

Practice Guideline on Communication and Collaboration – Section 4

See this section's applicable Code and Standards

This section promotes your knowledge of the following [*Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*](#) (Code and Standards).

RECEs:

- build connections and collaborate with community partners to enhance programs and promote the integration of services. They communicate the value and importance of early childhood education and advocate for the well-being of children and families in their communities and to the broader public (Ethic D).
- understand the benefits of collaborating with community partners and members of other professions to access resources and expertise, and they facilitate those community partnerships (Standard IV: C.3).
- engage with their professional community through activities such as participation in research, associations, committees, professional networks or as mentors (Standard IV: C.7).
- understand their ethical responsibilities involve making the well-being, learning and care of children their foremost responsibility (Ethic A).

Overview

Collaborating with community partners and other professionals is another important aspect of being an RECE. It can lead to improved support, care and programming for children and families. The Code and Standards state that RECEs build connections and collaborate with community partners to enhance programs and promote the integration of services. They communicate the value and importance of early childhood education and advocate for the well-being of children and families in their communities and to the broader public (Ethic D).

The Kindergarten Program (2016) highlights that relationships with community organizations that provide high-quality child care and early years programs offer enrichment for learning. For example, building connections and collaborating with community organizations can result in additional expertise, skills and materials not readily available through your place of employment. These relationships may include collaborating with resource consultants or another RECE to support a smooth transition for a child into the kindergarten program.

- As an RECE, you understand the importance of collaborating with other professionals and community partners to best support the holistic needs of children. For example, building connections and collaborating with community partners could include:
- Engaging with early years services to support integration of programming for children and families;
- Considering the unique rights, needs and identity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit children by engaging with Elders and knowledge keepers;
- Supporting relationships between child care and school staff, administrators and operators;

- Working with colleges and universities to provide student practicum placements and participate in research;
- Collaborating with associations or other professional bodies on projects or initiatives that support the well-being and care of children and families;
- Participating in quality assurance programs; or
- Interprofessional collaboration with partners in early learning and children’s services.

You effectively share your knowledge and experience in collaborative conversations with community partners to directly support children and families. You understand the benefits of collaborating with community partners and members of other professions to access resources and expertise, and you facilitate those community partnerships (Standard IV: C.3). For example, as an RECE, you might partner with leaders from diverse racial, cultural or religious groups to ensure the early years programming and environment reflects the diversity of the community. As a member of a relationship-based profession, you understand that building relationships with colleagues, community partners or other professionals that are based on respect, trust and integrity is fundamental to your practice.

Interprofessional Collaboration

As an RECE, you engage with your professional community through activities such as participation in research, associations, committees, professional networks or as mentors (Standard IV: C.7). For example, you might be a mentor for an early childhood education placement student completing their practicum in an infant room. You’re interacting with the professional community by collaborating and engaging with a student aspiring to the profession, by modelling appropriate practice, communication and collaboration.

Keep in mind that each regulated profession has its own ethical and professional standards, which help to guide practice and influence the decisions that particular professional makes. An integral aspect of interprofessional collaboration is balancing and respecting each profession’s standards while keeping the best interests of children and families as your priority.

If you’re an RECE working in a kindergarten program, you’re involved in interprofessional collaboration. As such, you work in partnership with another educator – an Ontario Certified Teacher (OCT) – who is also a regulated professional. As an RECE, you may collaborate with other registered professionals to best support children and families in a variety of practice settings. For example, you may collaborate with a Registered Social Worker (RSW) to support a child who experienced a trauma, or you may work with an Occupational Therapist (OT) to support a child who has a disability.

Sometimes interprofessional collaboration can result in differing views from team members, which may relate to ethical differences, practice decisions or preferred strategies. As an RECE, you use the Code and Standards, your knowledge, experience and reflective practice to help guide discussions with other professionals. Discussing possible courses of action and outcomes or consequences can also support the whole team in coming to an agreement. The value of engaging in collaborative inquiry and reflection with others is to help work through differing views to find a solution.

When engaging in interprofessional collaboration, remember that you are a valuable member of the team who contributes to the conversation. You’re a qualified and capable professional whose expertise and experience is unique. You bring a perspective on child development, pedagogy, play and inquiry-based learning and relationships with children and families that no other professional on the team can. Your voice is important and is one that needs to be heard in interprofessional collaboration. Take the time to reflect on your role in these conversations and engage in continuous learning that supports you in finding your voice.

Additional resources to support your learning

- In collaboration with the Ontario College of Teachers, the College of Early Childhood Educators developed a professional practice resource designed to facilitate critical dialogue and reflection regarding interprofessional collaboration and ethical leadership. For more information, review [Exploring Interprofessional Collaboration and Ethical Leadership](#) (2015).

Pause and Reflect

Consider the following scenario individually or with colleagues:

It's late August and Serena, an RECE in a child care centre, is supporting Emil and his family with the transition to kindergarten. Serena has built a trusting and meaningful relationship with Emil and his family over the past three years. Serena knows the educator team well and reassures the family that Emil is going to be in good hands. Serena learns, one week before school begins, that there has been a last-minute change in Emil's class. The RECE who was supposed to be part of the educator team had to take a leave of absence and has been replaced with another educator Serena happens to know as well. Serena used to work with this RECE and knows the RECE has an accent. Serena decides she is going to share this information with Emil's family at drop-off the next day. When Emil arrives at the centre, Serena pulls his mom to the side and says, "So there's been a change in the RECE for kindergarten next week. Between you and me, the new RECE has such a heavy accent I'm not sure you or Emil will be able to understand her."

- What are the main issues in this scenario?
- How do Serena's actions affect the relationship she's built with Emil's family?
 - How about the relationship between Emil's family and the new RECE?
 - How about the relationship between Serena and the new RECE?
- What aspects of the Code and Standards are reflected or not reflected in this scenario?
- In what ways might have Serena's actions directly influenced Emil's family's experience with kindergarten?

[Pause and reflect on the scenario about professional communication](#) (Word version)

[Pause and reflect on the scenario about professional communication](#) (PDF version)