BUILDING AND SUPPORTING PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



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Building and Supporting Professional Relationships in Early Childhood Education

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About This Book

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2. Reflective Practice in the Early Years by Sheryl Third, shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license.
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1: REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

1.1: What is Reflective Practice?
1.2: Becoming a Reflective Practitioner

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1.1: What is Reflective Practice?



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> "Reflective practice is the ability to reflect on one's actions so as to engage in a process of continuous learning" – *Donald Schon*

Why Reflective Practice?

We all undertake activities to think about our experiences, learn from them and develop a plan for what we will do or continue to do. Can you think of a time when you came home at the end of a week where everything had gone wrong? Or maybe when everything had gone well? What are your next steps?. Are you able to answer the question "why am I doing what I am doing?" In order to continue to develop a reflective practice within our workplace with colleagues, children and families we need to examine and understand the reasons for our reactions, our feelings and our interactions with others, which in turn leads us to becoming a reflective practitioner.

Reflective practice is something which has developed across many disciplines such as teaching, to learn from our experiences. There was a time when reflective practice would have been considered an optional skill or a desired disposition but over the past few years, reflective practice is no longer considered an optional skill but a required disposition.

Reflective Practice has been defined by many including Bolton[1], Moon[2], Rogers[3] and Schön[4]. Reflective Practice is a systematic rigorous self-directed meaning-making process where a person moves from one experience to another through the development of insights and practice with the intention of coming to a deeper understanding of one's personal values and intellectual growth. Schön suggests that, in practice, reflection often begins when a routine response produces a surprise or an unexpected outcome. The surprise gets our attention, which may begin a process of reflection. Reflective practice is "a dialogue of thinking and doing through which one becomes more skillful".[5]

Reflective Practice according to the College of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario

An approach used by educators to analyze and think critically about their professional practice with the intention to better understand and improve their practice. Reflective practice is thoughtful, action-oriented and often, a collaborative effort. Educators use reflective practice to plan, evaluate their strengths and challenges, make decisions and create change, if necessary. Self-reflection, critical reflection and collaborative inquiry are all important elements of reflective practice.[6]

Although a definition of reflective practice has been included this is only one part of the reflective process. Reflection is a very personal skill or disposition and different people will define it in different ways. It is important to remember that there is no one 'correct' way of defining what reflection is or how it should be done as a lot of this will depend on your own personal circumstances and work environment. For this reason this resource will explore elements of reflective practice that will help the practitioner develop their own practice. In describing reflective practice, I have interchangeably referred to it as a skill and / or a disposition . This is related to the current literature and discourse that suggests reflection is not a natural skill but rather a way of being or disposition . It involves an evaluation of our ethics, values and feelings around experiences.

Watch the video Understanding Reflective Practice[7] by Lifetime Training.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Dig Deeper

For more information on this topic check out the resource links below.

- Reflective Practice and Self-Directed Learning by the College of Early Childhood Educators
- Getting started with Reflective Practice by Cambridge International Education Teaching and Learning Team
- Research Article Revisiting reflective practice in an era of teacher education reform: A self-study of an early childhood teacher education program by Sophia Han, Jolyn Blank and Ilene R. Berson.
- The Ontario Ministry of Education. (2013). Capacity Building Series: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Sources

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1. Bolton, G. (2010). *Reflective Practice: Writing and Professional Development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
2. Moon, J. (2001). *Short courses and workshops: Improving the impact of learning and professional development*. Kogan Page: London.
3. Rodgers, C. (2002). *Defining Reflection: Another Look at John Dewey and Reflective Thinking*. Teachers College Record, 104, 842-866. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9620.00181
4. Schön, D. A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Books.
5. Schön, D. A. (1983). T*he Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Books. p. 56
6. College of Early Childhood Educators (2017). Code of ethics and standards of practice: For registered early childhood educators in Ontario. https://www.college-ece.ca/en/Docume...dards_2017.pdf
7. Reflective Practice. (2020). Understanding reflective practice. YouTube. https://youtu.be/iBmtH0Qx0YU

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1.2: Becoming a Reflective Practitioner

Let's look at some of the reasons reflective practice may be challenging. In exploring challenges you will be able to consider possible solutions to becoming more reflective.



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For most of us, the # 1 challenge is finding the TIME or right time.

Whether you are studying, working or both it can be hard to find time to complete your existing to-do list so why add on more things? Doing intentional reflection takes time and as Ellen Rose (2013) suggests it is a form of deep thought, an opportunity to slow down that allows for original thought, perspective and insights to emerge. Anyone in education knows time is always at a premium. Having said that, we are often unconsciously evaluating things and so the goal here is to be more intentional in analyzing your pedagogical practice which requires the time to do so.

What if the organizational culture and environment doesn't support reflection?

Not everyone works in an environment which is open to the idea of being reflective – since it can be difficult to cultivate. If those in charge don't see reflective practice as a valuable activity , it can be hard to really cultivate a practice. If you believe reflection is a mind-set , it may require a specific place, or time to initially reflect and it may take some trial and error to find that perfect fit for you. Rose[1] also points out the decline in reflection may be due to the way we are consuming information. We consume small chunks or nuggets of information on social media and we move from one topic to another with little time to digest the information let alone reflect on what we're reading, hearing or thinking.

Finally, do I have the skills, motivation and disposition needed?

For many people who are unfamiliar with reflection it can seem a bit challenging, especially if they are looking for a recipe, a specific approach or checklist to follow. As described earlier, a lack of time and support can influence your ability to reflect. At this point we can examine whether reflection is a skill or disposition. Being reflective does take a certain level of insight which can for some be uncomfortable, especially if you are new to reflection. Seeing reflection as a disposition does not eliminate the possibility of you needing a certain level of practice to develop into a reflective practitioner, but knowing what it takes is helpful. What is needed is time to slow down, to be curious, motivation to improve, and the desire to know why you do what you do are some essential mind-sets if you hope to overcome any of the challenges and wish to lean into becoming a reflective practitioner.

Dig Deeper

For more information on this topic check out the resource links below:

- Creating Conditions for Reflective Practice in Early Childhood Education
  Venninen, T., Leinonen, J., Ojala, M. (2012). *Creating Conditions for Reflective Practice in Early Childhood Education*. ICEP 6, 1–15 https://doi.org/10.1007/2288-6729-6-1-1
- Reflecting with Purpose an open textbook by Benjamin Storie published by BCcampus. CC BY-NC
- On Reflection: An Essay on Technology, Education, and the Status of Thought in the Twenty-First Century by Ellen Rose published by Canadian Scholars.

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1. Rose, E. (2013). *On reflection: An essay on technology, education, and the status of thought in the Twenty-First Century*. Canadian Scholars

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2: CURRENT ISSUES IN THE FIELD

2.1: Current Issues
2.2: Systemic Racism
2.3: Current Issues — Dance Lessons
2.4: Making Personal Changes
2.5: Additional Resources

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2.1: Current Issues

Learning Objectives

- Identify current issues that impact stakeholders in early childhood care and education.
- Describe strategies for understanding current issues as a professional in early childhood care and education.
- Create an informed response to a current issue as a professional in early childhood care and education.

Current Issues in the Field

There's one thing you can be sure of in the field of early childhood: the fact that the field is always changing. We make plans for our classrooms based on the reality we and the children in our care are living in, and then, something happens in that external world, the place where "life happens," and our reality changes. Or sometimes it's a slow shift: you go to a training and hear about new research, you think it over, read a few articles, and over time you realize the activities you carefully planned are no longer truly relevant to the lives children are living today, or that you know new things that make you rethink whether your practice is really meeting the needs of every child.

This is guaranteed to happen at some point. Natural events might occur that affect your community, like forest fires or tornadoes, or like COVID-19, which closed far too many child care programs and left many other early educators struggling to figure out how to work with children online. Cultural and political changes happen, which affect your children's lives, or perhaps your understanding of their lives, like the Black Lives Matter demonstrations that brought to light how much disparity and tension exist and persist in the United States. New information may come to light through research that allows us to understand human development very differently, like the advancements in neuroscience that help us understand how trauma affects children's brains, and how we as early educators can counteract those affects and build resilience.

And guess what—all this change is a good thing! Read this paragraph slowly—it's important! Change is good because we as providers of early childhood care and education are working with much more than a set of academic skills that need to be imparted to children; we are working with the whole child, and preparing the child to live successfully in the world. So when history sticks its foot into our nice calm stream of practice, the waters get muddied. But the good news is that mud acts as a fertilizer so that we as educators and leaders in the field have the chance to learn and grow, to bloom into better educators for every child, and, let's face it, to become better human beings!

Your Call to Reflect

You may know at an intellectual level that change is part of the deal, but what about deep down? Do you sometimes long for everything to just stay the same for a little while (especially when on vacation)? When you consider the idea of change, how does it make you feel? Anxious? Excited? Maybe just a little tired? What factors impact your response? What were your first thoughts when you sat back and FELT the reality of ever present change?

The work of early childhood care and education is so full, so complex, so packed with details to track and respond to, from where Caiden left his socks, to whether Amelia's parents are going to be receptive to considering evaluation for speech supports, and how to adapt the curriculum for the child who has never yet come to circle time. It might make you feel a little uneasy—or, let's face it, even overwhelmed—to also consider how the course of history may cause you to deeply rethink what you do over time.

That's normal. Thinking about the complexity of human history while pushing Keisha on the swings makes you completely normal! **As leaders in the field, we must learn to expect that we will be called upon to change, maybe even dramatically, over time.**

Your Call to Reflect

Now, put your educator hat on. Can you think of a time in your own education when something occurred that your teachers had to adapt to? Maybe a natural event, or a political or cultural one? What did they do to adapt to the event? Or maybe they didn't adapt—what happened then? What can you learn from this memory?

Let me share a personal story with you: I had just become director of an established small center, and was working to sort out all the details that directing encompassed: scheduling, billing policies, and most of all, staffing frustrations about who got planning time, etc. But I was also called upon to substitute teach on an almost daily basis, so there was a lot of disruption to my carefully made daily plans to address the business end, or to work with teachers to seek collaborative solutions to long-standing conflict. I was frustrated by not having time to do the work I felt I needed to do, and felt there were new small crises each day. I couldn't get comfortable with my new position, nor with the way my days were constantly shifting away from my plans. It was then that a co-worker shared a quote with me from Thomas F. Crum, who writes about how to thrive in difficult working conditions: "Instead of seeing the rug being pulled from under us, we can learn to dance on a shifting carpet".[1]

Wow! That gave me a new vision, one where I wasn't failing and flailing, but could become graceful in learning to be responsive to change big and small. I felt relieved to have a different way of looking at my progress through my days: I wasn't flailing at all—I was dancing! Okay, it might be a clumsy dance, and I might bruise my knees, but that idea helped me respond to each day's needs with courage and hope.

I especially like this image for those of us who work with young children. I imagine a child hopping around in the middle of a parachute, while the other children joyfully whip their corners up and down. The child in the center feels disoriented, exhilarated, surrounded by shifting color, sensation, and laughter. When I feel like there's too much change happening, I try to see the world through that child's eyes. It's possible to find joy and possibility in the disorientation, and the swirl of thoughts and feelings, and new ways of seeing and being that come from change.

You are a leader, and change is happening, and you are making decisions about how to move forward, and how to adapt thoughtfully. The good news is that when this change happens, our field has really amazing tools for adapting. We can develop a toolkit of trusted sources that we can turn to to provide us with information and strategies for ethical decision making.

Key Takeaways

Our practices in the classroom and as leaders must constantly adapt to changes in our communities and our understanding of the world around us, which gives us the opportunity to continue to grow and develop.

If You're Afraid of Falling...

One of the most important of these is the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, which expresses a commitment to core values for the field, and a set of principles for determining ethical behavior and decision-making. As we commit to the code, we commit to:

- Appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle
- Base our work on knowledge of how children develop and learn
- Appreciate and support the bond between the child and family
- Recognize that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture,* community, and society
- Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, and colleague)
- Respect diversity in children, families, and colleagues
- Recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect.

If someone asked us to make a list of beliefs we have about children and families, we might not have been able to come up with a list that looked just like this, but, most of us in the field are here because we share these values and show up every day with them in our hearts.

The Code of Ethical Conduct can help bring what's in your heart into your head. It's a complete tool to help you think carefully about a dilemma, a decision, or a plan, based on these values. Sometimes we don't make the "right" decision and need

to change our minds, but as long as we make a decision based on values about the importance of the well-being of all children and families, we won't be making a decision that we will regret.

Your Call to Reflect

Can you think of a time that you had to make a really hard decision and you were able to base that decision in a deeply held value like "family is the most important thing" or "my education comes first?" How did basing your decision in personal or professional values help you to make a decision? Are you experiencing change in some aspect of your life right now that you can link to a personal or professional value to help you move forward? As you reflect on whatever the hard change might be, are you able to explain your choices from a values standpoint? For example, maybe you are deciding whether to go to school full time next term or go only part time to be more present with your family. Which values would you lean on to help you decide to go full time? Which values would you lean on to decide to go part time? Neither is wrong—but deciding which values are most important to you at the time can help you make your decision.

An Awfully Big Current Issue—Let's Not Dance Around It

You might be wondering how we link the Code of Ethical Conduct to the change all around us—let's roll up our sleeves and dive into an example that has risen to the forefront in our culture and in early childhood care and education in recent years: skin color, bias, and prejudice. We hear the terms "race and racism" used to identify these issues in media and news. Tensions within and toward communities and individuals of color have been especially visible in the news because of the heightened impact of COVID-19 on communities of color, the highly visible police violence against black and brown men and women, and the subsequent demonstrations that took place in 2020. Children see and hear the media and adult conversations, and they feel the unease, or even fear, around questions of difference. This has heightened our responsibility as early educators to approach these issues in the classroom, and to do it with sensitivity and self-awareness.



In the field of early childhood, issues of prejudice have long been important to research, and in this country, Head Start was developed more than 50 years ago with an eye toward dismantling disparity based on ethnicity or skin color (among other things). However, research shows that this gap has not closed. Particularly striking, in recent years, is research addressing perceptions of the behavior of children of color and the numbers of children who are asked to leave programs.

In fact, studies of expulsion from preschool showed that black children were twice as likely to be expelled as white preschoolers, and 3.6 times as likely to receive one or more suspensions.[2] This is deeply concerning in and of itself, but the fact that preschool expulsion is predictive of later difficulties is even more so:

Starting as young as infancy and toddlerhood, children of color are at highest risk for being expelled from early childhood care and education programs. Early expulsions and suspensions lead to greater gaps in access to resources for young children and thus

create increasing gaps in later achievement and well-being... Research indicates that early expulsions and suspensions predict later expulsions and suspensions, academic failure, school dropout, and an increased likelihood of later incarceration.

Why does this happen? It's complicated. Studies on the K-12 system show that some of the reasons include:

- uneven or biased implementation of disciplinary policies
- discriminatory discipline practices
- school racial climate
- under resourced programs
- inadequate education and training for teachers on bias

In other words, educators need more support and help in reflecting on their own practices, but there are also policies and systems in place that contribute to unfair treatment of some groups of children.

So...we have a lot of research that continues to be eye opening and cause us to rethink our practices over time, plus a cultural event—in the form of the Black Lives Matter movement—that push the issue of disparity based on skin color directly in front of us. We are called to respond. You are called to respond.

Key Takeaways

It is not possible to simultaneously "respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every individual" and watch a significant number of students from a particular group be expelled from their early learning experience, realizing this may frequently be a first step in a process of punishment by loss of opportunity.

How Will I Ever Learn the Steps?

Woah—how do I respond to something so big and so complex and so sensitive to so many different groups of people?

As someone drawn to early childhood care and education, you probably bring certain gifts and abilities to this work.

- You probably already feel compassion for every child and want every child to have opportunities to grow into happy, responsible adults who achieve their goals. Remember the statement above about respecting the dignity and worth of every individual? That in itself is a huge start to becoming a leader working as an advocate for social justice.
- You may have been to trainings that focus on anti-bias and being culturally responsive.
- You may have some great activities to promote respect for diversity, and be actively looking for more.
- You may be very intentional about including materials that reflect people with different racial identities, genders, family structures.
- You may make sure that each family is supported in their home language and that multilingualism is valued in your program.
- You may even have spent some time diving into your own internalized biases.

This list could become very long! These are extremely important aspects of addressing injustice in early education which you can do to alter your individual practice with children.

As a leader in the field, you are called to think beyond your own practice. As a leader you have the opportunity—the responsibility!—to look beyond your own practices and become an advocate for change. Two important recommendations (of many) from the NAEYC Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education Position Statement, another important tool:

Speak out against unfair policies or practices and challenge biased perspectives. Work to embed fair and equitable approaches in all aspects of early childhood program delivery, including standards, assessments, curriculum, and personnel practices.

Look for ways to work collectively with others who are committed to equity. Consider it a professional responsibility to help challenge and change policies, laws, systems, and institutional practices that keep social inequities in place.

One take away I want you to grab from those last sentences: **You are not alone.** This work can be, and must be, collective.

As a leader, your sphere of influence is bigger than just you. You can influence the practices of others in your program and outside

of it. You can influence policies, rules, choices about the tools you use, and ultimately, you can even challenge laws that are not fair to every child.

Your Call to Reflect

Who's on your team? I want you to think for a moment about the people who help you in times where you are facing change. These are the people you can turn to for an honest conversation, where you can show your confusion and fear, and they will be supportive and think alongside you. This might include your friends, your partner, some or all of your coworkers, a former teacher of your own, a counselor, a pastor. Make a quick list of people you can turn to when you need to do some deep digging and ground yourself in your values.

And now, your workplace team: who are your fellow advocates in your workplace? Who can you reach out to when you realize something might need to change within your program?

Wonderful. You've got other people to lean on in times of change. More can be accomplished together than alone. Let's consider what you can do:

What is your sphere of influence? What are some small ways you can create room for growth within your sphere of influence? What about that workplace team? Do their spheres of influence add to your own?

Try drawing your sphere of influence: Draw yourself in the middle of the page, and put another circle around yourself, another circle around that, and another around that. Fill your circles in:

- Consider the first circle your personal sphere. Brainstorm family and friends who you can talk to about issues that are part of your professional life. You can put down their names, draw them, or otherwise indicate who they might be!
- Next, those you influence in your daily work, such as the children in your care, their families, maybe your co-workers land here.
- Next, those who make decisions about the system you are in—maybe this is your director or board, or even a PTA.
- Next, think about the early childhood care and education community you work within. What kind of influence could you have on this community? Do you have friends who work at other programs you can have important conversations with to spread ideas? Are you part of a local Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC)? Could you speak to the organizers of a local conference about including certain topics for sessions?
- And finally, how about state (and even national) policies? Check out The Children's Institute to learn about state bills that impact childcare. Do you know your local representatives? Could you write a letter to your senator? Maybe you have been frustrated with the slow reimbursement and low rates for Employment Related Day Care subsidies and can find a place to share your story. You can call your local Child Care Resource and Referral, your local or state AEYC chapter, or visit childinst.org to find out how you can increase your reach! It's probably a lot farther than you think!

Break It Down: Systemic Racism

When you think about injustice and the kind of change you want to make, there's an important distinction to understand in the ways injustice happens in education (or anywhere else). First, there's personal bias and racism, and of course it's crucial as an educator to examine ourselves and our practices and responses. We all have bias and addressing it is an act of courage that you can model for your colleagues.

In addition, there's another kind of bias and racism, and it doesn't live inside of individual people, but inside of the systems we have built. Systemic racism exists in the structures and processes that have come into place over time, which allow one group of people a greater chance of succeeding than other specific groups of people.

Key Takeaways

Systemic racism is also called institutional racism, because it exists – sometimes unquestioned – within institutions themselves.

In early childhood care and education, there are many elements that were built with middle class white children in mind. Many of our standardized tests were made with middle class white children in mind. The curriculum we use, the assessments we use, the standards of behavior we have been taught; they may have all been developed with middle class white children in mind.

Therefore it is important to consider whether they adequately and fairly work for all of the children in your program community. Do they have relevance to all children's lived experience, development, and abilities? Who is being left out?

Imagine a vocabulary assessment in which children are shown common household items including a lawn mower...common if you live in a house; they might well be unfamiliar to a three-year-old who lives in an apartment building, however. The child may end up receiving a lower score, though their vocabulary could be rich, full of words that do reflect the objects in their lived experience.

The test is at fault, not the child's experience. Yet the results of that test can impact the way educators, parents, and the child see their ability and likelihood to succeed.

Key Takeaways

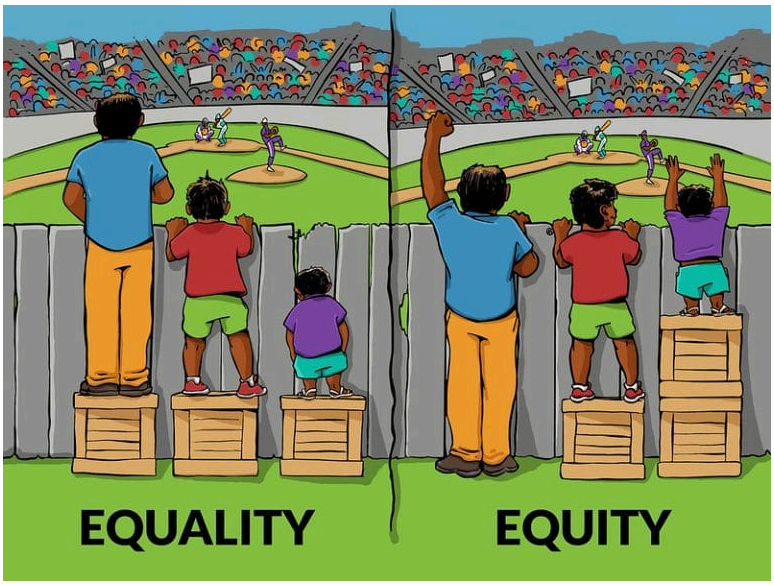
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You Don't Have to Invent the Steps: Using an Equity Lens

In addition to the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Equity Statement, another tool for addressing decision-making is an equity lens. To explain what an equity lens is, we first need to talk about equity. It's a term you may have heard before, but sometimes people confuse it with equality. It's a little different – equity is having the resources needed to be successful.

There's a wonderful graphic of children looking over a fence at a baseball game. In one frame, each child stands at the fence; one is tall enough to see over the top; another stands tip-toe, straining to see; and another is simply too short. This is equality—everyone has the same chance, but not everyone is equally prepared. In the frame titled equity, each child stands on a stool just high enough so that they may all see over the fence. The stools are the supports they need to have an equitable outcome—being able to experience the same thing as their friend.

Seeking equity means considering who might not be able to see over the fence and figuring out how to build them a stool so that they have the same opportunity.



By Angus Maguire/Interaction Institute for Social Change via Flickr CC BY-NC 2.0

An equity lens, then, is a tool to help you look at decisions through a framework of equity. It's a series of questions to ask yourself when making decisions. An equity lens is a process of asking a series of questions to better help you understand if something (a project, a curriculum, a parent meeting, a set of behavioral guidelines) is unfair to specific individuals or groups whose needs have been overlooked in the past. This lens might help you to identify the impact of your decisions on students of color, and you can also use the lens to consider the impact on students experiencing poverty, students in nontraditional families, students with differing abilities, students who are geographically isolated, students whose home language is other than English, etc.) The lens then helps you determine how to move past this unfairness by overcoming barriers and providing equitable opportunities to all children.

Some states have adopted a version of the equity lens for use in their early learning systems. Questions that are part of an equity lens[3] might include:

- What decision is being made, and what kind of values or assumptions are affecting how we make the decision?
- Who is helping make the decision? Are there representatives of the affected group who get to have a voice in the process?
- Does the new activity, rule, etc. have the potential to make disparities worse? For instance, could it mean that families who don't have a car miss out on a family night? Or will it make those disparities better?
- Who might be left out? How can we make sure they are included?
- Are there any potential unforeseen consequences of the decision that will impact specific groups? How can we try to make sure the impact will be positive?

You can use this lens for all kinds of decisions, in formal settings, like staff meetings, and you can also work to make them part of your everyday thinking. I have a sticky note on my desk that asks "Who am I leaving out"? This is an especially important question if the answer points to children who are people of color, or another group that is historically disadvantaged. If that's the answer, you don't have to scrap your idea entirely. Celebrate your awareness, and brainstorm about how you can do better for everyone—and then do it!

Key Takeaways

Racism and other forms of injustice can be built into the systems we work within—even if each individual is working hard not to recognize and root out their individual biases. As a leader, you can do work that will impact the system and undo these unjust practices or structures!

Embracing our Bruised Knees: Accepting Discomfort as We Grow

Inspirational author Brene Brown, who writes books, among other things, about being an ethical leader, said something that really

walloped me: if we avoid the hard work of addressing unfairness (like talking about skin color at a time when our country is divided over it) **we are prioritizing our discomfort over the pain of others.**[4]

Imagine a parent who doesn't think it's appropriate to talk about skin color with young children, who tells you so with some anger in their voice. That's uncomfortable, maybe even a little scary. But as you prioritize upholding the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every individual, you can see that this is more important than trying to avoid discomfort. Changing your practice to avoid conflict with this parent means prioritizing your own momentary discomfort over the pain children of color in your program may experience over time.

We might feel vulnerable when we think about skin color, and we don't want to have to have the difficult conversation. But if keeping ourselves safe from discomfort means that we might not be keeping children safe from very real and life-impacting racial disparity, we're not making a choice that is based in our values.

Your Call to Reflect

Can you think of a time that you prioritized your comfort over someone else's pain? I can! I've avoided uncomfortable conversations about disparity lots of times, for instance (though I also try really hard to be courageous and open when faced with these moments, and think I am doing better). Once you've thought of your example, take yourself back to the moment when you were deciding what to do, and say to yourself: I will not prioritize my own discomfort over the pain of others! Now grant yourself a do-over. Imagine what you would have done instead. How does it feel? Is the discomfort manageable? Does it go away? What other feelings do you experience?

Change is uncomfortable. It leaves us feeling vulnerable as we reexamine the ideas, strategies, even the deeply held beliefs that have served us so far. But as a leader, and with the call to support every child as they deserve, we can develop a sort of super power vision, where we can look unflinchingly around us and understand the hidden impacts of the structures we work within.

A Few Recent Dance Steps of My Own

You're definitely not alone—researchers and thinkers in the field are doing this work alongside you, examining even our most cherished and important ideas about childhood and early education. For instance, a key phrase that we often use to underpin our decisions is developmentally appropriate practice, which NAEYC defines as "methods that promote each child's optimal development and learning through a strengths-based, play-based approach to joyful, engaged learning." The phrase is sometimes used to contrast against practices that might not be developmentally appropriate, like expecting three-year-olds to write their names or sit quietly in a 30 minute story time.



But we have to consider how we as a field have determined what is developmentally appropriate. We do have science to build

on, a strong understanding of brain development and its impact on regulation, impulse control, language acquisition, etc. **But we also have a set of cultural values that impact what we believe to be appropriate.**

Let me tell you a story about how professional development is still causing me to stare change in the face! At the NAEYC conference in 2020, during a session in which Dr. Jie-Qi Chen presented on different perspectives on developmentally appropriate practice among early educators in China and the United States. She showed a video from a classroom in China to educators in both the US and in China. The video was of a circle time in which a child was retelling a story that the class knew well, and then the children were encouraged to offer feedback and rate how well the child had done. The children listened attentively, and then told the storytelling child how they had felt about his retelling, including identifying parts that had been left out, inaccuracies in the telling, and advice for speaking more clearly and loudly.

The educators were asked what the impact of the activity would be on the children and whether it was developmentally appropriate. The educators in the United States had deep concerns that the activity would be damaging to a child's self esteem, and was therefore not developmentally appropriate. They also expressed concerns about the children being asked to sit for this amount of time. The educators in the classroom in China felt that it was developmentally appropriate and the children were learning not only storytelling skills but how to give and receive constructive criticism.

As I watched the video, I had the same thoughts as the educators from the US—I'm not used to children being encouraged to offer criticism rather than praise. But I also saw that the child in question had self-confidence and received the feedback positively. The children were very engaged and seemed to feel their feedback mattered.

What was most interesting to me here was the idea of self-esteem, and how important it is to us here in the United States, or rather, how much protecting we feel it needs. I realized that what educators were responding to weren't questions of whether retelling a story was developmentally appropriate, or whether the critical thinking skills the children were being asked to display were developmentally appropriate, but rather whether the social scenario in which one child receives potentially negative feedback in front of their peers was developmentally appropriate, and that the responses were based in the different cultural ideas of self-esteem and individual vision versus collective success.

My point here is that even our big ideas, like developmentally appropriate practice, have an element of vulnerability to them. As courageous leaders, we need to turn our eyes even there to make sure that our cultural assumptions and biases aren't affecting our ability to see clearly, that the reality of every child is honored within them, and that no one is being left out. And that's okay. It doesn't mean we should scrap them. It's not wrong to advocate for and use developmentally appropriate practice as a framework for our work—not at all! It just means we need to remember that it's built from values that may be specific to our culture—and not everyone may have equal access to that culture. It means we should return to our big ideas with respect and bravery and sit with them and make sure they are still the ones that serve us best in the world we are living in right now, with the best knowledge we have right now.

Key Takeaways

Even our big ideas, the really important ones that underlie our philosophies, can't be assumed to be a universal truth, because they are affected by our beliefs and values. As leaders, we are called upon to be extra courageous and extra thoughtful in examining these beliefs and making sure they are a firm ground for every unique child to stand on.

You, Dancing With Courage

So...As a leader is early childhood, you will be called upon to be nimble, to make new decisions and reframe your practice when current events or new understanding disrupt your plans. When this happens, professional tools are available to you to help you make choices based on your ethical commitment to children.

Change makes us feel uncomfortable but we can embrace it to do the best by the children and families we work with. We can learn to develop our critical thinking skills so that we can examine our own beliefs and assumptions, both as individuals and as a leader.

Remember that person dancing on the shifting carpet? That child in the middle of the parachute? They might be a little dizzy, but with possibility. They might lose their footing, but in that uncertainty, in the middle of the billowing parachute, there is the sensation that the very instability provides the possibility of rising up like the fabric. And besides—there are hands to hold if they lose their balance—or if you do! And so can you rise when you allow yourself to accept change and adapt to all the new possibility

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Adaptation Credit

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4. Brown, B. (2018). Dare to lead. Vermilion.

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2.2: Systemic Racism

Break It Down: Systemic Racism

When you think about injustice and the kind of change you want to make, there's an important distinction to understand in the ways injustice happens in education (or anywhere else). First, there's personal bias and racism, and of course it's crucial as an educator to examine ourselves and our practices and responses. We all have bias and addressing it is an act of courage that you can model for your colleagues.

In addition, there's another kind of bias and racism, and it doesn't live inside of individual people, but inside of the systems we have built. Systemic racism exists in the structures and processes that have come into place over time, which allow one group of people a greater chance of succeeding than other specific groups of people.

Key Takeaways

Systemic racism is also called institutional racism, because it exists – sometimes unquestioned – within institutions themselves.

In early childhood care and education, there are many elements that were built with middle class white children in mind. Many of our standardized tests were made with middle class white children in mind. The curriculum we use, the assessments we use, the standards of behavior we have been taught; they may have all been developed with middle class white children in mind.

Therefore it is important to consider whether they adequately and fairly work for all of the children in your program community. Do they have relevance to all children's lived experience, development, and abilities? Who is being left out?

Imagine a vocabulary assessment in which children are shown common household items including a lawn mower...common if you live in a house; they might well be unfamiliar to a three-year-old who lives in an apartment building, however. The child may end up receiving a lower score, though their vocabulary could be rich, full of words that do reflect the objects in their lived experience.

The test is at fault, not the child's experience. Yet the results of that test can impact the way educators, parents, and the child see their ability and likelihood to succeed.

Key Takeaways

Leaders in early childhood care and education have an ethical obligation to value every child's unique experiences, family, and community. In order to make sure your program values every child, you must make choices that ensure that each child, especially those who are part of groups that have not had as many resources, receive what they need in order to reach outcomes.

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There's a wonderful graphic of children looking over a fence at a baseball game. In one frame, each child stands at the fence; one is tall enough to see over the top; another stands tip-toe, straining to see; and another is simply too short. This is equality—everyone has the same chance, but not everyone is equally prepared. In the frame titled equity, each child stands on a stool just high enough so that they may all see over the fence. The stools are the supports they need to have an equitable outcome—being able to experience the same thing as their friend.

Seeking equity means considering who might not be able to see over the fence and figuring out how to build them a stool so that they have the same opportunity.

An equity lens, then, is a tool to help you look at decisions through a framework of equity. It's a series of questions to ask yourself when making decisions. An equity lens is a process of asking a series of questions to better help you understand if something (a project, a curriculum, a parent meeting, a set of behavioral guidelines) is unfair to specific individuals or groups whose needs have been overlooked in the past. This lens might help you to identify the impact of your decisions on students of color, and you can also use the lens to consider the impact on students experiencing poverty, students in nontraditional families, students with differing abilities, students who are geographically isolated, students whose home language is other than English, etc.) The lens then helps you determine how to move past this unfairness by overcoming barriers and providing equitable opportunities to all children.

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2.3: Current Issues — Dance Lessons

Okay, sure—things are gonna change, and this change is going to affect the lives of the children and families you work with, and affect you, professionally and personally. So—you're sold, in theory, that to do the best by each one of those children, you're just going to have to do some fancy footwork, embrace the change, and think through how to best adapt to it.

But...how? Before we talk about the kind of change that's about rethinking your program on a broad level, let's talk about those times we face when change happens in the spur of the moment, and impacts the lives of the children in your program—those times when your job becomes helping children process their feelings and adapt to change. Sometimes this is a really big deal, like a natural disaster. Sometimes it's something smaller like the personal story I share below...something small, cuddly, and very important to the children.

Learning the Steps: How do I help children respond to change?

I have a sad story to share. For many years, I was the lead teacher in a classroom in which we had a pet rabbit named Flopsy. Flopsy was litter-trained and so our licensing specialist allowed us to let him hop freely around the classroom. Flopsy was very social, and liked to interact with children. He liked to be held and petted and was also playful, suddenly zooming around the classroom, hopping over toys and nudging children. Flopsy was a big part of our community and of children's experience in our classroom.

One day, I arrived at school to be told by my distraught director that Flopsy had died in the night and she had removed his body. I had about 15 minutes before children would be arriving, and I had to figure out how to address Flopsy's loss.

I took a few minutes to collect myself, and considered the following questions:

Does the issue affect children's lived experiences?

Yes, absolutely. The children would notice immediately that Flopsy was missing and would comment on it. It was important that I not evade their questions.

How much and what kind of information is appropriate for their age?

Flopsy had died. His body had stopped working. His brain had stopped working. He would not ever come back to life. We would never see Flopsy again. I wrote these sentences on a sticky note. They were short but utterly important.

How can I best affirm their emotions?

I would give children the opportunity to share their feelings, and talk about my own feelings. I would read children's books that would express feelings they might not have words for yet. I would pay extra attention to children reaching out to me and offer opportunities to affirm children's responses by writing them down.

What do I hope they will learn?

Human beings encounter death. Children lose pets, grandparents, and sometimes parents or siblings. I wanted these children to experience death in a way that would give them a template when they experienced more intense loss. I wanted them to know it's okay to be sad, and that the sadness grows less acute over time. That it's okay to feel angry or scared, and that these feelings, too, though they might be really big, will become less immediate. And that it's okay to feel happy as you remember the one you lost.

Could I accidentally be doing harm through my response?

I knew it was important not to give children mistaken impressions about death. I was careful not to compare it to sleep, because I didn't want them to think that maybe Flopsy would wake up again. I also didn't want them to fear that when mama fell asleep it was the same thing as death. I also wanted to be factual but leave room for families to share their religious beliefs with their children.

Which resources do I need and can I gather in a timely manner?

I didn't have time to do research. But I mentally gathered up some wisdom from a training I'd been to, where the trainer talked about how important it is that we don't shy away from addressing death with children. Her words gave me courage. I also gathered up some children's books about pet death from our library.

How do I gather my team?

The first thing I did was text my husband. I was really sad. I had cared for this bunny for years and I loved him too. I didn't have time for a phone call, but that text was an important way for me to acknowledge my own feelings of grief.

Then I talked to the other teachers. I asked for their quick advice, and shared my plan, since the news would travel to other classrooms as well.

How can I involve families?

During my prep time that day, I wrote a letter to families, letting them know Flopsy had died and some basic information about how we had spoken to children about it, some resources about talking to children about death, and some titles of books about the death of pets. I knew that news of Flopsy's death would be carried home to many families, and that parents might want to share their own belief systems about death. I also knew many parents were uncomfortable discussing death with young children and that it might be helpful to see the way we had done so.

Then, I created and enacted my plan...

I had curriculum planned for that day which I partially scrapped. At our first gathering time I shared the news with the whole group: I shared my sticky note of information about death. I told the children I was sad. I asked if they had questions and I answered them honestly. I listened when they shared their own feelings. I also told them I had happy memories of FLopsy and we talked about our memories.

During the course of the day, and the next few days, I gave the children invitations (but not assignments) to reflect on Flopsy and their feelings. I sat on the floor with a notebook and the invitation for children to write a "story" about Flopsy. Almost every child wanted their words recorded. Responses ranged from "Goodbye bunny" to imagined stories about Flopsy's adventures, to a description of feelings of sadness and loss. Writing down these words helped acknowledge the children's feelings. Some of them hung their stories on the wall, and some asked them to be read aloud, or shared them themselves, at circle time.

I also made sure there were plenty of other opportunities in the classroom for children who didn't want to engage in these ways, or who didn't need to.

We read "Saying Goodbye to Lulu" and "The Tenth Good Thing About Barney" in small groups; and while these books were a little bit above the developmental level of some children in the class, many children wanted to hear and discuss the books. When I became teary reading them, I didn't try to hide it, but just said "I'm feeling sad, and it makes me cry a little bit. Everyone cries sometimes."

In short, I recognized that I needed to address Flopsy's death right away, and changed the plan to do so with the resources I had on hand.

This would be a good set of steps to address an event like a hurricane, wildfires, or an earthquake as well. First and foremost of course, make sure your children are safe and have their physical needs met! Remember your role as educator and caretaker; address their emotional needs, consider what you hope they will learn, gather the resources and your team, and make decisions that affirm the dignity of each child in your care.

Your Call to Reflect

Can you think of a time you were called upon to be nimble in responding to an event that impacted children? Pet loss is a very common example. The severe illness or loss of a family member might only affect one child at a time, but could also be a good example. If you were working with children during the onset of COVID-19, that time called for a great deal of change

for children and adults as we learned to live in new ways. Once you have your example, look at the questions below. Imagine yourself right back to the moment when you were deciding how to respond, notice feelings of uncertainty, of concern, maybe of fear, of compassion, and whatever else surfaces for you. Now, walk that person you were through these questions.

- Does the issue affect children's lived experiences?
- How much and what kind of information is appropriate for their age?
- How can I best affirm their emotions?
- What do I hope they will learn?
- Could I accidentally be doing harm through my response?
- Which resources do I need and can I gather in a timely manner?
- How do I gather my team?
- How can I involve families?
- Now, I create and enact my plan...

Did your plan look any different for having used these questions? And did the process of making decisions as a leader look or feel different? How so?

You might not always walk yourself through a set of questions–but using an intentional tool is like counting out dance steps—there's a lot of thinking it through at first, and maybe forgetting a step, and stumbling, and so forth. And then...somehow, you just know how to dance. And then you can learn to improvise. In other words, it is through practice that you will become adept at and confident in responding to change, and learn to move with grace on the shifting carpet of life.

Citations

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2.4: Making Personal Changes

Feeling the Rhythm

How do I help myself respond to change—and grow through it?

Now, let's address what it might look like to respond to a different kind of change, the kind in which you learn something new and realize you need to make some changes in who you are as an educator. This is hard, but there are steps you can take to make sure you keep moving forward:

- Work to understand your own feelings. Write about them. Talk them through with your teams—personal and/or professional.
- Take a look in the mirror, strive to see where you are at, and then be kind to yourself!
- Gather your tools! Get out that dog eared copy of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, and look for other tools that are relevant to your situation. Root yourself in the values of early childhood care and education.
- Examine your own practices in light of this change.
- Examine the policies, structures, or systems that affect your program in light of this change.
- Ask yourself, where could change happen? Remember your spheres of influence.
- Who can you collaborate with? Who is on your team?
- How can you make sure the people being affected by this change help inform your response? Sometimes people use the phrase "Nothing for us without us" to help remember that we don't want to make decisions that affect a group of people (even if we think we're helping) without learning more from individuals in that group about what real support looks like).
- Make a plan, including a big vision and small steps, and start taking those small steps. Remember that when you are ready to bring others in, they will need to go through some of this process too, and you may need to be on their team as they look for a safe sounding board to explore their discomfort or fear.
- Realize that you are a courageous advocate for children. Give yourself a hug!



To make this real, let's imagine you just learned about expulsion rates among children of color (and maybe you just did!). This has struck a chord with you and you wonder if this is reflected in your own classroom or program or even your own practice. What do you do?

- Work to understand your own feelings. Write about them. Talk them through with your teams—personal and/or professional.

This might be a good time to freewrite about your feelings—just put your pencil to paper and start writing. Maybe you feel guilty because you're afraid that too many children of color have been asked to leave your program. Maybe you feel angry about the injustice. Maybe you feel scared that this topic is politicized and people aren't going to want to hear about it. Maybe you feel scared to even face the idea that bias could have affected children while in your care. All these feelings are okay! Maybe you talk to your partner or your friends about your fears before you're ready to get started even thinking about taking action.

- Take a look in the mirror, strive to see where you are at, and then be kind to yourself! Tell that person looking back at you: "I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better."

Yep. You love children and you did what you believed was best for the children in your program. Maybe now you can do even better by them! You are being really really brave by investigating!

- Gather your tools! Get out that dog-eared copy of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, and look for other tools that are relevant to your situation.

Okay! This would be an excellent time to bring out the equity lens and your other tools. Read them over. Use them.

- Examine your own practices in light of this change.

Do your practices affirm the dignity of every child and family? Ask yourself these hard questions while focusing on, in this case, how you look at behavior of children of color. Do the choices you make affirm the dignity of each unique child? Use your tools—you can pull out the equity lens here! Are you acknowledging the home realities of each child when you are having conversations that are meant to build social-emotional skills? Are you considering the needs of each child during difficult transitions? Do you provide alternative ways for children to engage if they have difficulty sitting in circle times?

- Examine the policies, structures, or systems that affect your program in light of this change.

And...Do your policies and structures affirm the dignity of every child and family? Use those tools! Look at your behavioral guidance policies—are you expecting children to come into your program with certain skills that may not be valued by certain cultures? What about your policies on sending children home or asking a family to leave your program? Could these policies be unfair to certain groups? In fact—given that you now know how extremely impactful expulsion is for preschoolers, could you take it off the table entirely?

- Ask yourself, where could change happen? Remember your spheres of influence.

Let's say you're a teacher, and you can look back and see that over the years you've been at your center, a disproportionately high number of children of color have been excluded from the program. Your director makes policy decisions—can you bring this information to him or her? Could you talk to your coworkers about how to bring it up? Maybe your sphere of influence could get even wider—could you share this information with other early educators in your community? Maybe even write a letter to your local representatives!

- Who can you collaborate with? Who is on your team?

Maybe other educators? Maybe parents? Maybe your director? Maybe an old teacher of your own? Can you bring this up at a staff meeting? Or in informal conversations?

- How can you make sure the people being affected by this change help inform your response?

Let's say your director is convinced that your policies need to change in light of this new information. You want to make sure that parent voice—and especially that of parents of color—is heard! You could suggest a parent meeting on the topic; or maybe do "listening sessions" with parents of color, where you ask them open-ended questions and listen and record their responses—without adding much of your own response; maybe you could invite parents to be part of a group who looks over and works on the policies. This can feel a little scary to people in charge (see decentered leadership?)

- Make a plan, including a big vision and small steps, and start taking those small steps. Remember that when you are ready to bring others in, they will need to go through some of this process too, and you may need to be on their team as they look for a safe sounding board to explore their discomfort or fear.

Maybe this plan is made along with your director and includes those parent meetings, and a timeline for having revised policies, and some training for the staff. Or—let's back it up—maybe you're not quite to that point yet, and your plan is how you are going to approach your director, especially since they might feel criticized. Then your plan might be sharing information, communicating enthusiasm about moving forward and making positive change, and clearly stating your thoughts on where change is needed! (Also some chocolate to reward yourself for being a courageous advocate for every child.)

- Realize that you are a courageous advocate for children. Give yourself a hug!

And, as I may have mentioned, some chocolate. You are a leader and an advocate, and a person whose action mirrors their values. You are worth admiring!

Maybe you haven't had your mind blown with new information lately, but I'll bet there's something you've thought about that you haven't quite acted on yet...maybe it's about individualizing lesson plans for children with differing abilities. Maybe it's about addressing diversity of gender in the classroom. Maybe it's about celebrating linguistic diversity, inviting children and parents to share their home languages in the classroom, and finding authentic ways to include print in these languages.

Whatever it is—we all have room to grow.

Make a Plan!

So, make yourself a plan. Look back to those 10 steps and write a few sentences, or more if you are inspired, on what you can do to move yourself forward, as a resourced member of a team and a powerful advocate for children! When you are done, take a step, then another, and another. And then, yes, you are walking the walk, dancing the dance (or maybe not The Dance, but some other, new, even more inspiring dance!) You are courageously living your beliefs, and your actions are rooted in respect of the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual your professional life touches!

Dancing Your Dance: Rocking Leadership in Times of Change

There will never be a time when we as educators are not having to examine and respond to "Current Issues in the Field." Working with children means working with children in a dynamic and ever-evolving landscape of community, knowledge, and personal experience. It's really cool that we get to do this, walk beside small human beings as they learn to traverse the big wacky world with all its potholes...and it means we get to keep getting better and better at circling around, leaping over, and, yep, dancing around or even through those very potholes.

In conclusion, all dancers feel unsteady sometimes. All dancers bruise their knees along the way. All educators make mistakes and experience discomfort. All dancers wonder if this dance just isn't for them. All dancers think that maybe this one is just too hard and want to quit sometimes. All educators second guess their career choices. But all dancers also discover their own innate grace and their inborn ability to both learn and to change; our very muscles are made to stretch, our cells replace themselves, and we quite simply cannot stand still. All educators have the capacity to grow into compassionate, courageous leaders!

Your heart, your brain, and your antsy feet have led you to become a professional in early childhood care and education, and they will all demand that you jump into the uncertainty of leadership in times of change, and learn to dance for the sake of the children in your care. This, truly, is your call to action, and your pressing invitation to join the dance!

Citations

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2.5: Additional Resources

Personal growth, change, and courageous leadership

- Brown, Brenee. Daring Classrooms.
- Chang, R. (March 25, 2019). *What Growth Mindset Means for Kids* [Video]. TED Conferences.

YouTube Video

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3: COMMUNICATION

3.1: Communication and Conflict Resolution
3.2: Conflict
3.3: Elements in Communication
3.4: Intercultural Communication
3.5: Additional Resources

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3.1: Communication and Conflict Resolution

Learning Objectives

- Recognize how conflict can be viewed from the point of view of individuals, teams, and through the lens of systems of personal and professional values and beliefs.
- Create a conflict resolution plan for a common challenge in Early Care and Education.
- Explain how communication impacts conflict resolution.

Have you ever thought—they just don't listen to me! Or I have no idea why they would say that! Communication is nuanced, varied, and dependent on context and who we are communicating to. While there are whole courses dedicated to communication, we are going to focus on communication and how it relates to resolving conflict.

Your Call to Reflect

Think about your communication skills. Reflect on your interactions with someone who you thought was a poor communicator. Why did you feel that person was a poor communicator? How was your communication received? What do you think makes you a good communicator?

Let's start with some working definitions of communication. Communication includes speaking, listening, non-verbal communication such as tone or volume of your voice, and body language. Communication modes include written, verbal, video, and sky writing (only if you have the budget).

We generally prefer to receive communications in the same way we choose to communicate with others. It is important to remember that everyone prefers different methods of communication. You may want to have a sit down, face-to-face conversation with someone who prefers to speak over the phone or in writing. Culture can also play a role in an individual's preferred communication style as well as personal experiences, values and belief systems. All of these facets can make communicating during conflict very challenging!

When we enter communications during conflict there are many opportunities for our intended messages to have quite a different impact on the other person. It is important to realize that we cannot control the way our message is received or how someone feels about it, but we can work hard to communicate our message effectively. Tension-reaction behavior can escalate poor communication and make it difficult to navigate conflict.

How can you use communication to resolve conflict? That is a great question! One of the most powerful communication tools you have is asking questions that can help you understand the other person's perspective as well as what the root cause of the conflict is about (resources, psychological needs, values).

Closed-ended questions...

- Confirm and clarify information—"I just want to confirm, you want me to arrive at 3pm. Correct?"
- Gather specific information— "Which color was the coat? Red or Blue?"
- Focus the conversation—"Can we speak about that tomorrow and focus on parent conferences today?"
- May be perceived as threatening—If your tone and non-verbals convey irritation or anger the questions can be perceived as negative.

Open-ended questions...

- Expand conversation— "That sounds interesting, can you tell me more about your experience?"
- Gather information—"I understand she is not sleeping at nap time. Can you share with me what she is doing instead and what you have done to support her?"

- Involve others in the conversation—"I would love to learn more about your experience with the Smith family. How have your interactions with them been?"
- May not provide specific information—If the question is too open you may get a lot of information but not what you are needing.
- May change focus of conversation—As in the example about the experiences with the Smith family, the other person may start relaying an encounter at the library and not about interactions at the program.

It can be tempting when dealing with conflict to seek advice from others. This is a normal part of being a nurturing and caring individual. Be cautious though and mindful of your ethical responsibility to your co-workers. By speaking directly with the person you have a conflict with you are showing respect and caring which can set the stage for a productive conflict resolution conversation!

Key Takeaways

NAEYC Code of Conduct states: "P-3A.2—When we have concerns about the professional behavior of a co-worker, we shall first let that person know of our concern in a way that shows respect for personal dignity and for the diversity to be found among staff members, and then attempt to resolve the matter collegially and in a confidential manner."

Three Parts to Communication

Now before you can say it—yes there are actually four parts to communication. As you may know, non-verbal communication is very important. How we say what we want to communicate is especially challenging during a conflict when tensions are high and non-verbals can give away our true emotions. Non-verbal communications (tone of voice, facial expressions, body language) can turn a simple message of "I am fine" into a tense message of "I AM FINE!??!"

The other three parts of communication are thinking, speaking, and listening.

Thinking

Ever wanted to blurt something out and stopped yourself? That is the thinking part of communication.

Stop before you speak and...

- Consider the message. What is it you want them to know? What is the outcome you want from the conversation?
- Consider the person receiving the message. What impact might your communication have? What do you intend to happen? What format is the best for this person? In writing? Face to face?
- Consider the context and timing. You don't want to have a conversation about conflict during arrival time for children. Where you talk and when you talk are important. Make sure you have a quiet, private space and time to get into the conversation.

Listening

We all think we listen until we find out we were not. Listening is tricky because we typically listen to persuade or share our point of view. As you head into this portion of the communication process remember to...

1. Listen more to the other individual's point of view than share my own.
2. Listen to individuals who disagree with me as attentive as I do to those who agree with me.
3. Put aside other work and focus on the individual.
4. Listen without letting my mind wander.
5. Try to put myself in the other shoes and listen for feelings.
6. Ask the other what they mean if I don't fully understand.
7. Listen without interrupting, even when I anticipate what the individual is going to say.

Speaking

This part seems pretty easy, right?! You just start talking! Effective speaking requires a few more pieces:

- Adjusting speaking tone and volume to the context and listener.
- Watching for signs the listener is not understanding and pausing or clarifying.
- Engaging the listener through questions or a back and forth exchange.
- Communication, especially during times of conflict, can often have different layers that we may not recognize right away. These layers are hidden dimensions that are present in every communication.

3 dimensions to every communication

Content of Communication. First there is the content of the communication. What exactly do you want to say? More importantly is what is the communication about? During times of conflict and tension-reaction behavior we can struggle to fully articulate what we want the other person to know. Or we bring up information that is not relevant to the current conversation, creating confusion and in some cases hostility.

Emotions. Emotions can make communicating extremely difficult. Even when we think we are concealing our emotions about and during a communication it can still be revealing. During conflict it is usually best to state your feelings, e.g. "I feel frustrated..." etc. This way there is no dissonance between your verbal and non-verbal communications.



Relationship/power. We all speak differently to individuals depending on our relationship with them. Some of us defer to our supervisors, or we may find ourselves speaking tenderly to a small child. This dimension can be tricky when you are navigating conflict with a fellow staff member. Factors such as age, experience, education, or tenure can all influence how we approach our communications. For example, you may have a conversation with someone you consider a friend in one way and a completely different conversation with someone you consider a mentor. These positions of power or importance of relationships can create challenges through assumptions— "my friend will know what I want" to "I don't think that is how I want to approach it but they are my mentor, so I guess I better."

Your Call to Reflect

Think back to the beginning of this section where you identified how you are an effective communicator—now that you understand more about the complexity of communication think about recent communication you had. What hidden dimensions were present? How did they or did they not influence your communication and the outcome of the communication?

Framework for Raising Difficult Issues

1. Opener: Agreement with yourself to have the conversation

2. I-Feeling Language: Only describe how you feel.
3. Practice speaking in positive language that normalizes the conflict and conveys a desire to work through the issue together.
4. Pinpoint specific details.
5. Acknowledge your part.
6. Agree on a solution: Develop a solution that you both create and implement.

Conflict is a natural part of life and working with children, families, and colleagues. As a professional it is our role to collaborate with others to resolve conflict and create opportunities to meet the needs of ourselves and those we work with. When we commit to acknowledging conflict and working through it we show respect and caring for ourselves and our team members. In the end, our nurturing and caring actions can support us in working through some of the tough issues that can come with working with children and families.

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3.2: Conflict

Conflict is a natural part of life. Conflict can create opportunities for innovation, or it can weigh down a team for months and months. Conflict is incredibly difficult to navigate because it often involves values and beliefs. Conflict is a natural part of life.

If conflict is so natural—why do most people avoid it? Because conflict can make us uncomfortable. Conflict can challenge our perceptions of what we know and invite us to grow and learn. Conflict forces us to consider change, and as we know, change is not always easy.

Your Call to Reflect

What comes to your mind when you think about conflict? Write a list of the first words or phrases you think of. Reflect on a recent conflict with a peer or supervisor. How did you react to the conflict? What was the interaction like? Would you say you avoid conflict? Do you see conflict as natural?

Conflict in Early Care and Education settings is often very different than conflict you may encounter in other parts of your life. Why? Because conflict in ECE settings can be complex.

1. The field of Early Care and Education is a caring and nurturing industry. This can translate to a lot of “polite” interactions where the team members don’t want to “upset” each other and so avoid having discussions or resolving issues that come up as a natural part of working together.
2. Conflict in these settings can be easy to avoid. With all of the things you have to do each day, there is a built-in excuse for not having that important conversation with another team member. A common thought is ”It will go away in a little while if I don’t pay attention to it.”
3. Conflict can include multiple people at different levels in the organization. It can also just involve one person whose perceptions are different from others. This can complicate communications, interactions, and opportunities to discuss and resolve the conflict.
4. Values and beliefs around conflict and how it should be viewed and resolved can increase the complexity for everyone involved.

It can be tempting with this many influences to simply ignore the conflict and hope it goes away. Unfortunately, these unexpressed feelings don’t die; they are pushed down and can come up at the wrong times and in the worst ways. When we view conflict as something that needs to be avoided and ignored it erodes trust and respect and sabotages productivity.

Consider this

- Conflict is a result of someone’s need not being met. “Why did that teacher get their planning time today and I didn’t?”
- If the issue is not resolved, tensions increase until someone reacts. “That is so unfair! I am going to tell her she can do the snack dishes today because she had PLENTY of time to lesson-plan!!”
- When reactions occur, this is called tension-reaction behavior. We react in a way we might not have had tensions not been so high.
- This cycle drains energy and reduces productivity. “I am not going to bother trying to plan for my children, I never get planning time anyway.”

Tension-reaction behavior is most difficult to control when it is directed at someone personally: (“That is so unfair! I am going to tell her she can do the snack dishes today because she had PLENTY of time to plan a lesson!!”). When two people are in tension-reaction behavior communication breaks down and can become controlled by emotions and perceptions.

Causes of Conflict and Strategies to Resolve Them

Access to Resources Psychological Needs Values

One thing to note! Each conflict has a life cycle and will continue to cycle and escalate until it is resolved. Because conflict is

rooted in an unmet need, as long as that need continues to not be met, the conflict will be harder and harder to avoid. Let's think of conflict from this angle—You are working with a 3-year-old who cries a lot because they are tired (they don't sleep at naptime) or are hungry (they frequently miss breakfast in the morning). You can ignore the crying, but eventually you will need to do something to support that child (nap, hugs, food etc.). In this example, the conflict is the 3-year- old. You can ignore the crying and sometimes the child will stop for a bit but eventually you will have a full melt-down on your hands.

Your Call to Reflect

Think about a recent conflict you have had. Was it about access to resources, psychological needs, or values? What were the tension-reaction behaviors involved? Was it resolved? How or why not?

Access to Resources

This cause of conflict is the most frequent and usually the easiest to navigate. Access to resources can include time, tangible things, or access to relationships. With so many things that need to be done in a day, time is a huge resource for most of us. Having access to the things you need in order to get your tasks done is also a common cause of conflict. Whether it is art supplies, dramatic play materials, or playground equipment, not having enough resources to support our work can be incredibly difficult and filled with tension-reaction behavior!

Strategies:

- Take a breath
- Gather more information
- Determine what your actual need is. Not what you think you need.
- Discuss with the person who controls the resource the best way for your need to be met and or advocate for someone else who may need the resource.

Psychological Needs

Psychological needs include the need for working independently, knowing that your skills are recognized, and having positive relationships with those you work with. As educators we need to know we can make decisions and act independently in a way that is appropriate for our position. If you are constantly being micro-managed and have to ask permission for basic things this may cause conflict. Effective leaders need to remember that team members were hired for their competence and abilities. When they are not able to use those skills to do their job it can be very difficult. This then impacts the relationships they have with each other, families, and leadership causing tension-reaction behavior.

Strategies:

- Ask questions such as What is your need?
- Is the other person aware of the impact of their actions?
- Discuss your concerns directly with the staff member or your supervisor.

Values



Sometimes conflict arises from what you value vs. what someone else values. For example, if your coworker values a clean classroom and you value child independence, these two values can cause conflict. Your coworker may come along behind children and clean things up for them while you encourage children to clean things up for themselves (which is often not as clean as a teacher would).

Sometimes it is about belief systems and how you view your work. You may believe that families are important partners and meet with parents to discuss their goals for their child and provide updates. Your coworker may believe that families are important but they don't know as much as an educator and have conversations with parents about what they need to do at home to support their child's development. Neither perspective is completely wrong. Both might lead to conflict.

Values can be about beliefs, ethics, morals, culture and all of the things that make us who we are...which is why it is more impactful and harder to navigate. Values can put you in direct conflict with someone else or, as is usually the case, be a slow simmer until things bubble over into something big. When values get tangled up in conflict tensions can rise!

Strategies:

- Don't try to "win" the other person over.
- Be clear with your beliefs and your perceptions—what story are you telling yourself? *Brene Brown
- Ask questions and seek to understand.
- Offer kindness and respect.
- Look for ways to negotiate.

Example

Scenario: You are working with a teacher who has recently begun to withdraw and doesn't really initiate activities with the children. You have reminded them a few times about what they should be doing but they continue to not engage with children. You feel angry and frustrated and not sure what to do next. What should you do?

1. Start by thinking about your perception. Are they really not engaging or are they just not engaging in the way you want them to? Perhaps ask someone else to observe the teacher and offer you objective feedback.
2. Set aside time and ask them questions—how are they feeling? How do they think things are going? Do they have questions or challenges? Get as much information as you can.
3. Offer kindness and respect. Let them know you are listening and care about them and resolving this issue.

4. Once you understand the issue you can begin to build a solution for you and the other teacher. Perhaps the teacher feels unsure about how to handle challenging behavior. Or maybe they are unsure what to do next once an activity gets started. By talking and starting from a place of understanding you can create a solution that works for both of you.

Let's think of conflict from this angle—You are working with a 3 year old who cries a lot because they are tired (they don't sleep at naptime) or are hungry (they frequently miss breakfast in the morning). You can ignore the crying but eventually you will need to do something to support that child (nap, hugs, food etc.) In this example, the conflict is the 3-year-old. You can ignore the crying and sometimes the child will stop for a bit but eventually you will have a full melt-down on your hands.

Your Call to Reflect

Think about a recent conflict you have had. Was it about access to resources, psychological needs, or values? What were the tension-reaction behaviors involved? Was it resolved? How or why not?

Key Takeaways

One thing to note! Each conflict has a life cycle and will continue to cycle and escalate until it is resolved. Because conflict is rooted in an unmet need, as long as that need continues to not be met, the conflict will be harder and harder to avoid.

Steps to Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution takes practice and time to develop your skills. Remember—every conflict is different and contains many different pieces. If you approach each conflict with the same strategies, you will not be successful. Just like no two toddlers are potty-trained in the same way, there are still some predictable patterns and successful strategies that you can apply.

The good news is that there is a pattern to resolving conflicts and you can use this framework in all scenarios.

1. **Analyze the conflict and the sources.** What do you think is happening? Why do you think that? Write down your thoughts and take time to reflect on the conflict and your beliefs about the conflict.
2. **Set the Scene**. Provide a quiet and private place away from children to talk about the conflict. Minimizing distractions allows both of you an opportunity to focus on listening and communicating.
3. **Ask open ended questions**. These may be hard questions, but they show a willingness to understand the other person's point of view. Be willing to listen for all parts of the communication (we will learn more about this in the communication section). If you don't spend enough time learning about the conflict and expressing yourself, you run a risk of not finding the right solution!
4. **Communicate, communicate, and communicate some more!** All parties should have an opportunity to listen and be heard. Commit to being authentic and honest in your communications. It is your job as a leader to support this process. Allow individuals to take breaks if needed. Talking about conflict can be very challenging for some and easy for others. Make sure you are offering an equal opportunity for all to engage in the process.
5. **Manage Big Emotions**. Communicating can raise big feelings from frustration and anger to sadness for both of you. Be prepared to take a break and agree to re-engage at a later time or to simply pause to allow time to process. Conflict is hard and can often surprise us in how it can make us feel.
6. **Focus on the future state.** Yes, how we got to the current conflict is important to know. Then—focus on what each of you wants and needs and the best methods for achieving those goals.
7. **Identify the agreed-upon resolution and create a timeline for implementation.** Sometimes conflict cannot be resolved with an "easy" fix. Make sure you and the other person knows what steps need to be taken, who is responsible, and the timeline for each step. It is important to include a follow-up conversation to ensure the solution has resolved the conflict.

Creative Problem Solving

Most conflicts can be resolved with a little creative problem solving. Conflict might not always feel good to begin with, but when we authentically bring our best selves to the table with open hearts and minds, it can turn into not only a satisfying experience, but the foundation for partnerships that last a lifetime.

There are five steps to the creative problem-solving process. Each step can be done individually or collaboratively as a group.

1. The first step is to take a deep breath and describe the problem in your own words. Then ask yourself—what else do I need to know? Who can give me those answers?
2. Next, after you have done some research, revise or restate the problem and determine what your objective is. What do you want to happen? How is that different from what is happening now?
3. Brainstorm possible resolutions. How could this conflict be resolved? Is there something you have not thought about before?
4. Review the list of possibilities and weigh the advantages and disadvantages to each possibility until you have narrowed it down to one that feels acceptable.
5. Finally, as a team, decide ways to implement the solution, who might be involved, what is the timeline and how will you know if it was a success or not?

Let's take creative problem solving for a test run!

Issue: Lunch is being delivered late to the classrooms. Everyone is frustrated because children are hungry and late lunch means late nap time. The kitchen staff are frustrated because they are working as hard as they can. Yikes!

1. Breathe! What else do we need to know? Some possible questions include—how late is late? How often is it happening? Are there other contributing factors? Who is all involved?

Through your careful questioning, you discover that it is happening almost daily and that the delay is 10-20 minutes. In addition, you discover that the dishes from the snack are not making it back to the kitchen in a timely manner (someone usually takes them back eventually but it is no one person's responsibility).

2. The problem is that the one set of dishes that are used for all snacks and meals are not making it back to the kitchen in time to be washed, sanitized and ready for lunch service. This causes lunch to be delayed.
3. Working as a team you brainstorm possible solutions including: using disposable dishes for morning snack, having one person collect all of the dishes before a certain time, have each classroom designate someone to take the dishes back at a certain time, only offer morning snacks that don't need dishes, or something else we have not thought of.
4. & 5. Weighing these options we decide that we don't like disposable dishes because of the impact to the environment and it is not reasonable to only offer snacks that don't need dishes. The team settles on a solution that involves getting the dishes back by a certain time each day. After careful consideration the team decides that while they would like to have someone from each class take them back—that is part of the problem right now. Therefore, the group decides that the break person will change the break schedule to allow them to collect all of the dishes and bring them back by 9:45am each day. We agree to check in at the end of the week to see if it is working.

As you can tell from this example, the issues started off as kitchen staff as the cause for the issue and upon further investigation the realization that the issue was a bit more complex. When we stop to ask questions and get to the root of an issue, we are more likely to come up with a solution that meets everyone's needs and is long lasting. It can be easy to fall into a cycle of blame that doesn't support anyone or really solve an issue.

Communication is key in resolving conflicts!

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3.3: Elements in Communication

Communication can mean different things to different people. It is affected by and influenced by our experiences, perceptions, culture, and more. To start, let's reflect on our beliefs about communication.

Questions for Reflection

- Think about communication in your daily life. When you make a phone call, send a text message, or like a post on Facebook, what is the purpose of that activity?
- Have you ever felt confused by what someone is telling you or argued over a misunderstood email?
- What does "communication" mean to you?
- What does "successful" communication look like to you?
- What are some barriers you've experienced when communicating with others in-person, online, or through writing?

There are many current models and theories that explain, plan, and predict communication processes and their successes or failures. In the workplace, we might be more concerned about practical knowledge and skills than theory. However, good practice is built on a solid foundation of understanding and skill.

Defining communication

The word communication is derived from a Latin word meaning "to share." Communication can be defined as "purposefully and actively exchanging information between two or more people to convey or receive the intended meanings through a shared system of signs and (symbols)" ("Communication," 2015, para. 1).

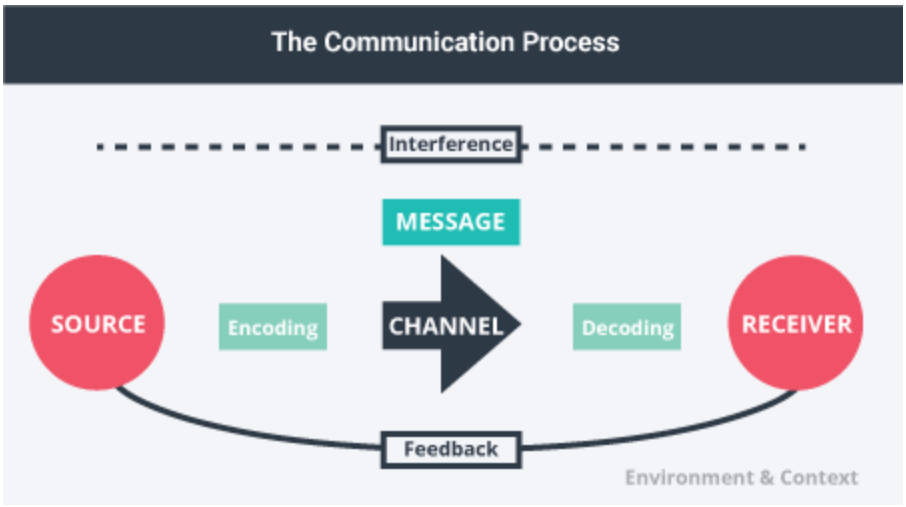
Let us break this definition down by way of example. Imagine you are in a coffee shop with a friend, and they are telling you a story about the first goal they scored in hockey as a child. What images come to mind as you hear their story? Is your friend using words you understand to describe the situation? Are they speaking in long, complicated sentences or short, descriptive sentences? Are they leaning back in their chair and speaking calmly, or can you tell they are excited? Are they using words to describe the events leading up to their big goal, or did they draw a diagram of the rink and positions of the players on a napkin? Did your friend pause and wait for you to to comment throughout their story or just blast right through? Did you have trouble hearing your friend at any point in the story because other people were talking or because the milk steamer in the coffee shop was whistling?

All of these questions directly relate to the considerations for communication in this course, including analyzing the audience, choosing a communications channel, using plain language, and using visual aids.

Before we examine each of these considerations in more detail, we should consider the elements of the communication process.

The Communication Process

The communication process includes the steps we take in order to ensure we have succeeded in communicating. The communication process comprises essential and interconnected elements detailed in Fig. 1.2.1. We will continue to reflect on the story of your friend in the coffee shop to explore each element in detail.



The communication process by Laura Underwood

Source: The source comes up with an idea and sends a message in order to share information with others. The source could be one other person or a group of people. In our example above, your friend is trying to share the events leading up to their first hockey goal and, likely, the feelings they had at the time as well.

Message: The message is the information or subject matter the source is intending to share. The information may be an opinion, feelings, instructions, requests, or suggestions. In our example above, your friend identified information worth sharing, maybe the size of one of the defence players on the other team, in order to help you visualize the situation.

Channels: The source may encode information in the form of words, images, sounds, body language, and more. There are many definitions and categories of communication channels to describe their role in the communication process, including verbal, non-verbal, written, and digital. In our example above, your friends might make sounds or use body language in addition to their words to emphasize specific bits of information. For example, when describing a large defense player on the other team, they may extend their arms to explain the height of the other team's defense player.

Receiver: The receiver is the person for whom the message is intended. This person is charged with decoding the message in an attempt to understand the intentions of the source. In our example above, you as the receiver may understand the overall concept of your friend scoring a goal in hockey and can envision the techniques your friend used. However, there may also be some information you do not understand—such as a certain term—or perhaps your friend describes some events in a confusing order. One thing the receiver might try is to provide some kind of feedback to communicate back to the source that the communication did not achieve full understanding and that the source should try again.

Environment: The environment is the physical and psychological space in which the communication is happening (Mclean, 2005). It might also describe if the space is formal or informal. In our example above, it is the coffee shop you and your friend are visiting in.

Context: The context is the setting, scene, and psychological and psychosocial expectations of the source and the receiver(s) (McLean, 2005). This is strongly linked to expectations of those who are sending the message and those who are receiving the message. In our example above, you might expect natural pauses in your friend's storytelling that will allow you to confirm your understanding or ask a question.

Interference: There are many kinds of interference (also called "noise") that inhibit effective communication. Interference may include poor audio quality or too much sound, poor image quality, too much or too little light, attention, etc. In our working example, the coffee shop might be quite busy and thus very loud. You would have trouble hearing your friend clearly, which in turn might cause you to miss a critical word or phrase important to the story.

Those involved in the communication process move fluidly between each of these eight elements until the process ends.

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3.4: Intercultural Communication

We may be tempted to think of intercultural communication as interaction between two people from different countries. While two distinct national passports communicate a key part of our identity non-verbally, what happens when two people from two different parts of the same country communicate? Indeed, intercultural communication happens between subgroups of the same country.

Whether it be the distinctions between dialects in the same language, the differences in perspective between an Eastern Canadian and a Western Canadian, or the rural- versus-urban dynamic, our geographic, linguistic, educational, sociological, and psychological traits influence our communication.

Culture is part of the very fabric of our thought, and we cannot separate ourselves from it, even as we leave home and begin to define ourselves in new ways through work and achievements. Every business or organization has a culture, and within what may be considered a global culture, there are many subcultures or co-cultures. For example, consider the difference between the sales and accounting departments in a corporation. We can quickly see two distinct groups with their own symbols, vocabulary, and values. Within each group there may also be smaller groups, and each member of each department comes from a distinct background that in itself influences behaviour and interaction.

Suppose we have a group of students who are all similar in age and educational level. Do gender and the societal expectations of roles influence interaction? Of course! There will be differences on multiple levels.

More than just the clothes we wear, the movies we watch, or the video games we play, all representations of our environment are part of our culture. Culture also involves the psychological aspects and behaviours that are expected of members of our group. From the choice of words (message), to how we communicate (in person or by e-mail), to how we acknowledge understanding with a nod or a glance (non-verbal feedback), to the internal and external interference, all aspects of communication are influenced by culture.

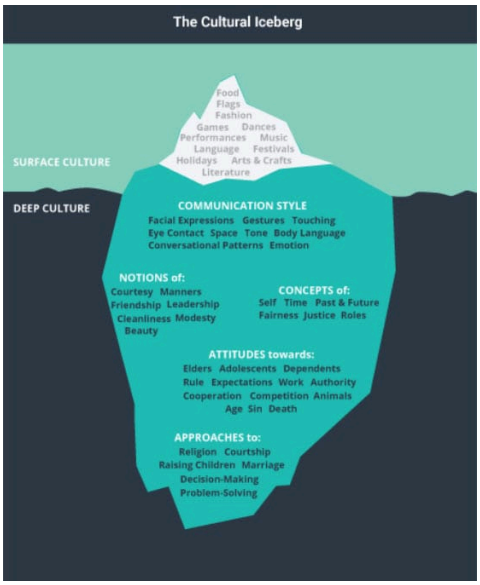
Defining culture

Culture consists of the shared beliefs, values, and assumptions of a group of people who learn from one another and teach to others that their behaviours, attitudes, and perspectives are the correct ways to think, act, and feel.

It is helpful to think about culture in the following five ways:

- Culture is learned.
- Culture is shared.
- Culture is dynamic.
- Culture is systemic.
- Culture is symbolic.

The iceberg (shown in Figure 7.5.1), is a commonly used metaphor to describe culture and is great for illustrating the tangible and the intangible. When talking about culture, most people focus on the “tip of the iceberg,” which is visible but makes up just 10 percent of the object. The rest of the iceberg, 90 percent of it, is below the waterline.



The cultural iceberg by Laura Underwood, adapted from Lindner (2013).

Many business leaders, when addressing intercultural situations, pick up on the things they can see—things on the "tip of the iceberg." Things like food, clothing, and language difference are easily and immediately obvious, but focusing only on these can mean missing or overlooking deeper cultural aspects such as thought patterns, values, and beliefs that are under the surface. Solutions to any interpersonal miscommunication that results become temporary bandages covering deeply rooted conflicts.

Multicultural, cross-cultural, and intercultural communication

Although they are often used interchangeably, it is important to note the distinctions between the terms multicultural, cross-cultural, and intercultural communication.

Multiculturalism is a rather surface approach to the coexistence and tolerance of different cultures. It takes the perspective of "us and the others" and typically focuses on those tip-of-the-iceberg features of culture, thus highlighting and accepting some differences but maintaining a "safe" distance. If you have a multicultural day at work, for example, it usually will feature some food, dance, dress, or maybe learning about how to say a few words or greetings in a sampling of cultures.

Cross-cultural approaches typically go a bit deeper, the goal being to be more diplomatic or sensitive. They account for some interaction and recognition of difference through trade and cooperation, which builds some limited understanding—such as, for instance, bowing instead of shaking hands, or giving small but meaningful gifts. A common drawback of cross-cultural comparisons is that we can wade into stereotyping and ethnocentric attitudes—judging other cultures by our own cultural standards—if we aren't mindful.

Lastly, when we look at **intercultural** approaches, we are well beneath the surface of the iceberg, intentionally making efforts to better understand other cultures as well as ourselves. An intercultural approach is not easy and is often messy, but when you get it right, it is usually far more rewarding than the other two approaches. The intercultural approach is difficult and effective for the same reasons; it acknowledges complexity and aims to work through it to a positive, inclusive, and equitable outcome.

Whenever we encounter someone, we notice similarities and differences. While both are important, it is often the differences that contribute to communication troubles. We don't see similarities and differences only on an individual level. In fact, we also place people into in-groups and out-groups based on the similarities and differences we perceive. We tend to react to someone we perceive as a member of an out-group based on the characteristics we attach to the group rather than the individual (Allen, 2010). In these situations, it is more likely that stereotypes and prejudice will influence our communication. This division of people into opposing groups has been the source of great conflict around the world, and learning about difference and why it matters will help us be more competent communicators and help to prevent conflict.

Theories of cross-cultural communication

Hofstede

Social psychologist Geert Hofstede (Hofstede, 1982, 2001, 2005) is one of the most well-known researchers in cross-cultural communication and management. Hofstede's theory places cultural dimensions on a continuum that range from high to low and really only make sense when the elements are compared to another culture. Hofstede's dimensions include the following:

- **Power distance**: High power distance means a culture accepts and expects a great deal of hierarchy; low power distance means the president and janitor could be on the same level.
- **Individualism**: High individualism means that a culture tends to put individual needs ahead of group or collective needs.
- **Uncertainty avoidance**: High uncertainty avoidance means a culture tends to go to some lengths to be able to predict and control the future. Low uncertainty avoidance means the culture is more relaxed about the future, which sometimes shows in being willing to take risks.
- **Masculinity**: High masculinity relates to a society valuing traits that were traditionally considered masculine, such as competition, aggressiveness, and achievement. A low masculinity score demonstrates traits that were traditionally considered feminine, such as cooperation, caring, and quality of life.
- **Long-term orientation**: High long-term orientation means a culture tends to take a long- term, sometimes multi-generational view when making decisions about the present and the future. Low long-term orientation is often demonstrated in cultures that want quick results and that tend to spend instead of save.
- **Indulgence**: High indulgence means cultures that are okay with people indulging their desires and impulses. Low indulgence or restraint-based cultures value people who control or suppress desires and impulses.

These tools can provide wonderful general insight into making sense of understanding differences and similarities across key below-the-surface cross-cultural elements, but remember that people are still individuals and may or may not conform to what's listed in the tools.

Trompenaars

Fons Trompenaars is another researcher who came up with a different set of cross-cultural measures. These are his seven dimensions of culture (The seven dimensions of culture, n.d.):

- **Universalism vs. particularism**: the extent that a culture is more prone to apply rules and laws as a way of ensuring fairness, in contrast to a culture that looks at the specifics of context and looks at who is involved, to ensure fairness. The former puts the task first; the latter puts the relationship first.
- **Individualism vs. communitarianism**: the extent that people prioritize individual interests versus the community's interest.
- **Specific vs. diffuse**: the extent that a culture prioritizes a head-down, task-focused approach to doing work, versus an inclusive, overlapping relationship between life and work.
- **Neutral vs. emotional**: the extent that a culture works to avoid showing emotion versus a culture that values a display or expression of emotions.
- **Achievement vs. ascription**: the degree to which a culture values earned achievement in what you do versus ascribed qualities related to who you are based on elements like title, lineage, or position.
- **Sequential time vs. synchronous time**: the degree to which a culture prefers doing things one at time in an orderly fashion versus preferring a more flexible approach to time with the ability to do many things at once.
- **Internal direction vs. outer direction**: the degree to which members of a culture believe they have control over themselves and their environment versus being more conscious of how they need to conform to the external environment.

Like Hofstede's work, Trompenaars' dimensions help us understand some of those beneath-the-surface-of-the-iceberg elements of culture. It's equally important to understand our own cultures as it is to look at others, always being mindful that our cultures, as well as others, are made up of individuals.

High context and low context cultures

High context cultures are replete with implied meanings beyond the words on the surface and even body language that may not be obvious to people unfamiliar with the context. Low context cultures are typically more direct and tend to use words to attempt to convey precise meaning.

For example, an agreement in a high context culture might be verbal because the parties know each other's families, histories, and social position. This knowledge is sufficient for the agreement to be enforced. No one actually has to say, "I know where you live. If you don't hold up your end of the bargain, ..." because the shared understanding is implied and highly contextual. A low context culture usually requires highly detailed, written agreements that are signed by both parties, sometimes mediated through specialists like lawyers, as a way to enforce the agreement. This is low context because the written agreement spells out all the details so that not much is left to the imagination or "context."

Working with others

How can you prepare to work with people from cultures different than your own? Start by doing your homework. Let's assume that you have a group of Japanese colleagues visiting your office next week. How could you prepare for their visit? If you're not already familiar with the history and culture of Japan, this is a good time to do some reading or a little bit of research online. If you can find a few English-language publications from Japan (such as newspapers and magazines), you may wish to read through them to become familiar with current events and gain some insight into the written communication style used.

Preparing this way will help you to avoid mentioning sensitive topics and to show correct etiquette to your guests. For example, Japanese culture values modesty, politeness, and punctuality, so with this information, you can make sure you are early for appointments and do not monopolize conversations by talking about yourself and your achievements. You should also find out what faux pas to avoid. For example, in company of Japanese people, it is customary to pour others' drinks (another person at the table will pour yours). Also, make sure you do not put your chopsticks vertically in a bowl of rice, as this is considered rude. If you have not used chopsticks before and you expect to eat Japanese food with your colleagues, it would be a nice gesture to make an effort to learn. Similarly, learning a few words of the language (e.g., hello, nice to meet you, thank you, and goodbye) will show your guests that you are interested in their culture and are willing to make the effort to communicate.

If you have a colleague who has traveled to Japan or has spent time in the company of Japanese colleagues before, ask them about their experience so that you can prepare. What mistakes should you avoid? How should you address and greet your colleagues? Knowing the answers to these questions will make you feel more confident when the time comes. But most of all, remember that a little goes a long way. Your guests will appreciate your efforts to make them feel welcome and comfortable. People are, for the most part, kind and understanding, so if you make some mistakes along the way, be kind to yourself. Reflect on what happened, learn from it, and move on. Most people are keen to share their culture with others, so your guests will be happy to explain various practices to you.

Improving your intercultural competence

One helpful way to develop your intercultural communication competence is to develop sensitivity to intercultural communication issues and best practices. From everything we have learned so far, it may feel complex and overwhelming. The Intercultural Development Continuum is a theory created by Mitchell Hammer (2012) that helps demystify the process of moving from monocultural approaches to intercultural approaches. There are five steps in this transition:

1. Denial: Denial is the problem-denying stage. For example, a well-meaning person might say that they pay no attention to race issues because they themselves are "colour blind" and treat everyone the same, irrespective of race. While on the surface this attitude seems fair-minded, it can mean willfully blinding oneself to very real cultural differences. Essentially, not much sensitivity or empathy can be present if one denies that cultural differences actually exist. This is a monocultural mindset. When there's denial in organizations, diversity feels *ignored*.

2. Polarization: Polarization is the stage where one accepts and acknowledges that there is such a thing as cultural difference, but the difference is framed as a negative "us versus them" proposition. This usually means "we" are the good guys, and "they" are the bad guys. Sometimes a person will reverse this approach and say their own culture is bad or otherwise deficient and see a different culture as superior or very good. Either way, polarization reinforces already-existing biases and stereotypes and misses out on nuanced understanding and empathy. It is thus considered more of a monocultural mindset. When polarization exists in organizations, diversity usually feels *uncomfortable*.

3. Minimization: Minimization is a hybrid category that is really neither monocultural nor intercultural. Minimization recognizes that there are cultural differences, even significant ones, but tends to focus on universal commonalities that can mask or paper over other important cultural distinctions. This is typically characterized by limited cultural self-awareness in the case of a person belonging to a dominant culture, or as a strategy by members of non-dominant groups to "go along to get along" in an organization. When dominant culture minimization exists in organizations, diversity feels *not heard*.

4. Acceptance: Acceptance demonstrates a recognition and deeper appreciation of both their own and others' cultural differences and commonalities and is the first dimension that exhibits a more intercultural mindset. At this level, people are better able to detect cultural patterns and able to see how those patterns make sense in their own and other cultural contexts. There is the capacity to accept others as being different and at the same time being fully human. When there is acceptance in organizations, diversity feels *understood*.

5. Adaptation: Adaptation is characterized by an ability not only to recognize different cultural patterns in oneself and other cultures but also to effectively adapt one's mindset or behaviour to suit the cultural context in an authentic way. When there is adaptation in organizations, diversity feels *valued and involved*.

The first two steps out of five reflect monocultural mindsets. According to Hammer (2009), people who belong to dominant cultural groups in a given society or people who have had very little exposure to other cultures may be more likely to have a worldview that's more monocultural. But how does this cause problems in interpersonal communication? For one, being blind to the cultural differences of the person you want to communicate with (denial) increases the likelihood that you will encode a message that they won't decode the way you anticipate, or vice versa.

For example, let's say culture A considers the head a special and sacred part of the body that others should never touch, certainly not strangers or mere acquaintances. But let's say in your culture, people sometimes pat each other on the head as a sign of respect and caring. So you pat your culture A colleague on the head, and this act sets off a huge conflict.

It would take a great deal of careful communication to sort out such a misunderstanding, but if each party keeps judging the other by their own cultural standards, it's likely that additional misunderstanding, conflict, and poor communication will transpire.

Using this example, polarization can come into play because now there's a basis of experience for selective perception of the other culture. Culture A might say that your culture is disrespectful, lacks proper morals, and values, and it might support these claims with anecdotal evidence of people from your culture patting one another on the sacred head!

Meanwhile, your culture will say that culture A is bad-tempered, unintelligent, and angry by nature and that there would be no point in even trying to respect or explain things them.

It's a simple example, but over time and history, situations like this have mounted and thus led to violence, war, and genocide.

According to Hammer (2009), the majority of people who have taken the IDI inventory, a 50- question questionnaire to determine where they are on the monocultural–intercultural continuum, fall in the category of minimization, which is neither monocultural nor intercultural. It's the middle-of-the-road category that on one hand recognizes cultural difference but on the other hand simultaneously downplays it.

While not as extreme as the first two situations, interpersonal communication with someone of a different culture can also be difficult here because of the same encoding/decoding issues that can lead to inaccurate perceptions. On the positive side, the recognition of cultural differences provides a foundation on which to build and a point from which to move toward acceptance, which is an intercultural mindset.

There are fewer people in the acceptance category than there are in the minimization category, and only a small percentage of people fall into the adaptation category. This means most of us have our work cut out for us if we recognize the value—considering our increasingly global societies and economies—of developing an intercultural mindset as a way to improve our interpersonal communication skill.

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3.5: Additional Resources

The following are resources to help build understanding when working with Indigenous children, families and colleagues.

- Seven Sacred Teachings, by the University of Winnipeg's Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre, to understand when building relationships.
- Seven Tips on Building Relationships with Indigenous Peoples, a 2017 blog post on *Indigenous Corporate Training*.
- 23 Tips on What Not to Say or Do When Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples. A free PDF manual by *Indigenous Corporate Training*.

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4: LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

4.1: Ethical Leadership
4.2: NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct

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4.1: Ethical Leadership

Learning Objectives

- Describe the ethical responsibilities that guide programs for early care and education and the professionals that work in them.
- Use the NAEYC code of ethical conduct to guide decision making[TM1] .
- Recognize how culture, bias, and belief systems impact and influence ethical dilemmas.

Running an Ethical Program is Complex

What are ethics? From a practical standpoint it can be difficult to connect to the concept because they are ideals and principles we aspire and work towards. Ethics can be easy to read about and then set aside as something you don't really need or might come back to some day. However, ethics are something you use everyday in decision making, relationships, and interactions with children, families, colleagues, and your community.

As an early care and education professional, I would frequently be faced with any of the following ethical scenarios:

1. Responding to a parent when they ask me to keep their 3 year old from napping because they are not sleeping at night.
2. Unpacking a child's lunch that included a sandwich made out of chocolate chips, marshmallow crème and sprinkles—every day. Yes every day!
3. Overhearing a team member complaining about another team member.
4. Being asked by my supervisor to "just do this today because licensing is coming by."

How did I navigate these challenges? Sometimes not too well. But once I learned there was a tool to use, the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Code of Ethical Conduct, I was much better prepared to recognize and respond to ethical dilemmas when they occurred! The NAEYC created the Code of Ethical Conduct to guide professionals in how to navigate ethical situations and dilemmas. Let's first dive into some definitions and foundational concepts.

Commonly Used Words

Ethics, ethical responsibilities, and ethical leadership are big topics that we will introduce in this module.

Ethics are moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity.

Ethical responsibilities is the ability to recognize, interpret, and act upon multiple principles and values according to the standards within a given field and/or context.

Ethical Leadership is defined as "leadership demonstrating and promoting 'normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relations'."

Is there a connection between values, morality, and ethics? Generally, the words are used interchangeably. There is, however, a difference:

- Values are the qualities we believe intrinsically to be desirable and that we prize for ourselves
- Morality is usually more theoretical; it is a philosophical concept that is about our beliefs about right and wrong
- Ethics are the practical application of morality in daily life. The term ethics refers to a conscious deliberation regarding moral choices.

The difference is that of theory and practice. If a person has a moral character, he or she will generally deal with other people in an ethical manner.

Example

I'm considering stealing a cookie. I value honesty, and morally I believe stealing is wrong. My personal ethics then guide me that because I value honesty, I decide not to steal the cookie. If I did steal the cookie, I would be acting outside of my values. Easy—right? Only if you are planning on stealing a cookie. Our personal values, ethics, and morality are developed based on our experiences as we grow. If each professional applied their personal code of ethics to their work with children and families it would be very difficult to navigate.

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4.2: NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct

A code of ethics is adopted by a profession to assist the members in distinguishing right from wrong within the context of early childhood education and independent of personal values and belief systems. While it may seem that right and wrong or very concrete and easy concepts, in the work with children and families it is not always an easy choice to make. For leaders, the decisions can be even harder and often leads to a choice that makes someone unhappy. Remember, the Code of Ethical Conduct is based on our profession, not our personal values.

The *National Association for the Education of Young Children* has created and shared the *Ethical Code of Conduct* and the *Ethical Code of Conduct for Administrators* to guide the decision making of ECE professionals. But what is our code of ethics? And why is it important to our profession? Great questions!

The *Code of Ethical Conduct* is sectioned by category of responsibility. Ethical responsibilities to children, families, colleagues, and community. (code of conduct will be hyper linked here). As you work through this module, you will notice that each section is divided into Ideals and Principles to offer guidance in our work with children and families. Take a look at the Ethical Code of Conduct and familiarize yourself on how it is organized and what the profession has determined is important to know and understand.

Deeper dives can be found on the NAEYC website. There are many resources available and you are encouraged to see the resources at the end of the modules for further study.

NAEYC recognizes that those who work with young children face many daily decisions that have moral and ethical implications. The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct offers guidelines for responsible behavior and sets forth a common basis for resolving the principal ethical dilemmas encountered in early childhood care and education. The Statement of Commitment is not part of the Code, but is a personal acknowledgement of an individual's willingness to embrace the distinctive values and moral obligations of the field of early childhood care and education.

Your Call to Reflect

After reading the Code of Ethical Conduct and watching the videos, think about the challenges listed at the beginning of this module. Would the Code of Ethical Conduct have been helpful? Why or why not?

Many of the decisions you make on a daily basis are fairly easy or follow a specific program policy. Some decisions are tougher and can involve values and beliefs systems or cultural differences, which can lead to an ethical dilemma. Ethical dilemmas occur when it is not clear what the best solution is and choosing one solution violates the other.

Example

A parent may ask you to keep their 4 year old awake during nap time because they are not going to bed until late in the evening. We have an ethical responsibility to support the development of children (allow them to sleep when they need to) and we also have an ethical responsibility to honor families as a child's first teachers and to listen and respect their input into how their children are raised. Tough decision! This is where the Code of Ethical Conduct can help you.

The Code of Ethical Conduct reads:

- P-1.1—Above all, we shall not harm children. We shall not participate in practices that are emotionally damaging, physically harmful, disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitative, or intimidating to children. This principle has precedence over all others in this Code.
- P-2.4—We shall ensure that the family is involved in significant decisions affecting their child.
- P-2.2—We shall inform families of program philosophy, policies, curriculum, assessment system, cultural practices, and personnel qualifications, and explain why we teach as we do—which should be in accordance with our ethical responsibilities to children.

In this example, the Code of Ethical Conduct would offer guidance as to how to communicate with the family about what is developmentally appropriate for the child and what your program policies are. You could empathize with the family and share your understanding about how difficult it can be when children don't sleep. You could share that your program policies state that children are offered rest time and if they fall asleep they are not to be woken up. You could discuss different options (if any) and select a choice that honors the family and adheres to the ethical code of conduct. One solution could be a family member picking up the child during nap time and returning them in the afternoon after nap is over.

Ethical situations are a challenge in every early care and education setting. This is why it is critical that professionals understand the different terms, how they connect, and how the Code of Ethical Conduct can support professionals in navigating ethical situations.

The Code of Ethical Conduct is not just about situations with children and families. It is also used to support leaders in understanding their ethical responsibilities. As a leader you have the opportunity to influence other people's behaviors and share your knowledge and experiences. This means that you must be careful and consider your actions through the lens of ethics.

Ethical Leadership

Your Call to Reflect

What do you think is important for a leader to be? What values do you hold for yourself and others in leadership positions?

Leaders by their very nature wield power over others in some capacity. Even in a Collective Leadership Model, you are often able to make decisions, allocate resources, and behave in ways that greatly impact other people. This power can be tempting to use in ways that may not be ethical; e.g., to favor one person's needs over another or to demand compliance over a questionable policy.

Three key questions for ethical leadership include:

1. What is the relationship and balance of power between me as a leader and those I have influence over? Do I have too much power as a leader? Do others feel they have input in decisions I make that impact them?
2. Do I sometimes feel tempted to ignore a rule or offer an exception?
3. Am I trustworthy? Do I follow through on what I say and am I there to support my team members?

Key Takeaways

Trust is a critical responsibility for a leader. When you and your team members trust each other, there are fewer ethical situations. Why? Because you demonstrate behavior that is respectful, collaborative, and transparent. Your fellow team members reflect that behavior back in their interactions with you and others. Communication is open, honest, and authentic.

Communication is one of the areas where ethics and leadership can get caught up in culture, values and beliefs. In some cultures, it is a cultural norm to:

- To be untruthful, be vague or less than forthcoming with all of the truth to spare someone shame or embarrassment or be very direct and open.
- To appeal to another person's emotions to get what you want or to be factual and analytical with your request.
- To keep secrets or to share everything with others.

In the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct supplement for Early Childhood Program Administrators, there are a couple of key principles that can offer guidance in these situations:

- P-3.1—We shall provide staff members with safe and supportive working conditions that respect human dignity, honor confidences, and permit them to carry out their responsibilities through performance evaluation, written grievance procedures, constructive feedback, and opportunities for continuing professional development and advancement.
- P-3.2—We shall develop and maintain comprehensive written personnel policies that define program standards. These policies shall be given to new staff members and shall be easily accessible and available for review by all staff members.

In each case, leaders must carefully weigh the policies of the program with the individual skills and competencies of each team member. Educating other professionals about the Code of Ethical Conduct is a great place to start!

Your Call to Reflect

Think of different people you have worked with who demonstrate one or more of these cultural values and beliefs listed. How might you approach each situation differently as a result of learning about the Code of Ethical Conduct?

Ethics and Confidentiality

Why is it important to maintain confidentiality when working with children and families? What type of information is important to keep confidential?

Confidentiality is critically important when working with children and families. Confidentiality is defined as keeping information secure and separate, only available for those who need to have it. There are several principles in the Code of Ethical Conduct that speak directly to confidentiality.

The following principles from the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct relate directly to confidentiality.

P-1.4–We shall use two-way communications to involve all those with relevant knowledge (including families and staff) in decisions concerning a child, as appropriate, ensuring confidentiality of sensitive information.

P-2.12–We shall develop written policies for the protection of confidentiality and the disclosure of children's records. These policy documents shall be made available to all program personnel and families. Disclosure of children's records beyond family members, program personnel, and consultants having an obligation of confidentiality shall require familial consent (except in cases of abuse or neglect).

P-2.13 We shall maintain confidentiality and shall respect the family's right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life. However, when we have reason to believe that a child's welfare is at risk, it is permissible to share confidential information with agencies, as well as with individuals who have legal responsibility for intervening in the child's interest.

P-2.14–In cases where family members are in conflict with one another, we shall work openly, sharing our observations of the child, to help all parties involved make informed decisions. We shall refrain from becoming an advocate for one party.

P-3A.2–When we have concerns about the professional behavior of a co-worker, we shall first let that person know of our concern in a way that shows respect for personal dignity and for the diversity to be found among staff members, and then attempt to resolve the matter collegially and in a confidential manner.

As you can see, confidentiality encompasses your work with children, families, and coworkers. Most organizations have confidentiality policies that include written and verbal confidentiality. Those policies may include:

- Keeping children's files in a secure location.
- Keeping staff files in a secure location.



- Not posting sensitive information (such as medical info) in public view.
- Not providing children's last names on written labels.
- Directing staff to not have conversations about children or families within hearing of other staff, children or families.
- Directing staff to not have conversations about children or families with others who are not engaged with the family or child.

It is critically important to know what your organization's policies are regarding confidentiality!

Your Call to Reflect

Maintaining confidentiality can be challenging sometimes. It can be incredibly difficult for educators to avoid talking with their friends or partners about sensitive situations at work. We care about the children and our close relationships with them. Think about a time you had to maintain confidentiality for sensitive information. What actions did you take? How did these actions align with the Code Of Ethical Conduct?

Ethics and Culture

Culture reflects the agreed-upon set of morals and beliefs that indicate how people within a specific group interact. As you interact with different groups, you bring your personal set of values and beliefs to these relationships. The more individuals engage, the more opportunities for values and ethics to come into conflict. Therefore, as a profession, it is critical that professionals adhere to the Code of Ethical Conduct.

But that is not always easy! Personal biases, beliefs, and experiences influence our judgement and how we interact. Portions of the Code of Ethical Conduct can be open to interpretation by individuals, making it challenging to know what is the "right" thing to do.

Questions you must ask yourself...

- Are you willing to ask questions to better understand cultural differences?
- Are you willing to educate yourself on the cultures of the families you serve?
- Are you willing to confront your personal biases and work towards resolving them?
- Are you willing to speak out when a policy or procedure seems unfair?

Understanding that an acceptable behavior in one culture may not be acceptable in another can go a long way toward untangling complex ethical challenges. It is up to you as a leader to commit to ethical behavior that is reflective and respectful.

How do culture and values impact ethical dilemmas? Great question! Let's dive deeper in a few examples.

NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct says

I-2.5—To respect the dignity and preferences of each family and to make an effort to learn about its structure, culture, language, customs, and beliefs to ensure a culturally consistent environment for all children and families.

Example

Let's say the cultural norms of one family were that children did not make eye contact with adults unless spoken to directly. Another family's culture promotes making eye contact and initiating conversation with adults. How would you honor the first family's culture while at the same time supporting the second family's culture? At first glance it may seem easy–simply allow each child to behave in a manner that suits them. Unfortunately, if you are teaching in a classroom that supports American culture, the first child may feel they are wrong for not making eye contact. They may not get the same level of attention and developmental support as the second child. Why? Because American culture tends to pay less attention to those who don't speak out. It is subtle, and often overlooked, but it is there. Is it ethical to provide the student who seems the most "engaged" with a higher level of engagement? Is it ethical to push away your doubts or uncomfortable feelings about teaching the student who seems "quiet?" Tough questions that must be answered if you are going to be an ethical leader.

Your Call to Reflect

What are the cultural norms that influence your communication with others? How do you feel about the examples? Do they resonate with you? Why or why not?

Ethical leadership can look different from leader to leader and organization to organization. That is why it is so important to keep ethics as a constant guide and learning tool!

The following ethical leadership commitment statements can assist you in navigating this complex concept:

- I will advocate for truthfulness, accuracy, honesty, and reason as essential to the integrity of communication.
- I will support freedom of expression, diversity of perspective, and respect.
- I will strive to understand and respect other communicators before evaluating and responding to their messages.
- I will promote access to communication resources and opportunities as necessary to contribute to the well-being of families, colleagues and communities.
- I will promote communication messages of caring and mutual understanding that respect the unique needs and characteristics of those I work with and serve.
- I will condemn communication that degrades individuals through distortion, intimidation, and coercion, and through the expression of intolerance and hatred.
- I will commit to the courageous expression of personal convictions in pursuit of fairness and justice.
- I will advocate for sharing information, opinions, and feelings when facing significant choices while also respecting privacy and confidentiality.
- I will accept responsibility for the short- and long-term consequences for my communication and expect the same of others.
- I will be trustworthy and offer and expect respect from those I work with and serve.

When we make a commitment to ethical leadership, we are acknowledging the complexity and "messiness" that comes with honoring diverse views, respecting each person, and doing the "right" thing. We know that we will make mistakes and learn about ourselves and others in the process.

Citations

NAEYC. (2011). *Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment*. https://www.naeyc.org/resources/posi...thical-conduct

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5: EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1: Educator Development
5.2: Professional Development Cycle
5.3: Professional Development Plan

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5.1: Educator Development

Learning Objectives

- Recognize the career stages of a professional in early care and education.
- Articulate the value of ongoing professional development

As a young professional I thought I had the best job ever! I was getting paid to play with children—how cool was that!? I would read stories and play dress up with preschool children in the morning, go to community college classes in the middle of the day, and end my day playing dodgeball in an afterschool program. BEST JOB EVER! And then my supervisor gave me a 6 month evaluation and said that I had a lot of great qualities but I needed to develop some key skills (classroom management, being seen as an authority figure, etc.). I was crushed! I thought things were going so well—after all, I and the children were having fun. So we created a plan to have me go to some professional development training, and after my first Saturday I was hooked! For the first time, I saw an opportunity to make early childhood education (ECE) my professional career. I immediately went into my counselor's office and changed my major from business to early childhood education. Then I really started having fun at college—as well as work!

Does my story sound familiar? Many of you probably felt as I did at some point in your professional journey. As educators, we understand the value of ongoing learning. We watch children practice, learn, and grow every day.

Key Takeaways

Just like there are stages and milestones of development for children, there are also stages that an educator experiences as they move through their professional career. These stages, along with the learning that occurs, are valuable for leaders to understand so they can support professionals throughout their career life cycle.

It is important to also note that not all educators will proceed through all stages. Some choose the role they love most and stay in that role throughout their career, while others move around, trying out different roles. The career of each professional can look very different from another. That is part of what makes working in the field such a diverse and amazing experience!

Before we start with the stages of an educator's growth, we think it is important to note that educators enter the field in a variety of ways. Here are some of the paths taken:

- 4-year college or 2-year degree or certificate program.
- Entering the field from another profession such as special education or classroom assistant in a K-12 setting.
- Opening your own business as a family child care provider in order to care for your own children and others in your community.
- Working at a Head Start.
- Babysitting or working with children in a high school program and getting a job or starting school after high school in the field and figuring out where you want to go next.

However you got here, you made choices along the way and here you are! Caring for and educating other people's children is a journey—not a destination. It is your journey and your choices that will propel you as you decide where you are and what next steps are best for you. Let's define career stages and offer some words of wisdom for you—wherever you are.

Your Call to Reflect

What started you on the path to working with children? What draws you to this career? What do you love about working with children? Where do you see yourself in five years?

Career Stages

Pre-service is the stage in an educator's career where they have not started working with children and families yet. In this stage you may be taking courses toward a degree or certificate, or you may be ready to walk into the classroom for the first time as an assistant. For many educators, the pre-service stage is a mix of working with children and pursuing a degree or participating in community-based training.

Characteristics of Pre-service Professionals:

- You are not quite sure if you are ready/what you got yourself into.
- You are enthusiastic and looking to have fun.
- You don't know what you don't know.
- You know what you don't know and you are ready to learn.
- You are ready to start applying the things that you know.

Educators in the Pre-service stage need external support to apply their knowledge and process what the "reality" of working with children really looks like. Pre-service educators need guidance for taking care of themselves so they don't burn out and may need help navigating building relationships with the adults that come with working with children.

The Survival stage is a roller coaster of emotions and behaviors. Educators in survival mode are beginning to apply what you know and have learned as you begin your work with children. Everything that you learned and thought you knew takes a backseat to the immediate actions needed to manage the children and tasks in front of you. You are still excited and realizing that working with children is hard and draining and exhilarating all at the same time.

Characteristics of Survival Professionals

- Your fight or flight brain kicks in and demands to pay high alert attention to everything.
- You may feel like you are never going to "get" it or that this is NEVER going to "work".
- You may feel overwhelmed at the "other" tasks that come with working with children.
- You may feel like you don't have control of the children in your program.
- You may feel locked into struggles with children or other team members.
- You may not feel confident in your abilities; particularly when talking to families.
- You may struggle to see yourself as a professional

Educators in the Survival stage need reassurance and individualized supports. They need to see that they are progressing and that there is an "end" in sight for the survival stage. Pairing professionals in the Survival stage with a veteran team member who can provide one on one advice and coaching. You can also provide these professionals with extra breaks, opportunities to talk, and lots of chocolate.

Developing Skills is the stage where things start to come together. Educators in this stage are practicing, making mistakes, learning, and experimenting. They are understanding what their skills are and increasing their competency.

Characteristics of Developing Skills Professionals

- You are looking for and participating in professional development that helps you solve problems.
- You are hands on and trying new things.
- You are confident.
- You are both sure and unsure of yourself.
- You think about the children in your care and your coworkers, even when you are not with them.
- You are setting routines and teaching others how to do what you need them to do.

Educators in the Developing Skills stage should be supported through opportunities to practice, make mistakes, and get coaching. They need recognition for their efforts and opportunities to participate in professional development. Support through one-on-one meetings, frequent check-ins, feedback, and coaching are very beneficial.

In the Mastery stage, educators have developed their competencies and may be looking for new challenges. For some that may mean administration positions, for others, mentoring or providing professional development.

Characteristics of Mastery Professionals

- You know it is not about you (it never was, but you were inwardly focused for the first three stages).
- You feel confident in your skills.
- You feel like you have “arrived” and can take time off from further professional development.
- You seek professional development opportunities that are focused on theory, practice, or a very narrow topic (ex: supporting children with ADHD).
- You can get stuck in “the way I have always done it” and not look for opportunities to stay current on issues or child development.
- You may feel bored and are looking for a challenge.
- You may feel isolated.

Educators in the Mastery stage may need opportunities to share their knowledge and expertise. This could be through coaching or developing others, presenting training, or participating in contributing to the field outside of their work. Professionals in the Mastery stage should be supported through giving outlets for sharing, providing them with feedback or encouraging them to continue their professional growth.

What stage would you say you are at in your career? What can you do to support your development to the next stage? What can others do to support you?

Resources

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). (2011). *Early childhood education professional development: Training and technical assistance glossary*. https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/...training_ta.pdf

Adaptation Credit

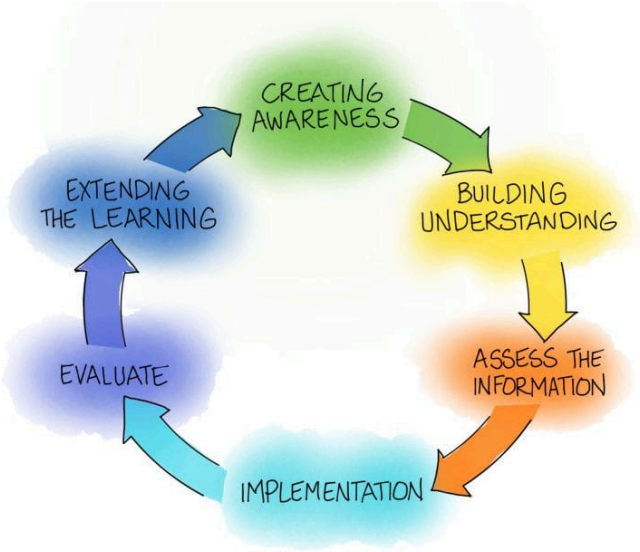
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5.2: Professional Development Cycle

Whether you are new to education or have been working with children and families for many years, all educators go through the same cycle for professional development. This 6-part process includes:

1. Creating Awareness – what do you want to know more about? Where can you go to get training or information?
2. Building Understanding – expand your knowledge of the topic you are interested in and learn what the big ideas are.
3. Assess the Information – is this something that will help you in your practice? How will you implement it? What supports or resource might you need?
4. Implementation – plan, prepare and implement the new knowledge. Practice, refine, and practice some more.
5. Evaluate – Did your learning have a positive impact? Is there more information you need? Will you integrate the new learning into your habits and routines?
6. Extending the Learning – What else do you want to know about the topic? Are there other resources available? How can you further increase your knowledge? (See create awareness)



Successful ECCE professionals engage in a cycle of reflective practice that increases their awareness and continues their development. This development cycle can be seen in all career stages except Survival. The reason? Because when you are in survival mode you are unable to learn and retain new information. Your brain is quickly evaluating and deciding on the issue or problem it is currently facing.

Reflective Practice & Professional Development

Reflective practice and professional development go hand in hand! Reflective practices are when you think back on how a particular project, action, task, or day went and you identify what went well and what you might want to do differently in the future. Reflective actions can include:

- Taking time each day to reflect on something that worked really well or not so well.
- Sharing your experiences with others in the field.
- Keeping a journal or log of best practices in your classroom as well as challenges.
- Determining what you could have done differently.
- Seeking out a mentor or coach to help you sort through your reflections and identify areas for continued growth

Your Call to Reflect

Reflect on something that is going well for you right now. What evidence supports your thought that it is going well? How is this having a positive impact? What steps can you take to act with intention to continue success?

Responsibility for Learning

No matter how long you have worked in ECE or what your role may be in the classroom or program, as a professional you have a responsibility to ensure that you have the education needed to perform your job in the best way possible. This means participating in professional development that prepares you for the position you are or will be in. Engaging in ongoing professional development continues your education about topics relevant to your work with children and families.

Ongoing Professional Development

- Ensures you stay current with the latest research.
- Provides you with opportunities to create awareness about what you don't know.
- Assists you in achieving your career goals.
- Engages you with others in the field.
- Provides you with opportunities to learn and explore diverse topics, perspectives, and contexts.

Professional Development of Others

Your leadership role may involve supporting the professional development of someone else. From creating individual professional development plans to providing professional development for groups, there are different methods for supporting others' ongoing professional development.

The following are the most common forms of professional development:

Training is a learning experience specific to a topic and related set of skills or dispositions, delivered by a subject matter expert with adult learning knowledge and skills.

Technical Assistance (TA) is the targeted and customized support by a subject matter expert to develop or strengthen processes, knowledge application, or implementation of services by professionals.

Mentoring is a relationship-based process between people in similar professional roles, the mentor, provides guidance and example to the less-experienced mentee. Mentoring is intended to increase an individual's professional capacity, resulting in greater effectiveness.

Coaching is a relationship-based process led by an expert with specialized and adult learning knowledge and skills. Coaching is designed to build capacity for specific professional skills and is focused on goal-setting and achievement for an individual or group.

Professional Development Advising) is a process through which an advisor offers information, guidance, and advice about professional growth, career options, and pathways.

Peer-to-Peer TA fosters the development of relationship-based learning and support communities among individuals, often in like roles. Peers have developed tools and strategies that can be shared with their colleagues.

Job-Embedded Professional Development (JEPD) refers to educator learning that is grounded in day-to-day teaching practice and is designed to enhance teachers' content-specific instructional practices with the intent of improving student learning.

Reflective Supervision is the regular collaboration between staff member and supervisor where the thoughts, feelings and experiences of the staff member are the focus of improving skills and competencies.

In conclusion, you can see there is a wide range of professional development delivery methods. Each method provides the learner

with specific supports and opportunities based on a number of factors including career stage of the learner, career stage of the leader, resources, context, and type of desired outcome.

Example

Let's revisit my story from the beginning of this module. I was a new assistant in the Survival stage. While I felt confident in my abilities to "play" with children, I did not understand the full scope of my responsibilities. I also did not see myself as a professional. I was offered training as a way to increase my knowledge and understanding of how to work effectively with children. In addition, because of the stage I was in, I also benefited from Job-embedded Professional Development. After the training, my lead teacher offered me guidance and opportunities to try my new skills. She gave me feedback when I attempted to lead circle time (it did not go well the first dozen times) and she provided me with coaching to understand the developmental stages of children.

As a leader, you will need to evaluate these factors to determine the best method for delivering learning for individual staff members as well as the team as a whole. While ongoing professional development hours are often a requirement for licensure or quality standards, they are not the only method for increasing knowledge and competency of staff.

Remember, the best methods for ensuring staff increase their skills/competencies through professional development is to work collaboratively for a mix of modalities that allow for knowledge transfer, practice, feedback, and behavior change. Learning needs to be supported on a regular basis and should become a regular part of your organization's culture. As a professional, it is up to you to continue your professional growth and development as you move through the stages of your career. Learning can be an ongoing journey full of joy and discovery that invigorates and increases the quality of your daily practice.

Adaptation Credit

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5.3: Professional Development Plan

What is a Professional development Plan?

As an early childhood educator, it is important that you have a Professional Development Plan (PDP). Your PDP is a personal document that outlines your goals for yourself as an early childhood educator. Your goals are going to be based on your interests and experiences in the field; your PDP may include specific types of workshops that you want to participate in, furthering your post-secondary education, volunteering, or working with community partners to improve the life of the children and the families that you work with, to name a few. You may want to include advice and suggestions from your director or colleagues if you are unsure where you want to start.

A PDP will outline your professional goals, and the steps you need to take to achieve those goals, and include a list of resources you will need, and timelines for achieving each goal. As you progress through the steps of your goals or your career path changes, your PDP should be adjusted to reflect where you are at and what you want to achieve. No two PDPs will be the same; two people may have the same goal however their plan for achieving that goal and when they want to achieve that goal will vary based on their support systems, their commitments to family or community, and other life events.

Creating a Professional Development Plan

When creating goals for your PDP you want to use the SMART goal method you want your goals to be: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely. By using the smart method, you will break a large goal down into smaller pieces that are easier to achieve and help maintain your motivation as you work towards larger goals.



SMART Goals image by Dungdm93 via Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY License.

There are many formats that a PDP may take some may choose a formal PDP while others may choose a more informal method of writing down their SMART goals. The goals you set in your PDP do not all need to be significant long-term goals; it is important to have a variety of career goals that fall into the short-term (can be completed within one year) or long-term (will take one to five years to complete) timeframes.

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6: STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Definitions

The term practitioner refers to adults who work in the field of child care including: early childhood educators, family child care providers, family resource program personnel, resource and referral program personnel.[1]

A child care setting is a setting other than the child's home in which care and education is provided for the child by a person who is not a member of the child's immediate family.

Standards of practice are benchmarks or points of reference against which occupations and the proficiency of people in those occupations are measured or assessed.[2] Standards of practice are also known as occupational standards.

What is the scope of standards of practice?

Standards of practice identify the particular skills and abilities necessary to perform the required tasks in a competent fashion. Usually, they do not encompass the full range of tasks that are typically performed; instead, they focus on the "set of tasks [that are] deemed to be the critical aspect of the occupation."[3]

In trades where tasks can be described in a tangible and measurable way, standards of practice may be limited to delineation of the actual tasks to be performed. However, in occupations that cannot adequately be described in this fashion, such as the provision of child care, standards of practice often include the requirement that a practitioner "have a minimum level of understanding of the concepts, theories, and practices of the occupation before they can work in the field."[4]

Supporting and fostering child well-being and development in child care settings requires the provision of certain experiences. The extent to which these experiences are appropriate and effective depends, in part, on the skills, knowledge and abilities of the adults relating to the child. Similarly, establishing and maintaining a partnership with a child's family requires certain skills and abilities based on specific types of knowledge.

Why Have Standards of Practice?

Regulation can increase the likelihood of quality in an early childhood setting by stipulating standards, such as child-to-adult ratios, that are consistent with those demonstrated through research to be associated with child well-being and supportive of child development. However, government regulations are simply enablers, not guarantees. Therefore, as noted by Griffin, it is essential that practitioners in early childhood settings themselves "develop and maintain the quality system that we seek."[5] Practitioners in other human service fields have done this through mechanisms such as the establishment and enforcement of occupational standards.

Various writers[6] have noted that standards of practice serve:

- as the basis for ensuring that the people receiving the service are not put at risk;
- to identify the type of preparation required and the skills needed to perform the work at an acceptable level;
- as guidelines in designing and delivering training and as a benchmark against which training can be judged;
- to assist training institutions to convey expectations to students, employers to convey expectations to directors and supervisors, and directors and supervisors to convey expectations to frontline workers;
- as a benchmark against which actual practice can be judged by the individual or by another person;
- to assist in the determination of whether people who obtained their basic qualification in another jurisdiction can meet the expectations of the jurisdiction in which they now wish to work.

The need for standards of practice in the early childhood field has been identified both in Canada[7] and in the United States.[8]

What is the basis of these standards of practice?

Standards of practice must be based on what practitioners actually do and the skills and abilities required to provide care that facilitates child well-being and development and supports the family in meeting its' responsibilities for the child. A Canadian consensus on the critical aspects of providing such care, whether the care is centre-or home-based, emerges from identifying the commonalities among recent statements developed through broad consultation in the field. The documents in question are:

- The National Statement on Quality Child Care (1991) by the Canadian Child Day Care Federation.
- Early Childhood Education Professional Competencies (1991) by Coordinators of Early Childhood Education program in Ontario's Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology.
- Certification Criteria (1993) by Certification Council of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia.
- National Guidelines for Training in Early Childhood Care and Education (1994) by the Canadian Child Care Federation.
- A Training Plan for Family Day Care Providers (1994) by the Family Day Care Association of Manitoba.
- Step Ahead: Alberta Family Day Home Provider Training and Certification Program (1994) by the Alberta Association of Family Day Care Homes.
- Early Childhood Education Program Standard (1996) by the Ontario College Standards and Accreditation Council.
- Good Beginnings: Caregiving Skills for Family Child Care Providers (1996) by Western Canada Family Child Care Association of B.C.
- Child Care Sector Occupational Competencies (1997) by the B.C. Multi-lateral Task Force on Training, Career Pathing and Labour Mobility in the Community Social Services Sector.
- Canadian Approaches to Family Support (1995) by the Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs.

To whom do these standards of practice apply?

These standards apply to adults working with children in any of the following settings:

- a family child carehome (all sections pertain to this setting);
- a child care centre (all the sections except section E pertain to this setting); and
- a family resource program that provides one or more of the following regular or occasional child care: a half-day child development program such as Head Start or kindergarten preparation, a nursery school program, a parent/child/caregiver drop-in program, a play group, before-and afterschool care, child minding to support another program for adults, for example, English or French as a Second Language, all sections pertain that are relevant to the services being provided. A family resource program is also known as a parent-child resource program or centre, a child-family support program, a family centre and a family place.

This section is copied and adapted from Standards of Practice section in Doherty. G. (2000). *Partners in Quality: Tools for Practitioners in Child Care Settings. Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, Guide to Self-Reflection.* Ottawa: Canadian Child Care Federation.

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6.1: Caring for Children
6.2: Partnerships with Children's Families
6.3: Partnerships with Colleagues and Other Community Services
6.4: Professionalism
6.5: Operation of a Family Child Care Home

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6.1: Caring for Children

Standard One

Protect and promote the psychological and physical safety, health and well-being of each child being cared for.

1. **The practitioner is able to maintain a sanitary environment that minimizes the risk of infection or food contamination through:**

- maintaining the required level of cleanliness and sanitation; and
- encouraging an awareness among the children of good health and hygiene practices.

2. **The practitioner is able to maintain a hazard-free environment that minimizes the risk of injury through:**

- ensuring that indoor and outdoor areas, furnishing, toys, and equipment are in good repair and safe for use by the children;
- ensuring the safe storage of all potentially dangerous materials;
- providing supervision that is appropriate for the children's developmental levels;
- developing and implementing effective procedures for emergency situations; and
- assisting children to develop safety awareness.

3. **The practitioner is able to promote children's health through:**

- providing snacks and meals that are nutritious and balanced and take into account cultural preferences within the parameters of the Canada Food Guide or the Native Food Guide, or, in situations where families are responsible for snacks, encouraging and assisting parents to follow the Canada Food Guide or the Native Food Guide;
- monitoring children's health on a daily basis and reporting concerns about possible neglect or abuse as required by and outlined in current provincial or territorial legislation
- recognizing symptoms of illness and common childhood diseases and taking appropriate action as required; and
- developing and implementing a specific procedure for administering medications; and
- identifying and monitoring children who have allergies or chronic medical conditions that require special precautions or care and ensuring that such precautions are taken and/or the requisite care is provided.

4. **The practitioner is able to protect and promote children's psychological health and well-being by:**

- providing an environment that conveys a sense of order, routine, consistency and continuity;
- setting realistic expectations and clear limits and using positive and developmentally appropriate approaches to guiding children's behaviour, adapting approaches on the basis of knowledge of the individual child's personality, culture, level of development and the current situation;
- providing experiences that are appropriate for the child's developmental level and responding to each child's efforts to grow and acquire skills in a positive manner;
- noting, accepting and respecting children's expression of their feelings, whether positive or negative, and the underlying message that is conveyed through body movement and/ or facial expression;
- supporting children in openly expressing their positive and negative feelings through a range of verbal, nonverbal and culturally-based communication strategies; and
- providing activities that respect each child's individual ethnic: and cultural heritage and encourage each child to feel proud of his/her heritage.

Standard Two

Develop and maintain a warm, caring, and responsive relationship with every child and with the group of children.

1. **The practitioner is able to convey a warm and caring attitude through:**

- using supportive and positive language, facial expressions and body language with children;
- responding promptly, appropriately and sensitively to children's verbal and nonverbal expressions of heed, their interests and

their attempts to communicate; and·
- supporting and encouraging children who are experiencing difficulties and comforting children who are distressed.

2. **The practitioner is able to maintain a warm, caring and responsive relationship with children by:**

- acknowledging and responding to each child's behaviours, interests and ideas in art attentive, respectful and consistent fashion;
- being emotionally as well as physically available to each child; and
- demonstrating respect for children's individual needs, culture and family context.

Standard Three

Plan and· provide daily experiences that support and promote each child's physical, emotional, social, communication,·cognitive and creative skills.

1. **The practitioner is able to develop and maintain an overall environment that supports and encourages the development of all the children by:**

- planning and providing a developmentally appropriate mix of child-initiated and adult-initiated activities, active and quiet activities, solitary and group activities, and indoor and outdoor activities;
- selecting materials and equipment that are appropriate for the children's developmental levels, areas of interest and cultural background and that promote skill development;
- ensuring that materials and equipment are accessible to the children;
- promoting active participation of all children by providing assistance in a variety of ways;
- seeking and incorporating children's input;
- recognizing and using everyday routines and activities as learning opportunities;
- arranging movement from one activity to another in the daily routines so that they occur smoothly;
- using community resources to broaden children's experience;
- organizing routines so that each child can receive some individual attention each day;
- recognizing delays in physical, cognitive, emotional or social development and taking appropriate action; and
- providing and/or accessing any supports that are required for the successful inclusion of children with handicapping conditions.

2. **The practitioner is able to support and promote each child's physical skills by:**

- selecting a variety of toys, materials and equipment for both fine and gross motor activities and ensuring that the toys, materials and equipment are accessible to the children;
- planning and implementing a variety of fine and gross motor activities that are appropriate to the children's developmental level and interests;
- encouraging and supporting children to engage in a balance of fine and gross motor activities on a daily basis; and
- using opportunities and planning activities that encourage children to use their senses by noting colours, odours; tastes, sounds and textures.

3. **The practitioner is able to support and promote each child's emotional well-being and growth by:**

- helping children to recognize, express and accept a full range of feelings;
- validating children's feelings and wishes and providing opportunities for their expression;
- responding promptly to counter discriminatory words or actions;
- assisting children to express their feelings and assert their wishes in socially acceptable ways;
- supporting children's attempts to nourish their own self-esteem;
- supporting children's independence and autonomy in culturally appropriate ways;
- fostering the development of children's self-control and self-direction;
- identifying indications of low self-esteem or negative self-concept and assisting children to deal with situations in which these occur; and
- fostering cultural diversity in daily practice through incorporating foods, language, books, stories, history, music, pictures, games, dances and clothing that reflect individual children's cultural and family backgrounds and other cultures into the daily activities.

4. **The practitioner is able to support and promote each child's social skill development by:**

- planning an environment and activities that support and encourage positive social interaction and the development of social skills;
- fostering children's ability to understand and cooperate with others;
- assisting children to understand the 'rules' and expectations of their peers; and
- assisting children to develop effective and socially acceptable ways to handle conflict.

5. **The practitioner is able to support and promote each child's communication skills by:**

- communicating with children in a style, manner and pace that is appropriate for their culture, developmental level and abilities;
- providing opportunities and activities that encourage children to develop their listening and understanding skills;
- encouraging children to express their needs, desires, feelings and thoughts non-verbally as well as verbally in a manner that is consistent with the child's culture, personality and developmental level;
- attending to, and supporting children's attempts to communicate, and encouraging children to use their first language;
- talking with children, asking open-ended questions, expressing interest in what they are saying and seeking their opinions; and
- providing opportunities and activities for children to present their ideas through non-verbal means such as painting and music.

6. **The practitioner is able to support and promote each child's cognitive skills by:**

- establishing an environment that encourages and supports children's exploration and problem-solving;
- providing activities that stimulate children's curiosity, inventiveness, problem-solving and communication skills;
- providing activities that set the stage for literacy and numeracy, such as counting, reading to children, and providing access to books;
- engaging children in questioning, probing, and problem-solving; and
- encouraging children to explain things and ideas, to predict what might happen and to experiment.

7. **The practitioner is able to support and foster children's creativity by:**

- providing a variety of art, crafts, music, dress-up items and other materials for the children to use and a variety of opportunities for creative activities;
- encouraging and supporting children's efforts to try new activities, to generate their own ideas and to use art and craft materials and toys in their own ways;
- showing appreciation of and encouraging children's creative expression; and
- introducing music, dance, art, stories and songs that reflect and affirm the cultures and interests of the children in care and other cultures.

Standard Four

Use a variety of observation techniques to identify children's skills, abilities, interests and needs and to evaluate the daily experience provided to the children.

1. **The practitioner is able to use a variety of observation techniques to identify children's skills, interests and needs and to evaluate the daily experience provided to the children by:**

- selecting and using the informal and formal observation techniques that are the most appropriate for the situation in which the observation is to occur;
- using appropriate observation techniques to monitor children's progress;
- recording observations accurately and promptly and in a form that is suitable and useful for planning appropriate experiences for the children;
- using appropriate techniques to analyze the information collected, recognizing and respecting differences in ability and cultural values and approaches when conducting and interpreting observations; and
- identifying when an assessment may be required from another source and ensuring that an appropriate referral is made.

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6.2: Partnerships with Children's Families

Standard Five

Establish and maintain an open cooperative partnership with each child's family that supports the family in meeting their responsibilities for the child.

1. **The practitioner is able to establish and maintain an open, cooperative partnership with each child's family by:**

- demonstrating to families respect and consideration for differences in child-rearing values and practices and individual, cultural and community values and traditions;
- demonstrating to families a respect for their position as the child's primary caregiver and creating opportunities for families to feel comfortable in expressing their wishes and needs;
- providing families with accessible information about service philosophy, policies, approaches and procedures before the child begins attending the child care setting and on an on-going basis;
- using a variety of approaches to encourage families to share information about the child on a regular basis, including the child's likes, dislikes, and schedule and familial preferences regarding child-rearing practices, diet and dress;
- assisting family members to feel welcome at any time that the child is present;
- using a variety of approaches, including interpretation and the translation of materials as required, to communicate with families about the child on a regular basis, including the results of observations about the child's daily experiences and development;
- providing a variety of user-friendly ways for families to be involved in program activities to the extent that they wish and to participate in programming decisions;
- providing a variety of user-friendly ways for families to participate in policy decision-making;
- working cooperatively with families to develop and implement program activities and caregiving routines that reflect children's cultural and religious backgrounds and the lifestyles of the children's families;
- using negotiation and positive problem-solving strategies to find solutions to differences of opinion or difficulties; and
- keeping family inquiries, conversations with families, and children's records confidential.

Standard Six

Strengthen the adults in the family in their roles as parents, nurturers and providers and empower them to act on their own behalf.

1. **The practitioner is able to strengthen and empower the adults in the family by:**

- including them in a meaningful and active fashion in defining and determining their wishes, needs and goals for their child;
- assisting them to identify and use their own strengths to address needs and problems;
- being responsive to family requests for information or assistance;
- providing parents with information about child development and suggestions to assist them in their parenting role in a way that respects cultural differences in child-rearing practices and the family's right to transmit their values, beliefs and cultural heritage to their children, encouraging them to use their home language with their children and to teach the practitioner about their culture;
- providing accurate and up-to-date information about other community agencies, programs and supports; and
- assisting families to develop and maintain social support networks.

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6.3: Partnerships with Colleagues and Other Community Services

Standard Seven

Establish and maintain a collaborative working relationship with supervisors, colleagues, assistants and alternates.

1. **The practitioner is able to establish and maintain a collaborative working relationship with colleagues, assistants and alternates by:**

- providing colleagues, assistants and alternates with verbal and practical support;
- seeking out and incorporating into their own practice the ideas and experiences of directors and/or home visitors, colleagues, assistants and alternates;
- resolving differences of opinion in an open, frank and respectful manner; and
- fostering professional development by sharing learning experiences with others.

Standard Eight

Establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with other community services.

1. **The practitioner is able to establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with other community services by:**

- identifying the roles and responsibilities of any other services involved with the child and/or family on a regular basis and, with the family's permission, establishing contact with these services;
- assisting other services involved with the child and/or family on a regular basis to feel comfortable expressing their needs;
- assisting other services involved with the child and/or family to feel welcome in the child care setting at any time the child is present, with the family's permission;
- sharing information about children and families, if requested, within the parameters of the family's consent and in keeping with legislated or court requirements;
- collaborating as part of a service provision team with other community agencies where this approach is appropriate;
- developing and implementing ways to keep other community services informed about changes in the child care service that may affect children they are involved with or that may affect their service; and
- working cooperatively with training services and institutions and, if involved in practicum placements, facilitating the learning opportunities provided to the students.

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6.4: Professionalism

Standard Nine

Adhere to ethical standards in all aspects of practice.

1. **The practitioner is able to adhere to ethical standards in all aspects of practice by:**

- accessing a provincial and/or national code of ethics and using same to guide practice;
- conveying a sense of respect for the uniqueness of the individual in all dealings with others; maintaining confidentiality regarding all personal information about children and families and sharing information only with the family's consent or when obliged to by legislation or court order;
- demonstrating integrity in all relationships; and
- accepting responsibility for the result of her/his actions.

Standard Ten

Balance one's personal and work roles.

1. **The practitioner is able to balance personal and work roles by:**

- maintaining enthusiasm and effectiveness and protecting her/his physical and emotional health and balancing work with other activities; and
- if a family childcare provider, clarifying for family members her/his role and responsibilities and their responsibilities while other children are present and · accommodating the needs of the family and the child care program in a way that protects the rights of each.

Standard Eleven

Reflect on one's own practice and identify areas where obtaining additional knowledge or changing approaches is indicated.

1. **The practitioner is able to reflect on their own practice and identify areas where obtaining additional knowledge or changing approaches is indicated by:**

- examining her/his daily practice and knowledge base, assessing strengths and identifying areas needing improvement; and
- evaluating performance feedback provided by others and using this to reflect on her/his practice and knowledge base.

Standard Twelve

Establish, implement, review and revise an achievable, realistic professional development plan.

1. **The practitioner is able to establish, implement, review and revise an achievable, realistic professional development plan by:**

- establishing achievable and appropriate short- and long-term professional development goals and objectives;
- identifying and accessing appropriate books, journals, and educational activities such as workshops, courses, and conferences to address her/his professional development plan; and
- identifying the extent to which professional development goals and objectives have been met and/or continue to be relevant, and adjusting them accordingly.

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6.5: Operation of a Family Child Care Home

Standard Thirteen

Operate the family child care home as a small business consistent with legislative requirements.

1. **The practitioner is able to operate the family child care home as a small business consistent with legislative requirements by:**

- maintaining current information about regulatory requirements;
- meeting all applicable provincial and municipal regulations;
- developing and implementing a written contract with each family and written policies in areas such as program philosophy, discipline and guidance methods, authorization for pick-up, children's personal care, fee schedules and child illness;
- ensuring that written policies and procedures are understood by everyone concerned, implemented, reviewed for on-going relevance and effectiveness, and changed as required;
- developing and implementing effective communication strategies to keep substitutes, co-providers and/or assistants aware of changes to policies or regulations;
- maintaining up-to-date records for each child, including health information and emergency numbers, and up-to-date business records in an organized manner;
- ensuring records and information are maintained in a way that protects confidentiality and meets legislative, regulatory and contractual requirements;
- using human and other resources in ways that maximizes their potential to foster the provision of quality child care;
- working with colleagues, assistants and alternates to develop and implement methods to evaluate the extent to which the overall program is meeting the needs of the children cared for and their families and taking corrective action as needed; and
- addressing all legal aspects pertaining to the operation of a family child care home.

Standard Fourteen

Manage the family child care home's financial resources so that they are used effectively.

1. **The practitioner is able to manage the family child care home's financial resources so that they are used effectively by:**

- developing an annual operating budget and effective procedures for tracking income and expenses on an ongoing basis and taking corrective action as indicated;
- developing and implementing procedures to obtain government funding and meet all reporting requirements for same; and
- taking into account future financial needs when considering new enrolments in order to maintain the income that will enable the child care service to continue to function.

Standard Fifteen

Interact positively and effectively with a broad range of stakeholders including, but not limited to, families, colleagues, assistants, alternates, practitioner's family members, other community services and regulatory and/or agency staff and officials.

1. **The practitioner is able to interact positively and effectively with a broad range of stakeholders by:**

- integrating the practitioner's own family into the family child care home while ensuring protection of family members' privacy and rights;
- establishing and maintaining a cooperative partnership with the family of each child receiving care;
- effectively communicating her/his philosophy, policies, and procedures to families and to other people working in the home;
- effectively soliciting input in regard to the home's policies and program from families and the community;
- working with colleagues, assistants and alternates to provide the families of the children being cared for with clear and timely information, assist families to express their needs and preferences, assist families in obtaining a fee subsidy if required, and to enable families to have meaningful input their children's care;

- working with colleagues, assistants and alternates to develop and implement user-friendly ways of providing child care and other related information to families;
- providing support for colleagues, assistants and alternates and working cooperatively with them;
- developing and maintaining a positive relationship with representatives of regulatory bodies and/or the sponsoring family child care agency;
- providing accurate information about the home and program to other organizations in the community;
- developing and maintaining on-going communication and collaborative working relationships with other community services for children and families;
- maintaining an awareness of and accessing required services from other community agencies; and
- providing information to the general public in order to increase general awareness about family child care and the role of family child care providers.

Standard Sixteen

Hire, develop and maintain knowledgeable, sensitive, and motivated colleagues, assistants and alternates.

1. **The practitioner is able to hire, develop and maintain knowledgeable, sensitive, and motivated colleagues, assistants and alternates by:**

- developing job descriptions that accurately reflect the skills and abilities required of colleagues, assistants and alternates;
- developing personnel policies, practices and procedures that are consistent with legislative requirements and amending them as required;
- undertaking recruitment, hiring, orientation, job performance evaluation and terminations of colleagues, assistants and alternates in accordance with the home's policies and legislative requirements;
- ensuring that others working in the home understand their job description and the home's personnel policies, practices and procedures;
- providing support to others working in the home through promoting a physical and human environment that meets their needs along with opportunities for meaningful input
  into development of the home's policies and program; and
- maintaining confidentiality regarding personnel issues.

Standard Seventeen

Ensure a safe, healthy, well-organized environment and purposeful daily program that meets the needs of the children being cared for and their families

1. **The practitioner is able to ensure a safe, healthy, well-organized environment and purposeful daily program that meets the needs of the children being cared for and their families by:**

- working with colleagues, assistants and alternates to ensure that policies, procedures and practices are developed and implemented in regard to issues such as: safeguarding children's health and safety, nutrition, culturally sensitive care, the maintenance of updated medical and developmental progress records on all children, behaviour management,
  developmentally appropriate supervision of children, handling sick or injured children or emergencies, obtaining parental consent where applicable, release of children, and reporting protection concerns and/or complying with court orders;
- providing training for others working in the home in regard to procedures for reporting protection concerns and/or complying with court orders and evacuation in the case of an
  emergency;
- developing and implementing plans for responding to any allegations of misconduct by people working in the home;
- working with colleagues, assistants, and alternates to ensure physical environments that are safe and clean, organized to provide for quiet and active activities, have materials and equipment that are developmentally appropriate in size and function, and to provide access to safe outdoor play space;
- providing leadership and support for others working in the home in their development of the children's daily program so that activities and materials are culturally and developmentally appropriate;
- assisting colleagues, assistants and alternates in selecting and using a variety of observational techniques to aid in the identification of children's skills, abilities, interests and needs and the evaluation of the activities provided for the children and the program as a whole;
- working with colleagues, assistants and alternates to develop and implement a variety of user-friendly methods for providing

families with information about the home's program and their children; and
- working with colleagues, assistants and alternates to develop and implement a variety of user-friendly approaches for encouraging and supporting children and parents to express their needs and preferences and to have meaningful input into their children's care.

This section is copied and adapted from Standards of Practice section in Doherty. G. (2000). Partners in Quality: Tools for Practitioners in Child Care Settings. Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, Guide to Self-Reflection. Ottawa: Canadian Child Care Federation.

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7.1: What is Advocacy

Learning Objectives

- Describe role of an Advocate.
- Articulate the role of Advocacy in Early Childhood Care & Education (ECE).
- Identify the elements of culture, bias, and beliefs that need to be considered when creating an Advocacy Plan.
- Design an Advocacy Plan for an issue or topic in ECE.

What is advocacy?[1]

What comes to mind when you hear the word “advocacy?” A lobbyist in Ottawa, ON? A political rally with thousands of participants? Or perhaps a member of the legislative assembly speaking on the senate floor about the concerns of her community? These are all examples of advocacy, as are other types of actions that most of us take every day.

You are an advocate if you have ever:

- helped a family receive needed services;
- stood up for someone who was being treated unfairly;
- attended a parent/teacher conference at your child’s school;
- participated in a city council meeting.

Advocacy is building support for an issue among audiences such as the general public, elected officials, the media, and key opinion leaders. Activities such as educating audiences about a topic, sharing illustrative stories, or working on a solution to a problem are considered advocacy. Individual citizens can always contact their elected officials as constituents.

Provincial and federal governments do not regulate the public at large from participating in advocacy or lobbying activities. Remember to use your personal e-mail and telephone when contacting policymakers. Lobbying is communicating with elected officials to influence their actions regarding a specific piece of legislation.

Advocacy activities that are not lobbying:

- Invite a legislator to visit your program and hear about the work being done.
- Provide a policymaker with information or educational materials on a topic.
- Talk with the media about a specific social issue.
- Track legislative positions and voting records.

Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further

What does it mean to be an advocate?

Simply defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, an advocate is “someone who publicly supports or promotes the interests of a cause or group.” [2] The role of an advocate in early childhood care and education is to support or promote the interests of children, families, and community.

As an early childhood care and education (ECE) professional you are in a unique and powerful position in influencing the lives of children and families. You are also in a unique and powerful position in understanding the issues that affect many families and children. You see the day-to-day struggles that families face, the barriers that keep children for succeeding to their full potential, and the missteps of policy creation that hold families back. You are an expert on these issues. Your thoughts, experiences and ideas are valuable, and your voice needs to be heard.

Don’t believe me? Then watch the two following YouTube videos. The first is a TedTalk titled “Every Kid needs a Champion” given

by Rita Pierson. Ms. Pierson passed away in 2013 but her message is still just as important today.

Every Kid needs a Champion

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

The second is a TedxPortland talk titled “The Power of Advocacy” given by Xiomara Torres, a Multnomah County judge who shares her journey which began with just one person who believed in her and stood beside her when she was just a child.

The Power of Advocacy

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

These videos show the positive power that one single person can have over the life of a child or an entire group of children. You can be that person—in fact, you probably already are.

Citations

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Adaptation Credit

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License, except where otherwise noted.

New section on Advocacy added from *Early Childhood Advocacy Toolkit*, and modified to reflect the Canadian context.

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1. Section on Advocacy copied and adapted from Ounce of prevention. (2009). *Early Childhood Advocacy Toolkit* (p.6). www.ounceofprevention.org
2. Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Advocate. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved February 6, 2021, from: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/advocate.

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7.2: Types of Advocacy

Case Advocacy

Intervening to address an individual child or family's problem. By being aware of and documenting service-delivery problems, providers can share important information and collect examples that help identify policy issues.

Strategies

- Research the rules or eligibility requirements of a particular program or policy.
- Document the problem, its history, and whether others have had similar difficulties.
- Meet with local agency staff and/or affected family to discuss a problem.
- File an appeal if services are denied.

Example

Tonya, a caseworker, has been working with the Ferguson family for several years. During a routine meeting she noticed that Ms. Ferguson brought along her youngest son, four-year-old Zachary. Ms. Ferguson explained that Zachary was with her, and not at preschool, because his child-care subsidy lapsed recently when his eligibility information was not received in time. In Tonya's experience, Ms. Ferguson was incredibly diligent and thorough in regards to eligibility paperwork.

Administrative Advocacy

Creating new policies, revising guidelines, and resolving program problems through activities directed at administrative and governmental agencies with authority and discretion to change rules and regulations. Many decisions are made informally, so interacting with the managing entity—rather than working through the legislature— can be the most effective way to make a positive change.

Strategies

- Develop ongoing relationships with advocates and agency staff to influence decision-making.
- Participate in forums where decisions are made.
- Provide reliable information about the impact of policy decisions in your community, agency, or program to build your credibility.

Example

Suzette, the local director of a home-visitation program, is frustrated because the state agency that provides her funding has told her that the program must use the approved developmental screening instrument. She and her staff have found that another comparable instrument that includes a more parent-focused process is extremely useful in helping to engage parents in conversations about their child's development. Suzette's staff has been using both screenings to satisfy the funder's requirement as well as have the desired outcome with families. During a site review, Suzette and her department liaison discuss the issue in-depth, and Suzette shows the liaison evidence of improved parent outcomes that they believe are linked to their preferred screening tool. After the site review, Suzette sends a follow-up e-mail to her liaison and his supervisor, asking them to reconsider their policy. After more investigation, the department amends its rule to allow programs greater flexibility in choosing from among a list of approved screening tools so that programs decide which tool better fits their local needs.

Legislative Advocacy

Working with elected officials to educate them about policies or programs and to inform them of the impact of the program in their home district. Advocates can educate decision-makers and suggest policies that would benefit their community. Legislative advocacy activities can also include lobbying on specific bills or requested funding levels.

Strategies

Communicate with legislators and staff through letters, e-mails, phone calls, or personal visits.

- Testify before relevant legislative committees.
- Work with legislators to compel agency administrators to adopt your proposal.
- Meet with staff of the Member of Parliament or Member of the Legislative Assembly's office and the legislature to draw attention to your issue.
- Invite legislators to visit your program and see how policies affect people in your community.

Example

Mary was experiencing severe postpartum depression. She had health insurance and access to great prenatal care, yet none of her doctors ever asked her about how she was feeling. Within weeks of having her baby, she was admitted to a psychiatric unit in the local hospital for treatment for postpartum depression. After recovering, Mary wanted to help other women living through the same ordeal. She called her state senator, and together they drafted legislation that would require doctors to screen women for postpartum depression and to provide expectant mothers and their families with information about perinatal mood disorders. Mary testified for a legislative committee and lobbied legislators in Springfield. Over the next several months, Mary and other advocates worked to pass the bill.

Media Advocacy

Using media to increase public awareness and influence broader public debate about early childhood issues. Keeping your issue in the news creates public recognition and support, thereby increasing its practical and political importance.

Strategies

Express your point of view through letters to the editor and call-in opportunities.

- Contact local reporters when your organization has news to share (i.e. increase/decrease in state funding or human-interest story about a family).
- Contact local radio and television stations about appearing on local talk shows or public-affairs programs to share your expertise.
- Meet with the editorial board of newspapers.
- Identify families or other impacted organizations and ask them to write letters or make calls as well.
- Share pertinent local media coverage with elected officials from your community.

Example

Anne, the director of a home visitation program at the county health department, reads a story in her local newspaper about the number of children under age one who enter the child welfare system because of abuse or neglect. Anne writes a letter to the editor, detailing community resources available through her agency to help coach new parents through the exhausting, overwhelming, and exhilarating first weeks and months of their child's life. Anne includes outcomes evidence from her program and national statistics on how home-visitation programs reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect.

Adaptation Credit

Types of Advocacy added from pages 7-8 in the Early Childhood Advocacy Toolkit (2009) by The Ounce of Prevention Fund. The content was modified to reflect the Canadian context.

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7.3: The Big A and Little a of Advocacy

What comes to mind when you hear the word Advocacy? Does it make you think about sticking your foot in doors to keep them open? Protesting in the street? Standing in a courtroom, board meeting, or other stakeholder gathering to make your case known and speak your mind? How do these scenarios make you feel? Are you palms sweaty, your heart racing, or your temperature rising?

If so, you are not alone. Many people, especially those of us working in early childhood care and education, feel uncomfortable in situations in which we put ourselves out there or even considering putting ourselves out there.

When I think about advocacy in early childhood care and education, I like to think about “little a” advocacy and “Big A” advocacy. Advocacy can take many forms. It can be the heroic big-impact actions that we see in the movies and on television. Such as participating or planning and leading a protest about an issue that you care about, meeting with policy creators, or presenting at board meetings. The Big A’s are the thoughts many people have about advocacy that can make palms sweat and hearts race.



However, there is also the equally powerful “little a” advocacy. Little a advocacy consists of the actions you choose to do for children and their families every day. Such as speaking your mind about what you know, from your experiences and/or education in early childhood. This may be when:

- You partner with a family about the best way to support their child as they learn to use a toilet.
- When you talk to your program director or supervisor about a vegetarian option for families who do not eat meat.
- Perhaps you have questioned a policy or procedure that does not align with what you know to be culturally responsive best practice for the people who live in the community.

Each of these, along with many more, are examples of how you are already an advocate.

You may not have realized that you were an advocate in these situations. You might, even now, be thinking, “That isn’t advocacy, that is just doing my job.” Well, yes, it is part of your job. Part of your job in working with children is, in fact, the advocacy in which you are already taking action. This is true no matter what position of power you hold in your classroom, in the program where you work, or your participation in early childhood associations. You are already an advocate for children.

The fact that you are an advocate may feel uncomfortable to you, or perhaps you know you are an advocate but want to take your work forward to the next level. Perhaps you want to do more, and maybe feel a bit guilty for not being more involved, or you might just not know where to start. Maybe you have found yourself thinking “someone should do something about this situation” and wondering if that someone should be you.

No matter where you are in the advocacy part of your leadership journey, this module was created to support and empower you in your advocacy work and to help you organize a sustainable strategy for performing actions of advocacy that fuel your passions and keep you from feeling overwhelmed or burnt out.

Your Call to Reflect

To take the first step, let's do a reflection about the advocacy work you are already doing. Reflection is a key component to being an effective leader. Your ability to reflect on your experiences and beliefs has a direct effect on your capability to learn from these experiences and grow.

Throughout this module, you will be called to reflect on your experiences. Plan to spend 10-15 minutes on each reflection. Clear your mind of any distractions. Read the reflection prompt through to the end. Depending on your learning style, you can write, web, draw, or do any other means of expression for your reflection.

Think about a time when you felt the need to stand up for another person or idea. What was the issue? Why was it important to you? What steps, if any, did you take to prepare yourself? How did you do it? What was the end result? How did you feel before, during, and after the situation? Would you classify this as Big A advocacy or little a advocacy?

If you did not do anything, what were the reasons at the time that made you make that decision? If faced with a similar situation today, would you do anything differently? Why or why not?

Connecting your identities in advocacy. Why your voice matters in early childhood policy creation.

For most early childhood care and education professionals, our comfort and natural tendencies may be in little a advocacy. Those things we do each and every day that make a positive change in the lives of children and families. Your role as an ECE professional gives you a unique insight to the challenges being faced by teachers, children, and families in your community that make it necessary for you to step into the Big A advocacy role. Guyon, (2019) writes:

> The field of early childhood education is complex and varied. From outside of the tangled web of home based, commercial, corporate, and publicly funded early childhood education and care programs, it can seem chaotic, but it is within this complexity that we find the uniqueness of early childhood education. Not every early childhood education program works for every family in all communities. Many early childhood education programs offer unique aspects that support the children and families they serve, focusing on the ever-changing needs and rights of the community around them (p. 117).

This is why it is so important for you, no matter what your role is in the classroom or early childhood program, to see yourself as a leader and an advocate for the children and families in your community. You have relationships and an understanding of the children and families in your program that no one else can have. You know what works and you know what does not work. You have had times in your career when decision makers have got it completely wrong, and you have had to find ways in which to work around policy and required practice that does not support the children in the classroom.

> Stop for a moment and take a deep breath or two. Re-read this paragraph and let it sink into your heart. Do you believe these sentences to be true for you? If not, can you say why?

Let me share a short, yet true, story. While working at a very large early childhood program, I was attending a professional development in-service day with my colleagues. During one of the sessions, the presenter, who was a supervisor in the program, was sharing the different Boardmaker® tools that were available to support children's language development, and encouraging us to share resources if needed. During this presentation, he declared that all Boardmaker® tools should be laminated and have Velcro on the back so we could hang them where needed. In this declaration he stated, "I am just going to make an executive policy that the fuzzy side of the Velcro goes on the back of the laminated tools." Now, if you have ever worked in an early childhood care and education program, you are rolling your eyes as much as we were. Why? Because you know that felt boards, and the back of early childhood furniture are soft. Which means that for items to stick to them, they need the scratchy side of the Velcro stuck

to the back.

This was not a huge issue, and after a week of having to peel off soft Velcro to re-stick scratchy Velcro someone finally spoke to him about his decision. However, it does show how policy and practice decisions can be easily made in ways that do not support the actual work we do. Nevertheless, it demonstrates why it is so important for each person working in a classroom to have a say in the policy that informs their practice.

Your Call to Reflect

You may have noticed in the story above that it took a week before someone advocated on the behalf of the teachers and spoke up to the supervisor about their Velcro decision. Why do you think no one spoke up during the in-service session? What aspects might have been in play that gave someone the opportunity or the confidence to speak up to the supervisor? In a similar situation, would you feel comfortable speaking up to your own supervisor? Why or why not? What would the conditions need to be for you to be comfortable to speak up? What do you think would be the results of your advocacy?

At this point, you may have connected to this story and are seeing the ways in which you are doing little a advocacy every day. You may also be thinking that Big A advocacy is too scary, too hard, or maybe you feel you are in a unique situation that prevents you from doing more than the tasks assigned to you in your role or job. This can be understandable, and although both Big A and little a advocacy require that you take a chance, Big A advocacy is on a much larger scale. Taking chances on a larger stage can be scary:

- What if you make someone mad?
- What if you are wrong?
- Or even worse, what if you are right and expected to take the lead?

Participating in Big A advocacy does not have to feel scary or isolating. If we rethink our ideas about what Big A advocacy really is, can be, or how it is implemented, what changes could we make collectively? How might your role in Big A advocacy look if you were involved with a group of people rather than just being on your own?

Rethinking our idea of Big A advocacy—Collective Advocacy

> "It's up to each of us to create a better world for our children." —Dr. Benjamin Spock

Collective advocacy allows a group of people, and the wider community with shared interests, to represent their views, preferences, and experiences. A collective voice can be more powerful than a single voice and can help policy makers, strategic planners, and service providers know what is working well, where gaps are, and how best to target resources. Being part of a collective advocacy group can help to reduce an individual's sense of isolation when raising a difficult issue.

Collective advocacy rethinks the way advocacy can look in ECE. Instead of the traditional idea of funders, policy makers, and decision makers creating policy to be implemented into ECE programs and classrooms, Collective advocacy is a process of creating and connecting individuals and groups in the community that share common needs and concerns to learn from each other. In collective advocacy, these individuals and groups work together towards making positive long-lasting change.

Collective advocacy empowers a group of people to share their views, ideas, and experiences about shared interests. It offers opportunities for the voices and stakeholders who are often not at the table to be heard. It creates a platform in which all perspectives are considered, and a deeper sense of understanding is obtained. Collective advocacy can allow individuals who may be unsure or uncomfortable speaking up on their own a community of support in which to address an issue. In collective advocacy, leadership and decision making are shared by all.

Traditional advocacy is what most people know and see—think about figures in history who have led big change or called attention to big issues, such as Rosa Parks, Malala Yousafzai, and David Hogg. Traditional advocacy is led by a few and followed by many with those at the top making the decisions. It can be dependent on leadership and dissolve quickly when leadership falters or changes.

Traditional Advocacy vs Collective Advocacy

> “Listening requires that you quiet your own experience to make room for another’s.” —Zikiea Gardner

The table below serves as a quick reference to the differences of what might be seen as traditional advocacy and collective advocacy.

	Traditional Advocacy	Collective Advocacy
Structure	Charismatic Leader(s)	Stakeholders are at equal levels of power.
Dec. Making	Executive Committee / Leadership	Decision making involves working through problems, sharing ideas, & decision making with the community.
Assumptions	Leaders know best. Force/power makes change	Family & community engagement will create lasting change
Beliefs	Working for change to a community	Working with families & community for lasting change

Let us look at each of the elements of traditional and collective advocacy in turn:

Structure

- Traditional advocacy structure usually has one or a few charismatic leaders at the top. They are the ones who begin the idea, set the goal, and have some sort of plan about what steps to take to get their idea out to others to make a change. They can get people fired up and their voices amplify their cause and get their ideas out.
- In collective advocacy structures, a number of people connect over an issue or an idea. They meet with each other to create a set of goals and a plan in which to move forward. In collective advocacy structures, many people take on many different leadership roles to amplify their cause and get their ideas out.

Decision Making

- In traditional advocacy, decisions are made by the one or few charismatic leaders at the top. It is their idea, their goals, and their plans that others follow. Other members of the advocacy project may contribute ideas or thoughts, but ultimately the end decision falls on the shoulders of the leader, or on a larger stage, with an executive committee.
- In collective advocacy, decision making is a process of understanding and working through problems, sharing ideas, and involving the community affected in the decision-making process.

Assumptions

- With traditional advocacy, it is assumed that the leaders know what is best for the community. Their perspectives, ideas, goals, and plans lead the force for change.
- With collective advocacy, the assumption is that all voices and perspectives will be heard to create ideas, goals, and plans that engage the community and make for lasting change.

Beliefs

- In traditional advocacy models, change is being made for a community to support the community in a beneficial way.
- In collective advocacy models, change is being made with the community to better understand the needs and desires of the community and help the community accomplish their goals.

How Traditional & Collective Advocacy can look in ECE

To consider how traditional and collective advocacy can play out in ECE, let us take a real-life issue that comes up in most ECE programs: special diets and food allergies.

Scenario

The program in which you work provides two snacks and a lunch for the children each day as part of the tuition families pay. There is a strict policy that children cannot bring food into the classroom from home. You have 20 children in your classroom with the following allergies and/or special diets:

- 3 children who are allergic to dairy
- 2 children who are gluten free
- 1 child that is vegan
- 1 child that is vegetarian
- 1 child that is allergic to melon
- 12 children who have no food allergies or special diets

Currently, your program caters to each child's dietary needs. However, doing so means following almost 50 different diet plans and has become too expensive to maintain. The program needs to find a way in which to support all children but keep costs down. The stakeholders in this decision are parents, children, administration/management, and teachers, each with their own ideas and wanting a voice of how to make this work. How would the decision-making process look using a traditional advocacy model?

	Traditional Advocacy	What it looks like:
Structure	A parent whose child has special dietary needs would advocate to meet with the director. (For this scenario let's say the family practices a vegetarian lifestyle.)	In this meeting the parent voices their beliefs about being a vegetarian and why having a vegetarian option is essential. The director listens and expresses the cost situation of the center to the parent. The director might extend an invitation to the parent to meet with the executive committee to be part of the decision making process.
Decision Making	The parent makes a suggestion to the executive committee, gives a strong argument in how the suggestion meets the needs of the center, and the suggestion is moved forward as the proposed change.	The suggestion is that all the food offered could be vegetarian. The parent offers to work with the committee to create well balanced vegetarian menus. The executive committee is excited about what seems like an easy solution and passes the suggestion.
Assumptions	It is assumed that the advocating parent's perspective is the only concern about the menu changes.	Everyone in the meeting thinks, "Yay! That was so much easier that we thought it would be!"
Beliefs	Decision makers believe that if other stakeholders cared, they would have said so.	"There will be no issues with the menu changes."
Likely Consequences	Not all of the needs of the community are heard and/or addressed. Many stakeholders are left out of the decision making process and do not feel heard.	The parents of children who are vegan, or have other special dietary needs and/or allergies are angry and frustrated with the changes. Chaos reigns.

Now let's take a look at how this might play out using a Collective Advocacy approach.

	Collective Advocacy	What it looks like:
Structure	A group of parents, administration members, teachers, children, and other stakeholders meet to discuss the upcoming menu changes.	A small group or individual reaches out to the director about building a committee to discuss the reason for the menu changes. An invitation is sent to all stakeholders to be part of the solution process. This includes parents, teachers, administration members, children, and others.
Decision Making	Each group is allowed an equal opportunity to share their needs and opinions. Each is discussed, problems are addressed, and possible solutions are offered. Solutions are voted on by the group.	After much consideration and debate, it is decided that the center would offer two menus, a vegan menu and a regular menu. Parents would choose to have their child eat one menu or another. It is also decided that children with special dietary needs would be allowed to bring in substitutions for items their children could not eat (such as berries for children allergic to melon, gluten free bread for children on a gluten free diet, etc.)
Assumptions	The group as a whole is working towards a solution that will benefit all involved.	"Our work has just begun."
Beliefs	We will do our best to make this work for everyone.	"This is a good start, but needs to be continually addressed over time to make sure we are meeting the needs of our community as it changes and grows."
Likely Consequences	The needs of the overall community are met, although they may look different for some families than for others.	Everyone feels as if their voices were heard and that they had the opportunity to be part of the decision-making process. They know that as issues come up, they will continue to have opportunities to work with the community to address the issues and make needed changes.

Pros & Cons of Each

- Traditional advocacy models can start quickly, spark a fire, and draw attention around an issue. Charismatic leaders inspire others to join in and traditional advocacy models can become a nationwide focus very quickly. Having a single voice directing goals and plans makes it easy for others to join even if those goals do not always align with the larger needs of the community. Involvement in traditional advocacy models can be long or short term, people who join can move in and out of their roles easily. Traditional advocacy movements can fizzle out quickly, especially if the leaders who began the movement leave or are involved in a scandal of some type, or slowly once the initial goals are met.
- Collective advocacy models can be slower to start and take more time to get going. Collective advocacy models focus on bringing many different groups and many different perspectives that are concerned about a certain issue to the table. In collective advocacy models, each voice has an equal opportunity to be heard and is equally valued. Because of this, setting goals and plans takes time, commitment, and a willingness to understand and find common ground. Collective advocacy models focus on a series of both long-term and short-term goals that work with families and the community for long-lasting change.

Your Call to Reflect

Think of a time when something was done for you that did not quite meet your needs. This can be in your professional life, such as a policy that was implemented, or your personal life, such as someone doing something for you to be kind or helpful. How did their involvement help and hinder the issue? How did it make you feel? What was your response?

Now think of a time that you were involved in the decision-making process. Again, this can be either in your professional life or your personal life. What was it like for you to be involved in the process? How did it make you feel? How did this compare and contrast to when you were not involved in the decision-making process?

> "I raise my voice not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard." —Malala Yousafzai

Think briefly about the reflection you just did in this module about the difference between when something was done for you and when you were involved in the decision making process. Which scenario created a better result? When creating an advocacy plan it is important to remember to have a focus of advocating with, rather than advocating for. Each of us carries our own thoughts,

beliefs, values, and bias. These come from our experience, our education, from our culture, and the way in which we were raised. As humans, we all look for connections and can sometimes incorrectly assume that others have the same thoughts, beliefs, values, and bias as us.

Some questions for consideration are:

- How is my positionality affecting my perspective about this issue?
- How do I make sure the perspectives of all stakeholders are represented and have the opportunity to be involved in this advocacy plan?
- How can I keep my bias from silencing other voices?
- Who do I need to contact to hear other perspectives about this idea or issue?
- What am I missing?

Citations

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7.4: Next Steps

Crafting your message[1]

Many of our key audiences often have very little time to discuss complex issues. Given these time constraints, it is imperative to develop a succinct message about early childhood issues that will capture the audience's interest. Advocates must also be capable of communicating a clear and concise message in a number of different formats: letters, e-mails, speeches, and meetings with public officials.

The message needs to:

- **E**ngage the Audience
- State the **P**roblem
- **I**nform Others about Potential Solutions
- **C**all to Action

The **EPIC** format, trademarked by the grassroots advocacy organization RESULTS (www.results.org), is a useful way to create a concise but powerful statement.

Engage the Audience
Identify the audience you are trying to influence. Choose information and language that will resonate with the audience and help it understand the issues.

State the Problem
Clearly and concisely define the problem. Choose the most compelling component of the issue for each audience.

Think about:

- What is the problem?
- Who is affected by the issue?
- Why does the issue need to be addressed at this time?
- Where is the problem greatest?
- When is intervention needed before there are negative consequences?
- How are children, families, and the community affected?
- What local data can you provide to emphasize how the problem is affecting the community?

Inform Others about Potential Solutions

Be prepared to suggest and discuss practical solutions. Consider your specific recommendations, the evidence you have to support them, and how these solutions might be funded.

Call to Action

The call to action required will vary according to the audience and the problem at hand, but make sure to clearly define the "ask." The action requested should be specific and give your audience an immediate way to get involved.

Moving the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further.

> "Anyone who does anything to help a child is a hero to me." – Fred Rogers

Most of us want to see, and be a part of, positive change in our programs and communities for a variety of reasons. Taking the first steps can be intimidating, it may be difficult to know where to start. You may be wondering:

- How do I know what is important to me?
- What if I don't know enough?
- What if people think I am a trouble-maker?
- What if I offend someone?
- What if I make it worse than it already is?

These worries are common and worthy of addressing. When you take the first steps from little a advocacy to Big A advocacy it can be helpful to identify one or two people you can rely on to help you address your concerns. This can be anyone: a co-worker, supervisor, colleague, partner, teacher, classmate, etc.

There are a lot of issues that need to be addressed in the field of ECE and it can be hard to narrow down where to hone your focus. Remember you are not alone! Many associations focused on early childhood have wonderful links and resources in which you can connect and explore different levels and types of advocacy.

ZERO TO THREE Mission Statement[2]

Our mission is to ensure that all babies and toddlers have a strong start in life. At ZERO TO THREE, we envision a society that has the knowledge and will to support all infants and toddlers in reaching their full potential.

National Association for the Education of Young Children Mission Statement[3]

NAEYC promotes high-quality early learning for all children, birth through age eight, by connecting practice, policy, and research. We advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children.

Let's get started!

> "To take a first step forward, you have to lose your balance a little."
> —3-year-old child in Reggio Emilia, Italy

There are also some wonderful tools to help you get started on your advocacy journey. For this module, we are going to use the You Have What It Takes! Zero to Three Advocacy tool. This tool was designed by ZERO TO THREE to help early childhood care & education professionals use their abilities, skills, knowledge and experience towards advocacy.

Let's walk through this tool together.

1. The first thing you will need to do is print the Advocacy Tool. You can use the link above or you can copy the pages out of this module.

Once you have copied or printed the Advocacy Tool pages, list out the ECE issues that you are interested in working as an advocate.

Your Call to Reflect

Take 10-15 minutes to free write about your thoughts around issues in ECE. If you have never done a free write, this is a good place to start. Simply place your pen or pencil on a piece of paper and write whatever comes to mind about this subject. Here are a couple of ideas to consider:

Think about the little a advocacy you do. What are the bigger issues connected to this work? Are you aware of any state or federal policies that are related to this in your classroom?

How would you imagine early childhood education and care at it's very best? What are the aspects you would see in classrooms, programs, or in your community? What are the barriers that might get in your way of achieving this image?

Once you have finished your free write, reread it and highlight three areas that mean the most to you, Write them down in the space provided on the Advocacy Tool Form.

1. For the next step, identify the skills that you already possess that make you a strong advocate. Consider each carefully, and rate yourself honestly. Remember that this form is to help you see where your advocacy skills can be put to use. Be honest, there are no wrong answers.
2. Now, use the Matching Skills chart to illustrate how your skills connect to different advocacy strategies. Fill in your scores on the Matching Skills to Advocacy Skills Chart.

When you have completed this chart, see where your strongest skills align with the Advocacy Strategies. You may be surprised at what you see, but don't let that intimidate you, you might have advocacy skills you haven't even considered yet!

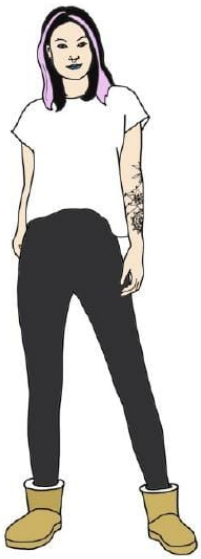
Example

The first time I completed this section of the Advocacy Tool, I wrote the ratings on top of the boxes, then I looked at where I saw the highest percentages. As someone who considered themselves an introvert, I was surprised to see that many of my skills aligned with public speaking (Testifying, Organizing Meetings, Recruiting Others, etc.). I reflected on this with a few of my colleagues and discovered that they fully agreed with the Advocacy Skills that I had identified in using this tool and mentioned several times that I had done each of these things in little a advocacy ways. Both the tool and the conversations helped me to see myself a bit differently than I had before.

You are now ready for your next step.

1. Build your Advocacy Plan and identify some achievable goals! Use the Advocacy Strategies that you checked off on the Matching Skills sheet. In the first column, list three of the Advocacy Strategies in which you had a high rating.
2. Next, visit the ZERO TO THREE Policy & Advocacy page. Also take a look at the NAEYC Advocacy page. Browse through the different topics and tools. What do you see that align with the three issues you identified at the beginning of this assignment available on this page that align with those issues? Do not get worried if you have to dig around a bit. You want to make sure that both the issue and plan align with what you feel is valuable and you are passionate about. In the second column, write down the first step you will take to work towards your advocacy strategy.
3. Identify your resources. You do not have to do this work alone! This section of the Advocacy Tool helps you to identify who you can collaborate with, how you can get connected, and how it will help you grow in your Big A advocacy work. Let's break this section down to the three columns.

- **Individual or Organization**—Who do you know is already involved in this work? Who do you know is passionate about this issue? Consider different professional development sessions you have had around the issue, who led those sessions? Think about your break room or playground conversations: who has expressed similar hopes or frustrations? What organizations are leading this work?



- **Connecting to Resources**—How are you going to connect with the individuals and/or organizations that you have identified? For individuals, an email or phone call is a great place to start, followed by an invitation to meet either in person or virtually. Organizations often have a plethora of resources on their websites and connecting to organizations can be as simple as

visiting the website and becoming a member or joining the email list.
- **How this resource can support your advocacy plan**—It is very easy to get lost in a conversation or go down the rabbit hole of information on a website and lose your focus on your original intent. Be sure to complete this third and final column of the Advocacy Tool and consider it as the beginning of your road map on your advocacy journey.

CONGRATULATIONS! You now have an Advocacy Plan!

Your Call to Reflect

Even with your plan, you may be still feeling a little nervous or not quite sure where to start. To learn how to begin your advocacy journey, watch the Tedx talk by Joseph R. Campbell as he describes five steps you can take to become an advocate.

Five Steps to becoming an Advocate

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

As you listen to his talk, write down how you might see yourself following these steps to support your own advocacy plan.

- Lock down your motivation—what is your sense of purpose?
- Establish role models or become one yourself—who else has done similar work?
- Understand your historical context and the histories of people around you—how do your intentions align with these contexts?
- Focus all those benefits, beliefs, and observations to push a way forward—are you looking at all the different perspectives? Who else do you need to connect with to learn more?
- Find a way forward—how can you take a step in, take a few steps back, and then step up?

Conclusion

As an early childhood care and education professional, you are in a unique and powerful position in influencing the lives of children and families. The work you do each day supports children in becoming healthy and happy adults. The way you speak to and speak about children can change the way families understand and support their children.

You are also in a unique and powerful position in understanding the issues that affect many families and children. You see the day-to-day struggles that families face, the barriers that keep children for succeeding to their full potential, and the missteps of policy creation that hold families back. You are an expert on these issues.

Embracing your role as both a “little a” advocate and a “Big A” advocate is an important part of the work you do with children and families. Hopefully, this module has provided you with tools, support, and motivation to continue and expand on this work. You do not have to do this alone. Partner with other ECE professionals in your program or center, connect with associations that support children and families, and find ways in which you can listen to the perspectives of the children and families in your care and invite them to get involved.

Most importantly, remember that your thoughts, experiences, and ideas are valuable, and your voice needs to be heard.

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Crafting Your Message up to and including Call to Action paragraph added from pages 9-10 in the *Early Childhood Advocacy Toolkit* (2009) by The Ounce of Prevention Fund. The content was modified to reflect the Canadian context.

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8: CODES AND GUIDES

8.1: CCCF Code of Ethics
8.2: AECENS Code of Ethics
8.3: NS ELCF Curriculum goals
8.4: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
8.5: ECE Pyramid Model in Nova Scotia

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8.1: CCCF Code of Ethics

This Code of Ethics reflects our commitment to conduct ourselves in accordance with the ethical standards expected in our sector. It's our roadmap to making sure that early childhood educators, parents, and children across the nation can trust the work undertaken by the CCCF.

The Canadian Child Care Federation and its affiliate organizations recognize their responsibility to promote ethical practices and attitudes on the part of child care practitioners. The following principles, explanations and standards of practice are designed to help child care practitioners monitor their professional practice and guide their decision-making. These ethical principles are based on the Code of Ethics of the Early Childhood Educators of B.C. They have been adapted for use by adults who work with children and families in a variety of child care and related settings. They are intended both to guide practitioners and to protect the children and families with whom they work. Professionalism creates additional ethical obligations to colleagues and to the profession.

Child care practitioners[1] work with one of society's most vulnerable groups – young children. The quality of the interactions between young children and the adults who care for them has a significant, enduring impact on children's lives. The intimacy of the relationship and the potential to do harm call for a commitment on the part of child care practitioners to the highest standards of ethical practice.

Principles of our Code of Ethics:

1. Childcare practitioners enable children to participate to their fullest potential in environments carefully planned to serve individual needs and to facilitate the child's progress in the social, emotional, physical and cognitive areas of development.
2. Childcare practitioners work in partnerships with parents, recognizing that parents have primary responsibility for the care of their children, valuing their commitment to the children and supporting them in meeting their responsibilities to their children.
3. Childcare practitioners promote the health and wellbeing of all children.
4. Childcare practitioners demonstrate caring for all children in all aspects of their practice.
5. Childcare practitioners work in partnership with colleagues and other service providers in the community to support the wellbeing of children and their families.
6. Childcare practitioners work in ways that enhance human dignity in trusting, caring and cooperative relationships, that respect the worth and uniqueness of the individual.
7. Childcare practitioners pursue, on an ongoing basis, the knowledge, skills and self-awareness needed to be professionally competent.
8. Childcare practitioners demonstrate integrity in all of their professional relationships.

Child care practitioners accept the ethical obligation to understand and work effectively with children in the context of family, culture and community. Child care practitioners care for and educate young children. However, ethical practice extends beyond the child and practitioner relationship. Child care practitioners also support parents as primary caregivers of their children and liaise with other professionals and community resources on behalf of children and families.

Eight ethical principles of practice are presented. These principles are intended to guide child care practitioners in deciding what conduct is most appropriate when they encounter ethical problems in the course of their work. Each principle is followed by an explanation and a list of standards of practice that represent an application of the principle in a child care or related setting.

1. This code uses the term childcare practitioner to refer to adults who work in the field of child care including: early childhood educators; family child care providers; family resource program personnel; resource and referral program personnel; and instructors in early childhood care and education programs in post-secondary institutions.
2. This code uses the term "parent" to refer the parent or legal guardian or the adult who assumes the parental role in the care of the child.

Canadian Child Care Federation. (n.d.). *Our code of ethics*. Retrieved April 4, 2022, from https://cccf-fcsge.ca/about-canadian...s/code-ethics/

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1. Enter your footnote content here.

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8.2: AECENS Code of Ethics

Guidelines for Responsible Behaviour in Child Care Practice

Association of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia (AECENS)

A code of ethics is our group beliefs about... “what is right rather than expedient... what is good rather than practical... and what acts a member must never engage in or condone”[1]

Children

To provide individualized and sensitive child care and accept professional responsibility for the children in ourcare

- To help each individual child learn:
  - To trust themselves and others
  - To trust in their abilities, and in those of others
  - To have respect for themselves and for others
  - To be honest with themselves and with others
  - To have self confidence
- To set up and maintain learning environments appropriate to the children’s interests, needs, and abilities.
- To accept the right of children to ask questions about unknowns that exist and to also accept the responsibility to encourage and provide different views and opinions, free from bias.
- To regard as our primary obligation the welfare of young children and the quality of services to them.
- To protect and extend each child’s sensory, physical, emotional, intellectual and social well being
- To familiarize oneself with laws and regulations regarding children, their care and child abuse, and to work to abide by them.
- To refrain from physical punishment, verbal abuse (ex. sarcasm, ridicule) and psychological abuse (ex. Threats, encouraging fear) of children in interactions with them
- To act responsibly when reporting abuse to the appropriate authorities
- To act promptly and decisively in situations where the well being of children is compromised, ensuring that the best interests of children supercede all other considerations.

Parents

- To maintain open communication with children’s families.
- To respect different family values and beliefs
- To recognize the importance of the family and the professional working together as a team, in the best interests of the child.
- To recognize the practitioner’s role as one which is supportive of the family and the child.
- To Cooperate with other persons, professionals, and organizations to promote programs that will enhance the quality of family life
- To share with parents, our knowledge and understanding of their children’s learning and developmental progress
- To provide quality child care services to all families using the program.
- To recognize that a privileged relationship exists between oneself, the children placed in one’s care, and their parents.
- To respect the rights of parents.
- To respect the confidential nature of information obtained about children and their families and to treat it in a responsible manner.
- To cooperate with professionals and organizations involved in a professional manner with the family.

Colleagues

- To support a climate of trust and forthrightness in the work place that will ensure that colleagues are able to speak and act in the best interests of children without
  far of recrimination

- To communicate with integrity, support on another and adopt professional attitudes and behaviours in their work with children.
- To receive suggestions or criticisms that will improve job performance
- To exercise care in expressing views on the disposition and professional conduct of colleagues.
- To share our knowledge and to support the development of our colleagues
- To increase one's own professional competence and to be willing to review and assess one's own practices.
- To improve professionally by actively pursuing knowledge about developments in early childhood education
- To respect confidentiality of views expressed in private by colleagues.
- To exercise utmost discretion
- To support a climate of trust and forthrightness in the work place that will ensure that colleagues are able to speak and act in the best interests of children without fear of recrimination.

Community

- To make information about services of the program openly and accurately available while maintaining essential safeguards for the privacy of individuals
- To advocate on a personal, professional and organizational level for appropriate early childhood services, resources and recognition
- To contribute to the extension of public information
- To model performance and attitudes
- To promote quality child care in our programs and practices
- To participate with colleagues and others in action to effect change consistent with the values, goals and objectives of our profession.
- To be knowledgeable about and practice licensing standards as outlined in the Nova Scotia Child Care Act and Regulations
- To be prepared to accept and abide by this code of ethics.

How to use this Code of Ethics

Ask Yourself

Is this decision that has to be made related to building relationships, stimulation or protection?

Refer to

Depending on the answer, refer to the section of the code of ethics that relates to:

- Building relationships – With trusting, caring and cooperative relationships that respect the worth and uniqueness of the individual
- Stimulation – With stimulation that encourages growth in the whole person
- Protection – With healthy and safe environments

Ask Yourself

Who are the persons to consider in this decision?

Refer to

The statement under the related heading– Children, parents, colleagues, community

Proceed with the Ethical Decision–Making Process

Should a situation arise that would compromise our ethical code, we are committed to the following decision–making process:

1. Identify the actual issue or practice that is causing a problem.

2. Indicate which individuals and/or groups are to be considered in the solution of the dilemma. (Consider the code of ethics, legislation, personalities etc.)
3. Explain what considerations each person/group is owed and why, particularly in terms of rights and considerations. Indicate the values that relate to the issue/practice and persons/group.
4. Develop alternative courses of action. Choose reasonable alternatives that seem to meet the considerations in 1–3. Evaluate the consequences of taking each alternative– short/long term effects, psychological, social and economical.
5. Apply values and principles conscientiously.
6. Choose a course of action and act with a commitment to that action. Assume responsibility for the course of action.
7. After a period of time, evaluate the action and assume responsibility for the consequences of the action.

Attribution

Association of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia (ACENS). (n.d.). *AECENS Code of Ethics guidelines for responsible behaviour in child care practice.* https://aecens.ca/wp-content/uploads...ics-AECENS.pdf

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8.3: NS ELCF Curriculum goals

Learning Goals and Objectives

> *Free the child's potential, and you will transform him into the world*
> *—Maria Montessori*

Learning goals provide a structure for early learning practice, guide educators' reflections and critical thinking, and form the basis for the assessment of children's learning and holistic development.

The four learning goals are

- well-being
- discovery and invention
- language and communication
- personal and social responsibility

These goals are consistent with the framework's image and vision of children as confident and capable learners. Each goal is supported by several Learning Objectives that provide educators with specific reference points. These reference points are there to identify, document and communicate children's progress to families, other early childhood professionals, and educators in schools. Over time, educators can reflect on how children have developed, how they have engaged with increasingly complex ideas, and how they have participated in increasingly sophisticated learning experiences.

Educators understand that children take different pathways to achieve these goals. Early learning does not focus exclusively on the endpoints of children's learning; educators give equal consideration to improvements made by individual children and recognize and celebrate not only the giant leaps that children take in their learning but the small steps as well.

Well-being

> Receive the children in reverence, educate them in love, and send them forth in freedom.
> —Rudolf Steiner

Well-being is a holistic concept that focuses on children being happy, confident, and healthy in all aspects of their development. For children, well-being implies that they are loved, respected, protected, and supported by their families and communities.

Dispositions to learn develop when children are immersed in an environment that is characterised by well-being and trust, belonging and purposeful activity, contributing and collaborating, communicating and representing, and exploring and guided participation.[1]

Children's well-being is affected by all their experiences within and outside of their early childhood education programs. Educators know that when they attend to children's well-being by providing warm and trusting relationships, they are supporting children's learning and development. Educators understand that it is essential to ensure predictable and safe environments for children, that provide affirmation and respect for all aspects of their physical, emotional, social, cognitive, linguistic, creative, and spiritual needs. By acknowledging each child's cultural and social identity, and responding sensitively to their emotional states, educators give children confidence, a sense of well-being, and a willingness to engage in learning. As children experience being cared for by educators and others, they become aware of the importance of living and learning together with others.

Children develop their own well-being and confidence as they learn more about healthy lifestyles, emotional well-being, and healthy social relationships. As children become more independent they can take greater responsibility for their health, hygiene, and personal care, and become mindful of their own and others' safety. Routines provide opportunities for children to learn about health and safety. Educators understand tha good nutrition is essential to healthy living and enables children to be active participants in play, and they are responsible for providing many opportunities for children to experience a range of healthy foods.

The state of children's well-being influences the way they interact in their environments. A strong sense of well-being provides

children with confidence and optimism to develop new friendships, interact with groups of other children, participate in new types of activities, and measure and calculate reasonable risks. It also influences children's readiness to persevere when faced with unfamiliar and challenging learning situations and creates opportunities for success and achievement.

Learning Objectives supporting the goal of well-being include:

- children feel safe, secure, and supported
- children become strong in their social and emotional well-being
- children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical well-being
- children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities

Discovery and invention

> *Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.*
> *—Unknown*

Children use a variety of processes such as exploration, collaboration and problem-solving to develop curiosity, persistence, and creativity. Children who are effective learners are transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another, and are able to locate and use resources for learning.

> *Through play, children invent symbols to explore relations of power, truth, and beauty as they move between the world as it is and the worlds they create. In these possible worlds, children have the liberty to push the boundaries and explore who they are as members of communities engaged with age-old issues such as good and evil. Learning to be imaginative and creative requires open and flexible environments, rich in materials and role models that reflect the cultural life of their communities—the songs, crafts, languages and artifacts—and opportunities for children to invent their own cultural forms and symbols; to explore unique and innovative approaches to understanding their worlds.*[2]

Educators recognize children as competent learners, and understand that they are capable of interacting with their indoor and outdoor environments to discover new concepts, problem solve, and create new ways of learning and playing. Children use their representational knowledge to invent new play—a rock may become a truck, a tree may become a house, and a line of chairs may become a train. Creativity allows children to create their learning environments over and over and in different ways. This type of active learning environment supports children's confidence to be involved learners who are increasingly able to take responsibility for their own learning, personal regulation, and contributions to the social environment. Connections and continuity between learning experiences in different settings make learning more meaningful, and contribute to the integrated nature of children's learning and development.

Children develop an understanding of themselves and their world through active, hands-on investigation. A supportive, active learning environment encourages children's engagement in learning which can be recognized as deep concentration and complete focus on what captures their interests. Children bring their own sense of self and their previous experiences to their learning. They have many ways of seeing the world, different processes of learning, and their own preferred learning styles.

> *An example of a learning disposition is the disposition to be curious. It may be characterized by: an inclination to enjoy puzzling over events; the skills to ask questions about them in different ways; and an understanding of when is the most appropriate time to ask questions.*[3]

Active involvement in learning builds children's understandings of concepts, as well as the creative thinking and inquiry processes that are necessary for lifelong learning. They challenge and extend their own thinking, and that of others, and create new knowledge in collaborative interactions and negotiations. Children's active involvement changes what they know, can do, and value, and transforms their learning.

Educators' knowledge of individual children is crucial to providing environments and experiences that optimize children's learning.

Learning Objectives intended to support discovery and invention include:

- children develop curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, and imagination
- children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem-solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesizing, researching, and investigating

Language and communication

> *Language is the tool of the tools.*
> *—Lev S. Vygotsky*

From birth, children communicate with others using gestures, facial expressions, sounds, language(s), and assisted communications. Responsive adults support the development of language throughout early childhood

- by giving language to a baby's gestures (Oh, you want the teddy bear!) and expressions (Ah, you like this applesauce!)
- by repeating toddlers' expressions into full sentences (You want to read the book again?)
- by probing and extending possibilities for language development when engaging in conversations
- by providing opportunities for children to express their ideas, ask questions, and share stories

Educators appreciate that children are social beings who are intrinsically motivated to exchange ideas, thoughts, questions, and feelings, and who use a range of tools and media, including music, dance and drama, to express themselves, connect with others and extend their learning.

> *Early Childhood Educators provide opportunities for children to be able to communicate their feelings, thoughts, and ideas through careful and thoughtful design of the environment, and the educators' own use of language and expression. Educators are skilled at maintaining a special balance in their exchanges with children—to respond to children's expressions in ways that inspire children to continue their communication, rather than replacing children's language with their own.*[4]

Children's use of their first language underpins their sense of identity and their conceptual development. They feel a sense of belonging when their language, interaction styles, and ways of communicating are valued. Children who hear, not only their own first language but the languages of other children in their program and community, begin to learn about the rhythms and sounds of all languages, and cultivate a sense of personal attachment to their own language, which contributes to their sense of personal identity.

Educators understand that children communicate with more than their words. Their constructions with blocks, art work, playdough figures, and pretend play scenarios all provide information about various stages of childhood development, interests and abilities, and how children interact both with the learning environment and other children. Educators encourage children to ask questions, and by analyzing those questions, educators assess children's learning concepts, use of language, and pursue the types of things that children wonder about. When children are encouraged to re-tell an event, describe a painting, or explain what's happening in the dress up corner, they have the opportunity to practice sequential thinking and reasoning. This expression and communication helps both educators and parents learn about children's thinking, their ideas, and who they are.

Experiences in early childhood education programs build on children's range of experiences with language, literacy, and numeracy within their families and communities. Positive attitudes towards, and competencies in literacy and numeracy are essential for successful learning. The foundations for these are built in early childhood.

Learning Objectives supporting language and communication:

- children interact verbally and nonverbally with others
- children engage with a variety of texts and gain meaning from them
- children express ideas and make meaning with a variety of media
- children begin to understand how symbols and patterns work
- children use technology to access information, investigate ideas, and express their thoughts
- Acadian and Francophone children in French minority language communities develop strong foundations in French

Personal and social responsibility

> *What children learn does not follow as an automatic result from what is taught, rather, it is in large part due to the children's own doing, as a consequence of their activities and our resources.*
> *—Loris Malaguzzi (Edwardo et al. 2011)*

From infancy, a child's relationships and experiences begin to influence the development of a uniquely personal sense of identity. Identity is not fixed at birth, but is shaped by a child's family and community, interactions with others, culture, language,

and experiences. Children who grow and develop in safe, secure, responsive, and consistent environments are more likely to develop the confidence to explore their environment and seek out new experiences. Children who are respected for their ideas, competencies, talents, and aptitudes develop a sense of themselves as competent and capable individuals.

> *Membership in communities involves interdependency. It is as simple and as complicated as this: we need to take care of each other, and we need to take care of the natural and constructed world around us. When children engage in respectful, responsive, and reciprocal relationships guided by sensitive and knowledgeable adults, they grow in their understanding of interdependency.*[5]

Throughout the early years, children develop their own identities, and understand how they relate to others. Participation in high-quality, play-based early childhood education programs gives children the opportunity to test out different roles, such as taking turns being the doctor, patient, store clerk, and airplane pilot, and understand and appreciate other perspectives.

Interactions with other children and adults provide opportunities to learn how to listen to other opinions, promote one's ideas, and resolve conflicts. Outdoor play cultivates a respect for the environment, and allows children to experience their natural environments in a first-hand and concrete way, and to understand their roles and responsibilities in taking care of our world.

Infants and toddlers begin to develop a sense of personal responsibility when they learn to feed themselves and recognize their belongings. Toddlers take greater responsibility for themselves when they accomplish self-care tasks, such as toileting and washing their hands.

Helping children develop strong personal identities, awareness, and sense of responsibility means educators spend time developing skills and strategies to help children regulate their emotions, problem solve, and communicate with others. Educators understand their own responsibility to model respect for children, families, and each other as professionals. They also understand the importance of creating inclusive environments that respect diversity and support all children to participate in activities regardless of their skill level or development.

> *In school age care settings, children's sense of responsibility for their learning is co-determined and skills and attitudes towards life-long learning are consolidated. Children actively involved in community building develop common interests and learn about citizenship.*[6]

By the time children are in their early school years, they are able to create rules for fair play, and modify and re-shape those rules in consideration of fairness to the group, or to ensure that all children have a chance to be included. Participation in games with teams encourages a sense of fair play for all and a sense of responsibility to the team.

Learning Objectives supporting personal and social responsibility
- children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy, and respect
- children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities, and how they can actively participate in them
- children respond to diversity with respect
- children become aware of fairness
- children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

Attribution

Learning Goals and Objectives (pages 47-54) from *Capable, Confident, and Curious*: *Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework*.

Province of Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2018). *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework*. https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/nselcur...mframework.pdf

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8.4: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

YouTube Video

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View this YouTube Video online

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an important agreement by countries who have promised to protect children's rights.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child explains who children are, all their rights, and the responsibilities of governments. All the rights are connected, they are all equally important and they cannot be taken away from children.



CRC Icons Poster

1. Definition of a child

A child is any person under the age of 18.

2. No discrimination

All children have all these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what they think, what they look like, if they are a boy or girl, if they have a disability, if they are rich or poor, and no matter who their parents or families are or what their parents or families believe or do. No child should be treated unfairly for any reason.

3. Best interests of the child

When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children. Governments should make sure children are protected and looked after by their parents, or by other people when this is needed. Governments should make sure that people and places responsible for looking after children are doing a good job.

4. Making rights real

Governments must do all they can to make sure that every child in their countries can enjoy all the rights in this Convention.

5. Family guidance as children develop

Governments should let families and communities guide their children so that, as they grow up, they learn to use their rights in the best way. The more children grow, the less guidance they will need.

6. Life survival and development

Every child has the right to be alive. Governments must make sure that children survive and develop in the best possible way.

7. Name and nationality

Children must be registered when they are born and given a name which is officially recognized by the government. Children must have a nationality (belong to a country). Whenever possible, children should know their parents and be looked after by them.

8. Identity

Children have the right to their own identity – an official record of who they are which includes their name, nationality and family relations. No one should take this away from them, but if this happens, governments must help children to quickly get their identity back.

9. Keeping families together

Children should not be separated from their parents unless they are not being properly looked after – for example, if a parent hurts or does not take care of a child. Children whose parents don't live together should stay in contact with both parents unless this might harm the child.

10. Contact with parents across countries

If a child lives in a different country than their parents, governments must let the child and parents travel so that they can stay in contact and be together.

11. Protection from kidnapping

Governments must stop children being taken out of the country when this is against the law – for example, being kidnapped by someone or held abroad by a parent when the other parent does not agree.

12. Respect for children's views

Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children seriously.

13. Sharing thoughts freely

Children have the right to share freely with others what they learn, think and feel, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms other people.

14. Freedom of thought and religion

Children can choose their own thoughts, opinions and religion, but this should not stop other people from enjoying their rights. Parents can guide children so that as they grow up, they learn to properly use this right.

15. Setting up or joining groups

Children can join or set up groups or organisations, and they can meet with others, as long as this does not harm other people.

16. Protection of privacy

Every child has the right to privacy. The law must protect children's privacy, family, home, communications and reputation (or good name) from any attack.

17. Access to information

Children have the right to get information from the Internet, radio, television, newspapers, books and other sources. Adults should make sure the information they are getting is not harmful. Governments should encourage the media to share information from lots of different sources, in languages that all children can understand.

18. Responsibility of parents

Parents are the main people responsible for bringing up a child. When the child does not have any parents, another adult will have this responsibility and they are called a “guardian”. Parents and guardians should always consider what is best for that child. Governments should help them. Where a child has both parents, both of them should be responsible for bringing up the child.

19. Protection from violence

Governments must protect children from violence, abuse and being neglected by anyone who looks after them.

20. Children without families

Every child who cannot be looked after by their own family has the right to be looked after properly by people who respect the child’s religion, culture, language and other aspects of their life.

21. Children who are adopted

When children are adopted, the most important thing is to do what is best for them. If a child cannot be properly looked after in their own country – for example by living with another family – then they might be adopted in another country.

22. Refugee children

Children who move from their home country to another country as refugees (because it was not safe for them to stay there) should get help and protection and have the same rights as children born in that country.

23. Children with disabilities

Every child with a disability should enjoy the best possible life in society. Governments should remove all obstacles for children with disabilities to become independent and to participate actively in the community.

24. Health, water, food, environment

Children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a clean and safe environment to live in. All adults and children should have information about how to stay safe and healthy.

25. Review of a child’s placement

Every child who has been placed somewhere away from home – for their care, protection or health – should have their situation checked regularly to see if everything is going well and if this is still the best place for the child to be.

26. Social and economic help

Governments should provide money or other support to help children from poor families.

27. Food, clothing, a safe home

Children have the right to food, clothing and a safe place to live so they can develop in the best possible way. The government should help families and children who cannot afford this.

28. Access to education

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education should be free. Secondary and higher education should be available to every child. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible. Discipline in schools should respect children’s rights and never use violence.

29. Aims of education

Children's education should help them fully develop their personalities, talents and abilities. It should teach them to understand their own rights, and to respect other people's rights, cultures and differences. It should help them to live peacefully and protect the environment.

30. Minority culture, language and religion

Children have the right to use their own language, culture and religion – even if these are not shared by most people in the country where they live.

31. Rest, play, culture, arts

Every child has the right to rest, relax, play and to take part in cultural and creative activities.

32. Protection from harmful work

Children have the right to be protected from doing work that is dangerous or bad for their education, health or development. If children work, they have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

33. Protection from harmful drugs

Governments must protect children from taking, making, carrying or selling harmful drugs.

34. Protection from sexual abuse

The government should protect children from sexual exploitation (being taken advantage of) and sexual abuse, including by people forcing children to have sex for money, or making sexual pictures or films of them.

35. Prevention of sale and trafficking

Governments must make sure that children are not kidnapped or sold, or taken to other countries or places to be exploited (taken advantage of).

36. Protection from exploitation

Children have the right to be protected from all other kinds of exploitation (being taken advantage of), even if these are not specifically mentioned in this Convention.

37. Children in detention

Children who are accused of breaking the law should not be killed, tortured, treated cruelly, put in prison forever, or put in prison with adults. Prison should always be the last choice and only for the shortest possible time. Children in prison should have legal help and be able to stay in contact with their family.

38. Protection in war

Children have the right to be protected during war. No child under 15 can join the army or take part in war.

39. Recovery and reintegration

Children have the right to get help if they have been hurt, neglected, treated badly or affected by war, so they can get back their health and dignity.

40. Children who break the law

Children accused of breaking the law have the right to legal help and fair treatment. There should be lots of solutions to help these children become good members of their communities. Prison should only be the last choice.

41. Best law for children applies

If the laws of a country protect children's rights better than this Convention, then those laws should be used.

42. Everyone must know children's rights

Governments should actively tell children and adults about this Convention so that everyone knows about children's rights.

43 to 54. How the Convention works

These articles explain how governments, the United Nations – including the Committee on the Rights of Child and UNICEF – and other organisations work to make sure all children enjoy all their rights.

Attribution

The United Nations. (1989). The United Nations convention on the rights of the child: The child-friendly version and CRC icons poster. UNICEF. https://www.unicef.org/sop/conventio...iendly-version

UNICEF. (2021, November 21). We all have rights (video). YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6F7ie1Z07aM

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8.5: ECE Pyramid Model in Nova Scotia

What is the Pyramid Model?



The Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children. Credit: NCPMI. (n.d.) Pyramid model overview. https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf...iew/index.html

The Pyramid Model is a conceptual framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children's healthy social and emotional development.[1] The Pyramid Model program uses a coaching model to provide guidance to families, Early Childhood Educators and other professionals and builds upon a tiered 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.[2]

Effective Workforce[3]

The foundation of the Pyramid Model is a trained, effective workforce. This ensures that systems and policies are in place to support those working with young children by providing ongoing training and support to implement the Pyramid Model practices.

1.High Quality Supportive Environments Nurturing & Responsive Relationships

This tier supports all children by providing nurturing and responsive relationships in safe and supportive environments.

2.Targeted Social and Emotional Supports

This tier supports some children who are at risk of challenging behaviours by teaching them targeted social and emotional supports such as how to identify and express emotions, develop problem-solving skills, and playing cooperatively with other children.

3. Intensive Intervention

This tier supports the few children who may require individualized and intensive supports which include planning with families to meet their needs and develop skills for understanding and responding to challenging behaviours.

What are the benefits of Pyramid Model practices?

Benefits for Children

Enhances their social skill an emotional skills which include their ability to:

- Develop and maintain friendships
- Identify and manage emotions
- Use problem-solving skills
- Follow directions
- Share and take turns
- Understand routines and transitions
- Develop self control strategies

Benefits for Educators

- Creates positive, supportive relationships with children
- Coaching and support for learning and implementing new strategies
- Provides training to support families
- Provides them with resources to share with families

Benefits for Families

- Creates positive, supportive relationships with children
- Provides resources and tips to promote social and emotional skills at home
- Helps build partnerships between families an educators to support capacity in preventing and addressing challenging behaviours

Pyramid Model in Nova Scotia[4]

Vision

All Nova Scotia (NS) ECEs and their programs have the capacity to support the social emotional well-being of children and their families in collaboration with a caring network of community partners.

Mission

To lead the development of a sustainable infrastructure to implement the Pyramid Model, a system of professional development practices for ECEs, that address the social emotional needs of NS children and their families.

Why implement Pyramid Model in Nova Scotia?

In a 2017 report (using data from 2012-13 & 2014-15), children in NS were reported to be amongst the most vulnerable nation-wide in at least one area of their development, including their social competence domain and emotional domain.[5] In response to this data, the province decided to implement the Pyramid Model in Regulated Childcare Centres (RCCs) and Pre-primary Programs (PPPs) to support educators working with young children and their families to develop and enhance their social and emotional development.

How is Pyramid Model implemented in Nova Scotia?

Who is involved in the Pyramid Model implementation in Nova Scotia?

The foundation of the Pyramid Model is data-based decision making, which means using practical information and experiences to inform decision making and future implementation. The Pyramid Model uses a coaching approach to professional development where Inclusion Coaches directly support ECEs in their implementation of Pyramid Model practices.

The program is implemented by Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development Intervention Services (NSECDIS) through 28 service locations. NSECDIS is a province-wide provincially funded program which provides specialized services and supports to families of young children from birth to school entry who are experiencing delays or difficulties in their development.

Who is involved in the Pyramid Model implementation in Nova Scotia?

There are key persons and various roles involved in the Pyramid Model implementation. Collaboration and positive relationship building are key for the implementation's success.

[table id=2 /]

Attribution

This unit is adapted from 2 resources:

The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI). (n.d.) Pyramid model overview. https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf...iew/index.html

NSECDIS and Early Childhood Collaborative Research Centre. (2021, June). *The pyramid model in Nova Scotia*. MSVU. https://www.msvu.ca/wp-content/uploa...al-English.pdf

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3. NCPMI. (n.d.) Pyramid model overview: Tiers of the pyramid model. https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf...iew/index.html
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5. Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2018). *Accountability Report 2017–2018*. https://novascotia.ca/government/acc...ity-Report.pdf

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S

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Chapter 2	Chapter 5				
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3.2	Chapter 4				
3.3			Chapter 1.2		
3.4			Chapter 8.1		
Chapter 4.1	Chapter 1				
4.2	Chapter 1				
Chapter 5	Chapter 2				
5.2	Chapter 2				
Chapter 6	Standards of Practice				
Chapter 7 .1	Chapter 6				
7.2	Chapter 6				
7.3	Chapter 6				
7.4	in Development				
Chapter 8				Chapter 7	
Chapter 9				Chapter 8	
Chapter 10				Chapter 9	

NSCC Version	Leadership in Early Care and Education	Reflective Practice in the Early Years	Introduction to Professional Communications	Fundamentals of Early Childhood Education in Nova Scotia	Additional Sources
Chapter 11				Chapter 10	
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Additional Canadian and Nova Scotia content has been added to make this resource relevant for students studying ECE in Nova Scotia.

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