

Alberta Orientation Course for Child Care Staff Session Overviews

Session 1: The Importance of Early Childhood Educators

The purpose of this orientation session is to provide an overview and examine your role as an early childhood educator. This first session reinforces the importance and purpose of providing quality care for children.

Learning Objectives

- Describe expectations for successful completion of this course leading to certification as a Level 1 – Early Childhood Educator
- Describe ethical conduct as an early childhood educator
- Describe quality care
- Differentiate between support functions and primary care responsibilities
- List some of the qualities of an early childhood educator

Session 2: Respecting Cultural Diversity

Children in childcare come from diverse backgrounds, so it is important to consider culture when working with children and their families. This session will increase your cultural awareness and provide strategies for developing an inclusive environment.

Learning Objectives

- Increase cultural awareness
- Expand cultural knowledge
- Examine and develop cultural skills
- Identify cultural practices in your community

Session 3: Indigenous Peoples of Canada

The purpose of this session is to provide important information about the Indigenous peoples of Canada and explain why it is important to support the cultural identity of Indigenous children.

Learning Objectives

- Define terms relating to Indigenous peoples of Canada
- Describe aspects of Indigenous history and cultural identity

- Describe Indigenous practices
- Describe cultural protocol for approaching Knowledge Keepers and Elders

Session 4: Communicating Effectively

Effective communication is essential to building relationships with children and their families. The skills presented in the session will help you communicate effectively with the people around you.

Learning Objectives

- Describe principles of communication and the communication process
- Describe barriers to and methods of developing effective communication, as well as the effects of body language, cultural influences, and ethics on communicative processes
- Assess personal communication skills
- Define active listening
- List barriers to effective listening
- Describe the benefits and steps of active listening
- Practise listening skills associated with identifying messages within communications
- Identify the feelings behind body language and words
- Describe responses that facilitate positive communications

Session 5: Intentionally Observing Children

Intentionally observing children is an essential component of providing quality child care. Knowing how to observe and document your observations properly will also help you to prevent/manage behavioural problems and allow you to understand each child's own strengths and capacities.

Learning Objectives

- Explain the importance of observing children and methods used to record observations of child behaviour
- Describe ways that early childhood educators can be prepared to engage in intentional observations in child care settings
- Understand and recognize inferences
- Examine the effects of culture, experiences, traditions, personal history, and biases when recording and interpreting children's behaviours

Session 6: Physical Development

Physical development is one component of the SPICE of Life (Social, Physical, Intellectual, Creative, and Emotional development). This is important in examining some of the factors that may influence physical

growth and motor development in children from birth to 12 years of age. Knowing how physical development can be positively influenced will help you consider and propose ways of promoting physical development in a child care setting.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the difference between large and fine motor abilities
- Describe different stages of physical development
- Design activities that promote physical development for children aged 0 to 12 years
- List factors that affect a child's physical development
- Understand the concept of physical literacy
- Define sensory perceptual development, kinaesthetic (movement), and physical growth
- Identify motor abilities and physical skills that are promoted through specific activities

Session 7: Cognitive Development

It is important for early childhood educators to focus on thinking skills to promote cognitive development. Early childhood educators should take every opportunity to explore ways that they can support children's thinking and enrich the childcare environment to promote learning.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the facts and stages of children's cognitive development
- Describe how children play with materials differently at various stages in their development
- Describe of how children learn through experiences with their environment
- Describe practices that support children's cognitive development and that coincide with child care activities
- Explain what and how children might learn from exploring specific toys and materials
- Describe different learning styles

Session 8: Language Development

This session focuses on how language develops in the first twelve years. A basic understanding of the principles of how language development happens in children and what children need to develop language skills will help you, as an early childhood educator, to promote children's language development.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the basic principles of language development
- Describe the milestones of language development for children from birth to five years

- Describe appropriate ways to promote language development
- Describe resources that promote language development for children
- Plan a learning experience related to language development for a child

Session 9: Social-Emotional Development

It is important for early childhood educators to focus on the importance of meeting children's social and emotional needs. Early childhood educators should take every opportunity to explore the ways that they can support children's social and emotional development to promote learning.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the meaning of social development and emotional development
- Describe important developmental tasks which children accomplish at various stages of their social-emotional development
- Describe effective caregiving behaviours for different stages of social and emotional development
- Describe what children need for healthy social and emotional development
- Outline the responsibilities of an early childhood educator that support healthy emotional and social development
- Describe ways to express appreciation

Session 10: Creative Development

Creativity is an important aspect in a child's development as a "whole" person. As an early childhood educator, it is important that you understand various aspects of creative development and how to promote creativity in children of all ages.

Learning Objectives

- Describe aspects of creative development
- Describe the stages that children progress through in creative expression
- Describe how children might use specific creative materials at different stages of development
- Describe elements in environments that promote creativity
- Describe safe materials and activities used in various child care interest programs to promote children's creative development
- Describe the feeling of creating
- Describe the role of the early childhood educator in promoting creativity in children
- Explain the difference between open-ended and close-ended experiences for children
- Describe open-ended questions that encourage creative responses from children

- Plan an age-appropriate experience that promotes creative development in children

Session 11: Developing Through Play

Play is critical for children's development. In this session, you will learn how you can provide and support play experiences that encourage children's development.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the importance and nature of personal play experiences
- List five characteristics of children's play
- Describe the developmental stages of play
- Explain the value of play for children's physical, creative, social-emotional development
- Describe intrinsically-motivated play
- Describe examples of how an early childhood educator can support and enhance play

Session 12: Providing for Play

Play is vital to the emotional, physical and cognitive development of children. It is important that early childhood educators understand the components of play and how to develop play activities that will enrich a child's experience at the childcare program.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the components that enhance play
- Describe materials that support play activities
- Identify the different stages of social play
- Describe the importance of observation as a tool to enhance children's program planning
- Describe the role early childhood educators as part of the playing process
- Describe principles of inclusion

Session 13: Healthy Eating Environments and Nurturing through Daily Routines

Good nutrition and well-planned routines are essential to children's healthy development. This session will describe how to plan and assess healthy meals and snacks, deal with picky eaters, and implement effective routines in a child care setting.

Learning Objectives

- Identify appropriate practices for early childhood educators to use in daily routines
- Explain how to promote healthy eating for children in child care programs

- Evaluate the appropriateness of eating practices
- Appraise the value of child care expectations and practices related to resting
- Discuss toilet training practices
- Review the challenges and importance of implementing appropriate transitions
- Observe and assess routines in a child care program

Session 14: Guiding Children's Behaviour

Children grow and develop their abilities best when they can learn self-control while maintaining their self-esteem. As an early childhood educator, you have the opportunity to help children learn to control their behaviour in a positive manner. Helping children develop self-control will also contribute to a positive childcare environment for all children by diminishing or eliminated unwanted behaviour.

Learning Objectives

- Differentiate between guidance, discipline, and punishment
- Describe effective practices for the prevention of behavioural problems
- Describe effective guidelines used to prevent discipline problems, property damage, and injury
- Describe how to use redirection strategies to avoid problem situations
- Describe techniques to help children use problem-solving strategies

Session 15: Licensing Legislation and Health/Safety/Supervision

Ensuring the health, safety and well-being of children are part of providing effective supervision and one of the most important roles of the caregivers. In this module, you will examine some of the components of the Early Learning and Child Care Regulation and the role of the child care licensing staff. You will also learn about ways to provide effective supervision of children.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the legislation governing child care programs in Alberta
- Describe the role of the child care licensing staff
- List ways to engage in effective supervision of children

Session 16: Together with Families

As an early childhood educator, helping children develop to their full potential means working together with families. Understanding how to create a working relationship with families and overcome any

barriers to working with a child's family is crucial to the child's happiness and development while at the child care facility.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the stresses facing families and the role of child care in supporting families
- Describe supportive and positive caregiver-family relationships
- Describe the steps of problem solving and how these may be used with family members
- Describe strategies that can improve relationships and communication with parents

Session 17: Child Abuse, Family Violence and Bullying

Individuals who choose to work in childcare feel very strongly that children should be nurtured, respected, and protected. Child abuse strikes the very core of our commitment to children. Many early childhood educators may encounter child abuse at some point in their careers. They must learn how to respond to it professionally and in accordance with their legal responsibility.

Learning Objectives

- List types of child abuse
- Recognize some indicators of child abuse
- Understand the early childhood educator's responsibility in reporting suspected child abuse and his or her role in preventing abuse
- Describe the appropriate process for reporting
- Describe the effects of domestic/family violence and its impact on children
- Describe strategies for supporting children and families in abusive situations
- Understand the types of bullying and what you can do to prevent them

Session 18: Becoming an Early Childcare Educator

In this final session of the Child Care Orientation Course, you will have the opportunity to reflect on what you have learned from the course and consider how you can apply all of what you learned as you work with children. It is important to understand that this course is just the first step in becoming an Early Childhood Educator and that continuing your education in the field is critical to your effectiveness and success as an early childhood educator.

Learning Objectives

- Describe your role as a member of an early childhood educator team
- Identify opportunities for further professional development
- Identify networks and organizations that support early childhood educators
- Describe what the Orientation Course has taught you