

Q: I am concerned about the development of a child in my program. As a registered early childhood educator (RECE), what can I do to support this child? What steps should I take?

R: Whether a child may or may not be diagnosed with a disability or exhibit characteristics typical of some exceptionalities, all early childhood educators are required to “recognize children’s unique characteristics and access the resources necessary to adapt the early learning environment to suit the child (Standard II: A.2).” Furthermore, RECEs “must access current evidence-based research and are able to transfer this knowledge into practice (Standard IV: E.1).” It is your ethical and professional responsibility, as an RECE, to pursue and engage in the ongoing learning required to access the supports for each and every child in the program.

Early childhood educators do not work alone. From the moment a child enters a child care centre, a relationship between the educator, child and family begins to develop. A child’s family is your primary resource and chief collaborator. Standard I: C reminds RECEs to “strive to establish and maintain ongoing and open communication regarding the development and learning of a child...with the child’s parents and/or legal guardians.” Exchanging knowledge, resources and creating relationships with families “based on trust, openness and respect for confidentiality” (Ethic B) provides a foundation for discussing developmental concerns and determining necessary supports for a child.

In addition, RECEs often work with other professionals who provide guidance and direction when implementing strategies for children in need of additional supports. Reaching out to supervisors, colleagues and resource

teachers are important steps in helping you adapt the learning environment or create strategies. It is essential that educators, “working collaboratively with community resource persons and members of other professions, access the resources and expertise available in their communities (Standard IV: C.4).” In these situations, it is important that RECEs seek out available supports in their communities.

Careful observation and clear documentation is one of the best ways to initiate communication and collaboration with others. Standard IV: B.3 states that RECEs are required to “observe and monitor the learning environment and anticipate when support or intervention is required.” Observation and documentation enables and empowers early childhood educators to communicate their concerns, discuss next steps and be receptive to the expertise of families and colleagues. ■



Practice Matters features questions regarding the College and the early childhood education profession. The College’s Director of Professional Practice, Melanie Dixon RECE, and the Professional Practice team address issues that members face and apply 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.

Put it into Practice: What resources are available to you in your centre, community or online? Do you have access to current screening or observation tools? Review what you use to document children’s learning and development. Take stock, reflect and discuss with your colleagues.