

EARLY CHILDHOOD Educator JOB DESCRIPTION

An Early Childhood Educator is an individual whose primary responsibility is the care and education of children. The ECA presents and directs the positive emotional, physical, social, and cognitive development of children in a child care setting by implementing appropriate activities and programs according to each child's individual developmental abilities, interests and needs.

The main areas of responsibility for the Early Childhood Educator are as follows:

I. Establish and Maintain a Safe and Healthy Learning Environment

- A. Safety
- B. Health
- C. Learning Environment

II. Advance Physical and Intellectual Competence

- A. Physical
- B. Cognitive
- C. Communication
- D. Creative

III. Build Positive Self-Concept and Individual Strength

IV. Promote Positive Functioning of Children and Adults

- A. Social
- B. Guidance and Discipline

V. Coordinate Home and Centre

VI. Supplementary Responsibilities

- A. Program Management
- B. Professionalism

I: ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A SAFE AND HEALTHY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The ECE should develop and implement with the aid of an ECE, a program that considers the child's basic needs for safe and healthy practices. The child's need to learn through safe and active exploration must also be promoted.

A: Safety

The ECE helps to provide a safe environment to prevent and reduce injuries. Indoor and outdoor areas should be free of dangerous conditions and materials. The ECA should be able to prevent injuries and accidents as well as handle emergencies appropriately if they do occur.

Specifically, the ECE will:

- supervise all indoor and outdoor play
- keep both the inside of the centre and the outdoor play area free of debris and structural hazards

- regularly check the facility, equipment and toys for hazards and respond appropriately
- know how to use safety equipment, such as fire extinguishers and smoke detectors
- ensure that safety equipment is in place and operable
- practice procedures for fires and other emergencies
- anticipate and make plans to prevent potentially dangerous situations
- supervise children when appliances are in use and practice kitchen safety
- assist in maintaining adequate first aid supplies
- use safe travel procedures, using restraints as required
- record accidents and injuries and report according to centre policy and licensing regulations

B: Health

The ECE should promote good health and nutrition and provide an environment that does not contribute to or cause illness or disease. Indoor and outdoor areas should be kept free of materials or conditions that could endanger children's health. The ECA should model and encourage good health and nutrition habits with children.

Specifically, the ECE will:

- maintain a clean and healthy environment for children and adults by performing light housekeeping duties and simple repairs
- maintain an atmosphere that is positive, relaxed and pleasant to reduce tension and stress provide nurturance and affection
- provide a variety of experiences which teach and model good health and nutrition practices, incorporating information from the children's cultures
- assist in planning and serving a variety of nutritious snacks and meals, in accordance with Canada's Food Guide, representing a variety of cultures and making eating time relaxed and pleasant
- follow centre procedure for maintaining daily health records and administering medication and first aid
- monitor children for symptoms of childhood conditions and illnesses, isolate children with symptoms of illness and report suspected illness as per centre and government policy
- release children only to authorized individuals
- report incidents of suspected abuse upon discovery as per centre and the Child Abuse Protocol
- attend to children's physical needs such as diapering, toileting, eating and napping
- update self regarding children with allergies and other conditions which require special care and make this information available to other adults working in the centre
- recognize and record unusual emotional and physical behavior and conditions and report according to centre policy
- assist in providing parents with information on available health and nutrition resources

C: Learning Environment

The ECE should use space, materials and routines as resources for constructing an interesting and enjoyable environment which encourages exploration and learning. A reliable framework of routines with a broad array of stimulating experiences should be used to facilitate children's learning.

Specifically, the ECE will:

- assist in planning and maintaining an environment that is attractive as well as functional
- assist in planning for and implementing a balance of active/quiet, indoor/outdoor, free/structured, individual and group activities that will encourage physical, social, intellectual, emotional and sensory

development at the appropriate level for each child

- assist in planning a balance of goals and objectives for each child with those for the group, and develop realistic plans responsive to the needs of all
- provide easily accessible materials that children can explore by themselves
- provide a place for each child to store his/her belongings
- provide for each child's need for privacy and solitary play
- organize the day so there is time for individual attention to each child
- assist in planning and implementing activities which stimulate children's curiosity, inventiveness, problem solving and communication skills
- assist children in expressing themselves by listening and responding with questions, comments or clarification
- use everyday routines and activities as learning opportunities
- demonstrate acceptance of each child's background, family structure, race, culture and gender through materials, songs, games, pictures, books and celebrations
- assist in providing ideas to parents re: free or inexpensive toys and equipment and how to use their homes as learning environment
- assist in planning and providing experiences which broaden the child's sense of community to enhance learning opportunities

II: ADVANCE PHYSICAL AND INTELLECTUAL COMPETENCE

The ECE should be aware of normal development and assist in providing a variety of equipment, activities and opportunities to promote children's physical and cognitive development as well as communication skills and creativity. Children should be challenged just beyond their present capabilities.

A: Physical

The ECE should assist in planning for children to have opportunities, both indoors and outdoors, to develop physically, including using large and small muscles, coordinating movements and using their senses.

Specifically, the ECE will:

- assist in planning, providing and monitoring activities for physical skills and sensory development; and have realistic expectations for each child based on an understanding of child development
- use a variety of activities such as dance, music and active games, incorporating children's cultures.
- use opportunities which encourage children to develop all their five senses
- participate daily in physical activities with children indoors and outdoors

B: Cognitive

The ECA should assist in providing activities and experiences that develop questioning, probing, exploration and problem solving appropriate to the developmental levels and learning styles of children.

Specifically, the ECE will:

- maintain an environment rich in opportunities to explore and discover
- stimulate children's curiosity, inventiveness, problem solving and communication skills through activities and experiences
- use equipment and materials that children can explore and master by themselves, helping them go according to their own speed and individual learning styles

- read with children daily, using a wide variety of literature
- recognize the importance of play and hands-on activities for learning

• C: Communication

The ECE should provide opportunities for children to understand acquire and use verbal and nonverbal means of communicating thoughts and feelings. Activities should be used that encourage children to listen, interact and express themselves with other children and adults.

Specifically, the ECE will:

- have realistic expectations for each child's understanding and use of speech and language, based on knowledge of language development and the individual child
- talk often with children stimulating conversation, modeling appropriate language and allowing children to speak without interruption
- assist in using activities which encourage children to develop listening and comprehension skills
- allow children to represent their ideas nonverbally e.g. through painting, music and creative movement
- help children to develop, understand and use words to express feelings
- take advantage of community resources and opportunities for language development
- be respectful of child's first language, encouraging them to teach others new words
- recognize and respect cultural differences in communication styles, e.g. use of eye contact

• D: Creative

- The ECA should provide experiences that stimulate children to explore and express their imaginative and creative abilities.

Specifically, the ECE will:

- maintain an environment and provide opportunities for individual expression and interpretation in art, movement, language, music and dramatic play
- focus on the process of creating rather than the end product
- encourage and value individual creative expression rather than conformity
- encourage children to try new and different activities
- encourage detailed and continuing exploration of creative materials
- model creativity
- encourage each child's efforts by displaying work attractively and respectfully and by providing meaningful commentary
- provide materials and equipment that can be used in more than one way

III: BUILD POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT AND INDIVIDUAL STRENGTH

The ECE should help each child to know, accept and take pride in herself or himself and to develop a sense of independence. Children should be given the opportunity to experience success, acceptance and increasingly challenging demands.

- treat each child as an individual with his/her own strengths and unique characteristics
- be honest, trustworthy and respectful with children
- encourage children to respect and support others
- be sensitive to different values and expectations concerning independence and expression of feelings

- have affectionate and appropriate physical contact with children
- support the development of each child's self concept
- offer children choices in activities, materials and foods and respect their choices
- encourage and help a child to practice self-help skills
- use celebrations, food, music, pictures, equipment and activities which reflect a child's cultural and family background
- offer children challenges and allow successes to be experienced
- express delight in child's success.
- express kindness and support when children are having trouble and help them learn from mistakes
- help children to recognize and accept all their feelings, and to express them in appropriate ways.
- recognize indicators of difficulties in developing a positive self-concept and report according to centre policy

IV: PROMOTE POSITIVE FUNCTIONING OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS

The ECE should encourage children to develop social skills by encouraging them to interact appropriately with other children and adults. Guidance should be done in a positive way with realistic limits and expectations.

A: Social

The ECE should help children learn to get along with others and encourage feelings of empathy and mutual respect among children and adults.

Specifically, the ECE will:

- Assist in planning and maintaining an environment which encourages positive social interaction
- help children learn positive ways of interacting with children and adults by encouraging sharing, taking turns cooperation and helpfulness
- have realistic expectations of children's behavior
- serve as a model by building a positive relationship with each child individually and encourage positive relationships with other adults in the centre
- recognize and respect each child's privacy and property rights and help children to respect these rights of others
- support children's attempts to resolve their differences with others
- encourage children to express their feelings and assert their rights in socially acceptable ways
- encourage friendships and play among all children

B: Guidance and Discipline

The ECE should provide an environment in which children can learn and practice behaviors which are appropriate and acceptable, individually and in a group. Children need to know what is expected of them and for the expectations to be realistic considering their individual needs.

Specifically, the ECE will:

- set realistic behavior expectations for each child which encourage self-control; and gear the explanations to each child's level of understanding
- evaluate the physical environment to assure it facilitates a positive behavior
- provide positive guidance methods, such as positive reinforcements, redirection and

- positive language; and use each appropriately
- anticipate confrontations and defuse inappropriate behavior
- help children to use language as a tool for resolving difficulties and conflicts
- address problem behavior without labeling, threatening or embarrassing the child
- contribute to and follow behavior management's guidelines established by the child care program, maintaining consistency with other adults in the program
- recognize and accept a variety of cultural expectations re: guidance and discipline
- assist in providing parents with resources related to child rearing, guidance and discipline

V: COORDINATE HOME AND CENTRE CHILD-REARING PRACTICES AND EXPECTATIONS.

The ECE should maintain an open, friendly and informative relationship with each child's family and encourage family involvement in the program while recognizing that each family has primary responsibility for its own children.

Specifically, the ECE will:

- participate in the orientation to the program for new families as determined by centre policy
- welcome the family and integrate each child into the group upon arrival
- recognize and respect the unique make-up of each family as well as its culture, social background, child-rearing methods and religious beliefs and practices
- inform parents about their children's experiences at the centre on a regular basis and send home items made by the children
- suggest and/or provide activities and materials that parents can share with children at home
- report problems of suspected abuse and neglect promptly, responsibly, and according to centre policy and provincial law
- encourage parents to keep the centre informed of important events in the children's lives and ask them periodically for updated information
- encourage parent involvement and sharing in the ongoing activities of the centre
- observe strict confidentiality regarding children and families
- offer parents information about community resources and services

SUPPLEMENTARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The ECE should be involved in the management of the program using an organized approach to planning, record keeping and conducting oneself. Conducting oneself as a professional and continuing to develop new skills is expected of the ECE.

A: Program Management

The ECE should be a competent organizer, planner, record keeper and manager and use all available resources to ensure an effective operation.

Specifically the ECE will:

- assist in recording observations regarding each child's growth, behavior and progress and use this information to plan an appropriate, responsive program
- assist in planning a long-range program
- be familiar with licensing regulations and ensure program is run accordingly
- work as a member of a team with others in the centre, including substitutes, parents, students and volunteers

B: Professionalism

The ECE should seek out and take advantage of opportunities to improve competence, both for professional growth and for the benefit of children and families.

Specifically, the ECE will:

- follow the philosophy of the child care program and be able to describe its goals and objectives to others
- attend regular staff meetings for the purpose of program discussion, planning, staff communication, individual child development assessment and general business
- evaluate own performance to identify needs for professional growth
- participate in peer evaluation and be able to accept comments and criticism from colleagues, supervisors and parents in a constructive way and solicit supervisors feedback
- advance knowledge through additional educational courses, seminars and workshops
- share own expertise with other staff members
- keep all information pertaining to children, families, and staff confidential
- maintain appropriate work habits such as punctuality and regular attendance
- maintain a current membership with the provincial professional association related to early childhood education
- keep informed about new developments and issues in the early childhood education profession, as well as legislation that affects it
- be an advocate for children and families
- demonstrate and personally maintain ethical and professional behavior

ECA signature

Director signature