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Guidelines

and Nomination Form



Prime Minister's Awards
for Excellence in Early Childhood Education
2005–2006

Canada

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www.pma-ppm.ca.

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The early years of children's lives are critical. The educators who teach and nurture young children in those years have an impact that will last for the rest of the children's 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 for Excellence in Early Childhood Education 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 meet life's challenges.

"Quality education that begins early in life prepares people to thrive in the future. Canadian parents, child care organizations, early childhood educators and governments have been working for years to develop ways to ensure that our youngest citizens get the best possible start in life. We are signing agreements in principle with the Provinces and Territories to build on these efforts and move our country closer to fulfilling a shared vision on early learning and child care."

*- Prime Minister Paul Martin
on the new early learning and
child care initiative*

Awards

- ◆ Up to 10 Certificates of Excellence (national level), each including a financial award of \$5000.
- ◆ Up to 15 Certificates of Achievement (regional level), each including a financial award of \$1000.

Certificates of Excellence are awarded to the 10 top-ranked nominees, with at least one award designated for each of the following regions: British Columbia; Prairies; Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut; Ontario; Quebec; and Atlantic Canada. In addition, one of the Certificates of Excellence is designated for the top-ranked Aboriginal early childhood educator.

The next 15 top-ranked nominees each receive a Certificate of Achievement. At least one of the Certificates of Achievement is awarded annually to an Aboriginal early childhood educator.

Financial awards are provided directly to recipients. Recipients may use award funds for professional development, equipment, resource materials or other tools to improve developmental programming and children's experiences related to the educator's work.

Recognition

All recipients receive a certificate, pin and letter of congratulations from the Prime Minister.

Certificate of Excellence recipients also receive an all-expenses-paid trip to Ottawa, including best practice sessions, and culminating in the presentation of award certificates by the Prime Minister at a special event. Families are welcome and some activities are organized for them; however, please note that the Prime Minister's Awards program covers only recipients' travel costs.

Certificate of Achievement winners are 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, 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 nationally and in the educator's home communities, through events and various electronic and print communications products. For example, an Exemplary Practices publication and educator profiles are published -- with permission -- on the Prime Minister's Awards website at www.pma-ppm.ca.

Eligibility

- ◆ Nominees must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents.
- ◆ Nominees must work a minimum of 2.5 days per week providing direct education and care to young children in a licensed early childhood education setting (as defined by provincial or territorial government regulations¹). Nominees who work in licensed early childhood education settings but who do not provide direct education and care to young children are not eligible for the award.
- ◆ Nominees must provide evidence of training in early childhood education and care in the form of one of the following:
 - ▲ 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
 - ▲ proof of completion of a training program in a family child care.
- ◆ Nominees must have worked in a licensed Canadian early childhood education setting for at least three years.

Posthumous nominations are not accepted.

The Prime Minister's Awards are designed to honour the overall accomplishments of a single educator 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. Each member of a team must meet the eligibility requirements described above. Any cash award is to be shared equally among the team members.

1. 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.

“Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services recognize that quality early learning and child care programs play an important role in promoting the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of young children... [Ministers] agree that support for early learning and child care is a critical investment in our children's future.”

—Federal/Provincial/Territorial
Multilateral Framework on
Early Learning and Child Care

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-ppm.ca, by sending an email to pmawards@ic.gc.ca or by calling toll-free 1 800 575-9200.

Nominators

Nominators may be any person or group with direct knowledge of the nominee's contribution.

Renomination

Recipients of a Certificate of Achievement may be renominated for a Certificate of Excellence in a subsequent year, but are ineligible for a second Achievement award. Unsuccessful nominees may be renominated in a subsequent year. In all cases, complete and updated nomination packages must be submitted. Previous recipients of a Certificate of Excellence are not eligible.

How Recipients Are Chosen

A committee of early childhood education and care practitioners and stakeholders from across Canada selects award recipients.

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 an exemplary project or practice may form part of a nomination, nominees are judged on their overall merits as educators.

In selecting award recipients, the committee looks for clear evidence that nominees have excelled in the four areas described below.

Support of child development

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

- ◆ optimizing each child's unique development;
- ◆ encouraging children's interest and participation;
- ◆ providing stimulating and engaging learning environments for all children;
- ◆ developing and maintaining warm, caring and responsive relationships with each child and with the group of children;
- ◆ using observation to assess children's skills, abilities, interests and needs;
- ◆ using developmentally appropriate "best practices."

Innovation

The nomination text should describe the educator's use of innovative and creative approaches to encouraging and supporting child development, such as the following:

- ◆ capturing and maintaining child interest;
- ◆ exploring new or different ideas with children;
- ◆ recognizing and adapting to children's special needs (including physical, emotional, social, cognitive and creative needs);
- ◆ recognizing and including diverse economic, cultural, linguistic and regional perspectives in the learning environment;
- ◆ respecting and promoting children's home language and cultural heritage;
- ◆ incorporating events and activities occurring in children's lives in the learning environment;
- ◆ incorporating international, national, local and community events and activities in the learning environment.

"First Ministers affirm their commitment to the well-being of children by setting out their vision of early childhood development as an investment in the future of Canada. Canada's future social vitality and economic prosperity depend on the opportunities that are provided to children today."

*—Federal/Provincial/Territorial
Early Childhood Development
Agreement*

Involvement with parents, families and the community

The nomination text should describe the educator's efforts to involve and engage parents, families and the community in children's education and care, such as the following:

- ◆ developing and maintaining open, cooperative relationships with each child's family;
- ◆ encouraging active parent, family and community involvement in children's learning;
- ◆ developing and using innovative approaches to engaging and supporting parents and families;
- ◆ fostering community contacts or partnerships that encourage or complement children's learning and activities;
- ◆ developing and maintaining relationships with others in the early childhood education setting (such as colleagues) or with other community services involved with the children.

Commitment and leadership in the field

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

- ◆ engaging in ongoing personal professional growth and learning;
- ◆ organizing or delivering professional development courses, workshops or other development activities;
- ◆ developing and disseminating learning materials, resources and best practices;
- ◆ providing support or training to other professionals in the field (such as mentoring and training of students);
- ◆ fostering or contributing to the development of a team environment within their own early childhood education setting;
- ◆ being actively involved in a professional organization, network or association related to early childhood education and care.

How to Apply

- ◆ Develop a nomination package, following the guidelines and hints set out below. Each nomination package must include a completed copy of the attached nomination form. This form is also available on the Internet (www.pma-ppm.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

The deadline for nominations is **January 6, 2006**.

Assembling a Nomination Package

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 educators. As a nominator, you are "painting a picture" of a nominee's achievements for a selection committee that reviews many applications, so the package should be compelling.

Your complete nomination package must not exceed 20 pages and should include the following items. **You must submit an original and five copies of your nomination package.**

- Signed nomination form** (2 pages).
- Nomination text** (maximum 5 pages).
- 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).
- Evidence of nominee's experience** (a minimum of three years in a licensed early childhood setting).

- **Letters of support** (three required). Letters of support should provide evidence of the nominee's excellence and achievements under any or all of the four selection criteria. The selection committee looks at the picture painted in both the nomination text and the letters of support. Letters should not exceed one page and must be signed by the author. 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.

Here are a few hints to help you prepare the nomination text.

Follow the criteria set out in the nomination guidelines. Provide adequate detail for each of the four categories of selection criteria. You may wish to 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 educator's efforts.

Describe any special projects or activities, philosophies, unique learning environments, or child reactions, outcomes or achievements that make this educator stand out.

Focus on the nominee's overall achievements. 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, advocacy or social events).

Format

Typewritten and double-spaced. All information should be typewritten in a font no smaller than 10 point and double-spaced on 8½" x 11" paper.

One-sided. To ensure ease of reproduction, please type on one side only.

Five copies. In addition to the original, please include five copies of the complete package, including any additional support materials.

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, 18th floor
Ottawa ON K1A 0C8

For more information, please send an e-mail to eceawards@ic.gc.ca or call the program's toll-free hotline at 1 800 575-9200.

Acknowledgements

Industry Canada, Social Development Canada and Health Canada, as partners in the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Early Childhood Education, gratefully acknowledge all of the stakeholders, experts, practitioners and government officials who provided advice on the development of this award.

In addition, numerous organizations and individuals involved in early childhood education and care take part in the award selection process. The program could not function without the participation of these volunteers. A list of the participating organizations is available on request or on the program Web site at www.pma-ppm.ca.

Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Early Childhood Education

2005-2006 Nomination Form

Please type or write in BLOCK letters. Please provide a separate form for each nominee.

Nominee's ECE Setting Information

Dr. Mr. Mrs. Ms.

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Please provide names as they should appear on certificates.

Name of setting _____

Address _____

City/Community _____ Prov./Terr. _____ Postal Code _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____

E-mail address (when applicable) _____

Website _____

Type of setting (e.g. child care centre, Aboriginal Head Start program, family child care program) _____

Ages of children in nominee's care _____

Does the nominee have at least three years experience in a licensed early childhood setting? Yes No

Is evidence that the early childhood setting in which the nominee works is licensed included in the nomination package? Yes No

Is evidence of the nominee's training in early childhood education and care included in the nomination package? Yes No

Is the nominee a Canadian citizen or permanent resident? Yes No

For the purposes of the awards designated for Aboriginal early childhood educators, does the nominee self-identify as Aboriginal? Yes No

Does the nominee use information and communications technology in support of her or his work? Yes No

Nominee's Personal Information

Home Address _____

City/Community _____ Prov./Terr. _____ Postal Code _____

Tel. (H) (_____) _____ Fax (H) (_____) _____ E-mail (H) _____

Personal Information

All personal information collected in nominations is protected under the *Privacy Act*. It is used by Industry Canada to process the nominations and for related statistical studies. Participation is voluntary. Information will be stored in Personal Information Bank IST-P-PU-015. Nominees may access, request correction of, or have a notation attached to the information about them at the address on page 9. IST/IST-205-05074.

Each award recipient's name, early childhood education setting, community, and work contact information are included in short biographies published for the media and on the World Wide Web. Award recipients' photographs may also be used in promotional and information materials by the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Early Childhood Education.

Nominator

To be completed by either an individual nominator or a representative of a nominating group.

Dr. Mr. Mrs. Ms.

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Organization represented (when applicable) _____

Address _____

City/Community _____ Prov./Terr. _____ Postal Code _____

Tel. (H) (_____) _____ Tel. (W) (_____) _____ Fax (_____) _____

E-mail _____

Signatures

Nominator

Signature of Nominator _____ Date _____

Nominee

I, the nominee, affirm that all information contained in this nomination package is, to the best of my knowledge, complete and correct. I understand that award-winning ideas and methods will be published in an annual report of exemplary practices and I give my release for that purpose.

Signature of Nominee _____ Date _____

Supervisor (when applicable)

Dr. Mr. Mrs. Ms.

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Signature of Supervisor _____ Date _____

For more information or assistance in completing your nomination,
call our hotline toll-free at 1 800 575-9200, or send us an e-mail (eeceawards@ic.gc.ca).