



Culture and Diversity in the Early Years



Acknowledging Indigenous Land

Today's Presentation

Presented by
Meredith Farley RECE
College of Early Childhood Educators



- 1 Role of the College / Professionalism
- 2 Anti- Racism:
Diversity, Culture, Equity and Inclusion
- 3 Reflecting on Beliefs and Bias
- 4 Professional Learning: Resources
- 5 Questions and Discussion

Role of the College

College Mandate: Serve and Protect the Public Interest



Registration
Requirements

Public
Register

Standards
of Practice

Continuing
Competence

Complaints
and
Discipline
Processes



2021–2022 Stats

5,468

Registered and
welcomed new
members to the
profession

59,547

RECEs in Ontario



Regulation vs. Advocacy

	The College	Advocacy Groups
Protects the public interest by regulating the profession	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Raises the standards of the profession	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sees ECEs as professionals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advocate on behalf of ECEs on employment issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

What does it mean to be a
regulated professional?

Being a professional

- Protected title and public trust
- Decision-making
- Collective responsibility
- Leadership

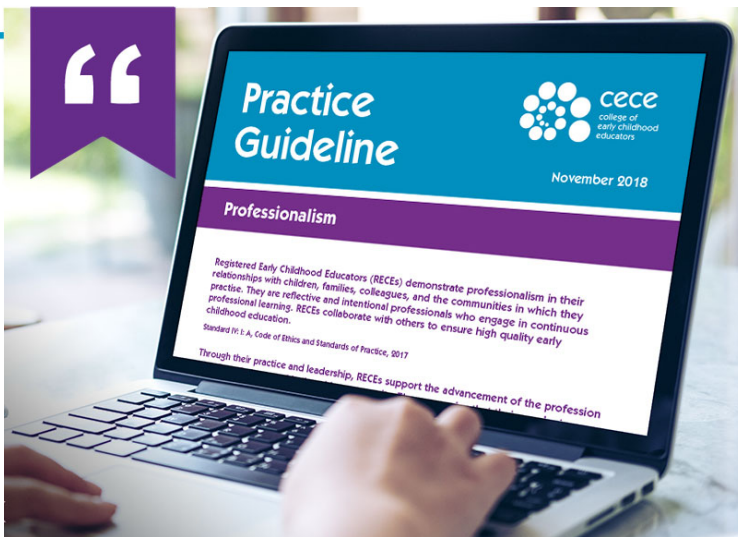




Recognized as a profession

- Have a defined scope of practice in the *Early Childhood Educators Act* (ECE Act)
- Are the only ones allowed to use the designated titles outlined in the ECE Act
- Are identified on a public register as meeting the professional standards
- Have a *Code of Ethics & Standards of Practice*

Professionalism



Professionalism is grounded in ethical values and refers to the use of knowledge, skills and judgment in the best interest of children and families. Professionalism is demonstrated through relationships with children, families and colleagues, and accountability to the public and the profession.

Practice Guideline: Professionalism

Care and Relationship-Based Practice

Ethical Values

The profession's core set of beliefs and values:

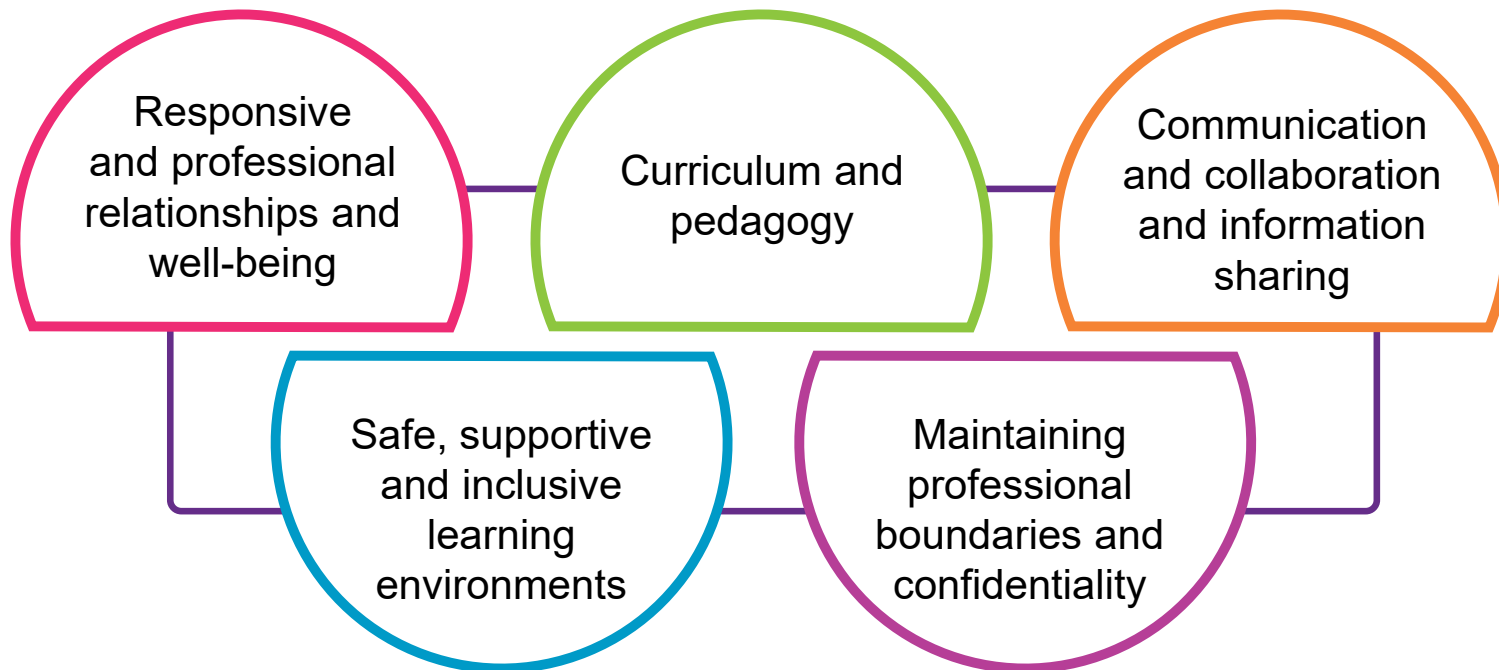


-
1. Inform and guide the practice and conduct as professional
 2. Influence the communication and collaboration with others
 3. Contribute to shaping the professional identity as part of a professional community of RECEs
-



Applying your Skills and Knowledge

The **Standards of Practice** highlight:



Decision-Making and Using Professional Judgment

RECEs:

- are not technicians
- make complex, ethical decisions every day
- navigate “messy” and uncertain situations or work contexts is the work of professionals.



Accountability and Collective Responsibility



- Personal responsibility for practice decisions, actions and interactions with others
- Collective responsibility to support the accountability of colleagues
- Behaviours in personal life may reflect upon RECES as professionals and impact the profession





RECEs value lifelong learning

Reflective and intentional professional learners and leaders

- Contribute to improving quality in ECE for children, families and communities
- Adapt to changes in early learning and child care sector
- Apply research, theories and practices
- Collaborate to create inclusive and equitable environments
- Support advancement of the profession in workplaces and communities

**Curious,
competent and
rich in potential!**

Leadership

- Participate in the self-governance of the profession
- Engage in CPL and professional community, build connections and collaborate with partners
- Advocate in the interest of children, families, RECEs and the early years sector
- Support the advancement of the profession
- Provide mentorship, support and guidance to colleagues, students and those new to the profession
- Empower others to lead

“All RECEs are leaders regardless of position or title.” Standard IV



Statement of Commitment to Anti-Racism

Statement of Commitment to Anti-Racism

- Recognition of historical and ongoing harm caused by racism, both systemic and overt, against **Black People, Indigenous People and People of Colour**.
- Firm belief that **all people and all racial groups** deserve **equity** in all areas, including social, economic and political.
- **Change is necessary** to eliminate existing racial inequities, and education plays a critical role in driving that change.
- Committed to embedding **anti-racism into all of our work**.
- Necessary to fulfil our responsibility of **regulating a diverse profession** in the **interest of all children and families** in Ontario.

Integrity ~ Fairness ~ Inclusion ~ Respect



Statement of Commitment to Anti-Racism

- The College as an organization
- The College as the self-regulatory body of the profession – some examples:
 - Identifying and removing barriers to entry to the profession that disproportionately affect certain groups such as Black people, Indigenous people and People of Colour
 - Continuing to support culturally responsive and reflective anti-racist pedagogy
 - Seeking out and elevating diverse voices of leadership within the profession
- The College as a stakeholder in the early learning and child care sector



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism

Diversity and Culture



The following terms have been defined in many different ways in various documents and by different cultural groups and organizations.

What is Diversity? It is the differences and uniqueness that each person brings to the early years setting.

What is Culture? Is the understanding, pattern of behaviour, practices and values that a group of people share.

The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, 2017

Equity and Inclusion



Equity: A state in which personal or social circumstances are not obstacles to being included and supported to achieve equal educational outcomes and well-being among all children. An early years environment that is equitable recognizes, values and builds on the diversity of each child and family.

Inclusion An approach to policies and practice in early years settings where all children and families are accepted and served within a program and where each child and family experiences a sense of belonging and is supported to participate fully in all aspects of the program or service. Inclusive practice includes being attentive to the capabilities, personalities and circumstances of all children and understanding the diversity of development of all children.

The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice (2017)

Anti-Racism



Anti-Racism recognizes the existence of systemic racism, and actively seeks to identify, remedy, and prevent racially inequitable outcomes, power imbalances between groups and the structures that sustain these inequities.

[Ontario Public Service Anti-Racism Policy | ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca)

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti- Racism



Critical Reflection

Becoming aware of and understanding diversity, culture and anti-racism is critical in order to achieve inclusion and equity.

Ongoing reflection to become aware of the ways that differences and similarities among individuals and groups of people impacts their experiences.



Visible and Invisible Features



Relationships

Code of Ethics says that:

RECEs recognize the uniqueness and diversity of children and families.

They respect each child's potential and **develop and maintain responsive relationships** with children and their families.

RECEs provide with meaningful opportunities to engage in and contribute to the learning environment.

As an RECE, you also **establish positive, collaborative relationships with your colleagues by demonstrating respect, trust and integrity.**



Intersectionality



- Race, class, gender, sexuality and other individual characteristics “intersect” or overlap.
- People are affected by different combinations of their identities.
 - The experience of a queer Black man will differ from the experience of a straight Black woman.
- This is not a hierarchy; it’s an observation that allows us to be aware of and analyse power imbalances and **to address all forms of oppression.**



Examples of diverse contexts

A colleague speaks Arabic, French and some English. She is Muslim and lives in a family structure that includes her parents, siblings and other extended family members. She was educated abroad but is having difficulty finding full-time work in Ontario. While she works part time as an assistant in a child care centre, she has signed up for language classes to support her in securing a full-time job.

A school-age child in your practice setting was raised in an adoptive family who recently helped him reconnect with his mother, an Inuk woman. The child is learning to speak Inuktitut through Elders in the birth mother's community. He is interested in sharing what he is learning about his heritage and language with the other children at school.



Critical Reflection: Relationships across Cultures

Consider the following:

- People and families have complex past and present lived realities, experiences and life circumstances and differing:
 - traditions, beliefs, perspectives, experiences, knowledge, language and ways of learning and relating. Schedule events or activities, such as family meetings or field trips, outside of religious holidays, or other days of significance to the family
 - levels of trust in others and in sharing personal information, particularly with those considered to be in authoritative roles.
 - different experiences with early learning services and professionals (e.g., child care, school, family support, child protective services or resource consultants).
 - goals and aspirations for their child(ren).
 - relationships with one another, their unique structure and status (e.g., socioeconomic, legal, immigrant or marital).



Communicating across Differences

Internal factors	External factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beliefs and biases• Interpersonal skills• Knowledge and life experiences• Languages spoken / language learners• Interpretations of ideas expressed, body language or voice tone and level• Disabilities (visible or invisible) (e.g., deaf, blind, people with diverse mental processes and outlooks)• Comfort level and confidence• Cultural beliefs and practices• Power dynamics in professional relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Availability (i.e., work and family responsibilities)• Appropriate and adequate timing• Cultural holidays or days of significance• Workplace limitations (e.g., environment, location, opportunities for connection or lack of privacy)• Access to phone, email, Internet or other technological platforms• Different schedules and routines• A family's legal situation



Pause and Reflect



Think about the following multi-dimensional aspects of human identity to give you insights into

- your own identity,
- the identity of members of your family
- the identity of members in your professional community – children, families and your colleagues

How does your culture and identity influence your professional practice?



Think about...

- Your position in society (i.e., the barriers and advantages you and others have).
- The inequities that people in different communities' face.
- The ways your culture may have shaped your beliefs and biases about others and the world.
- The ways that different social identities may knowingly or unknowingly be reflected in the physical and social environment (i.e., gender-stereotypes, heteronormativity, racial, colonial or religious messages).
- How informed you are about current events, legislation, research and information about the profession and political changes that impact the sector or certain communities.
- Workplace policies and practices. Do they promote equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism practices?
- How supported or prepared you feel to speak out against and dismantle racism. What do you need to be supported? Who can you reach out to?



Beliefs and Biases

Reflecting on Beliefs and Bias



Personal values and beliefs are powerful filters that shape how one perceives the world, themselves and other individuals and groups.

If practices are unknowingly shaped by stereotypical beliefs and biases, the ability to provide welcoming, supportive, collaborative and equitable environments is hindered.

Without considering how one's beliefs and biases guide thoughts, words, actions and professional practice, one runs the risk of unintentionally harming others. (excluding, silencing, shaming, rendering identity invisible or “othering”).



Reflecting on Beliefs and Bias

It is critical to learn about the beliefs and biases that underpin:

- thoughts, behaviours and actions
- decision-making processes
- professional judgment
- how you communicate and socialize
- the pedagogical observations you record or document
- how you develop and implement programs for children and families with your colleagues – who also hold their own beliefs and biases



Beliefs → Assumptions

With colleagues, consider the following beliefs, biases and assumptions. Discuss the varying degrees and types of potential harms they may pose to any member of the learning community.

Long hair is feminine. As a result, an RECE assumes that boys with long hair are feminine and girls with short hair are masculine.

A child from a same-sex family would dress in a certain way. As a result, the child's appearance surprises an RECE.

Children from some cultures are athletic. As a result, an RECE is surprised to find them reading.

Certain foods are unhealthy. As a result, an RECE assumes that children who eat processed food have parents who lack knowledge about nutrition or don't care about their child's health.



Professional Resources to Support Continuous Professional Learning

Practice Guideline on Diversity and Culture (2020)

Practice Guideline



October 2020

Diversity and Culture

Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) respond to the uniqueness of individuals and groups of children. They identify appropriate strategies, access the necessary resources and design curriculum to ensure full participation of all children, taking into account ability, cultural and linguistic diversity and Indigenous identity. They provide all children with opportunities for engagement, exploration and expression.

- Standard II: C.4, Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, 2017

The *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* (Code and Standards) demonstrates "a respect for diversity and a sensitivity to the multicultural character of the Province" (*Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*). It outlines the profession's core beliefs and values that are care, respect, trust and integrity. All RECEs are responsible for upholding them to guide their professional practice and conduct.

More attention is being placed on becoming aware of and understanding what diversity and culture mean in theory and professional practice. Learning on this topic includes ongoing self-reflection and collaboration with others to become aware of the cultural differences and similarities among individuals and groups of people. This resource is designed to help you co-create welcoming and supportive environments with children, families and colleagues from various communities, nations, cultures, backgrounds and social structures that may differ from your own.

You can use this resource to help you learn about:

- the importance of reflecting on your beliefs and bias, and to consider how they influence practice;
- ways to build relationships and communicate across differences;
- how to co-create culturally responsive, inclusive learning environments that embed diverse perspectives; and,
- the significance of leadership in inclusive practice and policy development and review.



Figure 1: Educator with a group of children outdoors

Respect for Indigenous culture

Michelle is an RECE with 15 years of experience working in a child care centre. She has just returned from a weekend conference, where she heard an Anishinaabe Elder share opening and closing prayers, some stories, songs and smudging. Having just read the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, Michelle is inspired and eager to respond to the calls to action. She immediately starts searching the Internet to learn more about indigeneity and ways that she can start indigenizing her preschool learning environment to make it an inclusive space.

Over the next few weeks, she adds posters of The Seven Grandfather Teachings and a new round rug depicting the Medicine Wheel. When the children gather together in a circle, she offers to smudge them using the information from the Internet. Michelle is feeling good about putting into practice the things she has learned.

One day, Michelle is asked to meet with her supervisor. The supervisor informs her that they received a call from one of the families. The parent would like to know where or who gave Michelle these teachings, items and information. The information and teachings she is giving the children are not reflective of the local Indigenous community.

Reflection questions

- Consider Michelle's ideas and actions.
 - Why might this situation be problematic?
 - How could indigenizing the space in this way impact Indigenous children and families' sense of identity, belonging and well-being?
- What other resources could Michelle access to support inclusion in the environment and to ensure that Indigenous identity is respected and valued?



Equity and Inclusion



- Seek to understand systemic racism and how it functions and how to address it
- Consider how beliefs and biases impact professional practice and children, families and colleagues experiences
- Understand the power of language. Reflect on the words you choose. Are the word choices exclusionary, stereotypical or hurtful to any cultural group? Learn and use accurate language when discussing human differences.
- Learn essential words, symbols or phrases in the child and family's language.
- Use multiple mediums to showcase children's play, certain ideas or schedules.
- Support the official language of the program (i.e., speak the Indigenous language used in the program or speak French in a francophone program)
- Engage in professional discussions with a community of practice to promote culturally responsive practices.
- Advocate for children, families and colleagues
- Continuous professional learning: a desire to grow as a professional, learn with and from diverse individuals and groups to see multiple views and perspectives



Equity and Inclusion

Supervisors and Employers can:

- Engage in critical reflection to examine policy and practices
- Talk about and address racism and discrimination in your workplace
- Demonstrate an anti-racist approach and support staff to do the same
- Support others to be aware of and accountable for their actions



Practice Resources

Practice Guideline
 cece
 college of
 early childhood
 educators
 July 2020

Pedagogical Practice

Registered early childhood educators (RECEs) are knowledgeable about current learning theories and pedagogical and curriculum approaches that are based on inclusion and inquiry and play-based learning.

Standard B: B.2, Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, 2017

The Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007 describes an RECE's practice as the planning and delivery of inclusive play-based learning and care programs that promote children's well-being, their sense of belonging and overall development. To fulfil these responsibilities, you:

- develop caring and responsive relationships with children and families
- communicate collaboratively with the learning community
- engage in ongoing professional learning to support your pedagogical practice
- generate an environment that fosters curiosity and inclusion

In this practice guideline, the learning community consists of children, families and colleagues.

You can use this resource to help you learn about:

- your professional role and responsibilities related to your pedagogical practice
- the relationship between pedagogy and curriculum
- the significance of inquiry and play-based learning, collaborative relationships and critical reflection
- strategies to guide pedagogical observation, documentation, planning, implementation, assessment and adaptation
- ways to use professional judgment and demonstrate leadership in pedagogical practice

It also provides practical examples, scenarios and reflection questions to help you think about your practice, discuss ideas, test theories and share learning with others in the community.

In your daily practice with children, families and colleagues — the learning community — you create pedagogical experiences that foster the joy of learning.

Practice Note
 cece
 college of
 early childhood
 educators

Professional Supervision of Supervisees

Practice Notes support Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) in understanding and applying the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice by examining a specific topic and providing practical guidance.

RECEs hold positions of trust and responsibility, not only with children under their professional supervision, but also with supervisees. Many RECEs working in a variety of roles and settings provide professional supervision of supervisees, so this practice note can apply to all RECEs.

You can use this resource to:

- Understand what professional supervision of supervisees involves
- Support supervisees in their practice
- Understand how professional supervision of supervisees can be an opportunity for RECEs to enhance their own professional practice

What is professional supervision of supervisees?


The College defines supervisee as any adult who is under an RECE's direct supervision including, but not limited to, the following:

- Other RECEs
- Staff (early childhood assistants, apprentices and administration)
- Students (high school co-op and post-secondary placement)
- Volunteers (students, families and community members)

Professional supervision of a supervisee occurs when an RECE, regardless of title, position or point in their career, holds a position of trust over a supervisee. By drawing on collective knowledge and experience, you help supervisees solve problems, create solutions and improve professional outcomes for children and families (Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, 2017).

College of Early Childhood Educators | Professional Supervision of Supervisees | April 2020

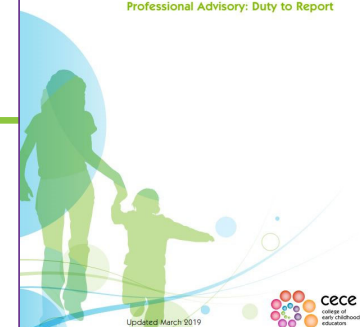
Case Study 8
 Balancing Supervisory Responsibilities



cece
 college of
 early childhood
 educators

cpl
 college of
 professional
 leadership

Reflection Guide
 Professional Advisory: Duty to Report



cece
 college of
 early childhood
 educators

Updated March 2019

#StandardsinPractice



To find additional resources go to college-ece.ca/resources





Thank You

Be a part of the RECE community year-round!



college-ece.ca