

Level 2 Early Childhood Educator

COMPETENCY PROFILE FOR NOVA SCOTIA

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Educators—Context of the Profession in Nova Scotia

Occupational Profile

Early childhood educators (ECEs) are responsible for the health, safety, and well-being of children who range in age from birth to 12 years old. Each day they observe, plan, and provide experiences that support and promote the development of children’s physical health and well-being, and social, emotional, language, cognitive, and communication skills. They develop caring and responsive relationships with each child and maintain open cooperative relationships with families. ECEs work in regulated child care programs, family home day care agencies, pre-primary programs, and many other types of settings where young children and their families are the focus of a program’s purpose.

ECE Classification

Individuals who wish to work as ECEs in regulated child care and family home day care agencies in the province of Nova Scotia must hold a classification issued by Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD). EECD is the regulatory body and is responsible for maintaining the standard for post-secondary training programs for early childhood education professions in Nova Scotia.

Pre-primary programs are publicly funded and offered province-wide in English and French. Programs are delivered by ECEs hired by Regional Centres for Education (RCEs) and Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP), the francophone school board.

Individuals are not required to hold a classification to work in a pre-primary setting. However, they are required to be trained and are subject to the hiring policies of the RCE or CSAP where they are employed.

It is recommended you read [A Guide to Classification and Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators](#) (Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2018c) before applying for Classification.

Early Learning Curriculum Framework

[Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia’s Early Learning Curriculum Framework](#) (Nova Scotia 2018a) has been developed for directors, pedagogical leaders, and educators involved with early childhood education programs in Nova Scotia. It focuses on programs for children from infancy to eight years old and its implementation depends on a solid understanding of child development and strong pedagogical leadership. The framework is based on the concept of the *Image of the Child*, which says that everyone’s personal Image of the Child is influenced by their own experiences, biases, and knowledge.

The [*Educator's Guide to Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework, Implementation Draft 2018–2019*](#) (Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2018b) builds on the foundation set by *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework*, and supports educators as they implement the framework in their early childhood education programs.

The Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model is a conceptual framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children's healthy social and emotional development. The Pyramid Model was developed by two national, federally-funded research and training centers: the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) and the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children (TACSEI). These centers' faculty represent nationally recognized researchers and program developers in the areas of social skills and challenging behaviour.

The Pyramid Model builds upon a tiered public health approach to providing universal supports to all children to promote wellness, targeted services to those who need more support, and intensive services to those who need them.

Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children



Source: Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning 2021; <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>.

Level 2 Early Childhood Educator Competency Profile

The standards detailed in the Level 2 Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Competency Profile describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for educators working in regulated child care or pre-primary programs to perform their job effectively and safely. The ECE Competency Profile defines what is expected of proficient and experienced ECEs who provide high-quality education and care in programs for children, from infant to school aged, each with their own unique needs.

This profile was developed in the context of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) program, to provide an alternate pathway to classification in Nova Scotia. The RPL assessment process provides candidates who have prior experience and/or training in early childhood education with the opportunity to demonstrate the necessary knowledge and experience required to obtain a Level 2 ECE Classification with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Note that while some Level 2 ECEs may work in supervisory positions or as directors/administrators, these roles are not included in the current profile.

Methodology

The ECE Competency Profile was developed in consultation and collaboration with ECEs from across Nova Scotia, including job incumbents, centre directors, and educators. Key phases of development included:

- researching and analyzing existing competency profiles, occupational standards, competency framework charts, education and training programs, and job descriptions related to the profession from national and international sources
- benchmarking, including comparing the competency profile with foreign national qualifications and occupational standards
- delivering an online survey of ECEs in the province to identify key issues and trends within the profession
- drafting a preliminary version of the ECE competency profile for consultation, using the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council's [Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators](#) (2010) as a starting point, adapting it to the Nova Scotia context and updating it to reflect findings from the research, benchmarking, and survey
- creating and validating the profile through industry-wide consultation, including:
 - a series of focus groups,
 - electronic reviews,
 - one-on-one interviews,
 - webinars, and,
 - in-person meetings with an advisory committee composed of representative members of the profession
- conducting research to determine the relevance of each subskill, as well as to set its criticality, frequency, level of difficulty, time to master, and required level of autonomy

How the Competency Profile can be used


Occupational standards included within the competency profile describe what a person in a particular occupation must *know* and be able to *do* to be considered proficient in the occupation. Occupational standards serve a wide range of other purposes within the child care sector, including:

For ECEs	For ECE Faculty	For Employers	For Sector Organizations
<p>providing detailed information on knowledge and performance expectations related to each competency that an ECE Level 2 candidate is expected to demonstrate in order to achieve certification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offering a foundation for career development • identifying training gaps in the occupational skill set • enhancing occupational recognition • enhancing job mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing the basis for curriculum, training development, and education • defining key objectives and high-level content that must be covered for each competency • identifying areas where expertise is required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding the scope of competencies covered in technical training and RPL assessment for ECE Level 2 candidates • identifying key tasks and roles • identifying professional development needs • facilitating objective job descriptions • providing guidance for recruitment • serving as the foundation for various HR functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicating the competencies that the sector has defined as representative of the scope of the ECE Level 2 occupation • forming the basis of certification programs • forming the basis of program accreditation • creating professional development opportunities • helping with workforce planning

Scope of Practice for Early Childhood Educators in Nova Scotia¹

Early childhood educators have a deep knowledge of child development that they use every day to support and promote the physical health and well-being, and social, emotional, language, cognitive, and communication skills, of children from birth to age 12.

¹ Adapted from the *Standards for Early Childhood Education Post-Secondary Programs* (Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2018d).



ECEs understand that maintaining strong, positive relationships contributes to healthy child development. They appreciate that their relationships with children, families, colleagues, and the community are necessary for children's well-being and learning. These relationships must be developed based on mutual respect for cultural, linguistic, and social differences. ECEs implement positive and supportive strategies for guiding children's behaviour and understand and apply principles and strategies for conflict resolution and negotiation with both children and adults. They seek support in maintaining relationships, and support others, when needed.

ECEs recognize and respect the primary role of the child's family, appreciating the diversity of family types, cultures, languages, and customs. They welcome families to early childhood settings and provide information to parents to make children's learning visible, share the curriculum's purposes and learning goals, and provide documentation to parents about their child's activities. They appreciate their relationship with the child's family, and share communication about the child while respecting confidentiality.

ECEs appreciate diversity in culture, language, gender, and developmental abilities. They understand principles of inclusion, and demonstrate this in their relationships, pedagogical practices, planning of children's activities, and in designing and maintaining indoor and outdoor learning environments. They articulate their respect for diversity to others and incorporate these values into procedural statements and observable practices for their early childhood education programs.

ECEs work collaboratively with children, families, and colleagues. They draw from their professional knowledge of child development, daily observation and reflection, child development and learning theories, and the pedagogical principles, practices, and learning goals of early learning frameworks to co-construct, implement, document, and assess child-centred, inquiry- and play-based learning experiences.

ECEs demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between human development and principles of health and safety, universal precautions, and the concept of reasonable risk taking in children's play. They incorporate their knowledge into planning for nutrition, implementing food safety protocols, hygiene, designing indoor and outdoor learning environments, and developing daily learning activities for children.

ECEs are familiar with provincial legislation, regulations, and policies, and understand the implications of these on their practice, such as mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect. They can explain the processes for such reporting and pay attention to potential or future changes to legislation and policies that may impact their practice. ECEs act on their professional responsibility to advocate for meaningful change.

ECEs demonstrate and maintain professionalism in all their relationships and communication with children, families, colleagues, community partners, and provincial officials. They seek professional counselling for themselves as needed. As active members of professional organizations, they regularly participate in ongoing professional development opportunities and demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning. ECEs maintain current knowledge of new research and trends in early learning and early childhood education. Professional courtesy is consistently demonstrated by ECEs in their work habits and attitudes, and they practice leadership skills and welcome opportunities to share their expertise.

How the Competency Profile is Structured

1 MAJOR CATEGORIES

The content of the competency profile was developed with the aim of making it explicit and accessible, to encourage use in a wide variety of settings. The competency profile contains seven major categories, each followed by a short narrative describing why or how those skills are relevant to the profession:

- A. Child Development
- B. Relationships
- C. Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity
- D. Learning Environments
- E. Assessment and Documentation
- F. Health and Safety
- G. Professionalism

2 SKILLS

Each major category is comprised of skills that a Level 2 ECE is required to demonstrate for classification.

3 SUBSKILLS

Skills are further defined by a variety of subskills—specific activities that come together to define a skill. In the RPL program, one or more RPL assessment tools are used to assess these skills and subskills.

4 DETAILS OF THE STANDARDS

This section outlines how the subskill can be achieved. The two components included in this section are:

- the abilities needed to perform the subskill at a competent level of proficiency
- the underpinning knowledge required for the subskill to be performed at a competent level of proficiency

Note that key terms are highlighted in **bold** and marked with an asterisk (*). These terms have been defined in the **Glossary** section.

1 A. CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Early childhood educators have a deep knowledge of child development which they use every day to support and promote the physical health and well-being, social, emotional, language, cognitive, and communication skills of children. Using applicable observation skills, they apply positive behaviour guidance strategies to facilitate the development of social-emotional competence in children from birth to age 12.

2 A1. Facilitate the development of the child

3 A1.1 Use a variety of observation and documentation techniques

4 PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 collect and review relevant information about the child's history
- P2 observe the child in natural situations as behaviours occur (e.g., play, interactions)
- P3 document observations using a range of methods (e.g., learning stories, portfolios, checklists, pictures)
- P4 record observations objectively (e.g., frequency, duration, types)
- P5 seek information from parents' observations of their child
- P6 categorize observations into development domains
- P7 interpret results of observations
- P8 share observations with parents and colleagues
- P9 apply strategies to allow time for documentation

5 KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 child development and learning theories*
- K2 early childhood pedagogy*
- K3 observation* methods and tools
- K4 authentic assessment* techniques
- K5 effective communication skills
- K6 value of documentation*

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	Ongoing	3	2 years	NS / A

11 Prepared by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Education, March 2021.

5 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

For each subskill, additional information is also provided via the use of five different scales:



Criticality



Frequency



Level of
Difficulty



Time to be
Proficient



Autonomy

Criticality refers to risk associated with the inability to perform the skill to the standard.

Frequency aims to define the “rate of recurrence” of the skill performed or unique circumstance that manifests the demand to perform the skill.

Level of Difficulty is the degree of complexity associated with performing the skill, both mentally and physically.

Time to be Proficient is an indication of the average length of time or number of repeated events that are minimally necessary for an individual to become proficient in performing the skill to the defined standard.

Autonomy has two dimensions: one defines the requirement for supervision in order to perform or execute the skill; the other defines if the task/competency is expected to be done alone or with assistance.

Summary of the Context Scales

Criticality	Frequency	Level of Difficulty	Time to be Proficient	Autonomy
1 Not critical, no risk	Defined by period of time, e.g., every three months, weekly, daily, hourly OR	1 Not difficult	An estimate of time for a Level 2 ECE to become proficient in the skill. Proficiency is the ability to perform at “optimal minimum level” in the range of expected work contexts, at the right pace. The baseline is the profile of a typical new entrant working in ideal conditions.	OVERSIGHT
2 Somewhat critical, minimal risk		2 Minimal difficulty or complexity		NS Performance expected without supervision
3 Critical, moderate risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ongoing, routinely, regular course of procedure occasionally unexpectedly, when emergency arises per project or contract specific, special circumstance 	3 Moderate difficulty or complexity		S Expected to be performed under supervision
4 Very critical, high, probable risk		4 Very difficult, challenging		AUTONOMY
5 Extremely critical, severe risk		5 Intense, highly complex		A Perform alone, without assistance
				T Performance requires team effort, assistance

Competency Profile Chart

The Competency Profile Chart illustrates the organization of major categories and the skills associated with each.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT A	Facilitate the development of the child A1	Guide the child's behaviour A2		
RELATIONSHIPS B	Foster a caring relationship with the child B1	Form collaborative partnerships with parents B2	Use community resources B3	
INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND EQUITY C	Promote inclusion, diversity, and equity C1			
LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS D	Develop and implement programs D1			
ASSESSMENT AND DOCUMENTATION E	Observe and assess the child's learning and development E1			
HEALTH AND SAFETY F	Protect the child's health and well-being F1	Meet nutritional needs F2	Develop and maintain a safe environment F3	
PROFESSIONALISM G	Conduct self professionally G1	Work as a member of a team G2	Communicate effectively G3	Use technology effectively G4

A. CHILD DEVELOPMENT

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A1. Facilitate the development of the child

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- P5 seek information from parents' observations of their child
- P6 categorize observations into development domains
- P7 interpret results of observations
- P8 share observations with parents and colleagues
- P9 apply strategies to allow time for documentation

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **child development and learning theories***
- K2 early childhood **pedagogy***
- K3 **observation*** methods and tools
- K4 **authentic assessment*** techniques
- K5 effective communication skills
- K6 value of **documentation***

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	Ongoing	3	2 years	NS / A

A1.2 Facilitate cognitive development of the child

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 observe and interpret developmental stages of the child during play and interactions
- P2 identify and implement **developmentally appropriate practices*** to further promote cognitive development of the child
- P3 gather information about the child's cognitive development from team members, parents, and relevant others

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **child development and learning theories***
- K2 stages of cognitive development
- K3 **observation*** methods and tools
- K4 effective communication skills

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	Ongoing	3	2–3 years	NS / A

A1.3 Facilitate language and communication development of the child

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 observe and interpret language and communication development during play and interactions
- P2 communicate with the child in a developmentally appropriate manner (e.g., non-verbal techniques, sign language, home language(s), mirroring, appropriate tone of voice)
- P3 determine the child's linguistic heritage
- P4 encourage the child's use of and acquisition of language and communication skills
- P5 explain how linguistic abilities impact learning and development
- P6 identify factors affecting language and communication development (e.g., environmental, intellectual, cultural, physiological, diversity)
- P7 support children in their verbal and non-verbal interactions with others

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 language development for second language learners
- K2 **child development and learning theories***
- K3 stages of language development (e.g., pre-linguistic or pre-language phase, linguistic or language stage, receptive and expressive language, developmental milestones, developmental sequences, developmental profiles, growth patterns, special or challenging needs, developmental differences and alerts, etc.)
- K4 **developmentally appropriate practices*** for promoting and supporting language development
- K5 resources in the environment (e.g., colleagues, materials, students)
- K6 **observation*** methods and tools
- K7 **culturally responsive practices***

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	Ongoing	3	2–3 years	NS / A

A1.4 Facilitate physical development of the child

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 observe and interpret:
 - the child's gross motor skills
 - the child's fine motor skills
- P2 identify if the child may have developmental lags or may exhibit atypical development
- P3 identify individual circumstances that could affect physical development (e.g., premature birth)
- P4 identify and implement **developmentally appropriate practices*** to promote physical development of the child
- P5 support the development of a child's **physical literacy***
- P6 provide developmentally appropriate materials and experiences

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **child development and learning theories***
- K2 stages of physical development
- K3 **observation*** methods and tools
- K4 **physical literacy***

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	Ongoing	3	2–3 years	NS / A

A1.5 Facilitate social-emotional development of the child

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 observe and interpret the child's social-emotional development, for example:
- the child's interaction with peers, family members, and adults
 - the child's interaction with their environment including the use of materials, lighting, sound, or other stimuli such as routines and scheduling
 - the child during play with other children and adults
 - the child's body language, gestures, and facial expressions
 - the child's level of comfort or security
 - the child's management of stress and conflicts
 - the child's management of transition times in the program
 - the child's self-esteem, autonomy, self-concept, and self-identity
 - the child's self-regulation skills
- P2 identify factors that might influence or affect children's behaviour (e.g., lack of sleep, hunger, environmental considerations like transition, routines, expectations)
- P3 identify and implement developmentally appropriate strategies to promote social-emotional development of the child
- P4 provide environments that support the development of social-emotional skills such as self-regulation, friendship, problem-solving, emotional literacy, etc.
- P5 facilitate the development of empathy

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **child development and learning theories***
- K2 stages of social and emotional development (e.g., common age divisions, developmental milestones, developmental sequences, developmental profiles, growth patterns, special or challenging needs, developmental differences and alerts, etc.)
- K3 child temperament theories (e.g., easy, difficult, slow-to-warm-up infants, etc.)
- K4 attachment bonds with children
- K5 foundations of self-regulation
- K6 **culturally responsive practices***
- K7 **observation*** methods and tools

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	Ongoing	3	3–5 years	NS / A

A2. Guide the child's behaviour

A2.1 Establish an environment that promotes positive behaviour in the program

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 implement guidance strategies based on observations, needs, and interests of the child
- P2 consider parents' expectations for their child's behaviour
- P3 arrange the environment to suit the child's needs and interests
- P4 create play areas that are compatible with one another (e.g., quiet play versus active play)
- P5 establish play areas that address the individual needs of all children and their overall development
- P6 make materials available to the child
- P7 provide opportunities for the child to experience success

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **child development and learning theories***
- K2 **environment as teacher***
- K3 **observation*** methods and tools
- K4 program guidance policy
- K5 **culturally responsive practices***

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	Ongoing	3	2 years	NS / A

A2.2 Implement positive behaviour guidance

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 model positive social skills and build relationships with individual children and families
- P2 select guidance practices based on knowledge of each child's needs
- P3 observe the child to identify possible reasons for behaviour (e.g., use preventive guidance techniques)
- P4 use positive language with the child
- P5 use a variety of positive behaviour guidance methods such as reinforcement and redirection
- P6 provide clear directions (e.g., use positive voice tone and body language, use age-appropriate or developmentally-appropriate language and expectations)
- P7 recognize effects of physical environment, schedules, and routines on behaviour
- P8 facilitate patterns of interactions (i.e., social dynamics of the group)
- P9 anticipate confrontations between children and intervene when necessary
- P10 establish and model conflict resolution methods
- P11 teach skills that foster self-control and self-regulation
- P12 encourage the child to respect the rights of others, cooperate with each other, consider the views of others
- P13 promote self-esteem
- P14 foster development of the child's autonomy
- P15 involve the parent in the process, as needed, to promote change

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **child development and learning theories***
- K2 conflict resolution approaches
- K3 **observation*** methods and tools
- K4 program guidance policy

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
3	Ongoing	5	2–3 years	NS / A

A2.3 Facilitate appropriate language

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 help the child verbalize their feelings and needs
- P2 listen actively to the child's language
- P3 recognize and reformulate the child's vocabulary
- P4 use a culturally responsive linguistic model (e.g., vocabulary, syntax)

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 effective communication skills
- K2 **culturally responsive practices***

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	Ongoing	3	2 years	NS / A

A2.4 Use natural or logical consequences

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 intervene consistently in dealing with the child's actions (e.g., follow through with expectations for individual children within the program)
- P2 apply consequences while respecting the child's development
- P3 take follow-up action
- P4 act on the basis of clear, constant, consistent, concrete, and appropriate limits
- P5 establish positive behaviour guidance strategies that are consistently applied by all staff

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **child development and learning theories***
- K2 **observation*** methods and tools
- K3 natural and logical consequences
- K4 program guidance policy

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	Ongoing	3	1 year	NS / A

A2.5 Facilitate problem-solving skills

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 introduce age and developmentally appropriate problem-solving skills
- P2 lead the child to think and come up with their own solutions
- P3 guide the child on how to solve problems to encourage self-sufficiency
- P4 respect the child's responses and choices
- P5 provide a safe environment while the child works toward solutions to their problems
- P6 share power between staff and the child

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **child development and learning theories***
- K2 problem-solving techniques
- K3 the importance of providing children with choices based on their abilities, allowing children to express their negative feelings, etc.
- K4 program guidance policy

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	Ongoing	3	1 year	NS / A

B. RELATIONSHIPS

Early childhood educators know that positive relationships with children, families, colleagues, and the community are necessary for each child's well-being and learning. They create trusting bonds with the child. They form collaborative partnerships with parents that respect the primary role of the child's parents. They establish relationships with and use resources in the child's communities to support the achievement of program objectives.

B1. Foster a caring relationship with the child

B1.1 Build a positive, nurturing relationship with each child

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- create a welcoming and safe environment
- consider each child as unique
- connect with the child (e.g., interact with the child at eye level, ask open-ended questions)
- provide one-on-one moments with the child
- demonstrate empathy
- respond to the child's cues (e.g., verbal, non-verbal)
- ensure the child's opinions and views are listened to by the adults in a respectful manner
- accept and value each child's creative expression
- involve the child in decision making and problem solving
- provide reassurance and support
- develop a trusting bond with the child (e.g., teach respect of self, promote attachment, feeling of security, self-awareness, and feeling of belonging)

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **child development and learning theories***
- K2 attachment bonds with children
- K3 **culturally responsive practices***
- K4 effective communication skills
- K5 **environment as teacher***

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	Ongoing	3	3–6 months	NS / A

B2. Form collaborative partnerships with parents

B2.1 Build and maintain meaningful relationships with parents

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 create a welcoming environment for all families
- P2 demonstrate empathy
- P3 discuss program and individual needs
- P4 discuss expectations
- P5 respect and recognize the primary role of the child's parents
- P6 seek out additional information to assist in understanding families
- P7 respect all family structures
- P8 encourage sharing of information with parents, for example:
 - communicate ongoing successes and concerns
 - encourage input from parents in developing individual plans or addressing concerns as they arise
 - provide parents with information about significant proposed changes or decisions that may affect them or the child
- P9 ensure families' cultural practices, traditions, religion, and home language(s) are respected in practice and policy
- P10 support orientation of families to the program
- P11 implement a transition plan for welcoming the child into the program
- P12 respond promptly when concerns are expressed
- P13 explore options when differences of opinion occur

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 effective communication skills
- K2 **culturally responsive practices***
- K3 **child development and learning theories***
- K4 **professional boundaries***
- K5 **program philosophy***
- K6 [Association of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia Code of Ethics](#)

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	Ongoing	5	3–5 years	S / T

B3. Use community resources

B3.1 Access community resources, facilities, and services

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 gather information on resources in the area
- P2 raise awareness of community events
- P3 post contact information on resources, facilities, and services for families
- P4 identify potential community partners
- P5 use community facilities and services (e.g., parks, libraries)
- P6 network with community members to implement programs and develop partnerships
- P7 make connections between families and resources

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 resources, facilities, and services in the area
- K2 program, families', and the child's needs

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
2	As needed	1	Within 3 months	NS / A

B3.2 Involve volunteers

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 welcome volunteers to the program
- P2 identify tasks suitable for volunteers
- P3 build relationships with volunteers
- P4 adhere to organizational policies and procedures for volunteers

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 related regulations and standards of practice
- K2 effective communication skills
- K3 **professional boundaries***
- K4 [Association of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia Code of Ethics](#)

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
2	As needed	2	3 months	NS / A

C. INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, AND EQUITY

Early childhood educators provide an inclusive environment for children and their families that is responsive through the integration and acceptance of unique and diverse familial and cultural realities. ECEs also ensure the acceptance and full participation of all children by engaging in ongoing evaluation and making program modifications as needed.

C1. Promote inclusion, diversity, and equity

C1.1 Support inclusion, diversity, and equity

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 gather information about different forms of diversities (e.g., culture and ethnicity, values and beliefs, language(s), abilities, education, life experiences, socio economic status, spirituality, gender, age, and sexual orientation) from the community, professional publications, websites, etc.
- P2 build relationships with families to learn more about them
- P3 acknowledge and respect the spiritual **well-being*** of each child
- P4 be responsive to families' cultural practices, traditions, religion(s), and home language(s)
- P5 respect differences in parenting practices
- P6 facilitate acceptance of diversity
- P7 model a positive attitude towards diversity (e.g., cultural and linguistic backgrounds, types of families, social and economic circumstances, life experiences, religious affiliations, gender and age)
- P8 provide materials that are culturally inclusive, diverse, and reflective of an anti-bias approach
- P9 provide learning materials that introduce the child to diversity in the community
- P10 provide programs that reflect a diverse population
- P11 be sensitive and accepting of all children and their cultural, socioeconomic, and family differences
- P12 engage all children in the program
- P13 use inclusive language when communicating with children and families
- P14 remove barriers that would prevent a child from full participation at their level of ability and interest
- P15 examine personal attitudes toward diversity, equity and inclusion

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 the principles of the [*United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*](#)
- K2 **child development and learning theories***
- K3 effective communication skills
- K4 principles and practices of inclusion (e.g., family-centred practice, family engagement practices, family-focused practice)
- K5 **reflective practices***
- K6 concepts of discrimination, prejudice, homophobia, racism, mainstreaming, integration, etc.
- K7 **culturally responsive practices***
- K8 [*Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework and Educator's Guide*](#)

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	Ongoing	3	2 years	NS / A

C1.2 Implement inclusion policy

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 adhere to inclusionary policies for program delivery
- P2 implement inclusionary practices into programs
- P3 implement an inclusive environment to suit the needs of all the children
- P4 recognize characteristics of typical and atypical development
- P5 apply strategies to support the learning needs of all children
- P6 use knowledge about individual children's needs to make accommodations and adaptations
- P7 engage in ongoing reflective evaluation of the inclusivity and equity of the program

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 [*Capable, Confident and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework and Educator's Guide*](#)
- K2 principles and practices of inclusion (e.g., family-centred practice, family engagement practices, family-focused practice)
- K3 **culturally responsive practices ***
- K4 principles of **universal design***
- K5 program evaluation
- K6 different aspects of diversity and inclusion (e.g., culture, sexual orientation, special needs)

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	Ongoing	4–5	3–5 years	NS / T

D. LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Early childhood educators prepare learning environments that support developmental goals, allow for play-based learning experiences, and allow educators to observe children’s interests, abilities, joys, and challenges. The learning environment, both indoors and out, is central to reflective practice and intentional teaching and influences the way ECEs engage in the program planning process.

D1. Develop and implement programs

D1.1 Research curriculum models

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 research appropriate information about a range of approaches and models
- P2 analyze information from each model to determine the best fit with individual program needs
- P3 describe the principles and practices embedded in early learning curriculum **frameworks*** and how they provide a guide for program planning and design

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **child development and learning theories***
- K2 **early childhood pedagogy***
- K3 curriculum approaches
- K4 professional research tools and approaches (e.g., books, publications, reputable websites)
- K5 **program philosophy***
- K6 [*Capable, Confident and Curious: Nova Scotia’s Early Learning Curriculum Framework and Educator’s Guide*](#)

CONTEXT RATING SCALES


CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	Ongoing	1	2-3 years	NS / s

D1.2 Develop programs

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 develop a program that supports **play-based learning***
- P2 use a continuous cycle of reflection and planning to design, evaluate and modify the program to reflect both children and the community
- P3 Incorporate principles of inclusion in program development
- P4 develop a program based on:
 - observation
 - developmental needs of the child
 - interests of the child
 - community resources
- P5 apply the principles of **developmentally appropriate practice** when developing programs for:
 - infants
 - toddlers
 - pre-school children
 - pre-primary children
 - school-age children
 - multi-age groupings
- P6 use the goals and objectives of *Capable, Confident, and Curious* to inform program development
- P7 plan routines that are respectful to the individual needs and interests of the child
- P8 vary play, routine and transitional periods (e.g., free play, directed play, projects, outdoors)
- P9 provide a balanced approach to both child-initiated and adult-initiated activities
- P10 collaborate with parents and other professionals in developing individual program plans
- P11 respect and respond to families' expectations for their child
- P12 share program plans
- P13 act purposefully with a goal in mind and a plan to accomplish it
- P14 act in a deliberate, thoughtful and purposeful manner in decision making and actions
- P15 promote social responsibility and respect for the environment in programming
- P16 organize field trips based on the **program philosophy***



For infant and toddler programs

P17 demonstrate responsive care giving

P18 incorporate routines throughout the curriculum providing a balance between care and education

For pre-school programs

P19 facilitate the transition of the child from child care to the school system

For pre-primary programs

P20 communicate and collaborate with other partners (e.g., schools, other professionals)

P21 incorporate the child's goals

For school-age programs

P22 encourage awareness of social justice issues to support the child's moral development (e.g., right/wrong, empathy, fairness)

P23 respect the child's transition to adolescence

For multi-age programs

P24 program according to ages and developmental levels within the multi-age room

P25 maintain ratios for multi-age groups

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

K1 **child development and learning theories***

K2 early childhood **pedagogy***

K3 **play-based learning***

K4 **culturally responsive practices***

K5 attachment bonds with children

K6 child temperament theories (e.g., easy, difficult, slow to warm up infants, etc.)

K7 related regulations and standards of practice

K8 organizational values, policies, and procedures

K9 principles and practices of inclusion (e.g., family-centred practice, family engagement practices, family-focused practice)

K10 **environment as teacher***

K11 [Capable, Confident and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework and Educator's Guide](#)

K12 [Quality Matters! Continuous Quality Improvement: A Guide for Licensed Child Care Centres](#)

K13 community resources

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	Ongoing	3	1 year	NS / T

D1.3 Prepare the learning environment

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 apply the goals and objectives of Capable, Confident, and Curious to design the learning environment
- P2 plan indoor and outdoor learning environments for each age group of children
- P3 engage in purposeful planning to design and modify environments
- P4 incorporate elements of nature in both indoor and outdoor learning environments
- P5 identify developmentally appropriate equipment and materials
- P6 provide an environment that supports self-directed learning
- P7 provide open-ended activities with varied developmentally appropriate and stimulating materials
- P8 provide sufficient materials and supplies for full participation
- P9 establish an environment that allows and encourages the child to explore, experiment, and express their own ideas
- P10 provide opportunities for the child to learn to assess risks, especially in the outdoor environment
- P11 observe and evaluate the use of the equipment and materials
- P12 make equipment and materials recommendations

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 elements of indoor and outdoor design that promote **well-being***
- K2 **play-based learning***
- K3 **intentional teaching***
- K4 environments that promote a sense of wonder and support inquiry-based learning
- K5 program and room planning techniques
- K6 **reflective practice***
- K7 risk-benefit analysis
- K8 [*Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework and Educator's Guide*](#)
- K9 learning goals, objectives, and strategies (well-being, discovery, and invention, language and communication, personal and social responsibility)

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	Ongoing	2-3	6 months- 1 year	NS / T

D1.4 Implement program

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 introduce activities to the child
- P2 share clear expectations with the child
- P3 allow the child to explore their environment
- P4 promote wonder, curiosity, and imagination
- P5 support each child's full participation
- P6 model **play-based learning***
- P7 co-construct learning with the child
- P8 guide the child's planning, decision making and communications
- P9 provide opportunities for the child to experience the consequences of their actions
- P10 use a variety of strategies to support learning during play and small-group activities (e.g., encouraging the child to take turns, providing positive encouragement, modelling)
- P11 demonstrate scaffolding techniques
- P12 provide children with rich and creative resources
- P13 provide children with opportunities for self-expression through creative means such as visual arts, musical arts, and dramatic arts
- P14 value process over product
- P15 promote the development of language, literacy, and numeracy skills
- P16 promote play and **physical literacy***
- P17 provide opportunities for children to practice fundamental movement skills
- P18 adapt schedule when required
- P19 **make learning visible*** through a variety of means
- P20 explain to families how children learn through play

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 related regulations and standards of practice
- K2 strategies to support learning
- K3 principles and practices of inclusion (e.g., family-centred practice, family engagement practices, family-focused practice)
- K4 **culturally responsive practice***
- K5 **reflective practice***

- K6 **intentional teaching***
- K7 **play-based learning***
- K8 inquiry-based learning
- K9 effective communication skills

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	Ongoing	3	6 months–1 year	NS / T

D1.5 Support and expand upon learning opportunities

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 respond to individual learning opportunities/teachable moments
- P2 demonstrate flexibility and spontaneity to take advantage of learning opportunities
- P3 observe and respond to the child's feelings, interests, and abilities
- P4 enter play to stimulate the child's thinking and extend learning
- P5 provide materials that relate to the child's explorations in the indoor and outdoor environments
- P6 plan activities that incorporate sensory and motor areas, physical knowledge skills, and cognitive and social play levels
- P7 use a variety of resources available within the program
- P8 sustain play by providing opportunities for repeated practice
- P9 foster child-initiated activities
- P10 extend the child's explorations with narrative, innovation, and challenges

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **child development and learning theories***
- K2 **play-based learning***
- K3 **intentional teaching***

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	As occurs	1	6 months–1 year	NS / A

D1.6 Evaluate program

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 observe and interpret:
- the child's engagement in activities through verbal and non-verbal feedback
 - the child's ability to remain attentive
- P2 identify if an experience supports the development of the whole child:
- **well-being***
 - language and communication
 - discovery and intervention
 - personal and social responsibility
- P3 engage in **reflective practice***
- P4 seek and integrate feedback from parents, team, and the child
- P5 check that program meets guidelines and quality standards
- P6 review documentation to draw relevant conclusions in written observations and discussions
- P7 adjust program plan based on observations of the child's developmental progress
- P8 prepare documentation (e.g., learning stories, language samples, children's drawings, emergent writing)

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **observation*** methods and tools
- K2 **child development and learning theories***
- K3 evaluation analysis methods and strategies for program improvement and enrichment
- K4 effective communication skills

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	Ongoing	3	2–3 years	NS / T

E. ASSESSMENT AND DOCUMENTATION

Early childhood educators assess children’s progress by observing children in their natural learning environment. Various methods of documentation are used to fully understand the child’s development in a holistic way. ECEs use reflective practice to share their observations of children’s learning and development with parents and other professionals.

E1. Observe and assess the child’s learning and development

E1.1 Identify and support each child’s individual learning and development goals

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 observe and describe the child’s representation (i.e. how the child demonstrates what they know or explore)
- P2 identify individual needs of the child
- P3 identify individual goals and objectives based on results of developmental observations
- P4 focus on learning goals and objectives as identified in the *Capable, Confident, and Curious*
- P5 engage the child in goal setting and planning

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **child development and learning theories***
- K2 **observation*** methods and tools
- K3 **documentation*** and authentic **assessment*** techniques
- K4 [*Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia’s Early Learning Curriculum Framework*](#) and [*Educator’s Guide*](#)

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	Ongoing	3-4	2 years	S / T

E1.2 Maintain documentation of the child's development

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 document program planning including individualized routine-based planning
- P2 engage in authentic **assessment***, documenting living moments (e.g., images, videos, artifacts, written or audio recordings)
- P3 record daily observations of the child
- P4 share observations with others
- P5 collaborate with children to document their achievements
- P6 assess the child's progress and development against goals on a regular basis
- P7 use documentation (e.g., words, pictures, videos, sketches and artifacts, learning stories, portfolios) to make **learning visible***
- P8 maintain a file for each child, including examples of the child's activities (e.g., photos, videos)
- P9 use documentation as a tool for reflection when planning next steps in the response to the child's play, activities, and ideas
- P10 explain to families how children learn through play (making learning visible)

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **authentic assessment***
- K2 **child development and learning theories***
- K3 **observation*** methods and tools
- K4 effective communication skills
- K5 **reflective practice***

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	Ongoing	3–4	2 years	S / T

F. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Early childhood educators demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between human development, principles of health and safety, and well-being. They incorporate their knowledge into planning for nutrition, implementing food safety protocols, hygiene, and maintaining safe indoor and outdoor learning environments. ECEs comply with quality standards and current laws and regulations associated with healthy and safe environments.

F1. Protect the child's health and well-being

F1.1 Accommodate for the child's allergies

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 gather and post allergy information from parents
- P2 develop an allergy response plan with parents for each applicable child
- P3 follow the program's allergy policies
- P4 seek or administer treatment and first aid when required (e.g., administer EpiPen in the event of anaphylactic reaction)
- P5 document and report allergic reactions

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 signs and symptoms of allergic reactions
- K2 how to administer emergency care
- K3 related regulations and standards of practice
- K4 program/centre's policy for storage and administration of medication

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	As needed	3	3 months	NS / A

F1.2 Administer medication and/or procedures

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 obtain written instructions and permission from parents
- P2 read labels and administer prescribed medications accurately
- P3 record dispensing/administering and intake of medication
- P4 use specialized medical equipment (e.g., asthma masks, catheters, feeding tubes), as needed
- P5 ensure a daily follow-up with parents regarding the dosage of medication administered to the child during the day
- P6 document medication and procedures

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 related regulations and standards of practice
- K2 program/centre's policy for storing and administering medication
- K3 specialized equipment and procedures
- K4 signs and symptoms of allergic and adverse reactions

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	As needed	2	6 months	NS / A

F1.3 Implement preventative health measures

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 sterilize and sanitize materials and equipment
- P2 use universal hand washing/sanitizing procedures
- P3 recognize signs of various communicable diseases
- P4 notify parents and health departments of communicable disease outbreak, as required
- P5 implement exclusion policy, as required
- P6 engage in ongoing health observations of each child

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 sanitization and sterilization procedures
- K2 universal precautions (e.g., hand washing, handling of body fluids) public health laws, related regulations and standards of practice including [*Guidelines for Communicable Disease Prevention and Control for Child Care Settings*](#)

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	Ongoing	2	3 months	NS / T

F1.4 Follow safe toileting and diapering procedures

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 implement developmentally appropriate diapering procedures
- P2 ensure sanitary conditions are always maintained
- P3 use proper diaper handling and disposal procedures
- P4 use safe lifting procedures
- P5 promote self-help skills as the child is ready
- P6 supervise the child
- P7 work collaboratively with parents to ensure consistency
- P8 document individual toileting and diapering routines for each child

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **culturally responsive practices***
- K2 public health laws, related regulations and standards of practice
- K3 [Guidelines for Communicable Disease Prevention and Control for Child Care Settings](#)
- K4 **child development and learning theories***

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	Ongoing	2	3 months	NS / A

F1.5 Identify and report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 identify and document suspected signs of abuse and neglect
- P2 maintain confidentiality to protect the child and family while addressing the situation
- P3 follow protocols for reporting abuse and neglect including federal, provincial, and international legislations
- P4 Share resources or information with parents about legislations and program expectations of behavioural guidance and the rights of the child
- P5 keep lines of communication open with parents

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 [*Reporting and Investigating Allegations of Abuse and Neglect in Regulated Child Care Settings*](#)
- K2 [*United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*](#)
- K3 effective communication skills
- K4 **professional boundaries***
- K5 [*Association of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia Code of Ethics*](#)

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	As needed	3	6 months	NS / A

F1.6 Actively supervise the child

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 ensure all emergency contact information for the child, medication, first aid supplies, and communication devices (e.g., cell phones) are on-hand
- P2 position themselves to maximize their view of areas
- P3 scan facilities frequently to maintain awareness of space and the group dynamic
- P4 recognize when redirection and intervention is required
- P5 maintain child–staff ratios
- P6 recognize the possible need for additional staff support
- P7 anticipate and communicate transition times
- P8 be aware of ongoing number of children and communicate with team
- P9 create environments that do not impede supervision
- P10 plan for supervision needs and assign designated persons (e.g., staff, family members, volunteers) to groups of children during outings and field trips
- P11 meet transportation requirements during outings and field trips

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 program guidance policy
- K2 related regulations and standards of practice

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	Ongoing	1	3–6 months	NS / A

F2. Meet nutritional needs

F2.1 Promote healthy eating

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 show a positive attitude towards healthy eating
- P2 respect each child's appetite, rhythm, and tastes
- P3 promote an environment that is conducive to healthy eating
- P4 follow [Canada's Food Guide](#) and [Nova Scotia's Manual for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings](#)
- P5 respect and respond to food restrictions (e.g., allergies, intolerances) and family dietary practices (e.g., cultural, vegan, vegetarian)
- P6 provide healthy eating information to families
- P7 prepare foods, per instructions, as needed
- P8 follow food safety principles and rules
- P9 provide opportunities to develop self-help skills
- P10 promote culinary activities with the children
- P11 use mealtime as an opportunity for learning about healthy eating
- P12 create a positive social and emotional atmosphere at mealtimes

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 [Canada's Food Guide](#)
- K2 [Nova Scotia's Manual for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings](#)
- K3 public health laws and regulations
- K4 **culturally responsive practices***

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	Daily	2	3–6 months	NS / A

F2.2 Accommodate for special nutritional requirement

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 obtain information from the parents about any specific nutritional needs for the child (e.g., allergies, intolerances, food restrictions due to cultural or dietary practices)
- P2 post and adhere to any specific nutritional requirements for the child
- P3 make children aware of any specific food requirements and safety rules
- P4 acknowledge cultural needs and traditions in menu planning and food preparation

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **culturally responsive practices***
- K2 [*Nova Scotia's Manual for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings*](#)
- K3 effective communication skills

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	Ongoing	2	6 months	NS / A

F2.3 Prepare and provide infant nutrition

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 acknowledge parents' plan for feeding, including formula feeding, breastfeeding, food introduction
- P2 prepare meals according to the infant's stage of development
- P3 serve food in safe conditions (e.g., milk and food temperature, food size, texture)
- P4 preserve nutritional integrity of foods (e.g., proper cooking, preparing, heating, and storage procedures)
- P5 feed according to infant's hunger
- P6 recognize the difference between hunger and emotional needs
- P7 encourage the bond with the infant through feeding, holding, and talking
- P8 support the transitions between breastfeeding/bottle and solid foods
- P9 provide infants with opportunities to self-feed when able to sit unassisted

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 public health laws and child care regulations
- K2 [*Nova Scotia's Manual for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings*](#)

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	Daily	3–4	1–2 years	NS / A

F3. Develop and maintain a safe environment

F3.1 Maintain indoor and outdoor physical environments

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 keep both indoor and outdoor play areas free of debris and structural hazards
- P2 check the facility equipment and toys regularly to ensure they are in good condition and safe for children to use
- P3 identify any physical hazards
- P4 solve minor safety issues
- P5 take action, as necessary (e.g., remove unsafe equipment)
- P6 record issues, concerns, and incidents, and report as necessary
- P7 address any issues related to noise, temperature, air quality, and humidity levels
- P8 properly store hazardous substances
- P9 implement safety standards and protocols
- P10 maintain cleanliness of facilities (indoor and outdoor)

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 program safety protocols and procedures
- K2 related regulations and standards of practice

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	Ongoing	2	3–6 months	NS / T

F3.2 Maintain equipment, materials, and furnishings

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 ensure the safety of play materials and equipment
- P2 follow directions and instructions for use
- P3 maintain a sense of order so that materials are found easily and injuries are prevented (e.g., tripping)
- P4 assess priorities for children and program
- P5 research and source equipment
- P6 plan and prepare supplies for activities
- P7 maintain adequate inventory

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **developmentally appropriate practices***
- K2 related regulations and standards of practice

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	Ongoing	2	3–6 months	NS / T

F3.3 Implement emergency and evacuation plans

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 identify emergency situations
- P2 keep plans up to date
- P3 educate the child and parents about the plans
- P4 practice safety procedures regularly
- P5 keep the child's emergency contact information up to date and accessible
- P6 document and report practices and drills, as required
- P7 respond to emergencies (e.g., hurricanes, snowstorms, extreme heat, floods, chemical spills, power outages)
- P8 contact appropriate emergency departments when necessary (e.g., fire, police, ambulance)
- P9 use safety equipment (e.g., fire extinguishers)

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 program emergency procedures
- K2 related regulations and standards of practice

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	As needed	2	6 months	NS / T

G. PROFESSIONALISM

Early childhood educators demonstrate professionalism by adhering to required policies and procedures. They are proficient in the application of ethics and maintain confidentiality to respect the rights of children, families, and colleagues at all times. They are familiar with provincial legislation, regulations, and policies and understand their implications. They demonstrate professionalism in all their relationships and communications. As active members of professional organizations, they regularly participate in professional development opportunities.

G1. Conduct self professionally

G1.1 Demonstrate professionalism

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 adhere to a code of ethics/code of conduct
- P2 demonstrate **ethical decision-making***
- P3 demonstrate awareness of conflicts of interest
- P4 adhere to policies and procedures (e.g., public health policies, education and childcare legislation, behaviour management policies)
- P5 maintain professional demeanour
- P6 advocate for the rights of the child
- P7 recognize when the child's rights have been violated and take appropriate action manage time and resources to meet deadlines for projects and tasks
- P8 take responsibility for personal actions and decisions, as well as the resulting consequences
- P9 respond to change in a productive manner
- P10 be open minded and receptive to constructive feedback
- P11 model non-judgmental attitudes
- P12 demonstrate creativity, spontaneity, and flexibility
- P13 maintain work-life balance
- P14 recognize the effect of personal health on the **well-being*** of the child
- P15 obtain required registration (classification) and other certifications such as First-aid, Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC), etc.

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 [Association of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia Code of Ethics](#)
- K2 organization's staff policy manual
- K3 regulations and standards of practice
- K4 [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	Ongoing	3	2 years	NS / A, T

G1.2 Maintain confidentiality

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 respect the privacy of self and others
- P2 share information on a “need to know” basis
- P3 recognize consequences of breaching confidentiality

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 [*Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act \(PIPEDA\)*](#)
- K2 **professional boundaries***

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	Ongoing	1	3 months	NS / A

G1.3 Participate in professional development

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 conduct a self-evaluation
- P2 participate in regular **performance** appraisals
- P3 set goals and objectives
- P4 develop a plan for achieving goals and objectives including timeframe, resources, and methods
- P5 keep current with best practices and legislation requirements/changes
- P6 research new trends and concepts
- P7 seek professional development opportunities based on professional development plan (e.g., workshops, courses, communities of practice)
- P8 actively participate in workshops and learning opportunities
- P9 maintain required registration (classification)
- P10 network with peers (e.g., online forums)
- P11 be receptive to new ideas
- P12 evaluate progress toward achieving their professional development plan and make adjustments, as needed
- P13 share learning outcomes and concepts with others (e.g., colleagues)

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **reflective practice***
- K2 effective communication skills
- K3 related regulations and standards of practice
- K4 resources for professional development (e.g., Association of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia (AECENS), Nova Scotia Early Years Professional Development Committee (EYPDC))

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
3	Ongoing	3	2–3 year	NS / A

G1.4 Demonstrate leadership skills

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 model positive behaviours
- P2 offer solutions to issues and take action as needed
- P3 demonstrate a positive attitude
- P4 use organizational skills
- P5 acknowledge the strengths of others
- P6 demonstrate initiative
- P7 act as a mentor to others, as needed
- P8 contribute to the development of policies

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 effective communication skills
- K2 team-building techniques
- K3 coaching strategies
- K4 action management

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
3	Ongoing	3–4	2–3 years	NS / T

G1.5 Evaluate program within the context of Quality Matters!

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 engage in **reflective practice*** with a view to continuous quality improvement
- P2 work with a team to develop assessment strategies
- P3 develop SMART program goals (i.e., specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound)
- P4 apply a systematic approach to problem solving
- P5 use a common language to describe program quality
- P6 perform research and data collection tasks

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 elements of quality in child care
- K2 [*Quality Matters! Continuous Quality Improvement: A Guide for Licensed Child Care Centres*](#)
- K3 goal setting
- K4 team-building techniques
- K5 problem-solving skills
- K6 effective communication skills
- K7 **reflective practice***

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	As required	4	3 years	NS / T

G1.6 Advocate for the profession

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 speak to the importance of early childhood education and the role of educators
- P2 build leadership capacity within the profession
- P3 share learning and knowledge
- P4 participate in awareness and outreach activities
- P5 participate in professional organizations/associations

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 professional resources (e.g., Canadian Child Care Federation, Association of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia)

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
3	As required	2	1 year	NS / A

G2. Work as a member of a team

G2.1 Develop relationships with colleagues

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 demonstrate integrity in all professional relationships
- P2 support colleagues and work collaboratively through effective communication strategies
- P3 demonstrate **culturally responsive practice***
- P4 participate in meetings
- P5 respect the opinions of others
- P6 make time for discussion with colleagues
- P7 share information and skills with colleagues
- P8 share resources and responsibilities
- P9 recognize strengths and limitations of self and colleagues
- P10 provide positive and constructive feedback
- P11 support colleagues to complete their work duties and offer assistance when needed
- P12 resolve interpersonal conflicts and differences in a respectful manner
- P13 participate in group application of **ethical decision making***
- P14 act as an advisor or coach to new colleagues, as needed

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 [Association of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia Code of Ethics](#)
- K2 **culturally responsive practices***
- K3 team-building techniques
- K4 effective communication skills
- K5 coaching strategies
- K6 conflict resolution approaches

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
5	Ongoing	4	3–6 months	NS / T

G2.2 Supervise practicum students

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 provide a welcoming environment
- P2 model professionalism
- P3 orient student to the program
- P4 discuss expectations
- P5 share information and skills
- P6 observe students
- P7 provide positive and constructive feedback
- P8 evaluate students' progress through their practicum
- P9 participate in meetings with students and practicum advisors
- P10 provide opportunities for reflective discussions
- P11 complete relevant documentation as required by training institution

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 **observation*** and **documentation*** methods
- K2 roles and responsibilities associated with practicum supervision
- K3 coaching strategies
- K4 effective communication skills
- K5 **reflective practice***

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	As needed	3	3–5 years	NS / T

G3. Communicate effectively

G3.1 Use and promote active listening skills

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 give speaker undivided attention
- P2 watch for nonverbal indicators that reinforce or contradict message
- P3 use appropriate body language and facial expressions (e.g., nod, smile, make eye contact)
- P4 ask questions to clarify or confirm information
- P5 reformulate the speaker's emotions and needs
- P6 encourage children to listen to others (e.g., speaking at the appropriate time in discussions)

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 principles of active listening
- K2 verbal and nonverbal communication techniques
- K3 communication barriers (e.g., second language difficulties, noise interference, emotionally charged situations)
- K4 questioning techniques
- K5 **culturally responsive practices***

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	Ongoing	3	1 year	NS / A

G3.2 Use verbal skills in a variety of contexts

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 Engage in respectful communications (e.g., positive language, position self at child's level)
- P2 Keep message clear and concise
- P3 Select language suited to the level of the listener's comprehension
- P4 Use non-biased language (e.g., open-ended sentences, non-judgemental terminology)
- P5 Use appropriate volume, tone, inflection, and speed
- P6 Use visual aids to make sure message is understood
- P7 Use body language to reinforce verbal message
- P8 Engage listeners by promoting input
- P9 Ask questions to ensure message is understood

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 effective communication skills
- K2 listener's or audience's information needs
- K3 verbal and nonverbal communication techniques
- K4 communication barriers (e.g., second language difficulties, noise interference, emotionally charged situations)
- K5 **culturally responsive practices***

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	Ongoing	3-4	2-3 years	NS / A

G3.3 Communicate in writing

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 select appropriate means of communication (e.g., text message, emails, letter)
- P2 use format, tone, content, and style appropriate to purpose and audience
- P3 keep message clear and concise
- P4 use non-biased language (e.g., inclusive language, non-judgemental terminology)
- P5 proofread draft for clarity, grammar, and spelling, revise as necessary
- P6 ensure message is received and understood

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 protocols for a variety of written formats (e.g., forms, incident reports, emails)
- K2 reader's information needs and comprehension level

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
4	Ongoing	3	1–2 years	NS / A

G4. Use technology effectively

G4.1 Demonstrate digital skills

PERFORMANCE

Competent ECEs must be able to:

- P1 consult relevant websites when seeking information
- P2 use computer software required by employers (e.g., email program, scheduling software)
- P3 use technology to communicate with peers and parents (e.g., online forums, emails, text messages)
- P4 use technology to facilitate documentation and record keeping
- P5 make appropriate use of social media
- P6 complete and submit required forms online

KNOWLEDGE

Competent ECEs must know:

- K1 organization's policies for computer and digital device use
- K2 applicable features of software, technologies, and digital devices

CONTEXT RATING SCALES

CRITICALITY	FREQUENCY	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	TIME TO BE PROFICIENT	AUTONOMY
2	Ongoing	3	2 years	NS / T

GLOSSARY

advocacy: Actions to champion change, or to extend or improve early learning opportunities and supports to children, families, and ECEs.

authentic assessment²: A form of assessment that measures children's skills and abilities by observing how children perform in real-life every day activities; it is carried out through observations and documentation of children's play, their interactions with peers, and conversations with families, other educators and professionals. Some techniques used for authentic assessment include images, videos, artifacts, notes, audio recordings, learning stories, portfolios, checklists, etc., which document living moments.

child development and learning theories: A set of theories that focus on various aspects of development including physical, social, emotional, and cognitive growth and explain how children learn and grow over time. These theories include various concepts such as developmental sequences, milestones, profiles, growth patterns, special or challenging needs, developmental differences and alerts, etc. Some important theories in early childhood education include Maturation Theory, Psychoanalytic and Psychosocial Theory, Cognitive-Developmental Theory, Socio-Cultural Theory, Social Constructivist Theory, Behaviourism, Social Learning Theory, Bioecological Theory, Essential Needs Theory, and Stage Theory of Cognitive Development.

classification: An official process where an ECE's qualifications are recognized as meeting the training requirements of Section 37 of the Early Learning and Child Care Regulations. ECEs may be granted classification at various levels, depending on qualifications. Individuals apply for classification by completing an application form and submitting proof of their qualifications according to the regulated criteria.

coaching: A helping relationship formed between two people whereby the coach assists the coachee to achieve a mutually identified set of goals and to improve their professional performance.

code of ethics: A document prescribing appropriate and expected behaviour from an individual in a particular role or industry. In Nova Scotia, the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia (AECENS) has published its own [Code of Ethics](#), which is a compilation of beliefs regarding what is right rather than expedient; what is good rather than practical; and acts members must never engage in or condone.

colleague: In this context, the word colleague is meant to be inclusive and refers to any other workers the ECE may work with including:

- immediate co-workers working in the same centre or school (e.g., other ECEs, teachers);
- other early childhood educators;
- other professionals involved in the care provided to a child (e.g., social worker, speech pathologist, psychologist).

confidentiality: An agreement set out in policy statements, a written agreement, or other type of mutual understanding that limits the amount or type of information that may be shared with others, such as other individuals, organizations, or media.

conflict of interest: A situation where a person or organization has competing interests. Typically, those competing interests undermine the impartiality of a person because of the competition between the person's self-interest and the person's professional interest. Conflict of interest usually indicates that the person may not be able to make a fair decision or would not be perceived as making a fair decision.

continuous quality improvement: A process that ensures an organization is systematically and intentionally working to improve the quality of the programs and services they provide. Continuous quality improvement typically includes the development of a quality improvement plan, and a period of self-assessment, goal identification, selection of indicators and time frames, the development of an action plan, and a progress review. EECD has implemented Quality Matters! (Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2018d), which places a focus on continuous quality improvement in the early childhood education sector.

culturally responsive practice: A process of reflecting and celebrating our pluralist society, which allows children to develop and learn while experiencing a sense of belonging and respect. Culturally responsive practice means being aware of one's own world view, gaining knowledge of different cultural practices, historical perspectives, and world views, developing positive attitudes toward and appreciation of cultural differences, and developing skills for communication and interaction across cultures and languages.


curriculum³: In early childhood education settings "curriculum" means the sum of experiences, activities, and events that occur within an inclusive environment designed to foster children's well-being, learning, and development. This implies collaboration between ECEs, children, and families.

curriculum framework³: An established set of values, principles, goals, and strategies that encourage a shared sense of purpose and communication between families and early childhood centres. A curriculum framework is different from a prescribed curriculum because in early childhood settings, learning is integrated, episodic, experiential, and facilitated through social relationships. Curriculum frameworks guide the pedagogical practices of ECEs.

developmentally appropriate practice (DAP): A term describing learning experiences and environments including activities and materials that are individualized based on a child's level of skills, abilities, and interests in order to support their individual learning needs. These practices acknowledge that each child is a unique individual whose developmental abilities, family and cultural heritage, needs, and learning style differ from those of other children.

diversity: Differences and unique qualities that each person brings to the early learning setting such as their culture and ethnicity, values and beliefs, language(s), abilities, education, life experiences, socioeconomic status, spirituality, gender, age, and sexual orientation.

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



early childhood educators (ECEs): As defined in academia, ECEs are qualified individuals who have earned post-secondary credentials in early childhood education. ECEs are competent, capable, curious, knowledgeable, caring, reflective, and resourceful. They bring diverse social, cultural, and linguistic perspectives to the early learning setting; and they collaborate with others to create engaging environments and experiences. ECEs foster children’s learning and development while engaging in lifelong learning themselves. They take responsibility for their own learning and make decisions about how to integrate their knowledge from theory, research, personal experiences, and personal relationships with the children and families they work with. (Akbari and McCuaig 2014). In Nova Scotia, ECEs have a range of post-secondary education from some courses to a diploma or degree in early childhood education. Others may be recognized for their prior learning experience by completing the Recognition of Prior Learning Program authorized for delivery by the Province of Nova Scotia.

environment as teacher: A concept used in early childhood education, where the environment provides children with a sense of beauty, allows for an organization of time, presents materials and activities for learning, provides space for play and exploration, encourages friendships and relationships, allows for privacy, recognizes diversity, and welcomes families. Loris Malaguzzi referred to this environment as “third teacher,” and Maria Montessori referred to it as the “prepared environment.” (Akbari and McCuaig 2014)

ethical decision making: Process of evaluating and choosing among alternatives in a manner consistent with ethical principles; it is necessary to perceive and eliminate unethical options and select the best ethical alternative.

family: All the persons related to the child, biologically or by adoption, including the child, parents, step-parents, siblings, and extended family such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

holistic: An approach to early learning that encompasses the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and creative development of a child. This approach focuses on the development of the whole child rather than only concentrating on individual components.

Image of the Child: What people believe, understand, and assume about the role of children in education and society. This image includes how people think about children’s capabilities, development, motivations, purpose, and agency. Social, cultural, and historical experiences influence a person’s Image of the Child.

inclusion: The consideration of all children’s social, cultural, and linguistic diversity, such as learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances, and geographic location, in curriculum decision making processes. The intent is to ensure that all children’s experiences are recognized and valued and that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their learning, and that they learn to value difference.

inquiry: A disposition for learning; also described as wonder, curiosity, and imagination; a tendency to try new ideas and take on challenges. Inquiry also involves:

co-inquiry: A learning and research process that helps educators to co-construct knowledge with children. It involves observation and documentation, reflection and interpretation, and planning.

critical inquiry: A process of gathering and evaluating information and ideas from a range of perspectives, followed by an analysis and evaluation of these ideas to gain a better understanding, leading to new ideas and questions.

professional inquiry: A culture established when ECEs and those they work with are all involved in an ongoing cycle of review where current practices are examined, outcomes are reviewed, and new ideas are generated. In such a climate, issues relating to curriculum quality, equity, and children's well-being can be raised and debated.

integrity: Quality of being honest and adhering to strong moral principles in one's actions; a personal choice to hold one's self to consistent standards.

intentional teaching: A form of teaching that encourages ECEs to be deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions. Intentional teaching is the opposite of rote or continuing with traditions simply because things have always been done that way. Some examples of intentional teaching include encouraging children to manage personal belongings and daily routines, using open-ended questioning to support children's agency and decision making, and encouraging children verbally and non-verbally to continue with what they are doing, etc.

making learning visible: The process of creating strong learning cultures using documentation as a tool to deepen and extend learning. Documentation of living moments (images, videos, artifacts, notes, or audio recordings) is used to shape, extend, and make visible how and what children are learning.

observation: The ongoing process of watching, listening, and being attuned to children's behaviours, emotional states, interests and abilities, and patterns of development to meet their needs and evaluate their development and learning. Some of the observation methods and tools used by ECEs include anecdotal notes, time and event sampling, frequency and duration counts, checklists, rating scales, etc.

parent(s): A person, or the people, primarily responsible for the day-to-day care of children and taking on the commonly understood parenting role. The term parent refers to biological or adoptive parents, step-parents, legal guardians, or extended family such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

pedagogy: The understanding of how learning takes place and the philosophy and practice that supports that understanding of learning. Pedagogy involves ECEs' professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision making, teaching, and learning. Early childhood pedagogy is different than a program plan, or defined activities intended to produce a defined outcome. It encourages educators to ask questions—about what they do, and why—and what impact their decisions have on how children learn.

program philosophy: A statement outlining the fundamental beliefs, values, and ideals that are important to individuals involved in early childhood education—directors/supervisors, practitioners, parents, families, and community. A philosophy identifies what is special about (and fundamental to) the program and is the basis for decisions about the way the program is managed and about its direction in the future.

physical literacy: Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life. (Whitehead and Murdoch 2006)

play: A naturally occurring and freely chosen activity in which children are self-motivated. It is characterized by imagination, exploration, delight, capriciousness, and a sense of wonder. It reflects the unique experiences of children, and the various ways children express their ideas and feelings, and come to understand themselves, others, and their world.

play-based learning: A context for learning through which children organize and make sense of their social worlds, as they actively engage with people, objects, and representations. It is an educational approach that builds upon children's natural inclination to make sense of the world through play. ECEs participate in play, guiding children's planning, decision making, and communications, as well as extending children's explorations with narrative, novelty, and challenges. The process through which learning happens in play is complex. ECEs continually develop and deepen their understanding of that process through professional learning and classroom observation, interpretation, and analysis.

professional boundaries: A term used to define appropriate boundaries between professionals and the public they serve. In early childhood education, ECEs must be sensitive to and aware of the occurrence of challenges to professional boundaries in their relationships with children, parents, and families.

quality: The demonstration of meeting the standards around certain criteria, such as human resources, staff qualifications, group size, ratio of ECEs to children, supports, methodology, environment, materials, interactions, activities, and child and family supports. When measuring quality in an early childhood education setting, the perspective and experiences of children must always be considered.

reflective practice: A systematic process used by ECEs that forms the basis for intentional teaching. There are three types of reflective practice:

reflection-in-action: Occurs naturally and continually throughout the children's day as ECEs engage in and observe children's activities.


reflection-on-action: Occurs after the fact, when ECEs reflect on the activities and interactions of the day, and question whether a situation may have been handled differently, or what new insights were gained as a result of children's interactions with each other or with adults. Such reflection can be done alone or in conversation with other ECEs.

reflection-for-action: Describes critical reflection. Critical reflection involves closely examining all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives. ECEs often frame their reflective practice within a set of overarching questions and develop more specific questions for particular areas of inquiry. Critical reflection also considers Image of the Child and values held, framed against the present set of experiences and circumstances, with an eye toward future changes or actions.

scope of practice: The collective actions, decisions, and procedures that ECEs are responsible for in their work.

SMART goals: To make sure goals are clear and reachable, they must meet the following five criteria: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound.

team: group of workers from the same centre working together for a common purpose, who must rely on each other to achieve mutually defined results.



universal design: Principle which states that all environment, products, and activities should be accessible by every child regardless of age, ability, or circumstance.

well-being: A state of physical, social, or emotional comfort. This includes happiness and satisfaction, effective social functioning, and the dispositions of optimism, openness, curiosity, and resilience.

LEARNING RESOURCES

Books

- *Administering for Quality, Canadian Early Childhood Development Programs*, 5th ed. (Chandler 2015)
- *Developmental Profiles: Pre-birth through Adolescence*, 8th ed. (Allen and Marotz 2015)
- *Inclusion in Early Childhood Programs: Children with Exceptionalities*, 6th ed. (Allen et al. 2015)
- *Inquiry-Based Early Learning Environments* (Stacey 2018)
- *Partnerships: Families and Communities in Early Childhood Development*, 6th ed. (Wilson 2018)
- *Well Beings: A Guide to Health in Child Care*, 3rd ed. (Canadian Pediatric Society 2008)

Other Resources

- “AECENS Code of Ethics” (Association of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia N.D.):
<https://aecens.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Code-of-ethics-AECENS.pdf>
- *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia’s Early Learning Curriculum Framework* (Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2018a):
www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/nselcurriculumframework.pdf
- *Day Care Regulations* (Nova Scotia 1989): www.novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/dayregs.htm
- *Educator’s Guide to Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia’s Early Learning Curriculum Framework* (Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2018b):
www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/nselfeducatorsguide.pdf
- *Guidelines for Communicable Disease Prevention and Control for Child Care Settings* (Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness 2015):
www.novascotia.ca/dhw/cdpc/documents/Guidelines_CDPC_Child_care_Setting.pdf
- *Quality Matters! Continuous Quality Improvement: A Guide for Licensed Child Care Centres* (Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2018d):
www.ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/documents/quality_matters_continuous_quality_improvement_en.pdf
- *Reporting and Investigating Allegations of Abuse and Neglect in Regulated Child Care Settings* (Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2017):
www.ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/documents/Reporting-Investigating-Abuse.pdf
- *Standards for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings* (Nova Scotia 2011.):
www.ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/providers/FoodandNutritionalSupport.shtml

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www.ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/documents/quality_matters_continuous_quality_improvement_en.pdf.