



Early Childhood Education

DEFINITION

Early Childhood Education programs serve families in need of high-quality child care in a center-based setting. Programs promote healthy child development through relationship building and a variety of cognitive, physical, and social activities.

Research Note: *Research has shown that high quality early childhood education can have a positive impact on the development, academic achievement, and safety of children. Some studies have found that the strongest impacts of high quality early childhood education programs were observed in at-risk children. A long-term study has shown that high quality early childhood education programs for at-risk children had positive effects on future economic success and the prevention of criminal activities in adulthood.*

Note: *Throughout this document, the term "teaching staff" is used to refer to individuals who work directly with children in the classroom, including teachers and assistant teachers. While organizations may use different terminology, the term "teacher" refers to the individual with primary responsibility for a group of children. Assistant teachers are directly supervised by teachers. When a standard was written for a specific position, the title is specified. The term "parent" is used to refer to the child's caregiver at home including biological parents, legal guardians, or extended family as applicable.*

Note: *These standards were not designed to accredit family child care homes and would not be an appropriate tool for such programs. The standards in this section are reflective of evidence informed practices in center-based care and do not address issues specific to the family child care setting. Completion of these standards by a child care center that utilizes family child care homes to expand its capacity to provide care will not result in accreditation of the individual homes and cannot speak to the quality of the care being provided within them. ECE 12 is intended only to review the oversight and support provided to family child care homes by the child care facility.*

Note: *Please see [ECE Reference List](#) for a list of resources that informed the development of these standards.*

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Provide an overview of the different programs being accredited under this section. The overview should describe:

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

- a. the program's service philosophy and approach to delivering services;
- b. eligibility criteria;
- c. any unique or special services provided to specific populations; and
- d. major funding streams.
- If elements of the service (e.g., assessments) are provided by contract with outside programs or through participation in a formal, coordinated service delivery system, provide a list that identifies the providers and the service components for which they are responsible. Do not include services provided by referral.
- Provide any other information you would like the peer review team to know about these programs.
- A demographic profile of persons and families served by the programs being reviewed under this service section with percentages representing the following:
 - a. racial and ethnic characteristics;
 - b. gender/gender identity;
 - c. age;
 - d. major religious groups; and
 - e. major language groups
- As applicable, a list of groups or classes including, for each group or class:
 - a. the type of activity/group;
 - b. whether the activity/group is short-term or ongoing;
 - c. how often the activity/group is offered;
 - d. the average number of participants per session of the activity/group, in the last month; and
 - e. the total number of participants in the activity/group, in the last month
- A list of any programs that were opened, merged with other programs or services, or closed
- A list or description of program outcomes and outputs being measured
- Early Childhood Education (ECE) Data Sheet

On-Site Evidence

No On-Site Evidence

On-Site Activities

No On-Site Activities

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

ECE 1: Philosophy of Care

The organization is guided by a philosophy that:

- a. provides a logical approach for how program activities will support the healthy development of children in care;
- b. provides a foundation for inclusive, individualized care; and
- c. is based on program goals and developmentally-appropriate practice in early childhood education.

Interpretation: *A program model or logic model can be a useful tool to help staff think systematically about how the program can make a measureable difference by drawing a clear connection between the service population's needs, available resources, program activities and interventions, program outputs, and desired outcomes.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g., A

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Written service philosophy needs improvement or clarification; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- In a few rare instances required consent was not obtained; or
- Monitoring procedures need minor clarification; or
- With few exceptions the policy on prohibited interventions is understood by staff, or the written policy needs minor clarification.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- The written service philosophy needs significant improvement; or
- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Documentation is inconsistent or in some instances is missing and no corrective action has not been initiated; or
- Required consent is often not obtained; or
- A few personnel who are employing non-traditional or unconventional interventions have not completed training, as required; or
- There are gaps in monitoring of interventions, as required; or
- Policy on prohibited interventions does not include at least one of the required elements; or
- Service philosophy is not clearly related to expressed mission or programs of the organization; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- There is no written service philosophy; or
- There are no written policy or procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A Philosophy of Care

On-Site Evidence

No On-Site Evidence

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Teaching staff

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

ECE 2: Enrollment

The organization responds to requests for care promptly and responsively.

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Enrollment procedures

On-Site Evidence

- Parent handbook and other informational materials provided upon enrollment
- Resource and referral list

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Relevant staff
 - b. Parents

ECE 2.01

Prior to enrollment, parents are offered a tour of the facility and receive information regarding:

- a. the organization's approach to education, child development, and behavior management;
- b. policies and procedures, including situations that can result in a child's removal from the program;
- c. classroom rules and expectations;
- d. opportunities and expectations for parental participation;
- e. applicable child protection reporting mandates;
- f. established mechanisms for parents to report safety concerns or suspected child abuse and neglect;
- g. means of resolving differences or complaints; and
- h. fees, operating hours, and whether or not there is space currently available.

Related: CR 1.08

ECE 2.02

Enrollment practices:

- a. ensure equitable treatment;
- b. support timely initiation of care; and
- c. provide for placement on a waiting list, if desired.

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

ECE 2.03

When the organization cannot meet the parent's need for care, it provides an explanation and appropriate referrals.

Interpretation: *Early childhood education providers are not expected to make referrals to specific providers, but should be able to direct parents to local child care resource and referral or relevant websites.*

ECE 2.04

The organization collects relevant information from families at enrollment and as needed throughout the year, including:

- a. identifying information, including name and date of birth;
- b. address;
- c. additional consent forms or permission slips, as needed; and
- d. authorizations for pick-up.

ECE 2.05

The organization maintains files for all children that:

- a. contain relevant information;
- b. are specific, factual, and legible;
- c. are kept up to date;
- d. are signed and dated by authorized personnel, where appropriate;
- e. comply with any applicable legal requirements; and
- f. are maintained and disposed of in a manner that protects privacy and confidentiality.

Interpretation: *Relevant information includes the information specified in ECE 2.04, as well as information that would not have been available at the time of enrollment, such as accident report forms, payment receipts when applicable, attendance sheets, and evidence of ongoing communication with family members, when appropriate.*

Files and signatures can be paper, electronic, or a combination of paper and electronic.

Interpretation: *In addition to supporting program operations, files are an important risk management tool. Well-maintained files can help shield an organization from allegations of misconduct and negligence, while poorly-maintained files and improper documentation are a known liability.*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

ECE 2.06

Access to confidential child files meets legal requirements, and is limited to:

- a. the child's parents or legal guardians or designated legal representatives;
- b. personnel authorized to access specific information on a "need-to-know" basis;
- c. auditors, contractors, and licensing or accrediting personnel, consistent with the organization's confidentiality policy; and
- d. others who are permitted access, as applicable.

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

ECE 3: Parental Involvement and Support

Parents are active participants and partners and receive the support and information needed to promote healthy child development.

Research Note: *The research on early childhood education demonstrates that teacher-family partnerships are a key indicator of quality and a strong predictor of positive developmental outcomes. Quality programs view parents as the child's primary caregiver with a critical role in the child's healthy development; tailor the program to meet families' emerging needs to the greatest extent possible; encourage maximum family involvement; and support, educate, and empower families.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards;
e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of the opportunities for parent involvement

On-Site Evidence

- Informational material provided to parents
- Copies of classroom information available to parents
- Community resource and referral list

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Teaching staff
 - c. Parents
- Review child files
- Observe facility
- Observe parent/ teacher interactions

ECE 3.01

Parents have access to daily schedules and other classroom information.

Interpretation: *The organization may use classroom bulletin boards, newsletters, a webpage, or email to provide parents with consistent access to classroom information. Information on daily routines should include the menu if meals are provided.*

ECE 3.02

Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the program.

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

Interpretation: *Active involvement in the program can include participation in classroom activities as an aid or volunteer, parent education meetings, parent advisory boards, regular parent meetings, or sitting on the organization's governing body. Having an open-door policy is one effective method for encouraging parents to visit the program, meet with their child's teacher, and participate in daily activities or special events.*

(FP) ECE 3.03

Parents are helped to understand and be actively involved in their child's development and education through:

- a. participation in decisions affecting their child;
- b. daily updates and two-way communication of information;
- c. parent-teacher conferences that are held biannually, or more often as needed, given the child's progress;
- d. assistance with recognizing developmental, health, or behavioral issues that may require additional services or support; and
- e. visits to the program.

Interpretation: *Teaching staff should have a system for documenting daily events, accomplishments, or concerns to share with parents.*

Interpretation: *Parents should be encouraged to share information on the child's behavior and development at home to ensure assessments are comprehensive and reflective of both the home and classroom environment. See ECE 7.03 and ECE 7.04 for more information on involving parents in assessments.*

Interpretation: *Health resources can include hearing and vision screenings, resources for immunizations and well-baby check-ups, and the state and local health department.*

Research Note: *The early detection of vision and hearing deficits is critical to limiting any developmental delays that could result.*

ECE 3.04

Teaching staff discuss cultural values and beliefs with parents and:

- a. adjust caregiving practices, daily routines, and classroom activities as appropriate; and
- b. approach differing points of view respectfully and in an empathetic manner.

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

Interpretation: *Providing culturally responsive care that reflects the care provided at home can be comforting to the child. Daily routines that may be adjusted based on a family's belief system include potty training, feeding, and napping. However, not all cultural practices should be supported in the classroom as they may cause harm to children or contradict developmentally-appropriate practice. Teaching staff should discuss with their supervisors how parental preferences can be appropriately incorporated into the child care setting.*

Research Note: *A study that reviewed cultural conflicts between teaching staff and parents found that conflicts tended to fall into three categories: (1) daily childrearing practices such as feeding, gender roles, sleeping techniques, and discipline; (2) specific cultural customs such as the celebration of holidays, ceremonial clothing, and hygiene; and (3) biases or preferences toward specific cultural groups such as parents' preferences for same-race teaching staff or the use of their native language in the classroom.*

ECE 3.05

Information is available to help parents cope with child-rearing responsibilities.

Interpretation: *Information should address the needs and interests of parents and can include topics such as:*

- a. *child development;*
- b. *child health issues;*
- c. *transition to school; and*
- d. *nutrition.*

Information can be provided through:

- a. *pamphlets;*
- b. *brochures;*
- c. *relevant publications;*
- d. *newsletter;*
- e. *bulletin boards;*
- f. *seminars;*
- g. *parent support groups;*
- h. *referrals to outside providers; or*
- i. *other programs or media appropriate to the size of the service.*

ECE 3.06

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

The organization is flexible and responsive to the changing needs and unique circumstances of families served.

Interpretation: *Changing needs or unique circumstances can include job loss, military deployment, the birth of a sibling, a death in the family, family violence, or divorce.*

Examples of how an organization can demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness include:

- a. *adjusting operating hours to accommodate changing work schedules;*
- b. *providing flexible care on an hourly or daily basis to facilitate job searches;*
- c. *referring families to local resources; and*
- d. *incorporating activities into the daily schedule to help children cope with stressors.*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

ECE 4: Health and Safety

The organization promotes and protects the health and safety of children and staff.

Research Note: *The research identifies health promotion as a key indicator of quality and a strong predictor of positive outcomes.*

Note: *Please see Facility Observation Checklist - Private, Public, Canadian for additional assistance with this standard.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Infant sleep procedures to reduce risk of SIDS
- Bottle handling procedures
- Cleaning and sanitation procedures
- Diaper changing procedures
- Hand washing procedures
- Child abuse and neglect reporting procedures
- Procedures for reporting, responding to and recording health problems and accidents

On-Site Evidence

- Health policy/procedures provided to parents
- Sample menus for meals and snacks
- Agreement with a health facility or qualified medical professional
- Documentation of professional installation, maintenance, and annual inspection of playground equipment
- Documentation of monthly playground maintenance inspections
- Copies of manufactures instructions for all playground equipment
- Smoking policy

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Relevant staff
- Review teaching staff files for:
 - a. documentation of health screening
 - b. CPR and First Aid certification
- Review children's health records
- Observe facility

(FP) ECE 4.01

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

A health record is maintained for each child that includes:

- a. verification of up-to-date, preventative screenings;
- b. evidence of up-to-date immunizations as required by applicable law or regulation;
- c. emergency contact information that is kept current and updated at least once a year;
- d. written parental authorization for emergency care;
- e. information about and consent forms related to relevant health information and needs, including medication permission forms, if applicable, updated at least annually; and
- f. information about and consent/authorization forms related to special needs, if applicable, updated at least annually.

Interpretation: *Emergency contact information includes the names of the family physician, clinic, or hospital to be used in emergencies.*

(FP) ECE 4.02

All parents receive a written health policy and procedures that address:

- a. the process for determining whether or not the organization can handle a child's specific health needs;
- b. attendance guidelines for sick children, including separation from other children; and
- c. procedures for notifying parents that their child may have been exposed to an infectious disease.

(FP) ECE 4.03

Child health problems and accidents, including changes in appearance or behavior, are promptly recorded and reported to parents and administration, and follow-up is conducted as needed.

(FP) ECE 4.04

Procedures for regularly cleaning and sanitizing the classroom limit the spread of infection and include:

- a. daily cleaning of the facility;
- b. disinfecting bedding, beds, cots, cribs, and mats at least once a week and between use by different children;

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

- c. disinfecting toys and other materials at least weekly and immediately after use if items are placed in the child's mouth; and
- d. the availability of properly labeled disinfectants, which are securely stored away from children at all times.

Related: ASE 4

(FP) ECE 4.05

To limit the spread of infection, diaper changing areas:

- a. are separate from food preparation areas;
- b. have a posted copy of diaper changing procedures;
- c. utilize changing tables made of non-porous material; and
- d. include covered, plastic-lined, hands-free cans for the disposal of used diapers.

(FP) ECE 4.06

Diapering procedures meet nationally recognized guidelines for sanitary diapering practices, and include:

- a. that children are never to be left unattended on changing tables and that one hand must be on the child at all times;
- b. proper disposal of diapers and other contaminated items;
- c. proper use of gloves when they are offered to teaching staff;
- d. steps for gathering materials ahead of time;
- e. relevant hand-washing requirements; and
- f. steps for disinfecting the area after each use.

Research Note: *The 2nd Edition of Caring for Our Children, which is a joint partnership of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Public Health Association, and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care, offers detailed diaper changing procedures that organizations may find useful when developing their own diapering practices.*

(FP) ECE 4.07

Hand washing areas are designed to promote safety and limit the spread of infection including:

- a. separating hand-washing sinks from food preparation sinks;

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

- b. installing shatter-proof mirrors;
- c. making hand washing sinks easily accessible to all children; and
- d. having liquid soap and sanitary methods for drying off hands available.

Interpretation: *Sanitary methods for drying off hands include disposable paper towels or electric dryers that turn on and off automatically.*

(FP) ECE 4.08

Hand washing policies and procedures meet nationally recognized guidelines for hand washing and include:

- a. under what situations hands must be washed;
- b. requirements for water temperature, soap use, and time spent scrubbing and rinsing; and
- c. procedures for turning off water that reduce the risk of recontamination.

Research Note: *The 2nd Edition of Caring for Our Children, which is a joint partnership of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Public Health Association, and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care, has hand washing procedures that organizations may find useful when developing their own hand washing practices*

ECE 4.09

Teaching staff promote good health habits by:

- a. modeling and providing developmentally-appropriate instruction on health and hygiene practices;
- b. serving nutritious meals and snacks; and
- c. providing opportunities for active play.

Interpretation: *Examples of health and hygiene practices include, but are not limited to:*

- a. *washing hands before and after eating;*
- b. *washing hands after using the bathroom;*
- c. *covering the nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing; and*
- d. *regular tooth brushing.*

Interpretation: *Active play for infants may include "tummy time," allowing infants to develop the muscles of their back and neck.*

Research Note: *Research has shown that healthy eating habits and active*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

lifestyles are established in infancy.

(FP) ECE 4.10

Children are protected from injuries, accidents, and illnesses through practices that ensure teaching staff:

- a. follow universal precautions as well as diapering, hand washing, and sanitation procedures;
- b. notify parents in case of emergencies or when safety issues arise;
- c. are trained on emergency response procedures;
- d. train children in a developmentally and age-appropriate manner on how to respond in case of emergency;
- e. identify and report suspected child abuse and neglect to prescribed authorities;
- f. have access to a telephone, emergency transportation, emergency numbers and first aid supplies both on- and off-site;
- g. are informed about children in their care with special medical needs or allergies; and
- h. are healthy and capable of performing the essential functions of the job with reasonable accommodation.

Related: TS 2.02, TS 2.04, ASE 7.02, ASE 7.03, ASE 7.04, ASE 8.01

Interpretation: *While an annual physical examination is preferred, teaching staff may receive a general health screening performed by a qualified medical practitioner, provided the screening addresses communicable diseases, including tuberculosis when required by relevant health authorities.*

(FP) ECE 4.11

The organization ensures that staff are available to respond in a medical emergency by guaranteeing:

- a. each classroom has at least one person present with current pediatric First Aid certification;
- b. one person with current Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certification is on site at all times the program is in operation; and
- c. individuals with First Aid and CPR certification are present on field trips away from the facility.

Related: TS 2.09

Interpretation: *First Aid and CPR certification must be kept up-to-date*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

according to the guidelines established by the certification body.

ECE 4.12

A health facility or qualified medical professional is available to provide:

- a. medical consultation to the organization and parents;
- b. a review of children's health needs; and
- c. a review of the organization's health and safety practices.

Interpretation: *The intent of this standard is not to require that organizations pay for this service, but to ensure they have access to medical professionals as needed. Some organizations, particularly those that serve a higher risk population, might have medical professionals on staff; others will develop formal or informal relationships with medical professionals outside the organization to receive assistance when special health needs arise.*

Research Note: *The literature identifies physical health as one predictor of future academic success. As such, organizations should consider each child's physical health and well-being when making program decisions.*

(FP) ECE 4.13

Bottles of breast milk and formula are:

- a. labeled with the child's full name and the date that it was brought in;
- b. brought in daily and stored in a refrigerator upon arrival;
- c. discarded if the bottle is not finished in one feeding; and
- d. warmed in water and never in a microwave oven.

Interpretation: *Breast milk or formula should not be stored overnight by the child care center. Bottles that are unused at the end of the day should be sent home with the parent.*

NA *The organization does not provide infant care.*

(FP) ECE 4.14

Teaching staff take necessary precautions to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related infant deaths, including:

- a. placing infants on their backs for sleep unless otherwise instructed by

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

- the child's doctor;
- b. placing infants on a firm sleep surface such as a safety-approved crib mattress with fitted sheet;
 - c. removing soft materials or objects such as pillows, loose bedding, bumper pads, or toys from sleep areas;
 - d. ensuring sleep spaces are free of strangulation hazards such as dangling cords, electric wires, and window-covering cords; and
 - e. keeping the room at a comfortable temperature and dressing infants appropriately for the environment.

Research Note: *The Back to Sleep Campaign® reduces the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related causes of infant death by educating caregivers on safe sleep practices, and is a good resource for organizations looking for more information on SIDS prevention. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development directs and maintains the Safe to Sleep campaign® in collaboration with the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, First Candle, and the Maternal and Child Health Bureau.*

NA *The organization does not provide infant care.*

(FP) ECE 4.15

A safe environment is maintained through proper selection and maintenance of play equipment, including:

- a. indoor and outdoor playground equipment that meets national safety standards;
- b. installing equipment on an appropriate amount of impact absorbing surfaces;
- c. conducting daily inspections of playground equipment and the surrounding area;
- d. monthly maintenance inspections of playground equipment according to manufacturer's instructions; and
- e. annual inspections of the play equipment by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector.

Related: ASE 4

Interpretation: *The amount of the impact absorbing surface will vary given the material used and the height of the playground equipment. Organizations should refer to industry standards and the manufacturer's instructions for more detailed guidance on the proper depth of impact absorbing surfaces.*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

Interpretation: *The daily inspection of the playground should focus on the immediate identification of potentially hazardous conditions such as standing water, broken glass, or damage to the play equipment. Monthly maintenance inspections should check for worn or damaged wood, bolts, chains, anchors, etc. The organization should use a standardized checklist for monthly inspections and observations should be documented. While routine checks of playground equipment can be performed by trained staff, the inspection, and maintenance of playground equipment is highly technical and best performed annually by an industry professional.*

(FP) ECE 4.16

Stairwells have railings and are closed off from child care classrooms.

NA *None of the organization's ECE facilities have stairwells.*

ECE 4.17

The facility provides an optimal care and learning environment that is:

- a. clean;
- b. welcoming;
- c. well lit, with natural light where possible and emergency lighting throughout;
- d. maintained at a safe, comfortable temperature, and noise level;
- e. odor free; and
- f. adequately ventilated.

(FP) ECE 4.18

Smoking is prohibited anywhere on the premises, including outside entrances, outdoor play areas and program vehicles.

(FP) ECE 4.19

Toys and other materials are child-proof, non-toxic, and maintained in good repair.

Related: ASE 5

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

ECE 5: Classroom Environment

Child care is provided in an enriched, interactive environment that is well-suited to meeting the developmental needs of children.

Note: Please see *Facility Observation Checklist - Private, Public, Canadian* for additional assistance with this standard.

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or A
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of how toys and other materials are chosen for the classroom

On-Site Evidence

- Policy governing the use of infant cribs, walkers, jumpers, and swings

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Teaching staff
 - c. Parents
- Observe facility

ECE 5.01

The environment supports positive development and education by providing:

- a. dedicated spaces to accommodate a range of developmentally-appropriate activities including group and individual play;
- b. an organized classroom that allows for safe movement throughout the space;
- c. flexible space that is easily updated to meet changing skills and interests of the group;
- d. sturdy, appropriate furniture;
- e. furniture that allows for adults to comfortably hold children, where appropriate;
- f. individual places for children to store their belongings; and
- g. reasonable accommodations for full access to indoor and outdoor activities by children with disabilities.

Related: ASE 2.01

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

Interpretation: *The room should be divided into areas for active and quiet play with low barriers separating dedicated spaces. Quiet space should include soft elements, feel private, and provide an opportunity for activities such as reading, quiet play, or taking a break from group activities while still allowing for visual supervision of children at all times.*

Interpretation: *Appropriate furniture is defined as furniture that is designed to accommodate the age range of children in the classroom. This can include consideration of the furniture's size, weight, durability, construction, and material. For example, chairs should be short enough that children can sit in them without having to climb, risking injury from the chair tipping. Additionally, furniture such as bookshelves should be chosen and installed in a secure way that prevents tipping.*

ECE 5.02

The physical facilities, buildings, and grounds of child care centers include:

- a. 75 square feet of outdoor space per child, based on the number of children outside at one time;
- b. outdoor areas enclosed by fences;
- c. outdoor areas and equipment that support a variety of play activities such as climbing, group activities, building, and exploring the natural environment;
- d. outdoor play areas that have shade;
- e. 35 square feet of unencumbered indoor space per child;
- f. separate lavatories customized for adults and children;
- g. drinking water available at all times and in all indoor and outdoor play spaces;
- h. quiet and private indoor areas for parents and staff; and
- i. a reception area where all visitors must sign-in and out.

Interpretation: *Quiet and private indoor areas should include areas for parents to breast or bottle feed their children, space for staff to take breaks away from the children, office space, and private areas for parent interviews.*

Interpretation: *Child care programs located in urban areas with limited outdoor space can accommodate children's needs for both active and outdoor play by offering larger indoor spaces such as gyms for active play and by taking children to local parks. Additionally a child's need for outdoor space will vary given his or her age and mobility level. For example, a group of infants would require less square footage of outdoor space than a group of 3 year olds.*

Interpretation: *Unencumbered indoor space is defined as usable activity*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

space for children. Closed storage areas, indoor space reserved for staff, reception areas, etc. should not be included when determining the amount of unencumbered indoor space available.

ECE 5.03

Toys and other materials are chosen and updated regularly:

- a. based on the ages, abilities, and interests of children;
- b. to sustain interest and support emerging skills;
- c. to reflect differences in gender, ethnicity, cultural background, age, and special needs; and
- d. to stimulate development in curriculum content areas.

Interpretation: *Books, toys, and room décor are examples of ways that diversity can be incorporated into the child care setting. Attention should be given to providing toys and materials that promote a deeper understanding of diversity while avoiding stereotypical images.*

Interpretation: *The exact toys and materials selected for the classroom will vary based on the above criteria; however, some examples of age-appropriate materials for infant classrooms include:*

- a. comfortable carpet or stiff blanket;
- b. shatter-proof mirrors;
- c. balls;
- d. washable plush toys;
- e. toys that make noise when shaken or squeezed;
- f. chunky toys that the child can look at, reach for, clutch, and mouth;
- g. board books;
- h. a method for playing music such as a MP3 player docking station or CD player; and
- i. toys that allow for manipulation such as turning or inserting.

Examples of age-appropriate materials for toddler classrooms include:

- a. art materials appropriate to their developmental level including large crayons, markers, and large paper;
- b. containers that can be filled and emptied including household items such as measuring cups or unbreakable bowls;
- c. sturdy picture books;
- d. a method for playing music such as a MP3 player docking station or CD player;
- e. items that can be pushed, pulled, or ridden; and
- f. sensory objects such as sand, dough, and water.

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

Examples of age-appropriate materials for pre-school classrooms include:

- a. *blocks;*
- b. *books;*
- c. *writing materials;*
- d. *math related games or toys such as items to be counted;*
- e. *a method for playing music such as a MP3 player docking station or CD player;*
- f. *age-appropriate instruments;*
- g. *items for scientific investigation such as a magnifying glass;*
- h. *items to be used in imaginary play such as props or costumes; and*
- i. *sensory play items such as modeling clay, sand, or water.*

Note: See ECE 7.01 and ECE 7.04 for more information on how toys should be chosen based on curriculum content and ongoing assessments.

ECE 5.04

Toys and other materials are arranged in a way that:

- a. allows children access without help; and
- b. encourages appropriate use.

Interpretation: *Toys and other materials should be arranged in a way that makes logical sense and encourages their appropriate use. For example, crayons should be stored with other art supplies, blank paper, and coloring books rather than on the shelf next to books meant for reading. This encourages children to use crayons for their intended purpose and discourages writing in books. However, this is not meant to imply that there is only one way of using each toy. Often times, the best toys and materials are those that can be used in a variety of ways, encouraging creativity and exploration.*

Research Note: *Toys should challenge the child both physically and mentally rather than relying on passive interaction. The child's manipulation of the toy should bring about a response or change in the item to promote exploration and learning. The best toys are those that are open-ended and can be used in a variety of ways.*

(FP) ECE 5.05

The least restrictive environment for infants is chosen at all times including;

- a. using cribs only for sleeping;
- b. limiting the use of infant swings and jumpers; and

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

c. prohibiting infant walkers.

Interpretation: *Infant swings and jumpers should never be used when infants are sleeping and infants should be attended to whenever they are in use. As with all of the equipment, toys, and materials used in the classroom, the organization should be aware of any product recalls that affect their swings or jumpers. The Consumer Product Safety Commission provides web-based access to a list of product recalls.*

NA *The organization does not provide infant care.*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

ECE 6: Promoting Quality Relationships with Teaching Staff and Peers

Children experience meaningful, responsive, and stable relationships with teaching staff and peers.

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information Â or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or Â
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of the primary caregiver role
- A description of how children contribute to the classroom and group
- Behavior management policy and procedures

On-Site Evidence

- Relevant portions of curriculum related to social and emotional development

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Teaching staff
 - c. Parents
- Observe interactions:
 - a. Teacher/child
 - b. Peer/peer
 - c. Teacher/teacher
 - d. Group
- Observe facility
- Review child files for behavior management plans

ECE 6.01

Each child has a meaningful, ongoing relationship with a primary caregiver.

Research Note: *The research shows that maintaining the same primary caregiver aids in the development of secure child-caregiver attachments, as well as improved relationships between the caregiver and the family, and between the child and his or her peers.*

ECE 6.02

Teaching staff facilitate the development of secure attachments by providing each child with care that is:

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

- a. responsive;
- b. flexible;
- c. consistent; and
- d. predictable.

Interpretation: *Responsive care includes:*

- a. *evaluating and adjusting routines, interactions, activities, or materials to meet the individual and changing needs, interests, and abilities of the children in care;*
- b. *responding promptly and appropriately to children's needs; and*
- c. *providing opportunities for child-directed activities and conversations.*

Interpretation: *Teaching staff should be flexible in meeting each child's eating, toileting, and sleeping needs.*

Research Note: *Research presents strong evidence that children who receive predictable, positive, and responsive care feel safe and supported, allowing them to explore confidently and without fear. Long-term studies have shown that these secure attachments are a strong predictor of future academic achievement including higher test scores, stronger cognitive and social skills, and fewer behavioral problems.*

ECE 6.03

Teaching staff establish meaningful relationships with each child by:

- a. demonstrating affection, attention, and respect;
- b. interacting frequently in a positive and expressive manner;
- c. engaging in extended conversations; and
- d. responding to his or her questions or requests.

Interpretation: *Positive interactions are demonstrated through:*

- a. *pleasant tone of voice;*
- b. *use of the child's name;*
- c. *use of positive language;*
- d. *speaking with children at their eye-level;*
- e. *eye contact;*
- f. *smiling;*
- g. *offering praise and encouragement; and*
- h. *making positive physical contact when acceptable to the child, such as: hugging, holding a child's hand, and offering comforting touch.*

Interpretation: *Conversations should be both child and teacher initiated. Teaching staff should demonstrate interest when children ask questions or*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

discuss something of interest to them.

Research Note: *The literature identifies positive interactions with teaching staff as a primary indicator of child care quality and a strong predictor of positive outcomes such as cognitive development, language skills, social development, and the healthy development of trust, confidence, and identity.*

ECE 6.04

Each infant receives individualized, ongoing care from one person, or a consistent team, who:

- a. imitates and responds positively to the infant's vocalizations;
- b. understands and respects the infant's sleeping and eating habits;
- c. recognizes the infant's various cries and promptly responds;
- d. provides reassurance, physical care, regular affection, and tactile and vocal stimulation;
- e. gives one-on-one attention during caregiving routines such as rocking, feeding, or changing; and
- f. offers consistent repetition of daily routines, allowing for some variety and contrast.

NA *The organization does not provide infant care.*

ECE 6.05

Teaching staff promote the development of positive self-identity by:

- a. honoring differing abilities, genders, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the classroom;
- b. providing opportunities for children to care for and make decisions regarding their classroom and contribute to the group;
- c. treating children and their families equally and with respect;
- d. welcoming children and their families to the program each day;
- e. encouraging exploration and celebrating achievements; and
- f. involving the child in communication with the family whenever possible.

Note: *Please see Facility Observation Checklist - Private, Public, Canadian for additional assistance with this standard.*

ECE 6.06

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

Teaching staff act as role models and promote the development of positive peer relationships by:

- a. supporting children in the development of friendships and other forms of positive group interaction;
- b. providing opportunities to learn and practice pro-social behaviors including negotiation, problem solving, and communication skills;
- c. helping children to enter into, sustain, and enhance play;
- d. protecting children from teasing and bullying;
- e. encouraging emotional self-regulation;
- f. serving meals "family-style;" and
- g. using everyday activities to foster the development of social skills.

Research Note: *To encourage socialization and promote relationship building, the literature on child development encourages serving meals "family style," with several children and adults sitting around a table, serving themselves, and engaging in conversations.*

Note: *See ECE 7.10 and ECE 7.11 for more information on promoting emotional and social development within the curriculum.*

ECE 6.07

Teaching staff support positive behavior by:

- a. developing positive relationships with children;
- b. building on children's strengths and reinforcing positive behaviors;
- c. recognizing opportunities for children to learn and practice conflict resolution skills;
- d. encouraging the child's ability to self-regulate and accept responsibility for their behavior;
- e. responding consistently to behavioral issues;
- f. providing engaging activities throughout the day;
- g. re-directing children to encourage self-calming and de-escalate volatile situations;
- h. providing sufficient support during daily transitions; and
- i. modeling positive behavior by interacting with fellow staff, children, and families in a positive, respectful manner.

Interpretation: *Re-directing children can involve engaging the child in an individual activity away from the group and having a developmentally-appropriate discussion about emotional self-regulation techniques and conflict resolution skills.*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

(FP) ECE 6.08

Negative approaches to behavior management are prohibited including, but not limited to:

- a. corporal punishment;
- b. interventions that involve withholding nutrition or hydration, or that inflict physical or psychological pain;
- c. isolation and locked seclusion;
- d. ignoring the child;
- e. group punishment or discipline for individual behavior;
- f. labeling a child "good" or "bad;"
- g. the use of demeaning, shaming, threatening, or degrading language, tone, volume, or activities;
- h. physical restraint, except when a child's behavior poses an immediate threat of harm to themselves or others; and
- i. punitive use of timeouts.

Interpretation: *Physical restraint should never be used as punishment or a means of controlling unwanted behavior unless that behavior poses an immediate threat of harm to the child or someone else. Examples of emergency situations that may require physical restraint include when a child runs towards a street or when a child attempts to cause physical harm to him or herself or another child in the classroom.*

ECE 6.09

When children with persistent behavioral issues are enrolled in the program, teachers work with parents to:

- a. identify triggers to negative behaviors;
- b. identify de-escalation strategies or interventions that have worked well in the past;
- c. develop and implement an individualized plan to support the child's success; and
- d. seek mental health consultation as needed.

Note: *See ECE 8 for more information on serving children with unique behavioral needs that may require additional screenings or services.*

ECE 6.10

Program changes are made with sensitivity to each child's need for stability

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

and consistent relationships.

Interpretation: *Program changes include decisions around grouping, staffing, and scheduling, which could impact a child's day-to-day routines and established relationships. Organizations can demonstrate that the needs of children in the program have been considered by instituting changes slowly, over-time; notifying children and their families of upcoming changes in advance; and taking the time to answer questions regarding the purpose of the change.*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

ECE 7: Developmental and Educational Activities

A variety of activities and lessons promote social, emotional, cognitive, language, and physical development.

Research Note: *The literature identifies developmentally-appropriate practices as a key area of quality. Studies have shown that developmentally-appropriate classroom settings predict a consistently high quality of care.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Curriculum or developmental plan for each age group
- Sample daily activity plans for each age group
- Assessment procedures
- A description of how results of assessments inform daily activities and classroom materials

On-Site Evidence

- Progress notes or group activity log
- Policy and procedures for the use of technology in the classroom
- Assessment tools and/or criteria

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Teachers
 - c. Assistant Teachers
- Review child files
- Observe interactions:
 - a. Teacher/child
 - b. Peer/peer
 - c. Group
- Observe facility

ECE 7.01

A curriculum, or another type of developmental or educational plan:

- a. guides the provision of daily activities and the selection of classroom materials;
- b. promotes social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development;
- c. is developmentally, individually, and culturally appropriate;

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

- d. fosters and supports the attitudes and skills needed for learning; and
- e. acts as the foundation for ongoing assessment of children's progress.

Interpretation: *The chosen curriculum must be: (1) developmentally appropriate and reflect what is known about child development and learning; (2) individually appropriate and reflect the strengths, interests, family situation, interpersonal characteristics, and needs of each individual child within the group setting; and (3) culturally appropriate and reflective of the social and cultural backgrounds of each child in the group.*

Interpretation: *Ways that teaching staff can foster and support learning skills include:*

- a. *providing opportunities for the child to make choices;*
- b. *encouraging children to try new things;*
- c. *helping children to finish what they start;*
- d. *encouraging the child to ask questions;*
- e. *providing a wide array of new experiences;*
- f. *recognizing achievements and offering praise and encouragement;*
- g. *encouraging the child to use materials in new, creative ways; and*
- h. *never rushing an activity, allowing the child to get involved and experience full engagement.*

Research Note: *Helping children practice and develop the attitudes and skills needed to learn allows them to better take advantage of educational opportunities. Learning skills include initiative, engagement, persistence, curiosity, eagerness to learn, reasoning, problem solving, invention, and imagination.*

ECE 7.02

Teaching staff regularly evaluates each child's development and learning through assessments that are purposeful, well planned, and ongoing.

ECE 7.03

Assessments are culturally and developmentally appropriate and take into account:

- a. developmental and educational goals;
- b. variations in learning and development; and
- c. input from parents.

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

ECE 7.04

Results of assessments:

- a. are communicated to parents;
- b. inform the selection of daily activities and classroom materials; and
- c. are used to evaluate and improve program effectiveness.

Research Note: *Carefully observing and documenting each child's activity patterns, developmental advances, and responses to everyday challenges can help teachers to provide a responsive, supportive learning environment. Planned activities and materials should reflect the daily observations and changing needs of children in the group.*

ECE 7.05

A wide variety of developmentally-appropriate activities are provided including:

- a. both large- and small-group activities as appropriate to the age range of children in the group;
- b. independent activity;
- c. daily opportunities for active and quiet play, nap time, and conversation;
- d. daily opportunities for both teacher- and child-directed activities;
- e. opportunities to meet developmental milestones through play;
- f. daily indoor and outdoor activities, when safety permits; and
- g. access to external resources such as libraries, museums, and community recreational, educational, and cultural sites or events.

Interpretation: *Access to external resources can be provided either in the classroom or in the community.*

Research Note: *Group activities provide children with an opportunity to play together and learn from one another. Large group activities are not appropriate for infants and toddlers.*

ECE 7.06

Activities, materials, and lessons reflect a multi-cultural society.

Interpretation: *Cultural exploration should be embedded in the curriculum to promote cultural awareness, sensitivity, and understanding.*

Note: *Please see Facility Observation Checklist - Private, Public, Canadian*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

for additional assistance with this standard.

ECE 7.07

To support cognitive development, classroom activities:

- a. offer choice;
- b. provide opportunities to question, experiment, and explore;
- c. are appropriate to the developmental level of children in the classroom;
- d. reflect a variety of educational techniques, including play;
- e. encourage the child's sense of mastery of new skills and experiences;
and
- f. incorporate curriculum content areas including literacy, math, science, social studies, health and nutrition, and the arts.

Interpretation: *Teaching staff can facilitate exploration of the visual and performing arts by:*

- a. *offering a variety of developmentally-appropriate art supplies;*
- b. *teaching new skills or ways to use art supplies;*
- c. *playing music in the classroom;*
- d. *displaying children's art in the classroom;*
- e. *exposing children to professional artists;*
- f. *displaying art at children's eye-level;*
- g. *singing songs;*
- h. *playing instruments; and*
- i. *engaging in imaginative play.*

Interpretation: *Teaching staff can promote the development of literacy skills in infants and toddlers through:*

- a. *interactive reading, such as asking questions, reading with expression, and naming objects or people on the pages;*
- b. *making board books available in the classroom;*
- c. *rhyming;*
- d. *providing opportunities for children to use writing utensils; or*
- e. *singing.*

In pre-school classrooms, the recognition of print should be emphasized by:

- a. *labeling items in the classroom;*
- b. *using dictation, where the teacher writes down what the child is saying;*
- c. *using print to describe daily routines or rules the child is familiar with;*
- d. *making developmentally-appropriate books available in the classroom;*
and
- e. *providing ample opportunities to recognize and write letters.*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

Interpretation: *Math content for infants and toddlers can include:*

- a. *exposure to different shapes, sizes, colors, and patterns through objects in their environment; or*
- b. *mathematical concepts that can be expressed non-verbally such as "more or less" or "big and small."*
- c. *Math content in pre-school classrooms can include:*
- d. *opportunities to gain familiarity with numbers, shapes, and patterns;*
- e. *opportunities for children to categorize items by size, color, shape and pattern;*
- f. *recognition of numbers and their meaning; or*
- g. *use of mathematical terms in their daily life.*

Interpretation: *Science content for infants and toddlers can include:*

- a. *opportunities to explore their senses;*
- b. *exploration of cause and effect; or*
- c. *opportunities to explore their capacity to affect or change their environment.*
- d. *Science content in pre-school classrooms can include opportunities to:*
- e. *explore the differences between living and non-living things;*
- f. *observe the life cycle;*
- g. *learn about the earth;*
- h. *observe and learn from the weather and their environment;*
- i. *exploration of cause and effect;*
- j. *use simple tools, such as a magnifying glass, to observe objects; or*
- k. *practice different methods of documentation such as drawing pictures.*

Interpretation: *Social studies content can include discussion, materials, and activities that explore concepts such as:*

- a. *diversity;*
- b. *varying definitions of family;*
- c. *the environment and environmental responsibility;*
- d. *fairness;*
- e. *friendship; and*
- f. *the local community.*

ECE 7.08

Language development is promoted by:

- a. *regularly engaging children in dialogue and encouraging children to engage in conversations with others;*
- b. *rephrasing children's ideas in complete sentences;*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

- c. minimizing "baby talk";
- d. introducing new words and concepts;
- e. asking open-ended questions;
- f. talking to children about familiar items or activities;
- g. offering alternative communication options for children who are non-verbal; and
- h. responding to vocalizations and attempts at language.

Research Note: *Research conducted by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development found that one of the best predictors of cognitive and language development was the language used by the caregiver. When teaching staff offered more stimulation by talking, asking questions, and responding to vocalizations, children demonstrated improved cognitive and language development.*

ECE 7.09

Activities and materials that promote physical development:

- a. include the development of both fine and gross muscle control;
- b. foster a variety of skills including balance, strength, and coordination;
- c. provide new challenges and reinforce already acquired skills; and
- d. provide opportunities for shared activities between children of varying abilities.

Interpretation: *Activities for infants should focus on exploration of what their own muscles can do such as:*

- a. *changing position;*
- b. *discovering hands and feet;*
- c. *spending time on their stomach; and*
- d. *pushing, grabbing, kicking, and mouthing.*

Activities for older infants and young toddlers can include:

- a. *crawling;*
- b. *walking with assistance; or*
- c. *holding and using writing utensils, paint brushes, or other materials that assist in the development of fine motor skills.*

In pre-school children, fine motor skills are developed through activities such as:

- a. *writing;*
- b. *drawing;*
- c. *puzzles;*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

- d. *painting;*
- e. *working with clay; and*
- f. *working with manipulatives.*

In pre-school children, gross motor skills are developed through activities such as:

- a. *throwing;*
- b. *climbing;*
- c. *kicking;*
- d. *running; and*
- e. *skipping.*

ECE 7.10

Opportunities for social development are incorporated into daily activities, including:

- a. recognizing opportunities to learn and practice social skills; and
- b. modeling, encouraging, and teaching pro-social behavior.

Interpretation: *Social development among infants can be promoted by:*

- a. *recognizing when an infant is interested in interacting with other infants and facilitating that behavior; and*
- b. *talking during routine, one-on-one activities such as diapering and feeding.*

ECE 7.11

Teaching staff recognize opportunities for children to learn and practice emotional self-regulation including:

- a. encouraging exploration of the senses;
- b. mentoring and practicing skills; and
- c. helping children to identify and appropriately express their emotions.

Research Note: *The ability to identify and appropriately express emotions has been associated with higher academic achievement.*

ECE 7.12

Use of passive and interactive technology is limited, targeted, and

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

purposeful, and the content is:

- a. supportive of the child's educational and developmental goals;
- b. tailored to the child's age and developmental stage; and
- c. monitored by staff at all times.

Interpretation: *Passive technology includes television and videos and their use should be even more limited than interactive technology such as video games and computers. Neither form should be used for children under the age of two.*

NA *The program does not use television, video, and computer equipment.*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

ECE 8: Caring for Children with Special Needs

The organization considers additional communication, activity, and staffing needs to promote optimal inclusion and development of children with special needs.

Related: ASE 2.01

Interpretation: *Special needs include medical, developmental, social, emotional, and behavioral needs.*

Research Note: *Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs are required to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA expects ECE programs to eliminate discriminatory admissions policies and practices; individually assess whether a child can be served by the organization with reasonable accommodations; and make reasonable accommodations so a child with disabilities can participate in the program. Reasonable accommodations are those that can be implemented without causing undue hardship to the organization. Examples of reasonable accommodations that can be implemented by an ECE setting include: changing policies and procedures; providing auxiliary services or aids to assist in effective communication with individuals who have speech, hearing, and visual impairments; and removing physical barriers under certain circumstances.*

Rating Indicators

- 1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.
- 2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,
 - Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
 - Procedures need strengthening; or
 - With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
 - For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
 - Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
 - Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.
- 3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of services for children with special needs

On-Site Evidence

- Documentation of training and qualifications for teaching staff who are responsible for children with special needs
- Resource and referral list for specialized services and supports

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Relevant personnel
 - c. Parents of children with special needs
- Review child files

(FP) ECE 8.01

Parents of children with special needs receive assistance obtaining and coordinating specialized supports necessary to enroll and keep their child in

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

care.

Interpretation: *Parents may need assistance obtaining suitable transportation, managing logistics, and coordinating services with other providers such as specialized screenings, assessments, and treatments. The amount and type of assistance provided will vary based on the resources available at the organization.*

Research Note: *Literature suggests that barriers to the enrollment of children with special needs include a lack of appropriate transportation, cost, challenges in coordinating services, and a lack of teachers that possess the competencies to care for children with special needs.*

ECE 8.02

A team approach is used in service planning, care provision, and transition planning.

Interpretation: *The team should include parents, service providers, and teaching staff.*

ECE 8.03

Teaching staff and administrators promote the child's inclusion in activities with other children.

Interpretation: *Whenever the child is attending the program, intervention services and special medical services provided on-site should be integrated, to the greatest extent possible, into the ongoing activities of the group to promote inclusion.*

ECE 8.04

Teaching staff who are responsible for working with children with special needs are qualified and trained to meet the specific needs of children in their care, and consultants and other professionals are brought in when necessary.

Interpretation: *The organization must seek out specialized training and support from parents, medical providers, and other specialists as needed. Some medical services should only be provided by qualified medical practitioners. Teaching staff and their supervisors must work with parents and consultants to clarify what activities they are not qualified to take on and*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

seek additional support as needed.

Interpretation: *Appropriate qualifications and training will vary given the needs of the children in care. It can include a combination of education, training, and experience.*

Research Note: *Studies show that the greatest barrier to providing inclusive child care is staff that lack specialized training in caring for children with special needs. As a result, organizations that employ teaching staff and supervisors with relevant education, training, and experience tend to provide a more inclusive child care group setting.*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

ECE 9: Child Supervision

Close supervision ensures child safety and improves service quality.

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Procedures for child pick-up
- Procedures for covering staff breaks and other situations that require a teaching staff person to leave the classroom for 5 minutes or more
- Policy and procedures governing mixing age groups

On-Site Evidence

- Log or other materials documenting the off-site whereabouts of children
- Documentation of group size and ratios for the past month
- Staffing chart for the past month

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Teaching staff
 - c. Parents
- Observe facility
- Observe arrival and pick-up times

(FP) ECE 9.01

Each child is supervised to ensure:

- a. departure is with a person who has been approved in writing by his or her parents;
- b. absences are documented;
- c. off-site whereabouts while under the supervision of the organization are known and documented; and
- d. departure is not allowed with someone who poses a safety risk.

Interpretation: *Protocols should provide direction on how to use relevant organizational or community resources to respond to individuals who are intoxicated by drugs or alcohol, mentally or physically unstable, or a safety risk.*

(FP) ECE 9.02

The child care center maintains teacher-child ratios and group sizes that:

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

- a. allow teachers to maintain sight and sound supervision that ensures child health and safety;
- b. allow teachers to establish and maintain relationships with each child in the group;
- c. allow teachers to offer a variety of activities and lessons that promote social, emotional, language, cognitive, and physical development;
- d. take into consideration the size and configuration of the space;
- e. take into consideration the qualifications and competencies of the teacher;
- f. take into consideration changes in supervision needs based on activities being conducted; and
- g. take into consideration the needs of the children in the group.

Interpretation: *Generally, the organization maintains teacher-child ratios that do not exceed COA's Recommended Teacher-Child Ratios and Group Sizes. Additionally, group sizes should not exceed those listed in the chart. Teachers assess and modify group size and/or ratios downward based on the special physical, social, or developmental needs of children within the group, the risks associated with a particular activity, and the qualifications and competencies of the teachers to ensure that children's needs are being met. Conversely, ratios may be modified at nap time or during early and late arrival times when the needs for supervision are reduced. However, there must always be a qualified staff person available should the individual in the classroom need assistance.*

Interpretation: *Average daily attendance is acceptable for group size and ratios in childcare centers, as long as the organization has back-up help available when unusually large numbers of children are present.*

Research Note: *Studies have shown that small group sizes and lower teacher-to-child ratios are associated with higher quality child care and improved social and cognitive outcomes for children. This may be due to the fact that lower ratios and group sizes allow for more frequent, nurturing, and playful interactions between teachers and children, which the research shows is critical to the achievement of positive outcomes.*

(FP) ECE 9.03

Teacher-child ratios are maintained at all times both on- and off-site, including when a teacher:

- a. works individually with a child who is ill, requires separation from the group, needs special supervision or care, or has an emergency;
- b. takes a break; or
- c. leaves the room to retrieve supplies.

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

Interpretation: *When teaching staff leave the room for five minutes or less, it is not required that a substitute be brought in to maintain ratios. However, if a teacher or assistant will be gone longer than five minutes, a substitute must be brought in to provide coverage and maintain ratios.*

ECE 9.04

When mixing age groups, the organization ensures:

- a. the developmental needs of all children can be met;
- b. teachers are skilled in programming for mixed-aged groupings; and
- c. the group's teacher-child ratio is tailored with consideration given to the age of the youngest children in the group.

NA *The organization does not offer mixed-age groupings.*

(FP) ECE 9.05

Teaching staff maintain constant supervision of the children in their care by both sight and sound.

(FP) ECE 9.06

Indoor and outdoor facilities are arranged to ensure constant child supervision, including:

- a. convenient storage of items needed for napping, feeding, diapering, and administrative tasks;
- b. low barriers between designated spaces to maintain constant visibility of the entire room;
- c. convex mirrors installed wherever they are needed; and
- d. visibility of the classroom by more than one adult.

Note: *Please see Facility Observation Checklist - Private, Public, Canadian for additional assistance with this standard.*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

ECE 10: Transition

Teaching staff work with parents and children to plan for orderly transitions.

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Procedures for transitioning to another classroom or age group
- Procedures for transitioning to another school or program

On-Site Evidence

- Policy for removing a child from care provided to parents upon enrollment
- Community resource and referral list

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Teaching staff
 - c. Parents
- Review child files

ECE 10.01

Parents and children receive assistance with managing transitions between the home and the child care setting.

Interpretation: *This can include helping the parent or child cope with daily drop-offs and/or departures or being sensitive to parents or children who are struggling with the idea of using out-of-home care for the first time.*

ECE 10.02

Teaching staff promote smooth transitions throughout the day by ensuring:

- a. transitions are well-planned;
- b. children receive advance notice; and
- c. activities are long enough to promote sustained play.

ECE 10.03

When the child needs to transition to another classroom or age group within the organization, the current teacher:

- a. engages parents in a discussion of the child's developmental needs and

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

- the reason for the transition;
- b. provides parents with general information on the transition process;
- c. arranges opportunities for the child to visit the new classroom and meet teaching staff and peers prior to the transition; and
- d. shares information with the new teacher to facilitate an orderly transition.

ECE 10.04

When the child needs to transition to school or another organization, teaching staff:

- a. engage parents in a discussion of the child's developmental needs and most suitable options;
- b. provide parents with general information on transitioning from the program;
- c. share information with other providers to facilitate an orderly transition; and
- d. notify collaborating service providers that the child has transitioned from the program.

Related: CR 2.02

ECE 10.05

When the organization can no longer meet a family's need for care, it refers families to local resources such as child care resource and referral.

Interpretation: *Reasons why an organization may no longer be able to meet the needs of the family include non-payment, when special needs arise that the organization can't meet with reasonable accommodation, or a change in work schedules that the organization cannot accommodate.*

ECE 10.06

The organization has a systematic process for removing children from care that is communicated with families upon enrollment.

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

ECE 11: Personnel

Teaching staff and their supervisors are trained and qualified to perform their job responsibilities.

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- With some exceptions, staff (direct service providers, supervisors, and program managers) possess the required qualifications, including: education, experience, training, skills, temperament, etc., but the integrity of the service is not compromised.
 - Supervisors provide additional support and oversight, as needed, to staff without the listed qualifications.
 - Most staff who do not meet educational requirements are seeking to obtain them.
- With some exceptions staff have received required training, including applicable specialized training.
 - Training curricula are not fully developed or lack depth.
 - A few personnel have not yet received required training.
 - Training documentation is consistently maintained and kept up-to-date with some exceptions.
- A substantial number of supervisors meet the requirements of the standard, and the organization provides training and/or consultation to improve competencies.
 - Supervisors provide structure and support in relation to service outcomes, organizational culture and staff retention.
- With a few exceptions caseload sizes are consistently maintained as required by the standards.
- Workloads are such that staff can effectively accomplish their assigned tasks and provide quality services, and are adjusted as necessary in accord with established workload procedures.
 - Procedures need strengthening.
 - With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used.
- With a few exceptions specialized staff are retained as required and possess the required qualifications.
- Specialized services are obtained as required by the standards.

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Â Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.
- A significant number of staff, e.g., direct service providers, supervisors, and program managers, do not possess the required qualifications, including: education, experience, training, skills, temperament, etc.; and as a result the integrity of the service may be compromised.
 - Job descriptions typically do not reflect the requirements of the standards, and/or hiring practices do not document efforts to hire staff with required qualifications when vacancies occur.
 - Supervisors do not typically provide additional support and oversight to staff without the listed qualifications.
- A significant number of staff have not received required training, including applicable specialized training.
 - Training documentation is poorly maintained.
- A significant number of supervisors do not meet the requirements of the standard, and the organization makes little effort to provide training and/or consultation to improve competencies.
- There are numerous instances where caseload sizes exceed the standards' requirements.
- Workloads are excessive and the integrity of the service may be compromised.Â
 - Procedures need significant strengthening; or
 - Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Specialized staff are typically not retained as required and/or many do not possess the required qualifications; or
- Specialized services are infrequently obtained as required by the standards.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

?For example:

- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

- Program staffing chart that includes lines of supervision
- List of program personnel that includes:
 - a. name;
 - b. title;
 - c. degree held and/or other credentials;
 - d. FTE or volunteer;
 - e. length of service at the organization;
 - f. time in current position
- Table of contents of training curricula
- A description of supervision and support provided to teaching staff

On-Site Evidence

- Job descriptions
- Documentation of training
- Data describing staff turnover
- Documentation of quarterly professional development opportunities and resources

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Supervisors
 - b. Teaching staff
- Review personnel files

ECE 11.01

Teaching staff:

- a. are at least 18 years of age; and
- b. meet federal, state, or local requirements for minimum education.

ECE 11.02

The program director has assessed competence in administering an early childhood education program and is qualified by:

- a. a bachelor's degree in a related field with two years of post-graduate experience in early childhood education or a related field;
- b. a bachelor's degree in an unrelated field with five years of post-graduate experience in early childhood education or a related field; or
- c. a bachelor's degree in an unrelated field with a state-approved directors credential.

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

Interpretation: *Related fields include early childhood education, child development, elementary education, early childhood special education, psychology, family consumer sciences, home economics, social work, program administration, and social services.*

ECE 11.03

Teachers have, or are actively working towards:

- a. a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, Certified Childcare Professional (CCP) credential, or equivalent;
- b. an associate's degree in early childhood education or child development;
or
- c. a bachelor's degree in a related field with two years of post-graduate experience in early childhood education.

Related: TS 1

Interpretation: *Related fields include early childhood education, child development, elementary education, early childhood special education, psychology, family consumer sciences, home economics, social work, and social services.*

Research Note: *Research has shown that caregiver education and training in child development is related to children's developmental outcomes. Teaching staff with higher education levels engaged more positively with children, leading to higher quality of care and improved developmental outcomes. As a result, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association recommend formal post-high school training including certification or college degree in child development, education, or a related field.*

ECE 11.04

Assistant teachers:

- a. have a high school diploma or GED; and
- b. carry out classroom activities under the direct supervision of an appropriately qualified teacher.

Related: TS 3

(FP) ECE 11.05

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

Teaching staff receive an orientation and ongoing training to meet the health, safety, and nutritional needs of children, including:

- a. child abuse and neglect prevention, detection, and reporting;
- b. food preparation, storage, and service;
- c. hand-washing and diapering procedures, if applicable;
- d. safe sleep practices including SIDS prevention procedures, if applicable;
- e. sanitation and proper handling and storage of disinfectants;
- f. recognizing the signs and symptoms of conditions that may require specialized services, additional screenings, or referrals including mental health or developmental delays; and
- g. policies and procedures regarding contagious and infectious disease prevention.

Related: TS 2, ASE 8.01

Interpretation: *If teaching staff use gloves while changing diapers, training on diapering procedures must include how to properly use and dispose of them.*
Interpretation: *Pre-service orientation should prepare the individual to perform his or her role at the organization. Teaching staff should never be expected to perform a task or provide a level of care that they have not been properly trained to handle.*

(FP) ECE 11.06

Teaching staff receive an orientation and ongoing training to provide culturally responsive care including:

- a. exploration of their own biases and their effect on interactions with children and families;
- b. information on varying beliefs, customs, values, and child rearing practices of the different cultural groups represented by the children in their care;
- c. how to communicate openly and work respectfully with families of other cultures;
- d. information on cultural dynamics; and
- e. the role that culture plays in child development.

Related: TS 2

ECE 11.07

Teaching staff receive an orientation and ongoing training in early childhood

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

development and education including:

- a. curriculum training to ensure consistent implementation;
- b. how to support a child's positive relationships with his or her peers;
- c. positive guidance techniques of behavior management;
- d. classroom activities appropriate to children of different developmental levels;
- e. recognizing developmental differences between children;
- f. skills for working with children with special needs;
- g. use of screening and/or assessment tools;
- h. skills in observation and documentation;
- i. effective classroom management; and
- j. teaching strategies for working with young children.

Related: TS 2

Interpretation: *Teaching strategies include:*

- a. *techniques for keeping children engaged and motivated;*
- b. *methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching strategies and the comprehension of the child;*
- c. *methods for working with small or large groups;*
- d. *teacher-directed and child-directed instruction;*
- e. *how to choose activities and materials;*
- f. *how to break down tasks into manageable components; and*
- g. *how to organize instruction to achieve developmental milestones.*

Research Note: *Studies have shown that curriculum implementation is often inconsistent without proper training and technical assistance. A study of preschoolers attending 14 Hartford, Connecticut child care centers found that children who received care from teachers with intensive curriculum training and support demonstrated improved school readiness.*

Research Note: *When teaching staff are responsible for conducting comprehensive developmental screenings, they should be properly trained. Comprehensive developmental screenings include instruments that measure general and social-emotional development. The screenings help identify children who may have developmental delays or disabilities so they can be connected to relevant resources or more specialized screenings. Research shows that early intervention is key to future success and achievement of positive outcomes. Not all organizations will offer developmental screenings on-site. Many will refer families to outside providers for screening when there are concerns. See ECE 8.01 for more information on referring children with special needs to needed support services.*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

ECE 11.08

Training provided is specific to job positions or categories, and:

- a. includes topics that are relevant to job descriptions;
- b. reflects the level of relevant experience and formal education obtained by teaching staff;
- c. ensures teaching staff remain up-to-date on current practices in early childhood education; and
- d. includes at least 24 training hours per year.

Related: TS 1, TS 2

Interpretation: *Training hours should be adjusted each year given the assessed training needs of teaching staff. See TS 1.03 for more information on maintaining a professional development program that meets the needs of staff. Most states regulate the number of annual training hours and training topics required for early childhood education teaching staff, so organizations should familiarize themselves with requirements in their state and adjust their training program accordingly.*

Training may be delivered using a variety of methods based on identified training needs and available resources. Examples of training delivery methods include:

- a. adult education courses;
- b. higher education or college courses;
- c. reading and audio-visual materials;
- d. conference workshops;
- e. distance learning; and
- f. in-service training.

ECE 11.09

Supervisors provide ongoing support and guidance including:

- a. ongoing learning opportunities through mentoring, coaching, and classroom observation and feedback; and
- b. recognizing the signs and symptoms of depression, stress, low-energy, or burn-out.

Related: TS 3

Research Note: *Teaching staff suffering from depression, stress, or low-energy may have difficulty forming secure attachments with the children in their care, leading to poor developmental outcomes.*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

ECE 11.10

Professional development opportunities and resources are provided on at least a quarterly basis and include:

- a. group meetings for joint problem-solving and mutual support;
- b. information sharing on child development and parent-child relationships;
- c. opportunities for teaching staff to plan together; and
- d. orientation for incoming teaching staff and regular in-service training.

Related: TS 2

Research Note: *In-service training is critical to providing high quality child care. Strong professional development programs will include a thorough orientation program for incoming teaching staff; comprehensive, systematic, ongoing trainings; and regular supervision, mentoring, and classroom observation by a highly trained professional. Organization leadership can make professional development opportunities more flexible by offering trainings electronically, providing coverage during the work day so teaching staff can complete trainings, and facilitating more frequent classroom observation with opportunities to provide feedback.*

Research Note: *Early childhood education workforce research suggests that with the tremendous growth in the field, it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit and retain experienced and qualified workers. Low wages and benefits have been cited as obstacles for sufficient recruitment and retention of teaching staff. Early childhood education programs should offer opportunities for teaching staff collaboration and support to prevent burn-out and reduce turnover. Lower turnover rates are associated with improved outcomes among children receiving out-of-home*

ECE 11.11

Teaching staff exhibit the:

- a. skills needed to interact and develop meaningful relationships with children, families, colleagues, and supervisors;
- b. energy and flexibility to meet the needs of children; and
- c. personal characteristics to provide children with safe, affectionate, secure, and continuous care.

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

ECE 12: Oversight of Family Child Care Homes

The organization provides oversight and support to family child care homes to ensure care is being provided in a safe environment that promotes healthy child development.

NA *The organization does not utilize family child care homes to expand its capacity to provide care.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

used; or

- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of supports offered to family child care homes
- Screening criteria for family child care homes
- Matching procedures for family child care homes

On-Site Evidence

- Documentation of licensure for family child care homes
- Documentation of caregiver credentials for family child care providers
- Curricula of any training offered to family child care personnel
- Group sizes and ratios for family child-care homes

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Family Child Care Coordinator
- Review personnel record for Family Child Care Coordinator

ECE 12.01

Family child care coordinators are qualified by:

- a. a CDA, CCP, or equivalent credential;
- b. an associate's degree in early childhood education or child development;
or
- c. a bachelor's degree in a related field with two years of post-graduate experience in early childhood education.

Interpretation: *Related fields include early childhood education, child development, elementary education, early childhood special education, psychology, family consumer sciences, home economics, social work, and social services.*

ECE 12.02

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

Family child care coordinators:

- a. recruit and assess family child care homes prior to their use;
- b. provide support and supervision through a monthly home visit;
- c. offer training and professional development opportunities; and
- d. monitor the quality of care being provided.

ECE 12.03

The organization utilizes family child care homes staffed by individuals with:

- a. a GED or high school diploma;
- b. at least 45 hours of family child care-related training within the last three years; and
- c. access to ongoing training and education.

Related: TS 1, TS 2

Interpretation: *The organization may choose to provide ongoing training or assistance in obtaining continuing education.*

(FP) ECE 12.04

Prior to use, all family child care homes are screened to ensure they are fully licensed or approved, according to applicable regulatory requirements.

ECE 12.05

The needs of the child and family are matched with a care provider to ensure suitable, family-based care.

ECE 12.06

The organization is aware of available spaces at each child care home and only refers families when it is determined that the resulting teacher-child ratios and group sizes:

- a. allow teachers to provide supervision that ensures child health and safety;
- b. allow teachers to establish and maintain relationships with each child in the group;

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.



Early Childhood Education

- c. allow teachers to offer a variety of activities and lessons that promote social, emotional, cognitive, language, and physical development;
- d. take into consideration the size and configuration of the space;
- e. take into consideration the qualifications and competencies of the caregiver; and
- f. take into consideration the needs of the children in the group.

Interpretation: *Generally, teacher-child ratios should not exceed COA's Recommended Teacher-Child Ratios and Group Sizes.*

Purpose

Early Childhood Education facilitates appropriate child development and ensures the health and safety of children in care.