

## Continuous Professional Learning

Continuous professional learning is the systematic and intentional maintenance, enhancement and expansion of the knowledge, skills, ethical values and behaviours necessary to ensure ongoing, quality professional practice throughout a member's career.

*CPL Portfolio Handbook*

### Legislative Background for Ongoing Learning

The College of Early Childhood Educators (the College) is a self-regulatory body with a primary duty to serve and protect the public interest. One of the objects set out in the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*, is to “provide for the ongoing education of members of the College.” To meet this object, the College has designed a Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) program to promote high standards and quality assurance to best serve and protect the public interest. Ongoing learning is an ethical and professional responsibility of all registered early childhood educators (RECEs). The College's *Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice* states that all members engage in professional learning to stay current in the skills, knowledge and ethical values that are essential to the practice of early childhood education.

The *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, which was passed by Council as a by-law of the College, addresses the legislated object to establish and enforce the ethical and professional standards of members of the College. By-law No. 21 Code of

Ethics and Standards of Practice, enacted in December 2010, is applicable to all members of the College.

The College has developed *Practice Guideline: Continuous Professional Learning* to support RECEs in understanding their ethical and professional responsibilities in relation to their ongoing learning. A practice guideline assists in communicating certain expectations and duties of RECEs outlined in the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* and how RECEs may apply those expectations in their practice. A practice guideline is based on recommended practices and is not enacted by legislation. The *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* document should be consulted when considering practice guidelines.

### Expectations of Members

The emphasis on the value of ongoing education for members is not unique to the College of Early Childhood Educators as a self-regulatory body. In order to better serve and protect the public interest, most Ontario self-regulatory bodies have developed and implemented expectations specific to the ongoing education of members. These expectations vary in nature.

## Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

The *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* articulates the knowledge, skills and ethical values central to the work of registered early childhood educators.

The *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* guides and supports the continuous professional learning experiences of all RECEs. Engaging in continuous learning that is linked to the *Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice* supports RECEs in their efforts to develop and expand their skills, knowledge and practice of ethical values and behaviours that are essential to the profession.

“Early Childhood Educators value lifelong learning and commit themselves to engaging in continuous professional learning to enhance their practice.”  
*Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*

### Standard IV: Professional Knowledge and Competence

This standard outlines the expectation that “early childhood educators are current in their professional knowledge” and that “they access current evidence-based research and are able to transfer this knowledge into practice.” *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*

Participation in the CPL program is currently voluntary. However, RECEs are expected to engage in continuous professional learning throughout their careers as stated in the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*. The CPL program provides RECEs with a framework to support their engagement in continuous professional learning and facilitates reflection, planning and documentation in a meaningful way.

### Continuous Professional Learning

The concept that continuous professional learning is important to members of the early childhood education profession is well recognized amongst registered early childhood educators in Ontario. RECEs are aware of the need to enhance their own learning in order to support both children and families. RECEs demonstrate their commitment to ongoing professional learning by engaging in development opportunities that are designed to enhance professional competency and reassure the public and other stakeholders that the profession undertakes and values ongoing learning.

The Ontario public, particularly families with children who are in the care of early childhood educators, want to be assured that members of the profession are qualified to be in their roles and are

competent and up-to-date in their practice. They understand that members of the College must engage in continuous learning in order to meet the evolving standards of their profession.

### The Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) Program

The CPL program provides an inclusive, self-reflective and self-directed framework for members of the College to engage in continuous professional learning and strive for practice excellence.

Involvement in the CPL program is highly encouraged by the College as it supports RECEs in meeting their professional obligation to stay current in their skills, knowledge, values and practice. Participating in the program supports members to reflect on their learning in relation to ethical and professional standards, set learning goals and maintain documentation of structured and informal learning activities and strategies.

Members may choose the types of learning options that best suit their learning needs, interests and goals. They are not required to engage in a specific number of activities or hours of professional learning. The CPL program is accessible to all RECEs regardless of their individual circumstances.

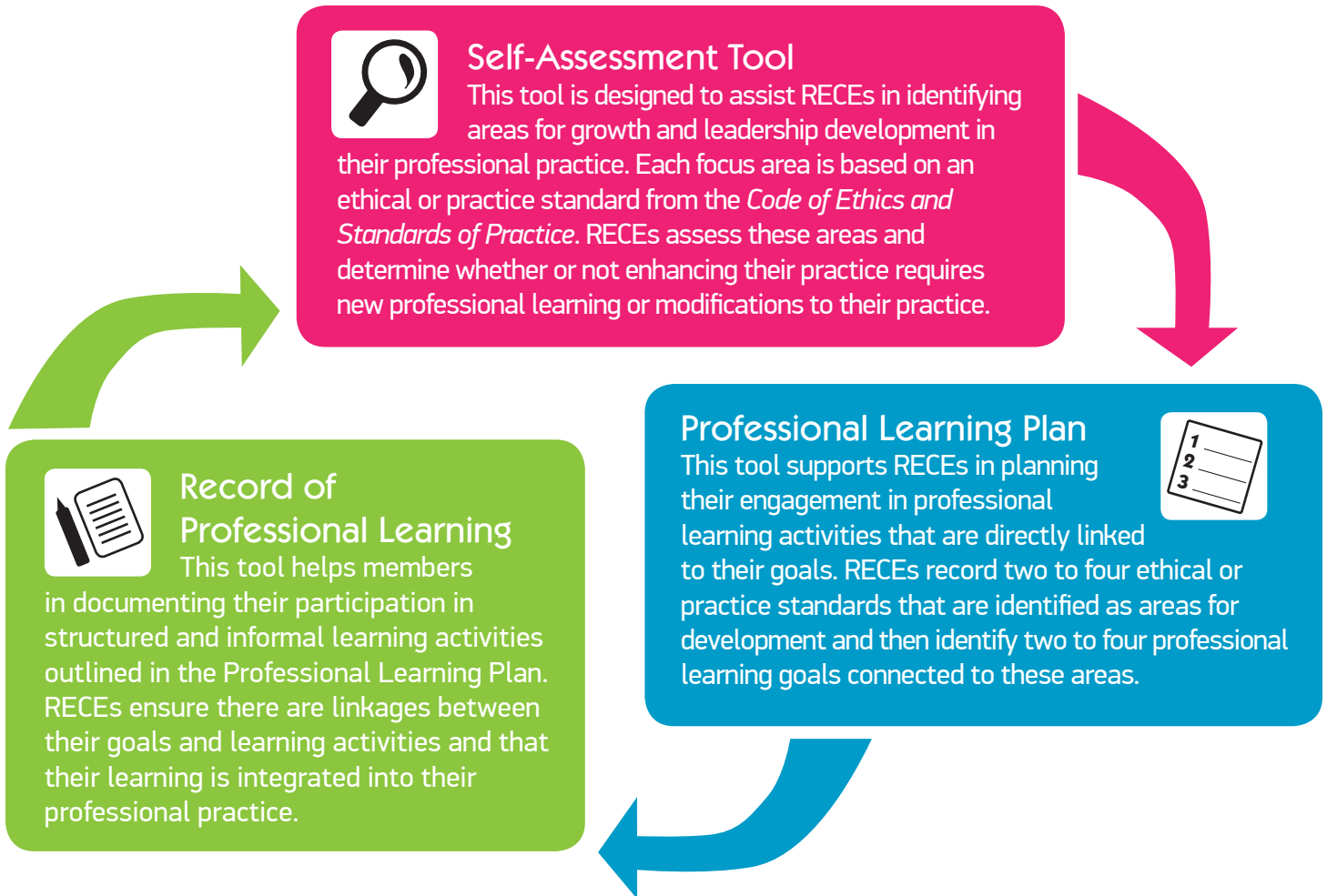
## CPL Introductory Phase

Member engagement in the CPL program begins with an online module called *Expectations for Practice: the Ethical and Professional Responsibilities of Registered Early Childhood Educators*. This is a web-based module that is available at no cost to members. The module guides members through the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*, and its related regulations and by-laws. Completing the module is the first recommended step to participating in the CPL program.

In the future, the College may develop other learning modules to support members and address specific ethical and professional practice issues.

## CPL Portfolio Cycle

The CPL Portfolio is comprised of three components that RECEs complete over a two-year cycle. The three components include a:



## Seeking Input and Support

Members participating in the CPL program are encouraged to seek input from their employer when completing their CPL Portfolio. Supporting an RECE in the program is at each employer's discretion. However, the College recognizes the potential of employer support to influence the quality of the programs and services offered to children and families. Employers may support RECEs with various continuous professional learning options such as training, mentoring, job shadowing or other opportunities.

It is also important to recognize the value of peer support when participating in the CPL program. Colleagues may offer their feedback, insights, and facilitate group discussion and reflection regarding learning and professional growth. The College encourages members to share their journey of ongoing learning with their colleagues and invite them to take part in the program.

Members may choose resources in their community to support them in meeting their CPL goals and seek

opportunities for networking and learning in communities of practice. Some of these resources include:

- Professional resource centres
- Community-based groups and networks
- Post-secondary institutions
- Local and provincial organizations serving early childhood educators or the early learning and care sector
- Municipal and provincial government
- Municipal, provincial or national conferences

### Continuous Professional Learning Scenarios: Inspired by Real-Life Experiences

As part of their self-assessment and reflection, members will use the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* to determine how broad or narrow their learning goals can be for each two-year cycle. The following scenarios provide members with some examples of continuous professional learning.

**Li Jing** works with a group of pre-school children in a licensed child care centre. Upon completing her CPL Self-Assessment Tool and developing a Professional Learning Plan, she began to observe and calculate the actual amount of outdoor playtime children experienced during the day. Li Jing’s goal was to create an outdoor classroom for her group to help them “understand their relationship to their natural environment and to the world” (Standard III: B.2). She did this by speaking with her co-educator and centre director and writing a list of natural resources that could be readily used. Li Jing also collaborated with other staff, researched recommended methods to increase outdoor learning,

found ways to enhance family involvement and documented the process for future initiatives.

**Paul** works in a family resource centre with parents and children from 0-6 years old. One of his learning goals was to develop his understanding of ways to support families of young children with special needs “by being respectful of diversity, equity and inclusion” (Standard I: E.). He began by reading journal articles about supporting parents of children with special needs. Paul also connected with the local public health nurse and several resource consultants. Receiving positive feedback and support from his supervisor motivated Paul to then develop a list of resources to share with colleagues and parents.

**After** completing the CPL Self-Assessment Tool, Reem decided to focus on her individual development by growing her leadership and advocacy capacity. She began by reading about leadership styles and worked on increasing her understanding of the profession as a whole. Reem’s next step was to speak with colleagues about the importance of their role as RECEs by bringing the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* to staff meetings for discussion. She also aimed to connect with parents with the goal of enhancing their understanding of the profession.

### Resources

Expectations for Practice Module\*  
CPL Portfolio Handbook\*

- Self-Assessment Tool
- Professional Learning Plan
- Record of Professional Learning
- Focus on Capacity Building tip sheets

Case Studies

Additional resources on the College’s website

\*Available as of September 2, 2014



To learn more about the College’s CPL program, please visit [college-ece.ca/CPL](http://college-ece.ca/CPL).

## Contact Us

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