

# **Practicum Handbook 2011-2012**

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## **NSCECE Early Childhood Education Program Philosophy**

In order to support the growth and development of young children we need to meet their basic needs and provide opportunities to develop high self-esteem, independence, and the beginnings of social responsibilities. Children need self-respect, a belief in their own competence and a chance to actively explore the world around them. Adults working with young children are thus obligated to act in ways that permit children to develop self-respect, competence and construct deeply productive knowledge. Over several decades of research, developmentally appropriate practice has been found to offer this to children.

There are four major tenets to developmentally appropriate practice. First, programs are child-centered with adults sharing power and responding to children's interests and ideas when developing curriculum. Secondly, each child is seen as unique and his/her development is supported. Thirdly, the whole child is respected as an active learner, who constructs his or her own knowledge. Fourthly, adults offer children not simply physical safety, but psychological safety, that is, respect for oneself. This supports the development of a social responsibility towards others.

The Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education provides students with a foundation in the theory and performance of developmentally appropriate practice. Courses provide theoretical underpinning as well as practical knowledge in combination with extensive experience in practicum settings in order to permit students to construct their own practical knowledge.

At the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education we are proud to lay the foundation for the personal and professional growth and development of our students. It is our hope and goal that our graduates continue to learn, practice and reflect throughout their careers in early childhood education.

**Successful completion of practicum requirements for graduation includes:**

- 600 hours of practical experience
- Submission of all required documentation
- Completion of all competencies at the acceptable level
- Attendance at practicum seminars

## Practicum Mentoring

Practicum Advisors (NSCECE faculty) visit each student twice during the semester. These visits will not always be scheduled at the midterm or end of the semester evaluation times. In addition to these on-site visits by the Practicum Advisor students receive coaching and feedback at regular practicum seminars.

Students also need regular meetings with their Contact Teacher to discuss their progress. The Contact Teacher will be asked to participate in ongoing feedback and to complete the evaluation form at midterm and end of practicum. Discussions should reflect the student's strengths and emerging skills. Equally important to this process is the student's ability to critically reflect on his or her own growth and development.

**There are many people involved in the successful mentoring of our students. Below are lists of each person's responsibilities.**

### The Student

- Attend all scheduled practicum seminars with Practicum Advisor. Be prepared to discuss the listed topics in seminar.
- Become familiar with routine of practicum placement.
- Create and post a self-introduction poster for families and colleagues.
- Post and maintain a time sheet in classroom and mark if absent. Please **keep a duplicate** for yourself.
- Arrive on time and notify Contact Teacher and Practicum Advisor if absent. All absences must be made up.
- Assist Contact Teacher with tasks as requested.
- Interact with individual children gradually moving from interacting with individuals to working with small groups.
- Consult daily with Contact Teacher and ask for help when needed.
- Develop skills to evaluate own strengths and needs. Carry out midterm and final self- evaluation.
- Dress in compliance with the child care centre dress code.
- Complete practicum binder, any assigned observation tasks, required hours and successfully complete self-evaluations.
- A minimum of 600 practicum hours are required to graduate. A minimum of 150 hours are required to pass each Practicum course.
- Participate in regular conferencing sessions with the Contact Teacher to discuss daily progress. Evaluate your own needs and strengths and be able to show evidence of trying to improve skills.
- Act on feedback given by both Contact Teacher and Practicum Advisor.
- Demonstrate initiative and become an effective member of the teaching team.
- Adhere to all College and Practicum policies found in Student and Practicum handbooks.

### **The Contact Teacher**

- Prepare children and families for the arrival of student teacher.
- Welcome the student in becoming an effective member of teaching team.
- Ensure student is not used as part of ratio.
- Provide student with an orientation to the classroom and the child care program.
- Gradually give the student responsibility for working with, and planning activities for individuals, small groups and circles.
- Read activity plans (and initial) in order to familiarize self with the general intent of plan. Detailed analysis and feedback on the activity plan is optional.
- Communicate with student and give feedback on regular basis.
- Communicate on a regular basis with the Practicum Advisor regarding student progress, practicum concerns, etc.
- Use the evaluation form as point of reference for expectations and communication during placement.
- Complete evaluations on the requested due dates - midterm and final.
- Familiarize yourself with where the student is in relation to the course of studies – what classes have they taken?
- Ensure the student has a place to post their time sheet. The Contact Teacher should initial it daily and contact the Practicum Advisor if there are issues with attendance or punctuality.
- Call the Practicum Advisor if the student is struggling to meet expectations.

### **The Practicum Advisor**

#### **Re: Placement/Contact teacher**

- Familiarize self with the philosophy of the program and inform the Contact Teacher of the practicum goals and expectations.
- During each practicum visit, discuss with the progress of the student with the Contact Teacher.
- Discuss problems that arise promptly with student and Contact Teacher.
- Serve as a resource for Contact Teacher.

#### **Re: Student**

- Help the student understand the organization and routines of the centre and the classroom.
- Visit the student at least twice during each term, initial the posted time sheet of the student, note absences and address attendance problems if they are apparent.
- Assist students in planning appropriate experiences.
- Discuss progress with the student and help the student identify areas of need and strengths.
- Complete feedback notes/comments and discuss with student. Leave a duplicate copy with the student.
- Monitor student's practicum binder and write concise comments. Initial planning sheets for each student.
- Conduct self in a professional manner while representing the College.

- Maintain a professional working relationship with placement personnel, parents, students, and families.

### **The College Executive Director or Practicum Coordinator**

- Hold initial seminar prior to each placement block with students to discuss practicum expectations and responsibilities.
- Keep communication open with placement sites. Act as a liaison between placement and student.
- Be available for consultation during posted office hours.
- Ensure that the required number of hours is completed and absences are made up.
- Determine final grade based on: overall year performance, suggested grade from Practicum Advisor, and required documentation.
- Be available to students to discuss progress and concerns.
- Be available to advisors to discuss student progress and concerns.

### **What to Expect**

**\*\*Please review contact teacher checklist and evaluation forms for specific details**

1. At the beginning of the placement the student should receive an orientation to the program. The contact teacher should discuss the philosophy of the program to ensure that the student understands the expectations of the placement and to ensure that the student has a clear understanding of his/her role in the classroom.
2. During the practicum placement the student should gain some experience with as many aspects of the program as possible.
3. At the beginning of each practicum placement the student should concentrate on getting to know individual children, observing the children and increasing his/her understanding of age appropriate expectations. For the first few days the student should work/play with individual children and then gradually become more involved. The student should act as the contact teacher's assistant, helping with activities and routine tasks that the contact teacher is engaged in.
4. After a few days the student should gradually be able to take on more responsibility for programming activities for groups of children. The student should also be able to carry out selected activities for the entire group (i.e. read stories, finger plays, transition activity). As the practicum continues, the student should experience many of the responsibilities of the contact teacher, while under their direct supervision.
5. There should be regular conferencing sessions with the contact teacher and the student to discuss progress. The student should also be able to reflect on his/her own strengths and needs, and show evidence of trying to improve skills.

## **Practicum Policies and Procedures**

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow all policies in the NSCECE Early Childhood Education Student Handbook and the NSCECE Early Childhood Education Practicum Handbook while on practicum.

### **1. Required Documentation**

Nova Scotia Day Care Regulations (Section 43) require that any person 18 or older who has contact with children in a licensed day care program must have a Criminal Record Check on file, and that any person 13 years or older must have a Child Abuse Registry Check on file. Consequently, these checks are required for each year of study at NSCECE during which you enroll for practicum. Any fees charged to complete these checks are the responsibility of the student.

Students are also required to have a medical health check on file with the College before starting practicum.

### **2. Professionalism**

In addition to providing an opportunity to develop skills, the practicum placement serves to introduce students to issues encompassing the professional nature of the child care field. The student should be able to fulfil all professional expectations as outlined in practicum evaluation and act in a conscientious and mature manner as a representative of The Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education.

As well, students should communicate with the Centre Director and/or Contact Teacher their level of comfort in respect to supervision of children. Acceptable standards of student conduct are based on common sense and common courtesy, respect towards all children, Contact Teachers, Administrators and colleagues.

The College expects a high standard of professionalism during the program, as each student is a representative of The Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education. Students, who are unable to uphold these standards (i.e.) do not conduct themselves in a professionally acceptable manner, may be asked to discontinue their practicum.

**\*\*\*Admission to a practicum may be refused by the Contact Teacher or Practicum Advisor for patterns of lateness, misconduct, inattention or neglect of duty.\*\*\***

Students are expected to work an eight (8) hour shift (e.g. 8:00 am to 4:00 pm) with one (1) hour for lunch. They receive 7.5 hour credit for each practicum day. Students will follow the Centre policy regarding additional breaks.

### **3. Attendance**

At least six hundred (600) hours of practicum are required for graduation. These hours are accumulated as a result of all practicum experiences scheduled by the College. Each practicum has a minimum one hundred fifty (150) hour time requirement to move on to the next placement. Time for documenting or journal writing should be negotiated with the Contact Teacher or Practicum Advisor.

Students are expected to attend practicum as outlined in their course schedule. The practicum site and your Practicum Advisor **must** be informed of any absences early in the morning. If there are more than two (2) days absence a medical note from a doctor will be required. Missed time must be made up with extra whole days added at the end of the placement. Please see your signed **Practicum Attendance Policy** for more details.

### **4. Time Sheets**

Time sheets and their maintenance are the responsibility of the student. Students are given a time sheet that **must be posted** in the child care centre and signed by both the student and Contact Teacher prior to submitting the time sheet to their Advisor. Students are also to keep a copy of their timesheet in their practicum binder so it can be reviewed and initialled by their advisor at practicum seminar.

Students are responsible for adding up their own hours and are reminded a **15 minute preparation time** each day is **not** to be included in the daily total. Most employers expect employees to be on site at least 15 minutes prior to beginning work. This time will give students the opportunity to gather materials, take a few moments to rest and prepare themselves for the busy day.

**College classes may not be missed to make up practicum time.** Hours made up in this manner will be deducted from time sheets and students risk an incomplete grade for the practicum.

### **5. Storm Days**

Child care centres do not usually cancel for storm days. However, in the case of extreme circumstances, closure is at the discretion of the centre. A total of at least 150 practicum hours is still required to pass practicum so students will need to make up anytime that might be missed due to storms.

### **6. Transportation**

Transportation to the practicum site and other costs, such as field trips, etc. are the responsibility of the student. Contact Teachers should advise students, in advance, of possible field trips requiring additional monies.

### **7. Practicum Seminars**

Practicum seminars are scheduled on a regular basis during the semester. This will give students an opportunity to discuss issues and concerns about placement

in a small group environment. Students must attend **all** scheduled seminars, as attendance will be taken. Non-attendance at practicum seminars may result in failure of practicum. Schedule of attendance at seminars (signed) must be submitted with the practicum binder.

### **8. Students with Special Needs**

If any student has a special need s/he should inform the Practicum Advisor and the Contact Teacher at the beginning of the term, so the College and the placement may provide as much support as possible.

### **9. Suspension from Practicum**

If, at any time, the student's performance during practicum is deemed to be detrimental to the children or the functioning of the placement, the student may be asked to leave the practicum and may risk being asked to leave The Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education.

### **10. Confidentiality**

Confidentiality includes showing respect for peers, faculty members, children and their families. Conversations regarding these persons should contain only professional objective observations with a focus on student reflection and learning. These types of conversations should be limited to practicum seminars.

All students sign a confidentiality agreement as part of the practicum process. Students must refrain from discussing any information about children and their practicum experience outside the child care centre and the College. Breaking confidentiality may be cause for termination of the practicum.

### **11. Personal Appearance**

Students should dress in compliance with the dress code of their child care centre. Students should make inquiries about centre dress codes during a pre-visit or, first day of practicum. If the centre does not have a dress code, students are reminded that they are to dress professionally and appropriately for the work they are doing. This includes clean and comfortable clothes, appropriate personal hygiene, no high heels, jewellery or manner of dress which may cause discomfort or present a danger to the children. If a student's dress is creating a problem for the Centre or the College, the student will be spoken to regarding this issue.

### **12. Evaluation**

Evaluation for practicum is an ongoing process involving the student, Contact Teacher and Practicum Advisor. Students will be evaluated at midterm (usually by block placement) and at the end of term.

The final evaluation for the semester's work in practicum is based on the following:

- 1) Midterm and final term evaluations
- 2) Satisfactory completion of required hours
- 3) Satisfactory completion of required documentation
- 4) Satisfactory attendance and participation in all practicum seminars

### **13. Written/oral communication**

Students are requested to implement the correct use of language, spelling and grammar, as indicated in the College policies, when submitting required documentation as well as direct oral communication with Contact Teachers, College Advisors, and children. Students are responsible for keeping an up-to-date practicum binder that is well organized and professionally presented.

## **PRACTICUM BINDER OUTLINE**

All students must complete a practicum binder. A completed practicum binder consists of several sections (**1-6**) outlined below:

### **1. Program information:**

- Student name, address and phone number
- Placement name, address and phone number
- Contact Teacher name
- Practicum Advisor name and College phone number
- Daily program routine
- Calendar reflecting the practicum period - overview of curriculum activities
- Established communication strategy with Contact Teacher and Practicum Advisor
- Philosophy Statement of the Centre
- Behaviour Guidance Policy of the Centre

### **2. "To Do" List:**

In this section the student will list at the beginning of each day, in point form, what objectives, or tasks are to be accomplished for that day. The list will help the student keep a record of what was planned and also what was accomplished. Students are encouraged to review the list on a daily basis and document a brief reflection of how the day went.

### **3. Planning Sheets:**

These should be included with the entry for the day on which specific experiences are planned. Students should have written observations of children in their practicum binder and should use these observations in combination with planning sheets to formulate program plans.

#### **4. Evaluation:**

It is important to use each practicum experience as a basis for planning the next one. Students should reflect on what skills, feelings, thoughts or ideas they have gained or contributed during the practicum placement and those skills they need to work on in the future.

The student should review the goals set at the beginning of the placement, assessing their progress toward these goals; reflecting on the overall experience, as well as personal and professional growth is an essential component of early childhood education.

**\*\*\* See Practicum Evaluation Forms for specific details of competencies for each practicum.\*\*\***

#### **5. Timesheet (signed):**

#### **6. Practicum Journal (2<sup>nd</sup> Year students only):**

All students participating in practicum III and IV will keep a practicum journal. In the journal, the student will choose significant happenings that have taken place and write an account of them. The events should be significant because of what happened and an effort should be made to reflect on what the student learned from the situation.

The journal is a personal account of the practicum experience and is only to be shared with the Practicum Advisor. It will be regarded as private and confidential.

***The Practicum Binder must be submitted to the Practicum Advisor. A satisfactory and complete practicum binder is a requirement for successful completion of practicum. An incomplete practicum binder results in an incomplete grade. If not completed satisfactorily, and in a timely manner, an incomplete binder will result in a failing grade (F).***

**PROGRAM OF STUDIES – 2011-2012**

<u>Course Code</u>	<u>Course Name</u>	<u>Number of Hours</u>
COM 100	Communications I	30
ECE 101	Child Growth & Development	60
ECE 111	Observing & Recording	30
ECE 113	Introduction to Curriculum	60
ECE 137	Nutrition	30
ECE 147	Behaviour Guidance I	30
ECE 105	Practicum I	150
ECE 203	Curriculum II	60
ECE 204	Infant Toddler Child Care	60
ECE 229	Inclusive Environments for Families	30
ECE 217	Health and Safety	30
ECE 223	Movement, Active Play & Well Being	30
ECE 205	Practicum II	150
ECE 306	Children with Special Needs	60
ECE 307	Behaviour Guidance II	30
ECE 309	Parents as Partners	30
ECE 311	Research Issues in ECE	30
ECE 320	Emergent Literacy	30
ECE 330	Professionalism & Advocacy	30
ECE 305	Practicum III	150
COM 430	Interpersonal Skills	30
ECE 425	Administration & Management	30
ECE 403	School Age Child Care	30
ECE 406	PP for Children with Special Needs	60
ECE 418	Emergent Curriculum	60
ECE 405	Practicum IV	150

### ***Appendix: Attendance Policy - Practicum***

The Department of Education requires an attendance policy for Private Career Colleges in Nova Scotia.

Daily attendance in practicum is a program requirement. Consistent attendance and punctuality are key markers of employability in early childhood education because of the critical importance of maintaining legal adult/child ratios. Students should assume the same responsibility for attendance and punctuality as regular members of staff. Absences should occur only for illness or in exceptional circumstances. A successful practicum is based on positive relationships with children, teachers and families and to this end, regular, reliable attendance is critical for a successful learning experience.

1. Students are responsible for a minimum of 150 hours of practicum per semester. If time is missed for any reason, it is the student's responsibility to arrange makeup time. All absences must be made up with extra whole days added to the end of the placement.
  - You are expected to make medical and other personal appointments after hours
  - You are to limit absences to illness or bereavement
  - Please inform the College beforehand of a need to be absent for important religious holidays during the Practicum placement
  - You should be prepared to show evidence of a legitimate excuse for any time missed during practicum
2. Each practicum course has a start date, an end date, a binder submission date, and a final completion date. Students must complete 150 hours and pass in all other practicum course requirements within this designated timeframe. The practicum term allows a limited amount of time for makeup days due to absence. ***Practicum will not be extended beyond the final completion date.***
3. Students who are absent more than two consecutive weeks from practicum must submit relevant documentation covering the missed dates to the Practicum Coordinator within five business days of the absences and may be required to withdraw from the placement.
4. Attendance is mandatory for all practicum seminars. Students will be in jeopardy of failure if they are absent for any reason.
5. Inform the practicum site of any absences before the beginning of your shift. Failure to inform your site of an absence will result in a failure "F" for that practicum.
6. Time sheets and their maintenance are the responsibility of the student. Students are given a time sheet that **must** be posted in the child care centre and signed by both the student and contact teacher prior to submitting the time sheet to their advisor. Students are required to keep an additional copy of their hours for review by the practicum advisor at seminar.