

Guiding Principles
for Ethical Practice in ECE

AECEA
Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta

Guiding Principles for Ethical Practice in Early Childhood Education in Alberta

Developed by the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta,
in collaboration with educators, students, and community partners

April 2026

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that this work takes place on the traditional territories of the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples who have lived on and cared for these lands since time immemorial. In Alberta, this includes Treaties 6, 7, and 8, as well as the Métis Nation of Alberta and the eight Métis Settlements.

The Guiding Principles for Ethical Practice are shaped by an understanding that early learning and child care does not exist outside of history or place. We recognize the ongoing impacts of colonization on Indigenous families, communities, and ways of knowing. Despite this, Indigenous peoples continue to lead with strength, care, and deep cultural knowledge, raising children in connection to language, land, identity, and community.

As educators, this acknowledgement calls us to reflect on how our practice is shaped by place, relationships, and responsibility. It invites us to engage with Indigenous perspectives, honour diverse ways of knowing and being, and consider how our everyday decisions reflect reconciliation.

Acknowledgements

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Finally, we recognize the many early childhood educators across Alberta who will continue to shape and strengthen this work. Their lived experience, knowledge, and ongoing reflection ensure that the Guiding Principles remain grounded, responsive, and connected to practice.

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AECEA's Role

As Alberta's professional association for early childhood educators, AECEA is responsible for contributing to a strong, respected, and well-supported workforce. Developing the Guiding Principles for Ethical Practice is one way AECEA fulfills its broader responsibility to professionalize the early childhood education workforce. A shared ethical framework strengthens consistency across the profession and supports greater recognition, credibility, and trust in early learning and child care.

Context

Early learning and child care in Alberta exists within broader social, historical, and political contexts that continue to shape our profession today. These include histories of colonization, inequitable access to care and education, undervaluation of care work, and ongoing systemic barriers experienced by children, families, and educators. These realities influence who has access to care, whose knowledge is recognized, and how care and education are understood and supported across the province. This document invites us to engage in ethical practice with awareness and reflection within this context.

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Introduction

The Guiding Principles for Ethical Practice articulate the shared values and responsibilities that underpin early childhood education in Alberta. They were developed to support educators in making ethical, thoughtful decisions while providing a common language that strengthens professionalism and coherence across the workforce.

The principles are intended for all early childhood educators across Alberta, across diverse roles, settings, certification levels, and program contexts. While practice may look different from one context to another, they offer a shared foundation for ethical decision-making across the profession.

Each principle is structured to support meaningful engagement:

The principle names a shared commitment within our profession

We understand... highlights the knowledge, values, and perspectives that ground the commitment

We embody... describes how the principle may be expressed in practice, relationships, and decision-making

We adapt by asking ourselves... offers reflective questions to support ongoing learning and responsiveness within each principle

Throughout the principles, you will notice key terms that are ***bolded and italicized*** the first time they appear. These terms are defined in the glossary (see pages 17-19) to support a shared understanding within the context of this document.

The Guiding Principles should be used in ways that are relevant for your practice. You might use them as a:

- reflective tool in individual practice
- conversation guide within teams or communities of practice
- foundation for professional learning
- support when navigating complex or uncertain situations
- tool to share with families

The Guiding Principles are grounded in two key foundations:

Foundation A explains the shared knowledge and commitments that inform ethical practice.

Foundation B describes educator well-being as an essential condition for ethical practice.

Foundation A: Shared Knowledge and Commitments

This document draws on internationally recognized rights frameworks, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child¹, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples², Universal Declaration of Human Rights³, as well as the Alberta Human Rights Act⁴. It is also informed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action⁵, which call on all sectors, including education, to advance reconciliation through respect, relationship, and responsiveness to Indigenous rights, perspectives, and ways of knowing. The *Spark Guide*⁶ further informs the integration of culturally responsive practice, supporting educators in engaging with diverse cultural perspectives in meaningful ways.

The Guiding Principles were developed with the understanding that inclusion is a way of being with children and families—rather than a particular approach, tool, or resource. Inclusive practice values diversity, supports vulnerable individuals, and upholds their right to equitable participation⁷. As such, inclusion is embedded throughout this document and understood as a foundation of ethical practice.

The document is grounded in Joan Tronto's ethic of care model⁸ which invites us to be attentive, responsible, competent, and responsive in our ethical practices. These concepts align with relational and responsive principles reflected in *Flight: Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework*⁹.

The principles are guided by established Canadian codes of ethics, including the Canadian Child Care Federation¹⁰, Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia¹¹, Manitoba Child Care Association¹², and Ontario's College of Early Childhood Educators¹³. As well as informed by the national Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators¹⁴, which describe the knowledge, skills and professional tasks expected of ECEs in Canada. The principles are aligned with these standards to ensure our ethical commitments are grounded in professional competence and quality care.

[1] United Nations. *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. New York: UN General Assembly, 1989.

Esp. articles 3, 12, 13, 23, 29, 31

[2] United Nations. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. New York: UN, 2007.

Esp. articles 2, 11, 13, 14, 15, 22

[3] United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Paris: United Nations General Assembly, 1948.

[4] Alberta, *Alberta Human Rights Act, RSA 2000, c A-25*, as amended, accessed December 17, 2025.

[5] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Calls to Action*. Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015.

Esp. calls 10, 12, 63

[6] PolicyWise for Children & Families. *Spark Guide: Supporting Culturally Responsive Practice in Early Learning and Care*. Canada, 2024.

[7] United Nations. *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Adopted December 13, 2006.

[8] Joan C. Tronto. *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

[9] Makovichuk, Lee, Jane Hewes, Patricia Lirette, and Nancy Thomas. *Flight: Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework*. Alberta Ministry of Education, 2015.

[10] Canadian Child Care Federation. *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*. Ottawa: Canadian Child Care Federation, 2004.

[11] Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia. *Code of Ethics*. Vancouver: ECEBC, 2019.

[12] Manitoba Child Care Association. *Code of Ethics*. Winnipeg: Manitoba Child Care Association, 2025.

[13] College of Early Childhood Educators. *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*. Toronto: College of Early Childhood Educators, 2017.

[14] Canadian Child Care Federation. *Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators*. Ottawa: CCCF, 2025.

Foundation B: Educator Well-Being

The quality of relationships and environments that children experience is deeply connected to educators' whole-selves—our physical, emotional, mental, cultural and relational well-being¹⁵. When educators feel safe, supported, and well, we are better equipped to offer responsive care, uphold children's rights, and co-construct meaningful learning experiences¹⁶. Ethical practice flourishes in environments where educators have access to professional support, collaboration, reflective space, and policies that honour our humanity and expertise¹⁷. Caring for educators is a collective responsibility within early learning and care communities, as well as the broader system¹⁸. Educators are encouraged to engage with these principles within their own contexts and capacities.

We strengthen this foundation by asking:

- What supports strengthen my capacity to be present and responsive in my work?
- How do I contribute to a workplace where colleagues feel safe, valued, and respected?
- Who can I turn to for collaboration, guidance, or shared problem-solving? Who can turn to me?
- How might we adjust our practices, routines, or policies to better support educator well-being?

[15] OECD. *Results from TALIS Starting Strong 2024: Strengthening Early Childhood Education and Care*. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2025.

[16] OECD, *Results from TALIS Starting Strong 2024*

[17] Tronto, *Moral Boundaries*

[18] Tronto, *Moral Boundaries*

Guiding Principles

for ethical practice in early childhood education

We act with integrity.

We build and maintain trust in the profession through accountability and decision-making that cares for children, families, colleagues, and self.

1

We are essential in upholding the holistic well-being of the children in our care.

We co-construct environments where all children can flourish.

2

We are relationship-builders.

We cultivate responsive, reciprocal relationships with people, land, water, and animals.

3

We are shaped by diverse identities and united in our commitment to children.

We work together to create a profession where every educator is seen, respected, and valued.

4

We are committed to seeing every child as strong, capable, and full of potential.

We honour children's dignity, autonomy, agency, and rights in ways that nurture belonging and meaningful participation.

5

We are a community of collaborators.

We engage in professional relationships and networks that strengthen our practice, enhance professional growth, and enrich the experiences of the children we care for.

6

We are skilled and reflective professionals who commit to ongoing growth.

We make informed decisions that support children and families with care and competence.

7

We are committed to partnership with families.

By working together, we support continuity, belonging, and shared responsibility for children's well-being.

8

We are dedicated to our profession.

We strengthen and advance the profession through collective leadership and commitment to high-quality practice.

9

All nine principles are interconnected. They are intended to be understood as a whole, with each principle informing and strengthening the others.

We act with integrity. We build and maintain trust in the profession through accountability and decision-making that cares for children, families, colleagues, and self.

1

We understand:

- Integrity is shown when our professional values, words, and actions align.
 - Educators hold responsibility within relationships—with children, families, colleagues—and must act with care.
 - Confidentiality is essential in protecting children, families, and colleagues.
 - **Safeguarding** is a legal and ethical responsibility; educators are required to report any concerns for a child’s safety or well-being to the appropriate authorities.
-

We embody this principle by:

- Speaking and acting with integrity and accountability—even when it is difficult.
 - Protecting privacy and using sensitive information only to support safety and well-being.
 - Fulfilling our **duty to report** when a child’s safety or well-being may be at risk, following legal requirements and organizational policies.
 - Taking responsibility for missteps and working to repair trust.
 - Maintaining boundaries that protect the physical and emotional safety of children, families, and oneself.
 - Representing our certification, training, and professional capabilities honestly, and seeking support or guidance when a situation exceeds our **scope of practice**.
 - Raising concerns when practices or conditions limit our ability to provide **responsive** care.
-

We adapt by asking ourselves:

- Do my actions and words align with my values?
- How might power show up in this situation, and am I using it responsibly?
- Is this within my scope of practice, and do I need to seek support or guidance?
- How do I take responsibility and restore trust when challenges or misunderstandings arise?
- What are the potential short- and long-term impacts of this decision on children, families, and professional trust?

We are essential in upholding the holistic well-being of the children in our care. We *co-construct* environments where all children can flourish.

2

We understand:

- Children’s well-being reflects the whole child—encompassing health, physical and emotional safety, social connection, development, cultural identity, spirituality, and resilience.
 - Well-being is strengthened through responsive relationships and environments that invite exploration, communication, and meaningful choice.
 - Play is central to children’s well-being, development, learning, and sense of identity.
 - Our own well-being shapes the quality of care and relationships we offer.
-

We embody this principle by:

- Creating safe, inclusive, and responsive environments that honour children’s diverse needs, abilities, and ways of being.
 - Upholding our responsibility to recognize and act on concerns for children’s well-being.
 - Modelling well-being through intentional presence, **healthy boundaries**, and **reflective pauses**.
 - Encouraging exploration, play, and choice-making appropriate to each child.
 - Preventing harm through thoughtful, developmentally appropriate child guidance.
-

We adapt by asking ourselves:

- How might my perceptions, assumptions, or decisions be shaping this child’s experience?
- What might I adjust in my approach to better support this child?
- Who could I collaborate with—families, colleagues, or other professionals—to deepen my understanding of this child?
- What supports, resources, or changes would help uphold this child’s holistic well-being, and what aspects are within my control or may require broader **advocacy** or **systemic** change?
- What support do I need to model well-being authentically and sustainably?

We are relationship-builders. We cultivate responsive, *reciprocal* relationships with people, land, water, and animals.

3

We understand:

- Relationships extend beyond people to include land, water, animals, and other *non-human beings* that shape and sustain our shared environments.
 - Consistent, caring relationships are foundational to learning, identity, and belonging in the early learning community.
 - Educators' presence—including our responsiveness, care for one another, and consistency—influences how children feel, learn, and participate.
-

We embody this principle by:

- Fostering reciprocal relationships with the natural world by caring for our environments and creating opportunities for exploration, inquiry, and learning through connection with the land.
 - Supporting *co-regulation* through calm, grounded interactions marked by presence and patience.
 - Engaging in shared moments of joy, play, problem-solving, and curiosity.
 - Acknowledging children's ideas, feelings, cues, and behaviour with care, recognizing all forms of communication.
 - Supporting children in building and navigating relationships with one another, including opportunities for connection and conflict resolution.
 - Actively repairing relationships—with people, land, and other non-human beings—through reflection, accountability, and renewed connection when harm occurs.
-

We adapt by asking ourselves:

- How am I honouring the land, cultures, and histories of the place where I teach?
- How am I building an ongoing relationship with the land, beyond using it as a setting for activities?
- How do my tone, body language, and boundaries support trust in my relationships?
- How do I repair and reconnect if a misstep occurs?
- How do my capacity, environment, or working conditions influence my ability to be present and responsive, and what support might be needed?

We are shaped by diverse identities and united in our commitment to children. Together, we create a profession where every educator is seen, respected, and valued.

4

We understand:

- Our ability to provide quality care and learning for children is strengthened when we experience belonging within our professional community.
 - Diverse lived experiences, identities, languages, cultures, and histories enrich our profession and the learning environments we co-construct.
 - Equity in the profession requires actively addressing **bias**, discrimination, and systemic barriers.
-

We embody this principle by:

- Welcoming and celebrating each educator’s experiences and identities—including, but not limited to, gender, orientation, cultures, languages, certification, training pathways, and abilities.
 - Creating space for every voice in professional conversations and decisions, valuing the unique strengths each educator brings.
 - Challenging assumptions or practices that undermine **dignity or equity**.
 - Contributing, within our roles and **capacities**, to a professional environment where ongoing learning, leadership, and recognition are accessible to all.
 - Standing up for colleagues when exclusion, harm, or unfair treatment occurs.
-

We adapt by asking ourselves:

- Whose perspectives might be missing or less present—and how can I support their inclusion?
- Could there be biases hindering participation or growth within my professional community?
- How do my words and actions communicate respect for different roles, languages, abilities, and training pathways?
- In what ways can I help build a profession where belonging is possible for everyone?
- What changes—personal or systemic—are needed to foster greater equity and inclusion for educators?

We are committed to seeing every child as strong, capable, and full of potential. We honour children's dignity, **autonomy, agency**, and rights in ways that nurture belonging and meaningful participation.

5

We understand:

- Each child is a **mighty learner** and citizen. They each arrive with identity, culture, and their own way of expressing themselves.
 - Children have the right to play, to be heard, and to participate in ways that reflect their diverse identities, abilities, cultures, and **ways of knowing**.
 - When children feel valued and included, they express their ideas with confidence, contributing meaningfully to co-constructed learning.
 - Children are active contributors to their families, communities, and learning environments in the present; they shape and are shaped by their relationships, contexts, experiences, and place.
-

We embody this principle by:

- Welcoming each child with an authentic belief in their capabilities, honouring diverse abilities, needs, and ways of being.
 - Co-constructing environments where children can express themselves through culture, play, movement, and choice.
 - Honouring children's agency by actively engaging with their ideas and supporting meaningful participation.
 - Taking responsibility to advocate for the supports and conditions that uphold all children's rights, dignity, and full participation.
-

We adapt by asking ourselves:

- How might my assumptions or decisions be shaping this child's experience of dignity, autonomy, agency, or belonging?
- Whose identities or perspectives are centred here, and whose might be overlooked?
- How am I honouring this child's autonomy and ways of expressing themselves?
- What changes in environment or practice could support greater inclusion and belonging for all children?
- How am I showing my belief in this child's capability?

We are a community of collaborators. We engage in professional relationships and networks that strengthen our practice, enhance professional growth, and enrich the experiences of the children we care for.

6

We understand:

- Professional collaboration may look different across early learning settings; whether working independently or alongside others, educators benefit from connection, shared knowledge, and professional dialogue.
 - Collaboration strengthens reflective practice and contributes to professional growth.
 - Each educator has knowledge and lived experience that contribute to our professional practice.
 - Collaborating with community partners strengthens children’s access to meaningful support.
-

We embody this principle by:

- Collaborating with others (including educators, knowledge holders, specialists, therapists, coaches, consultants, licencing officers, and professional peers) through the same curiosity we nurture with children.
 - Working together to plan, problem-solve, and make decisions.
 - Taking responsibility to learn with and from one another—in our daily work and/or through communities of practice and professional networks.
 - Addressing differences in practice through respectful, constructive dialogue that supports growth, learning, and responsibility—rather than judgment or harm.
 - Seeking and offering support that fosters a culture of inclusion, dignity, and collective well-being.
 - Collaborating with community partners when specialized knowledge or services can enhance children’s learning and/or well-being.
-

We adapt by asking ourselves:

- How am I contributing to a culture of shared responsibility?
- Whose strengths might enrich this conversation or decision?
- How do I respond when stressed or in disagreement?
- What supports or collaborations would strengthen my own professional practice?
- How could community partnerships help us better understand and honour children’s experiences?

We are skilled and reflective professionals who commit to ongoing growth. We make informed decisions that support children and families with care and **competence**.

7

We understand:

- Competence is grounded in professional knowledge such as child development, play, pedagogy, and inclusive practices.
 - Ethical decision-making requires the application of professional knowledge in a way that balances children’s rights, well-being, and agency.
 - As professionals, we are responsible for maintaining and strengthening our competence through ongoing engagement with current, evidence-informed practice, reflective inquiry, and meaningful **professional learning** in its many forms.
 - Professional learning includes engaging with diverse knowledge systems, including cultural ideologies, and Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing.
-

We embody this principle by:

- Making thoughtful decisions rooted in professional knowledge.
 - Using observation and documentation to deepen our understanding of children’s learning, our own practice, and the learning environment, supporting reflection and **co-inquiry**.
 - Actively seeking meaningful, ongoing professional learning—and applying it in practice.
 - Engaging in ongoing reflective practice to examine our decisions, assumptions, and responses, and to strengthen how we support children, families, and one another.
-

We adapt by asking ourselves:

- What knowledge informs my choices, and what more could I learn?
- How can observation and documentation help me understand this situation more clearly?
- Who can I learn from or collaborate with to strengthen my professional knowledge or practice?
- Whose perspectives are centred in this professional learning? What perspectives might be missing?

We are committed to partnership with families. By working together, we support continuity, belonging, and shared responsibility for children's well-being.

8

We understand:

- Children's identities and sense of belonging are rooted in their family and kinship relationships, place, cultures, and stories.
 - Families' lived experience and educators' professional knowledge work together to strengthen collective understanding and shared decision-making.
 - Recognizing families' strengths and capacities is central to ethical partnership.
 - Collaboration with families must honour cultural perspectives, caregiving practices, languages, and values; this strengthens trust, communication, and consistency in children's lives.
 - Building partnerships with families is shaped by time, communication, and capacity within each program context.
-

We embody this principle by:

- Approaching relationships with families with **cultural humility**, seeking to understand rather than assume, and remaining open to learning from diverse perspectives and ways of knowing.
 - Creating space for families' languages and cultures to be meaningfully reflected in the learning environment and daily experiences.
 - Collaborating with families and other professionals to advocate for and support children in ways that honour their diverse needs, dignity, and familial context.
 - Protecting privacy and holding sensitive information with care and professionalism.
-

We adapt by asking ourselves:

- How am I inviting families to share their knowledge about their child?
- How am I drawing on my professional knowledge while honouring this family's expertise?
- How am I honouring cultural practices and family structures that may differ from my own?
- How do I respond when families express stress, uncertainty, or disagreement?
- What actions can I take to strengthen trust, belonging, and collaboration with this family?
- What conditions or constraints may be impacting my ability to build a partnership with this family, and how can I respond with care within those realities?

We are dedicated to our profession. We strengthen and advance the profession through *collective leadership* and commitment to high-quality practice.

9

We understand:

- The strength of our profession is shaped by the conditions in which educators work, including policies, resources, and systemic supports.
 - Sustaining a strong profession includes supporting educators' sense of purpose, belonging, and long-term engagement within the sector.
 - Leadership is shared. It is expressed in how we support others, contribute to our professional community, and influence practice in everyday contexts.
 - Advocacy can take many forms and may be expressed within our own roles and capacities—through everyday conversations, relationship-building, and collective action.
-

We embody this principle by:

- Communicating with families, partners, and each other in ways that elevate our profession, affirming the value of our work.
 - Advocating for the conditions, resources, policies, and supports needed to uphold high-quality, ethical practice and a sustainable profession.
 - Staying connected to our unique reasons we do this work, and allowing our passion to shine through in how we speak about it.
 - Participating in professional communities that advance the sector, foster connection and belonging, and support ongoing engagement within the profession.
-

We adapt by asking ourselves:

- How do my words and actions reflect the value of our profession?
- What sustains my sense of purpose in this profession, and how might I continue to grow or contribute in ways that align with my evolving strengths and interests?
- What could I learn or do to strengthen my contribution to our profession?
- How am I expressing leadership within my context and professional community?
- How am I contributing to a professional culture where educators feel valued?
- What example does this decision set for others and for the future of the profession?

Glossary

Advocacy: The act of speaking up and taking action to support children, families, educators, and the early learning and child care sector. It can take many forms, including everyday actions in practice (“little a” advocacy)—such as supporting a child’s needs or building understanding with families—and broader efforts to influence systems, policies, and public perception (“Big A” advocacy)¹⁹. Both are essential in strengthening the profession.

Agency: The ability to express ideas, make meaningful choices, and influence what happens in one’s life and relationships; “my choices matter and shape what happens”.

Autonomy: The ability to make choices and act with independence in one’s own actions; “I can make choices”.

Bias: Pre-existing beliefs or assumptions that can influence our perceptions, decisions, and interactions, often without our awareness.

Capacity: What we are able to do, based on our context, knowledge, skills, well-being, time, and supports.

Co-construct: To create something in relation with others (children, educators, families, colleagues), valuing their perspectives alongside our own.²⁰

Co-inquiry: A collaborative process of learning and reflection in which educators engage with others to explore questions, deepen understanding, and inform practice.²¹

Collective leadership: A shared approach to leadership in which responsibility, decision-making, and influence are distributed. It recognizes that leadership emerges through collaboration, relationships, and the contributions of many, rather than being held by a single individual.

Competence: The integration and ongoing application of professional knowledge, skills, judgment, and dispositions in practice²². Competence is not fixed; it is developed and strengthened over time through experience, reflection, and engagement with current, evidence-informed knowledge and diverse ways of knowing.

[19] Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta. *Self-Advocacy Toolkit*. Edmonton: AECEA, 2025.

[20] Makovichuk et al., *Flight*

[21] Makovichuk et al., *Flight*

[22] Canadian Child Care Federation. *Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators*

Co-regulation: The process of using a calm, regulated presence to support a child in regulating their emotions and responses through connection and supportive interactions such as soothing tone, body language, and proximity²³. Co-regulation can only occur when the educator is regulated.

Cultural humility: An ongoing practice of self-reflection and learning in which educators remain open to others' perspectives, experiences, and ways of knowing²⁴. It involves approaching relationships with curiosity and a commitment to equitable practice.

Dignity: The inherent worth of every person, deserving of respect, care, and recognition²⁵.

Duty to Report: Under the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act, if you have reasonable grounds to suspect a child in your care is being abused or neglected, it is your legal responsibility to report your concern to Child Intervention Services or your local authorities²⁶. For more information visit: <https://www.alberta.ca/preventing-child-abuse-information-for-educators>²⁷

Equity: A commitment to fairness that recognizes differences in needs, identities, and experiences, and responds by removing barriers and providing appropriate supports.

Healthy boundaries: Clear and respectful limits that guide professional relationships with children, families, and colleagues. They support safe, ethical, and caring interactions while protecting the well-being of both educators and others.

Mighty learner: The view of a child as strong, capable, and resourceful²⁸.

Non-human being: Living and more-than-human entities—such as animals, plants, water, and other elements of the natural world—that we are in relationship with²⁹. Recognizing non-human beings acknowledges their role in sustaining life and shaping our shared environments.

Professional learning: an ongoing process through which educators deepen their knowledge, skills, and understanding. It occurs through a range of experiences, including reflection, co-inquiry, relationships, and both formal and informal learning opportunities such as workshops, courses, books, podcasts, and other resources.

Reciprocal: An act of equal give and take in a relationship.

Reflective pauses: Intentional moments of stopping to think, notice, and consider before responding or acting. They create space for deeper reflection, supporting thoughtful decision-making in practice.

[23] Maureen Salamon, "Co-regulation: Helping Children and Teens Navigate Big Emotions," Harvard Health Publishing, April 3, 2024

[24] PolicyWise, *Spark Guide*

[25] United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

[26] Alberta. *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*. Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, c. C-12. Current to December 18, 2025.

[27] Government of Alberta. "Preventing Child Abuse: Information for Educators." Accessed April 15, 2026.

[28] Makovichuk et al., *Flight*

[29] Indigenous Climate Hub. "Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)". Accessed April 11, 2026.

Responsive: To respond quickly, with intention. Responsive care is shaped by paying close attention to children’s cues, interests, and needs—and adapting in ways that support their well-being, belonging, and learning³⁰. Responsive environments are flexible, encouraging exploration, play, problem solving, and creativity with diverse materials and open invitations³¹.

Safeguarding: The process of proactively protecting children and vulnerable individuals from harm, while supporting their well-being.

Scope of Practice: The range of responsibilities and tasks an educator is qualified and authorized to perform based on their certification level, experience, and role.

Systemic: When something is systemic, it relates to the whole system, rather than any individual part. Systemic change might refer to organizational or societal changes in the early learning and child care system. Systemic barriers refer to organizational or societal obstacles that impact access or availability such as economic inequity and discrimination.

Ways of knowing: The diverse ways that we understand, interpret, and make meaning of the world. These are shaped by cultural, social, historical, and relational contexts, and may include ways of knowing through experience, story, language, land, spirituality, and relationships³².

[30] Makovichuk et al., Flight

[31] Makovichuk et al., Flight

[32] Apoqmatulti’k, “Ways of Knowing,”. Accessed April 11, 2026

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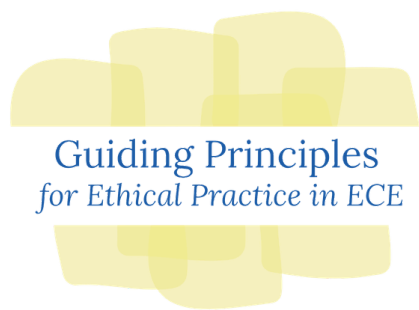
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Thank you for your continued dedication to early childhood education. Your care, knowledge, and commitment shape the experiences of children, families, and communities every day.



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