



Early Childhood Education Resource Consulting Program Standard

The approved program standard for Early Childhood Education Resource Consulting programs of instruction leading to an Ontario College Graduate Certificate delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 71214).

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
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Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for the Early Childhood Education Resource Consulting programs of instruction leading to an Ontario College Graduate Certificate delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 71214).

Development of system-wide program standards

In 1993, the Government of Ontario initiated program standards development with the objectives of bringing a greater degree of consistency to college programming offered across the province, broadening the focus of college programs to ensure graduates have the skills to be flexible and to continue to learn and adapt, and providing public accountability for the quality and relevance of college programs.

The Program Standards Unit of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has responsibility for the development, review and approval of system-wide standards for programs of instruction at Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology.

Program standards

Program standards apply to all similar programs of instruction offered by colleges across the province. Each program standard for a postsecondary program includes the following element:

- **Vocational standard** (the vocationally specific learning outcomes which apply to the program of instruction in question);
- **Essential employability skills** (the essential employability skills learning outcomes which apply to all programs of instruction); and
- **General education requirement** (the requirement for general education in postsecondary programs of instruction).

Collectively, these elements outline the essential skills and knowledge that a student must reliably demonstrate in order to graduate from the program.

Individual Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology offering the program of instruction determine the specific program structure, delivery methods and other curriculum matters to be used in assisting students to achieve the outcomes articulated in the standard. Individual colleges also determine whether additional local learning outcomes will be required to reflect specific local needs and/or interests.

The expression of program standards as vocational learning outcomes

Vocational learning outcomes represent culminating demonstrations of learning and achievement. They are not simply a listing of discrete skills, nor broad statements of knowledge and comprehension. In addition, vocational learning outcomes are interrelated and cannot be viewed in isolation from one another. As such, they should be viewed as a comprehensive whole. They describe performances that demonstrate that significant integrated learning by graduates of the program has been achieved and verified.

Expressing standards as vocational learning outcomes ensures consistency in the outcomes for program graduates, while leaving to the discretion of individual colleges, curriculum matters such as the specific program structure and delivery methods.

The presentation of the vocational learning outcomes

The **vocational learning outcome** statements set out the culminating demonstration of learning and achievement that the student must reliably demonstrate before graduation.

The **elements of the performance** for each outcome define and clarify the level and quality of performance necessary to meet the requirements of the vocational learning outcome. However, it is the performance of the vocational learning outcome itself on which students are evaluated. The elements of performance are indicators of the means by which the student may proceed to satisfactory performance of the vocational learning outcome. The elements of performance do not stand alone but rather in reference to the vocational learning outcome of which they form a part.

The development of a program standard

In establishing the standards development initiative, the Government determined that all postsecondary programs of instruction should include vocational skills coupled with a broader set of essential skills. This combination is considered critical to ensuring that college graduates have the skills required to be successful both upon graduation from the college program and throughout their working and personal lives.

A program standard is developed through a broad consultation process involving a range of stakeholders with a direct interest in the program area, including employers, professional associations, universities, secondary schools and program graduates working in the field, in addition to students, faculty and administrators at the colleges themselves. It represents a consensus of participating stakeholders on the essential learning that all program graduates should have achieved.

Updating the program standard

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities will undertake regular reviews of the vocational learning outcomes for this program to ensure that Early Childhood Education Resource Consulting Program Standard remains appropriate and relevant to the needs of students and employers across the Province of Ontario. To confirm that this document is the most up-to-date release, please contact the ministry.

Vocational standard

All graduates of Early Childhood Education Resource Consulting programs have achieved the [ten vocational learning outcomes \(VLOs\)](#) in the following pages.

Preamble

The Early Childhood Education Resource Consulting graduate certificate program provides early childhood educators with specialized knowledge, skills and abilities to work as resource consultants with **children with special needs*** and their **families***. Graduates work in a range of **early years and child care*** settings including centre-based and home-based **child*** care, child and family programs (e.g., EarlyON child and family centres), schools, and **children's*** services (e.g., supports for **children with special needs***, **children's*** mental health services and early intervention programs).

Graduates support **inclusive* early learning environments*** and lead others in the analysis, creation and implementation of child and family-centered policies and **evidence-based practices*** that support a philosophy of **inclusion***, and equitable and accessible early learning opportunities for all **children***, especially those **living with special needs*** and their **families***.

Graduates collaborate with early childhood educators, **children's*** service partners and **families*** to identify, respond to and support the **diverse*** abilities and interests of all **children***. Graduates engage with **children***, **families***, early childhood educators and **children's*** service partners to develop, review and update **children's* individualized support plans*** that ensure access to quality early learning experiences, programs and services and meaningful participation in these programs.

Graduates assess and document **children's*** responses to **early learning environments*** and opportunities and recommend **adaptations*** to enable all **children***, and children **with special needs*** in particular, to participate fully in early learning opportunities to support optimal **holistic development*** and learning, and successful transitions in daily life and to new learning environments.

Applying principles of adult learning/education theory and practice, graduates develop and deliver strength-based training and professional development activities to **families***, early childhood educators and **children's*** service partners to support quality, **inclusive* early years and child care*** programs and services for **children with special needs*** and **families***.

Graduates work collaboratively with a wide variety of professional and **children's*** service partners, and provide leadership through consultation, service coordination and **advocacy*** and support referral services for **children with special needs*** and their **families***. Graduates keep current in emerging research within the early learning field to lead initiatives related to **inclusive*** practice and **advocate*** for improvement of early

learning opportunities, programs and services for all **children*** and especially for those **living with special needs*** and their **families***.

As members of the College of Early Childhood Educators, graduates practice in accordance with the College of Early Childhood Educators current Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. Graduates engage in **reflective practice*** and ongoing **professional learning*** in the field of **inclusive*** early childhood education and special needs support and practice.

There are opportunities for graduates to pursue further educational qualifications and degree completion. Graduates should contact individual colleges for further details.

[*See Glossary](#)

Note: The [Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer](#) (ONCAT) maintains the provincial postsecondary credit transfer portal, [ONTransfer](#).

Synopsis of the vocational learning outcomes

Early Childhood Education Resource Consulting (Ontario College Graduate Certificate)

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. build and maintain **responsive relationships*** and partnerships with **children with special needs*** and **families*** from **diverse*** cultural and linguistic backgrounds including **Indigenous*** peoples' worldviews and Francophone identity, to provide culturally relevant early learning opportunities, programs and services.
2. recommend, discuss and plan, in partnership with **families*** and early childhood educators, **inquiry and play-based*** early learning program **adaptations*** to accommodate and support learning, **holistic development*** and well-being in **children with special needs***.
3. advise and lead early childhood educators and **children's*** service partners in the development of a philosophy of **inclusion*** and policies and practices that support **diverse***, equitable and accessible learning opportunities for **children with special needs*** and their **families***.
4. administer **observation strategies*** and screening tools to interpret and document **children's*** learning and to identify **children*** with challenges and facilitate **families*** referrals to resources for further assessment and intervention as necessary.
5. collaborate with **children***, **families***, early learning educators, health professionals and **children's*** service partners to facilitate the planning, co-ordination and evaluation of **individualized support plans*** for **children with special needs***.
6. plan, deliver and evaluate strength-based training to **children***, **families***, early childhood educators and **children's*** service partners to support quality, **inclusive* early years and child care*** programs and services for **children with special needs*** and **families***.
7. provide consultation, service coordination and referral support to **families***, early childhood educators and **children's*** service partners to support communication, collaboration and continuity of services for **children with special needs*** and **families***.
8. comply with current legislation, regulations, policies and **evidence-informed practices*** in **early years and child care*** settings to provide quality early learning programs and services for **children with special needs*** and their **families***.
9. **advocate*** for **inclusive***, meaningful and purposeful early learning opportunities and services for **children with special needs***, their **families*** and communities.

10. engage in **reflective practice*** and keep current in emerging research within the **early years sector*** to lead initiatives related to **inclusive*** practice and improving early learning opportunities, programs and services for all **children*** and especially those **living with special needs*** and their **families***.

[*See Glossary](#)

Note: The learning outcomes have been numbered as a point of reference; numbering does not imply prioritization, sequencing, nor weighting of significance.

The vocational learning outcomes

1. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: build and maintain **responsive relationships*** in partnerships with **children with special needs*** and **families*** from **diverse*** cultural and linguistic backgrounds including **Indigenous*** peoples' worldviews and Francophone identity, to provide culturally relevant early learning opportunities, programs and services.

Elements of the performance

- a. establish and maintain ongoing respectful **responsive relationships*** with all **children*** including **children with special needs*** and their **families***
- b. identify common responses and experiences that **children with special needs*** and their **families*** encounter within the context of home and community environments
- c. form partnerships with **children*** and **families*** that recognize their uniqueness, including **family*** structure, language, cultural values and practices, ethnicity, socio-economic status, spirituality, gender, age and sexual orientation
- d. view **children* and families*** as capable, competent, curious and rich in potential and unique contributions
- e. form partnerships with **Indigenous* children***, **families*** and their communities that recognize the integral role of extended **family***, community and relationships with the natural and spiritual world
- f. form partnerships with **children*** and **families*** from refugee and newly immigrated communities recognizing their challenges with knowing and accessing support and resources for a **child with special needs*** in an unfamiliar environment
- g. listen empathetically and act on **families'*** concerns and issues regarding the development and learning of their **children with special needs*** and the impact on the **family***
- h. identify and support **families*** in their grieving process
- i. communicate using language that is accessible to and understandable by **family*** members (i.e., family-friendly and culturally appropriate)
- j. be respectful of **family*** dynamics including communication and decision making practices
- k. engage **families*** in all decision making concerning their **children***
- l. identify **families'*** strengths and promote confidence in their ability to care for their **children with special needs***
- m. identify and appreciate parents as experts in the knowledge of their **children's*** strengths, interests and abilities
- n. implement strategies to promote **family*** engagement, empowerment and sense of competence
- o. coach and mentor parents regarding strategies to enhance their **children's* holistic development*** and learning and to support the development of **self-regulation*** of their response to stressors
- p. recommend family-centered supports and services that are both

- accessible and culturally acceptable to **children*** and **families***
- q. support **families*** with **children's*** transition processes including transitions among home, school and recreational environments
 - r. link **families*** to other **family*** support groups and/or informal support within their community, where appropriate and acceptable to **families***

[*See Glossary](#)

2. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: recommend, discuss and plan, in partnership with **families*** and early childhood educators, **inquiry and play-based*** early learning program **adaptations*** to accommodate and support learning, **holistic development*** and well-being in **children with special needs***.

Elements of the performance

- a. observe **children with special needs*** to understand, respond to and extend upon their learning interests and approach to learning
- b. apply principles of current early learning **pedagogy***, including **How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years (2014)**, when planning and recommending program **adaptations***
- c. collaborate with **families*** and early childhood educators to identify **inquiry and play-based*** early learning program **adaptations*** that build on an individual child's strengths and abilities
- d. recommend and discuss with **families*** and educators, specific instructional, behavioural and environmental **adaptations*** based on **evidence-informed practice*** and **children's* diverse*** and unique needs, interests and ideas
- e. apply principles of universal design for learning (UDL) to design learning contexts in a variety of formats to accommodate a range of learning styles and abilities
- f. work in partnership with **families*** to identify and implement program **adaptations*** that are culturally relevant and meaningful while optimizing the learning, **holistic development*** and well-being of **children with special needs***
- g. recommend **adaptations*** to the program and **early learning environment*** that are congruent with the program philosophy, goals, policies and **early learning and child care setting*** practices
- h. use **pedagogical documentation*** to reflect upon **children's*** responses to program **adaptations*** and share with **families*** and early childhood educators

[*See Glossary](#)

3. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to advise and lead early childhood educators and **children's*** service partners in the development of a philosophy of **inclusion*** and policies and practices that support **diverse***, equitable and accessible learning opportunities for **children with special needs*** and their **families***.

Elements of the performance

- a. learn with and from, **children***, **families***, early childhood educators and **children's*** service partners in exploring attitudes and beliefs about **inclusion*** in **early learning environments***
- b. support educators in the identification, analysis and implementation of **inclusion*** policies and practices within **early learning environments***
- c. collaborate with early childhood educators and provide leadership in the development of a philosophy that articulates values related to access, maximum participation and supports for quality early learning opportunities for all **children*** and their **families***
- d. recommend **evidence-informed practices*** and policies that are aligned with a philosophy of **inclusion***, can be implemented in settings with various program approaches and are meaningful to **children***, **families*** and communities served
- e. provide in-service training for early childhood educators related to strategies to support **inclusive*** learning contexts that welcome and engage all **children*** and create the conditions to support meaningful relationships among all **children*** and **families***
- f. recommend and support **inclusion*** policies and practices that promote meaningful and maximum participation by **children with special needs*** and their **families*** in **early years and child care*** settings and communities
- g. develop and implement strategies and experiences which enhance **children's*** abilities, interests and ideas and which maximize **children's*** abilities to interact with peers
- h. promote the most **inclusive*** learning environment that best supports the learning and development of individual **children with special needs***
- i. identify and promote **inclusion*** policies and practices as embedded quality criteria in standards in the **early years sector***
- j. build capacity for **inclusive*** practices in **early years and child care*** settings through leadership, role modeling, education and **reflective practice***

[*See Glossary](#)

4. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: administer **observation strategies*** and screening tools to interpret and document **children's*** learning and to identify **children*** with challenges and facilitate **families*** referrals to resources for further assessment and intervention as necessary.

Elements of the performance

- a. obtain informed **family*** consent for the collection and use of **children's*** information and comply with all privacy legislation
- b. identify and share with **families***, the purpose and process for the collection of information regarding their **children***
- c. collaborate with **families*** and early childhood educators to observe **children*** in authentic settings over multiple points in time, and noting the child's interaction with **families*** and caregivers where possible
- d. ensure that **families*** perceptions are acknowledged and the preferences regarding their **children*** are respected
- e. integrate childcare staff and **family*** members' perceptions of **children's*** learning, behaviour and developmental progress into holistic assessment of **children with special needs***
- f. select and use **observation strategies*** and screening tools that are culturally appropriate and do not discriminate against **children*** based on their special needs, **culture***, language spoken or socioeconomic background
- g. use a variety of developmental screening tools competently to identify **children*** requiring further assessment, intervention or referral e.g., Nipissing District Developmental Screen (NDDS)
- h. interpret, document and communicate observations and findings of developmental screening with parents, early learning team members, health professionals and **children's*** service partners, using principles of **pedagogical documentation***
- i. facilitate **families'*** referrals to health, learning or developmental professionals, or **children's*** services, for further assessment and intervention based on the identification of **children's*** needs and knowledge of the roles and expertise of health professionals and **children's*** service partners

[*See Glossary](#)

5. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: collaborate with **children***, **families***, early learning educators, health professionals and **children's*** service partners to facilitate the planning, co-ordination and evaluation of **individualized support plans*** for **children with special needs***.

Elements of the performance

- a. work in partnership with **children***, **families*** and early childhood educators to create realistic and meaningful opportunities for every child to reach his or her full potential, participate fully in early learning experiences, develop successful relationships and contribute their unique interests, ideas and abilities
- b. identify potential supports and services for **children with a variety of special needs***, including but not limited to, speech and language disorders, emotional or behavioural challenges, autism spectrum disorders, mental health disorders, developmental and cognitive delays, and sensory and physical impairments
- c. work in partnership with **families***, coordinating agencies, early childhood educators, health professionals, school boards and **children's*** service partners in the development of **individualized support plans***
- d. identify the roles, scope of practice and legislative context of health professionals
- e. promote **family*** input and perspectives into the development of **individualized support plans*** and provide flexibility and choice when determining priorities, program **adaptations*** and resources
- f. co-create and integrate **individualized support plans*** goals that are **child*** and **family*** directed, specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely i.e., SMART
- g. communicate the goals of the **individualized support plan*** in a manner that is understandable to **families*** and to **children's*** service partners
- h. align the early learning strategies that are part of the child's **individualized support plan*** with specific goals of participation, belonging, well-being and communication
- i. integrate adaptive technologies into the **individualized support plan*** where appropriate and under the supervision of health professionals where required
- j. monitor and evaluate **children's*** progress and regularly review **individualized support plans*** including goals, strategies and resources and revise as necessary
- k. integrate community supports and services into **individualized support plan *** where appropriate

[*See Glossary](#)

6. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: plan, deliver and evaluate strength-based training to **children***, **families***, early childhood educators and **children's*** service partners to support quality, **inclusive* early years and child care*** programs and services for **children with special needs*** and **families***.

Elements of the performance

- a. assess readiness to learn and learning needs to plan education/training sessions based on the specific strengths, and interests of **children*** and their **families***, early learning and child care staff and **children's*** service partners
- b. identify, value and integrate **children's*** and **families'*** strengths, interests and perspectives into education/training strategies
- c. lead early learning and child care supervisors in supporting and facilitating staff's **professional learning*** plans related to **inclusive*** practices, and risk and protective factors associated with **children*** and **families*** health, stress and resiliency
- d. develop training and educational opportunities applying the principles of adult learning/education theory within a range of **early years and child care*** settings
- e. use a variety of active learning strategies such as demonstrations, guided discussions, multimedia, journaling, case studies, coaching and mentoring
- f. model **inclusive*** practices with **children***, **families***, early childhood educators and **children's*** service partners
- g. coach and mentor **families*** and early childhood educators in strength-based strategies for their interactions with **children with special needs***
- h. provide additional resource information to extend learning opportunities for **families***, early childhood educators and **children's*** service partners
- i. assist **families***, early childhood educators and **children's*** services in deepening their understanding of **children living with a variety of special needs*** and their **families***
- j. research and provide program and resource recommendations to address **diverse*** and unique learning needs of **children with special needs***, **families***, early childhood educators and **children's*** service partners
- k. collaborate with other professionals and resource team members to plan and deliver relevant training opportunities based on identified learning needs
- l. provide professional networking opportunities for **early years and child care*** staff and **children's*** service partners working with **children with special needs*** and **their families***
- m. evaluate the effectiveness and impact of education/training sessions in **early years and child care*** settings and modify accordingly

[*See Glossary](#)

7. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: provide consultation, service coordination and referral support to **families***, early childhood educators and **children's*** service partners to support communication, collaboration and continuity of services for **children with special needs*** and **families***.

Elements of the performance

- a. advise and support **families*** and **early years and child care*** staff in early learning program **adaptations*** and/or implementation of **individualized support plans***
- b. identify and describe the range of professional service partners available for **children with a variety of special needs*** and their **families***, including but not limited to speech-language pathologists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists, nurses, physicians, child psychologists, early childhood educators, teachers and school administrators
- c. promote service team relationships and shared collaborative practice based on family-centered goals, reciprocal communication strategies and shared information
- d. apply principles of professionalism, engagement, involvement, responsibility and accountability to assist early childhood educators and **children's*** service partners to work together effectively and collaboratively
- e. recommend and provide support to **families*** in seeking referrals with health professionals, **children's*** service partners, resources and funding sources
- f. provide service coordination to **families*** receiving services from multiple partners
- g. facilitate and support **family*** service team relationships through communication and conflict resolution strategies, interprofessional collaboration and teamwork
- h. promote **family*** decision making when considering community supports and services planned for their **children***
- i. include **children*** in decision making where appropriate
- j. support **families*** as active members of the **family*** service team
- k. evaluate the supports provided to **children*** and their **families***, ensuring they are meaningful and perceived as helpful by **families***
- l. maintain accurate records and documentation related to service coordination and referral support and revise the **individualized support plan*** as necessary
- m. lead efforts to develop and maintain collaborative relationships among early childhood educators and **children's*** service partners

[*See Glossary](#)

8. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: comply with current legislation, regulations, policies and **evidence-informed practices*** in **early years and child care settings*** to provide quality early learning programs and services for **children with special needs*** and their **families***.

Elements of the performance

- a. act in accordance with **ethical and professional standards*** expressed in the College of Early Childhood Educators current Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Early Childhood Educators
- b. comply with key legislation impacting **early learning environments*** including the [Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007](#), the [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014](#), the [Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017](#) and the [Education Act, 1990](#)
- c. promote and engage in behaviours that support the dignity and rights of all members of **early years and child care*** settings in compliance with standards, policies, procedures and practices covered by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982 (section 15), the Ontario Human Rights Code, 1989 (revised 2000) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- d. safeguard **children's*** and **families'*** rights to privacy and confidentiality in accordance with current and applicable legislation, such as the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1990 (FIPPA), the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, 2000 (PIPEDA), as well as in compliance with established policies and procedures in **early years and child care*** settings
- e. determine reasonable grounds to suspect when a child is at risk for abuse or neglect, and may be in need of protection, and take appropriate action in reporting these incidences in accordance with the [Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017](#)
- f. research and critique **evidence-informed practices*** related to early childhood education, special needs and **inclusion*** and apply relevant findings to **early learning environments***

[*See Glossary](#)

9. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: **advocate*** for **inclusive***, meaningful and purposeful early learning opportunities and services for **children with special needs***, their **families*** and communities.

Elements of the performance

- a. protect and promote the rights of **children with special needs*** within their **families*** and communities
- b. recommend the use of **inclusive*** practices that will support **children with special needs*** to fully participate in and contribute to **early years and child care*** programs
- c. promote **family*** empowerment with respect to **advocating*** for quality **inclusive*** learning opportunities for their **children***
- d. promote the benefits of **inclusive*** practices provided to all **children*** in **early years and child care*** settings
- e. **advocate*** for community awareness of risk, resiliency and protective factors for all **children*** and their **families*** in general, and in particular, for those living with a **child with special needs***
- f. support, promote and build **families'*** **advocacy*** skills

[*See Glossary](#)

10. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: engage in **reflective practice*** and keep current in emerging research within the **early years sector*** to lead initiatives related to **inclusive*** practice and improving early learning opportunities, programs and services for all **children*** and especially those **living with special needs*** and their **families***.

Elements of the performance

- a. use **reflection*** and self-evaluation skills in an ongoing manner
- b. lead others, including **children***, **families*** and early childhood educators, in **collaborative inquiry*** to explore issues related to **inclusive*** practices for **children with special needs***
- c. lead early childhood educators, in the incorporation of relevant **evidence-informed practice*** guidelines related to **inclusive*** early learning and special needs
- d. engage in ongoing **professional learning*** opportunities to enhance one's performance as an early childhood resource consultant
- e. participate in the dissemination of knowledge and skills related to early learning and special needs practice
- f. network with professional colleagues and participate in activities, e.g., professional associations, research and committees, advancing the field of early learning and special needs practice

[*See Glossary](#)

Glossary

Adaptations - The adjustments to curriculum, instructional practices, materials or technology and the learning environment made in accordance with the abilities, interests and ideas of the child.

Advocate/advocacy - Actions to influence others, to champion change, to extend or improve early years and child care programs and services which improve the lives of children, families and supports professionals in the early years and child care sector.

Children - Refers to all persons from birth to twelve years within the context of their individual family, social, economic, cultural, linguistic, spiritual and diversities.

Children/child with special needs - Refers to any child whose cognitive, physical, social, emotional or communicative needs or whose needs related to holistic development are of such a nature that additional assistance, adaptations, accommodation and/or supports are required for the child to access, actively participate in, and contribute to early learning opportunities and social interactions (adapted in part from Ontario Regulation 137/15 made under the [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014](#)).

Collaborative inquiry - Engaging with others (i.e., children, families and colleagues) in critical reflection to question theory and practice, discuss ideas, test theories and new approaches and to share learning (*Ministry of Education, 2014, How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*).

Culture - The understandings, practices and values shared by a group of people. The children, families and staff in early years and child care settings may identify as belonging to more than one culture (CECE, *2017 Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, p.23*).

Diverse/diversity - Uniqueness that each person or groups of people brings to the early learning and child care setting including values and beliefs, culture and ethnicity, language, abilities, knowledge and interests, life experiences, socio-economic status, spirituality, religious affiliation, gender, age and sexual orientation (CECE, *2017 Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, p.23*).

Early learning environments - Physical, social and emotional contexts in which children, families, communities, early childhood educators and other colleagues collaborate to nurture, provide care and education with the goals of fostering children's curiosity, communication, engagement, sense of belonging and well-being. It includes relationships, experiences, the physical and non-physical space, place and materials, activities and routines.

Early years and child care – Encompasses a range of settings where early learning and child care programs and services are offered, including child care centres, home-

based child care, preschool programs, kindergarten programs in school boards, before and after school programs, EarlyON child and family centres and a range of child and family programs and services.

Early years sector - A distinct collective of programs, services and supports designed for children from birth to 12 years and their families. This includes research, policy development, education and training, advocacy and system management in the planning and delivery of early childhood education, early learning, child care, family supports, early intervention and children's services (CECE, 2017, *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, p.23).

Ethical and professional standards - A core set of beliefs, values, responsibilities and relationships fundamental to the profession that serve to define the exemplary practices of early childhood education. The practice of Early Childhood Education is regulated by the College of Early Childhood Educators in accordance with the [Early Childhood Educator's Act, 2007](#). It is the professional responsibility of all members of the College of Early Childhood Educators to meet and uphold the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice in their daily work in early years and child care settings.

Evidence-informed practice - The transfer of current research and knowledge into high quality early years and child care programs, in conjunction with professional judgement, critical reflection and collaborative inquiry (adapted from CECE, 2017, *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, p. 14).

Family/families - A group of children and adults who are related by affections, kinship, dependency or trust, and includes two or single-parent families, same-sex families, adoptive, multi-generational families and foster families (CECE, 2017. *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, p.23). Extended family includes persons to whom a child is related, including through a spousal relationship or adoption and in the case of an Indigenous child includes any member of a band or community of which the child is a member ([Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017](#)).

Holistic development - Describes an understanding of a child's development placing relationships first, and which considers the interrelationship among a child's physical, emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual and communication development, with recognition that development happens within the context of the child's own and family's life experiences, relationships with others and the socio-economic environment.

Inclusive/inclusion - An approach to policies and practice in early years settings where all children, families and colleagues are accepted and celebrated within a program and where each child and family experiences a sense of belonging and is supported to actively contribute to and participate fully in all aspects of the program or service. Inclusive practice includes being attentive to the capabilities, learning styles, vulnerabilities, personalities and circumstances of all children and families

and understanding the diversity of children's development. Inclusion also encompasses inclusive attitudes and beliefs, policies, resources and supports (adapted from College of Early Childhood Educators, CECE.2017 *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, p. 24).

Indigenous - A collective name for all the original peoples of North America and their descendants. The Canadian constitution recognizes three groups of Indigenous peoples; First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Indigenous peoples are diverse in their histories, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs (adapted from Government of Canada, 2018, *Indigenous Peoples and Communities*).

Individualized support plan - An individualized plan outlining the developmental, learning goals, adaptation strategies and resources specifically designed to support the developmental and learning needs of a child living with special needs and to foster their full participation, sense of belonging, well-being and communication in early years and child care settings. Directed by the family's goals and priorities for their child, and involving the child where possible, the individualized support plan is developed, coordinated and evaluated by the Early Childhood Education – Resource Consultant in consultation with families, early learning educators, health professionals and community service partners.

Inquiry and play-based - Inquiry-based is an approach to teaching and learning that places children's questions, ideas and observations at the center of the learning experience. Play-based is an educational approach which builds upon children's natural inclination to make sense of the world through complex and diverse play, where early childhood educators engage as co-learners with children, parents, caregivers, and colleagues. Together these pedagogical approaches inform early childhood educators' understanding of the thinking and learning of children to create learning opportunities and to design learning environments (adapted from CECE, 2017, *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, p. 24-25).

Observation strategies - A systematic strategy for collecting qualitative and subjective understandings of the behaviour, responses, interests, abilities and patterns of development and social interactions of an individual child or a group of children within a learning environment. Techniques may include participant observation, pedagogical documentation, portfolios, learning stories, developmental screening tools, anecdotal records, photography and diary recordings.

Pedagogy - The understanding of how learning takes place and the philosophy and practice that supports that understanding of learning (Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2007, *Early Learning for Every Child Today: A Framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings*, ELECT).

Pedagogical documentation - Representations (e.g., visual artistic, audio) that reveal children's thoughts, feelings, and values and creates a basis for educators, children and families to co-learn, to study events and to interpret their meaning together.

Pedagogical documentation as a process provides the opportunity for educators to reveal their own delights, questions, assumptions and learning.

Professional learning - Ongoing formal and/or informal activities undertaken by an individual to improve and broaden their knowledge, skills, and critical reflection to practice professionally and to assure high quality professional practice throughout their careers (CECE, Dec. 11, 2017, *Report: recommendations for program standards for Ontario college programs in the early childhood cluster*).

Regulatory body/regulator (requirements) - The organization or institution established with a mandate to regulate a profession in a certain jurisdiction in the service and protection of the public interest. Common components of a regulator's mandate are to establish requirements for entry into the profession, establish and maintain a code of ethics and standards of practice for the profession, promote ongoing professional learning, develop and administer a quality assurance program, and receive and address complaints and mandatory reports about a member's conduct or competence. In Ontario, the College of Early Childhood Educators is the regulator for the early childhood education profession. (CECE, Dec. 11, 2017, *Report: recommendations for program standards for Ontario college programs in the early childhood cluster*).

Reflection/reflective practice - An approach used by early childhood educators to analyze and think critically about their professional practice with the intention to better understand and improve their practice. Reflective practice is thoughtful, action-oriented and often, a collaborative effort. Educators use reflective practice to plan, evaluate their strengths and challenges, make decisions and create change, if necessary. Self-reflection, critical reflection and collaborative inquiry are all important elements of reflective practice (adapted from CECE, 2017 *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, p.25).

Responsive relationships - Positive and meaningful connections between children and adults that occur when adults observe and read children's signals and communication and respond with understanding to support children's sense of belonging. Engaging in responsive relationships that give children and families a feeling of being cared for and cared about contributes to their well-being, enabling them to be engaged in learning and comfortable expressing their thoughts, feelings and ideas.

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