

The Early Childhood Education Recognized Prior Learning (RPL) Program Information for Employers

The Province of Nova Scotia, represented by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD), has partnered with the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia (AECENS) to create the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) program for the Early Childhood Education profession in our province. This program provides a pathway to recognize the learning individuals have acquired through work experience and is a valuable recruitment and retention tool for employers.

What is Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognized Prior Learning (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.

This (RPL) was an exciting learning opportunity and I truly enjoyed the whole experience. I particularly appreciated the feedback and lists of resources for me to explore. I will continue to learn and grow throughout my journey in the ECE field. Thank you and your team for everything.

Cheryl Benedict

Why is the new RPL Program important?

The RPL Program provides an alternative method for individuals working in childcare facilities with work experience directly related to early childhood education to demonstrate they have the knowledge required to obtain a Level 2 Classification.

The RPL Program will increase the number of people recognized as trained early childhood educators in Nova Scotia.

The RPL Program will create a pathway to the Level 2 Classification for experienced early childhood educators coming to Nova Scotia from other jurisdictions with different qualification requirements.

How can the RPL Program benefit my centre?

As an employer of early childhood educators, the RPL Program can benefit your centre.

The RPL program...

- is an alternative way for your current employees to achieve their Level 2 Classification and improve the overall qualification level of your facility staff complement.
- presents the opportunity to hire individuals with childcare experience, but without formal training, to support their learning and use the RPL Program to be eligible for a Level 2 Classification.
- offers opportunities for senior members of your staff to support and mentor others to succeed in the RPL Program.
- can support employee engagement. The NS Works Human Resources Toolkit (the HR Toolkit) (a series of tools designed to provide information and resources to help employers in Nova Scotia) suggests ways to benefit employees:
 - Studies indicate that it pays to invest in building learning capacity, knowledge and professional development. By doing so businesses enhance their productivity and are better able to adapt to changes in the environment.
 - If you have been strategically upgrading your employee skills sets you may be able to fill new opportunities from within your organization and employees will be better prepared for promotion.

Visit [HR Toolkit | Workplace Initiatives HR Toolkit \(novascotia.ca\)](#) for more information.

- provides an opportunity for you to offer a financial incentive to your staff by paying RPL Program fees that may be tax deductible in your business.

What resources can I provide to support my employee to prepare for the exam?

- Make available and be familiar with the [Level 2 Early Childhood Educator Competency Profile for Nova Scotia](#) to provide coaching feedback to our employees.
- You can make available the textbooks and resources that were used to develop the RPL Program in your staff library.

These resources are commonly used in Early Childhood Education training programs, and you may already have these resources available to you or can source them online. Different editions offer similar information and are also suitable to support preparation.

- **Textbooks**
 - [Canadian Paediatric Society. *Well Beings: A Guide to Health in Child Care*. 3rd edition](#)
 - [Stacey, S. \(2018\). *Inquiry-Based Early Learning Environments*](#)

- [Chandler, K. *Administering for Quality, Canadian Early Childhood Development Programs*. 5th edition](#)
 - [Wilson, L. *Partnerships: Families and Communities in Early Childhood Development*. 6th 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*. 8th 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
 - 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

- Nova Scotia Early Learning and Child Care Regulations
<https://www.novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/elcc.htm#text>

What else can I do besides provide textbooks to support my employee?

- Establish a mentorship plan to support your employee as they learn and apply the ECE Level 2 Competencies. Include activities such as:
 - Providing opportunities for Entry Level, Level 1 and School-Age Training Approved employees to connect developmental theories to what is happening in the classroom;
 - Listening to your employee and providing guidance to reflect on their practice and professional development;
 - Discussing with your employee what they have learned as they go through the RPL process and;
 - Visit [Workplaceinitiatives.novascotia.ca/hr-toolkit/keeping-workers](https://workplaceinitiatives.novascotia.ca/hr-toolkit/keeping-workers) for more information and useful tips on supporting your employees.
- Encourage other staff members to share experiences and knowledge to help the individual succeed in the RPL Program.
- Provide financial incentives for staff members to participate in the RPL Program. This could be financial support to cover some or all fees associated with the RPL Program. Examples include establishing a reimbursement plan or a return of service agreement for financial support.
- Arrange for employees engaged in the program to receive paid time away from work to study and participate in RPL Program exams and interviews.
- Assist staff members with the application / eligibility process, including providing access to technology to submit applications or obtain reference materials.
- Promote the value of RPL as another pathway to be classified as Level 2 and encourage those interested to apply to the RPL Program.
- Celebrate success. When an employee has successfully completed the RPL Program, congratulate them and recognize their efforts and commitment to the RPL process. This will reinforce their value as an important member of your team.