



Standards for Early Childhood Education Post-Secondary Programs

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Note: Underlined terms can be found in the glossary.

To ensure you are accessing current information, please refer to the online version of this document at <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/pd/EarlyChildhoodEducationTraining.shtml>.

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Context

Standards for early childhood education post-secondary programs are criteria upon which early childhood education training programs are measured. The standards are established by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) and specify minimum criteria and learning outcomes beyond the regulatory requirements under the Private Career Colleges Operational Regulations.

Training standards are an industry measure used whenever the Department of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) requires a review of a new or existing diploma program. Under the Private Career Colleges Act, the department has the authority to approve a private career college program on successful completion of an industry review by the standard holder, in this case, EECD. Community colleges, though subject to other review processes, also use these standards as the foundation upon which their early childhood education programs are designed.

Current literature—on the professional practice of early childhood educators (ECEs) in group settings, on approaches undertaken in other jurisdictions across Canada, and on the status of the early childhood education system in Nova Scotia—was instrumental in the development of the standards. Particular attention has been given to the following provincial and national resources:

- *Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework—Pilot, April 2017* (Province of Nova Scotia: the final publication entitled *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework* will be released in 2018)

Nova Scotia's early learning curriculum framework describes a shared Image of the Child, sets broad learning goals for children, and relies on authentic assessment in early childhood education centres. The framework also emphasizes the importance of relationships, the child's family and community, and identifies exemplary pedagogical practices for ECEs.

- *Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators* (Child Care Human Resources Sector Council 2010)

These national standards describe the scope of practice for ECEs in a variety of settings; the skills and abilities required to perform that work; and the core knowledge an individual must acquire to adequately perform the work.

- *Quality Matters—Continuous Quality Improvement: A Guide for Licensed Child Care Centres* (Province of Nova Scotia 2018)

Quality Matters is a provincial quality improvement program for early childhood education settings delivered by EECD. It emphasizes the importance of continuous quality improvement, which includes examining, reflecting on, and systematically improving the quality of all aspects of early childhood education programs.

Note: While colleges may wish to design their programs to allow for students to be knowledgeable of early learning frameworks in any jurisdiction, it is most likely that students will be completing supervised practicum placements in Nova Scotia. Any person working in an early childhood education setting in Nova Scotia should be aware of the framework's existence and content.

Scope of Practice in Early Childhood Education

“Scope of practice” describes the collective actions, decisions, and procedures that ECEs are responsible for carrying out in their work. The scope of practice for ECEs draws on multiple types of knowledge, and demonstrates the integrated nature of the learning outcomes of a post-secondary early childhood education program.

In recent years, the scope of practice has expanded due to greater awareness of the long-term effects of children’s early experiences. ECEs have seen their profession grow to include working with vulnerable children and their families, including newcomers to Canada who may have experienced trauma, and children who may have a variety of developmental challenges, autism, and medically complex conditions. These issues often mean ECEs are involved in collaborative case management with other professionals.

Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia’s Early Learning Curriculum Framework has also introduced new expectations for ECEs to include different types of reflective practice, child observation, pedagogical documentation, and communication with parents and children’s professionals in their work. As well, the introduction of *Quality Matters* requires ECEs to lead or be involved in a process of continuous quality improvement.

ECEs may be employed with regulated child care programs, pre-primary programs, early intervention programs, family resource programs, hospital-based children’s programs, literacy-based programs for young children and their families, and many other types of settings where young children and their families are the focus of a program’s purpose.

Learning Outcome Connections

The following areas outline the scope of practice for ECEs in Nova Scotia and connect to each of the learning outcomes. Refer to Appendix A: Scope of Practice and Learning Outcomes Framework for additional information.

- 1. Child development:** ECEs use their in-depth knowledge of child development and learning theories, and are influenced by their values and cultures to form an Image of the Child. Skilled in observational techniques, ECEs use their insights to reflect on their practice both on their own and with colleagues. They continually refine their Image of the Child, and draw on it to design learning environments, assess their practice, and engage with children and families.
- 2. Relationships:** ECEs understand that maintaining strong, positive relationships contribute to healthy child development. They appreciate that their relationships with children, families, colleagues, and the community are necessary for children’s well-being and learning. These relationships must be developed based on mutual respect for cultural, linguistic, and social differences. ECEs implement positive and supportive strategies for guiding children’s behaviour, and understand and apply principles and strategies for conflict resolution and negotiation with both children and adults. They seek support in maintaining relationships, and support others, when needed.

ECEs recognize, respect, and honour the primary role of the child’s family, appreciating the diversity of family types, cultures, languages, and customs. They welcome families to early childhood settings, and provide information to parents to make children’s learning visible, share the curriculum’s purposes and learning goals, and provide documentation to parents about their child’s activities. They appreciate

their relationship with the child's family, and share communication about the child while respecting confidentiality.

3. **Diversity and inclusion:** ECEs appreciate diversity in culture, language, gender, and developmental abilities. They understand principles of inclusion, and demonstrate this in their relationships, pedagogical practices, in planning children's activities, and in designing and maintaining indoor and outdoor learning environments. They articulate their respect for diversity to others, and incorporate these values into procedural statements and observable practices for their early childhood education programs.
4. **Pedagogy:** ECEs work collaboratively with children, families, and colleagues. They draw from their professional knowledge of child development, daily observation and reflection, learning theories, and the pedagogical principles, practices, and learning goals of early learning frameworks to co-construct, implement, document, and assess child-centered, inquiry- and play-based learning experiences.
5. **Health and safety:** ECEs demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between human development and principles of health and safety, universal precautions, and the concept of reasonable risk-taking in children's play. They incorporate their knowledge into planning for nutrition, implementing food safety protocols, hygiene, designing indoor and outdoor learning environments, and developing daily learning activities for children.
6. **Observation and documentation:** ECEs use their professional observations and findings to make necessary referrals to child specialists and alert families to learning challenges. They confer with families to design and implement learning and behaviour strategies for children. They consult with supervisory staff on matters related to pedagogical practices, relationships, and program management. They also identify and declare their own conflicts of interest as required, and are aware of and maintain professional boundaries with children and families.
7. **Program evaluation:** ECEs are knowledgeable about quality in their practice, programs, leadership, and management of their work environments. They are familiar with a variety of approaches to be able to conduct program assessment. They collaborate with their colleagues to plan for continuous quality improvement, reach consensus on goals, indicators, and timelines, and carry out agreed-upon actions for quality improvement.
8. **Professionalism:** ECEs are familiar with provincial acts, regulations, and policies and understand the implications of them, such as mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect, on their practice. They can explain the processes for such reporting and pay attention to potential or future changes to legislation and policies that may impact their practice. ECEs act on their professional responsibility to advocate for meaningful change.

ECEs demonstrate and maintain professionalism in all their relationships and communication with children, parents, colleagues, community partners, and provincial officials. They seek professional counselling for themselves as needed. As active members of professional organizations, they regularly participate in professional development opportunities. ECEs maintain current knowledge of new research and trends in early learning and early childhood education. Professional courtesy is consistently demonstrated by ECEs in their work habits and attitudes; they practice leadership skills and welcome opportunities to share their expertise.

Post-Secondary Early Childhood Education Standards

Standard 1: Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are directly linked to the scope of practice for ECEs. Knowledge is developed by pre-service ECEs through their post-secondary studies in early childhood education which then informs and guides their roles, responsibilities, and practices.

Graduates of an early childhood education diploma program reliably demonstrate in-depth knowledge of early childhood education and apply this knowledge to their practices.

1. **Child development:** *The graduate of an ECE diploma program will reliably demonstrate in-depth knowledge of child development and learning theories and apply such knowledge to their practice. The graduate will be able to*
 - a. explain the historical and social foundations of early childhood education
 - b. describe the stages of emotional, social, physical, and cognitive development in typically developing children from birth to age 12
 - c. recognize the characteristics of developmental delays, giftedness, and learning disabilities in children and develop appropriate strategies to support their learning
 - d. explain the different learning styles, and how to develop learning experiences for each one
 - e. explain and demonstrate strategies for guiding children's behaviour
 - f. conduct comparative studies of child development theories, and learning theories and approaches
 - g. explain the concept of the Image of the Child and develop their own

2. **Relationships:** *The graduate of an ECE diploma program will reliably demonstrate an awareness, appreciation, and modeling of positive relationships, and apply such knowledge to their practice. The graduate will be able to*
 - a. explain the principles of developing and maintaining mutually respectful and supportive relationships
 - b. support children in forming positive relationships with other children
 - c. form relationships with children of different ages and abilities
 - d. value and form relationships with parents and families of children
 - e. encourage parental engagement
 - f. maintain professional boundaries with children and families
 - g. explain the differences between conflict resolution and conflict management, and demonstrate strategies and techniques for each one
 - h. explain the importance of professional relationships both within the early childhood education sector and its related professions

- i. model positive and professional relationships with colleagues and supervisors
 - j. build and maintain professional relationships with boards of directors, management, colleagues, community members and organizations, and other professionals such as child specialists and teachers
 - k. be a member of provincial or regional professional organizations and understand their purposes and policies, and follow their research and policy work to stay current with emerging trends and knowledge, such as the Canadian Child Care Federation, Association for Young Children International, Canadian Association for Young Children, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, and Child Care Resource and Research Unit
 - l. explain the role of advocacy in the early childhood education profession
- 3. Diversity and Inclusion:** *The graduate of an ECE diploma program will reliably demonstrate an understanding of and appreciation for diversity and inclusion, and apply such knowledge to their practice. The graduate will be able to*
- a. apply theories and principles of inclusion in an early learning environment
 - b. demonstrate an understanding of socio-cultural theories and influences on children and families
 - c. explain how linguistic abilities, and social and cultural influences impact learning and development
 - d. explain the impacts of familial and societal issues on children’s learning and development, such as
 - poverty
 - mental health
 - family violence
 - addiction
 - chronic illness
 - disability
 - family death
 - family break-ups
 - e. plan and implement inclusive learning environments for children
 - f. identify considerations when planning an inclusive work environment for colleagues
 - g. demonstrate knowledge of the diverse linguistic, cultural, and economic realities of newcomers to Canada
 - h. demonstrate awareness and appreciation of Nova Scotia’s cultural diversity
 - i. be aware of individual circumstances and apply strategies to support children living with the effects of trauma
- 4. Pedagogy:** *The graduate of an ECE diploma program will reliably demonstrate an understanding of early learning curriculum and pedagogical practices, and apply such knowledge to their practice. The graduate will be able to*
- a. demonstrate knowledge of Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia’s Early Learning Curriculum Framework and apply the framework’s learning goals and objectives to program planning and designing learning environments

- b. demonstrate knowledge of the pedagogical principles described in Nova Scotia's early learning framework and apply those principles to different age groups of children
 - c. demonstrate knowledge of early learning curriculum frameworks from other jurisdictions nationally and internationally
 - d. compare specialized curriculum approaches, such as Montessori, Reggio, Steiner, High Scope
 - e. use observation skills to inform pedagogical practices
 - f. explain different types of reflective practice, engage in it, and demonstrate the processes used and lessons learned
 - g. explain what is meant by inquiry and its implications for early childhood education pedagogical practices
 - h. describe the different types of play and explain the characteristics of each
 - i. demonstrate an in-depth understanding of inquiry- and play-based learning, as well as the supporting research and evidence
 - j. model inquiry- and play-based learning practices
 - k. design a play-based learning environment by planning indoor and outdoor learning environments for children of the same age group, such as infants, toddlers, preschool-age, school-age, and for children of mixed age groups
 - l. incorporate elements of nature in both indoor and outdoor learning environments
 - m. explain what is meant by environment as a teacher
 - n. demonstrate scaffolding techniques
 - o. explain the concept of self-regulation, why it is important, and how early learning experiences support its development
 - p. explain to parents how children learn through play (making learning visible)
 - q. explain the curriculum framework's purpose and learning goals to parents
- 5. Health and safety:** *The graduate of an ECE diploma program will reliably demonstrate an understanding of principles of health and safety for young children, and apply such knowledge to their practice. The graduate will be able to:*
- a. accurately apply the requirements set out in Nova Scotia's *Manual for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings* and related legislation on food safety
 - b. plan a three-week menu rotation, following food practices based on the requirements of the *Manual for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings*, with provisions for allergies, cultural or religious differences, and other food restrictions such as intolerances and sensitivities
 - c. explain and demonstrate safe and sanitary personal hygiene practices with children such as hand washing, sanitizing, diapering, and safe lifting
 - d. explain fire hazards and fire prevention strategies for indoor and outdoor learning environments
 - e. identify potential risks and hazards in indoor and outdoor learning environments, such as hazards on excursions, and explain the strategies used to address them
 - f. recognize the signs of the different forms of child abuse and neglect, and explain the ECE's responsibility for reporting and the processes required when reporting abuse and neglect
 - g. explain the benefits of reasonable risk-taking for children who are in their early years

- h. incorporate opportunities for reasonable risk-taking for children when designing indoor and outdoor learning environments
- 6. Observation and documentation:** *The graduate of an ECE diploma program will reliably demonstrate skills in Observation and Documentation, and apply these strategies in practice. The graduate will be able to*
- a. use a variety of observation techniques, including structured, controlled, and natural
 - b. be objective in recording observations
 - c. explain authentic assessment and the evidence to support the approach
 - d. explain the documentation process
 - e. document a child's learning using a variety of methods, such as learning stories, portfolios, check lists, and pictures
 - f. share observations with others, including colleagues, parents, supervisors, boards of directors, and children's specialists, and know how to make referrals, when appropriate
 - g. express thoughts and ideas clearly and concisely when initiating or responding to written and spoken communication with colleagues, parents, supervisors, boards of directors, and children's specialists
 - h. use appropriate grammar and vocabulary when initiating or responding to written and/or spoken communication
 - i. use appropriate technologies to facilitate documentation and administrative record-keeping
 - j. protect the sensitive information and the privacy and confidentiality of children and their families
- 7. Program evaluation:** *The graduate of an ECE diploma program will reliably demonstrate skills in program assessment, research and evaluation and apply these skills in practice. The graduate will be able to:*
- a. use basic research skills to interpret research studies and professional reports and incorporate this knowledge into their professional practices
 - b. conduct a literature review of quality in early childhood education settings
 - c. work with a team to develop assessment strategies to evaluate programs within the context of *Quality Matters*
 - d. develop program goals that are specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART)
 - e. develop program goals and objectives with measurements of success
 - f. understand and explain the process of continuous quality improvement
 - g. apply a systematic approach to problem-solving in an early childhood education setting
 - h. understand the mathematical and reasoning concepts and skills required to manage budgets and forecasts, monitor expenditures, and analyze the impacts of funding opportunities
 - i. remain current in research on early childhood education
- 8. Professionalism:** *The graduate of an ECE diploma program will reliably demonstrate professionalism, and apply this to all aspects of their practice. The graduate will be able to demonstrate competence in the following:*
- a. Professional behaviour**
 - i. demonstrate an understanding of and adhere to a code of ethics

- ii. make ethical decisions
- iii. recognize the importance of confidentiality, its limits, and the consequences of breaching it
- iv. demonstrate an awareness of conflicts of interest, and why it is necessary to identify and declare their own
- v. understand the importance of and model non-judgmental attitudes
- vi. manage their time and resources to meet deadlines for projects and tasks
- vii. take responsibility for their own actions and decisions, as well as the resulting consequences
- viii. productively respond to change
- ix. be open-minded and accepting of constructive feedback
- x. be professional in the workplace, such as awareness of tone of voice, respecting privacy, adhering to work hours, attendance policies, dress code, and other workplace expectations

b. Professional development

- i. establish personal learning goals
- ii. create professional development plans for themselves
- iii. explain the importance of ongoing professional development
- iv. access professional development opportunities and resources

c. Professional literature, information, legislation, and policies

- i. locate, select, organize, and document information using the appropriate technologies and information systems
- ii. understand the provincial requirements for obtaining “classification” under the Day Care Regulations
- iii. apply their knowledge of the following provincial legislation and standards
 - o Day Care Act
 - o Day Care Regulations
 - o Children and Family Services Act
 - o Children and Family Services Regulations
 - o Compliance and Enforcement Standards Pursuant to the Nova Scotia Day Care Act and Regulations
 - o Manual for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings
- iv. understand the United Nations’ *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and explain its relevance to early childhood education practices

The acquisition of knowledge and skills outlined above as learning outcomes applies to many aspects of the scope of practice for ECEs. Qualified ECEs integrate their knowledge and skills into their practices. Appendix A provides an overview of the integrated nature of the relevance of the learning outcomes to scope of practice.

Standard 2: Practicum

The practicum component of post-secondary early childhood education programs provides opportunities for students to practice and demonstrate their knowledge and skills gained through the curriculum in a real-world early childhood education setting. Practicum sites may include regulated child care centres, family home child care agencies, pre-primary programs, and other early childhood education settings that meet the criteria below.

Criteria for Practicum

Post-secondary early childhood education training institutions are responsible for ensuring the following criteria are met when offering students practicum experiences. Each student's practicum must

- include a minimum of 520 hours of supervised practicum experience
- be offered in units separate from other coursework and be identified on the transcript as courses with a pass or fail grade
- take place throughout the program and include clearly articulated progressive learning objectives that reflect the Learning Outcomes
- include a practicum handbook developed by the training institution, which is shared with the student, as well as the practicum site; it should outline roles, expectations, the Learning Outcomes, and other information the students should know about their placements
- be supervised and evaluated by a practicum advisor (faculty member) from the post-secondary training institution, whose role includes on-site visits and seminar sessions for students
- give students experience with children of all ages (e.g., infants, toddlers, preschool and school-age children) as well as experience with children who have additional support needs

Criteria for Practicum Sites

Post-secondary early childhood education training institutions must maintain a list of pre-approved practicum sites. At the time of approval, the site must meet the following criteria:

- meets all regulatory requirements that are applicable to the type of setting (a site with chronic non-compliance issues will not be approved and may lose their approval if previously approved)
- a pre-primary program site must have approval from their respective authority (regional centre for education or CSAP) to participate as a practicum site
- appoints a level 2 or 3 ECE to model learning and support the student

Note: Practicum students may not be counted in the centre's or program's ECE-to-child ratio requirement unless they are completing a workplace practicum.

Interacting with and Selecting Practicum Sites

Post-secondary early childhood education training institutions must

- approve practicum sites based on the staff's capacity to support a student

- ensure site staff clearly understand the roles and responsibilities associated with supporting a practicum student
- articulate the Learning Outcomes for practicums and communicate them to participating site staff and students
- attempt to offer each student at least one placement in a lab school (see p. 13 for more information) setting
- offer orientation sessions for supervising ECEs to familiarize them with the role and its responsibilities in supporting a practicum student
- assign a qualified practicum advisor to support the student (see p. 11 for more information)
- offer a seminar prior to students' first practicum to discuss expectations for professional conduct in the workplace
- offer seminar sessions for students as an opportunity for group discussions pertaining to practicum experiences
- base practicum evaluations on the Learning Outcomes and complete evaluations in consultation with practicum advisors, supervising ECEs, and practicum students

The practicum site must

- provide an orientation for students to the practicum site
- support the supervising ECEs and practicum student in performing their roles and fulfilling the expectations of practicum

Workplace Practicum Criteria

Workplace practicums are intended to allow current ECEs to continue to work and complete their early childhood education diploma. A workplace practicum is subject to all the criteria of the regular practicum as well as the student eligibility and site criteria below.

Workplace practicums are different from regular practicums for several reasons. Students who participate in workplace practicums

- work full- or part-time in an early childhood education setting
- are paid for their practicum because they are fulfilling practicum requirements through their workplace
- are counted in the early childhood education centre's or program's ECE-to-child ratio requirements

Students who wish to complete their practicum in their workplace must:

- have two years of full-time employment (minimum of 1,080 hours per year) in a licensed child care centre or pre-primary program at the time of enrolment in the training program, with details verified in writing by the employer
- be currently employed by a licensed child care centre or pre-primary program that has the capacity to support an employee or student on practicum

An approved workplace practicum site must:

- have a signed, written agreement with the early childhood education training program that outlines expectations, roles, and responsibilities when hosting an employee or student

- give the employee or student the opportunity to complete their practicum in a room and age group other than the one they typically work in
- provide a level 2 or 3 ECE other than the one the student typically works with, to function as the supervising ECE
- support the supervising ECE and employee or student in performing their roles and fulfilling the expectations of the practicum

If the site is not able to meet the workplace practicum criteria, the training program may work with the early childhood education centre or program to provide a statement related to the challenges and how they intend to mitigate them. In some cases, this may not be possible, and the workplace may not be a suitable site.

Qualifications and Responsibilities for Practicum Advisors and Supervising ECEs

Practicum advisors must hold the following qualifications:

- a recognized early childhood education diploma or degree with three years of experience working in a regulated child care setting or pre-primary program

Training in mentoring and coaching adults in professional settings is considered an asset.

Practicum advisors are responsible for supporting students on practicum by

- consulting and maintaining communication with the early childhood education centres or programs, students, supervising ECEs, and post-secondary institution
- conducting on-site visits (at least two per practicum)
- facilitating seminar sessions for students
- observing and facilitating students' reflection on their practicum experience

Supervising ECEs (those who supervise practicum students in the workplace) must hold all of the following qualifications:

- be a level 2 or 3 ECE (Nova Scotia)

AND

- have one year of experience working in a regulated child care setting

Supervising ECEs support students on practicum by

- observing students
- providing on-going feedback and opportunities for reflective discussion
- evaluating students' progress throughout practicum
- participating in meetings with students and practicum advisors, as needed

If the supervising ECE has no previous experience, it is recommended that they participate in an orientation session with the post-secondary training institution to familiarize them with the role and the responsibilities of supporting a student.

Standard 3: Program Characteristics

Admissions

Post-secondary early childhood education training institutions are responsible for ensuring students admitted to an early childhood education diploma program are suited for the program, both academically and in disposition. Eligible students must have one of the following as defined in the Private Career Colleges Operational Regulations, subclauses 17(a)(i) to (iv):

- (i) a Nova Scotia high school graduation diploma as described in the Public School Program published by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development,
- (ii) a Nova Scotia High School Diploma for Adults issued by the Department of Labour and Advanced Education,
- (iii) a high school equivalency certificate obtained through a General Education Development (GED) testing service,
- (iv) a qualification from another jurisdiction that is equivalent to any of those referred to in subclauses (i) to (iii)

AND

All of the following:

- pass both a Vulnerable Sector Check and a Child Abuse Registry Check
- demonstrate proficiency in the language of instruction (English or French) including the ability to speak, read, and write clearly and correctly
- provide two character references documenting 25 hours of experience working with children and detailing the student's emotional maturity and suitability for this work
- have participated in a program information session offered by the training institution

Duration of Program

A post-secondary early childhood education program must

- include a minimum of 900 hours of coursework plus a minimum of 520 hours of supervised practicum experience as referenced in the Criteria for Practicum section
- provide ample opportunity for students to meet the Learning Outcomes as specified in Standard 1: Learning Outcomes

Instructor-to-Student Ratio

An engaging and interactive learning environment helps students get the most out of their post-secondary education; smaller class sizes facilitate this.

At least one instructor for each class of 35 or fewer students is the maximum class size ratio. A lower ratio should be considered for classes that involve a higher level of interaction and group activities.

Lab Schools

Post-secondary early childhood education training programs are expected to provide positive educational and training experiences. To achieve this goal, each training program must have a lab school available for students.

The post-secondary training program must present evidence of communication and collaboration with the lab school in the following ways:

- an advisory board that includes representation from faculty of the training program, students, facility staff, and parents
- the child care centre director periodically attends the training program faculty meeting
- demonstrate a clear link between the lab school and the courses being taught in the training program
- demonstrate how the lab school director and staff have knowledge and understanding of the philosophy and content of the training program
- consistency in philosophy and practice of the lab school and training program
- strategy to support ongoing communication between the staff of the lab school and students to ensure that students are provided with regular feedback and support related to their practicum experience

In addition, the lab school is required to

- ensure that all educator-to-child ratio staff are level 2 or 3 ECEs
- demonstrate that all ECEs employed at the lab school engage in on-going mentoring and professional development to strengthen their skills and ability to coach practicum students
- offer ease of access for students to the lab school for practicum, observation, and completion of course work
- emphasize current research and best practices
- implement the principles and practices as described in *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework*
- participate in continuous quality improvement as described in *Quality Matters*

The following criteria are assets to the functioning of the lab school:

- exceeds the minimum regulated space requirements, as per Nova Scotia's Day Care Regulations, to accommodate students present for observation and practicum
- provides an observation room with microphone(s) and observation mirror(s) that
 - facilitate groups of students observing simultaneously
 - enable students to see the entire room and hear the activities of the children's program
 - provide privacy from the children's program

Standard 4: Instructor Qualifications

Post-secondary early childhood education training program instructors must be able to verify and demonstrate the following:

- a diploma in early childhood education with at least four years of experience in a regulated child care centre, family home day care agency, pre-primary program, or other early childhood education setting

OR

- a degree in early childhood education with at least three years of experience in a regulated child care centre, family home day care agency, pre-primary program, or other early childhood education setting

Note: Private career college instructors with less than one year of experience teaching adults must meet the requirements of the Private Career Colleges Operational Regulations as follows:

- 23 (1) An instructor who does not have at least 1 year's experience teaching full-time in a critical evaluative setting must
 - (a) in their first year of employment as an instructor, enrol in an instructional methods or train-the-trainer program approved by the Director; and
 - (b) complete the program referred to in clause (a) within 3 years from the beginning of employment and provide the Director with written verification of enrolment and of completion.
- (2) In calculating a time period referred to in clause (1)(a) or (b), time spent as an instructor at different times at the same college or colleges under common ownership is cumulative.

Full-Time Lead Instructors

A full-time lead instructor must be appointed to oversee the ECE training program and have the following:

- a diploma in early childhood education with at least four years of experience in a regulated child care centre, family home child care agency, or pre-primary program, or other early childhood education setting

OR

- a degree in early childhood education with at least three years of experience in a regulated child care centre, family home child care agency, or pre-primary program, or other early childhood education setting

AND

- a Certificate in Adult Education or the qualifications or experience to evaluate, monitor, and assess adult learning

Non-Early Childhood Education Specific Course Instructors

Instructors who deliver non-early childhood education specific courses (e.g., general education components, communications, health, nutrition) may be approved on a course-by-course basis. These instructors must have the following:

- educational credentials related to their area of instruction

OR

- five years of experience related to their area of instruction

Note: Private career college instructors with less than one year of experience teaching adults must meet the requirements of the Private Career Colleges Operational Regulations as follows:

Instructor with less than 1 year's teaching experience

- 23 (1) An instructor who does not have at least 1 year's experience teaching full-time in a critical evaluative setting must
 - (a) in their first year of employment as an instructor, enrol in an instructional methods or train-the-trainer program approved by the Director; and
 - (b) complete the program referred to in clause (a) within 3 years from the beginning of employment and provide the Director with written verification of enrolment and of completion.
- (2) In calculating a time period referred to in clause (1)(a) or (b), time spent as an instructor at different times at the same college or colleges under common ownership is cumulative.

As well, instructors who deliver non-early childhood education specific courses may be approved from third party providers such as St. John Ambulance.

Glossary

advocacy: Actions to champion change, or to extend or improve early learning opportunities and supports to children, families, and ECEs.

authentic assessment: A form of assessment that measures children’s skills and abilities by observing how children perform in real-life every day activities; it is carried out through observations and documentation of children’s play, their interactions with peers, and conversations with parents, and other educators and professionals. Authentic assessment approaches “engage or evaluate children on tasks that are personally meaningful, take place in real-life contexts, and are grounded in naturally occurring instructional activities. They offer multiple ways of evaluating students’ learning, as well as their motivation, achievement, and attitudes.” (Epstein et al., 2004)

classification: An official process where an ECE’s qualifications are recognized as meeting the training requirements of Section 37 of the Day Care Regulations. ECEs may be granted classification at various levels, depending on education. Individuals apply for classification by completing an application form and submitting proof of their credentials according to the regulated criteria.

code of ethics: A document prescribing appropriate and expected behaviour from an individual in a particular role or industry. In Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Child Care Association (NSCCA) has published its own Code of Ethics, which is a compilation of beliefs regarding what is right rather than expedient; what is good rather than practical; and acts members must never engage in or condone.

confidentiality: An agreement set out in policy statements, a written agreement, or other type of mutual understanding that limits the amount or type of information that may be shared with others, such as other individuals, organizations, or media.

conflict of interest: A situation where a person or organization has competing interests. Typically, those competing interests undermine the impartiality of a person because of the competition between the person’s self-interest and the person’s professional interest. Conflict of interest usually indicates that the person may not be able to make a fair decision, or would not be perceived as making a fair decision.

continuous quality improvement: A process that ensures an organization is systematically and intentionally working to improve the quality of the programs and services they provide. Continuous quality improvement typically includes the development of a quality improvement plan, and a period of self-assessment, goal identification, selection of indicators and time frames, the development of an action plan, and a progress review. EECD has implemented *Quality Matters*, which places a focus on continuous quality improvement in the early childhood education sector.

curriculum: In early childhood education settings “curriculum” means the sum of experiences, activities, and events that occur within an inclusive environment designed to foster children’s well-being, learning, and development. This implies collaboration between ECEs, children, and parents.

curriculum framework: An established set of values, principles, goals, and strategies that encourage a shared sense of purpose and communication between parents and early childhood centres. A curriculum

framework is different from a prescribed curriculum because in early childhood settings, learning is integrated, episodic, experiential, and facilitated through social relationships. Curriculum frameworks guide the pedagogical practices of ECEs. *Capable, Curious, and Confident: Nova Scotia's Early Childhood Learning Framework* was piloted in 2017, with full implementation planned for 2018.

disposition: Enduring habits of mind and action; a tendency to respond in characteristic ways to situations.

diversity: Differences and unique qualities that each person brings to the early learning setting such as their culture and ethnicity, values and beliefs, language(s), abilities, education, life experiences, socio-economic status, spirituality, gender, age, and sexual orientation.

documentation: A systematic strategy for collecting information on the behaviour, emotional responses, interests, abilities, and patterns of development of an individual child or a group of children within a learning environment or aspects of that environment. Methods may include participant observation, portfolios, learning stories, developmental screening tools, checklists, anecdotal records, and daily recordings.

early childhood educators (ECEs): Qualified individuals who have earned post-secondary credentials in early childhood education. ECEs are competent, capable, curious, knowledgeable, caring, reflective, and resourceful. They bring diverse social, cultural, and linguistic perspectives to the early learning setting; and they collaborate with others to create engaging environments and experiences. ECEs foster children's learning and development while engaging in lifelong learning themselves. They take responsibility for their own learning and make decisions about how to integrate their knowledge from theory, research, personal experiences, and personal relationships with the children and families they work with. (Ontario Ministry of Education 2014)

environment as teacher: A concept used in early childhood education, where the environment provides children with a sense of beauty, allows for an organization of time, presents materials and activities for learning, provides space for play and exploration, encourages friendships and relationships, allows for privacy, recognizes diversity, and welcomes families. Loris Malaguzzi referred to this as the environment as "third teacher", and Maria Montessori referred to it as the "prepared environment". (Ontario Ministry of Education 2014)

Image of the Child: What people believe, understand, and assume about the role of children in education and society. This image includes how people think about children's capabilities, development, motivations, purpose, and agency. Social, cultural, and historical experiences influence a person's Image of the Child.

inclusion: The consideration of all children's social, cultural, and linguistic diversity, such as learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances, and geographic location, in curriculum decision-making processes. The intent is to ensure that all children's experiences are recognized and valued and that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, opportunities to demonstrate their learning, and learn to value difference.

inquiry: A disposition for learning, also described as wonder, curiosity, and imagination; a tendency to try new ideas and take on challenges. Inquiry also involves

co-inquiry: A learning and research process that helps educators to co-construct knowledge with children. It involves observation and documentation, reflection and interpretation, and planning.

critical inquiry: A process of gathering and evaluating information and ideas from a range of perspectives, followed by an analysis and evaluation of these ideas to gain a better understanding, leading to new ideas and questions.

professional inquiry: A culture established when ECEs and those they work with are all involved in an ongoing cycle of review where current practices are examined, outcomes are reviewed, and new ideas are generated. In such a climate, issues relating to curriculum quality, equity, and children's well-being can be raised and debated.

intentional teaching: A form of teaching that encourages ECEs to be deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions. Intentional teaching is the opposite of rote or continuing with traditions simply because things have always been done that way.

lab school: A fully functioning child care centre and model demonstration site where college students may observe best practices and learn to be ECEs.

making learning visible: The process of creating strong learning cultures using documentation as a tool to deepen and extend learning. Documentation of living moments (images, videos, artifacts, written, or audio recordings) is used to shape, extend, and make visible how and what children are learning.

observation: The ongoing process of watching, listening, and being attuned to children's behaviour, emotional states, interests and abilities, and patterns of development to meet their needs and evaluate their development and learning.

parent(s): A person or the people primarily responsible for the day-to-day care of children and taking on the commonly understood parenting role. The term parent refers to biological or adoptive parents, step-parents, legal guardians, or extended family such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

pedagogy: The understanding of how learning takes place and the philosophy and practice that supports that understanding of learning. Pedagogy involves ECEs' professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision-making, teaching, and learning.

play: A naturally occurring and freely chosen activity in which children are self-motivated. It is characterized by imagination, exploration, delight, capriciousness, and a sense of wonder. It reflects the unique experiences of children, and the various ways children express their ideas and feelings, and come to understand themselves, others, and their world.

play-based learning: A context for learning through which children organize and make sense of their social worlds, as they actively engage with people, objects, and representations. It is an educational approach that builds upon children's natural inclination to make sense of the world through play, and ECEs participate in play, guiding children's planning, decision-making, and communications, as well as extending children's explorations with narrative, novelty, and challenges.

The process through which learning happens in play is complex. ECEs continually develop and deepen their understanding of that process through professional learning and classroom observation, interpretation, and analysis.

professional boundaries: A term used to define appropriate boundaries between professionals and the public they serve. In early childhood education, ECEs must be sensitive to and aware of the occurrence of challenges to professional boundaries in their relationships with children, parents, and families.

quality: The demonstration of meeting the standards around certain criteria, such as human resources, staff qualifications, group size, ratio of ECEs-to-children, supports, methodology, environment, materials, interactions, activities, and child and family supports. When measuring quality in an early childhood education setting the perspective and experiences of children must always be considered.

reflective practice: A systematic process used by ECEs that forms the basis for intentional teaching. There are three types of reflective practice:

reflection-in-action: Occurs naturally and continually throughout the children's day, as ECEs engage in and observe children's activities.

reflection-on-action: Occurs after the fact, when ECEs reflect on the activities and interactions of the day, and question whether a situation may have been handled differently, or what new insights were gained as a result of children's interactions with each other or with adults. Such reflection can be done alone or in conversation with other ECEs.

reflection-for-action: Describes critical reflection. Critical reflection involves closely examining all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives. ECEs often frame their reflective practice within a set of overarching questions, and develop more specific questions for particular areas of inquiry. Critical reflection also considers Image of the Child and values held, framed against the present set of experiences and circumstances, with an eye toward future changes or actions.

scaffolding: A teaching strategy developed by Lev Vygotsky. The premise of the strategy is that children learn through social interactions (socio-cultural theories), and that children can be supported in their learning by another more knowledgeable person (peers, older child, or adult) who helps the learner move to the next level through questions, hints, or directions.

scope of practice: The collective actions, decisions, and procedures that ECEs are responsible for in their work.

socio-cultural theories: Theories that emphasize the central role that families and cultural groups play in children's learning; the importance of respectful relationships; and provide insight into the social and cultural contexts of learning and development.

Appendix A: Scope of Practice and Learning Outcomes Framework

The Learning Outcomes identified in Standard 1 are intended to prepare early childhood education graduates with the knowledge, competencies, and skills to fulfill the requirements of an ECE as outlined in the Scope of Practice statements.

The following table outlines how each of the Learning Outcomes support the scope of practice statements.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE	LEARNING OUTCOMES
<p>Child development: ECEs use their in-depth knowledge of child development and learning theories, and are influenced by their values and cultures to form an Image of the Child. Skilled in observational techniques, ECEs use their insights to reflect on their practice both on their own and with colleagues. They continually refine their Image of the Child, and draw on it to design learning environments, assess their practice, and engage with children and families.</p>	<p>Learning Outcome 1 – a through g Learning Outcome 2 – d, f, i Learning Outcome 3 – c, e Learning Outcome 4 – a, b, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, o, p Learning Outcome 6 – a through j Learning Outcome 7 – c, d, e, f</p>
<p>Relationships: ECEs understand that maintaining strong, positive relationships contribute to healthy child development. They appreciate that their relationships with children, families, colleagues, and the community are necessary for children’s well-being and learning. These relationships must be developed based on mutual respect for cultural, linguistic, and social differences. ECEs implement positive and supportive strategies for guiding children’s behaviour, and understand and apply principles and strategies for conflict resolution and negotiation with both children and adults. They seek support in maintaining relationships, and support others, when needed.</p> <p>ECEs recognize, respect, and honour the primary role of the child’s family, appreciating the diversity of family types, cultures, languages, and customs. They welcome families to early childhood settings, and provide information to parents to make children’s learning visible, share the curriculum’s purposes and learning goals, and provide documentation to parents about their child’s activities. They appreciate their relationship with the child’s family, and share communication about the child while respecting confidentiality.</p>	<p>Learning Outcome 1 – a through g Learning Outcome 2 – a through l Learning Outcome 3 – a, b, c, d, Learning Outcome 4 – a, b, e, f Learning Outcome 6 – a, b, f, g, h, j Learning Outcome 8 – A: i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii, viii, ix, x</p> <p>Learning Outcome 2 – a through g Learning Outcome 3 – a through i Learning Outcome 4 – o, p Learning Outcome 6 – a through j Learning Outcome 8 – A: i, ii, iii, iv, v, vii, viii, ix, x</p>

SCOPE OF PRACTICE	LEARNING OUTCOMES
<p>Diversity and inclusion: ECEs appreciate diversity in culture, language, gender, and developmental abilities. They understand principles of inclusion, and demonstrate this in their relationships, pedagogical practices, in planning children’s activities, and in designing and maintaining indoor and outdoor learning environments. They articulate their respect for diversity to others, and incorporate these values into procedural statements and observable practices for their early childhood education programs.</p>	<p>Learning Outcome 1 – b, c, d Learning Outcome 2 – a, c, d Learning Outcome 3 – a through i Learning Outcome 4 – a through p Learning Outcome 6 – g Learning Outcome 7 – d, e</p>
<p>Pedagogy: ECEs work collaboratively with children, families, and colleagues. They draw from their professional knowledge of child development, daily observation and reflection, learning theories, and the pedagogical principles, practices, and learning goals of early learning frameworks to co-construct, implement, document, and assess child-centered inquiry- and play-based learning experiences.</p>	<p>Learning Outcome 1 – a through g Learning Outcome 2 – b, c, d Learning Outcome 3 – e, f Learning Outcome 4 – a through p Learning Outcome 5 – a, d, e, g, h Learning Outcome 6 – a through j Learning Outcome 7 – b, through g</p>
<p>Health and safety: ECEs demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between human development and principles of health and safety, universal precautions, and the concept of reasonable risk-taking in children’s play. They incorporate their knowledge into planning for nutrition, implementing food safety protocols, hygiene, designing indoor and outdoor learning environments, and developing daily learning activities for children.</p>	<p>Learning Outcome 1 – b, c, e Learning Outcome 4 – a, b, e, f, j Learning Outcome 5 – a through h</p>
<p>Observation and documentation: ECEs use their professional observations and findings to make necessary referrals to child specialists and alert families to learning challenges. They confer with families to design and implement learning and behaviour strategies for children. They consult with supervisory staff on matters related to pedagogical practices, relationships, and program management. They also identify and declare their own conflicts of interest as required, and are aware of and maintain professional boundaries with children and families.</p>	<p>Learning Outcome 1 – b, c, d, e Learning Outcome 2 – a, d, e, f, g, h, i Learning Outcome 3 – a, through e Learning Outcome 4 – b, e, f, h, i, j, k, l, n, o, p Learning Outcome 5 – c, d, e, f, g, h Learning Outcome 6 – a, b, e, f, g, h, i, j Learning Outcome 8 – all of a and b</p>

SCOPE OF PRACTICE	LEARNING OUTCOMES
<p>Program evaluation: ECEs are knowledgeable about quality in their practice, programs, leadership, and management of their work environments. They are familiar with a variety of approaches to be able to conduct program assessment. They collaborate with their colleagues to plan for continuous quality improvement, reach consensus on goals, indicators, and timelines, and carry out agreed-upon actions for quality improvement.</p>	<p>Learning Outcome 2 – h, i, j Learning Outcome 6 – a through j Learning Outcome 7 – a through i</p>
<p>Professionalism: ECEs are familiar with provincial acts, regulations, and policies and understand the implications of them for their practice (e.g., processes for the mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect). They pay attention to potential or future changes to legislation and policies that may impact their practice. ECEs act on their professional responsibility to advocate for meaningful change.</p> <p>ECEs demonstrate and maintain professionalism in all their relationships and communication with children, parents, colleagues, community partners, and provincial officials. They seek professional counselling for themselves as needed. As active members of professional organizations, they regularly participate in professional development opportunities. ECEs maintain current knowledge of new research and trends in early learning and early childhood education. Professional courtesy is consistently demonstrated by ECEs in their work habits and attitudes; they practice leadership skills and welcome opportunities to share their expertise.</p>	<p>Learning Outcome 2 – h through l Learning Outcome 7 – c, f, i Learning Outcome 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A: i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii ▪ C: ii, iii <p>Learning Outcome 2 – d, e, f, i, j, k, l Learning Outcome 4 – b, f, o, p Learning Outcome 6 – f through j Learning Outcome 7 – a through i Learning Outcome 8 – all of A, B, C</p>

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