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Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Early Childhood Education



GUIDELINES AND
NOMINATION FORM

2013

Canada

This publication is available upon request in accessible formats. Contact:

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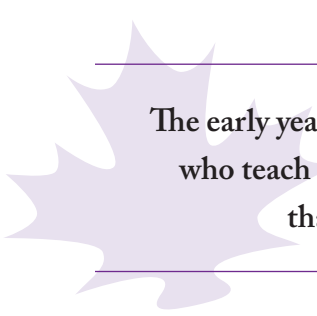
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The early years of children's lives are critical. The educators who teach and nurture young children have an impact that will last for the rest of their lives.

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 5 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 5 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 the top-ranked Aboriginal early childhood educator.

Financial awards for the Certificates of Excellence are shared equally between the recipient and the recipient's ECE setting (as identified on the nomination form) to be 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 50%) may be used to cover educator replacement costs while the recipient is attending the national awards ceremony traditionally held in Ottawa.

Recognition

All winners receive a certificate, a PMA pin and a letter of congratulations 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 representative, traditionally held in Ottawa. If invited, costs for Certificate of Excellence recipients to attend the national awards ceremony are covered by the Prime Minister's Awards program.

Certificate of Achievement winners are honoured at local events with children, supervisors, colleagues and local members of Parliament or local leaders attending, as appropriate.

Each recipient's early childhood education setting, when applicable, also receives a certificate, signed by the Prime Minister, recognizing its support and contribution to the educator'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 Prime Minister's Awards *Exemplary Practices* publication, which can be viewed at www.pma.gc.ca.

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.

Past Recipient



Eligibility

Upon submission of the nomination no later than **March 31, 2013**, all nominees must meet the following criteria:

- Nominees must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents.
- Nominees must provide hands-on, direct education and care to young children at least 2.5 days per week
- Nominees must have successfully completed training in early childhood education and care as follows (copy of training certification must be provided with the nomination):
 - › 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.
- Nominees must work full-time (minimum of 2.5 days per week) in a licensed Canadian early childhood education setting (as defined by provincial or territorial government regulations – *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 ECE setting for at least three years and still be employed in an ECE setting at the time of the nomination deadline (March 31, 2013).

Note: If the license to operate is lost between the time of nomination and the award presentation, the Prime Minister's Awards program reserves the right to withdraw this candidacy. If eligibility status of a nomination is compromised or changes (e.g. due to loss of certification, the closure of a centre, or as a result of professional misconduct), the nominator and/or nominee has a responsibility to inform the PMA program of a change in status in writing. See the PMA recipient Code of Conduct at www.pma.gc.ca for further information.

Posthumous nominations are not accepted.

The Prime Minister's Awards are designed to honour the overall accomplishments of a single 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 shared equally among the team members.

Educators who are not eligible for this award may be eligible for the Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence. Nomination guidelines are available at www.pma.gc.ca, by sending an email to pmaece-ppmepe@gc.ca, or by calling 613-946-0651.

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 can endorse the accomplishments of one or all members of the team.

Note: Page restrictions for the nomination text and letters of support are the same for team and individual nominations. However, please provide evidence of each nominee's training in early childhood education and care, 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 of child in care, supervisor, fellow educator, etc.). Self-nominations or nominations received from a nominee's direct family member will not be accepted.

Renomination

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.

“It is a great personal honour to be included in the company of so many excellent professionals... This has given me a chance to talk about my work, to highlight the importance of supporting early childhood education.”

Past Recipient



How Recipients Are Chosen

After an initial screening for basic eligibility, copies of the nomination text and letters of support are sent to selection committee members for review. 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 on our website at www.pma.gc.ca.

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

Selection Criteria

Award recipients are selected based on their innovative approaches and 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.

In selecting award recipients, the committee looks for **clear evidence (e.g. descriptive concrete examples)** showing that nominees have excelled in all **four areas** described below.

1. Support of child development

The nomination text should 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.

The nomination text should provide examples of the nominee's efforts to:

- 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 should describe and provide concrete examples of the educator's use of innovative and creative approaches to encourage and support each child's unique development.

The nomination text should provide examples of the nominee's efforts to:

- 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 should 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.

The nomination text should provide examples of the nominee's efforts to:

- 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 should 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.

The nomination text should provide examples of the nominee's efforts to:

- 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 guidelines and checklist provided.

- Each nomination package must include a completed copy of the enclosed PMA nomination form. This form is also available online at www.pma.gc.ca.
- 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 copy and complete a separate form for each.
- 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 posted and date stamped no later than **March 31, 2013**.



Assembling a Nomination Package

LENGTH: Your complete nomination package must not exceed 20 pages.

FORMAT: All information should be typewritten in a font no smaller than 10 point and double-spaced on 8½" x 11" paper. To ensure ease of reproduction, please print on one side only.

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

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

COPIES: Please send only 1 original copy by mail or by fax.

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 for 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 and include several examples in support of each of the four selection criteria.

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 individual's efforts. Describe any special projects or activities, philosophies, unique learning environments, or child reactions, outcomes or achievements that make this nominee stand out.

Focus on the nominee's overall achievements by describing numerous examples over time. Show that the nominee is well rounded 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, professional development, social events, etc.)

Refer to the checklist on page 10 to ensure you have included all necessary information.

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 ON K1A 0C8

Fax: 613-998-0943

For more information, please send an e-mail to pmaece-ppmepe@gc.ca, call 613-946-0651, or visit www.pma.gc.ca.

Acknowledgements

Industry Canada, Health Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development 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. A list of selection committee members is available on the program website at www.pma.gc.ca.

Checklist

To facilitate the preparation of the nomination package and its review by the PMA office, please attach this checklist to your nomination package.

- Copy of this checklist fully completed** (one page)
- Signed nomination form** (two pages)
- Copy of ECE setting's operating license**
As defined by provincial or territorial government regulations; if applicable (one page)
- Evidence of nominee's training in early childhood education and care**
such as a copy of a degree, diploma or certificate showing completion of training (one page)
- Evidence of nominee's experience**
Employer confirmation letter indicating a minimum of three years in a licensed early childhood setting (one page)
- Nomination text** (two pages per criteria up to a maximum of 8 pages)
Note: If the nomination text is longer than 8 pages, double-spaced, nominators will be asked to reduce the text.
- Letters of support** (three letters, maximum of two pages each, are required)
Note: If more than three letters are included, only the first three will be sent to the committee for evaluation.
Letters should not exceed two pages each and must be signed by the author. Letters of support should provide evidence of the nominee's excellence and achievements under any or all of the four selection criteria. To reduce repetition, ask writers to focus on one or two specific things about the educator that make her or him exceptional. Letters may come from anyone with direct knowledge of the nominee's accomplishments; however, letters from parents, children, peers and professional associations are often particularly effective in demonstrating a nominee's impact. Letters of support must be issued no earlier than six months **prior** to the nomination deadline, and must include contact information (mailing address and telephone number) for the author.