



Principle 1

Childhood is a significant and distinct time in life that must be nurtured, respected, valued and supported in its own right

- I will recognise the value and importance of childhood
- I will recognise and respect childhood as a unique and important stage in life
- I will acknowledge each child's unique qualities and abilities and I will guide and support them to the best of their potential ensuring the enjoyment of their childhood without undue pressure
- I will respect childhood as "an essential foundation for successful lifelong learning, social integration, personal development and later employability"

Principle 2

The child's individuality, strengths, rights and needs are central in the provision of quality childhood experiences

- I will respect the rights of children as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) and commit to advocating for these rights.
- I will work to ensure that all children can exercise their rights.
- I will acknowledge the holistic nature of children's learning and the significance of children's individual and group identities.
- I will acknowledge each individual child as a competent learner, and build active communities of engagement and exploration by respecting their uniqueness, dignity, worth, and ability
- I will foster children's independence and inter-dependence by providing opportunities to develop life skills.
- I will celebrate effort as well as success.

Principle 3

Parents are the primary educators of the child and have a pre-eminent role in promoting her/his well-being, learning and development

- I will recognise that families are of primary importance in children's development and that children are best understood in the context of their families.
- I will listen to and learn from families, in order to acknowledge and build upon their strengths and competencies, and support them in their role of nurturing their children
- I will acknowledge the rights of families to make decisions about their children
- I will develop partnerships with families and engage in shared decision making where appropriate.

Principle 4

Responsive, sensitive and reciprocal relationships, which are consistent over time, are essential to the wellbeing, learning and development of the young child

- I will establish professional and caring relationships with children and their families.
- I will build collaborative relationships based on trust, respect, honesty and open communication
- I will strive to maintain ongoing and open communication with parents/guardians regarding the development and learning of their child
- I will be a receptive listener and offer encouragement and support by responding appropriately to the ideas, concerns and needs of children and families.
- I will strive to facilitate community partnerships for the benefit of children by working collaboratively with all relevant professionals to access appropriate resources and expertise, as required.

Principle 5

Equality is an essential characteristic of quality early childhood care and education

- I will commit to ensuring a quality early childhood setting that acknowledges and respects equality for all.
- I will ensure that children are not discriminated against on the basis of gender, age, ability, economic status, family structure, lifestyle, ethnicity, religious belief, language, culture, or national origin.
- I will ensure that conflict between work and private interests, which could reasonably be deemed to have a negative impact on children, their families and colleagues, will not occur

Principle 6

Quality early childhood settings acknowledge and respect diversity and ensure that all children and families have their individual, personal, cultural and linguistic identity validated

- I will respect diversity in all children, families, and colleagues.
- I will recognise each child as an active citizen with individual and group identities.
- I will create and maintain an environment that supports the uniqueness of each family and strive to learn about their culture, family structure, lifestyle, customs, language, beliefs and kinship systems
- I will acknowledge that each family is affected by the community contexts in which they engage.

Principle 7

The physical environment of the young child has a direct impact on her/his well-being, learning and development

- I will create and maintain safe and stimulating environments that enhance children's learning, development, interactions, initiative, self-worth, dignity and show respect for their contributions.
- I will provide opportunities for young children to experience nature, and to understand their relationship to their natural environment and to the world.
- I will respect the value of indoor and outdoor environments in supporting the holistic development of children

Principle 8

The safety, welfare and well-being of all children must be protected and promoted in all early childhood environments

- I will act in the best interests of children at all times
- I will adhere to relevant legislation and regulations to ensure the protection and well being of all children.
- I will be sensitive to the vulnerabilities of children and families and respond in ways that empower and maintain the dignity of all children and families
- I will maintain confidentiality and respect the right of the family to privacy
- I am in a position of power in relation to children under my care. I will ensure that these children are protected from the abuse of such power

Principle 9

The role of the adult in providing quality early childhood experiences is fundamental

- I will utilise knowledge and research to advocate for universal access to a range of high-quality childhood programs for all children
- I will advocate for the development and implementation of laws and policies that promote child-friendly communities and work to change those that work against child and family wellbeing
- I will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate boundaries are maintained in all aspect of professional relationships.
- I will maintain confidentiality in all relationships
- I will work to ensure that our sector is viewed as a profession of high status.
- I will act in ways that advance the interests and standing of my profession.
- I will advocate for equitable pay and conditions for all those working in the early childhood sector.
- I will work within the limits of my professional role and avoid misrepresentation of my professional competence and qualifications.
- I will collaborate with my colleagues to generate a culture of continual reflection and renewal of high quality practices in early childhood.
- I will model high-quality professional practices.
- I will mentor other childhood professionals and students.
- I will acknowledge and support the personal strengths, professional knowledge, diversity and experience which students bring to the learning environment.
- I will implement strategies that will empower students to make positive contributions to the workplace.
- I will know the requirements of the students' individual institutions and communicate openly with the representatives of that institution.
- I will encourage qualities and practices of leadership within the childhood profession.
- I will provide ongoing constructive feedback and assessment that is fair and equitable.
- I will encourage my colleagues to adopt and act in accordance with this Code, and take action in the presence of unethical behaviours

Principle 10

The provision of quality early childhood experiences requires cooperation, communication and mutual respect

- I will collaborate with the child's family and appropriate specialists to support the child's holistic development.
- I will support workplace policies, standards and practices that are fair, non-discriminatory and are in the best interest of children, families and colleagues.
- I will acknowledge and support the personal strengths, professional experience and diversity which my colleagues bring to their work
- I will share and build knowledge, experiences and resources with my colleagues and students aspiring to the profession.
- I will promote and support ongoing professional development within my work team.
- I will make every effort to use constructive methods to manage differences of opinion in the spirit of fairness and respect.
- I will acknowledge the power dimensions within professional relationships.

Principle 11

Pedagogy in early childhood is expressed by curricula or programmes of activities which take a holistic approach to the development and learning of the child and reflect the inseparable nature of care and education

- I will endeavour to remain current in my professional knowledge about the continuum of child development and the pedagogy related to early learning, curriculum, program planning, parenting and family dynamics.
- I will base my work on contemporary perspectives on research, theory, content knowledge, high quality early childhood practices and my understandings of the children and families with whom I work.
- I will regard myself as a learner who undertakes reflection, critical self-study, continuing professional development and engages with contemporary theory and practice.
- I will recognise that research includes my routine documentation and investigations of children's learning and development, as well as more formal research projects undertaken with and by external bodies.
- I will support research to strengthen and expand the knowledge base of early childhood, and where possible, initiate, contribute to, facilitate and disseminate such research.
- I will make every effort to understand the purpose and value of proposed research projects and make informed decisions as to the participation of myself, colleagues, children, families and communities.
- I will ensure research in which I am involved meets standard ethical procedures including informed consent, opportunity to withdraw and confidentiality.
- I will represent the findings of all research accurately.

Principle 12

Play is central to the well-being, development and learning of the young child

- I will honour children's right to play, as both a process and context for learning.
- I will support the right of each child to play and learn in an inclusive environment that meets the needs of all children.
- I will provide an environment that allows children to become active agents within their own learning thus develop lifelong learning skills through play.
- I will provide individualized assistance and opportunities for children to develop a sense of belonging to a group through play.
- I will base my work on knowledge of how children develop and learn through play.
- I will explain the foundations of my practice and my decision-making processes and will communicate to parents and other professionals the benefits of play for child development.

Acknowledgements:

The Code of Ethics of the Association of Childhood Professionals is written in line with the twelve principles of quality practice as outlined in Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education.

In preparing the Code of Ethics the ACP's Working Committee has made reference to the Codes of Ethics of the following organisations: Early Childhood Australia, National Association for the Education of Young Children, Irish Preschool Play Association, The Teaching Council of Ireland, The Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario and The British Association for Early Childhood Education.

This is a working document and as such we would appreciate your feedback so that we can ensure that it covers all aspects of our professional practice