



**Recognized**  
**Prior**  
**Learning**

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# The Early Childhood Education Recognition of Prior Learning Program

## Program Guide

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This is an information package for Candidates enrolled in the Level 2 ECE Assessment  
for the Recognition of Prior Learning

## Introduction

Thank you for your interest in The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Program assessment process for the Level 2 ECE Qualification for Nova Scotia. RPL is a rigorous and valid assessment process that provides experienced and prepared candidates with an alternative pathway to classification. Based on a successful completion of the RPL Program, you will be able to apply to the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for a Level 2 Classification under the authority of the [Nova Scotia Early Learning and Child Care Act, Regulation 37D.](#)

The Province of Nova Scotia has partnered with the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia (AECENS) to develop an RPL assessment process that will provide 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 an EECD Level 2 ECE Classification.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the RPL Program and the assessment process, and describe key guidelines related to the process.

## What is RPL?

RPL is the process used to identify, document, assess and recognize existing skills and knowledge. Recognition is the process by which a person's existing skills and knowledge, regardless of how they have been acquired, are credited towards the achievement of units of competency for various qualifications, certifications, or accredited courses. The learning recognized may be formal, informal, non-formal, or experiential.

The development of the RPL Program for ECE Level 2 occupation in Nova Scotia is guided by the following nine principles for quality RPL practice developed by the Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA):

- **Accessible** – RPL processes provide information, advice and access by being responsive to applicant questions, cost-efficient for both applicant and organization, timely in both frequency of assessment and gap filling options, adult learner-centred, voluntary, available, and inclusive of all abilities and differences.
- **Consistent** – Industry decision-makers (advisors, assessors, administrators) work together to be consistent with criteria, training, tools, procedures, and outcomes. Competency definitions are, as far as possible, agreed across jurisdictions to allow for transferability.

- **Fair** – RPL processes are unbiased and recognize a wide range of experiences and ways that people learn. Therefore, candidates are allowed a wide range of evidence in providing evidence of competency. An appeal mechanism is provided. Policies and procedures of the governing organization(s) align with RPL principles.
- **Respectful** – RPL processes reduce barriers by being non-discriminatory, culturally appropriate and inclusive, value uniqueness of the individual, using plain language to ensure all communications are clear.
- **Valid** - Assessment methods align with the expected measures of achievement (e.g. competencies, occupational standards, goals, or outcomes).
- **Flexible** - Assessment methods are time and cost efficient. A variety of effective assessment options are considered.
- **Rigorous** - RPL assessment methods reflect the purpose for the required learning, have equivalent expectations to traditional assessment methods, are conducted by subject matter experts, and meet requirements of work or performance criteria.
- **Transparent** - Information uses explicit and plain language to be understood by all stakeholders (applicants, advisors, assessors, administrators). Policies, processes, and criteria are complete, fully disclosed, and accurate. For example:
  - process steps are clear and simple to follow,
  - methods of assessment and learning criteria are clearly stated,
  - results of RPL assessment are provided, including gaps and achievements.
- **Professionally Supported** - All individuals involved in RPL services provision receive initial and ongoing training for their RPL functions. (E.g., advising, assessment, development and systems administration or other related services).

## ECE Level 2 RPL Process Overview

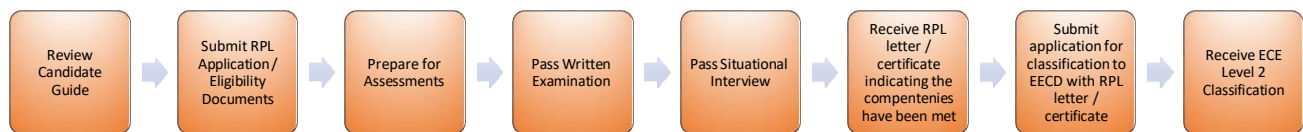
The ECE Level 2 RPL assessment process provides an opportunity for eligible individuals working in early learning programs to demonstrate their skills and knowledge by means of a validated assessment process that is based on standards of competency that were defined by experienced early childhood education practitioners in Nova Scotia. RPL assessment does not eliminate the option of completing a 2-year post-secondary course of study, but instead offers an alternative pathway to a Level 2 Classification in Nova Scotia for educators with the experience and training to meet the competency standards.

Participation in the RPL Process includes the following activities:

- Review [RPL Program Guide](#),
- Submit eligibility application for review and approval,
- Prepare for the assessment process (see Appendix A – Learning Resources),
- Pass the ECE Level 2 written examination (see Appendix B – Exam Table of Specifications),
- Pass the ECE Level 2 situational interview assessment,
- Receive a letter / certificate indicating the competencies required for a Level 2 ECE Qualification have been met,
- Apply for a [Level 2 Classification](#) using RPL assessment results to EECD (to apply for Level 2 Classification).

The RPL process is rigorous and challenging and will require eligible candidates to be both experienced and well prepared. If you are not successful at any stage of the RPL assessment process, you will be provided with information on the identified skills and knowledge gaps enabling you to reapply/reassess. Based on a successful overall assessment, you will be able to apply for a Level 2 Classification under the authority of the [Nova Scotia Early Learning and Child Care Act, Regulation 37D](#).

### Steps in the RPL Process:



## ECE Level 2 Standards to be Assessed

The [Nova Scotia ECE Level 2 Competency Profile](#) describes seven major competency categories:

1. Child development
2. Relationships
3. Inclusion, Diversity and Equity
4. Learning Environments
5. Assessment and Documentation
6. Health and Safety
7. Professionalism

Each category is comprised of skills that a Level 2 ECE is required to demonstrate for classification. Each skill contains one or more subskills. Each subskill has two components:

- a) the abilities needed to perform the subskill at a competent level of proficiency, and
- b) the underpinning knowledge required for the subskill to be performed at a competent level of proficiency.

The skills and subskills will be assessed using one or more assessment tools. The *Nova Scotia Level 2 ECE Competency Profile* document is available from the AECENS website at [NS-Level-2-ECE-Competency-Profile.pdf \(aecens.ca\)](#).

## RPL Assessment Eligibility Criteria

In order to be eligible for the RPL Assessment, you must meet the following criteria:

- Have **ANY ONE** of the following:
  - (i) Entry Level Classification, or
  - (ii) Level 1 Classification, or
  - (iii) School-Age Training Approval.
- **PLUS** at least 6500 hours experience in an early childhood education setting working directly with children in the last 8 years (gained through paid work experience) with documented evidence including employer contact information. A sworn and notarized statement of self-reported hours of work experience in cases where actual working records may not be available will be accepted.
- Where English or French is not the primary language, proof of English Level 7 competency is required.

Candidate eligibility relies on a specific time window (i.e.: the "most recent" 5 years), so qualifying hours need to be reassessed when more than one year has elapsed and the Candidate has not successfully completed the RPL Program. Therefore, from the date that the Candidate is deemed eligible for the RPL Program, the Candidate has a one-year time limit within which to successfully complete the RPL Program. In individual cases, the RPL Program Manager may grant limited time extensions, based on the merits of a Candidate's written request.

### Required documentation:

- Copies of any relevant qualifications and transcripts (including orientation or classification certificate), and
- Detailed and up-to-date Resume / Curriculum Vitae (CV), with specific descriptions of roles and responsibilities, and

Names and current contact information for all employers and/or supervisors during at least the most recent 6500 hours of work experience.

## RPL Assessment Steps

After your eligibility is approved, a combination of two RPL assessment tools will be used to identify your existing competencies:

- A written examination that will assess the knowledge elements of the *Nova Scotia Level 2 ECE Competency Profile*, and
- A situational interview based on authentic workplace-based scenarios with assessment criteria scored by a panel of Assessors trained to assess the practical competencies of the [Nova Scotia Level 2 ECE Competency Profile](#).

## Written Examination

- The written examination will consist of 125 multiple-choice questions.
- Each multiple-choice question will have four options with only one correct answer.
- The answers to the questions must be marked on a separate answer sheet provided during the written examination.
- The written examination will be 3 hours in duration.
- Each question will test a specific competency in the [Nova Scotia Level 2 ECE Competency Profile](#) document.
- The questions will map to an approved Table of Specifications (See Appendix B), indicating the relative weighting of the seven major categories (competencies) and skills included in the Competency Profile document.
- The questions will be drawn from a combination of sources, including recognized textbooks and other documentation (See Appendix A).
- To ensure that competencies and skills are measured at different levels of cognitive ability, the questions will focus on knowledge / comprehension, on application of principles and procedures, and on critical thinking / problem solving.

## Situational Interview

- A 90-minute interview based on three selected scenarios.
- The interview will be conducted by a panel of specially-trained Assessors – each of whom who will be experienced as an ECE.
- Each scenario will offer a general description of a workplace situation and will provide the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate a constellation of related competencies and to respond to questions from the panel of Assessors.
- Candidates will be allowed up to 10 minutes to read through each scenario (typically two pages long) before the discussion with the Assessors.
- Assessors will evaluate responses and score each Candidate's interview responses using criteria based on the Competency Profile.

## RPL Application and Submission

Application forms and other requirements for participation in the RPL Program are available at [www.aecens.ca/RPL/](http://www.aecens.ca/RPL/)

For more information, please contact AECENS at [rpl@aecens.ca](mailto:rpl@aecens.ca)

## Payment for the Program

Candidates will pay the following fees at each assessment step in the RPL Program:

- \$575 plus HST for Initial Registration and Eligibility Assessment,
- \$1150.00 plus HST for the Written Examination, and
- \$1150.00 plus HST for the Situational Interview.

At each of the above steps, you must indicate your readiness to proceed by completing and submitting the appropriate registration form (found at [www.aecens.ca/RPL/](http://www.aecens.ca/RPL/)). Upon receipt of your completed registration form, AECENS issues an invoice for payment of the assessment fee for that step. When you have paid the registration fee, you are considered to be 'registered' for that particular step.

## Program Completion

Upon successful completion of the RPL Program, you will be able to apply to the [Department of Education in Nova Scotia to have your ECE Classification changed to a Level 2](#).

Normally, you can expect to complete the RPL program within approximately one year, depending on how soon you are ready to register for assessment each step.

## Learning Resources

### Books

- Canadian Paediatric Society. *Well Beings: A Guide to Health in Child Care*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition
- Stacey, S. (2018). *Inquiry-Based Early Learning Environments*



- Chandler, K. *Administering for Quality, Canadian Early Childhood Development Programs*. 5<sup>th</sup> edition
- Wilson, L. *Partnerships: Families and Communities in Early Childhood Development*. 6<sup>th</sup> edition
- Allen, K. E., Langford, R., et al. *Inclusion in Early Childhood Programs: Children with Exceptionalities*. 6th edition
- Allen, K.E. & Marotz, L.R. *Developmental Profiles: Pre-birth through Adolescence*. 8<sup>th</sup> edition

### Other Resources

- Nova Scotia ECE Level 2 Competency Profile <https://aecens.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/2018-12-18-NS-Level-2-ECE-Competency-Profile-FINAL.pdf>
- AECENS Code of Ethics <https://aecens.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Code-of-ethics-AECENS.pdf>
- *Reporting and Investigating Allegations of Abuse and Neglect in Regulated Child Care Settings* <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/documents/Reporting-Investigating-Abuse.pdf>
- Nova Scotia (2015). *Guidelines for Communicable Disease Prevention and Control for Child Care Settings* [http://www.novascotia.ca/dhw/cdpc/documents/Guidelines\\_CDPC\\_Child\\_care\\_Setting.pdf](http://www.novascotia.ca/dhw/cdpc/documents/Guidelines_CDPC_Child_care_Setting.pdf)
- Nova Scotia. *Standards for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings* <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/providers/FoodandNutritionalSupport.shtml>
- Nova Scotia (2018). *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework* <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/nselcurriculumframework.pdf>
- Nova Scotia (2018). *Educator's Guide to Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework* <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/nselfeducatorsguide.pdf>
- Nova Scotia (2018). *Continuous Quality Improvement: A Guide for Licensed Child Care Centres* [https://www.ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/documents/quality\\_matters\\_continuous\\_quality\\_improvement\\_en.pdf](https://www.ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/documents/quality_matters_continuous_quality_improvement_en.pdf)
- *Nova Scotia Early Learning and Child Care Regulations* <https://www.novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/dayregs.htm>

## Table of Specifications for Written Examination

The Table of Specifications shows the relative weighting (expressed as a percentage of the 125 questions on the written examination) for each of the Skills in the [Nova Scotia ECE Level 2 Competency Profile](#).

Competencies	Weight %
<b>A. CHILD DEVELOPMENT</b>	
A1. Facilitate the development of the child	11
A2. Guide the child's behaviour	9
<b>B. RELATIONSHIPS</b>	
B1. Foster caring relationship with the child	9
B2. Form collaborative partnerships with parents	9
B3. Use community resources	1
<b>C. INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND EQUITY</b>	
C1. Promote inclusion, diversity and equity	9
<b>D. LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS</b>	
D1. Develop and implement programs	9
<b>E. ASSESSMENT AND DOCUMENTATION</b>	
	9
<b>F. HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	
F1. Protect the child's health and well-being	7
F2. Meet nutritional needs	7
F3. Develop and maintain a safe environment	5
<b>G. PROFESSIONALISM</b>	
G1. Conduct self professionally	6
G2. Work as a member of a team	4
G3. Communicate effectively	4
G4. Use technology effectively	1
Total	100%