

Practice Matters



Practice Matters features questions regarding the College and the early childhood education profession. Director of Professional Practice, Melanie Dixon RECE, addresses issues that members face and applies the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* to various situations.

Do you have a professional practice question? E-mail practice@college-ecce.ca for more information.

Does the College have rules and regulations for RECEs when using social media such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or YouTube?

For most of us, it is hard to envision our lives untouched by social media. Registered early childhood educators (RECEs) are not exempt from the effects of social media, and many utilize online communities to share personal and professional information.

As professionals, RECEs have a responsibility to be aware of issues that may arise while interacting within the social media environment. The College does not prohibit the use of social media by RECEs, nor does it have specific guidelines in place to direct member interactions. However, many of the standards from the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* apply to social media by addressing appropriate professional practice.

Standard V: B states that RECEs must “establish and maintain clear and appropriate boundaries in professional relationships . . . and do not violate those boundaries.” Additionally, Standard IV: E.2 states that RECEs are role models for children, families and other members of the profession and must “avoid conduct which could reasonably

be perceived as reflecting negatively on the profession of early childhood education.” For example, an RECE needs to consider the risks associated with accepting a Facebook friend request from a child, parent or colleague as this action may blur the line between the professional and the personal.

Another situation that might become compromising for members relates to confidentiality. Posting information and pictures of families and children that RECEs work with may seem harmless, but disclosing such content could breach privacy policies and be deemed as professional misconduct. Standard VI: A states that RECEs “respect the privacy of children under their professional supervision and the families of those children by holding in strict confidence all information about them and by complying with any applicable privacy and other legislation.”

RECEs are required to be aware of confidentiality agreements, social media privacy policies and legislation that pertains to their workplace and the families they serve. Members sometimes unintentionally forget to consider confidentiality when using social media. RECEs need to be aware that during an investigation of a complaint against a member, content posted on a social media site may be used as evidence. It is important to take some time to consider our actions and employ professional judgment prior to interacting and posting content on any social media site. ©

Put it into Practice!

Read Investigating Complaints on page 13.

Brainstorm with your colleagues

on how you could use social media

in a way that upholds your professional

reputation and the standards of the

profession while also enriching your

professional practice. What sites, blogs

or networks could be best suited

to this endeavour? Send the College your

ideas at practice@college-ecce.ca.