

An ETFO Guide to Your Role as a Kindergarten DECE

→ Information to help you build success in the classroom

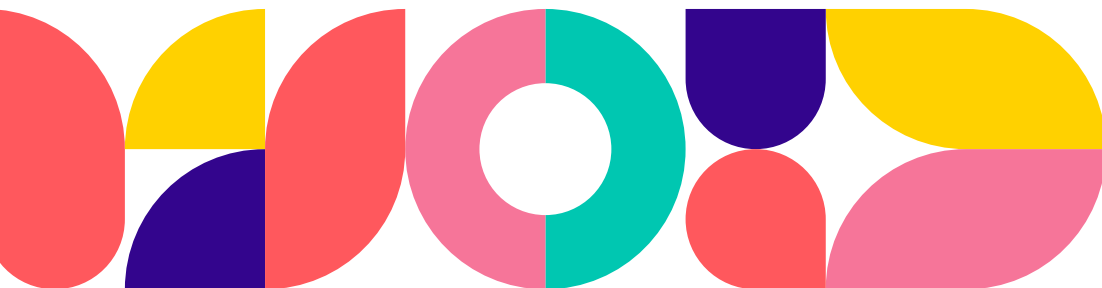
The DECE–Teacher Relationship

The Ontario Ministry of Education’s 2026 [Kindergarten curriculum](#) describes the relationship between designated early childhood educators (DECEs) and certified teachers as a partnership:

“Teachers and early childhood educators work together to plan and implement the program and to maintain a healthy physical, emotional, and social learning environment. They collaborate in observing, monitoring, and assessing the progress and development of the children in Kindergarten and in communicating with families.”

As stated in *Growing Success – The Kindergarten Addendum: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools*: “It is expected that teachers and early childhood educators will collaborate in observing, monitoring, and assessing the development of the children in Kindergarten and in communicating with families.”

The ETFO resource *Building & Enriching Partnerships in Kindergarten* notes that “children benefit by having both a DECE and a teacher in the classroom. These two professionals work together to give children the best possible start in school. The Kindergarten team keeps learning child-centred and play-based. Both professionals observe, assess, and assist each child in their classroom. Both undertake ongoing professional learning to enhance their skills. Both communicate with parents and caregivers. Both bring their special skills to the Kindergarten program.”



DECE Professional Expectations

The *Early Childhood Educators Act*, 2007 defines the practice of early childhood education as “the planning and delivery of inclusive play-based learning and care programs for children in order to promote the well-being and holistic development of children, and includes,

- a. the delivery of programs to children 12 years or younger
- b. the assessment of the programs and of the progress of children in the programs
- c. communication with parents or persons with legal custody of the children in the programs in order to improve the development of the children
- d. such other services or activities as may be prescribed by the regulations

The *College of Early Childhood Educators’ code of ethics and standards of practice* describe values and responsibilities ECEs are expected to uphold with four specific groups: children, families, their colleagues and their profession, and their community and the public. The standards outline expectations regarding knowledge, skills, and actions in six key areas:

- 1. caring and responsive relationships
- 2. curriculum and pedagogy
- 3. safety, health, and well-being in the learning environment
- 4. professionalism and leadership
- 5. professional boundaries, dual relationships, and conflicts of interest
- 6. confidentiality, release of information, and duty to report

Contact your local representative if you are unsure about any information contained in this document. Your collective agreement might also provide clarification.

