

CURRICULUM RESOURCE

Skills for Successfully Working in Child Care 1

OALCF ALIGNMENT

Competency	Task Group	Level
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A1. Read continuous text	2
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B1. Interact with others	2
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B2. Write continuous text	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adaptability | <input type="checkbox"/> Numeracy |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaboration | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reading |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Creativity and innovation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digital | |

NOTES: This Level 2 resource is the third in a series, following the introductory resources "Your Path to a Job in Child Care 1 and 2." It is intended to be completed by learners independently or with support from an LBS practitioner. It takes a deeper look at four of the Skills for Success (Adaptability, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity and Innovation) and how they would be used both in life and in a child care or early childhood education setting. For the other five Skills for Success, please see the next resource in this series "Skills for Successfully Working in Child Care 2."

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Community Literacy of Ontario

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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 help you 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 this resource, we will be looking at the first four skills: Adaptability, Communication, Collaboration, and the combined skills of Creativity and innovation.



Tip: The second resource in this series looks at the other Skills for Success: Digital, Numeracy, Problem Solving, Reading, and Writing. When you have completed this resource, please ask your teacher or tutor for a copy!

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

Explain what you think **Adaptability** is.

How would you describe **Communication**?

What do you think **Collaboration** is?

How would you explain **Creativity and Innovation** to someone?



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.

Each of these skills are important no matter what kind of job you do. Let's look at the different ways each of these skills are used every day both in life and when you are working in child care.



Adaptability

Adaptability is your ability to handle change when it happens. Whether it is a big change or a little one, how you handle change shows whether you are adaptable or not.

People who are **not adaptable** often resist change, get angry or frustrated, and may walk away from the change altogether.

People who **are adaptable** accept that change happens, and they deal with it in a mature, responsible way. They try to keep an open mind and recognize they need to come up with a plan to handle the change.

Adaptability in Life

Some changes are **big** and take time to adapt to. Finding out that you have to move out of your apartment would be a very big change. It would take a lot of work and time to adapt to a change like that.

Changes can also be **small** – like finding out your break at work has been moved a half hour later. That change may be annoying or inconvenient, but with the right mindset, it can be easy to adapt to.

It's also important to know that not all changes are bad – there can be good changes too.

- A **bad** change could be finding out that someone you care about and rely on is moving far away.
- A **good** change could be finding out that you got a promotion at work.



Even when things change unexpectedly for the better, it can cause stress. You may need to learn new things or get used to a different environment. You may need to make big decisions or be responsible for other people in ways you didn't expect.

Sometimes, when we are tired, hungry, or emotional, even small changes can feel like a big deal. Big changes, even good ones, can feel overwhelming.

This is why learning some tips to handle stress can help you become more adaptable. Here are four things you can do to help you handle stress:

1. **Get enough sleep.** The Public Health Agency of Canada says adults need 7 to 9 hours of sleep a night. If you can't get that much sleep, adding rest breaks during the day can help. Treat yourself to a nap, if you can!
2. **Eat regularly.** Skipping meals can make it harder to concentrate, leaving people distracted and easily frustrated. If you can't eat three meals a day, try to eat small, healthy snacks throughout the day.
3. **Be physically active.** Going for regular walks, swimming, or playing sports can have a big impact on your body and your mind. They can also help you sleep better (see Tip #1 on this list!). If you don't have time for regular exercise, even a short walk can make a difference, especially in nature.
4. **Give your brain short breaks.** If you have a hard time quieting your mind, try a relaxation activity like meditation or deep breathing. You can also distract your brain by working on an art project or other hobby. That short break lets your brain rest, helping it get stronger and more able to handle change.



Tip: For more information on stress, and how you can handle it, visit the Canadian Mental Health Association at:

<https://ontario.cmha.ca/documents/understanding-and-finding-help-for-stress/>

Adaptability in Child Care

People working in child care often face changes at work. These changes could be based on what the child care centre needs, what your fellow educators need, or what the children in your care need. Here are some examples:

- You have planned for an outdoor activity, but it starts to thunderstorm. You will need to adapt by coming up with a new activity for the children in your care that doesn't involve going outdoors.
- You expect to have quiet time to write notes to send home to families while the children in your care are napping. One of the children is upset and will not nap. You will have to adapt by focusing on comforting them and finding another time to complete your notes.
- You have planned a sing-along for the children in your care. When you arrive at work, you are introduced to a new child who cannot hear or speak. You will need to adapt the activity you planned so that all of the children can be included.
- You are scheduled to work in an infant room. When you arrive at the child care centre, you find out that your supervisor has switched you to a preschool room instead. You will have to adapt by accepting that you will have different responsibilities than you expected.
- You worked with another educator to create an activity that takes two people to run. On the day you plan to run the activity, the other educator is sick and cannot come to work. You will need to adapt by either replacing that activity or teaching another educator how to run it with you.

Adapting activities so they meet the needs of children with varying abilities is an important part of what people working in childcare do. Let's look at what **Early Learning for Every Child Today** says child care professionals should do:

Create learning environments for the full participation of all children that include adaptations for children with special needs.

They recommend creating activities that allow children of different abilities to show their learning in a variety of ways. Adaptability is truly an important skill for everyone who works with young children!

Reflect on what you learned

1. Fill in the missing words from this statement on Page 4: People who are adaptable _____ that change happens, and they deal with it in a mature, responsible way. They try to keep an _____ and recognize they need to come up with a _____ to handle the change.

2. Share an example of a big change and a small change you've had to deal with.

a) My big change was: _____

b) My small change was: _____

3. Share a **positive** change you experienced that caused stress.

4. What are two of the things suggested to help you handle stress?

a) _____

b) _____

5. Come up with an example of when you might need to be adaptable when working with young children.

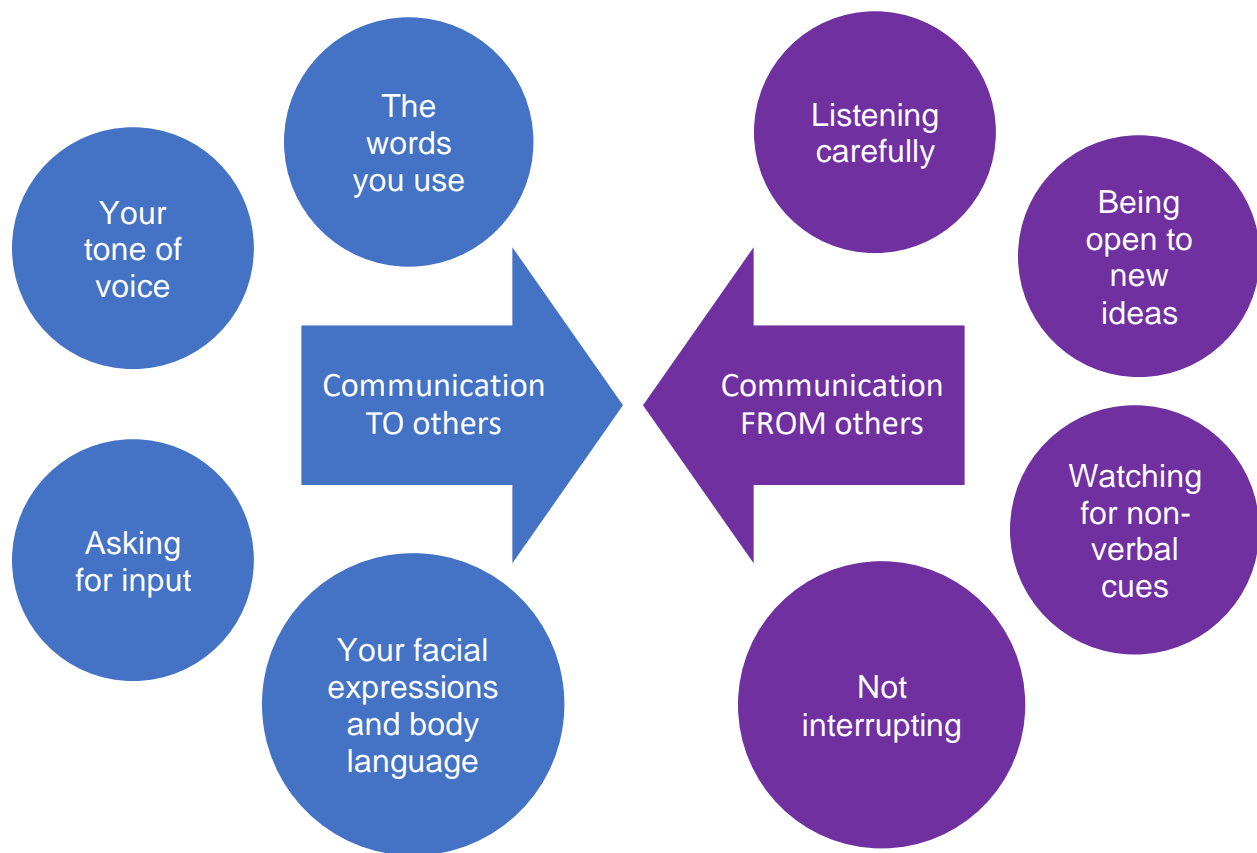


Share what you wrote with a tutor, teacher, or classmate.



Communication

Communication isn't just one skill, it's a combination of different skills. These skills work together to help you both communicate effectively with other people and understand what they are trying to communicate to you.



Many of these skills fall under three main categories:

- **Verbal Communication** – what you communicate with your voice. This can include the words you use and your tone of voice.
- **Non-verbal Communication** – what you communicate without using your voice. This can include your facial expressions and body language.
- **Listening Skills** – what you hear and understand from others. This can include observing other people's body language when they are speaking.

Communication in Life

We use verbal and non-verbal communication skills and listening skills every day. We use them when we order coffee, smile at a friend, listen to the radio, or ask for a transfer on the bus.



Speaking to other people is verbal communication. To be a good **verbal communicator**, we need to:

- choose words that the person we're speaking to will relate to and understand
- maintain an even tone of voice, not yelling or sounding bored
- provide opportunities for other people to ask questions or share their thoughts



A big part of what people understand when we talk to them isn't from our words at all, but from non-verbal communication. To be a good **non-verbal communicator** we need to:

- look directly at people when we're talking
- use facial expressions that reflect what we're talking about and show we're interested in the conversation
- relax our body language so we don't appear tense or closed-off



Listening is a great way to learn new things and to show people that we care about what they have to say. To be a good **listener** we need to:

- avoid distractions so we can focus on what people are saying
- be patient and let others share their thoughts without interrupting
- watch other people's facial expressions and body language and interpret what they mean
- ask questions to be sure we understand what other people are saying

Communication in Child Care

Child care providers need to be good communicators. They use their communication skills every day by:

- observing children's body language and responding to the needs they see being communicated
- getting down to the level of the children in their care so they can see and hear them clearly
- asking children questions and responding to the questions they ask
- telling stories and singing songs with children
- listening to what children have to say and responding
- helping children understand concepts like making sure everyone has a chance to speak
- being aware of and using children's preferred ways to communicate
- setting an example of what good communication looks like by speaking clearly and demonstrating good listening skills in front of children
- sharing information about children and their needs with co-workers
- learning about children and their families including what language(s) children speak at home
- telling families about what their children are doing and learning each day

Let's look at how **How Does Learning Happen?** describes this communication:

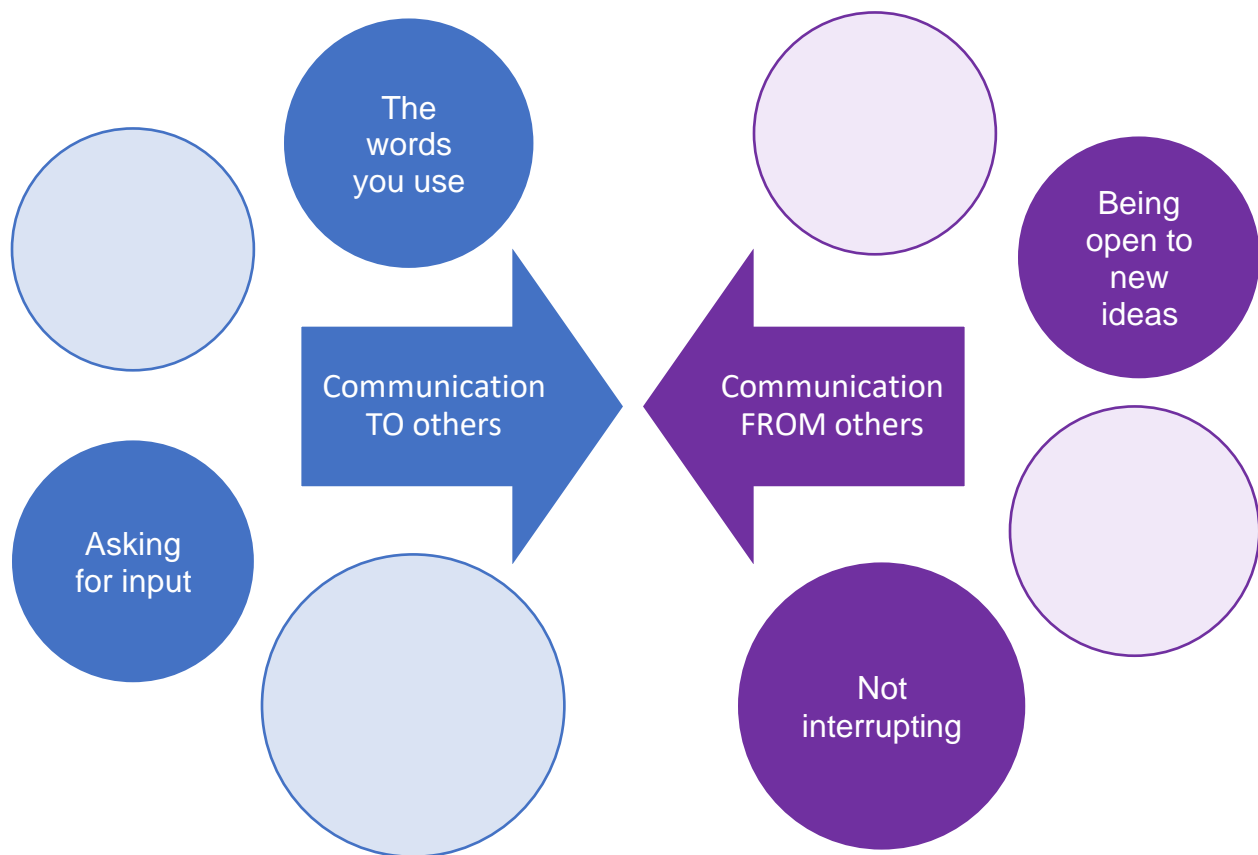
Show respect for what the child is interested in and what the child is trying to communicate.

These same practices are true for communication with families, caregivers, and co-workers.

Child care professionals communicate and help children build their communication skills in so many different ways!

Reflect on what you learned

1. Fill in the blanks in the image below by looking at the version on Page 9.



2. Share an example of when you use **verbal communication** in your daily life.

3. Share an example of when you use **non-verbal communication** in your daily life.

4. What is one way you can show you have good verbal communication skills?

5. What is one way you can show you have good non-verbal communication skills?

6. What is one way you can show you have good listening skills?

7. Look at the bullet point list on Page 11. Then, fill in the missing words from the statements below about how child care providers use their communication skills.

- Observing children's _____ and responding to the needs they see being communicated.
- Asking children _____ and responding to the questions they ask.
- _____ what good communication looks like by _____ and demonstrating good _____ skills in front of children.
- Sharing information about children and their needs with _____.
- Telling families about what their children are _____ and _____ each day.



Share what you wrote with a tutor, teacher, or classmate.



Collaboration



Working with other people to make plans or accomplish a task is collaboration. Working with other people can be a good experience. We can usually do more when we work as a team than when we try to do things on our own. Working with other people can also be difficult. If a team member won't listen to others, or if there are constant arguments, it can be difficult to accomplish anything at all.

People who are **good collaborators**:

- are open to other people's ideas and points of view, even if they are different from their own
- ask other people to contribute to conversations and decisions
- can share both responsibilities and rewards with other people
- want the best outcome for everyone, not just for themselves
- can accept that they don't know everything and want to learn and understand more

People who are **not good collaborators**:

- need to be right all the time and get upset if people disagree with their opinion
- make decisions on their own, without input from the people those decisions have an effect on
- don't want to do their share of the work to accomplish something but do want to take credit when things go well
- make choices based on what they want, not what's best for the group
- do not show empathy for what other people think, feel, or experience

Collaboration in Life

Anyone who lives with roommates, a partner, or as part of a family knows how to collaborate. They work together to do things like pay rent, clean, cook, and look after other household chores. Collaborating with those you live with is very important when big life decisions need to be made, like whether you should move to a new city or have a baby.

We also collaborate with friends, deciding when to meet and what to do once we are together. Any time a decision needs to be made that impacts both you and other people, collaboration is important.

Most jobs also involve collaborating with other people to accomplish workplace goals. You might work with a team to:

- create things, like machinists in factories do
- teach people, like child care professionals do
- fix things that are broken, like auto mechanics do
- sell products, like shopkeepers do
- help people, like doctors, nurses, and personal support workers do
- make food, like cooks and chefs do
- build things, like construction workers do
- serve customers, like salon staff and restaurant servers do

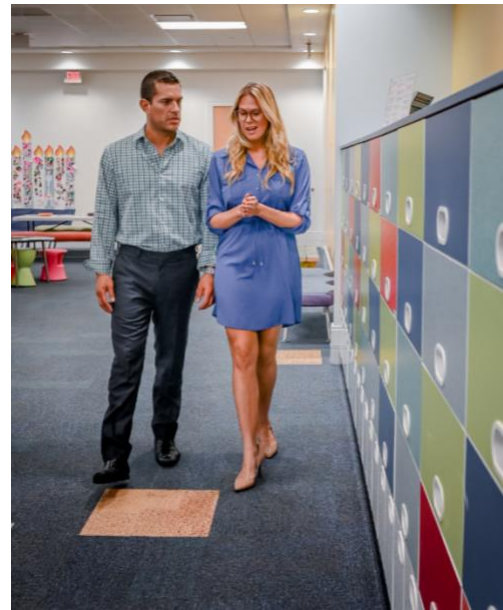


Pause and reflect: Think about a time when you had to collaborate with someone else. Think about the traits of people who are **good collaborators** and people who are **not good collaborators**. What traits did this person show? Were they a good collaborator?

Collaboration in Child Care

No matter where you work in child care, collaboration is important. Let's look at some different types of child care workplaces and how collaboration plays a role.

1. Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) and Child Care Assistants working in **child care centres** collaborate with a team of educators, supervisors, and support staff. These teams plan activities for children, coordinate schedules, and divide duties between members of the team.
2. Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) working in **Kindergarten classrooms** collaborate with classroom teachers to plan activities and support children's learning. They also collaborate with other RECEs and with support organizations like the College of Early Childhood Educators for ongoing professional learning.
3. **Home child care** providers work with support organizations in their community to get access to information and resources. They may also collaborate with other home child care providers to plan group activities and outings. Unless the home child care provider lives alone, they also collaborate with their family to figure out a schedule and share the home in a way that works for everyone's needs.



Let's look at how **Early Learning for Every Child Today** describes the role of early childhood practitioners:

An early childhood practitioner is an adult “who works in the field of ECE, including early childhood educators, family child care providers, family resource personnel, Kindergarten teachers and OEYC staff, in partnership with families and collaboration with other professionals.”

In the quote we just read, Early Learning for Every Child Today mentioned working “in partnership with families.” Working in any of these child care settings means **collaborating with families** to ensure the needs of their children are met.

This means listening to what parents and caregivers want, what they think is important, and what they believe. It is important to know that child care centres and classrooms are diverse, with families (and co-workers) who may have different:

- backgrounds
- religions
- values and beliefs
- ways of communicating
- cultures
- abilities

Being open-minded and able to respectfully accept these differences is an important part of being a good collaborator.

As educators, teaching children how to play and learn together is also an important job. You are helping children learn about collaboration, including how to:

- share toys with other children
- listen when other people are talking
- take turns in activities
- work together to build things
- stay calm when they don't get their way



These are all the foundations of good collaboration and are the reason that child care providers create safe and inspiring environments where children can play and learn together!

Reflect on what you learned

1. List two traits of people who are **good collaborators**.

1.

2.

2. List two traits of people who are **not good collaborators**.

1.

2.

3. What have you collaborated on in your life?

4. Name one thing that Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) and Child Care Assistants working in child care centres might collaborate on.

5. Name one thing that Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) working in Kindergarten classrooms might collaborate on.

6. Name one thing that home child care providers collaborate on.

7. Fill in the missing words from the statements on Page 17 of this resource:

It is important to know that child care centres and classrooms are _____,
with families (and _____) who may have different:

- backgrounds
- _____
- values and _____
- ways of _____
- cultures
- _____

Being _____ and able to respectfully _____ these
differences is an important part of being a good collaborator.

8. What are two things that educators teach children how to do that are related to good
collaboration?

1. _____

2. _____



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



Creativity and innovation

Many people think that creativity is about being artistic, like being a painter, a musician, or an actor. **Creativity** is actually about the way you think. People who are creative are open-minded, see the world from other points of view, and can imagine things being different than they are.

Innovation is also about thinking differently. People who are innovative see the world as full of possibilities and are able to come up with new and better ways of doing things. They like to know how things work and create things, which is why innovation is connected to creativity.

Creativity and Innovation in Life

Creativity and Innovation are closely related to two other Skills for Success: **Adaptability** and **Problem Solving**.

One of the ways we can adapt to change is by coming up with new and innovative ways of doing things.

Consider what someone who loves to cook would do if they were in an accident and suddenly needed to use a wheelchair. That is a very big change that would be hard to deal with. To continue cooking, they would need to come up with new ways to reach their cooking supplies, the oven dials, the burners, and the sink.



What kind of innovative adaptation could help this person continue to cook?



When we face problems in life, we often have to come up with creative solutions. This is especially true when the solutions we've tried in the past haven't worked.

Consider someone who owns houseplants but keeps forgetting to water them. The plants keep dying, and that makes the person feel guilty. They've tried leaving themselves notes about watering the plants, but they still forget. They really like having plants but don't have the money to keep replacing them, so they need to come up with a creative way to make sure the plants get watered.

What kind of creative solution could keep this person's plants from dying?

Thinking creatively and trying new, innovative things can help us overcome many of life's challenges. After all, if we always did things the same way for our whole lives, we would miss out on opportunities to learn, grow, and change.

One great way to grow your creativity and innovation skills is to challenge yourself. We discussed how to be creative and innovative to solve a problem, but what if there isn't a problem to solve? Figuring out a new and different way to do things that you're familiar with is an excellent way to build your skills. It can be as simple as taking a new route home from work, or as difficult as trying to write with your non-dominant hand. Doing things differently, even when we don't have to, builds our creativity and resilience!



Pause and reflect: Is there anything you're doing now that you could be doing differently?

Creativity and Innovation in Child Care

Innovative and creative approaches are as valuable in child care as they are in other areas of life. That is because things change frequently in child care. There can be small changes, like having fewer children in care one day than you expected. There can be big changes to things like regulations that make the demand for child care spaces much higher.

One big change that happened to child care was the COVID-19 pandemic. Lots of creative and innovative processes were put in place to ensure the health and safety of both child care professionals and the children in their care.



Sometimes child care centres create changes as a way to make things easier for families and staff. For example, child care centres used to plan in-person meetings with families to update them on what children were learning and experiencing in care. In-person meetings can be challenging for working parents and caregivers, however. Some child care centres have started using digital communication platforms and video conferences to help parents and teachers stay in touch. This creative solution is more flexible and makes it easier for families and child care professionals to communicate.

Working with children gives educators lots of opportunities to practice their own creativity. Think about the children you've known and how they look at the world around them.



Children are naturally creative. They easily make up stories as they play, pretending that a wooden log is a pirate ship and a scrap of paper is a treasure map. To be good play partners, child care professionals use their imagination and creative skills every day!

Creativity and innovation are skills that children continue to learn and build through play. Educators help children grow these skills by designing:

- sensory stations with objects children can touch, feel, and experiment with
- creative outlets like painting and drawing
- activities that encourage imagination and make-believe
- experiences for children to learn about people from different backgrounds
- dress-up stations where children can pretend to take on roles they see in the world, like teacher, doctor, or parent.
- exposure to objects that can be used in many different ways, so children can experiment
- chances for children to act and put on improvised scenes or plays
- music and song-based activities
- opportunities for children to accomplish a task in ways they choose.



Let's look at how **Early Learning for Every Child Today** describes the importance of play for learning:

Play is how children make sense of the world and is an effective method of learning for young children.

Child care professionals offer play-based learning activities that help children think creatively and learn new skills. Children love to play, so creativity and innovation are amazing tools that help children learn and grow. They can also help adults succeed!

Reflect on what you learned

1. Fill in the missing words from these sentences found on Page 20:

Many people think that creativity is about being _____, like a painter, a musician, or an actor. Creativity is actually about the way you _____. People who are creative are _____, see the world from _____, and can imagine things being _____ than they are.

2. Fill in the missing words from these sentences, also found on Page 20:

Innovation is also about thinking differently. People who are innovative see the world as full of _____ and are able to come up with _____ and _____ ways of doing things. They like to know how things work and _____ things, which is why innovation is connected to creativity.

3. What are the two other Skills for Success that Creativity and Innovation are closely related to?

4. Share a time when you used creativity skills or did something new and innovative.

5. List two different things educators design to help children grow their creativity and innovation skills.

1.

2.

6. Use your imagination and creative skills! Come up with something new or different a child might use these everyday objects for.



A child might use **a shoe** in this creative way:

A child might use **a cup** in this creative way:



A child might use **a book** in this creative way:

A child might use **an oven mitt** in this creative way:



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

Conclusion

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

- ✓ Adaptability
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Creativity and innovation

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

Which of these skills would you like to develop more?

Did you know that across Ontario, there are free adult education programs 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/>

If you are ready for your next step, complete the next resource in this series “Skills for Successfully Working in Child Care 2” which looks at the other Skills for Success: Digital, Numeracy, Problem Solving, Reading and Writing!

Then, you can move on to “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?