

Occupational Standards

for Child Care Practitioners



Gillian Doherty



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CHILD CARE
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and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges.

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Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners

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Introduction

What are occupational standards?

Occupational standards describe what a person in a particular occupation must know and be able to do to be considered “competent” at that occupation.

In general, being “competent” means that a person has the level of skills and knowledge required to do a job safely and properly. These occupational standards are intended for child care practitioners who are responsible for a group of children. For people in this position, being competent means having the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to:

- work with children between birth and age 12 in a way that protects their health and safety, attends to their physical and emotional needs, and promotes their physical, emotional, social, communication, cognitive, moral and creative development;
- support families in meeting their responsibilities for their children; and
- work with other professionals involved with the child and/or family to ensure cooperation and consistency in meeting the needs of the family.

Why have occupational standards?

The development of occupational standards by the people doing the job enables them, rather than outsiders, to define acceptable professional behaviour and the knowledge, skills and abilities required for competent practice and enables them to take ownership of their occupation. Occupational standards also serve:

- As guidelines for designing and delivering training for the occupation;
- As a reference point against which the success of training can be judged;
- To assist training institutions to explain their expectations to students, employers to explain their expectations to directors, and directors to explain their expectations to the people working for them;

Definition

Child care practitioners are adults who provide remunerated care and education on a regular basis for children who are not part of their immediate family.

- As a reference point against which actual practice can be judged by individuals themselves or by other people;
- To assist in the identification by the individual or by others of required additional training or professional development; and
- To determine whether a person who has trained or worked in child care in another jurisdiction has the skills and knowledge deemed necessary in the jurisdiction in which they wish to practice.

What do occupational standards consist of?

Occupational standards generally have three components, a written statement of:

- the **skills and abilities** required to perform the job in a competent fashion;
- the **core knowledge** required to perform the job in a competent fashion; and
- the **standards of ethical practice** expected of practitioners in the occupation.

The first four sections of this document present nine standard statements related to the skills and abilities and the core knowledge required for competent practice when responsible for a group of children. These standard statements are followed by the third component, the Canadian Child Care Federation Code of Ethics. Each of the nine standard statements has

corresponding indicators of the required skills and abilities and the required knowledge. These indicators:

- Provide examples of criteria against which an individual's skills, abilities or knowledge may be ascertained.
- Are not intended to be an exhaustive list of criteria for each standard.
- Are not set out in any order of importance.

Although an indicator may appear in only one standard, it may apply to other standards as well.

To whom do these draft occupational standards apply?

These draft occupational standards are intended to apply to any child care practitioner who is responsible for a group of children in any of the following settings:

- a family child care home;
- a child care centre; the child's own home; and
- a family resource program (may also be called a parent-child resource program or centre, a child-family support program, or a family centre or family place) 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 after-school care
 - child minding to support another program for adults (job training, for example).

Section A

Caring for Children and Promoting Their Development

Standard One

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

1.1

The ability to create and maintain a sanitary environment that minimizes the risk of infection or food contamination

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) identify potential or actual health hazards in the child care setting and to take appropriate action to address them; b) implement and maintain practices that minimize the risk of infection or food contamination, such as proper hand washing and procedures for safe containment and storage of garbage; c) correctly apply current, relevant health regulations of the province or territory in which they work; d) explain good hygiene practices to children in a way they can understand; and e) help children to use good hygiene practices and to develop overall good hygiene awareness. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) how common illnesses are spread; 2) common behaviours that are associated with the spread of illness and/or food contamination; 3) methods for providing and maintaining a sanitary environment; 4) the current, relevant health regulations of the province or territory in which they work; and 5) where and how to find information about creating and maintaining an environment that minimizes the risk of infection or food contamination.

1.2

The ability to create and maintain an environment that protects the health and physical safety of children and adults

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) identify when furnishings, toys, equipment or vehicles are unsafe or in need of repair and to take appropriate action; b) identify situations – indoors or outdoors – that are unsafe or potentially unsafe and to take appropriate action; c) assess the potential risks to their own health and safety in the workplace and respond in ways that protect their health and safety in the child care setting; d) protect the safety of a child who is demonstrating challenging behaviour, for example, protect the head of a child who is having a temper tantrum on the floor; e) protect the safety of others when a child is demonstrating challenging behaviour; f) identify potentially dangerous items or materials and either remove them (if they are not required) or store them safely; g) implement and maintain a procedure for safe storage and administration of medications; h) correctly apply current, relevant safety regulations of the province or territory in which they work; i) provide supervision that is appropriate to the children’s developmental levels; j) maintain an awareness of the whole group when working with an individual child or small group; k) explain good safety practices to children in a way they can understand; l) help children to use good safety practices and to develop overall safety awareness; and m) implement and maintain effective procedures and protocols for completing fire and emergency exit drills and handling emergency situations, for example, an injury. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) common environmental hazards; 2) common child care situations that may result in children or adults having accidents or being injured; 3) the occupational health and safety issues specific to working in a child care setting and strategies for addressing them 4) methods for providing and maintaining a physically safe environment where potentially dangerous materials and medications are stored safely and children are properly supervised both indoors and outdoors; 5) the current, relevant safety regulations of the province or territory in which they work; 6) the contagious diseases and illnesses that must be reported in the jurisdiction in which they work and how to report them; and 7) where and how to find information about creating and maintaining an environment that minimizes the risk of injury to children or adults.

1.3

The ability to identify and report possible evidence of neglect or abuse of a child

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) recognize the signs and symptoms of possible neglect or of possible physical, emotional or sexual abuse; b) describe clearly and concisely what has been observed that indicates possible neglect or abuse; and c) maintain accurate and up-to-date records about child protection concerns and/or custody issues as required by law. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the signs and symptoms of possible neglect or possible physical, emotional or sexual abuse; 2) what must be reported under law and to whom a report should be made; 3) where and how to find information about possible neglect or abuse; and 4) where and how to find support in dealing with a situation where neglect or abuse may have occurred.

1.4

The ability to protect and promote children's physical health and well-being

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) plan nutritious, appealing and balanced snacks and meals that take into account the children's ages, nutritional needs, cultural and religious practices, and any allergies a child might have; b) use appropriate methods to monitor and record the type and quantities of food eaten by the children where this is necessary; c) explain good nutrition and good health practices to children in a way they can understand; d) help children to follow good nutrition and health practices and to develop overall healthy living awareness; e) help children to rest or to relax during the day for the amount of time and in the way that is appropriate to their developmental levels and needs; f) recognize symptoms that may indicate illness, allergy, injury or common childhood diseases; g) monitor children who have allergies or chronic medical conditions that require special precautions or care and to ensure that such precautions are taken and/or the required care is provided; h) respond appropriately when illness or injury is detected; and i) assess emergencies or accidents and address them promptly, efficiently and responsibly. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the nutritional needs of children from birth to age 12; 2) common food allergies, food sensitivities, and food intolerances, for example, lactose intolerance, and how to provide nutritious snacks and meals that do not include allergic foods or foods to which children may be sensitive or unable to tolerate; 3) foods that may be dangerous for very young children; 4) healthy food preparation methods; 5) children's needs for rest and relaxation at different developmental levels; 6) signs and symptoms of possible illness, injury, and common childhood diseases; 7) first aid and correct procedures for cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) for the ages of children served by the child care setting; 8) effective illness and injury prevention strategies, such as the appropriate sleeping positions to minimize the occurrence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS); and 9) when and how to contact emergency services.

1.5

The ability to establish and maintain a psychologically safe environment for each child and for the group of children

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) express positive or negative emotions appropriately; b) create and maintain an environment that conveys a sense of calm, order, consistency and continuity without being overly regimented; c) provide experiences that are appropriate for each child’s developmental level; d) provide experiences that convey respect for each child’s cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic background and family context (blended, single-parent, etc.); e) convey acceptance of and respect for children’s open expression of their feelings, whether positive or negative, through facial expression, language, or appropriate physical action; and f) support children in openly and safely expressing their positive and negative feelings through a range of verbal and non-verbal, communication strategies that are respectful of the child’s/ family’s culture. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the stages, sequences and milestones for emotional and social development between birth and age 12, and the range of development that is considered to be within typical limits at each stage; 2) that an individual’s culture and religious values and beliefs and their socio-economic status may influence what the individual expects from others and how the individual communicates and behaves; and 3) how and where to access information about different cultures and religions.

Standard Two

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

2.1

The ability to develop a warm, caring and responsive relationship with each child and with the group of children

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) respond appropriately and sensitively to children’s verbal and non-verbal expressions of need and their attempts to communicate; b) acknowledge and respond to each child’s and to the group’s behaviour, interests and ideas attentively, sensitively, respectfully and consistently; c) demonstrate respect for children’s unique personalities, temperaments and their individual needs, cultures, and family contexts; and d) support, comfort and encourage children who are experiencing difficulties and help them to understand and handle their feelings. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) how to listen effectively to children at different developmental levels and from the cultures served by the child care setting; 2) techniques for confirming with children that their communication has been received and understood; and 3) a range of effective strategies for responding sensitively to children’s emotional states.

2.2

The ability to provide effective behaviour guidance

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) establish realistic expectations and clear, developmentally appropriate limits and boundaries for children’s behaviour; b) use developmentally appropriate ways to involve children in establishing guidelines and setting limits; c) promptly acknowledge children who are behaving in a positive fashion and clearly identify for them the specific behaviour that they should continue or repeat; d) help children to develop appropriate strategies for self-control and self-direction; e) recognize and respond when tiredness, boredom, hunger or feeling unwell might be contributing to a child’s inappropriate or challenging behaviour; f) use their assessment of the factors that may be contributing to a child’s inappropriate or challenging behaviour and their knowledge of the child to implement positive, developmentally-appropriate ways of addressing the behaviour; and g) identify when they need advice or additional information in order to respond sensitively and effectively to a child’s inappropriate or challenging behaviour. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the stages, sequences and milestones of behaviour between birth and age 12 and the range of behaviours that is considered to be within typical limits at each stage; 2) the stages, sequences and milestones for when children acquire self-regulation and self-direction between birth and age 12, and the range considered to be within typical limits at each stage; 3) positive, developmentally appropriate and effective approaches for guiding children’s behaviour; 4) how to recognize behaviours that indicate a child might need specialized attention from another professional; and 5) where and how to find information about children’s behaviour at different stages and how to provide effective behaviour guidance.

Standard Three

Plan and provide daily experiences that support and promote each child’s physical, emotional, social, communication, cognitive, ethical, and creative development

3.1

The ability to develop and maintain an overall environment that supports and promotes the development of all children

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) plan and provide a developmentally appropriate mix of child-initiated and adult-initiated play-based experiences; b) plan and provide active and quiet experiences, solitary and group experiences, and indoor and outdoor experiences; c) promote the active participation of all children by (1) ensuring that materials and equipment are accessible to each child, and (2) by providing direct or indirect assistance in a variety of verbal and non-verbal ways; d) interpret and respond appropriately to group dynamics; e) recognize and use everyday routines and activities as learning opportunities; f) provide each child with some individual attention every day; g) arrange movement from one experience to another during the day so that transitions occur smoothly; h) create an environment that reflects and affirms the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity within the surrounding community; i) obtain and incorporate children’s ideas into program planning in a way that is appropriate to their developmental level; and j) identify, access and use family and community resources to broaden children’s experiences. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) how to arrange and use the physical environment to support different purposes; 2) the role of the adult in supporting children’s development and learning; 3) the types of experiences and programming equipment and materials that are appropriate for children at different developmental levels; 4) what developmentally-appropriate play-based experiences are and how to create them; 5) techniques for ensuring smooth transitions between experiences for children at different developmental levels; 6) effective strategies for balancing individual and group needs; 7) effective strategies for identifying, accessing and using family and community resources; and 8) the general socio/demographic characteristics of the community being served by the child care setting.

3.2

The ability to support and promote each child's physical development

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) select a variety of toys, materials and equipment, for both fine and gross motor experiences, that are developmentally appropriate for the children in both size and function; b) plan and implement a variety of fine and gross motor activities that children enjoy and that are appropriate for their developmental levels and interests; c) explain the importance of regular gross motor activity to children in a way they can understand; d) encourage and support children to engage in a balance of fine and gross motor activities every day; e) use opportunities and plan play-based experiences that encourage children to use their senses by noting colours, odours, tastes, sounds and textures; and f) use community recreational resources to provide opportunities for experiences that promote physical development and physical skills. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the stages, sequences and milestones in the development of gross and fine motor skills between birth and age 12, and the range that is considered to be within typical limits at each stage; 2) the importance of play and how different types of play can be used to promote gross and fine motor development; 3) the five senses and their importance in physical development; 4) effective strategies for identifying, accessing and using community recreation resources to promote the development of children's physical skills; 5) how to recognize physical delays that might indicate a child needs specialized attention from another professional; and 6) where and how to access information about supporting children's physical development.

3.3

The ability to support and promote each child's emotional well-being and growth

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) help children to recognize, express and accept a full range of feelings; b) provide opportunities and help children to express their feelings and assert their wishes; c) intervene constructively and effectively when children use discriminatory words or actions associated with a child's gender, race, culture, religion, family background or ability level; d) use a variety of strategies to respond in a positive and encouraging manner to children's efforts to learn new skills; e) support the development of all children's self-esteem; f) identify indications of low self-esteem or negative self-concept; g) help children to deal with situations that generate low self-esteem or negative self-concept, and to develop more positive images of themselves; h) help children to become self-sufficient and independent in ways that are culturally appropriate and reflect their development levels and abilities; i) help children to develop appropriate strategies for self-control and self-direction; j) support and foster children's pride in their heritage by incorporating foods, language, songs, games, books, stories, dance, and clothing that reflect individual children's family backgrounds in a way that makes these part of the every day program; and k) help all children to feel comfortable and included within the child care setting. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the stages, sequences and milestones of emotional development between birth and age 12, and the range of development that is considered to be within typical limits at each stage; 2) that individual temperament, abilities, family cultural background and past experiences may influence children's emotional development and self-esteem; 3) effective strategies for enhancing children's self-esteem; 4) where and how to find information about how to promote children's emotional well-being; 5) how to recognize lack of self-esteem, negative self-concept or emotional behaviours that might indicate a child needs specialized attention from another professional; and 6) where and how to access information about supporting children's emotional development.

3.4

The ability to support and promote each child's social development

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) demonstrate positive interaction with others in day-to-day activities; b) plan an environment and set up activities that support and encourage positive social interaction among all children; c) use play-based experiences and verbal guidance to help children to learn and practice strategies for getting along with others; d) help children to share their ideas and feelings with others; e) help children to understand the needs and expectations of their peers; f) help children to be able to see how another child might have a different perspective; g) help children to learn how to cooperate in joint activities in a way that is consistent with their developmental level; and h) help children to develop effective ways for addressing conflict. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the stages, sequences and milestones of social development between birth and age 12, and the range of development that is considered to be within typical limits at different stages; 2) the stages and sequences of play behaviour between birth and age 12, and how different types of play can be used to promote the development of social skills; 3) group dynamics and the role of peers at different developmental levels; 4) that variables such as individual temperament, readiness, abilities, family cultural background, past experience and learning styles may influence the development of social skills; 5) that cultural and religious beliefs and values and socio-economic status may influence what a person expects of others as well as the person's communication style and social behaviours; 6) effective strategies for helping children to develop social skills; 7) how to recognize social behaviours that might indicate a child needs specialized attention from another professional; and 8) where and how to access information about supporting children's social development.

3.5

The ability to support and promote each child's communication skill development

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) identify and use effective strategies to communicate with each child in a style and manner, and at a pace and level, that is appropriate to the child's developmental level and needs; b) help each child to express his or her needs, desires, thoughts and feelings both non-verbally and verbally, in a manner that is respectful of the child's culture, personality and developmental level; c) recognize and use opportunities and provide experiences for children to present their ideas and feelings through non-verbal means; d) identify opportunities and set up play-based experiences that encourage children to develop their listening and understanding skills; and e) model good use of language (good grammar, no slang or swear words). 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the stages, sequences and milestones in the development of communication skills between birth and age 12, and the range of development that is considered to be within typical limits at each stage; 2) that individual temperament, readiness, abilities, family cultural background and learning styles may influence the development of communication skills; 3) common forms of non-verbal communication used by children between birth and age 12 and what they may signify; 4) effective listening strategies with children at different developmental levels; 5) effective, developmentally-appropriate strategies for communicating with children at different ages; 6) that cultural background may influence communication patterns; 7) the stages and sequences of play behaviour between birth and age 12, and how different types of play may be used to promote the development of communication skills; 8) how to recognize communication difficulties that might indicate a child needs specialized attention from another professional; 9) where and how to access information about supporting children's communication skills.

3.6

The ability to support and promote each child's cognitive skill development

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) identify and implement a range of appealing and challenging play-based experiences that acknowledge each child's developmental level and learning style, and stimulate his or her curiosity and inventiveness, problem-solving and communication skills; b) provide an environment and developmentally-appropriate opportunities that encourage and support children to make decisions and solve problems; c) offer children experiences that set the stage for literacy and number skills; d) offer developmentally-appropriate experiences related to reading, science, mathematics and social studies; e) engage children in exploring, questioning, probing and problem-solving through daily activities as well as through planned play-based experiences; and f) encourage and support children to explain things and ideas, to predict what might happen, and to experiment. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the stages, sequences and milestones of cognitive development between birth and age 12, and the range of development that is considered to be within typical limits at each stage; 2) that individual temperament, readiness, abilities, family cultural background and learning styles can influence the development of cognitive skills such as problem-solving; 3) the stages and sequences of play behaviour between birth and age 12, and how different types of play can be used to promote the development of children's cognitive skills; 4) play-based activities for children of different developmental levels that stimulate exploration, questioning and problem-solving; 5) activities for children that set the stage for literacy and number skills; 6) where and how to find and access information and ideas about activities that stimulate children's exploration, questioning and problem-solving; 7) effective strategies for identifying and accessing community resources that can be used to promote children's cognitive skill development; and 8) how to recognize cognitive delays that might indicate a child needs specialized attention from another professional.

3.7

The ability to support and promote each child's ethical understanding and development

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) demonstrate ethical behaviour and decision-making processes; b) help children understand the perspectives, feelings and rights of others in ways they can understand; and c) engage children in activities and discussions that help them think about and reflect on ethical issues and dilemmas. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the stages of ethical understanding and development between birth and age 12, and the range of development that is considered to be within typical limits at each stage; 2) effective strategies for helping children understand ethical behaviour; and 3) where and how to access information about ethical issues and how to help children understand ethical behaviour.

3.8

The ability to support and promote each child’s creativity

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) encourage and support children’s efforts to try new activities, to develop their own ideas and to use materials, toys and equipment in their own ways; b) show appreciation of and encourage children’s creative expression; c) offer children a variety of play-based experiences and open-ended opportunities for developmentally-appropriate creative activities; and d) introduce music, creative movement, art, dramatic play, stories and songs that reflect and affirm the cultures and interests of the children in the setting and other cultures to incorporate these activities as an on-going part of the program. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) a variety of developmentally-appropriate experiences that encourage children’s creative development; and 2) where and how to access information about and gain access to family and community resources that can expand children’s creative experiences.

Standard Four

Use observations to assess children’s skills, abilities, interests and needs

4.1

The ability to use observations to assess children’s skills, abilities, interests and needs

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) use observation in an objective, non-judgmental way to assess children’s skills, abilities and interests; b) use observation to evaluate if the environment is appropriate, comfortable for, and accepted by the children; c) use observations to plan developmentally-appropriate experiences that are respectful of the children’s culture; communicate the results of their observations to others in a factual way that also helps to identify goals and/or jointly plan program experiences; and d) use observation to determine whether program experiences are appropriate, useful and accepted by the children, and to modify them if necessary to better meet the children’s interests, abilities and developmental needs. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) methods for the observation of children; 2) methods for recording, sharing and using observations of children; and 3) the factors to take into account – such as a child’s developmental level, past experiences, and cultural background – when interpreting observations.

Standard Five

Recognize signs and symptoms of emotional or developmental delays or challenges and take appropriate action

5.1	
The ability to recognize signs and symptoms of emotional or developmental delays or challenges and to take appropriate action	
Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) observe children’s behaviours and abilities and assess whether they are within the range of what is considered to be typical for the child’s developmental stage; b) identify signs of possible developmental delay in the physical, emotional, social, communication, or cognitive spheres; c) clearly and concisely describe indications and examples of possible delays; d) seek out and obtain informed opinions from other professionals or sources in a way that respects the privacy of the child and family; and e) bring their concern about a possible delay or problem to the attention of the child’s family in a way that seeks the family’s opinion and indicates the possible need for further investigation but does not unduly alarm the family.¹ 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the stages, sequences and milestones of physical, emotional, social, communication, and cognitive development between birth and age 12, and the range of development that is considered to be within typical limits at each stage; 2) the characteristics of developmental delay, communication delay and behavioural/emotional difficulties; 3) the factors to take into account – such as the child’s past experience, the family’s child-rearing practices and cultural communication styles – when observing a child’s behaviours and abilities; 4) where and how to find and access information about the signs and symptoms of emotional disturbance and developmental delays; and 5) where and how to find and access informed opinions and professional help if necessary.

¹ Where appropriate, family should be understood to refer to the child’s guardian.

Section B

Relationships with children's families

Standard Six

Establish and maintain an open, cooperative relationship with each child's family

6.1

The ability to establish an open, cooperative relationship with each child's family

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) provide families with information about the child care setting's philosophy, policies, approaches and procedures in a way that answers their questions; b) convey to families respect for their position as the child's primary caregiver; c) create an environment where families feel comfortable asking questions, sharing information, and expressing their needs and preferences; d) convey to families respect and consideration for differences in child-rearing values and practices and individual, cultural, religious, and community traditions and practices; e) work cooperatively with families in defining their needs and wishes and their goals for their child; f) reassure families that family enquiries, conversations with families, and children's records will be kept confidential unless a parent gives explicit permission to share information or such sharing is required by law or by court order; and g) help family members to feel welcome in the child care setting. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the philosophy and policies of the child care setting in which they work; 2) the major challenges facing families in Canada today, for example, balancing work and family responsibilities, working non-standard hours or shifts, and how these may affect both how children develop and what their parents need or want from child care; 3) some of the challenges facing newcomers to Canada, for example, adjusting to a different culture with different behavioural expectations, and how these may affect both how children develop and what their parents need from child care; 4) effective listening strategies with youths and with adults; 5) effective communication strategies with youths and with adults; and 6) effective strategies for addressing differences in child-rearing approaches or differences of opinion, for example, conflict resolution strategies.

6.2

The ability to maintain an open, cooperative relationship with each child’s family

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) use a variety of methods to encourage each family to share information regularly, including information about the child’s likes and dislikes and the family’s preferences regarding child-rearing practices, diet and dress; b) use a variety of approaches to communicate on a regular basis with families about the child’s daily experiences, progress, and development in a way that assists families to set goals for the child and provide feedback on the child care program; c) listen and respond to each family’s views in a manner that supports and respects the individual family and encourages families to express their needs, desires and preferences; d) use a variety of approaches to help families to express their opinions about the experiences their child is having or has had in the child care program, and the experiences they would like their child to have; e) approach a family to discuss a problem that their child has or a problem with the child in the child care setting; and f) effectively address differences of approach or opinion. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the philosophy and policies of the child care setting in which they work; 2) the major challenges facing families in Canada today, for example, balancing work and family responsibilities, working non-standard hours or shifts, and how they may affect both how children develop and what their parents need or want from child care; 3) some of the challenges facing newcomers to Canada, for example, adjusting to a different culture with different behavioural expectations, and how they may affect both how children develop and what their parents need or want from child care; 4) effective listening strategies with youths and with adults; 5) effective communication strategies with youths and with adults; and 6) effective strategies for addressing differences in child-rearing approaches or opinion.

Section C

Relationships with others in the child care setting and other community services involved with the child

Standard Seven

Establish and maintain supportive, collaborative relationships with others working in the child-care setting

7.1

The ability to establish and maintain supportive, collaborative relationships with others working in the child-care setting

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) clearly describe their own role and responsibilities and those of others working in the setting; b) communicate information to others clearly and concisely; c) share relevant information about children and families with colleagues working in the childcare setting in a way that respects the child's and family's dignity and privacy; d) work as part of a team and share responsibility with others for program planning, implementation and assessment; and e) discuss issues arising from diverse perspectives and experiences or differences of opinion in an open, frank and respectful manner. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the primary tasks and responsibilities of child care practitioners in general and; 2) their own specific role and responsibilities and those of others working in the child care setting.

Standard Eight

Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with other community service providers working with the child

8.1

The ability to establish and maintain collaborative relationships with other community service providers working with the child

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) explore respective roles and responsibilities with other service providers involved with the child while adhering to the parameters of the family’s informed consent; b) seek information from other service providers that might help meet the child’s needs within the child care setting while adhering to the parameters of the family’s informed consent; c) share relevant information about a child with other service providers that might assist them in working with the child while adhering to the parameters of the family’s informed consent and in keeping with the law or with court requirements; d) function with other community service providers as part of a service-provision team; and e) provide accurate information about the child care setting to other community service providers. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the roles and responsibilities of the community organizations that serve young children – in particular, child protection and public health; and 2) where and how to find and access information about the roles and responsibilities of other community organizations.

Section D

Maintaining one's skill and knowledge

Standard Nine

Reflect on one's own knowledge, attitudes and skills and take appropriate action

9.1

The ability to reflect on one's own knowledge, attitudes and skills and take appropriate action

Required skills and abilities	Required core knowledge
<p>Child care practitioners are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) describe how their interactions with children are developmentally-appropriate and respectful of the children's/families' culture; b) describe how their interactions with families convey respect for different cultures, values and child-rearing practices; c) describe how the environments and experiences they provide for children are consistent with developmentally-appropriate, inclusive practice which is respectful of the children's/families' culture, and how they promote children's development; d) identify their areas of strength and areas where they need to obtain additional knowledge or skills or changes their approach; e) use feedback provided by others to reflect upon their knowledge, skills and attitudes and to clarify their values and biases; and f) identify and use relevant sources of information and professional development to continuously enhance their work and to obtain additional knowledge or skills. 	<p>Child care practitioners know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) that one's own experience, family, culture, and religion shape child-rearing beliefs and values; 2) how to provide child care within an ethical framework, for example, the importance of maintaining confidentiality about a personal family matter shared by a child; 3) the stages, sequences and milestones of physical, emotional, social, communication, cognitive and ethical development between birth and age 12, and the range of development that is considered within typical limits at each stage; 4) where and how to find and access information about children and the skills needed to provide child care; 5) where and how to find professional development opportunities to increase one's knowledge of children and one's child care skills. 6) where and how to find and access copies of relevant employment standards, labour legislation, and human rights legislation.

Code of Ethics

by the Canadian Child Care Federation adapted
from the Code of Ethics of the Early Childhood Educators of B.C.

Introduction

Child care practitioners¹ 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.

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/practitioner relationship. Child care practitioners also support parents² as primary caregivers of their children and liaise with other professionals and community resources on behalf of children and families.

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.

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.

The ethical practice of child care practitioners reflects the eight principles. However, the resolution of ethical dilemmas can be difficult and there will be circumstances in which the ethical principles will conflict. In these difficult situations, it is recommended that child care practitioners carefully think through the likely consequences of giving priority to particular principles. By evaluating the consequences, it may become clear which principle ought to be given more weight. The preferred action should be the one which produces the least amount of avoidable harm. Child care practitioners are also encouraged to consult with colleagues to obtain different perspectives on the problem, always being mindful of confidentiality issues. However, the final decision will be made by the individual practitioner facing the ethical dilemma.

Child care practitioners promote the health and well-being of all children.

Child care practitioners are responsible for the children in their care. They create environments for children that are safe, secure and supportive of good

The Principles of the Code

- Child care practitioners promote the health and well-being of all children.
- Child care practitioners enable children to participate to their full 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.
- Child care practitioners demonstrate caring for all children in all aspects of their practice.
- Child care practitioners work in partnership 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.
- Child care practitioners work in partnership with colleagues and other service providers in the community to support the well-being of children and their families.
- Child care practitioners work in ways that enhance human dignity in trusting, caring and co-operative relationships that respect the worth and uniqueness of the individual.
- Child care practitioners pursue, on an ongoing basis, the knowledge, skills and self-awareness needed to be professionally competent.
- Child care practitioners demonstrate integrity in all of their professional relationships.

health in the broadest sense. They design programs that provide children with opportunities to develop physically, socially, emotionally, morally, spiritually, cognitively and creatively. A healthy environment for children is one in which each child's self-esteem is enhanced, play is encouraged and a warm, loving atmosphere is maintained.

In following this principle, a child care practitioner:

- promotes each child's health and well-being;
- creates and maintains safe and healthy environments for children;
- fosters all facets of children's development in the context of the child, their family and their community;
- enhances each child's feelings of competence, independence and self-esteem;
- refrains from in any way degrading, endangering, frightening or harming children;
- acts as an advocate on behalf of all children for public policies, programs and services that enhance their health and well-being; and
- acts promptly in situations where the well-being of the child is compromised.

Child care practitioners enable children to participate to their full potential in environments that are carefully planned to serve individual needs and to facilitate the child's progress in the social, emotional, physical and cognitive areas of development.

Child care practitioners understand the sequences and patterns of child development and cultural influences on those patterns. They use this knowledge to create environments and plan programs that are responsive to the children in their care. Child care practitioners implement programs and use guidance techniques that take into account the ages of the children and individual variations in their development.

In following this principle, a child care practitioner:

- considers cross-cultural variations in child-rearing approaches when assessing child development;
- applies the knowledge that the stages of physical, social, emotional, moral and cognitive development of each child may be different;
- determines where each child is on the various developmental continua and uses that knowledge to create programs that allow for individual differences and preferences; and
- uses developmentally appropriate methods and materials in working with children.

Child care practitioners demonstrate caring for all children in all aspects of their practice.

Caring involves both love and labour. Caring is at the core of early childhood education and is reflected in the mental, emotional and physical efforts of child care practitioners in their interactions with all children. Being cared for and cared about is consistently communicated to all children.

In following this principle, a child care practitioner:

- responds appropriately to each child's expressions of need;
- provides children with experiences that build trust;
- expresses warmth, appropriate affection, consideration and acceptance for children both verbally and non-verbally;
- communicates to children a genuine interest in their activities, ideas, opinions and concerns; and
- supports children as they experience different emotions and models acceptable ways of expressing emotions.

Child care practitioners work in partnership with parents, recognizing that the parents have primary responsibility for the care of their children, valuing their commitment to their children and supporting them in meeting their responsibilities to their children.

Child care practitioners share joint interest in the children in their care while recognizing that parents have primary responsibility for child-rearing and decision-making on behalf of their children. Child care practitioners complement and support parents as they carry out these responsibilities. Through positive, respectful and supportive relationships with parents, child care practitioners advance the well-being of children.

In following this principle, a child care practitioner:

- promotes considerate relationships with the parents of the children in care;

- respects the rights of parents to transmit their values, beliefs and cultural heritage to their children;
- supports parents with knowledge, skills and resources that will enhance their ability to nurture their children;
- encourages and provides opportunities for parents to participate actively in all aspects of planning and decision-making affecting their children; and
- builds upon strengths and competencies in supporting parents in their task of nurturing children.

Child care practitioners work in partnership with colleagues and other service providers in the community to support the well-being of children and their families.

Child care practitioners recognize that nurturing family environments benefit children. Child care practitioners work with other helping professionals to provide a network of support for families.

In following this principle, a child care practitioner:

- supports and encourages families by developing programs that meet the needs of those families being serviced;
- assists families in obtaining needed specialized services provided by other professionals; and
- advocates public policies and community services that are supportive of families.

Child care practitioners work in ways that enhance human dignity in trusting, caring and cooperative relationships that respect the worth and uniqueness of the individual.

Child care practitioners welcome and cherish children unconditionally. They respect the dignity of children, parents, colleagues and others with whom they interact. They demonstrate respect for diversity by valuing individuality and appreciating diverse characteristics including ideas and perspectives.

In following this principle, a child care practitioner:

- communicates respect by practising and promoting anti-bias interactions;
- supports and promotes the dignity of self and others by engaging in mutually enhancing relationships;
- plans inclusive programs that communicate respect for diversity regarding ability, culture, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation and family composition; and
- provides opportunities for all children to participate in childhood activities.

Child care practitioners pursue, on an ongoing basis the knowledge, skills and self-awareness needed to be professionally competent.

Early childhood professional practice is based on an expanding body of literature and research. Continuing education is essential. In-service skills training and self-awareness work prepare child care practitioners to fulfil their responsibilities more effectively.

In following this principle, a child care practitioner:

- recognizes the need for continuous learning;
- pursues professional development opportunities;
- incorporates into practice current knowledge in the field of early childhood care and education and related disciplines;
- assesses personal and professional strengths and limitations and undertakes self-improvement;
- articulates a personal philosophy of practice and justifies practices on the basis of theoretical perspectives; and
- shares knowledge to support the development of the field.

Child care practitioners demonstrate integrity in all of their professional relationships.

Child care practitioners are truthful and trustworthy. They communicate honestly and openly and endeavour to be accurate and objective. Child care practitioners treat as confidential information about the children, families and colleagues with whom they work.

Information may be shared with colleagues and other helping professionals as required for the care and support of the children or as required by law. Child care practitioners acknowledge real or potential conflicts of interest and act in accordance with the principles of this code of ethics.

In following this principle, a child care practitioner:

- communicates with children, parents, colleagues and other professionals in an honest, straightforward manner;
- conscientiously carries out professional responsibilities and duties;
- identifies personal values and beliefs and strives to be objective;
- treats as confidential information concerning children, families and colleagues unless failure to disclose would put children at risk; and
- recognizes the potential for real or perceived conflict of interest and acts in accordance with the principles of the code where dual relationships with colleagues or families exist and/or develop.

Notes

1. This code uses the term *child care 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 to the parent or legal guardian or the adult who assumes the parental role in the care of the child.

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