weekends
Cambridge	4	Evening	Weekdays
Castleton	8	Evening	Weekdays
Charlotte	1	Evening	Weekdays
Chelsea	1	Evening	Weekdays
Chester	1	Morning	Weekend
Colchester	9	Morning/Evening	Weekday/Weekend
Derby	3	Evening	Weekdays
Dummerston	1	Evening	Weekdays
East Montpelier	9	Evening	Weekdays
Essex	14	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend
Fairfax	11	Morning/Evening	Weekdays
Fairlee	1	Afternoon	Weekdays
Greensboro	1	Evening	Weekdays
Hardwick	12	Evening	Weekdays
Hartford	55	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend
Huntington	4	Morning	Weekdays
Hyde Park	7	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend
Jericho	5	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend
Johnson	1	Evening	Weekday
Killington	29	Day-long conference	Weekday
Lyndon	23	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend
Manchester	2	Morning/Afternoon	Weekdays/Weekend
Marlboro	1	Morning	Weekday
Middlebury	67	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend
Milton	7	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend
Montpelier	42	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend
Morrisville	62	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend
Newport	55	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend
North Hero	1	Morning	Weekend
Norwich	1	Evening	Weekday
Poultney	1	Evening	Weekday
Pownal	5	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend
Proctor	1	Evening	Weekday
Randolph	7	Morning/Evening	Weekday
Richford	8	Morning/Evening	Weekday
Richmond	2	Morning/Evening	Weekday
Rockingham	2	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend

Town/Location	# courses offered in 2010	Time of day offered	Weekday/Weekend Offerings
Rutland	76	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend
Shaftsbury	6	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend
Shelburne	1	Morning	Weekend
South Burlington	2	Afternoon/Evening	Weekday
South Hero	4	Morning/Evening	Weekdays
Springfield	61	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend
St. Albans	86	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend
St. Johnsbury	42	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend
Stowe	1	Morning	Weekday
Swanton	3	Evening	Weekday
Vergennes	1	Evening	Weekday
Wallingford	1	Evening	Weekday
Waterbury	8	Morning/Evening	Weekdays
Weathersfield	1	Evening	Weekday
Wells	2	Evening	Weekday
Westminster	1	Morning	Weekday
Weston	1	Morning	Weekday
Williston	140	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend
Wilmington	3	Morning/Afternoon	Weekend
Windsor	2	Morning	Weekday
Winooski	5	Morning/Evening	Weekdays/Weekend
Out of State	5	Morning	Weekday
Central Office	17		Most at CCV
	Total = 1281		

Career Pathways	
Resource/Mechanism	*Description*
Qualifications	-Vermont Childcare licensing regulations -Vermont Department of Education public school certification/licensure requirements for teaching, administrative, and support staff positions.
Credentials, Certificates & Degrees	-CDA (Child Development Associate) -VT Program Director Credential -VT Professional Afterschool Credential - VT Afterschool Foundations Certificate - Vermont Child Care Apprenticeship Program - Community College of Vermont (CCV) Child Care Certificate -Associate degree in Early Childhood Education or related field -Bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education or related field -Graduate degree in field related to Early Childhood Education or related field -Doctoral degree in field related to Early Childhood Education or related field -VT Department of Education Teaching License
Career Pathway Resources	-Career Ladder The Career Ladder is a tool for tracking and planning professional growth. Each of the six levels requires: education, a current IPDP and professional experience with children and families. Achieving a level on the Career Ladder provides a financial recognition bonus from CDD; a higher score in the STARS staff qualifications arena; and a child care licensing requirement or a Department of Education teacher licensing requirement. -Career Lattice The Career Lattice shows how the Career Ladder connects with different work settings, serving as a frame of reference that gives general examples of jobs at each level of the Ladder. -NL Career Advising and Career Advising Guide

	-BFIS Credential Account/Resume
Articulation	Articulation Agreements: • Vermont State Colleges (VSC) assessment of prior learning and/or Course Challenge • CLEP exam • Most VSC have articulation agreements with one another for transferring of credits. • Springfield College will accept a CDA for 12 college credits

Data See the Data Inventory for a comprehensive review of ECPDS data sources.	
Data Source	*Description*
BFIS	BFIS is an online data management and information system developed for and operated by CDD. BFIS has several components including Licensing, Program Profiles and Reporting, Subsidy, and Professional Development. PD activities are advertised, verified and tracked for providers within BFIS. A credential account houses specific demographic information, individual training, education and degree, PD, IPDP data, etc. and is intended for tracking one's PD. A statewide Course Calendar (or registry of PD trainings) is available to help EC professionals find trainings and PD opportunities.
NLCDC Instructor Registry	The Instructor Registry is a web-based, searchable database of approved instructors teaching adults about the early childhood and afterschool fields. Instructors apply online and once approved, can choose to be listed in the public Registry.
NLCDC Excel spreadsheets	NLCDC has created data repositories using Excel spreadsheets to track and monitor NLCDC related activities for internal use. NLCDC staff collects data and updates with new data on a monthly basis. - NLCDC tracks data on all credentials and certificates issued through NLCDC -NLCDC Website analytics -NLCDC Outreach activities -NLCDC PD offerings and attendance -# of BFIS Course Calendar Entries -# Course attendance entries -# BFIS Q and C cards mailed
Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) Data	The Office of Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) provides comprehensive data on the services, staff, children, and families served by Head Start and Early Head Start programs nationwide. All grantees/programs are required to submit Program Information Reports for Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The PIR is an important source of descriptive and service data for the Head Start community, their partners, Congress, and for the general public. The PIR data is compiled for use at the federal, regional, state, and local levels. PIR were originally constructed to capture what the different status is for the children enrolled (e.g. Family demographics, individual demographics-income, race, language) and parameters of children enrolled in Head Start. PIR data captures descriptive data on individual children and Head Start staff and aggregates it (nationally, state or region, program/grantee). Individual information cannot be accessed, but individual program data can be accessed. The PIR contains data on staff qualifications, including degree and credential levels. Qualifications are included for various staff, including directors, supervisors, teachers, teacher assistants, home visitors. Basic demographic, workforce and salary data) are collected. Data is entered by Head Start program directors on a continual basis and is due for updating on an annual basis every August. Directors enter data as a way to verify their program meets federal policies and standards.
DOE - Educator Database	This database was implemented to meet *No Child Left Behind* requirements and collects data on individuals who are licensed. Data elements included are not extensive, but include basic tracking of workforce data and PD activities to indicate whether one is current or not. That is, in order to

	relicense, individuals who are licensed and work in the public school system are required to complete x number of college credits or their equivalent depending on which level they are at. Data is included only on licensed providers working in the public school system, so if one is licensed and not in the public school system, they are not in the database. Data elements include whether one's PD status is current, credits, licensure status and basic workforce data. The type of PD is not specified, however. DOE is interested in building the data system for EC providers and linking to BFIS if additional funds were to become available.

Funding	
Resource	*Description*
CDD Professional Development Grants	• CDA Assessment Fee Grant Assists registered providers and licensed center staff with the assessment fee to attain the CDA • CCP Fees Grant Assists registered providers and licensed center staff with the fees to attain the Child Care Professional (CCP) Credential • College Tuition: Individual Assists registered providers and licensed center staff with the cost of college courses related to working with children & families • Individual In-service Grant Assists consultants to regulated child care programs with the costs of training • Peer Review Assessment Fee Assists registered providers and licensed center staff with the peer review assessment fee for VT Department of Education licensure • Regional Collaborative Grant Application For regional agencies that are offering training opportunities to early childhood and afterschool professionals in Vermont • Statewide Collaborative Grant Application For statewide agencies that are offering training opportunities to early childhood and afterschool professionals in Vermont
Recognition Bonuses	CDD provides funding to support recognitions bonuses for providers/programs achieving a star in STARS and to NLCDC for administering bonuses to individuals achieving Career Ladder levels.
VCCICC	Vermont Child Care Industry and Careers Council (VCCICC) contracts six undergraduate courses from the Community College of Vermont. These six courses are tuition- free to staff working in regulated child care, and are offered in different regions of Vermont.
Regional Community Child Care Support Agencies	The 12 regional Community Child Care Support agencies provide free or low cost PD for early childhood and afterschool professionals in their region.
NLCDC Scholarships	Program Director Scholarships for the Human Resources Management course
DOE	PD offerings are available through DOE at no cost.
Head Start Training & TA	PD offerings are available through Head Start at no cost.
Federal	The Administration for Children and Families provides a Child Care Block grant to states; in Vermont this funding is administered by the CDD
Private Funding	Foundation and individual donation supports are provided to the ECPDS.

Vermont Early Childhood Professional Development System Data Inventory

Bright Futures Information System (BFIS) Child Development Division, Vermont Agency for Children and Families Contact: Carole Pomeroy-Emond Job Title: Operations Manager Phone: 802-241-2102 Email: carole.pomeroy@ahs.state.vt.us	
Purpose or mandate for database	BFIS is a comprehensive information system intended for parents and child care providers to get answers to questions about child care, preschool, afterschool care, and the services available to help ensure that high quality child care is available. BFIS assists providers with and stores data on licensing, professional development (includes a course calendar of statewide PD offerings), and qualifications, credentials and PD activities.
Overview of the database as it relates to EC Professional Development.	BFIS is an online data management and information system developed for and operated by CDD. Carole Pomeroy-Emond, Operations Manager at CDD, oversees BFIS. BFIS has several components including Licensing, Program Profiles and Reporting, Subsidy, and Professional Development. Professional development activities are advertised, verified and tracked for providers within BFIS. A credential account houses specific demographic information, individual training, education and degree, PD, IPDP data, etc. and is intended for tracking one's PD. A statewide course calendar (or registry of professional development trainings) is available to help EC professionals find trainings and professional development opportunities. Sponsors of professional development can utilize BFIS to advertise their trainings. Sponsors can send required course training information to Northern Lights Career Development Center to be posted on the BFIS course calendar.
Definition of a case or record in the database	Information is linked throughout the system with the use of unique identifiers – Party ID and Case ID. All programs and individual child care workers that are part of the regulated system (registered or licensed) are included as "parties" in BFIS. The Party ID is the primary key or unique identifier for all programs and child care workers entered into the system. Note that in BFIS, a "provider" refers to a licensed child care program and a "quality and credential" refers to an individual child care worker. Parties are associated with cases within BFIS. Cases can include one's credential account; subsidies received; QRIS/STARS; etc. Note that all cases have IDs as well.
Population included in the database	All child care programs and child care workers in Vermont's regulated system. BFIS includes a course calendar of all PD opportunities offered statewide that go through the NLCDC.
When and how are data collected	Basic demographic data and qualifications and credential data (as required by licensing regulations) are entered by licensing technicians when new licensing applications are received. Licensing technicians update some data elements annually upon receiving annual re-licensure applications. Some data elements are also self-reported and entered by "credential users" (i.e., child care programs or workers) to provide information on work experience, education, credentials, and PD. Some of these data elements are verified by NLCDC upon receipt of necessary documentation. NLCDC enters data on PD activities when able to verify the data. Note that although it is not mandated by a standard policy or procedure that all programs and providers entered into BFIS have a credential account within BFIS, it has become standard practice that all child care workers entered into BFIS are set up with a credential account. No policy exists on the use of one's credential account and keeping it current. NLCDC enters all course calendar data on PD opportunities as trainings are received by NLCDC from sponsors of PD.

Availability of data for analysis and reporting	Some specific queries and reports do exist for retrieving data from BFIS, however existing queries and reports are limited. CDD does not have the resources (e.g. IT staff) to develop and run reports as needed, but do contract specific requests out to Maximus, the original developer of the database, when prioritized as a high-level need. Reports BFIS does have the ability to run include: data on PD trainings (including attendance and where trainings were held, sponsor, area of knowledge; date; course ID; hour type). Note, Sylvia Godin of NLCDC currently does this as needed, but the process is very manual and has limited search capabilities. Basically, one can search in the same manner as searching the public interface of the BFIS Course Calendar; attendance data is available, although in total for a course rather than by course date (one can drill down by visually looking for course date and identifying attendance for the course on that specific date, but this process is manual and cumbersome).

BFIS Provider (Program or Child Care Worker) Account

My Profile
Tab provides demographic data and contact information for programs and child care workers.

Data Elements	Description of Data Element	Notes on Data Element
Name	Last name, First name Party name (program name or child care worker name); text box field	Required to enter for licensing application
Gender	Male or Female ; check box field	Required to enter for licensing application
Citizenship	Text box field	
Date of Birth	Month/Day/Year (xx/xx/xxxx); drop down select month, day, year	Required to enter for licensing application
Marital Status	Text box field	
Race	Text box field	
Ethnicity	Text box field	
Primary Language	Text box field	
Social Security Number		Only collected if being paid through BFIS for child care subsidy
Mailing Address- Street	Text box field	Required to enter for licensing application
Town	Drop down select list	Required to enter for licensing application
State	Drop down select list	Required to enter for licensing application
Zip Code	Text box field	Required to enter for licensing application
Contact Phone #	Text box field	Required to enter for licensing application
Email Address	Text box field	

Resume
This tab is one's "credential account" and provides data on qualifications, credentials and PD activities.
Each Resume or Credential Account has a unique "Quality Case ID" assigned by BFIS that is linked to one's Party ID. BFIS sends an automated report to NLCDC on all new parties with a credential account. NLCDC follows up with new credential account holders by sending a card welcoming them to the system and providing their credential account user login information and BFIS and NLCDC contact information.

Data Elements	Description of Data Element	Notes on Data Element
Summary Subtab		
Resume Date	Month/Day/Year (xx/xx/xxxx);	Resume Date displays the most recent date that the resume was updated (either by licensing technician or account holder).
Achievement Level		
Achievement Date		
Current PD Plan	IPDP (Individual Professional Development Plan). IPDP is self-reported and includes individuals 5 year	Self-reported and not verified. Most of the data is descriptive/qualitative with

	goals, plan date, and mentor. The IPDP is organized by core competency and data fields corresponding to each core competency are text box fields for entering goals, strategies, resources needed and timeline. A drop down select box is available for each core competency status: not started; started; complete.	no discrete or categorical data elements. All child care workers in the regulated system are required to have current IPDPs for licensure and re-licensure, but are not required to have it in BFIS. Most are in paper format. Nancy Sugarman notes that NLCDC is making progress in requesting annual updates to IPDPs be done electronically in BFIS, but not consistent practice at this time.
Current PD Plan> Plan Format	Drop down select list: CDA; NLCDC Core Competencies; VT Dept of Ed 5 standards for educators.	Required field (if entering in BFIS)
Current PD Plan> Plan Date	Month/Day/Year (xx/xx/xxxx);	Required field (if entering in BFIS)
Current PD Plan> Mentor	Text box field	
Transcripts	Link to PDF of scanned file.	Available if user provides copy to NLCDC for uploading. Only administrators can view scanned documents, individual "public" users cannot see documents scanned into their accounts.
Work Experience Subtab Data for this subtab is entered by self-report or by a licensing technician. If self-report, it can be updated or added to as often as desired. Licensing technicians update work experience annually upon receiving re-licensure application. None of the data entered here is verified.		
Position	Drop down select list: Applicant/Provider; Aide; Assistant; Care Provider/Household Member; Cook; Director; Head Teacher; Janitor; Other Care Provider; Other; Substitute; Teacher; Transportation. If other, one is prompted to enter position name in text box field below Position drop down select list.	Required field
Age Groups	Check box select list: Infant/Toddler; Preschool; School Age	
Start Date	Month/Day/Year (xx/xx/xxxx)	Required Field; Found to not always be accurate for several reasons, including when licensing technician enters it because begin and end dates are based on when one's licensing application is renewed.
End Date	Month/Day/Year (xx/xx/xxxx)	Found to not always be accurate for several reasons, including when licensing technician enters it because begin and end dates are based on when one's licensing application is renewed.
Organization Name (or Last Name)	Text box field	Required field
First Name	Text box field	
Street Address	Text box field	
City	Text box field	

State	Drop down select list: All states listed	
Zip Code	Text box field	
Phone Number	Text box field	
Education Subtab Data for this subtab is entered by self-report and NLCDC verifies all data entered when appropriate documentation is submitted to NLCDC. Data can be entered by self-report and left as not verified.		
Degree	Drop down select list: Associate; Bachelor; Certificate; Doctorate; High School or Equivalent; Master; Vocational	Required field
Date Conferred	Month/Day/Year (xx/xx/xxxx)	Required field
Concentration	Drop down select list: Child Development; Child and Family Studies; Early Childhood Education; Early Childhood Special Education; Elementary Ed; Human Development; Human Services; Infant Studies; Infant Child Mental Health; Other; Psychology; Sociology; Social Sciences; Teacher Education	Required field
School Name	Text box field	Required field
School City	Text box field	
School State	Drop down select list: All states listed	
Country	Drop down select list: United States listed as only option	
Verified	Format entered is determined by documentation submitted (Transcript/Diploma/Other). This is a required field when entered by NLCDC and cannot be left blank.	
Bonus	Yes/No/Blank; entered by NLCDC This is a required field when entered by NLCDC.	
Bonus Date	Month/Day/Year (xx/xx/xxxx); entered by NLCDC	
Credentials Subtab Credentials generally refer to achievement of a competency whereas a certificate generally refers to attendance or course completion. Note that the data in the credentials subtab are not always current or are outdated and the level of certificate is not shown. NLCDC tags credential data as verified in BFIS upon receipt of appropriate documentation.		
Type of Credential	Drop down select list: Apprentice; CPR; CCV; CDA; Director Certificate; DOE; Early Child Mental Health Certificate; Infant Toddler Certificate; CCP; School Age Certificate	Required field; it was noted that this field/drop down list is neither comprehensive nor accurate.
Date Obtained	Month/Day/Year (xx/xx/xxxx)	Required field
Expiration	Month/Day/Year (xx/xx/xxxx)	
Verified	This is a required field when entered by NLCDC (Generally Certificate/Diploma/Letter/Other)	
Bonus	Yes/No/Blank; entered by NLCDC This is a required field when entered by NLCDC.	
Bonus Date	Month/Day/Year (xx/xx/xxxx); entered by NLCDC	
Program Participation Subtab This subtab allows for users to document PD activities in progress, but not yet complete. Data is not verified; it is self-reported. It was noted that this subtab is not used often.		
Program Type	Drop down select list: Degree; Credential	
Program Type>Degree	Drop down select list: Associate; Bachelor; Certificate; Doctorate; High School or Equivalent; Master; Vocational	Required field
Program Type>Degree> Concentration	Drop down select list: Child Development; Child and Family Studies; Early Childhood Education; Early Childhood Special Education; Elementary Ed;	Required field

	Human Development; Human Services; Infant Studies; Infant Child Mental Health; Other; Psychology; Sociology; Social Sciences; Teacher Education	
Program Type>Type of Credential	Drop down select list: Apprentice; CPR; CCV; CDA; Director Certificate; DOE; Early Child Mental Health Certificate; Infant Toddler Certificate; CCP; School Age Certificate	Required field; it was noted that this field/drop down list is not comprehensive nor accurate.
School	Text box field	Required field
Start Date	Text box field	
Anticipated Completion Date	Text box field	

Professional Development Subtab

Data in this subtab can be entered by the individual account holder as self report or by NLCDC when NLCDC receives the documentation to verify the data. NLCDC receives attendance lists from trainers of PD activities that go through NLCDC and enters those PD activities into users' credential accounts under the PD subtab upon receipt of the attendance list. For PD activities attended outside of those coordinated through NLCDC (e.g., in another state), individuals can self report and send documentation to NLCDC or send documentation NLCDC and NLCDC will enter and tag the activity as verified.

The data in this subtab is split into two sections. The top section refers to PD activities that occur through sponsors/trainers who have agreements with NLCDC. The bottom section refers to PD activities that occur external to NLCDC or activities that occur through sponsors/trainers who have agreements with NLCDC but individual's attendance is incomplete (example: 2 of 4 hours completed). Training given by instructors is also recorded here (noted as Adult Instruction Given). First Aid certification and completion of Level I Fundamentals course is also noted here because there is no way to record it in the Credentials subtab.

For PD data to be entered that is coordinated through NLCDC, one can select continuing education or PD and is prompted to include the course title (required field). BFIS searches on the course title and provides the related courses for one to select and add. One can also use data entered without selecting a course from the BFIS database. (Note that if a user selects an existing course it will not be displayed in their résumé until it is verified by NLCDC). Data elements include:

Course title	Auto populated from BFIS Course Calendar data or manually entered	
School	Auto populated from BFIS Course Calendar data or manually entered; refers to sponsor	
Date completed	Month/Day/Year (xx/xx/xxxx)	required field
Hours	Auto populated from BFIS Course Calendar data or manually entered	
Hour Type	Auto populated from BFIS Course Calendar data; refers to clock hours or credit hours or manually entered	
Verified	NLCDC enters format of verification as other or remains blank if not yet verified	

Course Calendar

The BFIS Course Calendar is a searchable registry of PD trainings (e.g., workshops, classes, presentations) available throughout the state and coordinated through NL. Sponsors submit information on offerings to NL and NL enters the data in to the registry. Information on course offerings from 2005 to present is included. Note: All 12 Resource Development Specialists are BFIS sponsors/have agreements with NL.

Note: the accuracy of the search findings from the registry depend on the accuracy in which course data are entered and tagged (e.g., tagged with correct core knowledge area, format, etc.).

Data Elements	Description of Data Element	Notes on Data Element
Course ID	Text box field	
Course Title	Text box field	
Sponsor	Text box field	

Area of Knowledge	Drop down select list: Advanced Specialized Care; Basic Specialized Care; Principles of Child/Youth Development; Program Management; Introduction to Licensing; Observation and Assessment; Format: Conference; Families and Communities; Physical and Emotional Development; Social/Emotional Development; Healthy and Safe Environments; Fundamentals Level I; Level II Curriculum; Nutrition; Professionalism; Curriculum and Learning; First Aid; CPR: Format: Online	
Hours	Text box field	
Hour Type	Clock hours or credit hours	
Status		
Location	Drop down select list: all towns/cities in the state are listed to select from.	It was noted that this field is not reliable because often times the data entered on location is in reference to sponsor's location and not the actual location of the training.
Session Start Date	Month/Day/Year (xx/xx/xxxx)	
Session Completion Date	Month/Day/Year (xx/xx/xxxx)	
Start Time		Refers to the time the training starts
Description	Text box field entered by sponsor of training	
Course Contact Name		
Course Contact Phone Number		
Cost		Refers to the cost of attending the training. This information is most often not provided by the sponsor and therefore not included.
Scholarship		
Funding		

Instructor Registry

Northern Lights Career Development Center

Contact: Nancy Sugarman
Job Title: Director
Phone: 802-828-2876
Email: nancy.sugarman@ccv.edu

Purpose or mandate for database	The Instructor Registry is intended to help sponsors of PD find qualified instructors of adults who support the early childhood and afterschool fields. It also recognizes qualified instructors to help develop and promote instructors of adults.
Overview of Registry	The Instructor Registry is a web-based, searchable database of approved instructors teaching adults about the early childhood and afterschool fields. Instructors apply online and once approved, can choose to be listed in the public Registry. There are six types or levels of instructors in the Registry. This system was designed in 2006 and launched in January 2007 by a committee of NLCDC. Updates to the Instructor Qualification System were implemented in October 2009. The Registry lets you search for both early childhood and afterschool instructors. You can search for instructors by region, core knowledge area, curricula taught, instructor level or name.
Definition of a case or record in the database	Individual instructors are entered as a record in the database.

Population included in the database	Instructors included in the Instructor Registry are those that apply and are vetted through the Instructor Qualification System. The Instructor Qualification System uses an approval process that identifies instructors who have met established criteria for high quality instruction of adults. Instructors are qualified by the system at 1 of 6 levels based on education and instruction experience.
When and how are data collected	Instructor data are collected during the application process; by approved instructors in the registry updating their information at any time; and by instructors being required to update their application every three years. All data in the registry are verified by NLCDC.
Availability of data for analysis and reporting	Data is accessible and reportable by the public interface of the registry.
Search fields	One can search the Instructor Registry by region (county); Knowledge area; NLCDC Instructor Level; Curricula; and Last Name.
Note: All data for new instructors are added and verified by NLCDC. Updates to instructor information are verified by NLCDC. The quality of the data is good: reliable, complete and accurate.	

Data Elements	Description of Data Element	Notes on Data Element
Contact Information	Name, address, phone number and email	The Registry is searchable by last name.
Instructor Level	Instructor Level: Affiliate I; Affiliate II; Certified; Master; Specialist I; Specialist II	The Registry is searchable by instructor level.
Education	Degrees and instruction received are listed	
Work Experience	Includes text on work and instructional experience, experience length and professional references.	
Additional Information	Information on instructor experiences, learning objectives, core knowledge areas	The Registry is searchable by knowledge area
Logistics	Rate, home region, regions covered	The Registry is searchable by region.

Northern Lights Career Development Center Excel Spreadsheets

Contact: Nancy Sugarman
Job Title: Director
Phone: 802-828-2876
Email: nancy.sugarman@ccv.edu

NLCDC has created data repositories using Excel spreadsheets to track and monitor NLCDC related activities for internal use. NLCDC staff collects data and updates with new data on a monthly basis. Data is used for semi-annual reports to Jan Walker, Workforce Development and Quality Enhancement at CDD. Data has been tracked for about 5 years.

Credentials and Certificates

NLCDC tracks data on all credentials and certificates issued through NLCDC:

- # credentials issued (total and by type of credential, date on certificate and numbers tracked over the past 4 years)
- # certificates issued (total and by type of certificate, such as career ladder level 1, Career Ladder level II, etc.; date on certificate; and numbers tracked over the past 4 years)
- Time (in days) from application to credential creation; reasons for any delays
- Region (AHS district) of applicant
- Those who have earned more than one certificate/credential (and type)

NLCDC Website Analytics

- # Unique visitors to NLCDC website
- Total Website Hits/year over past 3 years
- Where visitors go on NLCDC Website from the NLCDC home page

NLCDC Outreach Activities

- # and type of presentations, displays, etc
- Outreach to organizations or groups and different state-wide meetings staff regularly attend

PD Trainings Offered (coordinated through NLCDC)

- Courses offered (by title or level)
- Attendance of Courses (can look at # enrolled and # completed in BFIS)

Instructor Registry

- # of new Instructors in Registry and approved at which level, date application entered into system, date approved
- Who has a supporting instructor; who they are

Miscellaneous NLCDC Activities

- # of BFIS Course Calendar Entries
- # Course attendance entries
- # BFIS Q and C cards mailed

Focus Group Guide

Good evening! Thank you for meeting with us today to talk about professional development as it relates to early childhood practitioners. My name is Fonda Kingsley and I will facilitate this evening's discussion. And, this is my colleague, Naomi Clemmons, who will be taking notes while we talk. The reason why we are having these discussions with you is that Building Bright Futures of Vermont and Vermont's Child Development Division have initiated an evaluation of Vermont's early childhood professional development system and would like to better understand:

1. What you know about Vermont's Early Childhood Professional Development System
2. How you find out about professional development offerings
3. What professional development offerings you participate in and why
4. Whether you use specific resources offered by the system to support your professional growth and what your experiences are using these resources

As users of the early childhood professional development system, each of you offers a valuable and unique perspective given your early childhood professional development needs and experiences. The more we can learn about your perspectives and experiences seeking and obtaining professional development the more we can do to make sure that the early childhood professional development resources, services and offerings available are meeting people's needs.

We have allocated one and one half hour for this focus group. I am going to ask a few questions, and we'd like you to respond and discuss. All of the information that you share with me will be kept anonymous. Comments will not be linked back to individuals in the group; only thematic data will be communicated. Although we will be taking notes during the discussion, we would also like to tape record the conversation in order to make sure that our notes accurately capture what you are saying. However, if any of you do not feel comfortable having the tape recorder on, we will not use it. Now, when I turn on the tape recorder, I am going to ask if there are any objections to this session being recorded. If you do not want this session recorded let me know and we will turn it off.

We hope you feel comfortable saying whatever you think or feel and we want to make sure that everyone who wants to say something gets a chance to talk today. So, we ask that you respect what others are saying; take turns talking; and, what is said in this room stays in the room— what is said needs to be kept confidential. Before we begin, do you have any questions?

I. Knowledge and Awareness of Vermont's EC Professional Development System

1. Each of you are providers of early childhood care and have annual professional development requirements that are part of the state licensing criteria. Can you tell me about your understanding of Vermont's Early Childhood Professional Development System?
    a. Are you aware of the system?
    b. What resources and services are available to you in Vermont for finding and supporting your PD?

2. Have you used the Northern Lights Career Development Center website to obtain information on PD?
    a. For those of you that have used the website, what information do you look for on the website?
    b. For those of you that have not used the website, can you talk about why you haven't used this website?

3. How easy or difficult it is for you to find the information you need on professional development?
    a. Can you tell me how you learn about professional development opportunities?
    b. For those of you that use the Bright Futures Information System Course Calendar, can you talk about how frequently you use the Course Calendar to find out about professional development opportunities?
    c. What other resources do you use to find out about professional development opportunities?
    d. What might be done to better communicate the system offerings and professional development opportunities?

II. Accessing Professional Development Offerings

Now I'd like to spend some time talking about how accessible the offerings of the Professional Development System are to you. I'd like to understand accessibility in terms of where and when offerings are available, how offerings are delivered, the affordability of the offerings and whether the offerings meet your professional development needs.

To start, I'd like to read items from a list. I'd like for each of you to select the top 5 factors that you consider most important when choosing to participate in a professional development opportunity.

- Topic
- Core competency area
- Content level (e.g., NL career ladder level)
- # of clock hours or credit hours
- Recommendation of supervisor
- Day of the week and time of day it is scheduled
- Location of training
- Instructor
- Sponsor organization
- Cost
- Format of delivery (e.g., online, conference, workshop, lecture, etc.)
- Are there any other factors you consider?

4. Based on the factors you noted as most important in your decision-making, let's spend some time talking about why these are important to you. Why is *[factor; facilitator will go through up to top 5 factors deemed most important]* important when your determining whether to participate in a professional development opportunity.

5. Similarly, I'd like to understand why the factors you didn't choose as important do not, in general, weigh into your decision-making. Can you talk about why *[x factor]* is ranked least important to you when considering whether to participate in a professional development opportunity?

III. Utilizing the System Resources to Support Professional Growth

Lastly, I'd like to spend some time talking about what components of the professional development system you use or do not use and why. Specifically, I'd like to ask you about your experiences using the Vermont Early Childhood Career Ladder and your BFIS credential account.

6. Are you aware of the Career Ladder? For those that are aware of the Career Ladder, can you tell me whether you found it easy or difficult to understand and use and explain why?
    a. Has the career ladder been a helpful guide for you when thinking about professional growth in terms of career planning and professional development activities?

7. Are you aware of having a credential account in the Bright Futures Information System? For those that are aware, can you talk about whether the credential account has been useful or helpful to you and if so, how?
    a. What are the primary purposes you use your credential account for?
    b. For those that don't use their credential account, can you talk about why you don't and what would encourage you to use your credential account?

8. I'd like to understand whether the system is supportive of your professional growth. Thinking of the resources and professional development offerings of the system can you talk about how the system has supported you in attaining your professional development needs, your educational goals, and your career goals?
    a. How has the system enabled your movement along the career ladder?

9. Thinking about the overall quality of the system, what do you see as the most important strengths of the system? What do you see as the most important challenges of the system?

10. Lastly, do you have any final thoughts you'd like to share about the professional development system or suggestions for improving the system to better meet your needs?

Thank you all for your time and thoughtful discussion. Please take a moment to complete the Participant Data Sheet before you leave. I also have informational brochures on the NL/BFIS available, which include contact information should you have additional questions about the Early Childhood Professional Development System and its offerings.

Key Informant Interview Guide: Vermont

Introduction: Good [morning/afternoon]. I'm Fonda Kingsley from JSI Research and Training, Inc. I am working with the Building Bright Futures Council and Vermont's Child Development Division to provide an initial evaluation of the offerings of Vermont's Early Childhood Professional Development System. This evaluation will be used to inform decision-making about improvements to and expansion of the system, with the goal of developing an integrated and aligned system that is supportive of professional growth and cross-sector articulation of qualifications, credentials and professional development activities. As part of this evaluation, we'd like to understand the strengths and challenges of the ECPDS from stakeholders of the system such as early childhood administrators, program directors and managers, and policymakers. To do that, we are conducting interviews with people such as you. The themes that emerge from the interviews will be used to develop recommendations for improvements to the system and to guide future evaluations of the system. While we will use the themes from the interviews, the information you share will be kept anonymous. Our final report will describe the general comments and themes that emerge during our conversations with interviewees.

There is series of questions that I'd like to ask in order to gain insight into your views and experiences with Vermont's Early Childhood Professional Development System. This interview process will take about 30-60 minutes. Before I begin, do you have any questions you'd like to ask us about the evaluation project or JSI?

1. To start, how would you describe Vermont's Early Childhood Professional Development System?

2. What do you feel are the main strengths and challenges of the Early Childhood Professional Development System?
    a. What are your suggestions for improving the system?

3. I'd like to better understand the advisory structure of the System. Are you familiar with the advisory structure or body of Vermont's Early Childhood Professional Development System and if so, can you describe it? *[If no, skip to question 3]*
    a. Can you talk about whether roles and responsibilities are clearly defined or are in need of better definition?
    b. What are your thoughts on the effectiveness of the leadership guiding, implementing and operationalizing the plans and policies of the system?
    c. Can you talk about the flow of information throughout the system? How are plans, policies, goals, etc communicated throughout the system and/or to representatives of the system?
    d. Are their groups or representatives from other groups that you feel should be at the table or be part of the advisory structure of the Early Childhood Professional Development System and if so, who would they be (e.g., higher ed, head start, public education)?

4. Thinking about how this system and parts of the system are funded, can you talk about how the Early Childhood Professional Development System is financially supported?
    a. What are the current funding sources for the system?
    b. Is the system well-funded or poorly-funded (are there parts that are well funded) and in what ways would additional funds improve the system?
    c. Can you talk about whether the offerings of the system are financially supported (e.g. Northern Lights Career Development Center; BFIS; professional development opportunities)?
    d. Where would you direct additional funds for the system if available?

5. Can you talk about alignment between the Vermont Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies with the professional development standards and guidelines of other related sectors, such as VT Department of Education and the VT licensing regulations for child care providers?
    a. Do the core knowledge areas and competencies apply across all early childhood/education sectors (i.e., child care, Head Start, public education)?
    b. Can you describe how the Vermont Early Childhood Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies were developed?
    c. Who were the stakeholders involved, how were they selected and how involved were they in the process?

6. What is the process for determining which professional development opportunities are offered through the system? *[Considering the interviewees relevant context, role, and responsibility (e.g. Head Start, Public School, Home)]*
    a. How does the system ensure that offerings available match Vermont Early Childhood Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies?
    b. How well do the opportunities offered cover the various core knowledge areas & core competencies?
    c. Can you talk about whether professional development opportunities are offered at various levels (e.g.: beginning, intermediate, advanced)?
    d. Is there a mechanism in place to ensure that the professional development opportunities offered are supportive of pathways leading to qualifications, degrees, and credentials and if so can you describe this mechanism or process?

7. What policies are in place to support those in the early care and education field advance to other roles or achieve additional qualifications and credentials?
    a. Can you talk about whether career pathways for early childhood professionals are clearly outlined in the system and recognized by other sectors?
    b. How do early childhood providers find out about the variety of career opportunities and pathways in the early care and education field?
    c. What resources are available to assist early childhood providers move to other roles or achieve additional qualifications and credentials in a seamless fashion?
    d. What articulation agreements are in place to support professional growth of the early childhood providers in Vermont?
    e. What articulation agreements would you like to see implemented?

8. Moving now to data and the Bright Futures Information System, can you describe your experience and perspective with this database/information system?
    a. What policies are in place to guide the collection, sharing and dissemination of the data collected in BFIS that is related to the early childhood workforce and professional development?
    b. What are the main strengths of this information system?
    c. What are the main weaknesses of this information system?
    d. What would you like to see done to improve capacity and usability of the information system?

9. How does the system ensure quality?
    a. What quality assurance mechanisms are in place within the system to ensure the resources and offerings of the system are aligned with professional standards, supportive of professional growth and meeting the professional development needs of the early childhood workforce?
    b. How does the system ensure accountability?
    c. How is the content of professional development offerings evaluated?

10. Lastly, do you have any final thoughts you'd like to share about the system?
    a. Based on all you've talked about, what recommendations would you put forth to improve the system?

Key Informant Interview Guide: Connecticut Charts-A-Course

1. To start, how would you describe Connecticut's ECPDS, the Connecticut Charts-A-Course?

2. What do you feel are the main strengths and challenges of the Charts-A-Course ECPDS?
    a. What are your suggestions for improving the system?

3. I'd like to better understand the governance/advisory structure of your state's ECPDS. Can you describe the advisory structure or body of the ECPDS?
    a. Can you talk about whether roles and responsibilities are clearly defined or are in need of better definition?
    b. What are your thoughts on the effectiveness of the leadership guiding, implementing and operationalizing the plans and policies of the system?
    c. Can you talk about the flow of information throughout the system? How are plans, policies, goals, etc. communicated throughout the system and/or to representatives of the system?
    d. Are their groups or representatives from other groups that you feel should be at the table or be part of the advisory structure of the ECPDS and if so, who would they be (e.g., higher ed, head start, public education)?

4. Thinking about how this system and parts of the system are funded, can you talk about how the ECPDS is financially supported?
    a. What are the current funding sources for the system?
    b. Can you talk about whether the offerings of the system are financially supported (e.g. professional development trainings, the professional development registry, funding incentives for providers or early childhood, etc.)
    c. Where would you direct additional funds for the system if available?

5. Are the CT Charts-A-Course core knowledge areas aligned with other standards set for early childhood care and education? If so, was alignment or is alignment ensured by the system?

6. What is the process for determining which professional development trainings/opportunities are offered through the system?
    a. How does the system ensure that offerings available match Core Knowledge Areas?
    b. Are the PD offerings of the system adequate to meet the needs of all early childhood providers throughout Connecticut?
    c. Can you talk about whether professional development opportunities are offered at various levels (e.g.: beginning, intermediate, advanced)?

7. Can you talk about whether career pathways for early childhood professionals are clearly outlined in the system and recognized by other sectors?
    a. How do early childhood providers find out about the variety of careers and career pathways in the early care and education field though the Charts-A-Course system?
    b. What resources are available in the ECPDS to assist early childhood providers move to other roles or achieve additional qualifications and credentials in a seamless fashion?
    c. What articulation agreements are in place to support professional growth of the early childhood providers in Connecticut?
    d. What articulation agreements would you like to see implemented?

8. Can you describe your state's ECPDS registry or data collection system?
    a. What data are collected? Who enters the data? Is the data verified?
    b. What policies are in place to guide the collection, sharing and dissemination of the data collected by the system?
    c. Is participation in the registry voluntary or mandatory? If voluntary, what policies are in place to incentivize EC professionals to participate in the registry?
    d. What are the main strengths of this information system?
    e. What are the main weaknesses of this information system?

9. What recommendations and/or lessons learned would you share with other state's working to build a coordinated, integrated and aligned ECPDS?

Key Informant Interview Guide: The Nevada Registry

1. To start, how would you describe Nevada's ECPDS, The Nevada Registry?

2. What are the main strengths and challenges of The Nevada Registry ECPDS?
    a. What are your suggestions for improving the system?

3. I'd like to better understand the governance/advisory structure of your state's ECPDS. Can you describe the advisory structure or body of the ECPDS?
    a. Can you talk about whether roles and responsibilities are clearly defined or are in need of better definition?
    b. What are your thoughts on the effectiveness of the leadership guiding, implementing and operationalizing the plans and policies of the system?
    c. Can you talk about the flow of information throughout the system? How are plans, policies, goals, etc. communicated throughout the system and/or to representatives of the system.
    d. Are their groups or representatives from other groups that you feel should be at the table or be part of the advisory structure of the ECPDS and if so, who would they be (e.g., higher ed, head start, public education)?

4. Thinking about how this system and parts of the system are funded, can you talk about how the ECPDS is financially supported?
    a. What are the current funding sources for the system?
    b. Can you talk about whether the offerings of the system are financially supported (e.g. professional development trainings, the professional development registry, funding incentives for providers or early childhood, etc.?
    c. Where would you direct additional funds for the system if available?

5. Are Nevada's core knowledge areas and core competencies aligned with other standards set for early childhood care and education in Nevada? If so, how is alignment ensured by the system?

6. What is the process for determining which professional development trainings/opportunities are offered through the system?
    a. How does the system ensure that offerings available match Core Knowledge Areas?
    b. Are the PD offerings of the system adequate to meet the needs of all early childhood providers throughout Nevada?
    c. Can you talk about whether professional development opportunities are offered at various levels (e.g.: beginning, intermediate, advanced)?

7. Can you talk about whether career pathways for early childhood professionals are clearly outlined in the system and recognized by other sectors?
    a. How do early childhood providers find out about the variety of careers and career pathways in the early care and education field though the Nevada Registry?
    b. What resources are available in the ECPDS to assist early childhood providers move to other roles or achieve additional qualifications and credentials in a seamless fashion?
    c. What articulation agreements are in place to support professional growth of the early childhood providers in Nevada?
    d. What articulation agreements would you like to see implemented?

8. Can you describe your state's ECPDS registry or data collection system?
    a. What data are collected? Who enters the data? Is the data verified?
    b. What policies are in place to guide the collection, sharing and dissemination of the data collected by the system?
    c. Is participation in the registry voluntary or mandatory? If voluntary, what policies are in place to incentivize EC professionals to participate in the registry?
    d. What are the main strengths of this information system?
    e. What are the main weaknesses of this information system?

9. What recommendations and/or lessons learned would you share with other state's working to build a coordinated, integrated and aligned ECPDS?