

Diversity and social inclusion: Exploring competences for professional practice in early childhood education and care ^[1]

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Full text in pdf ^[2]

Abstract:

The development of the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) profession is an ongoing process that has recently begun to gather momentum. Professional associations are being developed in several European countries. Other countries can learn from their journey. One of the first tasks in defining a profession is agreeing shared values. What do Early Childhood professionals stand for? What competences are needed in the many roles undertaken by those working with children? The sector has to have these conversations so that it can establish the way forward.

The early childhood workforce and the quality of early childhood practice is determined by many factors including the competences of all those involved in the sector. One of the key competences needed in ECEC is linked to the goal of achieving social justice through actively addressing diversity, equality and social inclusion. However, for some countries there is a huge barrier in asking Early Childhood workers to engage in social justice work in their practice when they experience inequality in their profession. The continuing development of the profession must go hand in hand with the wider work of achieving social justice for all children, families and communities.

This publication is an important step in this work of defining the competences needed in supporting diversity and social inclusion and in working as a professional in Early Childhood Education and Care. The inclusion of quotes from practice is illuminating. Those working in ECEC seem to have an openness to grow and learn with the children and families in their services. These competences challenge the profession to explore personal and collective values and holistically embrace diversity and social inclusion.

Region: International ^[3]

Tags: curricula and pedagogy ^[4]

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[4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/curricula-and-pedagogy>