

PROFESSIONALISM IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

by:

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According to NAEYC (2020), ECE teachers are knowledgeable community advocates, individuals who have received training in the ethical standards of ECE, have professional communication skills, are constantly collaborating with people, are introspective, and have purposeful practice working with young children. Further, they must have training and expertise in dealing with kids. As a result, they must possess credentials, degrees, and professional development experiences in early childhood development (NAEYC, n.d.).

As informed advocates

According to Kile (2018), to be able to call someone a professional in the field, being armed with professional knowledge is a must that includes best practices, child development, issues and concerns affecting the children and their families like being informed on the changes in

curriculum and new researches that might improve the teaching-learning process. One needs a formal education to promote early childhood education in the community (Kile, 2018).

Equipped with ethical guidelines of ECE

According to NAEYC (2011), educators must use effective communication methods while speaking with children, families, the community, and other practitioners.

For children, ECE teachers are in charge of helping them develop, supporting their individuality because every child is different, creating a good atmosphere, and helping them become whole persons (NAEYC, 2011).

For families, ECE teachers are tasked to communicate, collaborate and work with the families of children since they share a common interest in their progress (NAEYC, 2011).

For the community, ECE teachers should provide programs that meet diverse needs, cooperate with identified departments responsible for children, and help develop programs in the community. Guidelines set on responsible behavior will help educators resolve ethical problems encountered and will serve as their guide in maintaining work professionalism (NAEYC, 2011).

Each ECE teacher must sustain positive connections with coworkers by fostering mutual respect, trust, and cooperation (NAEYC, 2011).

Professional communication skills

Communication skills for professionals are being developed and improved. Each requires this skill to pursue further education and to connect with families, the community, and other practitioners. Strategies like attentive listening, grammatically accurate reading and writing, and even dialogue translation, include the capacity to communicate successfully in public and social settings (NAEYC, 2020). This skill also extends to the technological adaptation for communication.

As collaborative individuals

Educators must improve themselves professionally by seeking additional knowledge through formal education (Kile, 2018), attending training and seminars, conducting research, and collaborating with other professionals in the field. To enhance oneself, one must be able to evaluate their actions. A professional development plan could be helpful for future objectives in the sector.

Reflective and intentional practice

Each day, ECE teachers reflect on their practice and knowledge of young children (NAEYC,2020). They look for input from superiors to help them improve (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2018), and they take into account new information from recent studies and experiences in the community where they are situated. They knew how to handle stress to perform their professions successfully and were in good physical and mental condition.

ECE Teacher qualification

The recommended minimum requirement for teacher qualification in early childhood is at least earning a bachelor's degree in ECE (NAEYC,2020; NAEYC, n.d. & Thornton et al.,2020) equivalent to ECE Level III (Thornton et al., 2020). Teachers should have professional qualifications, basic knowledge, and commitment to serving young children (NAEYC, n.d.). Further, they should have specialized credentials in child development and attend continued education.

Since they require various educator certification skills, teaching young children and elementary grades differs from one another (Flavin, 2016). Apart from age, these professions differ from one another. While elementary teachers need to be specialists in subject knowledge, cooperation, and decision-making, early childhood educators (ECE) must be more patient and knowledgeable of the arts, music, and psychology (Lindberg, 2019). Programs for teacher education must consider the recommended guidelines (NAEYC,2020) of completing a program that will equip them with appropriate professional knowledge and practices in line with the position they are applying for. Having a proper educational background will be the first step for ECE teachers in attaining professionalism in the field.

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