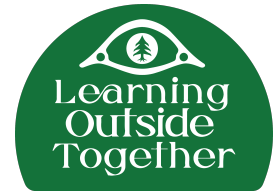


Learning Outside Together

Policy Document

Calculation and guidelines of Professional Development hours

Date: October 14, 2023



Overview

The Learning Outside Together course is jointly owned and administered by Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC) and BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS). The non-profit agency Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) is an equal partner in the project supporting mentor matching, participant recruitment, and project evaluation.

Content and course activities

The Learning Outside Together course consists of four components:

1. A self-paced online curriculum. There are 9 basic modules. 3 of the modules have a “part b”. The course is structured to allow participants to complete 1 of the “part b” modules, for a total of 10 modules.
2. Activities, personal reflections and contribution to the group chat to deepen comprehension, completed after each of the 10 modules.
3. A minimum of 10 online group meetings
4. A 2 hour, optional, online graduation celebration.

It is expected that the first three components each require a minimum of 1 hour per week, for a total of 3 hours. However, registration in the LOT program does not come with a set professional development certificate. Instead, the hours each participant commits to the program are calculated as described below. Professional development certificates reflect these calculations.

Calculating hours

Calculating hours for the online curriculum

There are 12 online modules that make up the online curriculum (9 basic and 3 “part b”). During the LOT program, the expectation is to work through 10 modules. Participant progress can be tracked by the administrator in the group management section of the Early Learning Hub.

At least 7 modules must be completed for a participant’s certificate to note “course completed” in addition to recognizing their professional development hours. 10 modules must be completed for the participant to qualify to become a mentor.

Completion of each module is calculated as 1 (one) hour of professional development to a maximum of 10 hours. Up to 2 additional hours are given should the participant complete all 12 modules.

Calculating hours for the weekly activities, reflections and contributions to the group chat

Each module (weekly curriculum) has associated activities such as the mapping exercises, visiting outdoor spaces, reflections and contributions to the online group chat. Adding photos and reflections into the group discussion is an integral component of this section.

Completion of each week's activities is calculated as 1 (one) hour of professional development to a maximum of 12 hours, should all 12 modules be completed.

Participants are on the honour system for these activities and reflections. If there are concerns that a participant has not done the weekly activities, mentors should first bring this up with participants. If the participants cannot demonstrate the completion of the activities, they will not be credited for these hours.

Calculating hours for the online group meetings

There are a minimum of 10 online group meetings scheduled over the course of the LOT program. It is expected that participants attend all meetings. At least 7 meetings must be attended for a participant's certificate to note "course completed" in addition to recognizing their professional development hours and for the participant to qualify to become a mentor.

Attending and contributing at 1 (one) meeting is measured as 1 (one) hour of professional development, to a maximum of 10 hours.

Should a participant not be able to attend a meeting, it is up to the participant to demonstrate an equivalent effort – by posting their insights into the discussion feed, meeting with the mentor one to one, or by another means. The mentor has the discretion to acknowledge and track one hour for this effort.

Should the mentor cancel a meeting and either not schedule a replacement meeting or the replacement meeting is at a time the participant cannot attend, the participants will not be penalized for this situation. As a replacement, participants can provide their reflection and comments for the week in the group discussion to receive the professional development hours associated with that meeting.

Calculating hours for the completion celebration

A two hour graduation celebration will be held via Zoom. Attendance is optional but encouraged. Attendance will be tracked and credited as professional development credits (up to 2 hours).

Certificates

The contributions of each participant are tracked (module completion, activities, meetings) and totalled. *Each participant's certificate will reflect the hours they have completed.*

Participants who complete 24+ hours, complete at least 7 modules and their associated activities and attend at least 7 online meetings are given a professional development certificate with their completed hours, that also states "Completion of the Learning Outside Together Course".

The maximum number of hours that may be listed on a LOT professional development certificate is 34 hours (12 modules, 12 associated activities, 10 meetings).

Participants who attend the celebration will be given a (separate) certificate for this event.

Note: Only participants who receive their certificate of completion AND completed 10+ modules are eligible to apply to become mentors.

Professional Development Certificate Production Process

Hours submission

Each mentor will submit to the LOT administration

- a list of their participants
- the weekly meeting attendance record
- any approved activities in lieu of weekly meeting attendance
- any agreed upon reductions for incomplete weekly activities

ECEBC will gather that information from the mentors as well as the Early Learning Hub and the Zoom Celebration records.

Notification

ECEBC will notify each participant within three weeks of the final celebration, via email, with the total hours that have been tabulated. If a participant believes there has been an error, they should notify ECEBC within a week.

Certificate production

ECEBC will issue the Professional Development certificates within three weeks of the final celebration.

Appeals

Need for an Appeals Process

ECEBC and BCACCS strive to create professional development certificates that are a fair representation of the effort participants commit to the LOT course. Both agencies recognize that from time to time, participants may dispute the professional development hours that have been calculated.

Appeals Process

If a LOT participant wishes to dispute the professional development hours tabulation, (s)he will have ten (10) business days from the date of the email notifying him/her of the tabulated hours to launch an appeal. The process will be as follows:

1. The participant will submit a claim to the Executive Director of ECEBC at appeals@ecebc.ca stating their view of why the decision is unjust and providing any additional information to support their appeal. **The subject line must say “LOT Program”**
2. The Executive Director will respond within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the appeal letter. (S)he will consult with the participant’s mentor, the LOT administrators and/or the Early Learning Hub administrators and bring this information to the partners (ECEBC, SRDC, BCACCS). Together, the partners will make a decision.
3. The Partners’ decision will be considered final, with no further avenues for appeal.