



Colorful star

The Right Stuff

Resources to Help Realize the Promise of Each Vermont Child



Featured Topic: Helping Families to Discover and Use the Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS)

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*The **Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS)** can be a terrific tool for learning about and supporting sequences of learning and development in young children, from birth through 3rd Grade. By sharing the VELS with family members, educators, specialists, and administrators can engage those partners in the shared work of supporting each and every child's intellectual, physical, creative, and social-emotional development.*

This issue of The Right Stuff has two kind of resources. On this page you'll find examples of free resources families can use to learn more about how to support their child in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), in conjunction with the VELS. On page two, you'll find a formatted document, suitable for copying and distribution, with ideas for families about how they can use the VELS to support their child. We hope families will find these resources useful and that professionals will share them widely.

Let's Talk, Read and Sing about STEM! (infants and toddlers)

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/talk-read-sing/stem-toolkit-infant-toddler-teachers.pdf>

*By talking, reading, singing, playing, signing, or using other ways to communicate – whatever works best for your infants and toddlers – you can help them purposefully develop STEM skills. For example, count a baby's toes, describe the changing leaves with children, or talk with a toddler as you play with blocks together! Visit the **Mathematics section of the VELS** (page 88) to see the skills we might expect for infants, younger toddlers, and older toddlers. You can also visit the **Science section of the VELS** (page 103) to get similar information about how knowledge of physical science, life science, and engineering evolve. This can be a great way to anticipate skills that children might be expected to develop next.*

Making Math a Family Thing (preschoolers)

<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/18/01/making-math-family-thing>

This web article offers strategies for families and teachers on closing the math gap between home and school. Use the VELS to see which of these resources might be appropriate for the age of your child. Check out the resources at the end, some of which are available in Spanish.

STEM Family Projects (Kindergarten through 3rd Grade) <https://www.cabarrus.k12.nc.us/Page/58553>

*Every month, R. Brown McAlister Elementary School in Concord, North Carolina shares a new **STEM Family Project**, providing a fun way for children and families to work on math, science, and other skills together. For example, the project for the month of August 2018 is to "create a model of a building or a shelter." By visiting the **VELS website** (<http://education.vermont.gov/documents/early-education-early-learning-standards>), families could learn about developmentally appropriate parameters for the project. For example, they would discover that we might expect a beginning first grader to develop a simple sketch for a structure (page 112), while we might expect an older third grader to come up with several possibilities. NOTE: Some Vermont public libraries offer STEM family nights. Check to see if this is available in your community.*

The Right Stuff is a free, one-way listserv that is distributed monthly. Each issue features resources for supporting the learning and development of young children who are culturally, linguistically, and individually diverse, birth to Grade 3, and their families. All resources are readily available and free. **The Right Stuff** may be freely shared or reproduced. Past issues are available at <http://fpg.unc.edu/presentations/right-stuff>

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The Vermont Early Learning Standards

A Resource for Families

A family is a child's first and most important teacher, advocate, and nurturer. An essential resource in ensuring the learning and development of children from birth through Grade 3 is the Vermont Early Learning Standards or VELs. Here are some ideas about how you can use the VELs to ensure that your child has strong relationships, is healthy, and is prepared for school.

The VELs is . . .

- Vermont's guide to help families and teachers understand how young children birth through age eight learn, grow and develop
- A guide to help you know what children may be expected to know and do at different ages
- A tool to help you understand what comes next in each area (or domain) of development
- A powerful resource to make sure that families and professionals can help realize Vermont's commitment to ensure that all the state's children grow up happy, healthy and ready for a lifetime of learning (Vermont's Promise)

The VELs can . . .

- Make you familiar with what your child is learning in child care, preschool, or Grades K-3
- Offer ideas for how to support your child's learning and development at home and in the community
- Help you understand what experiences may be available at home, in school and in the community to help prepare your child for school and life
- Support the development of partnerships with your child's teachers about your child's learning, growth and development
- Give you ideas about how play can be a fun way to help your child learn

You'll find the VELs online at <http://education.vermont.gov/documents/early-education-early-learning-standards> and at <http://vels.education.vermont.gov/>