

# 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@collegeoefce.on.ca](mailto:practice@collegeoefce.on.ca) for more information.

## How do RECEs, who work directly with children, collaborate with colleagues when differing philosophies arise? How do RECEs support these differences and also ensure they adhere to the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*?

Registered early childhood educators are members of a diverse professional group and practise in a wide variety of early learning and care settings. The scope of practice outlined in the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007* asserts that RECEs plan and deliver “inclusive play-based learning and care programs for children in order to promote the well-being and holistic development of children.” Regardless of unique approaches to program implementation, all RECEs have a professional responsibility to ensure that the programming in their work environment meets these requirements.

While RECEs’ workplaces are wide ranging, so too is the scope of professional and personal knowledge which they bring to their work. Interpretations of play-based, developmentally appropriate programming will vary. Most RECEs working directly with children work with colleagues

who are experienced educators, those who are new to the field as well as student educators. Differences in opinion and style are bound to occur; it is how these differences are supported that creates positive workplaces and quality learning environments for children.

Standard IV: Professional Knowledge and Competence in the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* states that RECEs must “work collaboratively with colleagues in their workplaces in order to provide safe and secure, healthy and inviting environments for children and families.” (Standard IV. C.1) Collaborating and building a climate of trust and respect with fellow colleagues is achieved through positive interpersonal skills and by using clear verbal and written communication.

When differences of opinion arise, employing these communication strategies is essential to building consensus. If an agreement cannot be reached and the program suffers due to significant differences in approaches, RECEs should refer to the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, as well as workplace policies and procedures for guidance. When consulting these documents and addressing them in the workplace, it is important to remember to “interact with colleagues and other professionals in ways that demonstrate respect, trust and integrity.” By doing so, RECEs support one another and also ensure adherence to the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*. 

### Put it into Practice!

Take some time to reflect on your own practice. What is your personal approach to programming and your style of communication with children, families and colleagues? Could you adapt your approach to support the philosophies and practices of colleagues and could you request that others do the same?