

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Process

Level 2 Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Qualification

CANDIDATE GUIDE

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*Developed by
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This is an information package for Candidates regarding the AECENS Level 2 ECE Qualification Assessment for
the Recognition of Prior Learning

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the early childhood education (ECE) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessment process pilot 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 assessment, 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 Day Care Act, Regulation 37D*.

The Province of Nova Scotia has partnered with the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia (AECENS) (formally known as the Nova Scotia Child Care Association) 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 EEC Level 2 ECE Classification.

The development of the RPL assessment process is currently in the piloting phase. For the pilot, AECENS will engage an initial group of 30 to 40 candidates to participate in the RPL process during August and September 2019. As these candidates work through the RPL process, AECENS will gather their feedback and inputs in order to finalize the assessment tools and processes.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the RPL 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 process 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 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 is available.
- **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 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

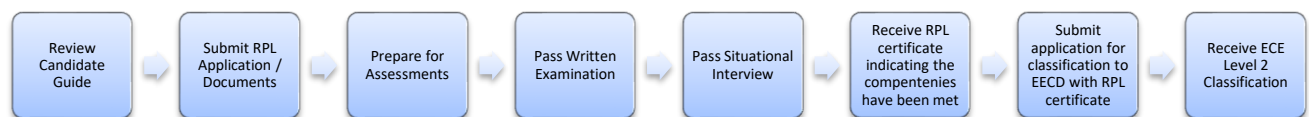
The ECE Level 2 RPL assessment process provides an opportunity for eligible individuals working in early learning programs to demonstrate their skills and knowledge by means of a validated assessment process that is based on standards of competency that were defined by experienced early childhood education 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 Candidate 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 certificate indicating the competencies required for a Level 2 ECE Qualification have been met; and
- 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 re-apply once the RPL assessment process has been formally implemented. Based on a successful assessment, you will be able to apply for a Level 2 Classification under the authority of the *Nova Scotia Day 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 <https://nschildcareassociation.org/rpl>

RPL Eligibility Criteria

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

- Have **ANY ONE** of the following:
 - (i) Completion of the Orientation for Staff Working in Licensed Child Care Facilities, or
 - (ii) Entry Level Classification, or
 - (iii) Level 1 Classification, or
 - (iv) School-Age Training Approval.
- **PLUS** at least 5 years of full-time experience in an early childhood education setting in the last 8 years (gained through paid work experience) with documented evidence including employer contact information.

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
- At least two references (using the Employer / Supervisor Reference template – available at the AECENS website at <https://nschildcareassociation.org/rpl> verifying the candidate's abilities based on the *Nova Scotia Level 2 ECE Competency Profile*,

- At least one reference must be from the current or most recent employer or supervisor.

RPL Assessment Tools

A combination of two RPL assessment tools will be used to identify your existing competencies:

- A four-choice, written examination with 125 questions 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 rubrics scored by specifically-trained Assessors 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.
- The written examination will be 3 hours in duration.
- A minimum percentage score of 70% on the written exam is required to pass.
- Each question will test knowledge for 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 be distributed across three taxonomy levels (adapted from Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*):
 - **Tax 1 – Knowledge / Comprehension**

This level combines the ability to recall previously learned material and to understand its meaning. For example, it will include such cognitive abilities as knowing and understanding definitions, facts, theories and principles of early childhood education.
 - **Tax 2 - Application**

This level refers to the ability to apply knowledge and learning to new or practical situations. For example, it will include applying rules, methods, procedures, principles and theories in early childhood education.
 - **Tax 3- Critical Thinking / Problem-solving**

This level deals with higher-level cognitive processes. For example, it will include the ability to judge the relevance of information, to solve problems, to identify cause-and-effect relationships, to formulate valid conclusions and to make judgments in early childhood education.

Situational Interview

- A 90-minute interview based on three selected scenarios.
- The interview will be conducted by a panel of three 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, in response to questions from the panel of Assessors.
- Candidates will be allowed 5 minutes to read through each scenario description (typically one-page) before their responses to the panel questions.
- Assessors will evaluate responses and score each candidate’s interview responses using rubrics based on the Competency Profile.
- A minimum percentage score of 70% on the situational interview is required for a pass.

RPL Application and Submission

Application forms and other requirements for participation in the RPL assessment pilot are available from AECENS at <https://nschildcareassociation.org/rpl>

Applications for participation in the RPL assessment pilot will be accepted until May 31, 2019. Please email your application package to: exd@nschildcareassociation.org

For more information, please contact the AECENS office at 902-423-8199 or by email at exd@nschildcareassociation.org

Key Dates for the Pilot

Written Examinations:

- Halifax, August 22, 2019
- Port Hawkesbury, August 24, 2019

Situational Interviews:

- To be scheduled individually during the weeks of September 9– 21.

Appendix A - Learning Resources

Books

- 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 Child Care Association Code of Ethics
<https://nschildcareassociation.org/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 Day Care Regulations*
<https://www.novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/dayregs.htm>

LEVEL 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR – RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

EMPLOYER / SUPERVISOR REFERENCE FORM

Appendix B - Table of Specifications for Written Exam

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

Competencies	Weight %
A. CHILD DEVELOPMENT	
A1. Facilitate the development of the child	11
A2. Guide the child's behaviour	8
B. RELATIONSHIPS	
B1. Foster caring relationship with the child	9
B2. Form collaborative partnerships with parents	9
B3. Use community resources	3
C. INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND EQUITY	
C1. Promote inclusion, diversity and equity	8
D. LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS	
D1. Develop and implement programs	8
E. ASSESSMENT AND DOCUMENTATION	
	8
F. HEALTH AND SAFETY	
F1. Protect the child's health and well-being	7
F2. Meet nutritional needs	6
F3. Develop and maintain a safe environment	5
G. PROFESSIONALISM	
G1. Conduct self professionally	5
G2. Work as a member of a team	4
G3. Communicate effectively	7
G4. Use technology effectively	2