Early Childhood Education Program Standard

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

**Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
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Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
Programs Branch, Program Standards and Evaluation Unit
23rd floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1L2

Telephone: (416) 325-2874
E-mail: susan.golets@ontario.ca

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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Table of Contents

I. Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for the Early Childhood Education program 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 and Evaluation 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 of 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, contact the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

II. Vocational Standard

All graduates of Early Childhood Education programs have achieved the ten vocational learning outcomes (VLOs) listed in the following pages, in addition to achieving the essential employability skills (EES) learning outcomes and meeting the general education (GE) requirement. Graduates of Native or Aboriginal Early Childhood Education programs (MTCU Code 51211) have achieved outcomes one to ten and an additional outcome eleven specific to Aboriginal Early Childhood Education programs.

Preamble

The Early Childhood Education program prepares graduates to work with infants, toddlers, preschool and school-aged children* and their families* in a variety of early learning settings including childcare centres, community child and family* support centres, home-based child care, Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten programs, school readiness and early intervention programs.

Graduates create 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*. Early childhood educators work collaboratively with colleagues, children* and families* from diverse* cultures*, experiences and backgrounds. Early childhood educators form partnerships with families*, and support their parenting through ongoing communication, guidance and education. Graduates form collaborative relationships with professionals from other disciplines to support holistic development* of all children*.

Early childhood educators establish responsive relationships* with children* and families* to support the optimal development* and learning of all children*. In addition, early childhood educators acknowledge that there is variability among children* and recognize potential areas that may require referral for further assessment and/or intervention.

Graduates design and implement quality play-based* early learning curriculum* and programs that support the learning needs of individuals and groups of children*, as well as their families*. Early childhood educators capitalize on spontaneous events in order to support child-initiated learning and to promote learning that arouses curiosity and imagination. Graduates evaluate and revise curriculum* based on regular observations and analysis of children's* development* and their responses to the curriculum* and goals of the program.

Graduates have knowledge of current legislation related to early learning environments* and recognize the interconnection of governing legislation, code of ethics, professional practice standards, and administrative responsibilities in order to provide support and guidance to children* and their families*.

Along with other early learning professionals and community partners, early childhood

educators function in advocacy* roles for children* and families* and for quality early learning environments*.

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

Early childhood educators engage in reflective practice and commit to ongoing professional development to enhance their practice. Graduates are aware of the need to responsibly address ethical dilemmas that arise when working in early childhood education settings and practice in accordance with the College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2011).

Early Childhood Educators are governed by the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*. Registration with the College of Early Childhood Educators as a Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) is required for practice in the province of Ontario.

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

Endnote: The Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) maintains the provincial postsecondary credit transfer portal, ONTransfer and the Ontario Postsecondary Transfer Guide (OPTG) at
http://www.ocutg.on.ca/www/index_en.php?page=the_ontario_postsecondary_transfer_guide

See Glossary

Synopsis of the Vocational Learning Outcomes
Early Childhood Education (Ontario College Diploma)

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to

1. design, implement and evaluate inclusive* and play-based* early learning curriculum* and programs that support children's* holistic development* and are responsive to individual children's* and groups of children's* observed abilities, interests and ideas.

2. establish and maintain inclusive* early learning environments* that support diverse*, equitable and accessible developmental and learning opportunities for all children* and their families*.

3. select and use a variety of screening tools, observation and documentation strategies to review, support and promote children's* learning across the continuum of early childhood development*.

4. establish and maintain responsive relationships* with individual children*, groups of children* and families*.

5. assess, develop and maintain safe, healthy and quality early learning environments* which meet the requirements of current legislation, agency policies and evidence-based practices* in early learning.

6. prepare and use professional written, verbal, nonverbal and electronic communications when working with children*, families*, colleagues, employers, and community partners.

7. identify, select and apply relevant legislation, regulations, College of Early Childhood Educators Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics, policies and evidence-based practice* guidelines, and interpret their impact on a variety of early learning environments*.

8. apply a developing personal philosophy of early learning in accordance with ethical and professional standards* of early childhood education practice.

9. advocate* for quality early learning environments* and collaborate with members of the early learning team, families* and community partners to establish and promote such settings.

10. engage in reflective practice, develop learning goals and maintain an ongoing professional development plan in accordance with evidence-based practices* in early learning and related fields.

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

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to

11.   plan, implement and evaluate Aboriginal early learning curriculum*, programs and environments that promote children's*, families* and communities knowledge of and respect for Aboriginal peoples and their cultures*.

*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

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to

1. **design, implement and evaluate inclusive* and play-based* early learning curriculum* and programs that support children's* holistic development* and are responsive to individual and groups of children's* observed abilities, interests and ideas.**

Elements of the Performance

- observe and identify the learning of individual children* and groups along a continuum of development* and in relation to learning expectations and holistic development*
- apply principles of early learning pedagogy* to curriculum* and program development
- identify and apply best practices based on current and relevant research findings, literature, and other resources to develop quality programs and curriculum*
- identify and select a variety of curriculum* models and approaches and determine the appropriateness for application to curriculum* and program development
- interact with children* to observe their emerging abilities, interests and ideas
- design inclusive* curriculum* that incorporates learning throughout all activities of the day and reflects children's* daily lived experiences
- use a variety of strategies to support learning through inquiry and play-based* experiences
- design, implement and evaluate early learning opportunities to foster the development and appreciation of music and creative arts
- promote learning opportunities in natural settings that foster an understanding of and appreciation for the environment
- facilitate inclusive* learning experiences based on accurate ongoing and systematic observation of children*
- evaluate curriculum* and programs based on observation and analysis of children's* behaviour and level of participation
- revise and adapt curriculum* and programs when necessary, in accordance with individual abilities and approaches to learning, in order to optimize children's development* and learning
- evaluate early learning curriculum* and programs to determine if children's* needs are met and their abilities, interests and ideas are acknowledged

* See Glossary

2.   *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

establish and maintain inclusive* early learning environments* that support diverse*, equitable and accessible developmental and learning opportunities for all children* and their families*.

Elements of the Performance

- provide a welcoming and nurturing environment for all children* and their families*
- promote a sense of belonging and acceptance in all children* within a variety of learning environments
- apply responsive and inclusive* practices in all aspects of early learning environments*
- identify and respond to opportunities which enhance and extend all children's* natural inquisitiveness
- foster inclusive* learning environments that allow all children* to participate in ways that are meaningful and recognize individual abilities and approaches to learning
- establish partnerships with children* and families* from diverse* communities
- support the development and learning of individual children* within the context of their family*, culture* and community
- establish learning environments that support positive behaviour in all children*
- design, set up and modify the physical environment to support all children's* ongoing development and learning
- provide learning materials and opportunities that are culturally inclusive*, diverse* and reflect anti-bias (Child Care Human Resources Sector Council: Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators , 2010)
- adapt learning opportunities and early learning environments* for children* living with special needs*
- provide flexibility and choice in learning materials and opportunities in order to optimize development and learning for all children* and their families*
- select and use appropriate technology and assistive technological tools to optimize all children's development* and learning

* See Glossary

3. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

select and use a variety of screening tools, observation and documentation strategies to review, support and promote children's* learning across the continuum of early childhood development*.

Elements of the Performance

- select and use data collection strategies and tools that are linguistically and culturally appropriate for identified children*
- use appropriate strategies to identify and interpret children's* abilities, interests and ideas
- identify and respect the variations that occur in children's* development, abilities and interests
- gather relevant information and observations about children* from families*, colleagues and other professionals
- use a variety of observation techniques* to enhance work with children*, families*, and colleagues
- use and assess developmental screening tools to identify children* requiring further assessment, intervention or referral
- share observations of children's* abilities, interests and ideas with family*, colleagues and other professionals
- monitor children's* development and assess on an ongoing and systematic basis
- use a variety of methods to document children's* development and learning such as, portfolios, checklists, anecdotal records and diary recordings.
- document and report observations in a professional manner
- identify and select technology tools to facilitate documentation and record-keeping
- comply with all required documentation policies and procedures
- safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of child and family* information

* See Glossary

4.   *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

establish and maintain responsive relationships* with individual children*, groups of children* and families*.

Elements of the Performance

- initiate genuine, authentic interactions with children* and their families*
- establish respectful partnerships with families* which promote involvement in children's* early learning
- identify the valuable input that parents/guardians contribute as experts in their children's* abilities, interests and ideas
- recommend and support families'* access to appropriate community resources
- communicate children's* developmental progress to families* in an ongoing manner
- communicate to families* the benefits of inclusive* and play-based* early learning opportunities
- respond with sensitivity* to children's* and parents'/guardians' behaviours
- use a variety of positive guidance techniques* that support self-regulation* and positive behaviour in children*
- provide children* with strategies to develop self control, self-regulation*, resiliency and autonomy
- promote competency and positive self esteem in children* and families*
- model respectful relationships which are trustworthy and inclusive*
- support the development of positive pro-social behaviour
- engage with children* to model and support their successful interactions in groups
- engage children* in reflection on own learning as a means to develop insight and build on learning
- support children's* transitions between daily activities and between home and school environments

* See Glossary

5. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

assess, develop and maintain safe, healthy and quality early learning environments* which meet the requirements of current legislation, agency policies and evidence-based practices* in early learning.

Elements of the Performance

- plan and provide healthy and safe indoor and outdoor environments and programming in accordance with current legislation, guidelines and agency policy
- use environmental rating scales such as the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) to assess learning environments
- assess and adapt health and safety environments and practices based on current research and quality criteria
- consult and plan with families* and relevant professionals to promote and support nutritional health in all children*
- meet specific health needs of children* according to individual needs and developmental requirements
- interpret and apply regulations of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1990* to early learning settings
- plan and adapt practices to enhance safety and accessibility for children* and others in the learning environment
- respond appropriately to unsafe and emergency situations following agency policies and procedures
- create opportunities for families'* learning and support related to health promotion, environmental hazards and safety practices
- promote regular, healthy physical activity in all children*
- model a healthy lifestyle

* See Glossary

6. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

prepare and use professional written, verbal, nonverbal and electronic communications when working with children*, families*, colleagues, employers and community partners.

Elements of the Performance

- use active listening techniques
- evaluate one's own interpersonal communication skills through self-awareness and ongoing personal reflection and taking into consideration peer and supervisor's feedback
- effect change in one's own communication, based on feedback received
- use non-verbal language that is consistent with intended message
- be respectful, positive and open in all communication without judgment or personal bias
- validate communication initiated by individual children*, families* and colleagues
- model respect for diversity* by monitoring and modifying interactions
- adapt communication based on the needs of children* and their families* considering factors such as culture*, age, ability and language
- communicate information comprehensively, concisely, accurately, objectively and in a timely manner
- establish and maintain ongoing reciprocal communication with families* regarding their children*
- maintain confidentiality in all written, verbal, and electronic communications
- communicate professionally in written documentation including vocabulary, grammar, spelling and format appropriate to early learning settings
- model and provide positive conflict resolution strategies in all relationships with children*, families*, colleagues, employers and others
- communicate effectively, respectfully and tactfully with children*, families*, colleagues and other professionals
- select and use appropriate technologies for professional electronic communications and record keeping
- establish and maintain effective communication as a member of the early learning team

* See Glossary

7. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

identify, select and apply relevant legislation, regulations, College of Early Childhood Educators Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics, policies and evidence-based practice* guidelines and interpret their impact on a variety of early learning environments*.

Elements of the Performance

- identify and explain the roles and responsibilities (e.g., policy, funding, legislation) of all levels of government related to early learning environments*
- identify the impact of legislative and regulatory bodies, policy, funding, and administrative practices on the structure and quality of early learning programs
- practise in compliance with the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Early Childhood Educators (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2011)
- comply with key legislation impacting early learning environments including the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*, the *Day Nurseries Act, 1990,* the *Child and Family Services Act, 1990* and the *Education Act, 1990*
- determine reasonable grounds to suspect when a child is at risk for abuse or neglect and may be in need of protection, and take appropriate action in reporting these incidences in accordance with the Ontario *Child and Family Services Act, 1990*
- provide rationale for professional self-regulation and accountability in the practice of early childhood education
- identify and maintain quality assurance practices in early learning environments*
- identify and act in accordance with agency policies and procedures including school board policies related to practice in Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten classrooms

* See Glossary

8. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

apply a developing personal philosophy of early learning in accordance with ethical and professional standards* of early childhood education practice.

Elements of the Performance

- analyze a variety of philosophical theories and historical trends related to the early childhood education practice
- maintain congruency between one's personal philosophy of early learning and interactions with children*, families* and colleagues
- act in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Early Childhood Educators (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2011)
- identify and use evidenced-based resources to build one's own developing philosophy of early childhood learning
- reflect on practice experiences and integrate them with theoretical perspectives when refining one's own developing philosophy of early childhood learning

* See Glossary

9. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

advocate* for quality early learning environments* and collaborate with members of the early learning team, families* and community partners to establish and promote such settings.

Elements of the Performance

- protect and promote the rights of children* within their families* and communities
- work in partnership with families* and community partners to advocate* for quality, inclusive* early learning environments*
- model and support families* in advocating for their children*
- consult with other professionals on the early learning team to reflect their knowledge and value their respective roles and scope of practice
- participate in the planning and organization of the Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten program
- lead others in the planning and implementation of inclusive* and play-based* learning strategies in a variety of early learning environments* including daycare centres, homes and neighbourhood child and family centres
- collaborate and consult with other early learning professionals in the identification and referral of children* and families* to community resources
- advocate* for the advancement of early childhood education through professional networking and sharing
- support and guide colleagues and students in early learning settings
- communicate to the public the benefits of quality early learning environments*

* See Glossary

10. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

engage in reflective practice, develop learning goals and maintain an ongoing professional development plan in accordance with evidenced-based practices* in early learning and related fields.

Elements of the Performance

- use self-reflection and self-evaluation skills in an ongoing manner
- research and analyze current studies and evidenced-based practices* in early learning and support their integration into one's own practice
- keep current with changes in the field and maintain contact with the early childhood learning community
- seek out and take advantage of professional development opportunities
- assess personal learning needs and develop realistic strategies to meet educational goals
- research and use support and resources for learning within personal and professional environments
- maintain all required certifications and training e.g., Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), First Aid, anaphylaxis training, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)
- develop a written personal development plan with specific learning goals, resources and timeframes
- evaluate and document progress towards achieving professional learning goals and modify plan accordingly
- assess personal health and well-being and develop strategies to maintain a healthy work-life balance

* See Glossary

VLO 11 is specific to ECE Diploma programs that are known as Aboriginal 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*

plan, implement and evaluate Aboriginal early learning curriculum*, programs and environments that promote children's*, families* and communities knowledge of and respect for Aboriginal peoples and their cultures*.

Elements of the Performance

- integrate a Generative Curriculum* model approach to early learning curriculum* and program development for Aboriginal children* and families*
- integrate community Elders and traditional knowledge as a means of transmitting cultural practices and ways of knowing into programs
- plan and implement curriculum* and programs consistent with Aboriginal philosophies, and cultural values
- assess programs based on culturally-relevant criteria
- situate early learning experiences within the community
- incorporate Aboriginal peoples stories and experiences into learning opportunities
- promote children's* positive relationship with the natural environment using the outdoors creatively
- support and promote intergenerational teaching and learning opportunities
- support the transmission of traditional languages
- contribute to community development initiatives
- advocate* for quality and culturally relevant early learning for Aboriginal children* and families* through liaison with the community
- foster positive identification with their culture* of origin with Aboriginal children* and their families*
- mentor others in aboriginal early learning settings

* See Glossary

Glossary

Advocacy - Actions to champion change, to extend or improve early learning opportunities and supports to children, families and early childhood educators.

Children's development - The sequential processes of growth and learning in which children come to acquire increasingly complex levels of moving, thinking, feeling and interacting with people and objects in the environment. Development involves both a gradual unfolding of biologically determined characteristics and the learning process. Children's development is holistic and interdependent including physical, intellectual, language, emotional and social development. It is embedded in the context of family, culture and society (adapted from CECE: *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, 2011).

Children – Refers to all children from birth to age twelve within the context of their individual family, social, economic, cultural, linguistic, spiritual and developmental diversities.

Continuum of early childhood development – Describes the sequence of skills within broad domains of development that children can be expected to demonstrate. The developmental continuum represents stages as approximations only. Individual children, as well as groups of children, can be in various stages of development across domains depending on a range of variables (adapted from the Best Start Expert Panel (2007). *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT): A Framework for Ontario Early Learning Settings*).

Culture - The total way of life of a group of people including: their economic, family, religious, health, education systems, values and traditions; their form of government; their way of viewing the world; and, also the objects, artifacts, language, literature, arts, institutions, organizations, ideas and beliefs that make up symbolic and learned aspects of human society.

Curriculum - An organized framework that delineates the learning opportunities provided to children, the processes through which children achieve the identified curricular goals, the practices which educators employ to help children achieve these goals, and the context in which educating and learning occur. Child-directed curriculum defines curriculum in its broadest sense, encompassing prevailing theories, approaches and models while following children's developmental and interest cues and developed in collaboration with early childhood educators and families.

Diverse/Diversity - Uniqueness that each person brings to the early learning environment including values and beliefs, culture and ethnicity, language, abilities, knowledge and interests, life experiences, socio-economic status, spirituality, gender, age and sexual orientation (adapted from Best Start Expert Panel (2007). *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT): A Framework for Ontario Early Learning Settings*).

Early learning environments - Child-centered environments that are focused on relationships between children, parents and early childhood professionals that provide, care, nurturing and education as a complex and coherent whole, with the goals of holistic development and overall well-being. It includes schedules, routines, physical environment, interactions, materials, activities and experiences (adapted from Best Start Expert Panel (2007). *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT): A Framework for Ontario Early Learning Settings*).

Ethical and professional standards - A core set of beliefs, values and responsibilities fundamental to this 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 work in early learning settings.

Evidence-based practice - The delivery of high quality early learning programs based on the best empirical evidence available, in conjunction with professional judgment (Best Start Expert Panel (2007). *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT): A Framework for Ontario Early Learning Settings*).

Family/families - A group of persons who are bound together over time by ties of mutual consent, birth and/or adoption/placement and/or legal guardianship who, together, assume responsibilities for physical, social, spiritual and emotional care of one another, addition of new members through procreation/adoption, socialization of children, and nurturance/love of one another.

Generative Curriculum Model - A generative approach to Aboriginal early childhood education curriculum which focuses on developing curriculum from community-relevant knowledge sources e.g. Elders and other 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 integrated approach to a child's development, which takes into account the interrelationship among a child's physical, emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual and cognitive development and life experiences, with special focus on the context of the child's family, culture, and community.

Inclusive - An approach to practice in early learning settings where all children are accepted and served within a program and where each child and family experiences a sense of belonging and no child or family is stigmatized or marginalized. Inclusion means bringing people in rather than excluding them in thought, word or deed. Inclusive practice provides equal learning opportunity and full participation in all aspects of the early learning program by all children.

(adapted from the College of Early Childhood Educators, (CECE): *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, 2011).

Observation techniques - A systematic strategy for collecting information on the behaviour, emotional responses, interests, abilities and patterns of development of an individual child or a group of children within a learning environment, and/or aspects of that environment. Techniques may include participant observation, portfolios, learning stories, developmental screening tools, checklists, anecdotal records and diary recordings.

Pedagogy - The study of the body of knowledge which seeks to understand how learning takes place and the philosophy that supports that understanding of learning (adapted from Best Start Expert Panel (2007). *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT): A Framework for Ontario Early Learning Settings*).

Play-based - An educational approach which builds upon children's natural inclination to make sense of the world through play, where early childhood practitioners participate in play, guiding children's planning, decision-making and communications, and extending children's explorations with narrative, novelty and challenges (Best Start Expert Panel (2007). *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT): A Framework for Ontario Early Learning Settings*).

Positive guidance techniques - Strategies used to support children's self-regulation* and the development of empathy and social competence while preserving each child's sense of worth, autonomy, sense of inclusion in the group and trust in the educator (Best Start Expert Panel (2007). *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT): A Framework for Ontario Early Learning Settings*).

Responsive relationships - Positive and beneficial interactions between adults and children that occur when adults observe and read children's signals and communication and respond with understanding to give children a feeling of being cared for and cared about (Best Start Expert Panel (2007). *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT): A Framework for Ontario Early Learning Settings*).

Respond with sensitivity - Responding to children in a manner that is timely and in direct response to a child's nonverbal and/or verbal signals, taking into account the child's temperament, background, abilities, interests, ideas and the situation. These interactions, always positive, are adaptable to individual children's behaviour.

Self-regulation - The ability to monitor and control emotions, behaviour and attention, (Best Start Expert Panel (2007). *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT): A Framework for Ontario Early Learning Settings*).

III. Essential Employability Skills

All graduates of the Early Childhood Education program of instruction have reliably demonstrated the essential employability skills learning outcomes listed on the following pages, 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	3. *execute mathematical operations accurately.*
CRITICAL THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING	• Analysing • Synthesizing • Evaluating • Decision making • Creative and innovative thinking	4. *apply a systematic approach to solve problems.* 5. *use a variety of thinking skills to anticipate and solve problems.*

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:
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	• Gathering and managing information • Selecting and using appropriate tools and technology for a task or a project • Computer literacy • Internet skills	6. *locate, select, organize, and document information using appropriate technology and information systems.* 7. *analyze, evaluate, and apply relevant information from a variety of sources.*
INTERPERSONAL	• Team work • Relationship management • Conflict resolution • Leadership • Networking	8. *show respect for the diverse opinions, values, belief systems, and contributions of others.* 9. *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	10. *manage the use of time and other resources to complete projects.* 11. *take responsibility for one's own actions, decisions, and consequences.*

IV. General Education Requirement

All graduates of the Early Childhood Education program have met the general education requirement described on the following pages, 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*).

For certificate programs: While the inclusion of General Education is locally determined for programs of instruction leading to either a college certificate or on Ontario College Certificate, it is recommended that graduates of the Ontario College Certificate programs have been engaged in learning that incorporates some breadth beyond the vocational field of study.

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 student's 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 colleges in the development and identification of courses that are designed to fulfill 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.

1. 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.

2. 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, and 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 Canada 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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 development 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.