

College of Early Childhood Educators
Presentation in Peel: Friday, January 7, 2005
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Why is legislative recognition or a College for Early Childhood Educators important?

A College of Early Childhood Educators would affirm early childhood education as a profession, ensure a minimum educational base for entry to practice, ensure continued professional development and create an environment of trust and accountability among ECEs, families and communities.

The College would enhance public recognition of early childhood education and support the process of recruiting and retaining qualified ECEs. In the “You Bet I Care” report, Gillian Doherty describes the difficulty of recruiting and retaining qualified staff and the subsequent effect on quality. A College would be a focus for responsibility and information, would promote a cohesive system of early childhood education services and would provide public education to enable parents to make informed choices.

The College would enable families to identify professionalism in the delivery of high quality early childhood education services and would enable governments of all levels – federal, provincial and municipal – to ensure higher accountability for programs and services receiving public funding for the education of young children.

I’d like to address a few of the questions we are commonly asked about the College such as:

What is the College of Early Childhood Educators?

It is a government legislated organization that maintains a mandatory registry of all practicing Early Childhood Educators in Ontario. Similar to the College of Teachers and other professional colleges in the province, but we are hoping to think beyond these examples when developing what it will look like.

What will the College do?

It will set standards such as

- Accrediting Ontario ECE training institutions
- Regularly review occupational standards
- Determine professional development required to maintain membership
- And determine who can refer to themselves as an Early Childhood Educator

It will regulate professional practice by:

- Receiving and investigating complaints against members
- Dealing with issues of discipline, fitness to practice and professional misconduct
- Creating a forum dealing with professional and ethical standards applicable to the college

It will speak for the profession by

- Maintaining information on current research, government policies and other ECE issues
- Developing position papers
- Communicating with the public on behalf of its members
- And Communicating with parents and the public regarding quality early learning and child care

Membership Requirements:

An accredited two-year Ontario ECE diploma or validated equivalent training

And

Ongoing professional development to maintain membership

There is also a recommendation to include a provision to “grandfather” those who work in the field who are not ECEs. Applicants would be granted conditional standing for a certain period of time, during which they could upgrade their education.

What will Representation at the College look like?

An 18-member council will be its governing body and board of directors
12 of these members will be elected by the membership and will represent geographical regions, professional specialties and both official languages

The Lieutenant Governor will appoint the remaining 6 positions

Committees will carry out the work of the college

Among the Councils responsibilities will be:

Employing a chief executive officer and other officers as required

Establishing committees

Establishing regional linkages

Holding annual meetings

Meeting annually with and submitting a report to the Minister of Children's Services

Identifying priorities and directing actions

The Committees will carry out the work of the college such as

Registration

Complaints and discipline

Communication

Standards and accreditation

Public education and

Professional development

And a the most frequently asked question, what will it cost members?

The intent is to keep the cost to a minimum given current ECE salaries in the province. The AECEO membership fee could be used as guideline. That fee is currently at \$135, which translates roughly to 37 cents a day.

The fees will ultimately be influenced by the size of the membership, services provided, staffing and the amount of volunteer time offered by members.

Conclusion

As many of you already know the provincial government has announced that they will be establishing a College as part of their mandate. And the Ministry has told us that discussions will begin this year. There is much work ahead and it is our hope to include as many stake holders as possible in the development stage in order to ensure the College is truly reflective of the field and the professionals working in it. We hope all you will take the time to visit our website and learn more about college but more importantly that you get involved and give us your feedback during this crucial stage.

Thank you.