

Raising the Bar: Best Practice Guide

Preface:

"**Raising the Bar on Quality**" is an Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (ASCY) Community Initiative that was developed to promote and support observance of community standards in a variety of early learning and child care programs. The process and its resources guide early learning and child care operators in practices to support high-quality services for children and families and in engaging educators in ongoing Professional Education, Mentoring, and Reflective Practice.

Developed for the Hamilton child care community in 2002, Raising the Bar was adapted over time for implementation in other early years sectors. As well, many other Ontario communities have adopted the ASCY/Community Raising the Bar program and made adaptations to align with their local quality strategies.

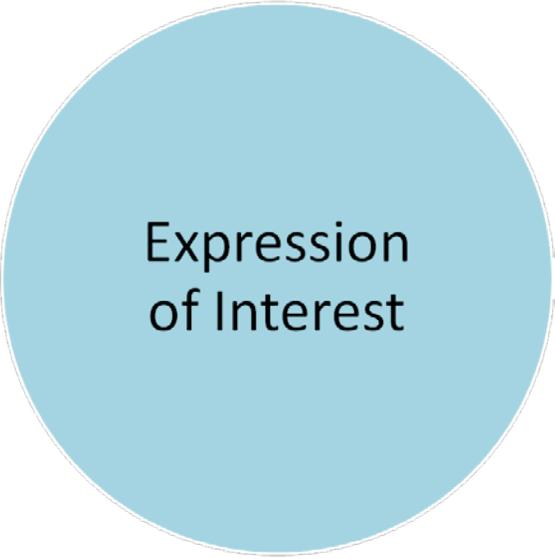
Raising the Bar: Best Practice Guide (ASCY, 2017) is a further evolution of the program, rewritten to correspond to the ["Hamilton Early Years Quality Program"](#), the framework for quality assurance introduced in the City of Hamilton in 2017.

This edition of **Raising the Bar** was written with three objectives in mind:

- To guide operators in preparing for full engagement as partners in the early years system of services.
- To guide new Supervisors in undertaking a complex leadership role that involves building crucial relationships with children, their parents, and educators, along with pedagogical leadership and program administration.
- To foster learning in organizations and support educators as lifelong learners.

A "Learning Organization" is one in which people at all levels, individually and collectively, are continually increasing their capacity to produce results they really care about.

Fifth Discipline Fieldbook, Senge et al



Expression of Interest

When a new operator expresses interest in entering into a service agreement with the City of Hamilton, they are invited to attend a system orientation session with their site Supervisor.

At this time the Supervisor is provided with a copy of Raising the Bar and learns about the Hamilton Early Years Quality Program, the system priorities, the City's role in quality assurance and process for working with System Partners. They learn about ASCY and professional learning opportunities available to them.

Raising the Bar is a manual to guide Operators and Supervisors in developing and implementing policies and practices that are recognized as best practices in the Hamilton Early Years Community. Completion of the Raising the Bar process is required for programs in service agreements with the City of Hamilton.



Raising the Bar

A Professional Learning Consultant at Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (ASCY) will meet with you at the ASCY location to provide an overview of Raising the Bar and support you in planning to develop a Quality Assurance & Licensing Manual for the organization. Through this introduction you will be introduced to the community resources at ASCY that support you in this process.

Once developed, the programs' quality assurance and licensing manual is reviewed with an ASCY Professional Learning Consultant and one or more peers to add perspective and exchange ideas.

Getting Started

Raising the Bar is a best practice guide for Supervision and Governance in early years programs. Through Raising the Bar, you'll inventory and develop tools and strategies for ongoing quality assurance and best practice. As an outcome of the process, you'll have a Quality Assurance Manual for the program. If your program is licensed, this manual will complement or, if you choose, encompass the content of your Licensing Binder. The Manual will be helpful to refer to when orienting new employees, or when describing your quality practices to families, Boards of Directors, etc., and in preparing for your licensing visits.

Throughout the guide, there are resources and links to relevant web pages. When viewed in its e-document format, you'll find the resources are hyperlinked for easy access.

Raising the Bar: Guide to Best Practices is designed as eight sections that directly correspond to the "Hamilton Early Years Quality Program Guide" . In each of Raising the Bar's eight sections there are three phases to guide your progress: "First Steps", "Next Steps", and "On-going". You will see that some steps would be the responsibility of the operator or Board of Directors, or the Director, while others are Supervisory roles, and many are responsibilities shared by all educators and individuals.

The Supervisor undertakes the lead in developing the manual and implementing the practices within Raising the Bar, however the full support of the operator is essential. In addition to operator or Board of Directors responsibilities, such as approving policies, the Supervisor will need provision of time, and parameters to implement Raising the Bar's practices.

First Steps for Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather any print materials you have related to the operation and its policies and procedures. These include Program Statement, Employee Handbook, Operating Policies, Procedures and forms, Parent Handbook or parent information package, registration forms. • Most Raising the Bar participants opt to assemble a large 3-4 inch binder and add tabs to organize contents, however it is entirely possible to create and maintain an electronic manual. • Contact ASCY at 905-574-6876 to request an introductory consultation on Raising the Bar mentorship.
Next:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly attend the Supervisors' Professional Learning Community to connect with others, share ideas, and exchange perspective. The Professional Learning Community is also a forum for updates and announcements. If you choose, your Consultant can attend with you for the first few times to introduce you to others. • Explore the Supervisors Professional Learning Community web page to see the resources that are offered..
On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend the Supervisors' Professional Learning Community and take part in the discussions that are planned for the agenda.

Create a Quality Assurance and Licensing Manual

Part I Quality: 8 Subsections including supplementary forms and documents

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|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1) Ideas | 2) Governance |
| 3) Infrastructure | 4) Policy and Planning |
| 5) Finance | 6) Human Resources |
| 7) Environments and Contexts for Relationships | 8) Data , Research and Evaluation |

Part II Licensing: To view a sample, visit [Sample Licensing Binder](#)

Supplementary Documents: Parent Handbook
Board of Directors Manual
Employee Handbook

1. Ideas - *Our vision*

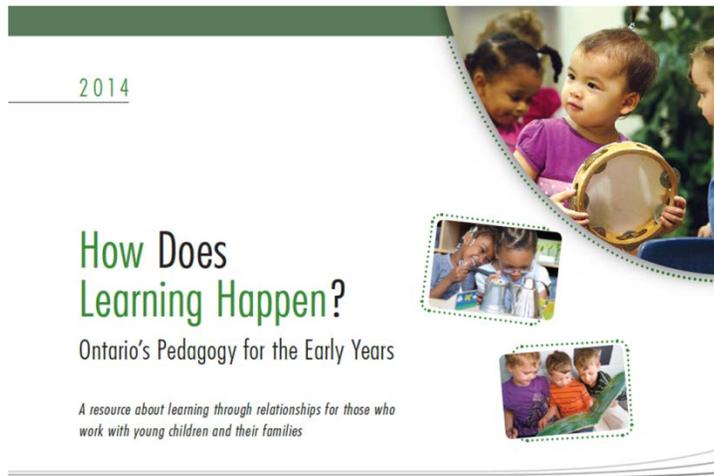
Vision: Children benefit from early years experiences that are coherent with current pedagogy, and informed by current research on child health, development, and learning.
– *Hamilton Early Years Quality Program*

Goal for Children and Families: The lived experiences of children and families are coherent with current pedagogy and system values. They are welcomed and respected for their culture, diversity, and supported in seamless transitions to other services.

– *Hamilton Early Years Quality Program*

“Ontario’s children and families are well supported by a system of responsive, high-quality, accessible, and increasingly integrated early years programs and services that contribute to healthy child development today and a stronger future tomorrow.”

Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2014



Children are competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential. They grow up in families with diverse social, cultural, and linguistic perspectives. Every child should feel that he or she belongs, is a valuable contributor to his or her surroundings, and deserves the opportunity to succeed. When we recognize children as capable and curious, we are more likely to deliver programs and services that value and build on their strengths and abilities.

<p>First</p> <p>Relationships and Responsibilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the program continually meets applicable regulations of the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA) and the Early Childhood Education Act, upholds the College of Early Childhood Education (CECE) Code of Ethics and Standards for Practice and complies with all relevant legislation, including Workplace Health and Safety, Ontarians with Disability, Child and Family Services Acts. • On licensing and monitoring visits, Ministry of Education Quality Assurance and Program Licensing Advisors can offer expertise in the CCEYA and contribute valuable insight to support best practice and high quality. • Take part in an orientation to Hamilton Early Years System, available through an ASCY Professional Learning Consultant. • Establish a cycle of team or full staff meetings for your educators. If it is necessary to meet after program hours, ensure they are compensated for the meeting time through wages, compensatory lieu time, or a combination. • Plan agendas to allow time for professional learning within your monthly staff meeting agendas. Record your staff meeting dates and topics for professional learning in your Supervisory log. • Build relationships with children and their families. Educators support children in developing friendships and learning about each other. • The orientation process for children includes play visits and a time for educators to get to know parents. • Develop a relationship with the Resource Teacher assigned to your organization by Community Living Hamilton (CLH). They can consult with you on strategies to support full inclusions of children with special needs • Engage in professional learning at ASCY
<p>Next</p> <p>Community Connections</p>	<p>Visit www.ascy.ca to learn about professional learning opportunities and the Supervisors' Professional Learning Community. On the Supervisors' Professional Learning Community page you'll see an extensive list of supportive resources.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Education resources to support study of "How Does Learning Happen? - Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years", and full compliance with the Child Care and Early Years' Act. • Pathway to Connect will lead you to Hamilton Charter of Rights of Children and Youth, Hamilton Parent Charter of Rights, supports for inclusion, and many community resources to support children's healthy development and overall well-being. • Early Years community Plan • City of Hamilton Public Health Resources • Policy, Planning, and Governance Resources.
<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend the Supervisors' Professional Learning Community and develop relationships with Supervisors and Directors for services in the neighbourhood.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build familiarity with community organizations and services. Gather brochures and contact information to have on-site for families. • Foster a perception of seamlessness for families by supporting them through transitions and with timely access to services. • Ongoing study, reflective practice, and community dialogue to support the commitment to coherence with goals and expectations of the community and of “How Does Learning Happen?” Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years.
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Add these items to your Quality Assurance and Licensing Manual:

- Parent Handbook:
 - i) Orientation process for new children and families.

- Section 6 - Human Resources
 - i) Schedule of staff meetings for the year ahead
 - ii) Form to log meetings, noting agenda highlights such as professional learning topic
 - iii) Policy related to employee compensation for attending staff meetings outside of work hours
 - iv) Copy the aforementioned policy to the Employee Handbook

2. Governance - *How We Operate*

Vision: System partners have well-designed governance structures and clear lines of accountability.

With children as a first consideration, the Raising the Bar programs intentionally solicit the perspectives of all key stakeholders: the children, the families, the program’s employees, and the broader community. – *Hamilton Early Years Quality Program*

Goal for Children and Families: Children and families are engaged in the community in meaningful ways and feel a sense of belonging. Families know they can share ideas, concerns, ask questions, and will be responded to respectfully.

Children and families have access to meaningful relationships in neighbourhood programs where system partners are responsive to their needs. – *Hamilton Early Years Quality Program*

“Families bring diverse social, cultural, and linguistic perspectives. Families should feel like they belong, are valuable contributors to their children’s learning, and deserve to be engaged in a meaningful way.” How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years, 2014

First	<p>Determine a model of governance of the organization. Not-for-Profit organizations and their Boards must comply with the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act legislation.</p> <p><i>Early Learning and Child Care programs that are licensed under the Child Care and Early Years Act develop, implement and follow a Program Statement with goals, approaches for implementation, and monitoring. Therefore as you develop roles, responsibilities and communication plans consider aligning with, and directly referencing stated goals and approaches.</i></p> <p>Define roles and responsibilities in governance, including the role for parents.</p> <p>Develop a plan for communication that addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communications between the organization and the Ministry of Education; the program and the City of Hamilton System Manager.• Communications between the operator or Board of Directors and the Supervisor or Director• Communications between Families and the Supervisor or Director of operations• Employees with the Supervisor and Director.• Programs with families.• Development and sharing of pedagogical documentation.• General information sharing.
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	<p>In addition to sharing pedagogical documentation and program information or notifications, the plan should include the process for bringing concerns forward, a commitment to respond in a timely way, and a conflict resolution plan and process. As well, the plan should address dissemination of community information (e.g. information for families, Information regarding forum dates for Supervisors, professional learning opportunities for educators). Include the communication plan in an Employee Handbook and Parent Handbook.</p> <p>About pedagogical documentation:</p> <p>Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) engage in daily observation and active listening to understand children’s perspectives and thinking. RECEs consider and make meaning of the children’s verbal cues and other languages of expression. Parents are viewed as the experts on their own children and the insight and information they provide guides the RECEs in understanding the child’s perspectives.</p> <p>Pedagogical documentation is evident in the children’s environment and shared in ways that allow for parents and others to ask questions and contribute their perspective.</p> <p>To learn more about Pedagogical Documentation, visit Think, Feel, Act Lessons from Research. As well, the ASCY Professional Resource Library can guide you to other resources for support in learning more about Pedagogical Documentation.</p>
Next	<p>Invite Parent Perspective: Annually, the organization and/or program implement 1-2 strategies to gather perspectives from parents. Examples: Web survey, Q&A forum on a website, paper-based survey, focus group or opportunity for social connection.</p> <p>Invite Employee Perspective: The organization implements one or more strategies to assess the workplace experience of employees. For example: conducting an annual or bi-annual workplace environment survey, a focus group, or offering exit interviews to those who resign from their positions.</p>
Ongoing	<p>The organization implements a strategy or practice of reporting back to others and, as appropriate and relevant to the group, contributes to the professional learning of others by sharing new directions or practices.</p> <p>At the Operator or Board of Directors level, implement an annual cycle to review policies and update as indicated by changes in legislation or direction.</p> <p>Directors accept opportunities to engage with the broader sector to influence policy and direction by responding to surveys and taking part in advisory or working groups. Implement an annual planning cycle that corresponds to your CCEYA licence renewal.</p> <p>Parents are invited to contribute in ways that are meaningful to them including, but not limited to, the opportunity to</p>

	participate in the program and curriculum.
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Add to Quality Assurance and Licensing Manual

- Section 2 – Governance and Board of Directors Manual
 - i) Develop a Board of Directors Manual and Organizational chart
 - ii) Lines of communication (may be shown on a copy of the organizational chart)
 - iii) Develop a planning cycle including an annual parent survey or feedback process

- Section 6 – Human Resources: Begin to gather relevant items for an Employee Handbook

- Licensing Section: Begin to gather relevant items to add to your Parent Handbook

- Include relevant components of the communication plan and process for discussing concerns
 - Add to the Employee Handbook
 - Add to the Parent Handbook

3. Infrastructure – Locations, Services, and Supports

Infrastructure Vision: ELCC programs are purpose built or purposely designed, co-located or connected to other services within neighbourhoods. Common, system-wide processes exist. – *Hamilton Early Years Quality Program*

Goal for Children and Families: Families can easily identify and locate system partner locations and understand these are places to go for early years programs and services. – *Hamilton Early Years Quality Program*

“Early Childhood Educators value and engage in collaboration with community agencies, schools and other professionals.”

College of ECE, Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, 2011

First	<p>Operators can begin by assessing the program’s current infrastructure. Purposely designed spaces for early learning and care meet all regulations of the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA, Regulation 137/15 Section 2) and have a number of features to support the health and well-being of very young children. Refer to Planning and Design Guidelines for Child Care</p> <p>The ASCY Library and professional learning opportunities can provide insight to quality indicators and introduce environmental assessment tools. You may choose to visit other programs to gain insight to infrastructure needs.</p> <p>Develop a daily, monthly and annual health and safety monitoring plan for indoors and outdoors, as well as a strategic plan to address major modifications or purchases such as structural changes or new furnishings.</p> <p>When developing or revisiting the program’s business case, refer to Hamilton’s Integrated Early Years Services Plan (2016-2019) to learn how plans align with local needs and priorities.</p>
Next	<p>In Hamilton, common system-wide processes have been implemented for efficiency and to support equitable access for families. At your introductory session, the ASCY Professional Learning Consultant will provide information about community processes, some of which are mandatory for those with service agreements with the City of Hamilton.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hamilton Early Years Quality Program • Hamilton Child Care Registry <p>Collaborate with others to enrich the program or build partnerships. For example: school-age groups might collaborate on a field trip to share the cost of transportation or programs in shared facilities might collaborate for special events.</p>
Ongoing	<p>Follow an annual planning cycle that corresponds to your CCEYA licence renewal and Program Statement implementation and monitoring plan.</p>

Add copies of these items to your Quality Assurance Manual:

Section 3. Infrastructure: Annual Planning Cycle, strategic plan

Licensing: Health and safety, indoor and outdoor monitoring and tracking forms.

Resources

[Ministry of Education Early Years Licensing Resources](#)

[City of Hamilton, Public Health Resources](#)

[Supervisors Professional Learning Community Resources](#)

4. **Policy and Planning**

Vision: The well-being of children and families is at the centre of policy and planning, both in the broader community and with system partners.

– *Hamilton Early Years Quality Program*

Goals for Children and Families: Policies are designed with the best interests of children, and families are confident in the system.

– *Hamilton Early Years Quality Program*

“Early Childhood Educators who are responsible for complying with privacy legislation establish clear policies and practices relating to the management of client information and make information about these policies and practices readily available in accordance with any applicable privacy or other legislation.”

College of ECE, Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, 2011

<p>First</p>	<p>Review, revise, or develop Operating Policies and Procedures. Develop an organized file system, either electronically, in print copy, or both, to ensure all employees have easy access to policies, procedures, and forms</p> <p><i>Early Learning and Child Care programs that are licensed under the Child Care and Early Years Act develop, implement and follow a Program Statement with goals, approaches for implementation, and monitoring. Through the development of their Program Statement, child care operators will have completed extensive policy development and planning around many of these topics.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies for families – information for families a Wait List Policy, Conflict Resolution and other policies you have in your parent Handbook. • Program statement, policies and procedures • Health and Safety – Playground, anaphylaxis, sanitary practices, medications, serious occurrence, fire safety and evacuation, sleep room policy • Human resource policies, including job descriptions and workplace health and safety. • Financial policies • Protocols for internal communications including reports to the program’s owner/operator, Executive Director or Board of Directors, as applicable. • Establish a pattern and process for reviewing policies and procedures with new employees during their orientation, and annually for all. <p>The Supervisors Professional Learning Community webpage offers a resource, Navigating Public Policy in the Child Care Sector, a Guide to Writing Centre Policy. Raising the Bar offers considerations for policies and procedures not encompassed by the CCEYA. Review policies, procedures, and forms with your Professional Learning Consultant or a peer to gain insight as</p>
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	<p>to revisions that are reflective of the organization’s aim for coherence with “How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years”.</p> <p>Once you have completed your policy development and review, include an index in your Quality Assurance Manual.</p> <p>Communicate policy information in a Parent Handbook and Employee Handbook, as relevant.</p> <p>Plan for a regular staff or team meeting cycle and agenda that devotes time to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Review, discuss policies and reflect on current practice; b) Review the College of Early Childhood Educators resources and case studies to support b) Share and reflect upon pedagogical documentation; c) Contribute ideas to extend learning.
<p>Next</p> <p>In programs</p>	<p>Use Resources developed for Ontario's child care centres, by Ontario Dietitians In Public Health , ODPH, to review and revise menus, program practices, and related processes such as purchasing.</p> <p>Through observation and, where appropriate, meetings with the children and peers, educators, gather ideas for future planning. For example: Educator teams have daily or weekly planning meetings with the children and children’s thoughts regarding interests and questions, are documented.</p>
<p>Operators</p> <p>Directors</p> <p>Supervisors</p>	<p>Consider all new or revised legislation in terms of implications for changes in policy and practice.</p> <p>At the Operator or Board of Directors level, implement an annual cycle to review policies and update as indicated by changes in legislation or direction.</p> <p>Monitor operations and evaluate.</p> <p>Directors accept opportunities to engage with the broader sector to influence policy and direction by responding to surveys and taking part in advisory or working groups.</p> <p>Schedule time to be present and intentionally observe in the program and reflect on coherence with your Program Statement and relevant policies. If you have concerns, meet with employees individually to share your observation and coach them on alternative approaches.</p> <p>The College of ECE website offers a number of scenarios for consideration and discussion at staff meetings. Each scenario can open discussion to deepen understanding of policies and standards for practice.</p> <p>Plan for program-wide professional learning to deepen understanding in topics or areas of concern.</p>

Add to Quality Assurance and Licensing Manual:

Section 4. Policy & Planning

- A list or index of your Program Statement, Policies, and Procedures. Note, all of your policies, procedures and forms should be held electronically and, at your option, in an Operating Policies and Procedures Binder.

Licensing:

- Tracking sheet for Supervisors' classroom observations.
- Tracking sheet for Program Statement, Policy and Procedure review, and sign-off.

Parent Handbook

- Information about policies that are relevant for parents.

Employee Handbook

- Information about policies that are relevant for employees

Resources:

[Navigating Public Policy in the Child Care Sector: A Guide to Writing Centre Policy](#)

5. Finance

Vision: Public dollars are directed to fund high quality programs and increasingly support ELCC programs that are accessible for all families. ELCC programs are adequately resourced and demonstrate viability through fiscal accountability and sound business practices.

Goals: Children and families are able to choose ELCC programs and services that are consistently high quality, inclusive, and accessible to them.

<p>First</p>	<p>Develop a Business Case.</p> <p>Investment of public dollars in the early years system demands high levels of accountability. Sound business practices and Financial Policies will ensure you are able to report on operating costs and utilization of funds.</p> <p>Operators develop an equitable wage and benefit scale for employees. In Hamilton, the expectation is that RECEs are paid the living wage (i.e. in 2017, \$15.47) as a baseline, before operating funding for wage supplements are added. Equitable salaries and benefits support retention of skilled, knowledgeable RECEs, a factor in program quality.</p> <p>Should you receive operating funding for wages, you will require a payroll system that shows a line-by-line break down of base wages, wage supplements, and all deductions. This will support you in meeting obligations for reporting and ensuring employees are aware of allocations.</p> <p>Operators develop an operating budget based on 85% of your operating capacity which allows for some fluctuation in enrollment and, to a few, allow spaces for children to age into (e.g. from toddler to preschool). However, it is important to monitor for trends and make staffing adjustments in a timely manner to avoid losses whenever possible. The Supervisors Professional Learning Community page on www.ascy.ca has business tools developed to support you in this regard.</p> <p>Financial administration of a child care program requires time for invoicing & receivables, purchasing & payables, payroll, purchasing, accounting, banking, and budgeting. Ensure the person(s) you hire or contract for these services has the knowledge and time for this responsibility.</p>
<p>Next</p>	<p>Develop financial policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual Budget & Monitoring of YTD revenue/expenses ▪ Review of Enrolment & Wait List ▪ Internal/external controls (i.e.: mechanisms for minimizing risk, fraudulent behavior, technology, etc.) ▪ Signing Authority

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Board Role ▪ Audited Financial Statements ▪ Liability Insurance
Ongoing	Monitor operations and evaluate.

Add to your Quality Assurance Manual:

Section 5.

- A copy of your Business Case
- A list or index of your financial policies.

Note: all of your policies, procedures, and forms should be held electronically and, at your option, in an Operating Policies and Procedures Binder.

6. Human Resources - *Our Professionals*

Vision: ELCC system professionals are qualified for their position, compensated fairly, respected in the community and workplace, contribute leadership and expertise, and engage in reflective practice and life-long learning.

All professionals understand the importance of their role in making person-to-person connections to support positive relationships.

– *Hamilton Early Years Quality Program*

Goals for Children and Families: The relationships between children, families, and professionals within the system are reciprocal, in that each are recognised for their expertise, knowledge and they support one another in their respective roles.

Children and families gain a strong sense of confidence and belonging when workplaces provide positive work environments and opportunities for leadership.

– *Hamilton Early Years Quality Program*

“Early Childhood Educators collaborate with families by exchanging knowledge and sharing practices and resources.”

College of ECE, Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, 2011

“Early Childhood Educators observe and monitor the learning environment and anticipate when support or intervention is required.”

College of ECE, Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, 2011

“Early Childhood Educators value lifelong learning and commit themselves to engaging in continuous professional learning to enhance their practice.”

College of ECE, Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, 2011

“Continuous professional learning is the systematic and intentional maintenance, enhancement, and expansion of the knowledge skills and ethical values and behaviours necessary to ensure ongoing quality professional practice throughout a member’s career.”

College of ECE, Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, 2011

“The continuous professional learning process supports RECEs in meeting expectations outlined in government legislation and College by-laws, policies, practices.”

College of ECE, 2014

“Every educator should feel he or she belongs, is a valuable contributor, and deserves to engage in meaningful work.”

How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years, 2014

“When educators engage in continuous professional learning and questioning, exploring new ideas and adjusting practices, they achieve the best outcomes for children, families, and themselves.”

How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years, 2014

First	<p>The organization ensures all employees are qualified for their position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fully endorses the College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards for Practice• Supervisor qualifications align with the CCEYA Regulations.• The complement of RECEs and all other employees aligns with the CCEYA Regulations.• Those who prepare and store food are Certified Food Handlers, as is the individual responsible for developing and reviewing policies and practices related to Healthy Eating. For programs where lunch is served, at minimum, two individuals will be Certified Food Handlers.• Employees, students, volunteers, and consultants provide proof of credentials including Vulnerable Sector Checks. <p>Operators and Directors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adopt Hamilton Parent Charter of Rights as principles for working with families.• Develop Job Descriptions for each position.• Compensate staff fairly. (Also referenced in Section 5. Finance)• Support an organizational climate for continuous professional learning and state the expectation for all employees to engage in continuous professional learning is stated in policy.• Reflect costs associated with professional learning and involvement in the operating budget.• Facilitate educator engagement by contributing to the cost of professional learning.• Fulfill their own obligation to continuous professional learning as defined in the CCEYA 2015 and CECE Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. <p>The Supervisors’ role in making person-to-person connections and in fostering a learning environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foster a sense of belonging for all children, families, and employees.• Adopt a work schedule that allows the Supervisor to be present and visible to many families and employees when they arrive and/or depart.• Parents have the opportunity to visit the program with their child prior to finalizing their decision to register.• Parents have the opportunity to spend time in the program with their child as a component of the family orientation. (Review the orientation plan in Section 1)
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- Educators meet with parents to gain insight as to the child’s interests, health, development, and unique qualities.
- Schedule time to be in each classroom daily for a check-in and on a regular basis, a longer period to work side-by-side with the educators, to have a shared experience to reflect upon with them.
- When observing, consider the educators interactions in terms of fostering relationships, facilitating inquiry, and problem-solving as well as responding to challenges.
- Schedule time on the calendar for weekly individual meetings with educators who are new to the organization and every 3-4 months for others. Regular times to connect with the Supervisor helps educators feel supported. Through dialogue, Supervisors’, as mentors, are able to constructively provide feedback, share insight, and respond to problems before they become ongoing issues.
- Maintain a log of observations and feedback times along with a brief meeting note.
- Support educators in the fulfilment of their professional responsibilities to the College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and support them with adherence to “How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years”.
- Encourage varied approaches to learning such as on-line webinars, self-study, or action research.
- Provide occasional opportunities for educators to attend events during their working hours.
- Schedule monthly team meetings.
- Provide time at team meetings for educators to share their learning among the team.
- Model leadership by maintaining an organizational membership with an association, sharing your own professional learning, and regularly attending the Supervisors’ Professional Learning Community.

Regularly visit www.ascy.ca and consider the many professional learning opportunities posted on or linked to the ASCY website.

Expectations for ECAs and others:

- Make person-to-person connections a priority
- Undertake responsibility for ensuring required credentials for their job description remain current.
- Take part in professional learning that is interesting to you and relevant to your role and responsibility.
- Review and reflect upon the CECE Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice to ensure their practices in the workplace are coherent with others.
- Fulfill their obligation to continuous professional learning as defined in the CCEYA 2015 and CECE Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.
- Educators study curriculum as described in “How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early

	<p>Years”, and strive to ensure the activities and experiences offered, and approaches are coherent with the document.</p>
<p>Next</p>	<p>Operators and Directors:</p> <p>The organization’s culture for professional involvement is strengthened in one or more ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directors are members of a professional association or professional learning community. • From time to time, the program hosts a professional learning community meeting at the centre’s location. • In collaboration with educators, identify and support an organization-wide study in one or more topic areas. <p>Supervisors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annually, meet with educators to review the CECE Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice and engage in discussion about Continuous Professional Learning. • Supervisors take part in recognition events along with the team. • Through professional learning, the team deepens their understanding of diversity and inclusion and work to strengthen the cultural competence within the program. <p>RECEs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a professional portfolio to document their learning. <p>Expectations for ECAs and others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepen their understanding of early childhood education by joining with colleagues in continuous professional learning activities.
<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Organizations and Directors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate opportunities for educators to share their professional learning with families and community partners. <p>RECEs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On an ongoing basis, consider their professional learning in terms of implications for practice and record and enter notes in their portfolio. Annually, at minimum, RECEs review their notes and document one or more experiences that reflect the impact of their learning and evolution of their practice.

	<p>Expectations for ECAs and others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain professional credentials in an organized manner such as the portfolio described for the RECEs. • Explore reading and professional learning on topics such as mentoring pedagogical leadership, and communication styles to inform your approach to mentorship. • As educators develop their feelings of competence and confidence provide them with opportunities to further develop their leadership skills by leading a project or by representing the program at a community table. • Ongoing study, reflective practice, and community dialogue to support the commitment to coherence with goals and expectations of the community and of “How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years”.
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Add to Quality Assurance and Licensing Manual

- Section 6 – Human Resources
 - i) Job descriptions for each position, including credentials.
 - ii) Orientation process for new employees.
 - iii) Orientation process for students, volunteers, and visiting consultants.
 - iv) Policies related to professional learning.

- Section 6 – Human Resources: Employee Handbook
 - i) Template for a record of Professional Learning (ASCY PL card)
 - ii) Template for self-reflection on Professional Learning.
 - iii) Link to CECE CPL programs and work book.

Licensing

- Tracking sheet for Supervisors’ classroom observations.
- Tracking sheet for vulnerable sector review and declaration.
- Tracking sheet for documenting reports to CECE.

[ASCY Professional Learning Opportunities](#)
[College of Early Childhood Education](#)

7. Environments and Contexts for Relationships

Vision: System Partners provide a climate of ELCC experiences that foster relationships, belonging, and well-being among children, families and educators.

Environments are designed, maintained and equipped to provoke curiosity, exploration, inquiry, support self-regulation through play, and reflect respect for children as capable and competent.

– *Hamilton Early Years Quality Program*

Goals: Children have a right to experience meaningful, active, creative, exploratory play, both indoors and outdoors. Environments are intentionally planned, appropriately equipped for children’s development, and support their health and well-being. ELCC system partners make person-to-person connections with parents/primary caregivers and build trusting, respectful relationships with children, families and professionals.

– *Hamilton Early Years Quality Program*

Reflecting on Pedagogy

“Children are competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential.”

“There is perhaps no relationship that holds greater responsibility or reward than the relationships we develop with children. As educators, as family members, as policy makers, or as administrators, we all know that the stronger our partnerships and the deeper and more valuable our connections, the greater the benefit.”

“Creating an environment that welcomes families into the space, inviting their perspectives and providing opportunities for families to participate in meaningful ways... on an ongoing basis, supports their sense of belonging.”

“Children are engaged learners when they engage with others to negotiate, collaborate, create, and communicate feelings, ideas, experiences, and knowledge. Educators can create contexts that engage children by connecting with families and communities and inviting their participation to ensure that environments and experiences reflect and are relevant to children’s everyday lives.”

“The environment is the context in which learning takes place. From the aesthetics of the space, to the type of furnishings and materials available, to the organization of time, the environment communicates a powerful message and contributes to shaping the actions that can be taken within it.”

How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years, 2014

Raising the Bar participants commit to providing and fostering environments where children and others feel a sense of belonging along with physical, social, and emotional well-being, including cultural identity. Environments with a rich variety of materials ignite curiosity, inviting engagement in explorative, constructive play and supporting opportunities for expression in a diversity of ways. The interactions of RECEs and other employees are significantly important to foster belonging, well-being, engagement, and expression. For some RTB participants, the organization has an enhanced focus on fostering children’s spiritual well-being and cultural identity, adding context for consideration in this RTB Section.

“What’s the central ingredient? Warm, responsive relationships”

Clinton, Think, Feel, Act, 2014

First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone is welcome. The program has policies that promote inclusion, leadership that promotes inclusion, and staff who believe in inclusion. • Relationships with children are seen as a first priority. Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) engage in daily observation and active listening to understand children’s perspectives. While infants and toddlers may not express their ideas verbally, RECEs can consider and interpret the child’s cues and languages of expression. Parents are viewed as the experts on their own children and the insight and information they provide guides the RECEs in understanding the child’s perspectives. • Educators support children in developing friendships and learning about each other. • Directors commit to being present with the children and educators on a routine basis. As the leader for the program, you are central to fostering a healthy social-emotional environment, nurturing relationships, and well-being of the children and team. • As noted in Section 6. Human Resources, daily informal and regular longer observations are important to monitor quality in the environment including interactions. Address matters of concern in a timely way. • Invite the perspective of community professionals with a view to gaining insight that will support their aspirations
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	<p>toward coherence with “How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource Teacher Consultants (RTC) bring expertise regarding the inclusion and early childhood education of children with special needs. • Through professional learning events and study groups, ASCY Professional Learning Consultants offer expertise on quality indicators, resources to guide assessment of the environment. • Investigate and select resources for guiding your observations of the environments and planning for enhancement. • Develop and select tools or formats to support daily and monthly monitoring for indoor and outdoor health and safety, the quality of educator interactions, and other recognized indicators of quality. • Respond immediately to issues that potentially place children at risk in terms of health, safety, and well-being, especially interactions. Identify timeframes to assess changes and re-evaluate.
Next	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors and educators take time to reflect on their own practice through the lens of each child’s experience of belonging, well-being, engagement, and expression. • Explore resources and professional learning that focus on children’s well-being. For example: Healthy Eating Indicators, physical literacy, early literacy, self-regulation, ForGoodnessSake, and Excerpts from ELECT. • On occasion, parents have the opportunity to spend time in the program with their child. For example: Periodically, the program facilitates special events so that families have an opportunity to get to know each other. • Through pedagogical documentation the children’s contributions, thinking, and learning are made visible to families.
Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators build connections to support children within their community. There are opportunities to engage with people, places and the natural world in the local environment. For example: Children have the opportunity to contribute to the care of the natural environment.

Add to Quality Assurance and Licensing Manual

- Section 7 – Environments and Contexts for Relationships
 - i) Program statement and any policies related to inclusion.
These may be included in Section 4. Policy and Planning



Resources:

Pedagogical Perspectives:

- [How Does Learning Happen? Goals for Children and Expectations for Programs](#)
- [Think, Feel, Act, Lessons from Research](#)
- Designs for Living and Learning 2nd Edition, Appendix of Resources. (Carter, Curtis 2014)

Additional resources are available in the ASCY Professional Resource Library <https://ascy.ca/>

8. Data, Research and Evaluation - *How are we doing? What can we learn?*

Vision: System managers and system partners gather, utilize, share, and link data to guide planning, continuous quality improvement which contributes to the growing body of early childhood research.

– Hamilton Early Years Quality Program

Goals for Children and Families: Children and families benefit from ELCC programs that engage in a cycle of continuous quality improvement and monitoring. Children and families contribute thoughts and ideas that inform both program and system planning. Children’s learning and development is made visible and celebrated through portfolios and documentation. Families have access to information that is meaningful to them, both to engage with their child and at the system level, inform decision making and for learning.

– Hamilton Early Years Quality Program

“Recurring themes from research, theory and practice suggest that high quality early childhood programs provide ongoing opportunities for educators to engage in critical reflection and discussion with others about pedagogy and practice to support continuous professional learning and growth.”
How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years, 2014

First	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operators and Directors include monitoring and evaluation in their annual planning cycle. Supervisors understand their role in gathering or summarizing information to facilitate monitoring by the Operator.• With children as a first consideration, the program undertakes a survey of key stakeholders to gather the perspectives of children, the families, the program’s employees, and the broader community.• Throughout Raising the Bar, other strategies have been introduced to solicit perspective and to sharing it back. The focus in this section calls for making meaning of the information you’ve gathered or that is otherwise made available to you, and being responsive to new research.• Organizations collaborate with the community and engage in initiatives to study factors that impact child health and well-being, including quality in ELCC.• Organizations consider information that is presented to them and its relevance to their work and respond through professional learning, reflective practice and adapt as necessary.
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	<p>Educators are researchers and reflective practitioners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The educators have a means to gather and compile documentation in children’s portfolios which are shared with families at least once a year. • The portfolio format allows for parents to add their own perspectives.
Next	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization implements a strategy or practice of reporting back to others and, as appropriate and relevant to the group, contributes to the professional learning of others by sharing the rationale for new directions or practices. • Educators gather observations to reflect on practice and when changes are introduced. E.g. “What happens when we invite children to pair up with a friend and help each other put their snow pants on?”; “What happens when we offer children a bucket and sponge to clean the paint easel when they are finished painting?”
Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With children, educators sometimes introduce learning and inquiry topics that extend beyond known facts and absolutes; they study ideas, questions, and abstract concepts. E.g. “What is <i>wishing</i>?”; “<i>What are spaces?</i>” • RECEs engage in action research within their program and through pedagogical documentation, share their learning with others, and contribute to professional learning throughout the broader sector.

Appendix i

References and On-Line Resources

Aboriginal Health: Health Canada First Nations and Inuit Health <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/index-eng.php>

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/accessibility/understanding_accessibility/aoda.aspx

Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (ASCY) www.ascy.ca

Association of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario (AECEO) <http://www.aeceo.ca>

Association francophone a l'education des services a l'enfance de l'Ontario <http://afeseo.ca/>

Centre de santé communautaire Hamilton/Niagara <http://www.cschn.ca/>

City of Hamilton <http://www.hamilton.ca/>

[City of Hamilton, Healthy Eating](#)

[City of Hamilton, Infection Control](#)

[City of Hamilton, Public Health](#)

[College of Early Childhood Educators\(CECE\)](#)

[Community Living Hamilton](#)

[Early Literacy Checklist](#)

<https://ascy.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Infanttoddlerchecklist.pdf>

[Early Words 1ers Mots Hamilton Preschool Speech and Language Service](#)

[Environment Rating Scales Institute](#)

[Excerpts from “ELECT”](#)

[Hamilton Best Start & Pathway to Connect](#)

[Ontario Dieticians in Public Health, Resources for Child Care](#)

[Ministry of Education](#)

[How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years](#)

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/>

[Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)

[Think, Feel, Act, Lessons from Research about Young Children](#)

[UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

Individual Staff Portfolio

Name: _____ Name of Program: _____

Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) YES Other role: _____

[] Standard First Aid Date: _____ CPR Date: _____

[] Food Handler Certification Date (if applicable): _____

1. What resources have impacted your practice over the past year?

2. How have you engaged in professional learning over the past year?

Check all that apply

[] Reading articles, books, journals

[] Study Group

[] On-line seminars

[] Book Club

[] Conferences

[] Self-guided study

[] Workshops

[] Professional Learning Communities / Networks

[] Post-secondary courses

Other: _____

