

Practice Matters



Practice Matters features questions regarding the College and the early childhood education profession. The College's 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-ece.ca for more information.



Previous columns of **Practice Matters** can be found on the Professional Practice section of the College's website, college-ece.ca

Q: My employer has recently instituted a new policy that prohibits employees from smoking within the immediate vicinity of the child care centre and strongly discourages any smoking during breaks and lunches. Am I required by the College to adhere to this policy?

A: According to Standard IV: A.2, registered early childhood educators are required to know, understand and abide by all policies and procedures relevant to their professional practice. This includes employer policies. Only in instances where there is a conflict between the College's ethical or professional standards and the policies or procedures of a member's workplace, would the member have an obligation to adhere to the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* and not the employer policy.

In this case, the employer's policy complements Standard III: Safe, Healthy and Supportive Learning Environments. Standard III requires that members maintain a safe and healthy learning environment for children and that they promote a healthy lifestyle, including but not limited to nutrition and physical activity. As a result, it appears that this policy reflects the research which emphasizes the importance of protecting children from the potentially harmful health effects of second-and third-hand smoke. 

Put it into Practice!

Review Standard III: Safe, Healthy and Supportive Learning Environments, and reflect upon your own practice as an RECE. Think about ways in which you promote a healthy lifestyle to the children under your professional supervision. Would you consider yourself to be a good role model?

Brainstorm ways to incorporate health, nutrition and/or physical activity into your curriculum. If this is an area of strength in your practice, consider taking a leadership role and encouraging your colleagues to consider ways to maintain and improve the health and safety of the learning environment.
