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# Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Early Childhood Education



NOMINATION  
GUIDELINES

2014

Canada

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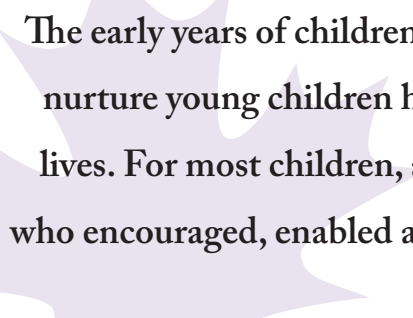
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The early years of children's lives are critical. The educators who teach and nurture young children have an impact that will last for the rest of their lives. For most children, at least one educator will stand out as someone who encouraged, enabled and inspired them to be their very best when they were very young.

The Prime Minister's Awards (PMA) for Excellence in Early Childhood Education (ECE) honour outstanding and innovative early childhood educators who excel at fostering the early development and socialization of the children in their care, and at helping build the foundation children need to make the best possible start in life.

## Awards

- Up to five Certificates of Excellence (national level), each including a financial award of \$5,000.
- Up to 10 Certificates of Achievement (regional level), each including a financial award of \$1,000.

Certificates of Excellence are awarded to the five top-ranked nominees. Up to 10 of the next top ranked nominees each receive a Certificate of Achievement, with at least one award (Excellence or Achievement) designated for each of the following regions, provided standards of excellence are met: British Columbia; the Prairies; the North (Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut); Ontario; Quebec; and Atlantic Canada. In addition, at least one Certificate of Excellence and one Certificate of Achievement are awarded to top-ranked Aboriginal educators.

Financial awards for the Certificates of Excellence are to be shared equally between the recipient and their ECE setting (as identified on the nomination form) and **spent under the recipient's direction**. If a winning educator changes ECE settings, financial awards (ECE setting portion) go to the ECE setting at which the recipient was working at the time of nomination. Financial awards for the Certificates of Achievement are sent directly to recipients.

Award funds may be used for professional development, equipment, resource materials or other tools to improve developmental programming and children's experiences related to the educator's work. For recipients of the Certificate of Excellence, a portion of the ECE setting's award funds (up to 25%) may be used to cover educator replacement costs should the recipient be asked to attend a national awards ceremony.

“The award meant so much to me, because I felt my children won.”

2013 PMA Recipient



## Recognition

All winning educators receive a certificate, a PMA pin and a congratulatory letter signed by the Prime Minister.

Certificate of Excellence recipients may also be invited to participate in best practice sessions and attend a national awards ceremony with the Prime Minister, or his designate, traditionally held in Ottawa. Costs for Certificate of Excellence recipients to attend the national awards ceremony are covered by the PMA program.

Certificate of Achievement recipients are to be honoured at local events involving children, supervisors, colleagues and, local Members of Parliament or local leaders, as appropriate.

Each recipient's early childhood education setting also receives a certificate signed by the Prime Minister to recognize its support and contribution to the recipient's achievement.

## Promotion

The achievements of all recipients are promoted both nationally and in the educators' home communities. Certificate of Excellence recipients are profiled, with their permission, in the annual Prime Minister's Awards Exemplary Practices publication.



***To be told that I am outstanding at what I have chosen to do means the world to me! I feel proud and yet humbled at the same time: proud for the recognition and affirmation and humbled that I have been blessed to work in a field filled with children and families.***



**2009 PMA Recipient**



## *Nomination Deadline: April 15, 2014*

### Eligibility

**At the time of nomination**, all nominees must meet the following criteria:

- Nominees must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents.
- Nominees must have successfully completed training in early childhood education and care as follows:
  - degree, diploma or certificate in early childhood education and care;
  - official certification as an early childhood educator in the province or territory where the nominee is working; or,
  - successfully completed a training program in family child care.

A copy of the nominee's training certification must be provided.

- A nominee's certification must be in good standing with their provincial or territorial governing body. Evidence of training certification status is required, such as a letter from their province or territory.
- Nominees must provide hands-on, direct education and care to young children at least 2.5 days per week.
- Nominees must work a minimum of 2.5 days a week in a licensed Canadian early childhood education setting, as defined by provincial or territorial government regulations. **Note:** This requirement is waived for nominees who work in Aboriginal Head Start sites on and off reserve or in early childhood education settings

on-reserve where there is no applicable provincial or territorial government licensing.

- Nominees must have worked in a licensed Canadian ECE setting for at least three years and still be employed in an ECE setting at the time of nomination.

**Note:** If the ECE certification is withdrawn or the license to operate is lost between the time of nomination and the award presentation, the PMA program office reserves the right to withdraw the candidacy. If eligibility status of a nomination is compromised or changes (e.g. due to loss of certification as a result of professional misconduct, the closure of a centre, etc.), the nominator and/or nominee has the responsibility to inform the PMA program office of a change in status in writing. See the **PMA Recipient Code of Conduct** at [www.pma.gc.ca](http://www.pma.gc.ca) for further information.

Posthumous nominations are not accepted.

The PMAs are designed to honour the overall accomplishments of an individual or a team of up to three educators. The program is not intended to recognize the achievements of an entire early childhood education setting or staff. Cash awards are to be shared equally among the team members. When team members work in different ECE settings, cash awards are to be shared equally among the institutions. Educators who are not eligible for this award may be eligible for the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence. Nomination guidelines for Teaching Excellence are available at [www.pma.gc.ca](http://www.pma.gc.ca).

## Team Nominations

Successful team nominations address the overall accomplishments of a team of up to three educators. Each member of a team must meet the eligibility requirements described above. A team nomination should reflect a true collaboration, not simply a collection of individual accomplishments. The nomination text should describe how the team worked together to meet each of the selection criteria.

If a centre director is included as a member of the team, they must work a minimum of 2.5 days per week providing direct education and care to young children.

Letters of support should endorse the accomplishments of all team members.

**Note:** Page restrictions for the nomination text and letters of support are the same for team and individual nominations. Do not submit separate applications if part of a team nomination. However, please provide evidence of each nominee's training certification, evidence of each nominee's experience and copies of each ECE setting's operating license (if applicable).

## Nominators

Nominators may be any person or group with direct knowledge of the nominee's contribution (e.g. parent, supervisor, fellow educator, etc.). Self-nominations or nominations received from a nominee's direct family member will not be accepted.

## Re-nomination

Recipients of a Certificate of Achievement may be re-nominated for a Certificate of Excellence in a subsequent year, but are ineligible for a second Achievement award. Unsuccessful nominees may be re-nominated in a subsequent year. In all cases, **a complete and current nomination package must be submitted, including letters of support written during the current nomination period.**

Previous recipients of a Certificate of Excellence are not eligible.

## Selection Process

After an initial screening for basic eligibility, copies of the nomination text and letters of support are sent to selection committee members for review. Selection committee members include early childhood education and care practitioners and stakeholders from across Canada. See the current list of organizations represented in the selection committee at [www.pma.gc.ca](http://www.pma.gc.ca).

Nomination packages are evaluated and ranked by selection committee members based on how well the nominee meets the selection criteria. A final list of top-ranked individuals is then provided to the Prime Minister for recognition.

## Selection Criteria

Award recipients are selected based on the excellence and innovation of their outstanding ability to engage and support the development of the children in their care, and on their overall commitment to the development of children and the early childhood education and care profession. While a specific exemplary project or practice may form part of a nomination, **nominees are judged on their overall and ongoing merits as educators.** Examples of exemplary practices which set out the foundational skills for science, technology, engineering and math (i.e. nature walks, numeracy, scientific experiments) are encouraged.

In selecting award recipients, the committee looks for clear evidence showing that nominees have excelled in all of the following **four areas**:

### *1. Support of child development*

The nomination text must describe and provide concrete examples of how the educator provides daily experiences that support and promote each child's physical, emotional, social, cognitive, ethical and creative development, such as:

- optimize each child's unique development;
- encourage children's interest and participation;
- provide stimulating and engaging learning environments for all children;
- develop and maintain warm, caring and responsive relationships with each child and with the group of children;
- use observation to assess children's skills, abilities, interests and needs; and,
- use developmentally appropriate best practices.

### *2. Innovation*

The nomination text must describe and provide concrete examples of the educator's use of innovative and creative approaches to encourage and support each child's unique development, such as:

- capture and maintain children's interest;
- explore new or different ideas with children;
- recognize and adapt to children's special needs (including physical, emotional, social, cognitive and creative needs);
- recognize and include diverse economic, cultural, linguistic and regional perspectives in the learning environment;
- respect and promote children's home language and cultural heritage;
- incorporate events and activities occurring in children's lives in the learning environment; and,
- incorporate international, national, local and community events and activities in the learning environment.

### *3. Involvement with Parents, Families and the Community*

The nomination text must describe and provide concrete examples of the educator's efforts to involve and engage parents, families and the community in children's education and care, such as:

- develop and maintain open, cooperative relationships with each child's family;
- encourage active parent, family and community involvement in children's learning;
- develop and use innovative approaches to engaging and supporting parents and families;
- foster community contacts or partnerships that encourage or complement children's learning and activities; and,

- develop and maintain relationships with others in the early childhood education setting, such as colleagues or with other community services and organizations involved with the children.

#### 4. Commitment and Leadership in the Field

The nomination text must show evidence of the educator's ongoing professional development, leadership and commitment to improving the early childhood education and care field and to enhancing the ability of others in the profession, such as:

- organize or deliver professional development courses, workshops or other development activities;
- develop and disseminate learning materials, resources and best practices;
- provide support or training to other professionals in the field (such as mentoring and training of students);
- foster or contribute to the development of a team environment within their own early childhood education setting; and,
- be actively involved in a professional organization, network or association related to early childhood education and care.

## How to Apply

Once you have identified one outstanding early childhood educator or team of educators, develop a nomination package using the nomination guidelines and checklist found at [www.pma.gc.ca](http://www.pma.gc.ca).

- Each nomination package must include a completed copy of the nomination form.
- Nomination forms must be signed by the nominee and the nominator, as well as by the nominee's supervisor, when applicable.

- When there is more than one nominee, please complete a separate form for each nominee.
- When more than one nomination package is received for an educator, nominators will be asked to combine their packages.

## Nomination Deadline

**Nomination packages must be submitted to the PMA program office no later than April 15, 2014.**

## Assembling a Nomination Package

**LENGTH:** Your complete nomination package must **not exceed 20 pages**, excluding training certification and checklist.

**FORMAT:** All information should be typed in a font no smaller than 10 points and double-spaced on 8½" × 11" paper.

**PACKAGING:** Simple packaging is recommended. Creative packaging can certainly make a nomination package stand out. Unfortunately, selection committee members do not get the opportunity to see it.

**BINDING:** For ease of reproduction, please do not bind your nomination package.

**COPIES:** Please send only one original copy by mail.



## Helpful Hints in Preparing a Nomination Text

An effective nomination package illustrates the outstanding achievements of the nominee and clearly explains why she or he should receive one of Canada's highest honours in early childhood education. As a nominator, you are “painting a picture” of a nominee's achievements for a selection committee that reviews hundreds of applications, so the package should be compelling.

Although self-nominations are not accepted, nominators are encouraged to seek advice from the nominee while developing a nomination text.

Follow the criteria set out in the nomination guidelines. Provide adequate detail for each of the **four categories** of selection criteria. Organize your text using the same headings.

Provide concrete examples and details to show how the nominee has met the selection criteria and explain the impact of the nominee's efforts. Describe any special projects or activities, philosophies, unique learning environments, extracurricular activities, child reactions, outcomes or achievements that make this nominee stand out.

Focus on the nominee's overall achievements. Show that the nominee is well rounded and meets all **four criteria** in her or his overall work, not just in one particular project. Include activities the nominee participates in to support the development of the children in her or his care, the setting in which she or he works, colleagues and the early childhood education and care field, such as volunteer work or professional development.

Please refer to the checklist to ensure you have included all necessary information. To facilitate the preparation of the nomination package and its review by the PMA program office, a copy of the completed checklist is required for each nomination package.

### Address

Please send nomination packages to the following address:

Prime Minister's Awards for  
Excellence in Early Childhood Education  
Industry Canada  
Jean Edmonds Tower North  
300 Slater Street, 20th floor  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C8

For more information, please contact the PMA program office at [pmaece-ppmepe@gc.ca](mailto:pmaece-ppmepe@gc.ca) or 613-991-4255, or visit [www.pma.gc.ca](http://www.pma.gc.ca).

## Acknowledgments

Employment and Social Development Canada, Health Canada, Industry Canada, and the Public Health Agency of Canada, as partners in the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Early Childhood Education, gratefully acknowledge the volunteer contributions of numerous organizations involved in early childhood education and care who take part in the award selection process. The program could not function without the participation of these volunteers.

Visit [www.pma.gc.ca](http://www.pma.gc.ca) for a complete list of participating organizations.

## Nomination Checklist

Please print and complete one nomination checklist for each nominee found at [www.pma.gc.ca](http://www.pma.gc.ca)

## Nomination Form

Please complete one nomination form for each nominee found at [www.pma.gc.ca](http://www.pma.gc.ca).