



Designated Early Childhood Educator (DECE) Performance Appraisal, Learning Plans and Continuous Professional Learning (CPL)

Changes to the Education Act in 2010 introduced kindergarten extended day programs. The role of the Designated Early Childhood Educator (DECE) was addressed in these legislative changes and DECE performance appraisal was contemplated but not immediately mandated. Since then, school boards across the province have developed a range of performance appraisal programs and processes for Learning Plans and Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) specific to DECEs.

Performance Appraisal for DECE Members

The *Education Act* gives every district school board the authority to establish and implement a program for conducting performance appraisals for DECEs. The amendments to the *Act* left open the possibility that performance appraisal programs for DECE members could become mandatory at some point in the future, through the implementation of a new regulation to the *Act*. To date, though, no regulation has been implemented to make performance appraisal programs for DECE members mandatory.

Although DECE performance appraisal programs have not been made mandatory, several school boards have developed policies or programs to implement an appraisal system. Some of these mirror elements of the statutory teacher appraisal system but most are quite distinct from that. The provisions of the DECE appraisal programs and policies and the manner in which they are carried out must comply with the legislation and with any restrictions or requirements set out in collective agreements governing ETFO members. Your collective agreement may also specifically require the board to abide by the policy it has implemented.

ETFO collective agreements for DECE bargaining units may contain language addressing performance appraisal where boards have such policies in place. Commonly, such collective agreements stipulate that only supervisory officers, principals and vice-principals can evaluate a DECE member. They also typically provide that members of the DECE bargaining unit cannot be required or requested to evaluate another DECE member. Both collective agreements and the *Education Act* provide that teachers shall not participate in the performance appraisal of a DECE member. The *Education Act* specifies that school boards cannot force teachers to conduct or participate in such an appraisal while ETFO collective agreement language normally provides that this is not permitted, whether the teacher agrees or not.

Where a school board does not have an appraisal process in place, the collective agreement may require consultation with ETFO in the event that a board decides to implement a DECE appraisal program.

Generally, there are two possible ratings for a performance appraisal: satisfactory and unsatisfactory. Performance appraisal processes may vary from board to board. A DECE member has the right to have a union representative present at any post observation meeting that results in an unsatisfactory rating.

Learning Plans

Generally, where DECE performance appraisal programs have been implemented, as part of the performance appraisal process, DECE members are required to complete a learning plan. This plan will outline goals and learning objectives decided upon by the member. The school boards will have created a template that DECE members can use to complete the plan using their professional judgment. According to the *Education Act*, the learning plan will usually be reviewed periodically by an administrator. DECE members may want to speak with their administration about the professional learning plan. There may be activities they would like to access in order to meet the goals they have developed. If a member has questions or concerns regarding expectations about the learning plan or performance appraisal they should contact their local president.

What DECE members need to know about performance appraisals and learning plans:

- DECE members take responsibility for their own learning and growth as professionals;
- DECE members should familiarize themselves with board policies and expectations as well as collective agreement language for performance appraisals as they may vary from local to local;



- Where a learning plan is required, DECE members should develop a plan consistent with board policies and which should generally include professional goals as well as an action plan for achieving these goals;
- DECE members should keep a list of professional learning activities, copies of learning plans and performance appraisals for your records.

College of Early Childhood Educators Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) program

According to the CECE, The Continuous Professional Learning Program (CPL) is a self-directed, self-reflective framework designed to help registered early childhood educators (RECEs) reflect, plan for and document their professional learning in a meaningful way. As registered members of the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE), ETFO's DECEs are subject to the requirements of the CPL Program.

The *Early Childcare Educators Act*, passed in 2007, included the establishment of a recertification program. The CPL Program was introduced in September 2014 and was voluntary. Regulation 359/15 Continuous Professional Learning became law in January 2016. The regulation made participation in CPL Program mandatory for all members.

ETFO communicated its opposition to mandatory professional learning to the College at an information session in July 2013 and later through a written submission to the Ministry of Education in August 2013. The Federation has not been provided with any subsequent opportunities to provide feedback on the program. ETFO's position is that professional learning should be voluntary and self-directed.

Please see PRS Matters #89 College of Early Childhood Educators Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) Program

Suggestions for possible self-directed ongoing professional learning for DECE members are provided below. Many of these opportunities can be accessed within your school board or through various ETFO programs.

- Professional dialogue with colleagues
- Webinars and blogs
- Professional reading/writing
- Reflective practice and dialogue
- Video and audio resources
- Attending workshops and conferences
- Job shadowing/practicum
- Preparing and delivering workshops, conferences, parent presentations
- Working with a mentor or mentoring colleagues

ETFO has a variety of resources to support members in their professional learning. Visit the ETFO website for more information at www.etfo.ca.

At this time the College's CPL program is voluntary. This program may become mandatory for RECE members based on the regulation in the *Child Care and Modernization Act* currently being developed. It is anticipated that the regulation will be passed in the 2015-2016 school year.

ETFO will continue to monitor the implementation of this *Act*, the implications for ETFO DECE members and will continue to keep local presidents and members informed.

For further information contact Professional Relations Staff at
416-962-3836 or 1-888-838-3836 at the provincial office
See also ETFO's website www.etfo.ca – Advice for Members

