Continuous Professional Learning Program

Portfolio Handbook

cece
college of early childhood educators

Continuous Professional Learning

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The Continuous Professional Learning Program for Registered Early Childhood Educators
Introduction

The knowledge, skills and values inherent in the early childhood education profession reflect a dynamic field that is continually evolving and expanding. In order to promote high standards and quality assurance within the profession, members of the College of Early Childhood Educators need to be engaged in high quality continuous professional learning.

The recognition that continuous professional learning is important to members of the early childhood education profession is not a new idea. Early childhood educators have always found ways to enhance their knowledge and skills and have viewed learning as part of the role.

What has changed, however, is that early childhood educators are part of a self-regulated profession. As a regulatory body, the College aims to transform the concept of professional learning from something that registered early childhood educators (RECEs) "just did" into a documented formal process. The continuous professional learning process supports RECEs in meeting the expectations outlined in government legislation and College by-laws, policies, practices and programs.

The Continuous Professional Learning program allows RECEs to demonstrate their professional learning commitment to themselves, their colleagues, their employers, the young children and families with whom they work and to Ontario society.

Background

Part III Section 7 (2) of The Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007 lists the College objects. Objects 2, 3 and 8 outline the College mandate:

- to develop, establish and maintain qualifications for membership in the College;
- to provide for the ongoing education of members of the College;
- to promote high standards and quality assurance with respect to early childhood educators and to communicate with the public on behalf of members.

Part IX Section 43 (1) subsection 8 of the Act states that the College, subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council and with prior review by the Minister, may make regulations "prescribing ongoing education requirements for members of the College".

The Standards of Practice Committee Terms of Reference call for the Committee to "advise Council on the development of a plan to promote continued learning and ongoing professional development of members of the College and a process to implement such a plan".

In addition, the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice states that members "value lifelong learning and commit themselves to engaging in continuous professional learning to enhance their practice". Standard IV: Professional Knowledge and Competence outlines the expectation that "Early Childhood Educators are current in their professional knowledge" and that "they access current evidence-based research and are able to transfer this knowledge into practice. They are aware of the need to enhance their own learning in order to support both children and families. Early Childhood Educators demonstrate their commitment to ongoing professional development by engaging in continued learning".

The emphasis on the importance of ongoing education for members of self-regulatory bodies is not unique to the College of Early Childhood Educators. There are now over 40 professional self-regulatory bodies in Ontario. In order to serve and protect the public interest, most Ontario self-regulatory bodies have independently developed and implemented expectations specific to the ongoing education of members. The scope and nature of these expectations and practices vary.

The College's Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) program will promote high standards and provide a transparent level of quality assurance in order to best serve and protect the public interest.

Relationship of the CPL Program to the **Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice**

Definition of Continuous Professional Learning in a Regulatory Environment
Continuous professional learning is the systematic and intentional maintenance, enhancement and expansion of the knowledge, skills and ethical values and behaviours necessary to ensure ongoing quality professional practice throughout a member's career.

The *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* articulates the knowledge, skills and ethical values that are central to the work of early childhood educators. The Code of Ethics defines and describes the professional knowledge, professional expertise and ethical values and behaviours required of members of the College. The Standards of Practice describe the complexity of the role and the wide-ranging contributions that early childhood educators make to the care and learning of young children.

Registered early childhood educators practise their profession in a wide variety of settings, including, but not limited to, licensed early learning and care settings, private home environments, family resource centres, hospitals, public and private schools, colleges and universities and in government and corporate work places.

Prior to obtaining a Certificate of Registration, applicants to the College must provide evidence that they meet the educational requirements to be deemed qualified for entry to practice the profession. When applicants become members of the College, they are required to know and abide by the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*. This document outlines the expectations placed on a member in their professional practice throughout their career.

The *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* guides and supports the continuous professional learning experiences of all RECEs. Ongoing learning is an important and required component of professional competency and quality assurance for new members and RECEs progressing along their career continuum.

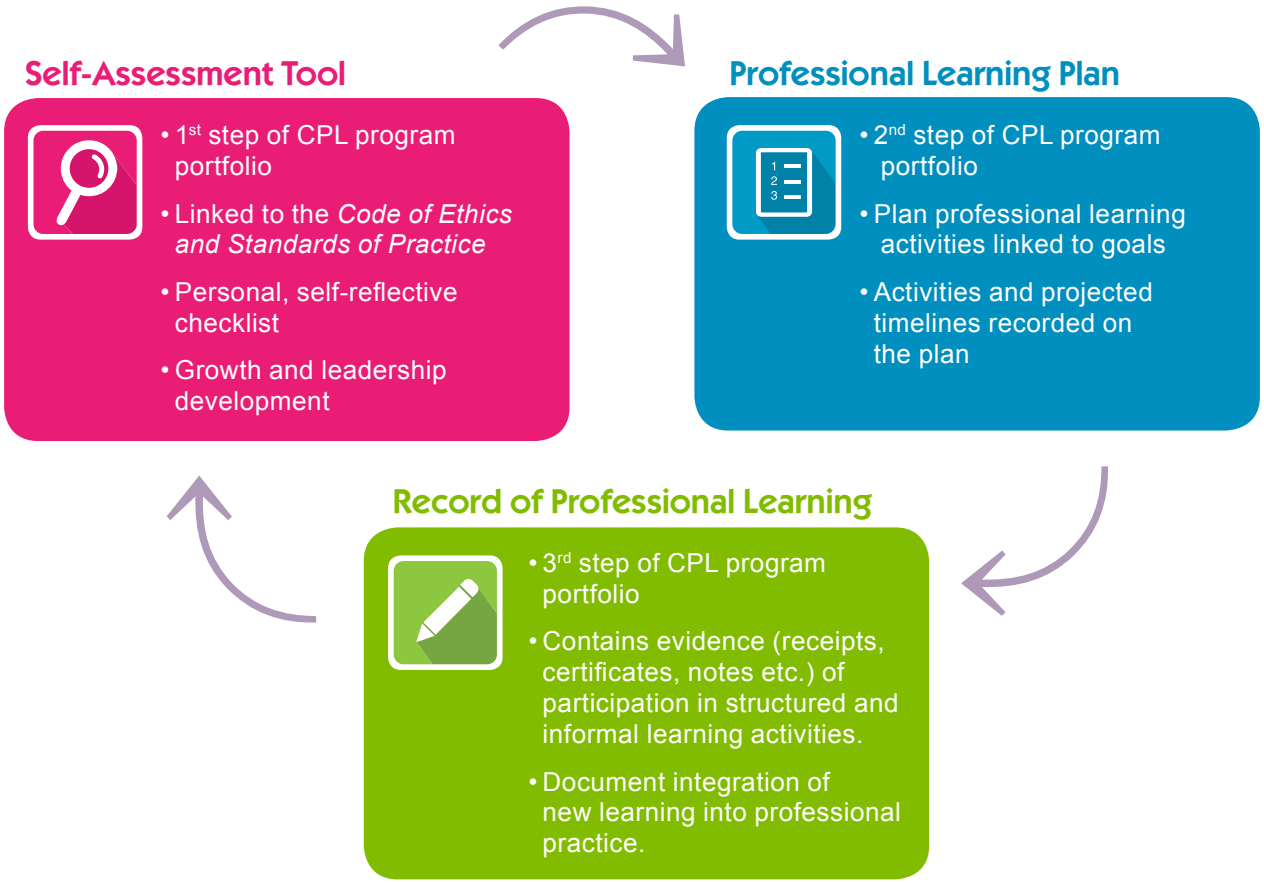
Throughout their careers, RECEs will engage in continuous learning opportunities designed to enhance professional competency and to reassure others that the profession undertakes and values ongoing learning. Engaging in continuous learning, linked to the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, supports RECEs in their efforts to develop and expand their knowledge and understanding of ethical values and behaviours essential to practising the profession.

The Three Components of the **CPL Program Portfolio**

The CPL program portfolio is comprised of the following three components that RECEs are recommended to review and complete every two years as part of the CPL program portfolio two-year cycle:

- Self-Assessment Tool
- Professional Learning Plan
- Record of Professional Learning

To guide future professional learning planning, RECEs are encouraged to complete and keep the three components of the CPL program portfolio.



The Self-Assessment Tool is the first component of the CPL program portfolio. The Self-Assessment Tool is completed at the beginning of every two-year portfolio cycle.

The Self-Assessment Tool is a personal, self-reflective checklist designed to assist RECEs in identifying areas for growth and leadership development in their professional practice. Each growth area is linked to an ethical or practice standard from the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*. RECEs assess whether a particular area is of high, medium or low priority and whether or not enhancing their practice in this area would require new professional learning or require modifying their practice.

The Professional Learning Plan is the second component of the CPL program portfolio. The plan is completed at the beginning of the two-year cycle and updated the following year as needed.

The Professional Learning Plan is a chart that supports RECEs in planning their engagement in professional learning activities that are directly linked to their goals. First, RECEs record two to four ethical or practice standards that are identified as high priority areas for growth from their Self-Assessment Tool. Next, RECEs identify two to four professional learning goals connected to their recorded ethical and practice standards. The plan provides space to record the learning activities and projected timelines required in order to accomplish these goals.

The Record of Professional Learning is the third component of the CPL program portfolio. This component is completed and updated on an ongoing basis as learning takes place throughout each two-year portfolio cycle.

The Record of Professional Learning provides a space to document RECEs' participation in structured and informal learning activities as outlined in the Professional Learning Plan. In addition to collecting documentation for the Record of Professional Learning, RECEs complete the charts ensuring linkages are created between their goals, learning activities and the integration of their learning into their professional practice. Space is provided for comments addressing successes, challenges and unexpected outcomes of goals or activities.

Purposes of the **Self-Assessment Tool**, the **Professional Learning Plan** and the **Record of Professional Learning**

The Self-Assessment Tool, Professional Learning Plan and the Record of Professional Learning for registered early childhood educators:

- Link continuous professional learning with the ethical and practice expectations outlined in the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.*
- Provide a template for RECEs to self-reflect on their professional practice and their learning needs.
- Assist in developing a plan for engaging in learning activities and creating strategies to meet their goals.
- Provide a format for presenting documentation of completed learning activities and support reflective practice through recording the integration of learning, as well as successes and challenges in meeting learning goals.
- Demonstrate that RECEs are accountable and are committed to upholding ethical and practice standards throughout their careers.

Each component of the CPL Program Portfolio illustrates the College's commitment to protect the public by expecting that early childhood educators remain competent and current in their efforts to provide professional, quality service in their practice.

The portfolio components are designed to be useful documents for RECEs striving to maintain and enhance their level of professional competence.

The CPL program acknowledges that RECEs are motivated adult learners. The portfolio components reflect the principles of adult learning. Engagement in the Continuous Professional Learning program provides early childhood educators with opportunities to self-reflect and direct their own learning when enhancing their professional practice.

Overview of the CPL Program
Two-Year Portfolio Cycle

The following graphic provides an overview of the CPL program two-year portfolio cycle. The graphic serves as a guide in completing the Self-Assessment Tool, Professional Learning Plan and Record of Professional Learning by providing a suggested monthly timeline of tasks.

The monthly timeline of tasks is intended to serve as a guide in completing the two-year portfolio cycle. RECEs are highly encouraged to complete all three components of the CPL Program Portfolio.

Year One		
Months One and Two	**Months Three to Ten**	**Months Eleven and Twelve**
1. Review your recent professional learning activities and other information relevant to your continuous professional learning. 2. Complete the Self-Assessment Tool. 3. Identify the ethical and practice standards that are of high priority for your growth or leadership development. 4. From these priority areas, identify **two** to **four goals** for your professional learning. 5. Complete the Professional Learning Plan by recording the ethical and practice standards, goals, learning activities and timelines for your plan.	1. Engage in your planned learning activities, complete the Record of Professional Learning and collect your documentation of participation in learning activities.	1. Submit your annual membership renewal. *Please note that although participation in the CPL program is not required at this time, the College will ask if you have participated in the CPL program.*

CPL Portfolio Cycle

Portfolio Cycle: Year 1
- Complete Self-Assessment
- Set goals in Professional Learning Plan
- Track progress in Record of Professional Learning

Portfolio Cycle: Year 2
- Document discoveries in Record of Professional Learning
- Reflect on goals, activities and learning

Year Two

Months One and Two	Months Three to Ten	Months Eleven and Twelve
1. Review your Professional Learning Plan. 2. Update or revise any goals, learning activities and timelines on your plan for year two of the two-year portfolio cycle, if needed.	1. Continue to engage in your planned learning activities. 2. Continue to complete your Record of Professional Learning and collect your documentation of participation in learning activities. 3. Review your Professional Learning Plan and your Record of Professional Learning. 4. Record comments on your Record of Professional Learning with regard to your successes, challenges or unexpected outcomes.	1. Retain all three completed portfolio components with supporting documentation of participation in learning activities. 2. Submit your annual membership renewal. 3. Plan to start another CPL portfolio two-year cycle the following month. Some goals and activities may be carried forward. *Please note that although participation in the CPL program is not required at this time, the College will ask if you have participated in the CPL program.*

Guide to Completing your **Self-Assessment Tool**

Introduction

Members of the College are recommended to complete the Self-Assessment Tool once every two years.

Early childhood educators who are new to the profession are recommended to complete the Self-Assessment Tool and develop their Professional Learning Plan at the beginning of their second year of membership.

The Self-Assessment Tool is designed to assist RECEs to self-reflect on their professional practice in order to identify professional learning needs and priorities.

The full version of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, including its endnotes on pages 27-28, should be considered when completing the Self-Assessment Tool.

Before Starting

- Get your full-text version of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.
- Review Completing My Self-Assessment Tool.
- Set aside a block of time or several shorter periods of time to complete the Self-Assessment Tool.
- Arrange time to consult with colleagues.
- Review your records if you have previously completed a Self-Assessment Tool and Professional Learning Plan.
- Review your Record of Professional Learning if you have previously completed one.
- Organize documentation of recent involvement in professional learning activities.
- Review other records such as recent performance appraisals or feedback questionnaires distributed in your practice setting.
- Download an electronic copy or print a hard copy version of the Self-Assessment Tool from the College website, college-ece.ca.

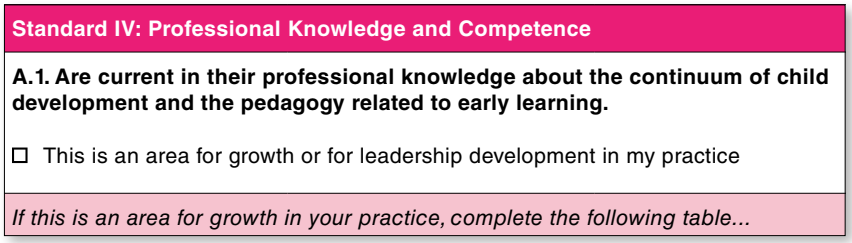
Next Steps

- Start on page one of the Self-Assessment Tool and ensure that you have a full-text version of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* available, including its endnotes on pages 27-28.
- Review each area of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* and reflect on your current practice and your continuous professional learning needs.
- Consult the following diagrams for clarification on when you should check off the boxes for growth or leadership development and whether it is high, medium or low priority to your practice.

Check the box if you perform at the level required to be competent in your practice role and setting however, you need or want to enhance your practice in this area.

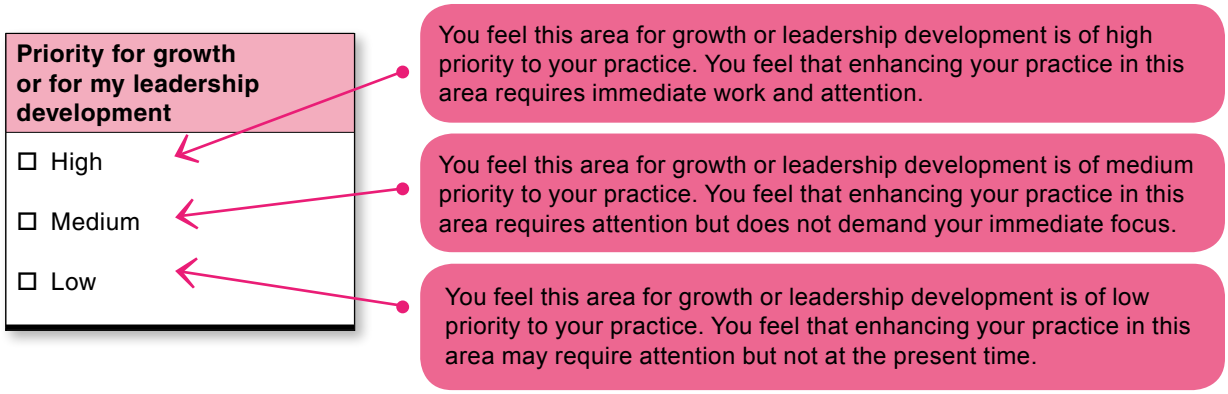
Or

You feel you need to enhance your leadership capacity in this area.

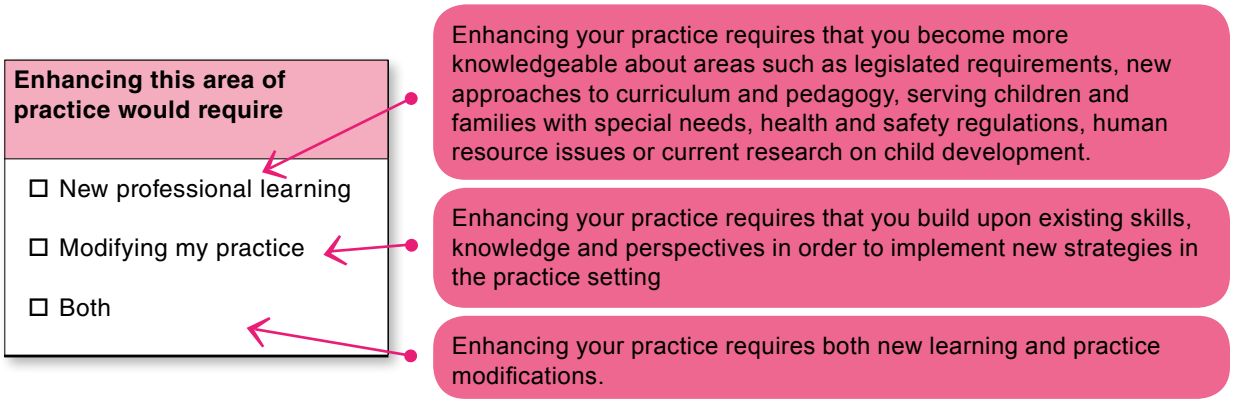


Note: Continuous professional learning in the context of enhancing leadership capacity is relevant to members in, or aspiring to, a designated leadership role (i.e. manager, supervisor or director) and to members whose experience and expertise are shared through informal, distributed leadership opportunities in daily practice, for example with colleagues, parents, etc.

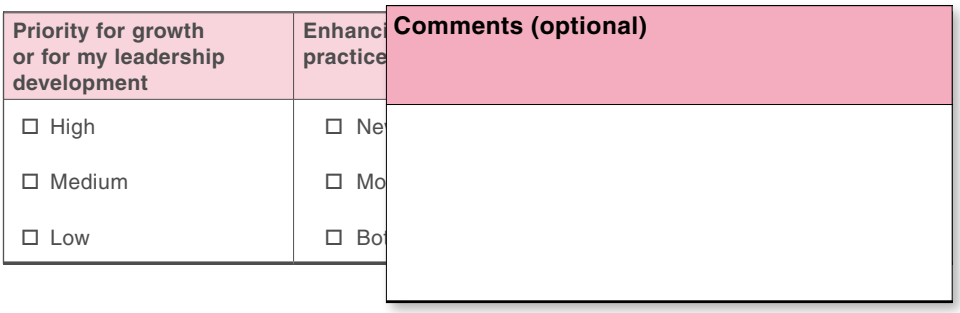
- If the ethical or practice standard is not an area for growth or leadership development for you at this time, proceed to the next ethical or practice standard in the tool.
- If you have chosen to check off the box for an area of growth or leadership development, you will then check off the box for high, medium or low priority.



- After indicating the level of priority, you must then determine the type of learning that is required to enhance your practice.



- The comment sections of the tool are optional. Providing comments may assist you in beginning the Professional Learning Plan.



Reviewing and Revising Your Self-Assessment Tool

- Review the entries that you have made in your Self-Assessment Tool and ensure that they reflect the realities of your practice role and setting, your professional learning needs and your priorities.
- Consider asking for feedback from your supervisor, mentor or other colleagues in your practice setting about your Self-Assessment Tool.
- Consider any feedback you obtain and finalize your entries for your Self-Assessment Tool.
- Keep your Self-Assessment Tool along with your CPL program portfolio documents.

Sample Entries for the Self-Assessment Tool

Standard IV: Professional Knowledge and Competence

For the full text version of Standard IV, see pages 19-21 of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* and endnotes on pages 27-28.

Early childhood educators...

Standard IV: Professional Knowledge and Competence		
A.1. Are current in their professional knowledge about the continuum of child development and the pedagogy related to early learning. ☐ This is an area for growth or for leadership development in my practice		
If this is an area for growth in your practice, complete the following table...		
Priority for growth or for my leadership development	**Enhancing this area of practice would require**	**Comments (optional)**
☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low	☐ New professional learning ☐ Modifying my practice ☐ Both	Learn more about designing curriculum and strategies to support RECEs and their work with children with special needs.
A.2. Know, understand and abide by the legislation, policies and procedures relevant to their professional practice. ☐ This is an area for growth or for leadership development in my practice		
If this is an area for growth in your practice, complete the following table...		
Priority for growth or for my leadership development	**Enhancing this area of practice would require**	**Comments (optional)**
☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low	☐ New professional learning ☐ Modifying my practice ☐ Both	I need to learn more about the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.*

Guide to Preparing your **Professional Learning Plan**

Introduction

The Professional Learning Plan is a part of the College's Continuous Professional Learning program portfolio. RECEs are recommended to update and revise their Professional Learning Plan every year.

The Professional Learning Plan assists early childhood educators to identify professional learning goals and link them with learning activities designed to meet these goals.

Members are encouraged to consult with other registered early childhood educators while reflecting on their practice and identifying helpful and realistic professional learning activities. Consulting with colleagues will help RECEs ensure that their Professional Learning Plan includes relevant, specific and measurable learning goals.

The Continuous Professional Learning program acknowledges that RECEs will engage in a variety of learning options to complete their goals. Members can engage in structured activities and informal activities over the two-year portfolio cycle.

The CPL program encourages members to engage in learning activities connected to their goals, complete the Professional Learning Plan and Record of Professional Learning, and maintain documentation of participation in planned learning activities. RECEs may choose the types of learning options that best suit their needs and learning goals.

Before Starting

- Review Completing My Professional Learning Plan.
- Review your Self-Assessment Tool:
  - → Identify the areas for growth or leadership development with the highest priority.
  - → Ask yourself which of the priority areas are most crucial to enhancing your current practice within the next two years.
  - → Focus on a minimum of two goals to a maximum of four goals for the two-year portfolio cycle.
  - → You may set long-term goals that will not necessarily be completed within one two-year portfolio cycle.
  - → Review and research your continuous professional learning options. Consider participating in both structured and informal activities to accomplish your goals. Look at the Examples of Continuous Professional Learning Options web on the following page to generate ideas.
  - → Investigate the learning options available to you at your place of employment, in your region, online or through self-directed study or research.
- Download an electronic copy or print a hard copy version of the Professional Learning Plan from the College website, college-ece.ca.

Examples of Continuous Professional Learning
Planned professional discussions with colleagues
Webinars/blogs
Professional Inquiry/action research
Self-study or study groups
Reflective practice/ journaling
Case study analysis
Professional reading/ writing
College of Early Childhood Educators learning modules
Post secondary courses/programs
Job shadowing or practicum
Video and/or audio resources
Preparing/delivering workshops, conferences or parent presentations
Attending workshops and conferences
Mentorship
Professional social networking

Guide to Preparing your **Professional Learning Plan**

Next Steps

- Enter the ethical or practice standard that you identified as an area for growth or for leadership development in your Self-Assessment Tool.
- Set a goal related to enhancing your practice in this area.
- List the professional learning activities you will need to complete in order to meet your goal.
- Indicate the timelines for accomplishing this goal.
- Continue completing your Professional Learning Plan with your remaining goals.

Reviewing Your Professional Learning Plan

- Consider asking for feedback on your Professional Learning Plan from your colleagues or others in your practice setting.
- Consider any feedback you have received and finalize your plan.
- Adjust your goals as needed.
- Keep your Professional Learning Plan along with your CPL program portfolio documents.

Sample Entries for a Professional Learning Plan

Area for Growth or for Leadership Development (Ethical or Practice Standard)	**Professional Learning Goal**	**Professional Learning Activities**	**Projected Timelines**
Transfer the ethical or practice standard you identified as an area for growth or for leadership development in your Self-Assessment Tool into this field.	Identify a goal relating to enhancing your practice in this area.	Determine what professional learning activities you will need to complete in order to meet your goal.	Estimate when you will begin to undertake professional learning activities and/or strategies and when you plan to reach your goal.
Standard IV: A.1 Early Childhood Educators are current in their professional knowledge about the continuum of child development and pedagogy related to early learning, curriculum, program planning, parenting and family dynamics.	To enhance my leadership skills in order to assist other RECEs to design and implement curriculum to support children with special needs in a child care setting.	• Shadow the Resource Teacher/Consultant at my place of employment. • Attend a workshop with a leadership or special needs focus. • Enroll in a Resource Teacher Certificate at a local college.	Fall 2015. Winter/Spring 2016. Programs begin in September 2016 and end in January or April of 2018.
Standard IV: A.2 Know, understand and abide by relevant legislation, policies and procedures.	To gain a better understanding of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* and how it applies to real life scenarios.	• Review the document and related resources describing the purpose and content. • With colleagues, read a case study about ethical decision-making available on the College website. Discuss and respond to the questions. • Read Practice Matters and Investigating Complaints in *Connexions*.	Between November 1, 2015 and February 28, 2016.

Guide to Completing and Maintaining your **Record of Professional Learning**

Introduction

The Record of Professional Learning is a part of the College's Continuous Professional Learning program portfolio. Documenting professional learning is one way that RECEs demonstrate to the public that they are accountable to the high standards of the profession.

The Record of Professional Learning includes charts for documenting structured and informal learning activities completed by the RECE to meet the goals outlined in their Professional Learning Plan.

RECEs add documentation such as receipts, certificates of completion, reflective journals and other notes to the Record of Professional Learning. The type and form of documentation maintained is determined by the RECE.

Before Starting

- Review Completing My Record of Professional Learning.
- Review your Professional Learning Plan.
- Gather documentation of participation in planned learning activities.
- Download an electronic copy or print a hard copy version of the Record of Professional Learning from the College website, college-ece.ca.

Next Steps

- Transfer your learning goals onto the appropriate Record of Professional Learning chart.
- For each goal:
  - → Indicate the learning provider, if applicable.
  - → Describe the activity.
  - → Record the date you completed the activity.
  - → List the documentation you have collected, including e-documents, to the Record of Professional Learning to indicate your participation in the activity (e.g. workshop descriptions, conference brochures, copies of professional articles, certificates of participation, receipts, newsletter articles/ research reports that you have reviewed or written, lists of presentations you have given, etc.).
  - → Describe how you have integrated your learning into your practice.
  - → Comment on any successes, challenges or unexpected outcomes you encountered in meeting or not meeting the goal.
- Review your documentation and completed charts. Make any changes or comments necessary to accurately reflect the learning activities that you have pursued and the goals that you have accomplished.
- Keep your Record of Professional Learning along with your CPL Program portfolio documents.

Sample Entries for a **Record of Professional Learning**

Structured Continuous Professional Learning Activities

RECEs can include information about engagement in structured or formalized activities such as workshops or webinars, courses offered by post-secondary institutions, community-based organizations, provincial associations serving the early childhood education sector, local, provincial or national conferences.

Professional Learning Goal	Description of the Activity	Professional Learning Provider (if applicable)	Date Completed	Documentation of Participation	Application of Professional Learning in my Practice
Transfer the ethical or practice standard you identified as an area for growth or for leadership development in your Self-Assessment Tool into this field.	Provide a brief description of the training including the time required to complete the activity.	List the name of the organization or institution offering the training.	Insert the date that the training was completed.	List the documentation of participation you will keep attached to your Record of Professional Learning.	Provide a brief description of how you integrated or will integrate your learning into your professional practice.
To enhance my leadership skills in order to assist other RECEs to design and implement curriculum to support children with special needs in a child care setting.	½ day workshop: "Modeling Appropriate Interactions" that described strategies for modeling for other RECEs appropriate interactions with children with special needs.	ABC Inc.	December 1, 2015	• Certificate of Attendance • My notes taken during the workshop • Presenter handouts	• I will give a 10-minute presentation to my colleagues at the next staff meeting regarding appropriate interactions. • I will continue to model the strategies I learned during the workshop and ask for feedback from my colleagues.

Reflections/Next Steps	
Reflect on your learning. Describe the successes, challenges or unexpected outcomes related to meeting or not meeting your goals.	My presentation was well received. I've been asked to present my material to staff at other centers. Several colleagues have come forward eager to contribute to the material and offer suggestions on alternate strategies and interactions.

Informal Continuous Professional Learning Activities

RECEs may record self-directed learning activities such as profession-related reading, planned colleague-to-colleague discussions, mentoring, project-related teamwork, video, audio, electronic communication or computer-based learning activities, research, writing and/or presentations or in-practice research that are not associated with a formal course or program. Self-directed learning activities will not typically have a professional learning provider.

Professional Learning Goal	Description of the Activity	Date Completed	Documentation of Participation	Application of Professional Learning in my Practice
Transfer the ethical or practice standard you identified as an area for growth or for leadership development in your Self-Assessment Tool into this field.	Provide a brief description of the training including the time required to complete the activity.	Insert the date that the training was completed.	List the documentation of participation you will keep attached to your Record of Professional Learning.	Provide a brief description of how you integrated or will integrate your learning into your professional practice.
To gain a better understanding of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* and how it applies to real life scenarios.	Organized a study group with two colleagues to review the document. Read a case study and responded to the questions as a group. Read all previous Practice Matters articles in *Connexions.*	January 15, 2016 January 30, 2016	• Case study questions and answers along with notes taken during our discussion. • Made some notes and highlighted areas of the articles that are of relevance to my practice.	I will analyze my professional decision-making on a bi-annual basis to determine how my knowledge of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* is influencing my judgments. I will keep track of my thoughts in a notebook. I will apply some of the answers outlined in the articles to my decision-making in my practice (i.e. maintaining professional boundaries with families).
Reflections/Next Steps Reflect on your learning. Describe the successes, challenges or unexpected outcomes related to meeting or not meeting your goals.	I find I am better able to remember the standards and address them with students in the Early Childhood Education program. Overall, I am maintaining a more professional attitude when interacting with colleagues, students and families.			

Glossary

Action research

A process whereby early childhood educators, through reflective practice and disciplined inquiry in their practice setting, work to improve the quality of their professional practice. (See also, Reflective practice.)

By-laws

Rules adopted by an organization chiefly for the government of its members and the regulation of its affairs.[1] In the context of the College of Early Childhood Educators, the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*, gives Council the authority to make by-laws related to the administrative and domestic affairs of the College.[2]

Case study analysis

A research method that focuses on investigating and understanding the situational, ethical and professional occurrences and relationships in a practice environment.[3] This research method focuses on the motivations, causes, behaviours and outcomes of registered early childhood educators in practice settings to highlight the ethical and professional and ethical dilemmas facing early childhood educators and to investigate the underlying principles of the profession.

Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

By-law 21, under the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*, states that the document, *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, outlines the prescribed code of ethics and standards of practice for members of the early childhood education profession in Ontario. This by-law came into force on February 28, 2011. The document and by-law communicates the scope and nature of the early childhood education profession. The *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, along with the Professional Misconduct regulation, serve as the basis on which members of the College are held accountable for professional practice and professional responsibilities. It also expresses a common set of ideals and aspirations for members of the College of Early Childhood Educators, regardless of the early childhood education setting in which they practice.[4]

College

In this document, the College refers to the College of Early Childhood Educators.

Continuous professional learning

The systematic and intentional maintenance and expansion of the knowledge, skills, and ethical values and behaviours necessary to ensure ongoing quality professional practice throughout an early childhood educator's career.

Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) program

A program designed for all registered early childhood educators in Ontario. The CPL program is a recommended framework for use by RECEs, comprised of learning modules, the CPL portfolio, and resources. The program encourages RECEs to reflect on their practice and identify ways in which they can grow professionally. The program is accessible to all RECEs, regardless of different learning styles, geographic locations, career stages and career ambitions. Members can declare their participation in the CPL program when renewing their membership.

Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) portfolio

The CPL portfolio promotes the principles of adult learning and is designed to assist RECEs in maintaining and enhancing their professional competence in relation to the ethical and professional standards. The portfolio is comprised of three components: the Self-Assessment Tool, Professional Learning Plan and the Record of Professional Learning.

Distributed leadership

Recognizes the value of a group of individuals with multiple skills and talents, interacting in an open manner without boundaries; views varieties of expertise distributed across the many rather than the few.[5] In the context of early childhood education, distributed leadership is characterized by collaboration, shared decision-making, problem solving and effective interpersonal communication.

Documentation

The documents, records, samples, and other modes that serve as evidence of participation in continuous professional learning activities and completion of professional goals as part of the CPL program. All documents in relation to the planning and completion of informal and structured learning activities are attached to the Record of Professional Learning component of the CPL portfolio.

Early childhood education

Defined by the scope of practice in the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*, early childhood education refers to the planning and delivery of inclusive play-based learning and care programs for children in order to promote the well-being and holistic development of children. This includes the delivery of programs to pre-school children and school aged children, including children with special needs; the assessment of the programs and of the progress of children in the programs; communication with the parents or persons with legal custody of the children in the programs in order to improve the development of the children.[6]

Evidence-based research and knowledge

Research and knowledge about child development, early learning, care and education that has been published in peer-reviewed journals and meets rigorous research standards. RECEs integrate evidence-based research and knowledge with child, family, cultural and workplace characteristics and values to create appropriate developmental care and education plans.[7]

Informal learning activity

A self-directed learning activity an RECE may pursue as part of the CPL program. Examples of informal learning activities are professional reading, planned colleague-to-colleague discussions, mentoring, project-related teamwork, video, audio, electronic communication or computer-based learning activities that are not associated with a formal course or program, profession-related research, writing and/or presentations or in-practice research.

Job shadowing

A work-based learning experience where early childhood educators gain insight into particular roles through following, observing and asking questions of an experienced colleague during a typical day.[8]

Journaling

A process by which educators write notes, reflections and personal and professional thoughts or observations on their work and professional practice. Journaling serves as a method to examine personal assumptions, biases and theories about teaching and learning.[9] In the context of the CPL program, journaling is considered an informal learning activity.

Leadership

A process where leaders draw on a range of strategies to achieve positive and ethical outcomes for members of a group or an organization. In the early childhood education context, leadership is understood through a range of models such as strategic, transformational, ethical, learning-centered, constructivist, positional, emotional, distributed and sustainable.[10]

Leadership development

The steps taken by early childhood educators to improve quality in the early learning and care sector through assuming leadership roles. Leadership development can occur by engaging in continuous professional learning activities in order to modify practice and/or acquire new knowledge and skills required to assume positional or distributed leadership roles.

Learning options

The range of learning opportunities available to RECEs when engaging in continuous professional learning. Learning options include all structured and informal forms of learning. Examples of learning options include, but are not limited to, case study analysis, webinars, job shadowing, and post-secondary courses.

Legislation

A law such as the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*, *Day Nurseries Act, 1990*, *Education Act,* 1990, *Child and Family Services Act, 1990*, or a set of laws or regulations made by the Ontario government including the regulations made there under.[11]

Members

Refers to members of the College of Early Childhood Educators. Members of the College also hold the protected title of registered early childhood educator (RECE) or early childhood educator (ECE) under the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007.*

Mentorship

A relationship between two professionals, that provides an opportunity for professionals to engage in reflective dialogue and practice. Mentorship, in the context of the CPL program, encourages participants to explore new possibilities related to their continuous professional learning. It requires both participants to collaborate on accomplishing learning goals through discussion, correspondence or face-to-face interactions in a specific practice setting. In the context of the CPL program, mentorship may be recognized as an informal learning activity set up in a practice setting or as a structured learning activity through participation in an established mentorship program through an organization.

Modifying my practice

Enhancing professional practice that requires an early childhood educator to develop skills and strategies in order to implement new perspectives and knowledge in the practice setting.

New professional learning

Refers to enhancing professional practice that requires an early childhood educator to become more knowledgeable about areas such as legislated requirements, new approaches to curriculum and pedagogy, serving children and families with special needs, health and safety regulations, human resource issues or current research on child development.

Performance appraisal

Refers to a process to assess and support early childhood educators in meeting early childhood program standards, fulfilling job responsibilities and contributing to the realization of a program vision, reaching the program goals, and meeting the program objectives.[12]

Portfolio

Both a product and a process; a portfolio is a dynamic, ever-changing, living document that reflects an early childhood educator's growth. Portfolios may contain evidence of learning through a variety of mixed media forms, representations, personal reflections, performance appraisals, written professional and/or academic documents, awards, certificates, diplomas and often includes an educational philosophy statement.[13]

Professional competence

Refers to the ability to perform activities in a professional, early childhood education context, to standards required in such work situations using appropriate knowledge, skill and attitude.[14]

Professional development

A process of continuous learning for the purposes of enhancing an individual's competencies and/or professionalism by expanding upon skills and knowledge based on current research and pedagogical development in the field.[15] Some examples of professional development may include the participation in activities such as courses, conferences, and workshops.

Professional learning

Refers to the active, ongoing learning that occurs within many contexts and through all experiences (i.e. social, emotional, cultural and cognitive) of an early childhood educator's life. Professional learning views the continuous education of educators from a holistic perspective and accounts for not only the transmission of knowledge and skills but, places value on the learning experience itself. This type of learning supports professional learning activities that take place in practice settings such as action research, mentorship, job shadowing. Professional learning also encourages early childhood educators to integrate learning experiences that occur outside of the practice setting into their daily, professional practice.

Professional learning activity

A specific activity an early childhood educator undertakes that is directly related to a corresponding professional learning goal. Professional learning activities are determined by the broader learning options and are indicated on the Professional Learning Plan and Record of Professional Learning of the CPL program portfolio. Professional learning activities can be either structured or informal.

Professional learning goal

A goal directly linked to an early childhood educator's identified area for growth and/or leadership development in their professional practice. Professional learning goals emerge out of a completed Self-Assessment Tool and are based on the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*.

Professional Learning Plan

The second component of the CPL program portfolio. The Professional Learning Plan is a chart that supports RECEs in planning their engagement in professional learning activities that are directly linked to their goals. Learning activities, and projected timelines are recorded on the plan.

Quality assurance

Refers to the measures and rules that help agencies and organizations provide high quality services and supports and meet set standards. Self-regulated professions, like early childhood education in Ontario, develop quality assurance mechanisms, such as the CPL program, to ensure the effectiveness of continuing professional development of its members.[16]

Record of Professional Learning

The third component of the CPL program portfolio. The Record of Professional Learning is a chart that contains the evidence of participation in structured and informal learning activities outlined in the Professional Learning Plan. Receipts, certificates, notes and other evidence are attached to the Record of Professional Learning.

Reflective practice

The systematic, reflective, collaborative process used by early childhood educators to plan, evaluate, make decisions and create and implement change through consideration of relevant literature, current practice learning environments, observations of children's development, behaviour, social interactions, learning and knowledge of families.[17]

Regulation

A law that is made by a person or body whose authority to make the law is set out in an Act.[18]

Self-assessment

A process by which an early childhood educator evaluates his or her knowledge, skills, ethical values and behaviours for the purposes of identifying areas for professional learning.

Self-Assessment Tool

The first component of the CPL program portfolio. The Self-Assessment Tool is a personal, self-reflective checklist designed to assist RECEs in identifying areas for growth and/or leadership development in their professional practice. Each focus area is based on an ethical or practice standard from the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*.

Self-directed learning

In the context of the CPL program, self-directed learning refers to the process and instructional method of learning for early childhood educators with regard to the CPL program portfolio components. It is any study form in which individuals have primary responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating the effort.[19] Self-directed learning experiences can be highly personalized to meet each early childhood educator's needs and goals, their preferred learning styles and their realities of the time, financial support and resources available to them.

Self-study

In the context of the CPL program, self-study refers to an informal learning activity that upholds the principles of self-directed learning whereby an early childhood educator independently explores, learns and acquires new knowledge on a particular topic related to their professional practice.

Structured learning activity

Refers to a structured learning activity an RECE may pursue as part of the CPL program. Examples of structured and/or formal learning activities are workshops, webinars, courses offered by post-secondary institutions, community-based organizations, provincial associations serving the early childhood education sector, local, provincial or national conferences or recommended learning developed by the College of Early Childhood Educators (e.g. Expectations for Practice Module).

Two-year CPL program cycle

Refers to the timeline in which the CPL program portfolio is recommended to be completed by members of the College. The CPL program two-year cycle provides a suggested monthly timeline for completing the Self-Assessment Tool, Professional Learning Plan and the Record of Professional Learning. Participating RECEs are encouraged to complete the three components of the CPL program portfolio and engage in learning activities throughout the two-year cycle.

Webinar

An online educational presentation during which participating viewers can submit questions and comments.[20] A webinar can also be viewed online after the live screening has taken place. In the context of the CPL program, a webinar is considered a structured continuous professional learning activity.

Workshop

A brief intensive educational program for a relatively small group of people that focuses on techniques and skills in a particular field.[21] In the context of the CPL program, a workshop is considered a structured continuous professional learning activity.

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