# Supporting Each and Every Young Child and Family’s Full and Equitable Participation: Guiding Principles

# BASIC QUESTIONS

**Why does Vermont need a set of Guiding Principles?**

The explicit language of the Guiding Principles will be used to:

* Create high expectations for each and every child to reach his or her full potential;
* Influence priorities for professional development, training and technical assistance;
* Shape responsive policies and guidance;
* Guide collection of data that will enable Vermont to see how well each child is faring;
* Shape the daily work of professionals and administrators with each child and family; and
* Build collaboration and strengthen connections across agencies and sectors

**How do the Guiding Principles align with and reflect current state and national perspectives and priorities?**

The words and concepts of the Guiding Principles have been developed to:

* Incorporate, build on, complement, and extend early childhood work that is foundational in Vermont (e.g., the Vermont Early Learning Standards or VELS, Vermont’s Early Childhood Action Plan);
* Be consistent with both state and federal mandates (e.g., section 619 of IDEA); and
* Move beyond the inclusion of children with disabilities to offer explicit, intentional, and actionable statements related to supporting the full potential of each and every child and their family.

**How can the Guiding Principles become a widely known and used resource across settings, agencies, sectors, and organizations?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PROACTIVE STRATEGIES AND TOOLS FOR SUPPORTING USE OF THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES** | |
| **Incorporate in higher education accreditation standards**    **Work with private and public funders to incorporate the Guiding Principles**   * Require that applicants describe how they will use the Guiding Principles as a competition requirement * Use a Guiding Principles checklist in grant monitoring   **Incorporate the Guiding Principles in the BBF audit**  **Develop an endorsement process**   * Identify criteria for endorsement, e.g., commitment to action steps for using the Guiding Principles on an ongoing basis * Engage organizations, programs, and entities * Share information about the groups that have endorsed the Guiding Principles   **Collect and share examples of how agencies, programs, and individuals use the Guiding Principles, so others may benefit**  **Integrate an emphasis on the Guiding Principles in ongoing conversations. For example, there is an Early MTSS/VELS group developing questions for leadership teams that pertain to the adoption of the VELS in programs. Why not incorporate an emphasis on the Guiding Principles?**  **Provide training to increase the responsiveness of community helpers to the circumstances of young children and their families**   * Example: school resource officer talked about putting “bad guys in jail” in a classroom in which young children had incarcerated family members   **Use the Guiding Principles to examine data collection priorities. What data are being collected about which children? How are data being used to support the full participation of each and every child?**  **Provide laminated copies of the Guiding Principles to have on the table during meetings** | **Develop conversation guides to support the use of the Guiding Principles**   * Could develop a set of guiding questions to help dive deeper into each Principle * Provide examples and resources to support thinking about each question   **Create tools to help individuals and organizations learn about and understand the ways in which children and families are unique**   * Topical discussion guides and fact sheets (e.g., on dual language learners, race, inclusion) * Children’s books to promote positive stories and images of children in different circumstances   **Create tools to help individuals and organizations learn about and understand the factors that contribute to each child’s learning and development**   * Topical discussion guides and fact sheets on connections between health and education, looking across domains at the whole child, learning about families and communities   **Use the Guiding Principles to support mandated diversity conversations in programs**   * Develop sample agendas, videos, discussion questions, and/or community experiences   **Develop companion checklists, based on the Guiding Principles, for families and professionals**   * Have each group complete the checklists separately. Programs could then compare the answers and address the discrepancies in improvement plans.   **Develop hiring process guidelines using the Guiding Principles**   * Use to promote anti-bias hiring * Use to support improvements in position descriptions and rating systems |

**FROM THE CRITICAL CONVERSATION: How could Vermont’s Guiding Principles be used . . .**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| . . . by early childhood programs? | * As a lens for looking at many program components (e.g., supervision) * To inform mentoring practices * For self-evaluation – staff, program, individual, family satisfaction * For self-reflection * Include in enrollment materials, staff handbook, program handbook, and family handbook * To define needs for training and professional development * To build bridges with other initiatives that have embraced the Guiding Principles * To establish a set of shared beliefs * To create a feedback loop for families * To provide a framework for all services (i.e., shared decision making, funding, priorities) * To ensure that individual needs are being met (as opposed to one size fits all) * To support the development of Individual Professional Development Plans (IPDP), as well as program development * To support smooth transitions from Part C to Part B |
| . . . by families? | * Connect families with their early childhood programs * Prioritize principles that are most important to them * Provide a common language around full participation * Help families advocate for better funding with legislature and local sources (e.g., LA tax incentive to small businesses for early childhood education purposes) * Common values would support smoother transitions from Part C → Part B →Kindergarten * List provided to families from the educator perspective * Informational for families re: what they should expect * Keep providers accountable to the principles * Hold state agencies and programs accountable with Guiding Principles * Lead them to reach out for services * Help them ask questions of providers |
| . . . to shape responsive policies and guidance? | * Use as a filter * Reactive legislation implementation – use as a lens * Use during cross-sector work to guide collaboration and development of products * Use to review current systems and structures to ensure family engagement as policies and programs are developed * Use to filter data collection – policy methodology, questions, implementation * Use for setting budgeting priorities * Use to guide hiring/electing of leaders who represent diverse identities and communities * Incorporate in STARS and professional development system * Embed in systems work → policies and procedures * Use to prioritize initiatives and professional development * Use in grant and contract application process to oblige applicants to incorporate in their scope of work and measures of accountability * To support transitions from Part C to Part B |

**How could Vermont’s Guiding Principles be used . . .**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| . . . to build collaboration and strengthen connections across agencies and sectors? | * Consistent values and language would promote transitions between early intervention and early childhood special education services * Tool to bring new partners to regional tables * Inform content of Building Bright Future Regional Plans * Support Head Start-LEA PreK partnerships * Bridge to partner for the provision of comprehensive services * Support for smooth transitions from Part C to Part B * Informs Interagency Agreement for serving children with disabilities * Serves as a common language between agencies and between units within agencies * Benefits families as they will find a common language used by different entities |
| . . . to support professional development (PD), training, and technical assistance? | * Embed in early childhood competencies for educators, directors, and instructors * Peer review/licensure * Conversations with higher education to prepare future educators * Evaluation tool – core knowledge * Add to IPDP forms the way core knowledge of CDA goals are * Break down into dispositions and skills to provide direct training * Flesh out how the Guiding Principles translate into effective practice * Include them in the MATCH * Prepare professionals in multiple systems to support smooth transitions (e.g., from Part C to Part B) * Support all levels – program directors, administrators, etc. Implementation will require reaching out to all levels. * Use to inform policy development (e.g., training required for program development) * Buy-in from all levels: top-down and bottom-up. From community through relationships. * Accountability of credibility (capital A is non-negotiable) * Embed in professional development that is already in place instead of creating more or different PD * Develop and share resources that PD providers can use to integrate new content and concepts in existing teaching and training * Integrate in teacher standards * Use them in assessment of programs and systems * Provide PD to PD providers (faculty, trainers, coaches, mentors, etc.) on using the Guiding Principles * More opportunities for people in varied disciplines to come together to articulate the practices that support implementation of the Guiding Principles * Explore how these Guiding Principles mesh with other guiding principles in the field (e.g., Guiding Principles of the Vermont State Literacy Plan ([**http://www.vriuvm.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Section-I-Guiding-Principles.pdf**](http://www.vriuvm.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Section-I-Guiding-Principles.pdf)) * Review with the Vermont Professional Development Guiding Principles which also have an organizational self-assessment leading to an action plan ([**http://northernlightscdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/about-principlesworkguidance.pdf**](http://northernlightscdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/about-principlesworkguidance.pdf)) |