



Ontario  
College of  
Teachers

Ordre des  
enseignantes et  
des enseignants  
de l'Ontario

# **Additional Qualification Course Guideline Kindergarten, Specialist**

## **Schedule D Teachers' Qualifications Regulation**

**March 2013**

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## **Additional Qualification Course Guideline Kindergarten, Specialist**

### **1. Introduction**

Three-session specialist Additional Qualification courses identified in Schedule D (*Teachers' Qualifications Regulation*) are intended to:

- enhance professional practice, and extend knowledge and skills in the delivery of Kindergarten courses (Part I)
- enhance professional practice, and extend and apply knowledge and skills in the design and delivery of Kindergarten courses (Part II)
- enhance professional practice, and extend and apply knowledge and skills in the curriculum leadership of Kindergarten courses (Specialist).

The Additional Qualification Course: Kindergarten Specialist employs a critical lens to explore in a holistic and integrated manner theoretical foundations, the development of learners, program planning and implementation, instructional practices, assessment, the learning environment and ethical considerations related to teaching and learning.

Critical to the implementation of this course is the modeling of a positive learning environment that reflects care, professional knowledge, ethical practice, leadership and ongoing learning.

The Ontario College of Teachers recognizes that candidates working in the publicly funded school system, independent/private institutions or First Nations schools will have a need to explore in an integrated delivery model, topics and issues of particular relevance to the context in which they work or may work.

### **2. Regulatory Context**

The College is the self-regulating body for the teaching profession in Ontario. The College's responsibility related to courses leading to Additional Qualification includes the following:

- To establish and enforce professional standards and ethical standards applicable to members of the College.
- To provide for the ongoing education of members of the College.
- To accredit Additional Qualification courses and more specifically,

*The program content and expected achievement of persons enrolled in the program match the skills and knowledge reflected in the College's Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession and the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession and in the program guidelines issued by the College. (Regulation 347/02, Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs, Part IV, Subsection 24).*

Additional qualifications for teachers are identified in the *Teachers' Qualifications Regulation*. This regulation includes courses that lead to Additional Qualifications, the Principal's Qualifications and the Supervisory Officer's Qualifications. A session of a course leading to an Additional Qualification shall consist of a minimum of 125 hours of work that is approved by the Registrar. Accredited Additional Qualification courses reflect the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*, the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession*.

Successful completion of the course leading to the Additional Qualification: Kindergarten, Specialist listed in Schedule D of the *Teachers' Qualifications Regulation*, is recorded on the teacher's Certificate of Qualification and Registration.

In this document, all references to "candidates" are to teachers enrolled in the Additional Qualification course. References to "students" indicate those enrolled in schools.

### **3. The Ethical Standards and the Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession**

A commitment to a clear vision of what it means to be a teacher is at the core of teacher professionalism. The *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* (Appendix 1) provide the focus for ongoing professional learning and are the foundation for the development of the Additional Qualification Course: Kindergarten Specialist. In addition, the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* is underpinned by the standards, articulates the principles on which effective teacher learning is based and acknowledges a range of options that promote continuous professional learning. The ongoing enhancement of informed professional judgment, which is acquired through the processes of lived experience, inquiry, and reflection, is central to the embodiment of the standards

and the Professional Learning Framework within this AQ course and professional practice.

### **Standards Resources**

The College has developed resources to support the effective integration of the standards within Additional Qualification courses. These teacher education resources explore the integration of the standards within professional practice through a variety of educative and inquiry-based processes. This guideline has been designed to reflect the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession*. A list of these resources can be found in Appendix 2 and are available through the College web site ([www.oct.ca](http://www.oct.ca)).

## **4. Course Components**

The design, course content and implementation of the Additional Qualification Course Guideline: Kindergarten Specialist support effective teacher education practices. The following course components of this guideline support and inform effective professional knowledge, judgment and practice within the Additional Qualification Course: Kindergarten Specialist.

The *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* which guide the professional judgement and actions of the teaching profession are embedded within the overall expectations of this guideline.

### **A. Overall Expectations**

This Additional Qualification course has the following overall learning expectations for candidates:

- deepening understanding of the implementation of the Ontario's curriculum, policies, frameworks, strategies and guidelines
- modelling the integration of First Nations, Métis and Inuit ways of knowing and perspectives
- assisting other in applying the theoretical understanding necessary to design, implement and assess programs and/or practices

- assisting others to implement expectations, strategies and assessment practices in response to the individual needs of students, and the promotion of student success
- sharing with others how to apply principles of holistic play-based environments that stimulate inquiry and enhance learning and development for each student
- sharing with others how to create learning environments conducive to the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, environmental, linguistic, cultural, spiritual and moral development of the student to support learning
- sharing with others how to apply strategies for team building and reciprocal learning with teaching partners in-school personnel, parents/guardians and the community
- assisting others to integrate a variety of appropriate resources, including technological and communication resources, to enhance professional knowledge in support of student learning and development
- assisting others to refine professional practice through ongoing inquiry, dialogue and reflection
- modelling ethical practices and addressing ethical issues
- sharing with others strategies to encourage participation in professional learning communities to enhance professional knowledge and support student learning and development
- modeling innovative approaches for integrating environmentally respectful perspectives and practices
- modeling innovative strategies to create and sustain safe, healthy, equitable and inclusive learning environments that honour and respect diversity
- providing leadership in implementing emergent curriculum and play/inquiry-based approaches to learning and development
- assisting others in the integration of exploration, investigation, guided instruction, and explicit instruction within the context of the Kindergarten program
- assisting others in applying self-directed (child-centred) learning and teacher-directed learning
- assisting others with the integrating the strands of age-appropriateness, individual appropriateness, and cultural appropriateness into a cohesive philosophy of Early Education.

Candidates will explore and deepen their understanding of the following:

### **B. Ontario Curriculum and School Policies**

The Additional Qualification Course: Kindergarten Specialist is aligned with current Ontario curriculum, relevant legislation, government policies, and resources. These documents inform the development and implementation of the Additional Qualification Course: Kindergarten Specialist. These resources can be viewed at [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca).

### **C. *The Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession and the Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession:***

- understanding and embodying care, trust, respect and integrity
- demonstrating commitment to students and student learning
- integrating professional knowledge
- enriching and developing professional practice
- supporting leadership in learning communities
- engaging in ongoing professional learning.

### **D. Theoretical Foundations of Kindergarten Specialist**

- demonstrating leadership in the application of theories of early learning within the context of global and diverse communities
- providing leadership in the exploration, selection and application of conceptual and theoretical frameworks for early learning
- demonstrating leadership in understanding and applying knowledge of the interconnected domains of growth and variability among children in the progression of learning and development
- assisting colleagues to develop an awareness and apply knowledge of current brain research in the area of early learning
- assisting others to explore and apply the developmental stages and types of play
- modeling for others an understanding of how young children contribute to their own learning

- modelling advocacy for the rights of the child as reflected in the United Nations convention on the rights of the child in all interactions with children and families
- advocating and demonstrating for others an understanding of the concepts of active engagement, imaginative play, creativity and authentic opportunities for problem-solving in inquiry-based learning environments
- demonstrating leadership in implementing the Ontario curriculum and government policies relevant to early learning
- leading change through critical reflection and professional dialogue on the relationship between theory and practice relevant to early learning
- assisting others to understand and align kindergarten expectations with developmentally-attuned teaching-learning, and assessment practices
- assisting others to understand and develop strategies to interact sensitively with students, parents and community partners in a way that honours the rich individuality of each student and family to better support learning
- assisting educators to explore and co-create learning communities that foster strong cultural identities in each student
- assisting others to explore and apply a knowledge of typical pathways of child development and how literacy/numeracy are integral to all aspects of this development
- modeling instructional strategies for children whose first language/dialect is different from the language of instruction.
- modeling teacher professionalism reflective of the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* as the foundation for teacher professionalism and to guide the professional judgement within the Additional Qualification Course: Kindergarten Specialist.
- supporting others in understanding the significance of the Ontario Human Rights Code, Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and associated responsibilities within professional practice.

### **E. Planning for and Creating a Play-based Learning Environment**

- assisting others to adapt programs to reflect positive, equitable, nurturing, safe and risk-free learning communities

- providing leadership in exploring and developing a program planning framework that reflects the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*
- providing leadership in planning programs that take into consideration the factors in a diverse and changing society that impact on student learning
- coaching educators in program planning and the development of implementation strategies and frameworks related to kindergarten
- advocating for differentiated instruction and emergent design practices in the planning, development and implementation of learning experiences in kindergarten
- offering leadership in identifying, accessing, integrating and assessing community, print, electronic and collegial resources related to Kindergarten
- assisting others to explore and apply integrated, balanced planning approaches and inquiry-based learning opportunities to meet expectations in all learning areas
- assisting other to apply knowledge and observations of children in play/inquiry-based emergent learning contexts to choose materials, develop the classroom environment, and plan for developmentally-attuned learning opportunities
- assisting others in how students engage in a variety of forms of play that promote learning and development
- advocating for the implementation of programs that allow for a young learner's multiple ways of representing when communicating ideas, concepts and observations
- providing leadership understanding the importance of critically examining qualitative and quantitative research related to professional practice
- assisting others in integrating culturally responsive pedagogy within program planning and development
- assisting others in developing an understanding of the mental health needs of students and the implications for teaching and learning.

#### **F. Leadership in the Instructional Setting and the Early Learner**

- providing leadership in implementing strategies to foster a collaborative community of learners to support equity and honour diversity
- providing leadership in the use of developmentally appropriate information and communication technology to support student learning and development

- providing leadership in the use of research-based instructional strategies to support inquiry in a play/inquiry-based learning environment
- providing leadership in differentiated instruction/ learning opportunities to acknowledge the rich diversity of each child
- providing leadership in the implementation of strategies for the co-creation of an inclusive learning environment that reflects the ethical standards and standards of practice and affirms the need to respect and conserve resources in the environment
- providing leadership in the application of pedagogies that reflect the professional identity of educators as described in the ethical standards, the standards of practice and in the Foundations of Professional Practice
- providing leadership in the scaffolding of children's learning experiences in ways that acknowledge their individuality and promotes their learning and development
- sharing with others how to apply knowledge of the gradual release of responsibility model to meet individual learning needs
- assisting others to apply the use of a variety of opportunities for instruction through large group, small group and individual play/inquiry-based activities across the program.

### **G. Observations, Assessment and Evaluation**

- exploring and integrating observation-based strategies as a key component of assessment in the Kindergarten program
- providing leadership in the development and integration of ongoing, appropriate and equitable assessment and evaluation methods that honour the dignity, emotional wellness, cognitive development and support facility with the language of instruction of all students
- ensuring that assessment, evaluation and reporting are consistent with the principles and practices and expectations reflected in Ontario's policy documents
- using assessment for the following three purposes: to provide feedback to students and to adjust instruction (assessment *for* learning); to develop students' capacity to be independent, autonomous learners (assessment *as* learning); to make judgments about the quality of student learning (assessment *of* learning)

- integrating multiple assessment methods that are ongoing, varied in nature and implemented over a period of time to support student learning
- assisting others to identify and integrate authentic and classroom-based ways of gathering data about students
- providing leadership in integrating multiple assessment methods to support student learning: diagnostic, formative, and summative.

#### **H. Shared Partnerships**

- assisting others to collaborate with students, parents/guardians to determine effective methods to provide continuous, meaningful and detailed information to support student learning
- assisting others to explore and integrate a variety of effective formal and informal communication strategies with parents/guardians and other community partners to support a successful transition into kindergarten and grade one
- showing others how to recognize and respond to the importance of shared responsibility and partnership as conveyed in the *Foundations of Professional Practice*
- showing others how to identify, access and apply district school board, school and community resources to support learning in a kindergarten context
- assisting others to explore and implement strategies for building shared understanding of play/inquiry-based programs in kindergarten
- assisting others to implement and sustain a positive, welcoming school climate in which all parent perspectives are encouraged, valued, and heard.

### **5. Instructional Practice in the Additional Qualification Course Kindergarten Specialist**

In the implementation of this Additional Qualification course, instructors use strategies that are relevant, meaningful and practical in providing candidates with learning experiences about instruction, pedagogy and assessment and evaluation. These include but are not limited to, small group interaction, action research, presentations, independent inquiry, problem solving, collaborative learning and direct instruction.

Instructors model the standards, honour the principles of adult learning, recognize candidates' experience and prior learning and respond to individual needs. Important to the course are opportunities for candidates to create support networks and receive feedback from colleagues and instructors and share the products of their learning with others. Opportunities for professional reading, reflection, dialogue and expression are also integral parts of the course.

Instructors model effective instructional strategies and formative and summative assessment that can be replicated or adapted in the candidate's classroom.

### **A. Experiential Learning**

Candidates will be provided with opportunities to engage in experiential learning related to key concepts and aspects of Kindergarten as collaboratively determined by both the instructor and course candidates. The intent of the experiential learning opportunities is to support the application and integration of practice and theory within the authentic context of teaching and learning. Candidates will also engage in critical reflection and analysis of their engagement in experiential learning opportunities related to Kindergarten. The professional judgment, knowledge and pedagogy of candidates will be enhanced and refined through experiential learning and, inquiry.

The College's standards resources (Appendix 2) can be integrated into AQ courses to help support experiential learning through professional inquiry.

## **6. Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates**

At the beginning of the course, candidates are provided with the specific learning expectations and forms of assessment and evaluation that will be used throughout the course. Opportunities will be provided by instructors for regular feedback regarding candidates' progress throughout the course.

A balanced approach to candidate assessment and evaluation is used. It includes the combination of self and peer assessment and instructor evaluation, and models effective practices. A variety of assessment approaches will be used that enable candidates to convey their learning related to course expectations. The course provides opportunities for both formative and summative assessment and evaluation.

Central to candidates enrolled in Additional Qualification courses is the opportunity to be engaged in relevant and meaningful work. Assignments,

artefacts and projects enable candidates to make connections between theory and practice. At the same time, assignments must allow candidates flexibility, choice, and individual inquiry opportunities.

Part of the evaluation process may include a major independent project or action research component over the duration of the course. This project is an opportunity for candidates to illustrate a high level of professional knowledge, communication skills, pedagogy, ethical practices and instructional leadership. Similarly, if a portfolio assignment is used, it will also include reflections and analysis of a candidate's learning over time.

A final culminating experience in the course is recommended. This experience may take the form of a written assessment, a research paper, a performance, an inquiry project or a product that is genuinely new, meaningful and practical.

The following list of assessment strategies which are reflective of experiential learning is not exhaustive; it is intended to serve as a guide only.

- a) Performance assessment: designing a sample scenario of emergent curriculum that honours children's interests and incorporates a variety of technologies and resources relevant to teaching in Kindergarten
- b) Written assignment: reflecting critically on issues arising from articles, publications, research and/or other resources related to teaching in Kindergarten
- c) Presentation: developing a digital story, presenting an issue related to teaching in Kindergarten
- d) Portfolio: creating a portfolio of practical resources, artefacts, photographs and recording critical reflections for one or several components related to Kindergarten
- e) Action research: engaging in action research by reflecting and acting upon a specific inquiry into teaching practice related to Kindergarten
- f) Independent project: addressing any aspect of the course that is approved by the instructor
- g) Instructional resource: developing a meaningful resource that will support instruction and pedagogy related to teaching in Kindergarten
- h) Reflective writing: reflecting on professional practice through journal writing, or writing a case or vignette that will support instruction and pedagogy related to teaching in Kindergarten

- i) Case inquiry: writing or exploring a case related to collaboration and shared partnerships, with parents, colleagues, and community organizations
- j) IEP development: collaboratively develop an IEP related to Kindergarten with the family, student and school team
- k) Facilitating a Learning Experience: developing and implementing an engaging learning experience that reflects differentiated instruction and universal design.

## Appendix 1

### **The *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession***

The *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* represent a vision of professional practice. At the heart of a strong and effective teaching profession is a commitment to students and their learning. Members of the Ontario College of Teachers, in their position of trust, demonstrate responsibility in their relationships with students, parents, guardians, colleagues, educational partners, other professionals, the environment and the public.

#### **The Purposes of the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession are:**

- to inspire members to reflect and uphold the honour and dignity of the teaching profession
- to identify the ethical responsibilities and commitments in the teaching profession
- to guide ethical decisions and actions in the teaching profession
- to promote public trust and confidence in the teaching profession.

#### **The Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession are:**

##### **Care**

The ethical standard of *Care* includes compassion, acceptance, interest and insight for developing students' potential. Members express their commitment to students' well-being and learning through positive influence, professional judgment and empathy in practice.

##### **Respect**

Intrinsic to the ethical standard of *Respect* are trust and fair-mindedness. Members honour human dignity, emotional wellness and cognitive development. In their professional practice, they model respect for spiritual and cultural values, social justice, confidentiality, freedom, democracy and the environment.

##### **Trust**

The ethical standard of *Trust* embodies fairness, openness and honesty. Members' professional relationships with students, colleagues, parents, guardians and the public are based on trust.

##### **Integrity**

Honesty, reliability and moral action are embodied in the ethical standard of *Integrity*. Continual reflection assists members in exercising integrity in their professional commitments and responsibilities.

## ***The Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession***

The *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* provide a framework of principles that describes the knowledge, skills, and values inherent in Ontario's teaching profession. These standards articulate the goals and aspirations of the profession. These standards convey a collective vision of professionalism that guides the daily practices of members of the Ontario College of Teachers.

### **The Purposes of the Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession are:**

- to inspire a shared vision for the teaching profession
- to identify the values, knowledge and skills that are distinctive to the teaching profession
- to guide the professional judgment and actions of the teaching profession
- to promote a common language that fosters an understanding of what it means to be a member of the teaching profession.

### **The Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession are:**

#### **Commitment to Students and Student Learning**

Members are dedicated in their care and commitment to students. They treat students equitably and with respect and are sensitive to factors that influence individual student learning. Members facilitate the development of students as contributing citizens of Canadian society.

#### **Professional Knowledge**

Members strive to be current in their professional knowledge and recognize its relationship to practice. They understand and reflect on student development, learning theory, pedagogy, curriculum, ethics, educational research and related policies and legislation to inform professional judgment in practice.

#### **Professional Practice**

Members apply professional knowledge and experience to promote student learning. They use appropriate pedagogy, assessment and evaluation,

resources and technology in planning for and responding to the needs of individual students and learning communities. Members refine their professional practice through ongoing inquiry, dialogue and reflection.

#### **Leadership in Learning Communities**

Members promote and participate in the creation of collaborative, safe and supportive learning communities. They recognize their shared responsibilities and their leadership roles in order to facilitate student success. Members maintain and uphold the principles of the ethical standards in these learning communities.

#### **Ongoing Professional Learning**

Members recognize that a commitment to ongoing professional learning is integral to effective practice and to student learning. Professional practice and self-directed learning are informed by experience, research, collaboration and knowledge.

## Appendix 2

### Standards-Based Professional Resources

Information pertaining to the following standards resources which support learning through professional inquiry is available through the College web site at [www.oct.ca](http://www.oct.ca)

- Allard, C.C., Goldblatt, P.F., Kembell, J.I., Kendrick, S.A., Millen, K.J., & Smith, D.M. (2007). Becoming a reflective community of practice. *Reflective Practice* (8)3, 299-314.
- Cherubini, L., Smith, D., Goldblatt, P.F., Engemann, J., & Kitchen, J. (2008). *Learning from experience: Supporting beginning and mentor teachers*. Toronto, ON: Ontario College of Teachers.
- Ciuffetelli Parker, D., Smith, D., & Goldblatt, P. (2009). Teacher education partnerships: Integration of case studies within an initial teacher education program. *Brock Education*, 18(2), pp. 96-113
- Goldblatt, P.F., & Smith, D. (2004). Illuminating and facilitating professional knowledge through casework. *European Journal of Teacher Education* (27)3, 334-354.
- Goldblatt, P.F., & Smith, D. (2005). (Eds.). *Cases for teacher development: Preparing for the classroom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ontario College of Teachers. (2003). *Standards in practice: Fostering professional inquiry*. [Resource kit 1]. Toronto, ON: Author.
- Ontario College of Teachers. (2006). *Foundations of professional practice*. Toronto, ON: Author.
- Ontario College of Teachers. (2008). *Living the standards*. [Resource kit 2]. Toronto, ON: Author.
- Ontario College of Teachers. (2010). *A self-reflective professional learning tool*. Toronto, ON: Author.
- Ontario College of Teachers. (2010). *Voices of wisdom* [DVD]. Toronto, ON: Author.

Smith, D., & Goldblatt, P.F. (Eds.). (2006). *Casebook guide for teacher education*. Toronto, ON: Ontario College of Teachers.

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Smith, D. (2012). Supporting new teacher development using narrative based professional learning. *Reflective Practice*, (13)1, 149-165.