

# Employer Bulletin

## **Professional Advisory: Use of the titles “early childhood educator” (ECE) or “registered early childhood educator”(RECE)**

The College of Early Childhood Educators (the College) recently published a Professional Advisory regarding the use of the protected titles “early childhood educator” (ECE) or “registered early childhood educator” (RECE) and their French equivalents, “éducatrice de la petite enfance” (EPE), “éducateur de la petite enfance” (EPE), “éducatrice de la petite enfance inscrite” (EPEI) and “éducateur de la petite enfance inscrit” (EPEI).

It is important that employers understand the legal, ethical and professional parameters that govern members’ judgement when using the professional title.

### **The Protected Title**

The *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007* (ECE Act) prohibits any person from engaging in the practice of early childhood education or holding herself or himself out as able to do so unless the person holds a Certificate of Registration issued under the ECE Act, subject to certain exceptions (section 3(1) of the ECE Act).

The ECE Act also prohibits any person other than a member of the College from using any of the protected titles or an abbreviation of any of those titles to describe themselves or their profession (section 4 of the ECE Act).

The purpose of a protected title is to assure the public that any person who uses the title has met the educational and other requirements for entry to practise the profession and has obtained a Certificate of Registration issued by the College. It also assures the public that any

person who uses the title is accountable to practise the profession of early childhood education in accordance with the ethical and professional standards of practice for members of the College.

### **Use of the Title**

A member of the College is required to use the title “registered early childhood educator” or “éducatrice de la petite enfance inscrite” or “éducateur de la petite enfance inscrit” in connection with her or his practice. A member is also required to use the professional designation RECE or EPEI in documentation used in connection with her or his practice.

For example, members of the College use the professional designation RECE or EPEI on reports, correspondence, letterhead, business cards, e-mail signatures, marketing materials, professional materials and websites.

The professional designation RECE or EPEI cannot be modified in any way. It must be written in all capital letters with no periods in between, and should appear after a person's last name. If the individual has more than one professional designation, the designations should be separated by commas.

### **What should employers know?**

Early childhood educators are professionals whose practice is guided and informed by the Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice.

Employers, such as operators of child care programs and school boards, should use the College's public register to verify that their employees are current members of the College. If an individual is listed as a "Current member" on the College's public register, they are entitled to engage in the practice of early childhood education and use the protected title.

If a member's Certificate of Registration with the College has been revoked, cancelled or suspended:

- A notation will be entered on the College's public register.
- The person may no longer engage in the practice of early childhood education or hold herself or himself out as able to do so (subject to certain exceptions).
- The person may no longer use the title "early childhood educator" or "registered early childhood educator" or the French equivalents or an abbreviation of any of them to describe herself or himself or her or his profession.
- The person may no longer represent or hold out (expressly or by implication) that she or he is a member of the College.

### **Are there consequences for misuse of the title?**

Each of "ECE", "RECE", "EPE" and "EPEI" is an official mark (under the *Trade-marks Act* (Canada)); unauthorized use of any of them without the prior written consent of the College is strictly prohibited. It is a provincial offence for an individual who is not a member of the College to use the protected titles or their abbreviations. Upon conviction, a person is liable to a fine of up to \$2,000 for a first offence and up to \$10,000 for a subsequent offence.

Under the ECE Act, the College may also apply to a court for a court order which requires a person to comply with the legislation.

### **Where can employers get more information?**

The full Professional Advisory is available on the College's website.

The College will publish additional resources on its website to help members and employers understand the Professional Advisory and the intended use of the protected titles. Resources will include examples of situations in which members should use their title, frequently asked questions and answers, and a discussion guide for members and employers.

### **For additional information or an expression of concern regarding use of title:**

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