Early Childhood Education Program Standard

The approved program standard for Early Childhood Education programs of instruction leading to an Ontario College Diploma delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 51211).

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for the Early Childhood Education programs of instruction leading to an Ontario College Diploma delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 51211).

Development of system-wide program standards

In 1993, the Government of Ontario initiated program standards development with the objectives of bringing a greater degree of consistency to college programming offered across the province, broadening the focus of college programs to ensure graduates have the skills to be flexible and to continue to learn and adapt, and providing public accountability for the quality and relevance of college programs.

The Program Standards Unit of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has responsibility for the development, review and approval of system-wide standards for programs of instruction at Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology.

Program standards

Program standards apply to all similar programs of instruction offered by colleges across the province. Each program standard for a postsecondary program includes the following elements:

- **Vocational standard** (the vocationally specific learning outcomes which apply to the program of instruction in question),
- **Essential employability skills** (the essential employability skills learning outcomes which apply to all programs of instruction); and
- **General education requirement** (the requirement for general education in postsecondary programs of instruction).

Collectively, these elements outline the essential skills and knowledge that a student must reliably demonstrate in order to graduate from the program.

Individual Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology offering the program of instruction determine the specific program structure, delivery methods and other curriculum matters to be used in assisting students to achieve the outcomes articulated in the standard. Individual colleges also determine whether additional local learning outcomes will be required to reflect specific local needs and/or interests.

The expression of program standards as vocational learning outcomes

Vocational learning outcomes represent culminating demonstrations of learning and achievement. They are not simply a listing of discrete skills, nor broad statements of knowledge and comprehension. In addition, vocational learning outcomes are interrelated and cannot be viewed in isolation from one another. As such, they should be viewed as a comprehensive whole. They describe performances that demonstrate that significant integrated learning by graduates of the program has been achieved and verified.

Expressing standards as vocational learning outcomes ensures consistency in the outcomes for program graduates, while leaving to the discretion of individual colleges, curriculum matters such as the specific program structure and delivery methods.

The presentation of the vocational learning outcomes

The **vocational learning outcome** statements set out the culminating demonstration of learning and achievement that the student must reliably demonstrate before graduation.

The **elements of the performance** for each outcome define and clarify the level and quality of performance necessary to meet the requirements of the vocational learning outcome. However, it is the performance of the vocational learning outcome itself on which students are evaluated. The elements of performance are indicators of the means by which the student may proceed to satisfactory performance of the vocational learning outcome. The elements of performance do not stand alone but rather in reference to the vocational learning outcome of which they form a part.

The development of a program standard

In establishing the standards development initiative, the Government determined that all postsecondary programs of instruction should include vocational skills coupled with a broader set of essential skills. This combination is considered critical to ensuring that college graduates have the skills required to be successful both upon graduation from the college program and throughout their working and personal lives.

A program standard is developed through a broad consultation process involving a range of stakeholders with a direct interest in the program area, including employers, professional associations, universities, secondary schools and program graduates working in the field, in addition to students, faculty and administrators at the colleges themselves. It represents a consensus of participating stakeholders on the essential learning that all program graduates should have achieved.

Updating the program standard

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities will undertake regular reviews of the vocational learning outcomes for this program to ensure that the Early Childhood Education Program Standard remains appropriate and relevant to the needs of students and employers across the Province of Ontario. To confirm that this document is the most up-to-date release, please contact the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Vocational standard

All graduates of Early Childhood Education programs have achieved the [ten vocational learning outcomes (VLOs)](#), in addition to achieving the essential employability outcomes and meeting the general education (GE) requirement.

Preamble

The Early Childhood Education diploma program prepares graduates to work as early childhood educators with **children***aged 0-12 years and their **families***. Graduates find employment in a range of **early years and child care***settings including centre-based and home-based child care, child and family programs (e.g., EarlyON child and family centres), schools (full day kindergarten, before and after school programs in public and private schools), and **children's***services (e.g., supports for **children with special needs***, **children's***mental health services and early intervention programs).

Early childhood education is a regulated profession governed by the *[Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007](#)* and regulated by the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE). Registration with the College of Early Childhood Educators as a Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) is required for practice in the province of Ontario.

Graduates of the Early Childhood Education program create learning contexts that build and maintain caring, **responsive relationships***and partnerships with **children***, **families***and communities that respect **diverse***cultural and linguistic backgrounds including **Indigenous***peoples' worldviews and Francophone identity. Graduates acknowledge that there is variability among **children***while identifying circumstances where **children***and **families***may require additional support or referral to community resources to support **holistic development***and optimal learning and well-being.

Working from the view of **children***, **families*** and educators as competent, capable, curious and rich in potential and experience, graduates co-create, facilitate and reflect upon programs and **pedagogical*** approaches to support **children's*** learning and **holistic development***. Graduates co-create **inquiry and play-based***early learning opportunities to ensure all **children*** have a sense of belonging, well-being, engagement, and opportunities to express their ideas and responses. Graduates capitalize on spontaneous events to support child-led learning and to promote meaningful **early learning environments*** that build on **children's***curiosity and imagination. Graduates reflect on and revise early learning **curriculum***and programs using **pedagogical documentation***as a means of communication and reflection about how **children*** think and learn.

Graduates co-design and maintain safe, healthy and **inclusive***early learning environments***that support equitable and accessible learning opportunities for **children***with diverse abilities, interests and ideas, and their **families***. Graduates create partnerships through professional communication and collaboration with

families*, colleagues, multi-disciplinary professionals, authorities and child service agencies to promote and **advocate*** for quality early learning and child care programs and services.

Graduates have knowledge of current legislation related to **early learning environments*** and can relate regulations to current policies and procedures in **early years and child care*** settings. They recognize the interconnection of governing legislation, code of ethics, professional practice standards, and administrative responsibilities to provide support and guidance to **children*** and their **families***. Graduates recognize the importance of the protection of **children*** and identify, report and document when a child is at a perceived risk for abuse or neglect in accordance with the College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, legislation, policies and procedures.

Graduates of the Early Childhood Education program base their work with **children*** and **families*** on relevant **pedagogy***, theories and **evidence-informed practices***, making informed decisions based on their professional knowledge and judgement. Core professional values of accountability, caring, respect, trustworthiness and integrity enable graduates to formally recognize their commitment to **children***, **families***, colleagues and the community, and to the profession of early childhood education.

Graduates are prepared to engage in **collaborative inquiry*** and **reflective practice***. They commit to ongoing professional learning and recognize that all early childhood educators are leaders regardless of their role or position in **early years and child care*** settings.

Graduates are aware of the need to responsibly address ethical dilemmas that arise when working in **early years and child care*** settings and apply **ethical and professional standards*** in accordance with the current College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.

There are opportunities for graduates to pursue further educational qualifications and degree completion. Graduates should contact individual colleges for further details.

[*See Glossary](#)

Note: The [Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer](#) (ONCAT) maintains the provincial postsecondary credit transfer portal, [ONTransfer](#).

Synopsis of the vocational learning outcomes

Early Childhood Education (Ontario College Diploma)

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. create learning contexts to enable, build and maintain caring, **responsive relationships*** in partnerships with **children***, **families*** and communities that value and respect social, cultural and linguistic **diversity*** including **Indigenous*** peoples' worldviews and Francophone identity.

2. co-create, facilitate and reflect upon **inquiry and play-based*** early **years and child care*** programs and **pedagogical*** approaches to support **children's*** learning, **holistic development*** and well-being following **children's*** capabilities, interests, ideas and experiences.

3. co-design and maintain **inclusive* early learning environments*** to value and support equitable, accessible and meaningful learning opportunities for all **children***, their **families*** and communities in a range of **early years and child care*** settings.

4. collaborate with **children***, **families*,** colleagues, agencies and community partners to create, maintain, evaluate and promote safe and healthy **early learning environments*** to support independence, reasonable risk-taking and healthy development and well-being.

5. use **observation strategies*** to identify **children's*** strengths and challenges and to ascertain when **children*** and **families*** might benefit from additional support or community resources.

6. use professional communication in interactions with **children***, **families***, colleagues, employers, the **regulatory body***, government authorities and **children's*** service agencies to meet legal and ethical standards of the **early years sector***.

7. act in accordance with relevant legislation, regulations, College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, agency policies and procedures and principles of **evidence-informed practice*** and **reflect*** upon their impact on one's own role in **early years and child care*** settings.

8. identify, report and document when a child is in a situation of perceived risk for, or actual neglect or abuse, in accordance with legislation, the College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, policies and procedures.

9. create and engage in partnerships with **families*,** communities, colleagues, inter-disciplinary professionals, authorities and child service agencies to advocate for quality **early years and child care*** programs and services.

10. engage in **reflective practice*** and continuous **professional learning*** in accordance with principles of lifelong learning, **evidence-informed practices*** in the **early years sector*** and requirements of the College of Early Childhood Educators.

VLO 11 below is specific to ECE Diploma programs that are known as **Indigenous*** Early Childhood Education Programs (MTCU Code 51211). Graduates of these programs have reliably demonstrated Vocational Outcomes 1-10 in addition to VLO 11.

11. engage with **Indigenous* children***, **families*** and communities to co-create, implement and evaluate **Indigenous* early years and child care*** and child and family programs and environments that are **culturally*** sensitive and **culturally*** relevant to the communities they serve.

[*See Glossary](#)

Note: The learning outcomes have been numbered as a point of reference; numbering does not imply prioritization, sequencing, nor weighting of significance.

The vocational learning outcomes

1. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: create learning contexts to enable, build and maintain caring, **responsive relationships*** in partnerships with **children***, **families*** and communities that value and respect social, cultural and linguistic **diversity*** including **Indigenous*** peoples' worldviews and Francophone identity.

Elements of the performance

a. acknowledge and engage in caring and **responsive relationships*** with **children***, their **families*** and communities as fundamental to early childhood education practice
b. view **children* and families*** as capable, competent, curious and rich in potential and experiences
c. discuss the professional duty that early childhood educators have to develop caring **responsive relationships*** with **children***, **families*** and communities within the requirements of the profession's **regulatory*** framework
d. respect and honour the uniqueness and **diversity*** of **children***, **families*** and communities including **family*** structure, language, cultural values and practices, ethnicity, socio-economic status, spirituality, gender age and sexual orientation
e. respect and honour the uniqueness and **diversity*** within **Indigenous*** **families*** including the integral role of extended family*, community and relationship with the natural and spiritual world
f. work with **families*** and communities to support the transmission of language and **culture***
g. recognize and value the capacity and abilities that **families*** bring to the early learning partnership
h. provide the space and opportunity for **Indigenous*** peoples to discuss the impact of colonization experiences on their **families*** and communities
i. initiate supportive and respectful interactions with **children*** and **families*** from immigrants or refugee communities recognizing the impact of experiences such as war, violence, trauma or separation
j. establish partnerships with **families*** to promote engagement in **children's*** early learning
k. identify the valuable input that **families*** contribute as experts and as first teachers, in their **children's*** abilities, interests and ideas
l. integrate and reflect on the unique strengths and contributions of **families*** and communities into programs and support their sense of belonging and partnership
m. offer and support **families*** through the sharing of knowledge and community resources
n. support connections between **Indigenous* families***, communities and **Indigenous* culture***
o. share **children's*** ongoing development with **families***
p. promote competence, resiliency and positive self-esteem in **children*** and **families***
q. model respectful relationships which are trustworthy and **inclusive***

r. support healthy social and emotional development in **children***
s. engage with **children*** to model and support their successful interactions in groups and to develop their sense of belonging and connectedness
t. engage **children*** and **families*** in reflection on learning to develop insight and build on learning
u. support **children*** in developing internally motivated strategies for **self-regulation***
v. support **children*** and **family*** transitions between daily routines

[*See Glossary](#)

2. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: co-create, facilitate and reflect upon **inquiry and play-based*** early **years and child care*** programs and **pedagogical*** approaches to support **children's*** learning, **holistic development*** and well-being following **children's*** capabilities, interests, ideas and experiences.

Elements of the performance

a. observe **children*** to understand, respond to and extend upon their learning interests and approach to learning
b. analyze a variety of current child learning theories and **pedagogical*** approaches
c. apply principles and practices of early learning **pedagogy*** to program development, across a range of early learning and child care programs including child care, kindergarten, before and after school and child and family programs, and in accordance with current provincial **curriculum*** guidelines or program/**pedagogical documents***
d. integrate **pedagogical*** approaches to support the foundations of learning into program planning, (i.e., goals of **children's*** well-being, engagement, belonging and expression
e. incorporate learning throughout all activities of the day including learning opportunities in outdoor settings that foster an understanding and appreciation for the natural environment
f. co-create and interact with **children*** in **early learning environments*** and spaces that encourage investigation, imagination, creativity and problem solving and recognize **children*** as competent, capable, curious and rich in experience
g. co-create learning environments where **families*** participate as co-learners and co-planners with **children*** in programs and spontaneous learning opportunities
h. use a variety of strategies to support learning through **inquiry and play-based*** experiences and provide rationale for pedagogical decision-making
i. co-create and reflect upon early learning opportunities to foster the development and appreciation of creative arts, including music, dance, visual, dramatic and literary arts
j. co-create and use a broad range of open-ended materials that scaffold learning and support investigation, creativity and problem solving in **children***
k. identify with **children*** and **families*** ways that learning can be extended at home
l. engage in **pedagogical documentation*** processes to make **children's*** thinking and learning visible, e.g., digital/electronic platforms, documentation panels, portfolios and learning stories
m. share **pedagogical documentation*** with **children***, **families*** and colleagues to encourage **reflection*** and co-learning or discovery of meaning underlying **children's*** experiences
n. reflect upon early learning programs based on observation and analysis of **children's*** engagement and level of participation with learning materials, environment, self and others
o. interact with **children*** to observe their emerging abilities, interests and ideas and adapt programs to optimize **children's* holistic development*** and learning

p. use **observation strategies*** and reflection to determine if **children's*** abilities, interests and ideas are acknowledged

q. collaborate with others in the co-creation, implementation and evaluation of **inquiry and play-based*** learning strategies in a variety of **early years and child care*** settings

r. communicate with **families*** the benefits of **inclusive***, **inquiry and play-based*** early learning opportunities

[*See Glossary](#)

3. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: co-design and maintain **inclusive*** **early learning environments*** to value and support equitable, accessible and meaningful learning opportunities for all **children***, their **families*** and communities in a range of **early years and child care*** settings.

Elements of the performance

a. provide a welcoming and nurturing environment for all **children*** and their **families***
b. promote a sense of belonging and acceptance in all **children*** and their **families***, including **children with special needs***, within a range of **early years and child care*** settings
c. discuss the concept of the environment as a "third teacher"
d. co-design **inclusive*** **early learning environments*** with colleagues, **children*** their **families***and communities that ensure full participation of all **children*** considering ability, cultural and linguistic diversity, sexual identity, socioeconomic diversity, spirituality, religious affiliation, refugee status or **Indigenous*** identity
e. foster **inclusive*** learning environments that allow all **children*** and **families*** to participate in ways that are meaningful and recognize individual abilities and approaches to learning
f. support relationships with and between **children*** and **families*** from **diverse*** communities to create **inclusive*** **early learning environments***
g. support the development and learning of **children*** within the context of their **family***, **culture*** and community
h. **establish early learning environments*** that welcome and engage all **children*** and create the conditions to support meaningful relationships among **children***colleagues and **families***
i. co-design, set up and modify the physical, social and emotional environment to support all **children's***ongoing **holistic development*** and learning, including **children with special needs***
j. provide learning materials and opportunities that are culturally appropriate and authentic
k. provide flexibility and choice in learning materials and opportunities to optimize **holistic development*** and learning for all **children*** and their **families***
l. apply principles of universal design in learning to the development of learning materials and opportunities
m. select and use appropriate technology and assistive technology tools to optimize all **children's*** learning and **holistic development***
n. apply current regulations of the *[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005](#)*, to **early years and child care*** settings
o. identify community partnerships and resources to support inclusive environments
p. work with others, using **observation strategies***and **reflection***, to evaluate *inclusive** practices in a variety of **early years and child care***settings
q. contribute to an early learning **culture*** that reflects on current practices and promotes quality **inclusion*** practices in **early years and child care*** settings

[*See Glossary](#)

4. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: collaborate with **children***, **families***, colleagues, agencies and community partners to create, maintain, evaluate and promote safe and healthy **early learning environments*** to support independence, reasonable risk-taking and healthy development and well-being.

Elements of the performance

a. plan and provide healthy and safe indoor and outdoor environments and programming in accordance with current legislation, guidelines and agency/school board policy
b. use current **evidence-informed*** methods to monitor, evaluate and ensure **early learning environments*** are healthy, safe and of high-quality
c. *act in accordance with health and safety requirements outlined in the [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014](#)*
d. facilitate **children's*** efforts to take reasonable risks, test limits and gain independence and self-confidence
e. co-develop strategies to ensure sufficient time for safe and supportive transitions in daily routines while maintaining supervision at all times
f. consult and plan with **families*** and relevant professionals to incorporate **family*** and **cultural*** preferences that promote and support nutritional health
g. identify **children's*** relevant health information, including but not limited to medical conditions, **special needs***, allergies, medication requirements and emergency contact information
h. collaborate with **families*** to meet specific health needs of **children***
i. support the development of **children's*** physical and mental health and well-being by promoting healthy patterns of eating, physical activity, sleep and personal care
j. interpret and apply regulations of the [Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1990](#) to **early years and child care*** settings
k. observe and monitor **early learning environments*** and take action to avoid exposing **children*** to harmful or unsafe situations
l. plan and adapt practices to enhance safety and accessibility for **children*** and others in the learning environment
m. respond appropriately to emergency situations following provincial and/or municipal requirements, and agency/school board policies and procedures
n. report and record all accidents or incidents noting strategies to reduce risk and prevent future incidents
o. create opportunities for **children's*** and **families'*** learning and support related to health promotion, environmental hazards and safety practices

[*See Glossary](#)

5. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: use **observation strategies*** to identify **children's*** strengths and challenges and to ascertain when **children*** and **families*** might benefit from additional support or community resources.

Elements of the performance

a. identify and value the variations that occur in **children's*** development, abilities and interests
b. select and use data collection strategies and tools that are without bias and that are linguistically and culturally appropriate for **children***
c. obtain **family*** consent for the collection and use of **children's*** information and comply with all privacy legislation and policies for information sharing
d. identify and share with **families***, the purpose and process for the collection of information regarding their **children***
e. use appropriate strategies to identify and interpret **children's*** and **families*** strengths, interests, ideas and challenges recognizing the subjective nature of observations and interpretations
f. gather relevant information and observations about **children*** using **pedagogical documentation***
g. identify and use current developmental screening tools used to identify **children*** requiring further assessment, intervention or referral e.g., physical, cognitive, language and/or social and emotional development
h. share observations of **children's*** abilities, interests, ideas and challenges with **family***, colleagues and other professionals
i. identify a range of child and **family*** supports and resources and be aware of how to access them
j. work with **families*** to identify circumstances where **children*** and **families*** may benefit from additional support and community resources and facilitate connections to these supports with empathy, compassion and kindness
k. share knowledge and resources with **families*** to support informed decision making regarding their **children*** while respecting their readiness for information shared
l. work collaboratively with **family*** and outside supports, e.g., resource consultants, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists

*See Glossary

6. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: use professional communication in interactions with **children***, **families***, colleagues, employers, the **regulatory body***, government authorities and **children's*** service agencies to meet legal and ethical standards of the **early years sector***.

Elements of the performance

a. listen to, respond and build on child and **family*** initiated communication
b. evaluate one's own interpersonal communication skills through self-awareness and ongoing personal reflection and taking into consideration peer and supervisor's discussion
c. effect change in one's own communication, based on feedback received
d. be respectful, positive and open in all communication recognizing one's own personal bias
e. adapt communication for **children*** and their **families*** considering factors such as **culture***, age, ability and language
f. communicate information comprehensively, concisely, accurately, objectively and in a timely manner
g. communicate professionally in written documentation including vocabulary, grammar, spelling and format appropriate to the **early years sector***
h. model and provide positive conflict resolution strategies in all relationships with **children***, **families***, colleagues, employers and others
i. communicate effectively and respectfully with **children***, **families***, colleagues and other professionals
j. establish and maintain effective communication as a member of the early learning team in accordance with College of Early Childhood Educators current *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*
k. maintain clear and appropriate professional boundaries with **children*** and **families*** **and colleagues**
l. select and use current technologies to facilitate documentation, record-keeping and communication with government authorities and/or **children's*** service agencies
m. ensure that the use of technology and social media is consistent with expectations of professional boundaries and guidelines
n. comply with all required documentation policies and procedures in **early years and child care*** settings
o. safeguard and protect the privacy and confidentiality of **children's*** and **families**'* information in all written, verbal, and electronic communications

[*See Glossary](#)

7. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: act in accordance with relevant legislation, regulations, College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, agency policies and procedures and principles of **evidence-informed practice*** and **reflect*** upon their impact on one's own role in **early years and child care*** settings.

Elements of the performance

a. analyze the roles and responsibilities (e.g., policy, funding, legislation) of all levels of government related to **early years and child care*** settings
b. examine the impact of legislative and the **regulatory body***, policy, funding, and administrative practices on the structure and quality of **early years and child care*** programs
c. discuss the accountability and responsibilities that a registered early childhood educator has towards **children***, **families***, community partners, the public, colleagues and to the profession
d. discuss the role and mandate of the College of Early Childhood Educators as **regulator*** of the early childhood education profession in the province of Ontario
e. practise in compliance with the College of Early Childhood Educators current **Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice**
f. comply with key legislation impacting the **early years sector*** including the *[Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007](#)*, the *[Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014](#)*, the *[Education Act, 1990](#)* or any successor legislation to these acts
g. promote and engage in behaviours that support the dignity and rights of **children*** and **families*** and all members of the early learning community in compliance with standards, policies, procedures and practices covered by the *[Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982](#)*, the *[Ontario Human Rights Code,1990,](#)* and the *[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990](#)*
h. discuss the impact of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Call to Action (2015)*, Employment and Social Development Canada*, Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework, (2017)* and *The Journey Together: Ontario's' Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples (2016)* on the **early years sector***
i. discuss the impact of current government policy documents on the **early years sector***
j. identify and act in accordance with **early years and child care*** settings policies and procedures including practice within school boards' kindergarten programs
k. identify and maintain quality assurance practices in **early years and child care*** settings

[*See Glossary](#)

8. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: identify, report and document when a child is in a situation of perceived risk for, or actual neglect or abuse, in accordance with legislation, the College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, policies and procedures.

Elements of the performance

a. discuss the concept of child abuse[1] to include physical, emotional and sexual abuse and/or neglect along with patterns of abuse and risks of harm
b. discuss how notions of abuse are culturally and socially constructed
c. reflect on the impact of early childhood trauma on **children's* holistic development***, including stress responses, delays in the development of resiliency and emotional and learning disturbances
d. identify signs of possible child abuse, neglect and **family*** violence
e. determine reasonable grounds to suspect when a child is at risk for abuse or neglect and may need protection
f. identify the impact of harassment or violence on self and others and facilitate support for self, peers, **children*** and **families***
g. discuss the role of the Children's Aid Society and other child protection agencies and organizations
h. acknowledge the early childhood educator's legal duty to report suspected or actual incidents of abuse and neglect in accordance with the Ontario *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* and the College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice
i. document and report incidences of actual or suspected abuse or neglect in accordance with the Ontario *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* and **early years and child care*** setting policies and procedures
j. identify potential commercial or other exportation resulting in harm to **children's*** health, survival, development or dignity in the context of relationships
k. identify the inherent imbalance of power in relationships between a professional and a child or family* and ensure that they are protected from coercion, improper influence, harassment, abuse or exploitation

*See Glossary

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[1] Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. What is abuse? Retrieved from http://www.oacas.org/childrens-aid-child-protection/what-is-abuse/

9. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: create and engage in partnerships with **families*,** communities, colleagues, inter-disciplinary professionals, authorities and child service agencies to advocate for quality **early years and child care*** programs and services.

Elements of the performance

a. discuss the range of **early years and child care*** programs, services and resources and the roles of the providers of these **early learning and child care*** services
b. discuss ways to protect and promote the rights of **children*** within their **families*,** communities and programs and services in the **early years sector***
c. work in partnership with **families*** and community partners to **advocate*** for and facilitate quality, **inclusive* early years and child care*** programs and services
d. model and support **families*** in advocating for their **children*** and promote self-advocacy in **children*** and **families***
e. consult and collaborate with other professionals on the early learning team to reflect their knowledge and value their respective roles and scope of practice
f. participate in the collaborative planning and organization of a kindergarten classroom
g. identify system barriers including political, social and economic factors that may contribute to stereotyping, bias, discrimination and social inequalities
h. support **children*** and **families*** in overcoming system-based barriers to care and services
i. **advocate*** in the interest of **children***, **families***, early childhood educators and the **early year sector***
j. engage with the **early years sector** * through professional activities, e.g., participation in associations, research, committees or professional networks
k. communicate the benefits of quality **early learning environments** * for **children*,** **families*** and communities

[*See Glossary](#)

10. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: engage in **reflective practice***and continuous **professional learning*** in accordance with principles of lifelong learning, **evidence-informed practices*** in the **early years sector*** and requirements of the College of Early Childhood Educators.

Elements of the performance

a. analyze a variety of philosophical theories and historical trends related to early childhood education and **family*** support practices
b. reflect on practice experiences and critically examine them when refining one's own developing philosophy of early childhood learning
c. reflect on how **family*** composition, dynamics and experiences influence **children's*** early learning experiences and the early childhood educator's role in promoting valuable early learning experiences for **children*** and their **families***
d. engage in critical review of current research in the early learning, sociology and psychology fields and transfer this knowledge into practice
e. engage in critical reflection and **collaborative inquiry*** with colleagues, **children*** and **families*** to question theory and practice, discuss ideas, test theories and to share learning
f. keep pace with and adapt to changes in the **early years sector***, including but not limited to, the emergent knowledge related to early learning and development from varied fields of study
g. discuss the contribution that a **professional learning*** plan makes to safe, competent and professional practice in the early learning field
h. assess personal knowledge and competence as a basis for one's **professional learning*** plan
i. develop a written **professional learning***plan with specific learning goals, resources and timeframes in accordance with the **regulatory requirements*** of the College of Early Childhood Educators
j. evaluate and document progress towards achieving **professional learning*** goals and modify the plan accordingly
k. maintain a professional network within the **early years sector***
l. seek out and take advantage of **professional learning*** opportunities
m. assess personal learning needs and develop realistic strategies to meet ongoing **professional learning*** goals
n. research and use support and resources for learning within professional environments
o. maintain certifications and training e.g., Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), First Aid, anaphylaxis training, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), as required
p. assess personal health and well-being and develop self-care strategies to maintain a healthy work-life balance

*See Glossary

VLO 11 below is specific to ECE Diploma programs that are known as Indigenous*
Early Childhood Education Programs (MTCU Code 51211). Graduates of these
programs have reliably demonstrated Vocational Outcomes 1-10 in addition to VLO 11.

11. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: engage with **Indigenous***
children*, **families*** and communities to co-create, implement and evaluate
Indigenous* early years and child care* and child and family programs and
environments that are **culturally*** sensitive and **culturally*** relevant to the
communities they serve.

Elements of the performance

a. integrate a **Generative Curriculum*** model approach to early learning **curriculum***
and **family*** support program development for **Indigenous* children***, **families***
and communities
b. integrate community Elders as a means of sharing knowledge of traditional beliefs,
languages, spiritual practices and **Indigenous*** ways of knowing into **early learning
environments***
c. co-plan and implement learning contexts and child and **family*** programs that are
sensitive to and respectful of **Indigenous*** peoples' philosophies, and **cultural***
values, within **diverse*** Indigenous communities both on and off reserves
d. use **pedagogical documentation*** as a space to share **Indigenous*** ways of being
e. co-design early learning opportunities that are holistic in nature and inclusive of
cultural* and spiritual ways of knowing, being and expressing experience
f. co-create early learning opportunities that are **culturally*** responsive in that they are
relevant in their materials, meaning and authentic to the **Indigenous* children*** and
families* they serve
g. provide **Indigenous*** language learning opportunities using **culturally*** meaningful
resources and experiences to support the transmission of traditional languages
h. evaluate **early years and child care*** programs based on **culturally*** relevant
criteria that recognize and value **Indigenous*** values in early learning and child care
i. situate **early learning environments*** and experiences within **Indigenous***
communities
j. incorporate **Indigenous*** peoples' stories and experiences into early learning
opportunities
k. promote **children's*** positive relationship and connections with the natural
environment
l. support and promote intergenerational teaching and learning opportunities
m. **advocate*** for quality and **culturally*** relevant **early learning environments*** for
Indigenous* children* and **families*** through liaison with **Indigenous*** communities
n. foster self-esteem, self-identity and **cultural*** identity for **Indigenous* children*** and
their **families***
o. mentor others in **Indigenous* early years and child care*** settings

[*See Glossary](#)

Glossary

Advocate/advocacy - Actions to influence others, to champion change, to extend or improve early years and child care programs and services which improve the lives of children, families and supports professionals in the early years and child care sector.

Children - Refers to all persons from birth to twelve years within the context of their individual family, social, economic, cultural, linguistic, spiritual and diversities.

Children/child with special needs - Refers to any child whose cognitive, physical, social, emotional or communicative needs or whose needs related to holistic development are of such a nature that additional assistance, adaptations, accommodation and/or supports are required for the child to access, actively participate in, and contribute to early learning opportunities and social interactions (adapted in part from Ontario Regulation 137/15 made under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*).

Collaborative inquiry – Engaging with others (i.e., children, families and colleagues) in critical reflection to question theory and practice, discuss ideas, test theories and new approaches and to share learning (Ministry of Education, 2014, How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years).

Culture - The understandings, practices and values shared by a group of people. The children, families and staff in early years and child care settings may identify as belonging to more than one culture (CECE, 2017 Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, p.23).

Curriculum - The sum total of environments, experiences, activities and events that occur within an inclusive environment designed to foster children's well-being, learning and development and to ensure meaningful participation for every child and their family (2007) Early Learning for Every Child Today: A Framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings, ELECT.

Diverse/diversity - Uniqueness that each person or groups of people brings to the early learning and child care setting including values and beliefs, culture and ethnicity, language, abilities, knowledge and interests, life experiences, socio-economic status, spirituality, religious affiliation, gender, age and sexual orientation (CECE, 2017 Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, p.23).

Early learning environments - Physical, social and emotional contexts in which children, families, communities, early childhood educators and other colleagues collaborate to nurture, provide care and education with the goals of fostering children's curiosity, communication, engagement, sense of belonging and well-being. It includes relationships, experiences, the physical and non-physical space, place and materials, activities and routines.

Early years and child care – Encompasses a range of settings where early learning and child care programs and services are offered, including child care centres, home-based child care, preschool programs, kindergarten programs in school boards, before and after school programs, EarlyON child and family centres and a range of child and family programs and services.

Early years sector - A distinct collective of programs, services and supports designed for children from birth to 12 years and their families. This includes research, policy development, education and training, advocacy and system management in the planning and delivery of early childhood education, early learning, child care, family supports, early intervention and children's services (CECE, 2017. Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, p.23).

Ethical and professional standards - A core set of beliefs, values, responsibilities and relationships fundamental to the profession that serve to define the exemplary practices of early childhood education. The practice of Early Childhood Education is regulated by the College of Early Childhood Educators in accordance with the *Early Childhood Educator's Act, 2007*. It is the professional responsibility of all members of the College of Early Childhood Educators to meet and uphold the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice in their daily work in early years and child care settings.

Evidence-informed practice - The transfer of current research and knowledge into high quality early years and child care programs, in conjunction with professional judgement, critical reflection and collaborative inquiry (adapted from CECE, 2017. Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, p.14).

Family/families - A group of children and adults who are related by affections, kinship, dependency or trust, and includes two or single-parent families, same-sex families, adoptive, multi-generational families and foster families (CECE, 2017. Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, p.23). Extended family includes persons to whom a child is related, including through a spousal relationship or adoption and in the case of an Indigenous child includes any member of a band or community of which the child is a member (Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017).

Generative Curriculum Model - A generative approach to Indigenous early childhood education curriculum which focuses on developing curriculum from community-relevant knowledge sources e.g. Elders and others within the community and co-creating knowledge through shared experiences, reflection and dialogue (Ball, 2004, *As if Indigenous Knowledge and Communities Mattered: Transformative Education in First Nations Communities in Canada*).

Holistic development - Describes an understanding of a child's development placing relationships first, and which considers the interrelationship among a child's

physical, emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual and communication development, with recognition that development happens within the context of the child's own and family's life experiences, relationships with others and the socio-economic environment.

Inclusive/inclusion - An approach to policies and practice in early years settings where all children, families and colleagues are accepted and celebrated within a program and where each child and family experiences a sense of belonging and is supported to actively contribute to and participate fully in all aspects of the program or service. Inclusive practice includes being attentive to the capabilities, learning styles, vulnerabilities, personalities and circumstances of all children and families and understanding the diversity of children's development. Inclusion also encompasses inclusive attitudes and beliefs, policies, resources and supports (adapted from College of Early Childhood Educators, CECE.2017 *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, p. 24).

Indigenous - A collective name for all the original peoples of North America and their descendants. The Canadian constitution recognizes three groups of Indigenous peoples; First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Indigenous peoples are diverse in their histories, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs (adapted from Government of Canada, 2018. Indigenous Peoples and Communities).

Inquiry and play-based - Inquiry-based is an approach to teaching and learning that places children's questions, ideas and observations at the center of the learning experience. Play-based is an educational approach which builds upon children's natural inclination to make sense of the world through complex and diverse play, where early childhood educators engage as co-learners with children, parents, caregivers, and colleagues. Together these pedagogical approaches inform early childhood educators' understanding of the thinking and learning of children to create learning opportunities and to design learning environments (adapted from CECE, 2017. Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, p. 24-25).

Observation strategies - A systematic strategy for collecting qualitative and subjective understandings of the behaviour, responses, interests, abilities and patterns of development and social interactions of an individual child or a group of children within a learning environment. Techniques may include participant observation, pedagogical documentation, portfolios, learning stories, developmental screening tools, anecdotal records, photography and diary recordings.

Pedagogy - The understanding of how learning takes place and the philosophy and practice that supports that understanding of learning (Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2007. Early Learning for Every Child Today: A Framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings, ELECT).

Pedagogical documentation - Representations (e.g., visual artistic, audio) that reveal children's thoughts, feelings, and values and creates a basis for educators, children and families to co-learn, to study events and to interpret their meaning together. Pedagogical documentation as a process provides the opportunity for educators to reveal their own delights, questions, assumptions and learning.

Professional learning - Ongoing formal and/or informal activities undertaken by an individual to improve and broaden their knowledge, skills, and critical reflection to practice professionally and to assure high quality professional practice throughout their careers (CECE, Dec. 11, 2017, Report: recommendations for program standards for Ontario college programs in the early childhood cluster).

Regulatory body/regulator (requirements) - The organization or institution established with a mandate to regulate a profession in a certain jurisdiction in the service and protection of the public interest. Common components of a regulator's mandate are to establish requirements for entry into the profession, establish and maintain a code of ethics and standards of practice for the profession, promote ongoing professional learning, develop and administer a quality assurance program, and receive and address complaints and mandatory reports about a member's conduct or competence. In Ontario, the College of Early Childhood Educators is the regulator for the early childhood education profession. (CECE, Dec. 11, 2017, Report: recommendations for program standards for Ontario college programs in the early childhood cluster).

Reflection/reflective practice - An approach used by early childhood educators to analyze and think critically about their professional practice with the intention to better understand and improve their practice. Reflective practice is thoughtful, action-oriented and often, a collaborative effort. Educators use reflective practice to plan, evaluate their strengths and challenges, make decisions and create change, if necessary. Self-reflection, critical reflection and collaborative inquiry are all important elements of reflective practice (adapted from CECE, 2017 Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, p.25).

Responsive relationships - Positive and meaningful connections between children and adults that occur when adults observe and read children's signals and communication and respond with understanding to support children's sense of belonging. Engaging in responsive relationships that give children and families a feeling of being cared for and cared about contributes to their well-being, enabling them to be engaged in learning and comfortable expressing their thoughts, feelings and ideas.

Self-regulation – Self-regulation refers to how efficiently and effectively a child deals with a stressor and recovers to a calm, alert and happy state. (Shankar, S. 2013, in Ontario Ministry of Education *Think, Feel, Act; Lessons from Research about Young Children*).

Essential employability skills

All graduates of the Early Childhood Education program of instruction must have reliably demonstrated the essential employability skills learning outcomes listed below, in addition to achieving the [vocational learning outcomes](#) and meeting the [general education requirement](#).

Context

Essential Employability Skills (EES) are skills that, regardless of a student's program or discipline, are critical for success in the workplace, in day-to-day living and for lifelong learning.

The teaching and attainment of these EES for students in, and graduates from, Ontario's Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology are anchored in a set of three fundamental assumptions:

- These skills are important for every adult to function successfully in society today.
- Our colleges are well equipped and well positioned to prepare graduates with these skills.
- These skills are equally valuable for all graduates, regardless of the level of their credential, whether they pursue a career path, or they pursue further education.

Skill categories

To capture these skills, the following six categories define the essential areas where graduates must demonstrate skills and knowledge:

- Communication
- Numeracy
- Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
- Information Management
- Interpersonal
- Personal

Application and implementation

In each of the six skill categories, there are a number of defining skills, or sub skills, identified to further articulate the requisite skills identified in the main skill categories. The following chart illustrates the relationship between the skill categories, the defining skills within the categories and learning outcomes to be achieved by graduates from all postsecondary programs of instruction that lead to an Ontario College credential.

EES may be embedded in General Education or vocational courses, or developed through discrete courses. However these skills are developed, all graduates with Ontario College credentials must be able to reliably demonstrate the essential skills required in each of the six categories.

Skill category	Defining skills: Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:	Learning outcomes: The levels of achievement required by graduates. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:
Communication	• Reading • Writing • Speaking • Listening • Presenting • Visual literacy	1. communicate clearly, concisely and correctly in the written, spoken and visual form that fulfills the purpose and meets the needs of the audience. 2. respond to written, spoken or visual messages in a manner that ensures effective communication.
Numeracy	• Understanding and applying mathematical concepts and reasoning • Analyzing and using numerical data • Conceptualizing	1. execute mathematical operations accurately.
Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	• Analyzing • Synthesizing • Evaluating • Decision making • Creative and innovative thinking	1. apply a systematic approach to solve problems. 2. use a variety of thinking skills to anticipate and solve problems.

Information Management	• Gathering and managing information • Selecting and using appropriate tools and technology for a task or a project • Computer literacy • Internet skills	1. locate, select, organize and document information using appropriate technology and information systems. 2. analyze, evaluate and apply relevant information from a variety of sources.
Interpersonal	• Teamwork • Relationship management • Conflict resolution • Leadership • Networking	1. show respect for the diverse opinions, values, belief systems and contributions of others. 2. interact with others in groups or teams in ways that contribute to effective working relationships and the achievement of goals.
Personal	• Managing self • Managing change and being flexible and adaptable • Engaging in reflective practices • Demonstrating personal responsibility	1. manage the use of time and other resources to complete projects. 2. take responsibility for one's own actions, decisions and their consequences.

General education requirement

All graduates of the Early Childhood Education program must have met the general education requirement described below, in addition to achieving the vocational and essential employability skills learning outcomes.

Requirement

The General Education Requirement for programs of instruction is stipulated in the Credentials Framework (Appendix A in the Minister's Binding Policy Directive Framework for Programs of Instruction).

In programs of instruction leading to either an Ontario College Diploma or an Ontario College Advanced Diploma, it is required that graduates have been engaged in learning that exposes them to at least one discipline outside their main field of study and increases their awareness of the society and culture in which they live and work. This will typically be accomplished by students taking 3 to 5 courses (or the equivalent) designed discretely and separately from vocational learning opportunities.

This general education learning would normally be delivered using a combination of required and elective processes.

Purpose

The purpose of General Education in the Ontario college system is to contribute to the development of citizens who are conscious of the diversity, complexity and richness of the human experience; who are able to establish meaning through this consciousness; and who, as a result, are able to contribute thoughtfully, creatively and positively to the society in which they live and work.

General Education strengthens students' essential employability skills, such as critical analysis, problem solving and communication, in the context of an exploration of topics with broad-based personal and/or societal importance.

Themes

The themes listed below will be used to provide direction to Ontario Colleges in the development and identification of courses that are designed to fulfil the General Education Requirement for programs of instructions.

Each theme provides a statement of Rationale and offers suggestions related to more specific topic areas that could be explored within each area. These suggestions are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. They are included to provide guidance regarding the nature and scope of content that would be judged as meeting the intent and overall

goals of General Education.

Arts in society:

Rationale:

The capacity of a person to recognize and evaluate artistic and creative achievements is useful in many aspects of his/her life. Since artistic expression is a fundamentally human activity, which both reflects and anticipates developments in the larger culture, its study will enhance the student's cultural and self-awareness.

Content:

Courses in this area should provide students with an understanding of the importance of visual and creative arts in human affairs, of the artist's and writer's perceptions of the world and the means by which those perceptions are translated into the language of literature and artistic expression. They will also provide an appreciation of the aesthetic values used in examining works of art and possibly, a direct experience in expressing perceptions in an artistic medium.

Civic Life:

Rationale:

In order for individuals to live responsibly and to reach their potential as individuals and as citizens of society, they need to understand the patterns of human relationships that underlie the orderly interactions of a society's various structural units. Informed people will have knowledge of the meaning of civic life in relation to diverse communities at the local, national and global level and an awareness of international issues and the effects of these on Canada, as well as Canada's place in the international community.

Content:

Courses in this area should provide students with an understanding of the meaning of freedoms, rights and participation in community and public life, in addition to a working knowledge of the structure and function of various levels of government (municipal, provincial, national) in a Canadian and/or in an international context. They may also provide an historical understanding of major political issues affecting relations between the various levels of government in Canada and their constituents.

Social and cultural understanding:

Rationale:

Knowledge of the patterns and precedents of the past provide the means for a person to gain an awareness of his or her place in contemporary culture and society. In

addition to this awareness, students will acquire a sense of the main currents of their culture and that of other cultures over an extended period of time in order to link personal history to the broader study of culture.

Content:

Courses in this area are those that deal broadly with major social and cultural themes. These courses may also stress the nature and validity of historical evidence and the variety of historical interpretation of events. Courses will provide the students with a view and understanding of the impact of cultural, social, ethnic or linguistic characteristics.

Personal Understanding:

Rationale:

Educated people are equipped for life-long understanding and development of themselves as integrated physiological and psychological entities. They are aware of the ideal need to be fully functioning persons: mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually and vocationally.

Content:

Courses in this area will focus on understanding the individual: his or her evolution; situation; relationship with others; place in the environment and universe; achievements and problems; and his or her meaning and purpose. They will also allow students the opportunity to study institutionalized human social behaviour in a systematic way. Courses fulfilling this requirement may be oriented to the study of the individual within a variety of contexts.

Science and technology:

Rationale:

Matter and energy are universal concepts in science, forming a basis for understanding the interactions that occur in living and non-living systems in our universe. Study in this area provides an understanding of the behaviour of matter that provides a foundation for further scientific study and the creation of broader understanding about natural phenomena.

Similarly, the various applications and developments in the area of technology have an increasing impact on all aspects of human endeavour and have numerous social, economic and philosophical implications. For example, the operation of computers to process data at high speed has invoked an interaction between machines and the human mind that is unique in human history. This and other technological developments

have a powerful impact on how we deal with many of the complex questions in our society.

Content:

Courses in this area should stress scientific inquiry and deal with basic or fundamental questions of science rather than applied ones. They may be formulated from traditional basic courses in such areas of study as biology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, geology or agriculture. As well, courses related to understanding the role and functions of computers (e.g., data management and information processing) and assorted computer-related technologies should be offered in a non-applied manner to provide students with an opportunity to explore the impact of these concepts and practices on their lives.

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Inquiries regarding specific Early Childhood Education programs offered by Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology in Ontario should be directed to the relevant college.

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