

Selecting an Approved Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Training Program

Congratulations on selecting a challenging and rewarding career in Early Childhood Education! The next decision to make is where to obtain the training that will enable you to positively impact the lives of young children through your work as an Early Childhood Educator. Prior to making that important decision there are some key factors to consider:

- **Training Options**
- **Program Information**
- **Admissions Information**

Training Options

There are numerous ECE training programs available throughout the Province of British Columbia. **To work as a licensed Early Childhood Educator in BC you are required to have received training from an Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Registry approved training program.** Approved programs offer course curriculum that fulfills all provincial Early Childhood Educator requirements and prepares students for licensure and employment in the Early Childhood Education sector in BC. A comprehensive list of approved programs is available for your reference. Please refer to the ***Approved Training Institutes Offering Early Childhood Education Programs*** (PDF 38 KB) to verify the institution you are considering is an approved training program.

The following types of training institutions may offer approved ECE training programs:

Public Post-Secondary Institutions

- A public post-secondary institution can be a college or university that receives funding from government sources as well as student tuition.

Private Post-Secondary Institutions

- A private post-secondary institution can be a college, institute or training center that receives funding from student tuition.
- Private Post-Secondary Institutions approved by the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Registry are required to be accredited by the Private Career Training Institutions Agency (PCTIA).

Adult Education Programs

- Adult education programs are commonly offered through school districts.

Distance Education Programs

- Distance education programs are limited in number but accessible throughout the province because of the correspondence format.

As an ECE I get to nurture and teach young children through their most formative years. Helping families to reach their goals by supporting parents to pursue career choices, whether for personal fulfillment or financial necessity, is a huge part of our job. Providing parents with quality childcare is important not only for the children's development but for the peace of mind of parents. Watching children thrive in all aspects of their development is an honor and gift.

~BC Licensed ECE, 13 years

Program Information

When considering an Early Childhood Educator training program there are essential variables to keep in mind. The program you select needs to respond to your needs as a student in the following areas:

Programs offered

Each Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Registry approved training program offers a unique learning perspective for students. Programs may be delivered in various formats, such as on campus or on-line, and can result in a certificate or diploma. A Basic Early Childhood Educator training program will provide students with the knowledge, skills and abilities to work in the field with young children ages three years and older. A Post-Basic training program would provide students with additional training, after the completion of the Basic program, to work as an Infant/Toddler Educator or as a Special Needs Educator. To ensure the program you select meets your individual needs as a student, consider the following:

- Does the institution offer a Basic and/or Post-Basic program?
- How long is the program in duration?
- How much of the training is classroom lecture versus practical experience?

Training institution location and accessibility

Early Childhood Educator training is available throughout the Province of British Columbia. Please refer to **[Approved Training Institutes Offering Early Childhood Education Programs](#)** (PDF 38 KB) for a list of approved training programs. Students may need or wish to stay in their own communities while completing training or may be willing to relocate or commute to a training institution. For those already employed in the field of early childhood education (or otherwise), an important consideration may be whether the program is offered during the daytime or evenings. Whatever your individual situation may be, consider the following to ensure your student success:

- Is there a local training institution that will meet my needs?
- Am I willing to relocate or commute to a training program?
- Is the institution easily accessible by public transportation?
- Does my learning style work best with an on-campus or an on-line program delivery?
- What time is the program offered and does that fit my schedule?

My favorite thing about being an ECE/IT is when you see the child's "light bulb" go on when they finally understand what you are teaching them. I love their honesty and innocence.

~BC Licensed ECE/IT, 6 years

Enrolment and student/instructor ratio

All training institutions have an enrolment capacity for each course offering. Prospective students should keep this in mind when selecting a training institution as they know what class size is best suited to their learning requirements. Another key point to consider is when student intake happens. Training institutions commonly offer annual, bi-annual or continuous intake of students and sometimes may have a waiting list. Consider the following:

- What class size is best suited to my needs?
- Will new students be continuously joining the class?
- Will I be a part of a student cohort?
- Is there a waitlist to begin the program?

Transferability of course work

The ability to transfer course work from one training institution to another is an additional consideration to make when selecting an Early Childhood Educator training program. Prospective students should inquire about transferability of course work as courses taken at some training institutions are not transferable. Students should keep in mind that a course taken at a private institution may not transfer to a public institution.

The best thing I've learned, being a Special Needs Early Childhood Educator and working in fully integrated settings, is that all children have needs that make them special--some just need a little more help making the world work for them.

~BC Licensed ECE/IT/SN, 12 years

Admissions Information

When selecting an Early Childhood Educator training program pay careful consideration to the admissions information provided to prospective students. This information should include, but is not limited to, the following:

Admission Requirements

All Early Childhood Educator training programs have admissions requirements that students must meet for program entry. Students may need to provide a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED), may require an interview or testing and may be asked to complete volunteer hours prior to admission to the program. Whatever the requirements may be students should ensure they are aware of the admissions criteria and are able to meet them. Additional considerations may include:

- Does the institution require a high school diploma or GED?
- Is there an admissions test?
- Is there an admissions interview?
- Do I need to complete volunteer hours prior to applying?
- Do I need references?
- Does the training program require any other additional criteria for entry?

Being an ECE allows me to touch the lives of young children, who have not yet been exposed to the negative side of our world. Seeing a child develop and being part of their growth, in my opinion, is the most fulfilling job. That is why I chose Early Childhood Education as my career path.

~BC Licensed ECE, 1 year

Financial Requirements

Each training program has varying tuition costs and may or may not offer financial assistance to students. As finances are a key consideration for most students, make sure you are aware of all program costs to help with selecting a training program. Consider the following:

- What is included in the price of tuition?
- Are there additional program costs?
- Are instructional materials and books available for loan or do they need to be purchased?
- Are student loans or other types of financial aid available?
- Are scholarships available?
- Can tuition be paid in instalments?
- How long is the program relative to the cost of the program?

Student Services

Training institutions offering an Early Childhood Educator training program may or may not have student services available on-campus or by distance. Those services can include assistance with job placement upon the completion of the program, personal and professional counselling and mentoring programs. Understanding the services available from a training institution can be an integral piece of the selection process. Whatever your individual service needs may be, consider the following to ensure the training program you select is a good fit for you as a student:

- Does the training institution assist in finding job placements for ECE graduates?
- Are job search techniques taught as part of the program?
- What information is available on the success of the training program's graduates?
- Are counselling services available to students?
- Are mentoring programs available and are students encouraged to participate?
- What other student services are available?

Being an ECE allows me to be a part of children's lives in a meaningful way. By developing creative programs and watching the children flourish, I am constantly in awe and in wonder each day. They lead me and teach me in the learning process. In the daycare community, we laugh, we can be silly and we remember to live each day to the fullest. It takes a village to raise a child; we are an important part of that village.

~BC Licensed ECE/IT, 17 years

Welcome to the Early Childhood Education Sector!

The most vital step in ensuring your happiness and success with your selected training program is to take the time to identify what your needs are as a student. Knowing this provides you with the information required to determine which training program is right for you.