

Early Childhood Education Orientation

Session Overviews

The Orientation Course consists of 18 sessions. Each session will take approximately 3 hours to complete including reading, watching videos and completing exercises, session assignments and tests.

Course Introduction: Welcome to your Orientation

The purpose of this introductory session is to provide learners with information on how to navigate through the course, *The Student Code of Conduct*, *Plagiarism Policy*, citing outside sources, course policies, and learner expectations.

Session 1: The Importance of Early Childhood Educators

The purpose of this session is to provide an overview and examination of the role of an early childhood educator, and to reinforce the importance and purpose of providing quality care for children.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe what ethical conduct is, and what it means to an early childhood educator
- Describe quality care
- Identify the different roles of an early childhood educator
- Describe the distinction between front line early childhood educator roles and support roles
- Describe the personal qualities of a successful early childhood educator

Session 2: 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, considering how best to communicate with children who have diverse needs
- Define active listening
- List barriers to effective listening
- Identify the feelings behind body language and words
- Describe responses that facilitate positive communications

Session 3: Together With Families

In this session, participants will learn about how early childhood educators can create positive working relationships with families to make the child care experience valuable for both children and their families.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify key stresses faced by today's families
- Describe what you can do to foster positive relationships with families
- Identify some of the barriers to positive relationship-building and how to overcome them
- Describe how you can effectively problem-solve with families
- List ways you can effectively communicate with families and make them feel included in their child's day
- Identify when it is appropriate to intervene and how to communicate with family members

Session 4: Inclusivity and Respecting Cultural Diversity

Children attending child care programs have come from diverse backgrounds and have different abilities, so it is important to be aware of inclusivity and culture when working with children and their families.

Learning Objectives:

- Recognize diversity within child care settings
- Describe inclusivity and cultural awareness as it relates to your role as an early childhood educator
- Understand your own personal cultural biases and the impact this has on children
- Examine and develop cultural skills and awareness
- Identify cultural practices in your community that can be introduced to children
- Describe the significance of inclusivity in child care
- Identify basic child rights

Session 5: Supporting the Cultural Identity of Indigenous Children

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 the importance of identity to child development, and how residential schools and the Sixties Scoop impacted generations of Indigenous children
- Identify how you can support the cultural identity of Indigenous children in your care
- Describe the holistic perspective to child wellness, and the role of the Wellness Wheel
- Describe some Indigenous cultural practices
- Describe how to respectfully work with Elders to bring Indigenous culture into the child care setting

Session 6: Physical Development

This session begins by establishing a definition of physical development; what it is and why it is important. Knowing how to positively influence a child's physical development will help early childhood educators consider and propose ways of promoting physical development in various child care settings.

Learning Objectives:

- Define physical development and describe why it is important
- Describe the different stages of physical development
- Describe how active play strengthens physical development
- Describe developmental milestones for children 0-12 years of age
- Define physical literacy and incorporate activities into your programming
- Develop outdoor activities suitable for Alberta winters
- Describe your role as an early childhood educator in a child's physical development

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 to support children's thinking and enrich the childcare environment to promote learning.

Learning Objectives:

- Define cognitive development
- Identify the stages of cognitive development
- Describe the developmental milestones and how children play at various stages in their development
- Describe how children learn through experiences with their environment
- Describe "ways of learning" and practices that support children's cognitive development that align with child care activities
- Describe your role as an early childhood educator in supporting the cognitive development of children

Session 8: Language Development

This session focuses on how language develops in the first twelve years of a child's life. A basic understanding of the principles of how language development happens will help you, as an early childhood educator, 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 12 years
- Describe appropriate ways to promote language development
- Understand what early literacy is and describe the importance of early literacy skills
- Describe the significance of cultural diversity and inclusivity as they relate to language development
- Describe your role as an early childhood educator in supporting the language development of children.

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:

- Define social-emotional development
- Identify the stages of social-emotional development
- Describe the developmental milestones and how children interact at various stages in their development
- Describe the relationship between social-emotional development and mental health
- Identify common mental health challenges experienced by children; and
- Describe your role as an early childhood educator in supporting the social-emotional development of children

Session 10: Creative Development

Creativity is an important aspect in a child's development. 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 the stages of creative development
- Describe how the things you say and do affect a child's creative development

- Describe how to create environments that promote the creative process
- Describe your role as an early childhood educator in supporting creativity in children

Session 11: 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.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe the difference between positive guidance and punishment
- Identify effective child guidance practices
- Describe how to provide clear guidelines and communicate them in a positive way
- Describe redirection
- Describe problem-solving strategies you can help the children in your care develop
- Identify techniques that can help children self-regulate
- Describe bullying and how you can respond to it and prevent it from happening

Session 12: Nurturing Through Daily Routines

In this session you will learn how to establish routines and navigate transitions within the daily schedule. You will examine how to promote a child's healthy social-emotional development by providing opportunities to build trust, independence, and initiative during daily routines. You will also learn how to implement strategies to make smooth and effective transitions between various parts of the child care day.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify appropriate practices for early childhood educators to use in daily routines, including during:
 - Pick up and drop off of children
 - Snack time and mealtime
 - Rest times
 - Other transitions
- Describe toileting best-practices

Session 13: Developing Through Play

Play is a critical component 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 what play is
- Describe different perspectives about learning and play (socio-cultural and developmental)
- Identify the difference between a child-led activity, an adult-directed activity and an intrinsically motivated activity
- Identify the importance of play as a way of learning and co-creating knowledge
- Describe the four holistic play-based goals
- Describe the five characteristics of true play
- Identify less desirable play experiences
- Describe the different stages and types of play that children will move through as they grow
- Identify the value of play
- Describe what learning stories are
- Describe how you can support play for the children in your care

Session 14: Developing Play Environments

Play is an important, life-enriching activity in a child's life. In this session, you will learn about how play can be enhanced to benefit a child's development. The various stages of social play will be discussed as well as your role as an early childhood educator.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe environments that nurture play for children, building on Flight's four holistic play-based goals
- Describe how to facilitate children's play
- Describe the ages and stages of play
- Describe the role of the early childhood educator, as part of the playing process

Session 15: 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:

- Describe why intentional observation is important;
- Describe the three steps to conducting an observation;

- Identify how to make thoughtful inferences
- Define the methods used in observation and documentation; and
- Assess how your culture and background can impact your observations.

Session 16: Licensing and Nutrition, Health and Safety

Ensuring the health, safety and well-being of children is part of providing effective supervision and one of the most important roles of early childhood educators. In this session, you will examine some of the components of the *Early Learning and Child Care Act* and the Early Learning and Child Care Regulation, Public Health and Safety Guidelines, and Nutrition Standards. 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 requirements for licensed programs and the role of child care licensing staff
- List ways to engage in effective supervision of children
- Describe public health and safety requirements
- Describe nutrition guidelines for children ages 1 to 12

Session 17: Child Abuse and Family Violence

Early childhood educators understand the critical importance of nurturing, respecting and protecting children. Child abuse strikes the very core of our commitment to children. Many early childhood educators may encounter children that have been abused or neglected at some point in their careers. They must learn how to respond to it professionally and in accordance with their legal responsibility.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as neglect and identify the signs of each
- Describe family violence, and the effects it has on children
- Identify conditions that increase the risk of family violence
- Recognize indicators of abuse
- Describe the reporting process
- Describe what to do when a child reports abuse to you
- Describe how to provide care for abused children
- Identify the role early childhood educators play in helping to prevent child abuse

Session 18: Becoming an Early Childhood Educator

This final session of the Child Care Orientation Course allows for the opportunity to reflect on all the information presented in the course and consider how it can be applied when working as an early childhood educator. It is important to understand that this course is only 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:

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- Describe how to plan for a balanced day
- Identify important guidelines for program planning
- Describe key components of Flight
- Identify opportunities for lifelong learning and professional development
- Describe the basics of educator health and wellness