



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CATALOGUE

2026-2027



Vermont
Afterschool



Vermont Afterschool Membership



Are You a Member?

When you become a member of Vermont Afterschool (VTA), you are supporting critical services provided by VTA to third-space programs and professionals throughout Vermont, while also further enhancing the quality of these programs, promoting the benefits of universal afterschool, and empowering the state's youth. Members receive:

VTA Annual Conference discount • Extra Annual Conference raffle tickets • Membership to National Afterschool Association • Digital subscription to NAA's *AfterSchool Today* magazine • Discount on NAA program materials and supplies • Recognition in VTA's annual report

Become a Member Today!

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ROOTED IN TRUST

Cultivating Relationships in Afterschool

Oct. 22 & 23, 2026
Hotel Champlain, Burlington

2026 Vermont Afterschool Annual Conference

Vermont Afterschool's 17th Annual Conference returns for another 2-day affair! **Thursday will feature a half-day, professional development deep-dive with Marla Goldstein of Vermont Afterschool entitled "Leaders to Staff: Relationships, Planning, and Presence."** (*The content of this Thursday deep dive is geared toward directors or leaders in the afterschool space and their connection with staff they support.*)

Friday will once again bring together over 200 of Vermont's out-of-school time directors, staff, educators, and partners for a full day of learning, a keynote from Marissa Badgley from Reloveution, networking, and celebration of the important work you do for Vermont's children, youth, and families.

Dates: October 22 (12:45 PM–5:00 PM) and October 23 (8:00 AM–5:00 PM)

Location: Hotel Champlain, Burlington, VT

Cost: The registration cost for the Thursday Deep Dive is \$75. Early bird registration (before September 11) for the Friday full-day conference is \$145/person for members, \$170/person for non-members. After September 11, rates increase to \$170/person for members, \$195/person for non-members.

Registration: vermontafterschool.org/conference/

Career Pathways

Vermont's afterschool and youth work field is dynamic and filled with passionate, caring, and innovative individuals who enter the field through a variety of avenues. Whether you are new to the field, an emerging leader, or a veteran looking for new opportunities, there are many pathways to help you grow your skills and make this your career. This Career Pathways section outlines these different pathways and indicates the type(s) of professional each pathway is geared toward.

	Aide
	Staff
	Site Coordinator
	Program Admin
	Director

AFTERSCHOOL ESSENTIALS



Afterschool Essentials is an accelerated half-year program that Vermont Afterschool offers **FREE for staff working in licensed afterschool and child care programs**. It is designed to meet the needs of the professional with limited experience in the afterschool setting. This program covers a full range of topics, including school-age child development, program development, health and safety issues, partnerships with families, inclusion, and cultural diversity.

The program content will include five meetings with the cohort, 11 online learning modules with the Youth Development Institute, self-study, and consultation with a coach.

Spring 2027 Dates:

- Wednesday, March 3, 2027 (9:00 AM–12:00 PM) | *Understanding the Afterschool Pathways* | IN PERSON
- Wednesday, March 24, 2027 (10:00 AM–12:00 AM) | *Introduction to Licensing* | Virtual
- Wednesday, April 14, 2027 (10:00 AM–4:00 PM) | *Basic Specialized Care* | Virtual
- Wednesday, May 12, 2027 (10:00 AM–12:00 PM) | *Culturally Responsive Afterschool Practices* | Virtual
- Wednesday, June 2, 2027 (10:00 AM–12:00 PM) | *Professionalism and Creating Effective IPDPs* | Virtual

Fall 2027 Dates: TBD

Cost: FREE for staff working in licensed afterschool and child care programs.

Registration: Contact Ben Ardel (ben@vermontafterschool.org) to register. Spring registration opens in December, Fall registration opens in July. Space is limited. Register early.

Note: Those who complete the full course will also be eligible for a \$300 bonus from CDD and the Afterschool Foundations Certificate.

ONLINE COLLEGE COURSES



Vermont Afterschool partners with the Child Development Division (CDD) to offer FREE 3-credit, online courses for afterschool professionals through the Community College of Vermont (CCV). This is a tuition-free opportunity for those who are currently working in a licensed afterschool and child care program.

FALL 2026: Introduction to Afterschool Education (EDU 1320)

SPRING 2027: Afterschool Education & Development of the School-Age Child (EDU 2065)

Social-Emotional Development in Children Ages 5–18 (EDU 2145)

Curriculum & Environment Development in Afterschool & Youth Programs (EDU 2185)

Dates: Follows CCV semester schedule; meets online weekly

Cost: FREE for staff working in licensed programs. Space is limited.

Location: Virtual

Registration: Contact Ben Ardel (ben@vermontafterschool.org) to register.



MICRO-CREDENTIALS

SEL (Social-Emotional Learning)



Foundations and Applications of SEL

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) has taken schools, communities, and parents/caregivers by storm the past few years for good reason: SEL supports academic achievement, improves student well-being, builds skills that are key to future readiness, and improves school climate and safety. This is an introductory level 6-part, 18-hour professional development series for school-based afterschool professionals who are seeking a more expansive lens of the SEL core competencies and a greater understanding of how to apply these principles to your own work.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand and effectively apply the five core competencies of social emotional learning identified by the Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL).
- Practice peer facilitation and connect each of the five core competencies to key settings in your community
- Develop a deeper understanding of how to apply SEL principles to your own work through a self-guided project-based learning experience

Dates:

- Session 1: October 2, 2026 (9:00 AM–12:00 PM) | in-person at our South Burlington office
- Session 2: November 6, 2026 (9:00 AM–12:00 PM) | in-person at our South Burlington office
- Session 3: December 4, 2026 (9:00 AM–12:00 PM) | in-person at our South Burlington office
- Session 4: January 8, 2027 (9:00 AM–12:00 PM) | in-person at our South Burlington office
- Session 5: February 5, 2027 (9:00 AM–12:00 PM) | in-person at our South Burlington office
- Session 6: April 2, 2027 (9:00 AM –12:00 PM) | in-person at our South Burlington office

Cost: FREE

Registration: vermontafterschool.org/foundations-and-applications-of-sel/

Note: Participants who successfully complete the SEL Microcredential are eligible to receive a \$300 bonus.

MICRO-CREDENTIALS (cont.)

L.E.A.D. (Leadership, Exploration, and Development)



L.E.A.D. 1.0: Leadership and quality in afterschool programs are inseparable; for programs to succeed and become sustainable, they need strong leadership at all levels. This four-part series provides an advanced level group of afterschool professionals with the tools to hone their strengths and develop new skills to assume greater leadership roles in the future. It is specifically designed for experienced directors and site coordinators looking for that next level of growth and development. Each session will include a training session, a guest speaker, light refreshments, and time to network.

Dates:

- Monday, November 2, 2026 (10:00 AM–1:00 PM) | in-person at our South Burlington office
- Wednesday, January 13, 2027 (10:00 AM–1:00 PM) | in-person at our South Burlington office
- Tuesday, February 16, 2027 (10:00 AM–1:00 PM) | in-person at our South Burlington office
- Wednesday, March 10, 2027 (10:00 AM–1:00 PM) | in-person at our South Burlington office
- Tuesday, May 11, 2027 (9:00 AM–1:00 PM) | TBD

Cost: FREE for 16 hours of professional development

Registration: vermontafterschool.org/LEAD/

L.E.A.D. 2.0: This program is designed for those who have completed LEAD 1.0 and are interested in continuing to further develop their skills and collaborations with other like-minded leaders in the afterschool field. There are five in-person meetings, and virtual coaching sessions with a designated Vermont Afterschool coach as needed. Participants will create and implement a project that will improve the quality of their program and support their growing leadership skills. Each participant will present their project and working portfolio at the end of the course.

Dates:

- Monday, November 2, 2026 (10:00 AM–1:00 PM) | in-person at our South Burlington office
- Wednesday, January 13, 2027 (10:00 AM–1:00 PM) | in-person at our South Burlington office
- Wednesday, March 10, 2027 (10:00 AM–1:00 PM) | in-person at our South Burlington office
- Tuesday, April 13, 2027 (9:00 AM–11:00 AM) | in-person at our South Burlington office
- Tuesday, May 11, 2027 (9:00 AM–1:00 PM) | TBD

Prerequisite: LEAD 1.0

Cost: FREE

Registration: vermontafterschool.org/LEAD/

Note: Participants who successfully complete L.E.A.D. 1.0 and 2.0 *are eligible to receive a \$1,600 bonus.*

CERTIFICATES AND CREDENTIALS

- > Interested in furthering your career?
- > Want to receive recognition for your skills and training?
- > Need to fulfill education requirements for the afterschool licensing regulations?

Afterschool and Youth Work Certificate



Offered by the Community College of Vermont (CCV), the Afterschool and Youth Work Certificate will provide students with essential skills to develop, support, and administer high-quality afterschool and youth programs for young people ages 5–18. Emphasis is on developing programs that use youth voice, active learning, planning and reflection, and supporting effective collaboration with families and community partners. The coursework can be completed fully online for a total of 24 credits. **The 4 FREE online CCV courses listed on p. 6 can be applied to this Certificate.**

Participants who successfully complete the Certificate are **eligible to receive a \$2,100 bonus.**

More Information: www.vermontafterschool.org/professionals/youth-work-certificate/. Contact Ben Ardel (ben@vermontafterschool.org) if you have further questions.

Vermont Afterschool Foundations Certificate



Designed to support and recognize the professional development of Vermont's entry-level afterschool professionals during the first two years of employment.

Vermont Afterschool Professional Credential



The Credential is a way to formally recognize the professional competency and accomplishments of afterschool professionals who demonstrate a depth of experience and training.

The Certificate and Credential are connected to the Vermont Core Competencies for Afterschool Professionals. The application process for the Credential requires applicants to document learning in each of the following 10 core knowledge areas:

1. Child/Youth Growth and Development
2. Learning Environments and Curriculum
3. Child/Youth Observations and Assessment
4. Relationships and Interactions with Children and Youth
5. Youth Engagement, Voice, and Choice
6. Equity and Inclusion
7. Family, School, and Community Relationships
8. Safety and Wellness
9. Program Planning and Development
10. Professional Development and Leadership



Date: Applications reviewed on a rolling basis

Cost: A small fee for each application.

Participants who successfully complete the Credential are **eligible to receive a \$1,200 bonus.**

Registration: vermontafterschool.org/professionals/certificates-credentials/

More Information: Contact Ben Ardel (ben@vermontafterschool.org) for more information.

Field Forums

Vermont Afterschool regularly hosts virtual field forums on different topics relating to out-of-school time providers and professionals including health, safety guidance, funding, advocacy, and more.

1. **Failure ... It's Part of the Adventure!** | November 3, 2026 (6:00–7:30 PM)
2. **STEM Career-Connected Learning** | January 26, 2027 (6:00–7:30 PM)
3. **Playworks: Playtime Systems** | March 10, 2027 (6:00–7:30 PM)
4. **Supporting Youth as Staff** | May 2027 (Date/Time TBD)

Cost: FREE

Registration: Register through Vermont Afterschool calendar (vermontafterschool.org/calendar/)

Summer Camp Kick-Off

Get ready for summer with a full day of professional development designed for afterschool and summer camp professionals. Connect with colleagues, explore engaging workshops, discover new games and activities, and build practical skills to help create safe, inclusive, and memorable camp experiences. Whether you're new to camp or a seasoned leader, the Summer Camp Kick-Off is a great opportunity to recharge, learn, and head into the season feeling inspired and prepared.

Stay tuned for additional information, including the official date (early June), location, and registration details as they become available.



Youth Voice Micro-Credential



A micro-credential is a certification indicating demonstrated competency in a specific skill. Professionals take courses/trainings and develop these skills in certain fields. They promote learning by doing: professionals apply their learnings in practice, collect evidence, and demonstrate their competence.

HELPING THEM TO LEAD THE WAY

Do you want to support a group of youth to create change in their lives? Helping Them to Lead the Way is a 5-part workshop series on the knowledge-base and skill sets for raising up youth voices and supporting them to create the change they see is needed in their lives, schools, and communities. From individual self-advocacy to empowering community level youth leadership, this series walks participants through an Empowerment Model for creating youth-led change, while supporting them in creating their own youth leadership development plan.

This series will provide participants with knowledge of adolescent development, leadership, and relationship content relevant to each phase of the empowerment model, and will present key principles and activities of youth empowerment, while supporting participants to develop their own youth leadership goal and a plan to achieve that goal. Culminating in the presentation of participants' youth empowerment project plans and the design of an evaluation of their effectiveness from the youths' perspective, this series provides the content and experiences for developing and planning a youth-led change initiative in partnership with youth and empowering their leadership development as change-makers.

1. **Micro-credential course overview, Introduction to the Awareness Phase and the Power of Relationships** | Friday, January 15, 2027 (10:00 AM–4:00 PM) | in-person location TBD*
2. **The Visioning Phase, Leadership Practices and Youth Voice Frameworks** | Date/Time TBD (by the group) | 2-hour Virtual
3. **The Transformation Phase, Supporting Leadership Development and Creating Change** | Date/Time TBD (by the group) | 2-hour Virtual
4. **The Growth Phase, Laying the Groundwork and Preparing the Adults for Youth-Led Change** | Date/Time TBD (by the group) | 2-hour Virtual
5. **Project Presentations, Peer Evaluation, Reflection, and Celebration** | TBD (10:00 AM–2:00 PM) | in-person location TBD*

*We will do our best to find locations for the in-person sessions that are centralized to registrants' locations.

Cost: FREE

Registration: Register until November 14, 2026 through Vermont Afterschool calendar (vermontafterschool.org/calendar/)



SCAN WITH YOUR PHONE TO VISIT THE
VERMONT AFTERSCHOOL CALENDAR



In-Person and Virtual Staff Trainings

We offer interactive learning experiences for staff working in afterschool, summer, and third-space programs. These trainings, typically 2 hours in length, are facilitated by trainers with significant expertise in their topic areas and can be scheduled at a time that is convenient for your staff. From brand new direct service staff to seasoned staff members to site and program directors, there are a range of trainings that will benefit a variety of audiences. Most trainings are available virtually as well. **Please note that we require a minimum of 10 participants for each workshop (with a maximum of 40 participants).**

A sample of workshops offered:

Basics of Social and Emotional Learning in Afterschool

Child Brain/Child Behavior

Creating a Culture of Youth Voice

Engaging Groups and Running Clubs

Group Dynamics and the Team Building Process

STEM 101

STRONG: An Introduction to the Strengthening Families Framework

Structure and Clear Limits

Understanding Trauma and Recovery

Youth and Relationship Development

***Customized coaching available upon request**

The workshops in the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) series are interactive and hands-on courses designed to provide participants with practical skills that are geared to improve the quality of interactions with youth. The workshops are aligned with the items of the YPQI tool but are appropriate to any afterschool program looking to boost quality efforts.

YPQI trainings:

Active Learning

Ask, Listen, Encourage

Building Community

Cooperative Learning

Homework Help

Planning with Data

Planning and Reflection

Reframing Conflict

SEL PQA Basics

Structure and Clear Limit

Voice and Choice

Dates: Schedule at your convenience

Location: Virtual or in-person

Cost: \$300+ per two-hour training, plus mileage and materials; partial scholarships available for licensed programs through the Child Development Division

Registration: For a full list of available workshops, visit vermontafterschool.org/workshops/. For more information and to inquire about scheduling for your program, contact Becka Wilcke (becka@vermontafterschool.org).

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING METHODS

The following Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Methods workshops have been developed to help adults improve their practice in supporting social, emotional, and cognitive development in their programs.

Please note, programs will need to commit to the full strand of either Cognitive, Emotional, or Social. Each strand consists of three workshops for a total of 7 hours of training. **There is a minimum requirement of 10 participants for each strand (with a maximum of 40 participants).**

Cognitive Development Strand:

- Foundations and Self-Awareness of Cognitive Development
- Engaging Youth in Supported Struggle
- Facilitating Problem Solving

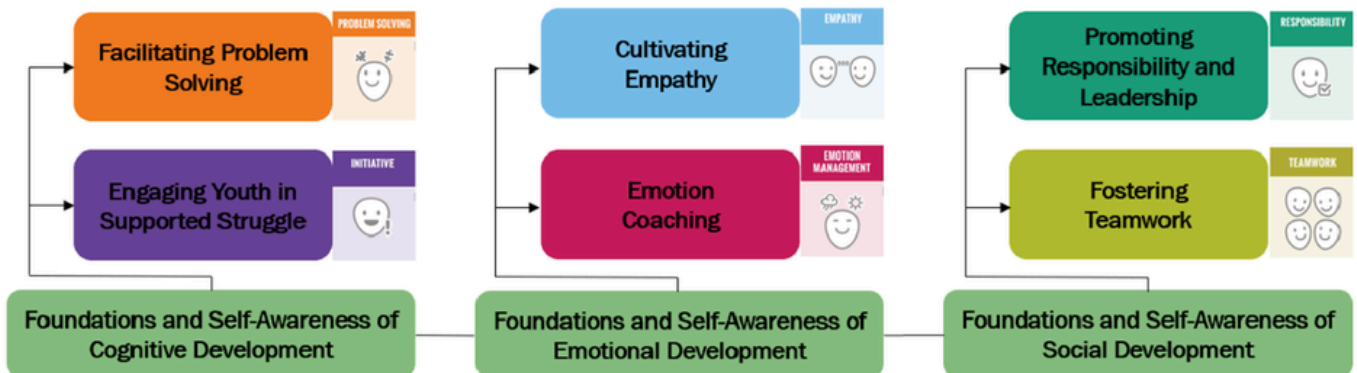
Emotional Development Strand:

- Foundations and Self-Awareness of Emotional Development
- Emotion Coaching
- Cultivating Empathy

Social Development Strand:

- Foundations and Self-Awareness of Social Development
- Fostering Teamwork
- Promoting Responsibility and Leadership

Registration: vermontafterschool.org/SEL-methods/



Essentials of an SEL Framework

Youth Resilience Trainings

BASIC SPECIALIZED CARE

This six-hour introductory training for early childhood and afterschool professionals who serve vulnerable children and their families in regulated child care and afterschool settings is one of the requirements to become a Specialized Care Provider in Vermont. Topics covered include caregiving together with families; child abuse, neglect, and trauma; understanding differences in development; and understanding children's behavior.

Dates:

- Wednesday, November 18, 2026 (10:00 AM–4:00 PM) | Virtual
- Wednesday, April 14, 2027 (10:00 AM–4:00 PM) | Virtual

Cost: FREE

Registration: Register through Vermont Afterschool calendar (vermontafterschool.org/calendar/)

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Youth Mental Health First Aid USA teaches you how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders in youth. This training gives adults who work with youth the skills they need to reach out and provide initial support to children and adolescents (ages 12-18) who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem and help connect them to the appropriate care. This training includes 2 hours of required pre-work and 5 hours of instructor-led content.

Date:

- Tuesday, October 13, 2026 (9:00 AM–3:00 PM) | Virtual
- Thursday, February 11, 2027 (9:00 AM–3:00 PM) | Virtual
- Thursday, May 6, 2027 (9:00 AM–3:00 PM) | Virtual

Cost: FREE

Registration: Register through Vermont Afterschool calendar (vermontafterschool.org/calendar/)

GUIDEBOOKS & RESOURCES

Vermont Afterschool's website is home to many printable guidebooks, templates, and other resources designed to help you strengthen your afterschool program.



YOUTH THRIVE

Youth Thrive is an evidence-informed framework for approaching our work with youth ages 9-24. Instead of a sole focus on limiting risk factors or maintaining a problem-free environment, Youth Thrive teaches youth work professionals and parents to recognize, support, and build on protective and promotive factors. Based in strengths-based and positive psychology, this approach can be used in any setting where youth and families are served.

Dates: *Must attend both dates.

- Thursday, October 8, 2026 **and** Thursday, October 15, 2026 (10:00 AM–4:00 PM) | in-person in South Burlington
- Thursday, March 18, 2027 **and** Thursday, March 25, 2027 (10:00 AM–4:00 PM) | in-person in Montpelier

Cost: FREE

Registration: Register through Vermont Afterschool calendar (vermontafterschool.org/calendar/)

YOUTH THRIVE 4 YOUTH

Developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, Youth Thrive is a Framework and a national initiative that promotes improvements in youth-serving systems and better access to supports, resources, and opportunities for all young people to thrive. The Framework is based on a review of research on adolescent development, brain science, trauma, resilience, and healing. At the heart of the Youth Thrive Framework are five protective and promotive factors that are key to well-being for all youth (age 9–26) as they grow into young adults. This 8-hour training (2 hours virtual, 6 hours in person) is available for a cohort of youth in your program ages 14–22 who are invested in understanding what they and their peers are going through during adolescence and learning how to promote their own healing, health, and well-being.

More Information: Contact Marla Goldstein (marla@vermontafterschool.org) for more information and to inquire about scheduling for your program.



Program Support

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

In recognizing that we have so much to learn from each other, we offer different types of community of practice as a way for staff to come together and reflect on how they can improve personal and program practices. Learning comes from facilitated discussions with each other.

Vermont Youth Center Alliance (VYCA)

The Vermont Youth Center Alliance (VYCA) serves as a meeting place for professionals working in youth centers who can often feel isolated in their work and even within their communities. The mission of VYCA is to promote the healthy development of Vermont youth and advocate as a cohesive group in order to advance the mutual concerns of Vermont youth centers.

More Information: Contact Matt Wolf (matt@vermontafterschool.org) for more information.

NETWORKING SESSIONS

In conversations with the field, we've heard a clear and consistent request for more opportunities to connect, collaborate, and exchange ideas. In response, Vermont Afterschool is pleased to offer a series of virtual networking sessions centered around key topics relevant to out-of-school time providers. These sessions are designed to foster meaningful dialogue, support peer learning, and strengthen connections across the field.

Dates:

- Tuesday, October 13, 2026 (10:00 AM–11:00 AM) | Topic: *Establishing Routines, Systems, and Expectations*
- Tuesday, January 12, 2027 (10:00 AM–11:00 AM) | Topic: *Family, School, and Community Relationships*
- Tuesday, March 30, 2027 (10:00 AM–11:00 AM) | Topic: *Youth Voice, Choice, and Leadership*
- Tuesday, June 8, 2027 (10:00 AM–11:00 AM) | Topic: *Setting Yourself up for Summer Success*

Cost: FREE

Registration: Register through Vermont Afterschool calendar (vermontafterschool.org/calendar/)

STEM INDUSTRY & OST DROP-IN MONTHLY SESSIONS

Virtual, open conversation where afterschool and summer programs, youth serving organizations, and STEM industry professionals can talk through ideas, network, and create partnerships. No prior experience required, feel free to drop in whenever it suits your schedule.

Dates: Every second Monday of the month (12:00 PM–1:00 PM.)

Cost: FREE

More Information: Contact Katie O'Shea (katie@vermontafterschool.org) for more information.

QUALITY 4-PART TRAINING SERIES

This virtual training series, led by experienced SPARQS assessors Kathleen Bray and Ben Ardel, is for staff who would like to take a deep dive into quality. Participants will use an educational video focusing on what quality looks like in afterschool. We'll take a deep dive into the PQA items Skill Building, Youth Leadership, Authentic Choice, and Reflection and SELPQA items Fostering Teamwork, Cultivating Empathy, Scaffolding Learning, and Furthering Learning. Participants are strongly encouraged to attend all four sessions.

Dates:

- Tuesday, January 12, 2027 (6:00 PM–7:30 PM)
- Tuesday, January 19, 2027 (6:00 PM–7:30 PM)
- Tuesday, January 26, 2027 (6:00 PM–7:30 PM)
- Tuesday, February 2, 2027 (6:00 PM–7:30 PM)

Cost: FREE

Registration: Register through Vermont Afterschool calendar (vermontafterschool.org/calendar/)

SCHOOL-AGE AND SEL PQA EXTERNAL ASSESSMENTS

As a new way to support afterschool and summer programs' continuous quality improvement, Vermont Afterschool now has the capacity to offer external assessment visits for the School-Age (SA) (Program Quality Assessment) PQA and the Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) PQA. Our team has been certified by successfully completing the External Assessor Reliability Training for both of these tools.

PQA assessments are a valuable opportunity for programs to benefit from another set of eyes—someone with additional training and a deep understanding of the intent of each scale and item—who can observe, score, and provide meaningful feedback. They can be especially useful for programs that traditionally score high in certain areas and are seeking a fresh perspective to ensure accuracy. An outside observer may also highlight new areas of growth or offer insights that help bolster your program's goals.

Cost: FREE for licensed programs

More Information: For more information, contact Tricia Pawlik (tricia@vermontafterschool.org).



FLOURISH LAB: SEL MICRO-TRAININGS

Vermont Afterschool is pleased to offer virtual SEL micro-trainings created by The Flourish Lab. Known for being relevant, easy to implement, and right to the point, what's learned in these workshops can be used in your program as soon as the following day. Many micro-trainings are offered multiple times throughout the year.

Topic: Acknowledging & Validating

Feeling seen and acknowledged by adults is vital to children's positive development. When young people feel valued and respected, they're more likely to trust, which deepens any exchange. We'll explore the empowering skills of acknowledgement and validation (along with their opposites), examining the potential impact of each.

Dates: November 4, 2026 (5:00 PM–5:45 PM); May 19, 2027 (6:00 PM–6:45 PM)

Topic: Bank of Trust

What do eco-systems have to do with trust? At any moment, trust is either quietly built or broken. When we invest in a Bank of Trust with parents/guardians, co-workers, principals and others in a child's support system, trust grows. Engaging children's broader communities helps them feel more engaged, safer, and open to learning.

Date: November 18, 2026 (6:00 PM–6:45 PM)

Topic: Belonging

It is deeply rooted in us all to want to belong. Not surprisingly then, when we first step into a new group, it is our differences that often bubble to the surface, sometimes manifesting difficult emotions and behaviors. Spotting this kind of pattern is part of how we show up fully for our students—as we support them with new vantage points that see, embrace, and celebrate differences.

Date: December 2, 2026 (5:00 PM–5:45 PM)

Topic: Bias Introduction

You can't change what you don't acknowledge. And yet, it's virtually impossible to show up as ourselves without bringing our personal blind spots to the table. Once we see and name our biases, we can change them. With new awareness, equity enters the forefront, allowing us to intentionally show up as our best for all students. This workshop dips a toe into a timely human topic that fundamentally changes every conversation and our part in it.

Date: December 16, 2026 (6:00 PM–6:45 PM)

Topic: De-Escalation

Children, like adults, have emotional emergencies—they just look different from ours. But there's a predictable pattern to escalation that, if caught in time, can re-direct outcomes from explosive to calm. Using a child-first, relationship-centered mindset, this module teaches us that strong behaviors are no mystery, and that all feelings make sense. We also discover that preventative techniques can help facilitate a sense of calm.

Dates: September 9, 2026 (5:00 PM–5:45 PM); January 20, 2027 (6:00 PM–6:45 PM)

Topic: Empathy for Self

When we're at our best, the sun shines brighter and there's a bounce in our step. We also have moments that feel the opposite. To address the ups and downs of life and work, we'll explore inner critics, self-compassion and how to practice empathy for yourself so you can be ready to lavish it on the children you serve.

Date: April 21, 2027 (6:00 PM–6:45 PM)

Topic: Powerful Feelings

When it comes to strong emotions, what we see is rarely what is actually going on with a child. Powerful emotions invite us to check assumptions at the door and go deeper into what's really causing the behavior. These micro-opportunities for long-term growth can have an indelibly positive impact on children. This workshop offers practical solutions and strategies to navigate the landscape of strong emotions — how they can present in unusual ways, and how we can support youth when they're in the thick of what they're feeling.

Date: October 7, 2026 (5:00 PM–5:45 PM)

Topic: Problem Solving

As adults we often try to solve problems for young people instead of letting them figure it out themselves. The challenge is to step out of the all-knowing adult role and into the role of coach who celebrates discoveries, validates feelings, and offers choices and useful questions to guide our capable students. We'll explore ways to help children solve personal, social, and task-related problems, and offer creative ways to get out of the way while doing it.

Date: May 5, 2027 (5:00 PM–5:45 PM)

Topic: Purposeful Pause

Have you ever found yourself showing up in a way that is less than your best? You may be extra reactionary with the youth in your program. You snap at your co-workers. The voice in your head screams "I'm DONE!" What if you could learn to PAUSE before getting to this point? When we learn this invaluable skill, we show up as our best more often, making the positive impact we want to make.

Date: February 17, 2027 (6:00 PM–6:45 PM)

Topic: Reaction to Response

We all have emotional hot buttons that cause us to show up as less than our best. Once we recognize these triggers, we can regain control over them. One important part of the process is understanding what sets us off. Adding clear action steps for these moments helps us quickly get back to showing up fully for our youth.

Dates: October 21, 2026 (6:00 PM–5:45 PM); January 6, 2027 (5:00 PM–5:45 PM)

Topic: The Ripple Effect

The response you choose in each moment has an inevitable ripple effect on the youth in your program, co-workers, parents, guardians, and others in your community. When we are intentional about our actions, we can maximize the chance of making a positive impact on those we care about. We will consider the multitude of ways to respond to common scenarios in youth development, and the possible outcomes of those choices.

Date: March 3, 2027 (5:00 PM–5:45 PM)

Topic: Transitions

We've seen more than a few youth programs self-combust during transitions alone. The culprit each time: the absence of creative planning for times between activities. Whether cleaning up from snack time, or migrating your group from inside to out—down-times can quickly derail the best of the best, if you haven't planned for it. We'll share strategies and tools to ensure your students stay motivated and engaged, even in down-time.

Dates: September 23, 2026 (6:00 PM–6:45 PM); February 3 (5:00 PM–5:45 PM)

Topic: Your Values

Personal values can provide vital clues to navigating the emotional ups and downs that inevitably come up in the everyday. When we use our values as a guide, we can intentionally change the course of any exchange. When we embody what matters most to each of us, we elevate the way we are able to show up for ourselves and the young people in our care. We'll explore your own values and how to use them as your own personal roadmap.

Date: May 17, 2027 (6:00 PM–6:45 PM)

Topic: Your Why

Whatever your reason for working with young people, your WHY matters. You may want to make a positive impact your community, to pay forward the impact of a positive adult in your life, or teach invaluable life lessons. When we're able to hone in on WHY we work with young people, we're able to have a bigger impact in the work we do. We'll discuss why you do the work you do and how it can keep you grounded in what matters most, especially when things feel hard.

Date: April 7, 2027 (5:00 PM–5:45 PM)

Registration: Register through the Vermont Afterschool calendar (vermontafterschool.org/calendar/).

Resources

Northern Lights at CCV | northernlightscv.org/
Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations | dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/laws-rules/
Vermont Child Development Division | dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/
Agency of Education | education.vermont.gov/
National AfterSchool Association | naaweb.org/
Afterschool Alliance | afterschoolalliance.org/
Hunger Free Vermont Snacks & Meals | hungerfreevt.org/getfoodhelp/



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LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH.

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150 Kennedy Drive
South Burlington, VT 05403
info@vermontafterschool.org
802-448-3464