



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-ecce.ca for more information.

Practice Matters

While the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* frequently refers to children as the primary group who falls under an RECE's professional supervision, it is important for RECEs to be aware of their roles and responsibilities in the supervision of their colleagues. **Ethic C. Responsibilities to Colleagues and to the Profession** addresses supervision by requiring RECEs to "support experienced colleagues, those who are new to the profession and students aspiring to the profession."

Support and guidance goes hand in hand with professional supervision. Through their employment titles and roles, RECEs often have other staff, students or volunteers (i.e. supervisees) under their professional supervision. In a position of authority and trust, such RECEs "provide guidelines, parameters and direction... that respect [the supervisee's] rights. RECEs ensure a level of supervision which is appropriate in light of the supervisee's education, training, experience and the activities being performed (Standard IV: C.3)." In this way, RECEs are role models with the opportunity to demonstrate appropriate, quality supervisory skills that facilitate a secure learning environment for all.

The adage "safety comes first" cannot be underestimated. According to the Ontario Regulation 223/08, subsection 2(2), early childhood educators are guilty of professional misconduct if they "fail to supervise adequately a person who is under the professional supervision of a member."

The phrase "professional supervision" is used throughout the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*. Can you explain who falls under the "professional supervision" of registered early childhood educators and what this entails?

A **Ethic A. Responsibilities to Children** of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* states: "Early Childhood Educators make the well-being and learning of all children who are under their professional supervision their foremost responsibility." In order to ensure the well-being and learning of children, RECEs must place the "safe and secure supervision of children based on age and stage of development" (Standard IV: B.1) as one of their highest priorities in their professional practice.

Keeping current attendance records, maintaining ratios and scanning the environment are fundamental to quality supervision but RECEs must consider other factors when working directly with children. For example, relevant medical conditions or guardianship and maintaining open lines of communication with families (Standards I and III) are essential in providing safe and healthy learning environments, and therefore appropriate supervision.

Put it into Practice!

Read "In the Public Interest" on pages 14 and 15. Take a look at the College's website for a complete list of disciplinary decisions, some of which address the neglect of duty in supervising children, colleagues and staff.

Read and reflect upon one of the decisions. In your practice, is professional supervision an area for growth and leadership development? How might you modify your practice or incorporate new learning to improve your supervisory skills?