



Early Childhood Education - Resource Consulting Program Standard

*The approved program standard for
Early Childhood Education - Resource
Consulting program of instruction
leading to an Ontario College Graduate
Certificate delivered by Ontario
Colleges of Applied Arts and
Technology (MTCU funding code 71214)*

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
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I. Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for the Early Childhood Education - Resource Consulting program of instruction leading to an Ontario College Graduate Certificate delivered by Ontario colleges of applied arts and technology (MTCU funding code 71214).

Development of System-Wide Program Standards

In 1993, the Government of Ontario initiated program standards development with the objectives of bringing a greater degree of consistency to college programming offered across the province, broadening the focus of college programs to ensure graduates have the skills to be flexible and to continue to learn and adapt, and providing public accountability for the quality and relevance of college programs.

The Program Standards and Evaluation Unit of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has responsibility for the development, review, and approval of system-wide standards for programs of instruction at Ontario colleges of applied arts and technology.

Program Standards

Program standards apply to all similar programs of instruction offered by colleges across the province. Each program standard for a postsecondary program includes the following elements:

- **Vocational standard** (the vocationally specific learning outcomes which apply to the program of instruction in question),
- **Essential employability skills** (the essential employability skills learning outcomes which apply to all programs of instruction); and
- **General education requirement** (the requirement for general education in postsecondary programs of instruction).

Collectively, these elements outline the essential skills and knowledge that a student must reliably demonstrate in order to graduate from the program.

Individual colleges of applied arts and technology offering the program of instruction determine the specific program structure, delivery methods, and other curriculum matters to be used in assisting students to achieve the outcomes articulated in the standard. Individual colleges also determine whether additional local learning outcomes will be required to reflect specific local needs and/or interests.

The Expression of Program Standards as Vocational Learning Outcomes

Vocational learning outcomes represent culminating demonstrations of learning and achievement. They are not simply a listing of discrete skills, nor broad statements of knowledge and comprehension. In addition, vocational learning outcomes are interrelated and cannot be viewed in isolation of one another. As such, they should be viewed as a comprehensive whole. They describe performances that demonstrate that significant integrated learning by graduates of the program has been achieved and verified.

Expressing standards as vocational learning outcomes ensures consistency in the outcomes for program graduates, while leaving to the discretion of individual colleges curriculum matters such as the specific program structure and delivery methods.

The Presentation of the Vocational Learning Outcomes

The **vocational learning outcome** statements set out the culminating demonstration of learning and achievement that the student must reliably demonstrate before graduation.

The **elements of the performance** for each outcome define and clarify the level and quality of performance necessary to meet the requirements of the vocational learning outcome. However, it is the performance of the vocational learning outcome itself on which students are evaluated. The elements of performance are indicators of the means by which the student may proceed to satisfactory performance of the vocational learning outcome. The elements of performance do not stand alone but rather in reference to the vocational learning outcome of which they form a part.

The Development of a Program Standard

In establishing the standards development initiative, the Government determined that all postsecondary programs of instruction should include vocational skills coupled with a broader set of essential skills. This combination is considered critical to ensuring that college graduates have the skills required to be successful both upon graduation from the college program and throughout their working and personal lives.

A program standard is developed through a broad consultation process involving a range of stakeholders with a direct interest in the program area, including employers, professional associations, universities, secondary schools, and program graduates working in the field, in addition to students, faculty, and administrators at the colleges themselves. It represents a consensus of

participating stakeholders on the essential learning that all program graduates should have achieved.

Updating the Program Standard

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities will undertake regular reviews of the vocational learning outcomes for this program to ensure that the Early Childhood Education Resource Teacher Program Standard remains appropriate and relevant to the needs of students and employers across the Province of Ontario. To confirm that this document is the most up-to-date release, contact the [Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities](#).

II. Vocational Standard

All graduates of Early Childhood Education – Resource Consulting programs have achieved the ten vocational learning outcomes (VLOs) listed in the following pages.

Preamble

This program provides Registered Early Childhood Educators with specialist knowledge and skills to work as resource consultants with children living with special needs* and with their families*. Graduates work in a variety of early learning settings including licensed childcare centres and home-based child care agencies; family* support programs; infant and child development* and specialized early learning programs.

Graduates support inclusive* early learning environments* and lead others in the analysis, creation and implementation of family-centered policies and practices that support a philosophy of inclusion.

Graduates collaborate with early childhood professionals, community partners and families* to identify, respond to and support the diverse* abilities and interests of all children*. Graduates develop, review and update family-centered individualized Family Service Plans (FSP)* that support access to early learning programs* and services, meaningful participation in these programs*, optimal development and learning, and successful transitions* in daily life and to new learning environments.

Graduates analyze programs* and early learning environments* and recommend adaptations* to enable all children*, and in particular children living with special needs*, to participate fully in early learning opportunities that will enable them to reach their maximum learning and developmental potential.

Applying principles of adult training/education theory and practice, graduates develop and deliver strength-based training and professional development activities to families*, agency/childcare centre staff and community service providers.

Graduates work collaboratively with a wide variety of professional and community-based service providers, and provide leadership through consultation, service co-ordination, case management and referral services for children living with special needs* and for their families*.

As members of the College of Early Childhood Educators, graduates act in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2011). Graduates commit to reflective practice and ongoing professional development in the field of inclusive* early childhood education and special needs support and practice.

There are opportunities for graduates to pursue further educational qualifications and

degree completion. Graduates should contact individual colleges for further details.

Endnote: The Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) maintains the provincial postsecondary credit transfer portal, ONTransfer and the Ontario Postsecondary Transfer Guide (OPTG) at http://www.ocutg.on.ca/www/index_en.php?page=the_ontario_postsecondary_transfer_guide

**See Glossary*

Synopsis of the Vocational Learning Outcomes Early Childhood Education – Resource Consulting (Ontario College Graduate Certificate)

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to

- 1. plan, recommend and support play-based* early learning activities, program* adaptations* and modifications* to accommodate the learning, abilities and developmental needs of children living with a variety of special needs*.**
- 2. advise and lead agency/childcare centre staff and community partners in the development of a philosophy of inclusion and of policies and practices that support maximum participation of all children*, including children living with special needs*, in early learning opportunities.**
- 3. select, administer and interpret a variety of observation techniques* and screening tools to identify children* at risk for atypical development and learning, and refer to specialists for further assessment and intervention as necessary.**
- 4. create and maintain partnerships with families*, agency/childcare centre staff and community partners, to provide family-centered and community-based supports and services for children living with special needs*.**
- 5. plan, co-ordinate and evaluate individualized Family Service Plans (FSP)* for children living with special needs*, incorporating development and learning goals and developed in consultation with families*, early learning educators, health professionals and community service providers.**
- 6. plan and deliver strength-based training to families*, agency/childcare centre staff and community partners, and evaluate results.**
- 7. provide consultation, case management and referral services to families* and agency/childcare centre staff in early learning settings.**
- 8. identify and act in accordance with current legislation, regulations and evidence-based practices* in early childhood education, special needs and inclusive*practice.**
- 9. promote the benefits of inclusive*, meaningful and purposeful learning opportunities and services for children living with special needs*and for their families*.**

- 10. engage in reflective practice and keep current in emerging knowledge of early childhood education, special needs related and inclusive* practice.**

**See Glossary*

Note: The learning outcomes have been numbered as a point of reference; numbering does not imply prioritization, sequencing, nor weighting of significance.

The Vocational Learning Outcomes

1. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

plan, recommend and support play-based* early learning activities*, program* adaptations* and modifications* to accommodate the learning, abilities and developmental needs of children living with a variety of special needs*.

Elements of the Performance

- observe and identify the continuum of early development* in individual children* and groups of children* noting characteristics consistent with typical and atypical development
- identify and recommend activities and program* adaptations* that build on an individual child's strengths and abilities
- recommend modifications* to the program* and learning environment where necessary to optimize the learning and development of children living with special needs*
- recommend specific instructional, behavioural and environmental adaptations* based on evidence-based* research and children's* diverse* and unique needs
- apply principles of early learning pedagogy* and play-based* strategies to program* adaptations* and modifications*

**See Glossary*

2. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

advise and lead agency/childcare centre staff and community partners in the development of a philosophy of inclusion and of policies and practices that support maximum participation of all children*, including children living with special needs*, in early learning opportunities.

Elements of the Performance

- identify, analyze and implement policies and practices within early learning environments*
- work with parents, early learning team members and community partners to explore attitudes and beliefs about early learning inclusion practices
- consult with early learning personnel to support the development of a philosophy that articulates values related to access, maximum participation and supports for quality early learning opportunities for all children* and their families*
- recommend evidence-based* inclusion policies and practices that are aligned with a philosophy of inclusion, can be implemented in settings with various program* approaches and are meaningful to children*, families* and communities served
- recommend and support inclusion policies and practices that promote meaningful and maximum participation by children living with special needs* and their families* in early learning settings and communities
- promote the most inclusive* learning environment that best supports the learning and development of individual children living with special needs*

3. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

select, administer and interpret a variety of observation techniques* and screening tools to identify children* at risk for atypical development and learning and refer to specialists for further assessment and intervention as necessary.

Elements of the Performance

- observe children* in familiar settings over multiple points in time where possible
- select and use observational and screening tools that do not discriminate against children* based on their special needs, culture*, language spoken or socioeconomic background
- identify childcare staff and family* members' perceptions of children's* learning, behaviour and developmental progress
- use a variety of developmental screening tools competently to identify children* requiring further assessment, intervention or referral
- interpret, document and communicate observations* and findings of developmental screening with parents, early learning team members, professionals and community service providers, where appropriate
- initiate referrals to health, learning or developmental professionals, or community services for further assessment and intervention based on identification of children's* needs and knowledge of the roles and expertise of service providers
- safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of child and family* information in accordance with all applicable legislation, regulations and policies

4. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

create and maintain partnerships with families*, agency/childcare centre staff and community partners to provide family-centered and community based supports and services for children living with special needs*.

Elements of the Performance

- establish and maintain ongoing respectful responsive relationships* with all children* and their families*
- identify common responses and experiences that children living with special needs* and their families* encounter within the context of home and community environments
- listen empathetically to families'* concerns and issues regarding the development and learning of their children living with special needs* and the impact on the family*
- identify and support families* in their grieving process
- communicate using language that is accessible to and understandable by family* members (i.e., family-friendly and culturally appropriate)
- be respectful of family* dynamics including communication and decision making practices
- engage families* in decision making concerning their children*
- identify families'* strengths and promote confidence in their ability to care for their children*
- identify and appreciate parents as experts in the knowledge of their children's* strengths, interests and abilities
- implement strategies to promote family capacity*, empowerment and sense of competence
- coach parents regarding strategies to enhance their children's* development and learning and/or manage behavioural challenges
- recommend supports and services that are both accessible and acceptable to children's* families*
- promote family-centered supports and services for children* living with special needs* and their families*
- link families* to other family support groups and/or informal support within the community, where appropriate and acceptable to families*

5. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

plan, co-ordinate and evaluate individualized Family Service Plans (FSP)* for children living with special needs*, incorporating development and learning goals and developed in consultation with families*, early learning educators, health professionals and community service providers.

Elements of the Performance

- create realistic and meaningful opportunities for every child to reach his or her full potential
- identify potential supports and services for children living with a variety of special needs* including but not limited to speech and language, emotional or behavioural challenges, developmental and cognitive delays, and sensory and physical impairments
- consult with parents/guardians, early learning educators and health professionals/early intervention specialists and community partners in the development of FSPs*
- co-ordinate and facilitate FSP* meetings and develop individualized written FSPs*
- promote family* input and perspectives into the development of the FSP* and provide flexibility and choice when determining priorities, program* modifications* and resources
- create FSP* goals that are family* directed, specific, meaningful, appropriate, measurable and manageable
- communicate the goals or objectives of the FSP* in a manner that is understandable to families* and agency/childcare staff
- develop and implement strategies and experiences which enhance children's* abilities, interests and ideas and which maximize the child's ability to interact with peers
- align the instructional and behavioural strategies that are part of the FSP* with specific expected goals and outcomes
- integrate adaptive technologies into FSP* where appropriate and under the supervision of health professionals where required
- establish realistic timeframes for the accomplishment of FSP* goals and objectives
- monitor and evaluate children's* progress and regularly review FSPs* including goals, strategies and resources and revise as necessary
- integrate community supports and services into FSP* where appropriate
- support families* with children's* daily transition* processes including transitions* among home, school and recreational environments

6. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

plan and deliver strength-based training to families*, agency/childcare centre staff and community partners, and evaluate results.

Elements of the Performance

- assess learning needs and plan training sessions based on the specific strengths, and interests of children* and their families*, agency/childcare staff and community
- engage agency/childcare centres supervisors in supporting staff's professional development plans related to inclusive* practices and quality early learning programs* and environments for children living with special needs*
- develop training and educational opportunities applying the principles of adult education/training theory and practice
- use a variety of active learning strategies such as demonstrations, guided discussions, multimedia, journaling, case studies, coaching and mentoring
- present information in a variety of formats to accommodate a range of learning styles
- provide additional resource information to extend learning for families*, agency/childcare staff and community partners
- assist staff in deepening their understanding of children living with a variety of special needs* and their families*
- provide program* recommendations to address diverse* and unique needs
- research and inform others about new resources available to meet the needs of children living with special needs*
- collaborate with other professional and resource team members to plan and deliver relevant training opportunities
- provide professional networking opportunities for agency/childcare centre staff and community partners working with children living with special needs* and their families*
- evaluate the effectiveness and impact of staff training sessions and modify accordingly

7. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

provide consultation, case management and referral services to families* and agency/childcare centre staff in early learning settings.

Elements of the Performance

- advise and support families* and agency/childcare centre staff in early learning program* adaptations* and/or implementation of FSPs*
- identify and describe the range of professional service providers available for children with a variety of special needs* and their families*, including but not limited to speech-language pathologists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists, nurses, physicians, child psychologists, early childhood educators, teachers and school administrators
- promote service team relationships and shared collaborative practice based on family-centered goals, reciprocal communication strategies and shared information
- provide case management services to families* requiring co-ordination of multiple service providers
- recommend and initiate referrals with professionals and community service providers
- facilitate and support family* service team relationships through communication and conflict resolution strategies, interprofessional collaboration and teamwork
- promote family* decision making when considering community supports and services planned for their children*
- support families* as active members of the family* service team
- evaluate the supports provided to children* and their families*, ensuring they are meaningful and perceived as helpful by families* and revise FSPs* as necessary
- maintain accurate records and documentation related to the initiation, referral and provision of community supports and services
- safeguard children's* and families'* right to informed consent, privacy and confidentiality of personal information pursuant to any and all applicable municipal and provincial legislation, regulations and policies.
- support, promote and build families' advocacy* skills

8. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

identify and act in accordance with current legislation, regulations and evidence-based practices* in early childhood education, special needs and inclusive*practice.

Elements of the Performance

- act in accordance with ethical and professional standards* expressed in the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Early Childhood Educators (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2011)
- comply with key legislation impacting early learning environments* including the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*, the *Day Nurseries Act, 1990*, the *Child and Family Services Act, 1990* and the *Education Act, 1990*
- promote and engage in behaviours that support the dignity and rights of all members of the early learning settings in compliance with standards, policies, procedures and practices covered by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982* (section 15), the *Ontario Human Rights Code, 1989* (revised 2000) and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*
- safeguard children's* and families'* rights to privacy and confidentiality in accordance with current and applicable legislation, such as the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1990* (FIPPA), the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, 2000* (PIPEDA), as well as in compliance with established policies and procedures in early learning settings
- determine reasonable grounds to suspect when a child is at risk for abuse or neglect, and may be in need of protection, and take appropriate action in reporting these incidences in accordance with the *Ontario Child and Family Services Act, 1990*
- research current evidence-based* early childhood, special needs and inclusive* practices and apply findings to early learning environments

9. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

promote the benefits of inclusive*, meaningful and purposeful learning opportunities and services for children living with special needs*and for their families*.

Elements of the Performance

- protect and promote the rights of children living with special needs* within their families* and communities
- recommend the use of evidence-based* practices and inclusive* policies that will enhance the developmental and early learning outcomes of children living with special needs*
- promote family* empowerment with respect to advocating for quality inclusive* learning opportunities for their children* where appropriate
- participate in research to advance best practices in inclusive* early childhood education
- promote the benefits of inclusive* practices provided to all children* in early childhood learning settings

10. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

engage in reflective practice and keep current in emerging knowledge of early childhood education, special needs related and inclusive* practice.

Elements of the Performance

- use self reflection and self evaluation skills in an ongoing manner
- identify and analyze evidence-based* knowledge related to early childhood education and special needs related knowledge, and incorporate relevant findings into practice
- engage in ongoing professional development opportunities
- participate in the dissemination of knowledge and skills related to early childhood education and special needs practice
- network with professional colleagues and participate in professional associations advancing the field of early childhood education and special needs practice

Glossary

Adaptations - The adjustments to curriculum, instructional practices, materials or technology and the learning environment made in accordance with the abilities, interests and ideas of the child.

Advocacy - Actions to champion change, to extend or improve early learning opportunities and supports to children, families* and early childhood educators.

Child development - The sequential processes of growth and learning in which a child comes to acquire increasingly complex levels of moving, thinking, feeling and interacting with people and objects in the environment. Development involves both a gradual unfolding of biologically determined characteristics and the learning process. Children's development is holistic and interdependent including physical, intellectual, language, emotional and social development. It is embedded in the context of family, culture and society (adapted from CECE: *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, 2011).

Children - Refers to all children from birth to age twelve within the context of their individual family, social, economic, cultural, linguistic, spiritual and developmental diversities.

Children living with special needs - Refers to any child who displays challenges in learning and functioning in one or more areas of development and increased vulnerability to environmental and non-environmental stresses and who may require additional assistance, planning and support (Best Start Expert Panel (2007). *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT): A Framework for Ontario Early Learning Settings*).

Continuum of early development - Describes the sequence of skills within broad domains of development that children can be expected to demonstrate. The developmental continuum represents stages as approximations only. Individual children, as well as groups of children, can be in various stages of development across domains depending on a range of variables (adapted from the Best Start Expert Panel (2007). *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT): A Framework for Ontario Early Learning Settings*.)

Culture - The total way of life of a group of people including: their economic, family, religious, health, education systems, values and traditions; their form of government; their way of viewing the world; and also the objects, artefacts, language, literature, arts, institutions, organizations, ideas, and beliefs that make up symbolic and learned aspects of human society.

Diverse - Uniqueness that each person brings to the early learning environment including values and beliefs, culture and ethnicity, language, abilities, knowledge and interests, life experiences, socio-economic status, spirituality, gender, age

and sexual orientation (adapted from Best Start Expert Panel (2007). *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT): A Framework for Ontario Early Learning Settings*).

Early learning environments - Child-centered environments that are focused on relationships between children, parents and early childhood professionals that provide, care, nurturing and education as a complex and coherent whole, with the goals of holistic development and overall well-being. It includes schedules, routines, physical environment, interactions, materials, activities and experiences (adapted from Best Start Expert Panel (2007). *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT): A Framework for Ontario Early Learning Settings*).

Ethical and professional standards - A core set of beliefs, values and responsibilities fundamental to this profession that serve to define the exemplary practices of early childhood education. The practice of Early Childhood Education is regulated by the College of Early Childhood Educators in accordance with the *Early Childhood Educator's Act, 2007*. It is the professional responsibility of all members of the College of Early Childhood Educators to meet and uphold the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice in their work in early learning settings.

Evidence-based practice - The delivery of high quality early learning programs based on the best empirical evidence available, in conjunction with professional judgment (Best Start Expert Panel (2007). *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT): A Framework for Ontario Early Learning Settings*).

Family/families - A group of persons who are bound together over time by ties of mutual consent, birth and/or adoption/placement and/or legal guardianship who, together, assume responsibilities for physical, social, spiritual and emotional care of one another, addition of new members through procreation/adoption, socialization of children, and nurturance/love of one another.

Family capacity - Family's ability to provide a nurturing, supportive, stimulating and caring environment that provides its members with the opportunity to grow in independence and develop holistically (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. *Early Childhood Intervention Programs: Building Family Capacity & Competency*, 2011).

Family Service Plan (FSP) - An individualized plan outlining the developmental, learning and behavioural goals, adaptation strategies and resources specifically designed to meet the developmental and learning needs of a child living with special needs and their family. Directed by the family's goals and priorities for their child, the FSP is developed, co-ordinated and evaluated by the Early Childhood Education – Resource Consultant in consultation with families, early learning educators, health professionals and community service partners.

Inclusive - An approach to practice in early learning settings where all children are accepted and served within a program and where each child and family experiences a sense of belonging and no child or family is stigmatized or marginalized. Inclusion means bringing people in rather than excluding them in thought, word or deed. Inclusive practice provides equal learning opportunity and full participation in all aspects of the early learning program by all children. (adapted from the College of Early Childhood Educators, (CECE): *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, 2011).

Modification - Refers to adaptations in policies and practices that will support the development and learning of children living with special needs.

Observation techniques - A systematic strategy for collecting information on the behaviour, emotional responses, interests, abilities and patterns of development of an individual child or a group of children within a learning environment, and/or aspects of that environment. Techniques may include participant observation, portfolios, learning stories, developmental screening tools, checklists, anecdotal records and diary recordings.

Pedagogy - The study of the body of knowledge which seeks to understand how learning takes place and the philosophy that supports that understanding of learning (adapted from Best Start Expert Panel (2007). *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT): A Framework for Ontario Early Learning Settings*).

Play-based - An educational approach which builds upon children's natural inclination to make sense of the world through play, where early childhood practitioners participate in play, guiding children's planning, decision-making and communications, and extending children's explorations with narrative, novelty and challenges (Best Start Expert Panel (2007). *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT): A Framework for Ontario Early Learning Settings*).

Program - An organized framework that delineates the learning opportunities provided to children, the processes through which children achieve the identified program goals, the practices which educators employ to help children achieve these goals, and the context in which learning occurs.

Responsive relationships - Positive and beneficial interactions between adults and children that occur when adults observe and read children's signals and communication and respond with understanding to give children a feeling of being cared for and cared about (Best Start Expert Panel (2007). *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT): A Framework for Ontario Early Learning Settings*).

Transition - The process involved in the movement of children and families from one learning environment to another. This transition may involve the transition of the child through daily activities within the learning environment or to transitions

between learning environments i.e. child care to Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten settings. It is recognized that children living with special needs and their families may require additional support and services to successfully adjust to new environments.