

# Code of Ethics

*The AECEO Code of Ethics reflects a core set of beliefs and values, which are fundamental to our field and serve to inform our practice as Early Childhood Educators. Members of the AECEO, through the Code of Ethics, publicly acknowledge their commitment to these beliefs and values and recognize their responsibility to use the Code of Ethics on a day to day basis to guide their behaviour in working with the children and families of Ontario.*

## Obligations to Children

As Early Childhood Educators working with and for young children, we are committed to promoting developmental care and education for each child in cooperative relationships with the family and the community. Early Childhood Education programs enable children to participate fully 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. Early Childhood Educators working with young children are obliged to:

1. Maintain and promote each child's self-esteem.
2. Recognize and respect the uniqueness and the potential of each child.
3. Be accepting of all children, respecting race, belief system, gender, national origin and socio-economic

- status.
4. Accept and integrate into regular programs the child with special needs when such integration is advisable and sufficient support is available.
  5. Be familiar with the knowledge base of Early Childhood Education and demonstrate this knowledge in program practices.
  6. Create and maintain a safe and healthy setting that supports the positive growth and welfare of children.
  7. Refrain from physical punishment, verbal abuse (e.g. sarcasm, ridicule) and psychological abuse (e.g. threats, encouraging fear) of children in interactions with them.
  8. Maintain the confidentiality of information obtained in the course of professional dealings with children and families. However, when concerned about a child's welfare, it is

- permissible to reveal confidential information to agencies and individuals who may be able to act in the child's interest.
9. Recognize symptoms of child abuse and know and act on law pertaining to child abuse.
  10. Involve all individuals (colleagues and parents) in decisions concerning the child.
  11. Report in a responsive manner and through the appropriate channels instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations to those who will take corrective action.
  12. Advocate and contribute to the extension of public information and education about children's needs for quality services.
  13. Advocate for policies and laws that promote the well-being of children and their families.

## Obligations to Families

Families are of primary importance in children's development. (The term family may include others besides parents who are responsibly involved with the child). Because the family and the Early Childhood Educator have a common interest in the child's welfare, we acknowledge a primary responsibility to bring about collaboration between the home and Early Childhood

program in ways that enhance the child's development. Early Childhood Educators working with families are obligated to:

1. Develop relationships of mutual trust with families they serve.
2. Respect the dignity of each family.

3. Respect families' child rearing values and their right to make decisions for their children.
4. Interpret each child's progress to guardians within the framework of a developmental perspective and help families understand and appreciate the value of developmentally appropriate Early Childhood programs.

## Obligations to Colleagues

Early Childhood Education is a profession that relies on a team approach. The relationship of colleagues within a profession influences the status of the profession and the quality of service provided. Colleagues in Early Childhood Education must act with integrity in supporting one another and adopting professional attitudes and behaviours in their work as models and teachers for young children. An Early Childhood Educator is obliged to:

1. Present professional qualifications, experience and affiliations honestly.

2. Speak or act on behalf of an association or organization only when duly authorized and then to do so accurately.
3. Establish and maintain cooperative relationships with colleagues and other professionals providing service to the child.
4. Exercise care in expressing views on the disposition and professional conduct of colleagues, confining such comments to matters of fact, which arise out of first-hand knowledge and which relate to the interest of children.
5. Respect the confidentiality of views expressed in private by colleagues.
6. Support a climate of trust and forthrightness in the

- work place that will ensure that colleagues are able to speak and act in the best interest of children without fear of recrimination.
7. Present concerns about the professional behaviour of a colleague, first to that person and attempt to resolve the matter collegially.
  8. Participate in the development and implementation of teaching methods that will effectively address the stated educational principles and goals of programs.
  9. Be a willing participant in the training process by articulating concerns constructively and by providing opportunities for students to practise professional skills under knowledgeable supervision.

## Obligations of Leaders

Recognition that Early Childhood Educators in leadership positions can substantially influence the quality of programs for young children, a code of ethics must specify additional guidelines for the professional competence and special duties of supervisors, consultants, administrators and training personnel. Early Childhood Educators in leadership positions are accountable for the programs and services provided. An Early Childhood Educator working in a leadership role is obliged to:

1. Develop and state clearly a philosophy toward the care and education of children and adhere to practices that are consistent with the goals inherent in this philosophical approach.

2. Provide a written job description and personnel policies that define program standards.
3. Conduct each staff and student evaluation impartially, basing it on first-hand observations of performance in accordance with the duties and responsibilities contained in the job description or student placement guidelines. Employees who do not meet program standards shall be informed of the areas of concern and when possible, assisted in improving their performance.
4. Support professional development and advancement of personnel.
5. Act promptly and decisively in situations where the well-being of children is compromised, ensuring that the best interests of children supersede all other considerations.
6. Inform an employee in advance of the reasons for

- dismissal, referring only to evidence of unsatisfactory performance which is accurate, documented, current and available to the employee.
7. Exercise utmost discretion when providing information or recommendations about children, families or personnel when such information is solicited by authorized persons. Obtain consent from the parties concerned whenever practical, especially when such information may be prejudicial.
  8. Make use of community and professional services when appropriate and provide parents with information about resources that will support and strengthen family life.
  9. Hire, promote and provide training in accordance with Human Rights Legislation.

## Obligations to Professional Competence

Early Childhood Educators have a commitment to ensure their own continuing professional competence and to further the field of Early Childhood Education. Early Childhood Educators are obliged to:

1. Keep professional knowledge up to date.
2. Recognize critical self-reflection as an important part of professional development.
3. Engage in self-care activities which help to avoid conditions (e.g. burnout, substance abuse) that could

- result in impaired judgement and interfere with their ability to benefit others.
4. Further the professional development of the field of Early Childhood Education and to strengthen its commitment to realizing its core values as reflected in this Code.