

CURRICULUM RESOURCE

Skills for Successfully Working in Child Care 2

OALCF ALIGNMENT

Competency	Task Group	Level
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A1. Read continuous text	2
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B2. Write continuous text	2
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B1. Interact with others	2
Competency E - Manage Learning	N/A	2
Competency F - Engage with Others	N/A	1

Goal Paths (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment | <input type="checkbox"/> Postsecondary |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship | <input type="checkbox"/> Independence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary School Credit | |

Embedded Skills for Success (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptability | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Numeracy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity and innovation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writing |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Digital | |

NOTES: This Level 2 resource is the fourth in a series, following "Your Path to a Job in Child Care 1 and 2" and "Skills for Successfully Working in Child Care 1." Intended for learners to complete independently or with support from an LBS practitioner. It takes a deeper look at the remaining four Skills for Success (Digital Skills, Numeracy, Problem Solving, Reading, and Writing) and how they are used both in life and in a child care or early childhood education setting. The final resource in the series is called "Resources to Support Your Child Care Career."

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Glossary of Terms

Before we begin, let's look at some documents and organizations that are important for people who work in child care. We will look at each of them in this resource.



The College of Early Childhood Educators was created in 2009. It isn't actually a college. It's an organization that all Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) must belong to. The job of the 'College' is to monitor RECEs in the work that they do and to help promote the profession of being an ECE.

Find them online at: <https://www.college-ece.ca/>

Early Learning for Every Child Today. This resource, originally developed in 2007 and updated in 2014, describes how young children learn and develop. It is used in all child care centres, regulated home child care settings, nursery schools, Kindergartens, and EarlyON Centres.

Find it online at:

<https://www.dufferincounty.ca/sites/default/files/rtb/Excerpts-from-Early-Learning-for-Every-Child-Today.pdf>



How Does Learning Happen? This resource, originally developed in 2014, describes how people who work with young children can encourage learning through relationships. It is used by all early learning programs including centre-based and home-based child care, child and family programs, and before and after school programs.

Find it online at: <https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf>

Skills for Success

A career in child care can be exciting, fun, and rewarding. It also takes a lot of skill! If you are passionate about working with children and are ready to learn new things, you can build the skills you need to succeed.

The **Skills for Success** are the nine skills that everyone needs to be successful in learning, work and life. They are:



- Adaptability
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Creativity and Innovation
- Digital Skills
- Numeracy
- Problem Solving
- Reading
- Writing

In our last resource, we looked at Adaptability, Communication, Collaboration, Creativity and Innovation. If you have not used that resource, please ask your teacher or tutor for a copy!

In this resource, we will be looking at the rest of the Skills for Success: Digital, Numeracy, Problem Solving, Reading, and Writing.



What do you think each of these skills is? Write your own explanation below.

What do you think **Digital Skills** are?

What do you think **Numeracy** is?

Share your own definition of **Problem Solving**.

Explain what is involved in **Reading**.

How would you describe **Writing**?



Share your explanation with a tutor, teacher or another learner. Ask them to share their definition of each skill and discuss how your answers are similar and how they are different.



Digital Skills

We live in an increasingly digital world. While computers have been around for a long time, technology has advanced far beyond computers and the software on them. Many people use smartphones, tablets, and different apps every day. Sometimes, they use more than one device at the same time!



Desktop and laptop computers have:

- operating systems like Windows and MacOS
- software like Microsoft Word, Apple Pages, or Adobe Acrobat
- web browsers like Edge or Chrome

Smartphones and tablets have:

- operating systems like Android or Apple iOS
- apps like Spotify, Google Maps, or TikTok
- web browsers like Mozilla Firefox, Safari, or Chrome

Digital Skills in Life

We use digital skills for both personal and professional reasons.

People use digital technology for **personal reasons** like:

- texting people
- taking photos
- posting things on social media
- looking up information
- shopping online
- reading articles and stories
- watching videos
- playing games
- getting directions

People use digital technology for **professional reasons** like:

- emailing people
- creating documents and presentations
- using spreadsheets and databases
- doing research
- attending meetings
- collaborating with coworkers
- uploading resumes and applying for jobs

What other **personal** things do people use digital technology for?

What other **professional** things do people use digital technology for?



During the COVID-19 pandemic, many tasks we were used to doing in-person moved online. We needed to use digital skills to do things like order groceries and make appointments for vaccines. To stay in touch with family and friends, we learned how to use video meeting software like Zoom, and children across the province figured out how to attend school from home.

We learned these things under difficult circumstances, but they've become a regular part of our lives now.

Digital Skills in Child Care

Child care professionals use digital technology to complete many important tasks. They can include:

Keeping records of children in care:

Digital tools can be used to maintain and access child records, including medical information, allergies, and emergency contacts. Electronic records can also be used to track children's learning and development.

Communicating with families:

Child care centres often use email, text messages, or dedicated apps like HiMama and StoryPark to let families know about daily activities, events, and information about their child's well-being and development.

Signing children in and out, and marking attendance: Digital systems can be used to track attendance, sign-in/sign-out times, and security measures. This can include information about custody, who is allowed to pick up children from care, and who is not.

Supporting their own learning: Child care professionals also use digital technology as part of their ongoing professional learning. They may take online classes or attend virtual workshops as part of their professional development and to advance their careers.

Activity and lesson planning: Child care professionals can use digital tools to plan and organize lessons and activities. They can access and share resources, daily schedules, and the materials needed to run different learning activities.

Promotion: Childcare centres often use social media platforms and websites to share updates, photos, and videos. This can help them keep families updated at the same time as letting the public know about the good work they are doing with the children in their care.

Administrative tasks: Digital technology helps make administrative work like creating contracts, processing child care payments, scheduling, and paying staff easier. This helps child care providers to manage their business more efficiently.

Children's learning experiences: Child care centres may use educational software or online learning platforms that offer learning activities or games.

Children seem to learn digital skills quickly and easily – more so than adults. We’ve probably all seen young children still in strollers playing with smartphones and tablets!

When used to enhance children’s learning and development, the use of digital technology is encouraged in child care. It is not to be used as a distraction or as a “babysitter” while child care professionals do other work. Just as with other forms of play, educators should be partners in any activities using digital technology.

In their Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, the **College of Early Childhood Educators** suggests child care professionals:

“Use technology and assistive technological tools as appropriate to support children’s learning and development,” and “Ensure that communications with children, families and colleagues are professional and that use of technology and social media is consistent with professional boundaries.”

“Professional boundaries” are rules that child care professionals need to follow. These rules let child care workers know what is and is not okay to do when using technology and social media. This can include rules about not posting a child’s photo online without permission from the child’s parents.



Reflect on what you learned

1. Name three types of software that desktop and laptop computers might have.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2. Name three types of software or apps that smartphones or tablets might have.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. Name one **personal** thing people use digital technology for and one **professional** thing people use digital technology for.

Personal thing: _____

Professional thing: _____

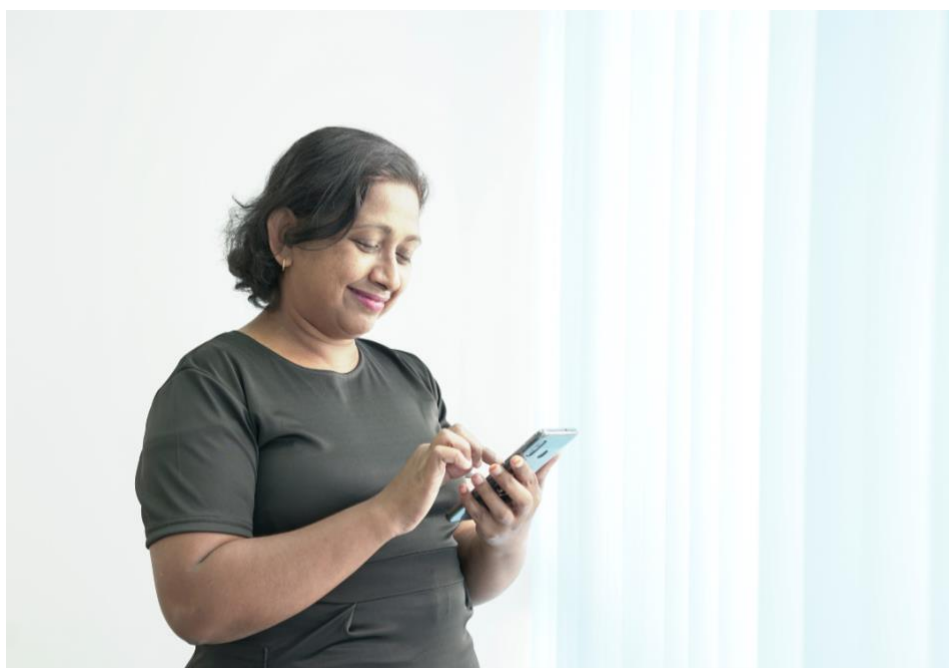
4. Fill in the missing words from this statement on Page 7: Child care centres often use email, text messages, or apps like _____ and _____ to let families know about daily _____, events, and information about their child's _____ and _____.

5. Fill in the missing words from this statement on Page 7: Digital systems can be used to track _____, _____ / _____ times, and _____ measures. This can include information about _____, who is allowed to pick up children from care, and who is not.

6. Fill in the missing words from this statement on Page 7: Child care professionals can use digital tools to plan and organize _____ and _____. They can access and share _____, daily _____, and the materials needed to run different _____.



Share your answers with a tutor, teacher, or classmate.





Numeracy

Numeracy is our ability to understand and use numbers. Here are some common numeracy skills and concepts.

1 2 3 Number recognition: Understanding numbers and how they relate to one another and the world around us.

Temporal awareness: Understanding the concept of time and how it passes.



Spatial awareness: Understanding the measurement of distances in the environment around us, including centimetres, inches, feet, and meters.

Financial literacy: Understanding financial concepts including budgeting, saving, investing, and managing your money effectively.



Mass and volume: Understanding the weight of objects and the space they take up. Mass is measured in units like ounces, pounds, and kilograms; and volume is measured in units like pints, quarts, teaspoons, and tablespoons.

Arithmetic: Understanding how to use addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.



Which of these numeracy concepts are you familiar with?



Tip: Because numeracy involves words, numbers, symbols, and graphics, you also need two of the other Skills for Success: **Reading** and **Problem Solving** help build numeracy skills.

Many people have trouble with numeracy and with some of the other Skills for Success. This is one of the reasons Ontario's free adult upgrading programs are so helpful. They can help you develop the numeracy skills – and confidence – you need both at work and in life.



Learning Networks
of Ontario

To find an adult upgrading program near you, contact your regional literacy network! You can find your regional network at: <https://learningnetworks.ca/contact-my-network/>

Numeracy in Life

Here are some things we use numeracy skills for in our daily lives. Can you figure out what numeracy concept is related to each? Draw a line between each activity and the related mathematical concept!

We use numeracy skills to:

measure ingredients when cooking a meal

make sure we have enough money to pay our bills every month

dial a phone number

make sure we're not late for appointments

split the cost of something evenly between friends

figure out how far away the bus stop is

The numeracy concept this is related to:

number recognition

temporal (time) awareness

spatial (distance) awareness

financial literacy

understanding mass and volume

using arithmetic

Some numeracy tasks can be simple, like figuring out how many burgers you need to feed a family of four. It can also be complex, like figuring out the area of walls in a room to calculate the amount of paint you need to cover them. Whether it's easy or not, we use numeracy skills every day, so it's important to build your skills!

Numeracy in Child Care

Child care professionals use numeracy skills at work every day. They need to pay attention to things like:

- how many minutes to spend doing certain activities
- how much medicine to give a child that requires it
- how many children are in their care at all times
- how often children need to eat or nap
- how much of each ingredient to use when making things like homemade playdough
- how many new skills a child is developing in their program
- how much money they need for supplies
- how often children need diaper changes or visits to the bathroom
- how many hours they are working, and what they are earning as a result

One of the most important child care regulations that all caregivers need to follow involves numeracy skills is **child care ratios**.

Ratios refer to how many you have of one thing compared to another thing. If you were making a salad dressing, you might use one-part vinegar to two-parts oil. That ratio is “one to two” and it can be written like this:

1:2

In child care, ratios refer to how many children you can have under the care of an educator. For example, if each Early Childhood Educator can care for up to five toddlers, the ratio is “one to five.” It can be written like this:

1:5

Tip: these ratios change, depending on the age of the children.

Here are the ratios for child care providers in Ontario:

Age group	Age range	Ratio of staff to children	Maximum number of children in group
Infants	younger than 18 months	3 to 10	10
Toddlers	18 to 30 months	1 to 5	15
Preschool	30 months to 6 years	1 to 8	24
Kindergarten	44 months to 7 years	1 to 13	26
Primary and junior school age	68 months to 13 years	1 to 15	30
Junior school age	9 to 13 years	1 to 20	20

Source: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/child-care-rules-ontario>

The ratios are different for home child care providers. An **unlicensed** home child care provider can only care for a maximum of **five** children under the age of 13. A home child care provider that is overseen by a **licensed** agency can care for up to **six** children under the age of 13.

Both unlicensed and licensed home-based child care providers must:

- count their own children if they are younger than four years old
- care for no more than three children younger than two years old at any time

Educators use numeracy in their work, and they teach numeracy to the children in their care. They help children recognize:

- what numbers are called and what they look like
- what numbers mean in their lives (e.g., I am three years old. I have two siblings.)
- that some numbers are larger than others
- that there are different quantities (e.g., I have two blocks, and my friend has five.)
- the relationship between sizes (e.g., big and little, more and less, tall and short)

Some common activities child care professionals do to introduce numeracy in a fun and interactive way include:

- singing number-related songs or rhymes, such as "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe" or "Five Little Ducks"
- giving children a collection of objects (e.g., buttons, colored beads) and encouraging them to sort them by color, shape, or size
- creating simple patterns using objects or stickers (e.g., red-blue-red-blue) and asking children to continue the pattern
- using simple measuring tools like a ruler or measuring cups to explore concepts of length and volume
- introducing numbers through flashcards or number charts, and pointing out numbers on clocks or doors
- playing simple board games that involve moving pieces based on the number rolled

How educators introduce numbers to children can help them develop both comfort with and recognition of numeracy concepts. Let's look at how **Early Learning for Every Child Today** describes this:

When adults introduce and use a wide range of number representations, such as tallies, drawings, maps, graphs made from stacked objects, pictographs, bar graphs, tables and narratives, they promote number thinking and help children remember and explain their reasoning.

Reflect on what you learned

1. Fill in the missing words that describe the following numeracy skills or concepts listed on Page 11.

- a) Arithmetic: Understanding how to use _____, subtraction, _____, and division.
- b) _____ recognition: Understanding numbers and how they relate to one another and the world around us.
- c) Spatial awareness: Understanding the measurement of _____ in the environment around us, including centimetres, inches, feet, and meters.
- d) _____: Understanding financial concepts including budgeting, saving, investing, and managing your money effectively.
- e) Mass and volume: Understanding the _____ of objects and the _____ they take up.
- f) Temporal awareness: Understanding the concept of _____ and how it passes.

2. What numeracy concept is related to each of these things child care professionals pay attention to every day?

- a) How many minutes to spend doing certain activities. _____
- b) How many children are in their care at all times. _____
- c) How much of each ingredient to use when making homemade playdough.

- d) How much money they need for supplies. _____

3. Use the chart on Page 15 showing ratios for child care providers in Ontario to answer the following questions:

- a) What is the maximum number of infants (younger than 18 months) you can have in a group? _____
- b) What is the ratio of staff to preschoolers (children aged 30 months to 6 years old)? _____
- c) What is the ratio of staff to Kindergarten-aged children (children aged 44 months to 7 years old)? _____
- d) What is the maximum number of Kindergarten-aged children you can have in a group? _____

4. Answer the following questions about ratios for home child care providers.

- a) What is the maximum number of children under the age of 13 an **unlicensed** home child care provider can care for?
- b) What changes if the home child care provider is overseen by a **licensed** agency?
- c) Do home-based child care providers have to count their own children in that ratio, if they are younger than four years old? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Which of the common activities child care professionals do to introduce numeracy in a fun and interactive way is your favourite?



Share your answers with a tutor, teacher, or classmate.





Problem Solving

Having good problem-solving skills means you can find ways to deal with problems. Here are six helpful steps you can follow to help you solve problems.



Figure out what the problem is and why it happened. Sometimes what appears to be the problem may not be the actual problem. Taking the time to really understand the problem is the only way to come up with a solution that will work.



Recognize what you can control and what you can't. Some problems are so big that you cannot solve them by yourself. There is often something within your control you can do to make things better.



Think about different ways to overcome the problem. It is a good idea to come up with several different ways you could solve the problem instead of just one. Sometimes the best idea is the one you think of third or fourth!



Decide which of the possible solutions to try first. Sometimes the first thing we try to solve a problem doesn't work. That is why it's good to come up with several possible solutions. That way you have a backup plan.



Try the solution you chose. If it works – great! If not, think about why it didn't work. Use that information to help you when you try the next possible solution. You may need to repeat this step several times to find a solution that works.



Learn from the experience. Figuring out why the problem happened may help you avoid it in the future. If the problem is unavoidable, remembering what solutions worked and which ones didn't can help you solve similar problems more quickly.

Problem Solving in Life

Everyone faces problems in their lives. Sometimes they are small problems, and sometimes they are big ones.



Small problems could include figuring out when to do laundry, or how to run errands without backtracking all over town.



Big problems could include figuring out how to pay the bills when there isn't enough money for everything, or dealing with a major illness.

Many people face the problem of not feeling like there's enough time in the day to do everything that needs to be done. This can turn into a big problem if something important doesn't get done. Problem-solving steps can be very helpful when facing this issue. Those steps can help identify:

- Why there isn't enough time. Is it because there are too many tasks for anyone to do in a day?
- What tasks you can change and what tasks you cannot.
- What steps you might be able to take to change the number of things that you need to do in a day.
- How to avoid experiencing that problem in the future.



Unfortunately, some problems cannot be solved. We still need to deal with them though. That is why Problem Solving is closely related to another one of the Skills for Success: **Adaptability**.

Problem Solving in Child Care

Just as in life, problems can happen at work. In a child care centre, those problems could include:

- balancing the needs of a large group of children. This can be difficult if some of those needs are complex like physical or learning disabilities.
- having difficulty filling out paperwork while actively working with and caring for children. It can be hard to balance all of the responsibilities a child care professional has.
- being short-staffed. This can happen because someone called in sick, or because there are not enough Registered Early Childhood Educators or Child Development Practitioners for open child care jobs.
- working with children who have behaviour issues. Some of these children need extra support or supervision to ensure their safety and the safety of other children.
- having trouble communicating effectively with families. It can be challenging to adapt to everyone's style of communication, reading and speaking skills, languages, and cultures.
- finding time for ongoing professional learning. This is a requirement of all Registered Early Childhood Educators and takes additional time.



Each of these problems can be solved, but many of them cannot be solved alone. This is a good opportunity to practice another one of the Skills for Success: **Collaboration**.

Working with other educators and with supervisors and support staff can help. Experienced child care workers will have faced these problems in the past, and can provide advice on how to solve them.

Helping children learn how to solve problems is also part of what child care professionals do. They often create opportunities for children to learn and practice problem-solving skills. For example:

- If a child spills a drink or drops a bucket of art supplies, the educator can ask the child to tell them how to clean it up. This involves children in the job of finding a solution.
- An educator might point out that one of the supplies needed for an activity is missing and ask children what they think needs to happen for the activity to still work.
- Educators ask questions to help children understand what is causing a problem. Remember: knowing why a problem is happening is the first step in finding a solution!
- Educators also ask problem-solving questions about topics that children are interested in (like animals, trucks, or food). Using what children are curious about can help keep them interested in the problem-solving process.
- Reading stories that include a problem that needs to be solved can help children understand that problems are fixable. It's also a good opportunity for educators to practice another one of the Skills for Success: **Reading!**

There are many ways that child care professionals can help guide children's learning, especially related to problem solving. Let's look at how **Early Learning for Every Child Today** describes it:

Support children's play ideas and adopt a problem-solving approach to conflict.

When children disagree, it is a good opportunity to teach them problem-solving skills, rather than telling them how to solve the problem. Helping children figure out different ways of dealing with problems teaches them skills they will need for the rest of their lives. As child care professionals, we can really help children build their problem-solving skills!

Reflect on what you learned

1. What are the six steps you can follow to solve problems?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

2. Share an example of a small problem and a big problem you've had to deal with. How did you try to solve those problems?

a) The small problem I faced was:

I tried to solve this problem by:

Did the solution work? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If not, what should you try next?

b) The big problem I faced was:

I tried to solve this problem by:

Did the solution work? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If not, what should you try next?

3. Which of the other Skills for Success is Problem Solving closely related to?

4. If you face a problem that is hard to solve alone, which of the other Skills for Success would you use?

5. What opportunity would you create for children to learn and practice problem-solving skills? Come up with your own example below!



Share your ideas with a tutor, teacher, or classmate.



Reading

Reading is looking at words and symbols and understanding what they mean. We read on computer screens, books, flyers, and posters almost every day. After speaking, it is one of the main ways we get information about the world around us.

Everyone has different levels of reading skills. Some people are comfortable with reading long passages in text books, or reading unfamiliar words and figuring out what they might mean. Other people are more comfortable with shorter texts that are written in plain language and words they recognize.



It's important to read information but also to understand it. That may involve other Skills for Success, like **Problem Solving** as you try to figure out what some words mean, or verbal **Communication** as you talk to other people about what you've read.

Reading in Life

Reading is important because it helps us learn new things, understand the world better, and communicate with others. When we read books, articles, or even signs, we gain knowledge and ideas. Sometimes we read made-up things (fiction), and other times we read information that is real (facts).

- Reading fiction lets us explore different places, meet interesting characters, and discover new adventures — all from the comfort of our own homes.
- Reading fact-based information helps us learn about the world around us and gain the knowledge we need to become good at our jobs.

Reading also improves our vocabulary and makes us better at expressing our thoughts and feelings.

When you read a book, get an email or a text from a friend, a letter in the mail, or a message on social media, you use your reading skills. Reading plays a role in many of the activities we do every day, including:



understanding the instructions on a bottle of medicine that tell you how much medication to take and how often



looking at street signs to find an address, and road signs warning drivers to stop or yield to other traffic



reading labels to find out information about ingredients, nutritional facts, and serving sizes



following the details of a recipe and the cooking instructions on packages to find out how to make a meal correctly



reading a job posting to find out more about the job and what the employer is looking for



reviewing bus, train, or subway schedules to figure out how to get to a destination



looking at the hours a business will be open to know when to go there



reading menus to decide what to order when eating at a restaurant or ordering food for takeout or delivery



assembling furniture, using appliances, or setting up electronic devices following the directions in their instruction manuals



reading online reviews before buying something to learn about the experiences other people have had with the store or product

Reading in Child Care

To become a child care professional, most people will attend school. They may enrol in an Early Childhood Education diploma program at a College, or they may apprentice as a Child Development Practitioner. No matter which path you choose, there will be a lot of reading involved.

Child care professionals also read when they are at work. Sometimes it is to learn the information they need for their job. Other times it is to teach children the skills they need for reading.

At work, some of the things child care professionals read include:

- workplace policies and procedures
- articles about child development
- notes from co-workers
- employment contracts
- benefits booklets
- letters from parents
- instructions related to the children in their care
- safety notices
- memos from their employer

As educators, people who work in child care teach children reading skills by:

- being a good example of what reading looks like, and talking about what they learned from what they read. This helps children understand that we learn from written words.
- reading out loud, telling children stories or pointing out what the words on posters say
- showing children books with both pictures and words
- teaching children how to recognize each letter in the alphabet and how to put those letters together to make words



Educators have an important role to play in helping children develop their communication, language, and literacy skills. Let's look at what **Early Learning for Every Child Today** says about this:

Read and re-read interesting stories that are rich in ideas and meaning and that engage the children. Show your enjoyment in reading books. When reading is experienced with enjoyment, learning is reinforced and children are motivated to continue.

Using your reading skills, you can inspire a new generation of readers!

Reflect on what you learned

1. What are two other Skills for Success you might use when trying to understand the words you read?

a) _____

b) _____

2. Think of something you read in your daily life. What do you learn from reading it?

I read:

By reading this, I learn:

3. Fill in the missing words from these statements found on Page 28:

Child care professionals also read when they are at work. Sometimes it is to learn the _____ they need for _____. Other times it is to _____ children the skills they need for _____.

4. What are three things child care professionals read at work?

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

5. What is one of the ways people who work in child care teach children reading skills?



Share your answers with a tutor, teacher, or classmate.





Writing

Writing is how we share information using words and sometimes using symbols and images. Traditionally writing was done with paper and a pen or pencil – that is how most people learn how to spell and write.

However, much of the writing we do today is done using a digital device like a computer or a smartphone. This makes writing closely connected to another Skill for Success: **Digital Skills**.

A lot of people find it easier to write using a digital device instead of on paper with a pen or pencil. Digital devices can help you avoid spelling mistakes or having difficulty reading what you've written because of messy hand writing. There will always be times when you need to write using paper and a pen and pencil however, so it's a good skill to practice.

Share two examples of when you might need to use a pen or pencil to write something:

- 1.
- 2.

Whether you're writing on paper or on a digital device, your writing can be **casual** or it can be **formal**. Which one you use is often based on the audience you're writing for – who will read what you've written.

- Writing a text to a close friend would be **casual**. You can mis-spell words, use short-forms and emojis, and you don't need to be too concerned about grammar or sentence structure.
- Writing an email to someone you hope will hire you would be **formal**. You need to use professional language, correct spelling, grammar, and sentence structure. Writing casually when formal writing is appropriate can ruin your chance of getting what you want – like a job.

Writing in Life

There are lots of reasons to write in our daily lives. Here are just a few things people write:

- information on medical forms
- notes to roommates or family
- emails to friends, family members or customers
- reports
- social media posts
- product reviews
- notes to teachers or the school about a student
- letters to businesses
- applications for loans or credit cards

Some people write only when they have to. They write things like grocery lists and reminders, but that's about it. Other people write because they enjoy writing. They write blogs, journals, short stories, and even novels!

Do you write because you have to, or because you like to?

What is one thing you write in your daily life?

Writing in Child Care

As you might guess, reading and writing are closely connected. Just like anyone studying to become a child care professional will do a lot of reading, they will also do a lot of writing. Child Development Practitioner apprentices and students in Early Childhood Education college diploma programs both write a lot as part of their education.

On the job, child care professionals write every day. Here are some examples of different writing tasks that happen in child care:

- When staff leave a child care centre for the day, they write notes for the next staff member to read, to update them on what happened during their shift.
- Infant and young children's eating and toileting/diapering schedules are carefully recorded and shared with parents and other educators.
- When there are accidents in a child care centre, every detail needs to be clearly written in an accident report by the staff involved.
- Registered Early Childhood Educators write about their work in journals. They write about things that happen, why they happen, how it makes them feel, and what they might do differently in the future. This is called "reflective practice" and is required as part of maintaining professional certification in child care.
- Educators carefully watch children's behaviour and development and write what they observe. These notes are used to create **learning stories** that are shared with families and put in children's records.

These learning stories are an important part of the writing that child care professionals do. Let's look at how **Early Learning for Every Child Today** describes this kind of writing:

Learning stories from early childhood settings offer snapshots of children's learning and development in action by describing actual, unique experiences. The stories and assessments can be presented in children's portfolios for children, families and practitioners to read and re-read.

Learning stories are a great way to share how and when children learn different skills. They show parents that their children are growing and experiencing important things in child care. They also help other caregivers learn what interests and engages a child so they can use that information to build future learning activities.

By ensuring there are a lot of books, posters, signs, paper, and writing materials in the child care space, educators make both writing and reading part of every day life. Child care providers help children develop their writing skills in a variety of more direct ways too.

Teaching children to write is a gradual process that includes activities that may not look like writing, but that build the foundation from which writing skills develop. For example:

- Activities like threading beads, cutting with safety scissors, and playing with playdough or clay can help children build the hand muscles they need for writing.
- Scribbling with crayons, markers, or chalk on paper or chalkboards helps children develop hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills. It also helps them get used to the feeling of holding something and making marks with it.
- When children talk about things they like and an educator writes down key words, it helps them associate words they know with written symbols.
- Watching educators label objects, write messages, or make lists lets children see every day examples of writing. They often want to copy the adults in their lives, so modeling writing can be very effective!



As children grow, the writing activities that educators do with them can grow as well. For example, educators can:



- help children recognize their names by using name cards or putting names on each child's belongings or cubby
- teach proper letter formation starting with simple letters like "L" or "T," showing children how to start at the top and move down or from left to right
- use raised letters or textured surfaces to help children feel the shape of the letters
- provide worksheets or activity books with simple words for children to copy or trace

Through activities like this, child care providers can create a supportive and nurturing environment that fosters a child's love for writing!

Reflect on what you learned

1. What is something you can do in **casual** writing that you can't do in **formal** writing?

2. What are two examples of different writing tasks that happen in child care?

1.

2.

3. Fill in the missing words in the statements from Page 34 about how educators help children build writing skills in ways that may not seem obvious.

a) Activities like threading beads, cutting with safety scissors, and playing with playdough or clay can help children build the _____ they need for writing.

b) Scribbling with crayons, markers, or chalk on paper or chalkboards helps children develop _____ and _____. It also helps them get used to the feeling of holding something and making marks with it.

c) When children talk about things they like and an educator writes down key words, it helps them associate _____ with _____.

d) Watching educators label objects, _____, or
_____ lets children see every day examples of writing. They
often want to copy the adults in their lives, so _____
can be very effective!

4. What simple letters can educators use to teach children proper letter formation?

5. What two things can educators use to help children feel the shape of the letters?

6. True or false: Worksheets or activity books with simple words for children to copy or trace can help them learn to write. ☐ True ☐ False



Share your answers with a tutor, teacher, or classmate.



Conclusion

In this resource, you learned about five of the Skills for Success:

- ✓ Digital Skills
- ✓ Numeracy
- ✓ Problem Solving
- ✓ Reading
- ✓ Writing

Which of these skills do you think you are very good at?

Which of these skills would you like to develop more?

Remember, there are free adult education programs across Ontario that can help you build all of these skills. If you aren't already connected to an adult upgrading program, contact the Learning Networks of Ontario today to find a program near you!

<https://learningnetworks.ca/contact-my-network/>

Have you completed the first Skills for Successfully Working in Child Care resource? If not, ask for a copy today so you can learn about Adaptability, Communication, Collaboration, Creativity and Innovation! You can also ask for “Resources to Support Your Child Care Career” for a deeper look at the College of Early Childhood Educators, and the documents Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) and How Does Learning Happen?