

## Role of the Contact Teacher

**Thank you!** Thank you for sharing your time and talents with an NSCECE practicum student. We are grateful to have committed partners who are willing to help in the training of new early childhood professionals.

**Serve as a role model...** The student will be learning how to teach and nurture by watching you. They have been instructed to ask you about how and why you do things. Please be prepared for specific questions, such as “Why did you have Jason hold your hand and not Mason’s?” Please understand the student is not questioning your authority but is trying to learn from you. Your insights and reasons for making the choices you do are extremely valuable for student learning.

**Offer guidance...** Discuss the rules of the centre and your expectations with your student. Don’t assume your student understands how things work at your centre, even if s/he appears to. The student is trying hard to fit in and may accidentally create the impression that s/he knows what to do. Establishing a relationship where “not knowing” is okay and where questions are welcome creates the best learning environment.

**Take time each day to discuss:**

- Daily plans – let the student know what will happen each day or week and the role you would like the student to play.
- Daily dialogue – take a few minutes at the end of the day to discuss the events of the day. What went well? What could be improved?
- Any plans for activities or experiences. Students have ideas, access to resources and enthusiasm that you can tap into if you involve them in your thinking and planning.

**Provide feedback...** You will be asked to complete a NSCECE Feedback Form for the student that outlines strengths and areas for growth. Please review the Feedback Form with the student and explain the comments you have made. When you share insights about your student’s performance and what different competencies look like in practice, the student is better able to understand what is required. We know that students who are just starting their studies, and may never been in a childcare environment, have a lot of learning to do before they can independently demonstrate many of the competencies required by early childhood educators. Your student has three more practicums in which practice and gain the knowledge, skills and confidence of an entry level early childhood educator.

**Attendance:** Please post the time sheet the student will provide. We take attendance and punctuality very seriously. Students who miss time must speak to you to arrange make-up time. We want to know if students miss more than one day or if they show a pattern of tardiness.

**What if things aren’t working out or you have concerns?** Please contact the student’s Practicum Advisor immediately if there are any problems or concerns. She/he will discuss the situation with you and create a plan of action.

# Introducing the Student to Your Classroom

## Make introductions...

- Find out the first and last name of your student teacher.
- Exchange contact information and important phone numbers.
- Review the student's daily schedule including arrival time and lunch time.
- Introduce the student to the children and the parents and to other teachers and staff.

## Give a tour...

- Show the student around your room. Point out where supplies are located.
- Show the student where to keep personal belongings, which washroom to use and anything else that would him or her feel more comfortable.
- Show the student where to post his or her time sheet.

## Give information...

- Explain important centre rules and practices: hand washing, proper use of equipment, etc.
- Explain your approach to guidance and discipline. Identify the limits you set for children's behaviour and how you would like the student to help in guiding behaviour.
- Discuss children with special needs or children who learn best with certain strategies. Explain those needs/strategies and give insights and suggestions. Keep in mind that some Practicum I students have never worked with young children or guided their behaviour.

## Explain the daily routine...

- Explain the children's daily schedule and tell the student how s/he might be of help at different times of the day. Remember that our students can never be left alone with children, not even to take a child to the washroom or out to the playground.
- Explain emergency/safety policies & procedures such as fire evacuations, or what you want the student to do if a child gets injured.

## Take time to get to know each other...

- Talk to the student about your interests and about the kind of working relationship you would like to have.
- Ask the student for his or her introduction poster and encourage the student to share his or her interests and goals with you. Help the student find a place to post the poster so that families and staff can see it too.
- Encourage the student to keep you informed about course work and assignments.

## Take time to give feedback...

- Remember the student is there to learn. Positive feedback is always helpful.
- Offer constructive ideas and suggestions for improvement, a little more of this, a little less of that helps the student understand the nuances of the work and the choices you make.
- Remember this is the student's first practicum experience so mostly we want the student to try a few activities, get comfortable with the children, and learn to work well with staff.