



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.

Q: Following some discussion with colleagues, I am looking for clarification about how RECEs should behave outside of work hours. What are the College's expectations?

Consider the following...

All registered early childhood educators are part of a regulated profession and therefore are accountable for their conduct both during and outside of work hours. Though you may not be at work, you still hold the protected title and designation of RECE at all times. This indicates that you have committed to uphold the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* of the profession and are accountable as a trusted professional in your community, regardless of the situation or setting. This also means that if you fail to live up to the College's expectations, you can face allegations of professional misconduct ranging from failing to maintain the standards of the profession to conduct that is "unbecoming of a member" of the College.

According to Standard IV: E.2 of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, RECEs "recognize that they are role models for children, families, members of their profession, supervisees and other colleagues and avoid conduct which could reasonably be perceived as reflecting negatively on the profession

of early childhood education." This means that RECEs should reflect on their professional role and responsibilities, including but not limited to, the following situations:

- interactions with children, families, colleagues and supervisees outside of the workplace
- behaviour in all public settings (community events, public forums and spaces, etc.)
- postings on social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, etc.)
- communications with the College of Early Childhood Educators

It is important to remember that being recognized as a regulated profession depends on the trust and confidence of the public in individuals who hold the title of RECE. This means that the public must be assured that all RECEs conduct themselves in a professional and appropriate manner.

Families in Ontario associate the title and designation of RECE with qualified, accountable individuals who educate and care for young children and support families and communities. Therefore, RECEs are required to demonstrate a high standard of professional conduct both at work and outside of work, all of which is essential to the continued growth of the profession. ■

Put it into Practice: Reflect on your own identity as a professional outside of work. What does it mean to you to be part of a regulated profession? How do you want to be viewed by the public? Consider behaviours that could put your professional reputation at risk. Consult the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* and the *Professional Misconduct Regulation*.