

Practicum Preparation

Pacific Rim Early Childhood Institute Inc. is committed to the belief that children should have an opportunity to participate in quality child care programs with trained staff. To meet this objective, training programs and practicums have been developed to prepare students to work with infants, toddlers, preschoolers and children requiring additional support.

Practicums are a critical component of Pacific Rim Early Childhood Institute's (PRECI) Early Childhood Education programs. They provide students with experience applying theory to practice. All practicums must be completed in British Columbia at appropriate child care facilities that meet PRECI's approval criteria.

There are three practicums in the Basic ECE Certificate program:

- Practicum One – Observing and Recording, which takes 5 weeks to complete;
- Practicum Two, which takes 3 weeks to complete; and
- Practicum Three, which takes 3 weeks to complete.

Each of the Post-Basic Certificate programs has one practicum:

- Practicum – Infants and Toddlers, which takes 5 weeks to complete; or
- Practicum – Inclusion in Early Childhood Settings, which takes 5 weeks to complete.

The purpose of this practical experience is to incorporate theory, learned in the courses, into practice; to understand how to work as a team member in an early childhood setting; to develop skills in planning and carrying out developmentally appropriate activities for children; to learn from constructive feedback given by professionals in the field; and to develop skills in self-reflection and self-evaluation.

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Students are responsible for choosing an appropriate child care facility, that meets PRECI approval criteria, in which to complete their practicum. Most students living in British Columbia can find placements that can be approved and where they can demonstrate the required practicum competencies within their community. In some cases, students may be required to travel (at their own expense) to attend a practicum that meets PRECI approval criteria. All practicum plans are subject to approval by a PRECI instructor prior to beginning each practicum.

PRECI approval criteria for practicums include, but are not limited to:

- Appropriate Facility
 - Students must practice in an environment that holds a license equivalent to where they will be eligible to work upon program completion and certification (e.g., a Basic ECE Certificate student would complete practicums at licensed group child care 30 months-school age facilities, an Infant/Toddler Educator Certificate student would complete a practicum at a licensed group child care under 36 months licensed facility, and a Special Needs Educator Certificate student would complete a practicum at a licensed group child care facility).
 - The facility license must be valid as determined by the applicable jurisdiction/licencing authority.
 - The facility must be an environment where practicum guidelines can be followed and all learning outcomes and competencies can be demonstrated. This includes the allowance of video recording for Practicum II, Practicum III, the IT Practicum and the IECS Practicum.
- Qualified Supervision
 - An ECE Mentor must hold an equivalent certification credential to what the student is working towards (e.g., an ITE program student would work under an ECE Mentor that holds a valid ITE certification).
 - An ECE Mentor's certification must be current and in good standing as determined by the applicable jurisdiction/authority.

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- Appropriate Composition
 - The reliable attendance of an appropriate age grouping to demonstrate competencies (e.g., working with a group of children will require 3 or more children ages 3–5 to demonstrate this competency for the Basic ECE Certificate practicums, children must be ages 0–3 for the IT Practicum, and there must be at least one child that requires additional support for the IECS Practicum).

Students are required to attend all practicums full-time, 35 hours/week with the exception of Practicum I in the Basic ECE Certificate program that may be completed part-time (no less than 18 hours/week). Students may not accumulate more than 8 hours a day (excluding breaks) for any practicum without approval from PRECI and all hours must be in accordance with labour standards.

Regular practicum attendance helps nurture relationships and provides an environment of consistency for students, children and ECE Mentors. Practicum plans must be submitted to the student's instructor for consideration of approval a minimum of five business days prior to commencing the practicum. Hours completed prior to approval will not be considered towards the practicum hour requirements.

During practicums, students are expected to spend a minimum of 80% of their time interacting directly with children. Only up to 20% of the practicum may be spent on other tasks such as program planning, setting up, cleaning, and handling administrative or other programming details.

To facilitate diverse experiences and increased objectivity during practicums, students should seek a variety of different practicum placements to complete the three required practicums of the Basic ECE Certificate program. Up to two, but not all three practicums may be completed under the same ECE Mentor in the same setting (including at places of employment). In addition, up to two, but not all three practicums may be taken at a specialized facility (such as preschool, Montessori, CEFA, or Waldorf classroom). It is

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required that at least one practicum must be in a play-based child care environment so that students can demonstrate competencies related to caregiving responsibilities and play-based curriculum. Family licensed child care facilities are not appropriate for practicum placements.

Practicums may not be completed in a centre where there is a personal or financial conflict of interest. In cases where a centre owner or supervisor is completing a practicum, they may not be supervised by an employee or by someone that reports to them.

Practicums are assigned “PASS” or “FAIL”. To receive a “PASS”, students must satisfactorily meet all the required competencies and submit all required assignments and documents on time. Students may not enroll in another practicum prior to successful completion of their current practicum. All learning outcomes and evaluations follow the British Columbia Child Care Sector Occupational Competencies and are aligned with the British Columbia Early Learning Framework.

No remuneration may be received by students during practicums. This is a requirement of the Private Training Institutions Branch (PTIB).

Practicum Attendance Policy

Students **are expected to attend their practicums full-time** (35 hours/week) with the exception of Practicum I. While it is encouraged that Practicum I is completed full-time, it may be completed part-time (no less than 18 hours/week) if the ECE Mentor is comfortable with the extended practicum duration. Practicum I is the only practicum that may be completed part-time.

Practicums are typically 8 hours a day, and include a 30 to 60 minute break mid-day that is excluded from the total number of practicum hours (typically 7-7.5 hours are recorded a day). Students may not attend practicums for longer than 9 hours a day. This is to ensure students are receiving adequate time to reflect, refresh and recharge. If

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students are attending longer days, all local labour laws must be followed and breaks must be taken appropriately.

A minimum of 80% of the practicum hours must come from interacting directly with children of the correct age.

Students are expected to arrive at their practicum each day in a timely manner. When students are completing their practicums, they must make up any hours missed due to illness or statutory holidays. Any absence due to illness must be reported to the ECE Mentor and Pacific Rim Practicum Instructor as soon as possible.

Practicum Enrollment, Materials and Deadlines

Students will receive two sets of course materials. One set will include a full set of practicum materials, and the other set will contain copies of just the practicum documents (plan, facility licence information, calendar and guidelines) required to begin a practicum. These documents are also included in the main set of practicum materials.

The practicum plan, facility licence, calendar and guidelines must be completed, signed and submitted to the student's instructor for approval prior to the practicum starting. Hours **cannot** be accumulated until the practicum has been officially approved. The Practicum Instructor will notify the student by email as soon as the placement is approved.

All practicum assignments and videos (videos are not required for Practicum 1) should be submitted as they are completed. The final evaluation(s) may be submitted at the end of the practicum once completed and signed. **All submissions are due within 10 days of the contracted practicum end date.**

It is advised that students enroll in a practicum a week or more before they plan on beginning it so they have time to review the materials, submit appropriate documents

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and receive approval before beginning the practicum. As practicum planning requires scheduling with members of the community, the Institute allows some flexibility to the practicum start and end date. Should a student require revised practicum dates due to scheduling challenges, or other circumstances, they must contact the administrator immediately so the practicum dates are correct on our records. Dates may be adjusted up to a month; any changes exceeding this are at the discretion of the Institute.

Failure to submit assignments in a timely manner, or report changes to practicum dates to the administrator may result in an incomplete grade, requiring the practicum be re-started at a later time.

Choosing a Practicum Location

Students will choose their own practicum placements. If students are currently working in a group licensed child care setting, it is recommended that students complete their practicum in a centre outside of the one that they are currently working in. This will allow for the optimum level of objectivity. In the Basic ECE Certificate program, students may complete as many as two practicums in the same classroom, under the supervision of the same ECE. Most students can find placements in their community where they can complete all the practicum requirements. The local Child Care Resource and Referral Centre will have a list of licensed early childhood education centres. The ECE Mentor must have current ECE Certification. Family Day Care Homes are not acceptable for completing practicum placements. The province of British Columbia has a very useful tool where licensed child care can be searched for by city, <https://maps.gov.bc.ca/ess/hm/ccf/>. The Private Training Institutions Branch (PTIB) requires that no remuneration is received during practicums.

Considerations for International Students

Students may occasionally be permitted to complete a practicum internationally. This will be dependent upon many factors and is subject to approval. To be considered, an internationally completed practicum must meet the same criteria as acceptable

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placements in Canada. The centre must be regulated and be reflective of a high-quality early childhood environment. The region's early learning framework must be aligned with the British Columbia Early Learning Framework. In addition, the ECE Mentor must be able to correspond in English and hold equivalent certification and training to certified British Columbia mentors. In most cases, students will be required to complete practicums in Canada unless they can clearly demonstrate that an international placement is equivalent to a placement at a licensed British Columbia early childhood centre under the mentorship of a certified Early Childhood Educator. Regardless of location, all students must demonstrate practice in alignment with Pacific Rim Early Childhood Institute's Learning Outcomes and the BC Child Care Sector Occupational Competencies.

Practicum Descriptions

Practicum I

Practicum I is designed to introduce the student to the practice of Early Childhood Education, with an emphasis on developing observation skills and developing the skills necessary to build relationships with young children. Students will build on their knowledge of child development and begin to develop a clear picture of quality care for young children.

Practicum I is **5 weeks** full-time (35 hours/week) and is a total of 225 hours. In the first **observation week**, students will observe several different high-quality programs and complete observation and reflection assignments. The first four days will include the completion of four observation and reflection assignments where students will review video resources exemplifying different areas of high-quality environments (20 observation hours total). The last day of the observation week will be spent completing a 3-hour in-centre observation and reflection in the block practicum placement they have selected and had approved. After the first observation week, the remaining 4-weeks of the block practicum will be completed at the approved practicum site (140 hours). The remaining 62 hours will be spent completing unit assignments.

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The final four weeks is a 140-hour **block practicum** spent in a group licensed 3–5 facility. Strong start programs and family licensed day care programs are not eligible for practicum placements. During the block practicum, students learn about the role of the early childhood educator, continue to sharpen observation skills and complete assignments. Students are encouraged to participate in the routines and activities of the centre as soon as they are settled in. Practicing leading activities and extending play will help students gain important skills that will be needed for the successful completion of Practicums II and III.

Practicum II

Practicum II develops and expands on the knowledge and skills learned in Practicum I.

Practicum II is **3 weeks** full-time (35 hours/week) and is a total of 125 hours (105 hours “in-centre” time and 20 hours for assignments). The practicum should be completed in a group licensed child care facility for children ages 3–5 and under the supervision of a certified ECE.

During this practicum, students will be required to actively participate in the centre’s activities and as a part of the ECE team. One of the assignments will be for the student to plan, lead and videotape three activities. Each video clip should be approximately 10–15 minutes long and should be submitted to the Pacific Rim Practicum Instructor. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain a video recording device and record these activities.

Practicum III

Practicum III develops and expands on the knowledge and skills learned in Practicums I and II. Students will become aware of the child as an integral part of his/her family and its cultural heritage. They will learn to appreciate and understand the uniqueness of each child and family.

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Practicum III is **3 weeks** full-time (35 hours/week) and is a total of 120 hours (105 hours “in-centre” time and 15 hours for assignments). The practicum should be completed in a group licensed child care facility for children ages 3–5 and under the supervision of a certified ECE.

Students will be required to demonstrate their competencies in planning, implementing activities, communicating with parents and staff and enriching children’s play. As in Practicum II, many of these competencies will be demonstrated through video clips. In Practicum III, students will submit videos of 3 structured activities and 2 children’s play enrichment experiences. Each video clip should be approximately 10–15 minutes long and should be submitted to the Pacific Rim Practicum Instructor. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain a video recording device and record these activities.

Practicum – Infants and Toddlers

The **Infants and Toddlers Practicum** is **5 weeks** full-time (35 hours/week) and is a total of 200 hours (175 hours “in-centre” time and 25 hours for assignments). The practicum should be completed in a group licensed child care facility for infants and toddlers ages 0–3 and under the supervision of a certified ITE.

The student will be expected to provide and maintain a safe, healthy environment as well as provide opportunities for emotional, social, cognitive and physical growth for infants and toddlers. Students will demonstrate competencies in creating and leading developmentally appropriate activities, and guidance techniques for infants and toddlers. These competencies will be demonstrated through assignments and video clips. Students will plan and record themselves leading 6 developmentally appropriate activities. Each video clip should be approximately 10–15 minutes long and should be submitted to the Pacific Rim Practicum Instructor. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain a video recording device and record these activities.

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Practicum – Inclusion in Early Childhood Settings

The **Inclusion in Early Childhood Settings Practicum** is **5 weeks** full-time (35 hours/week) and is a total of 200 hours (175 hours “in-centre” time, 6 hours of centre observation time and 19 hours for seminar/assignments). The practicum should be completed in a child care facility that is group licensed children ages 3–5 with at least one child that requires additional support and should be under the supervision of a certified SNE.

Before the 5-week **block practicum** begins the student will complete two observation and reflection assignments (a minimum of 3 hours each) to **observe** and reflect on best practice within inclusive child care settings. The first observation and reflection will be based on digital observations and the second will be on-site at the centre where the block practicum will be completed. After the student has completed the observation portion of the practicum, they move to a block placement in a centre that is inclusive of children that require additional support.

Students will develop skills necessary to include and build relationships with children who require extra support. Students will be required to complete an Individual Program Plan (IPP) and then plan, lead, and video record five activities/experiences that meet specific goals of the IPP. During these activities students will support a child requiring additional support to interact with their peers. Each of the five video clips should be approximately 10–15 minutes long and should be submitted to the Pacific Rim practicum instructor. It is the student’s responsibility to find a video recording device and to arrange for someone to video record these activities. In addition to these assignments, students will also complete and submit resource and community survey activities.

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