School of Community Services
Early Childhood Education
PLAR Handbook
(Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition)
2025/2026

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PLAR Definition

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Definition:

St. Lawrence College recognizes that college-level learning may be acquired outside the classroom through employment, volunteer activities, self-directed study, travel, or other life experiences. PLAR recognizes military on-the-job training programs as prior learning.

PLAR credits are awarded for demonstrated learning, not just from various experiences. To be eligible for credit, the learning achieved must be applicable to the vocational learning outcomes in your chosen program at St. Lawrence College.

The PLAR process at St. Lawrence is designed to assist adult learners in identifying, describing, and demonstrating past learning which may be eligible for advanced standing or course credits towards the certificate or diploma of their choice. It is the learning from the experience that is recognized and credited, not the experience itself. As well, in order to be eligible for credit, the learning achieved must be appropriate to the courses offered in the program of choice.

St. Lawrence College PLAR website, 2025-2026

ECE PLAR

Applicants who have extensive and recent experience working in licensed childcare, Kindergarten, and/or early learning settings (example: EarlyOn centres) may be eligible for PLAR credits towards their diploma. Applicants will challenge the ECE program's Vocational Learning Outcomes (VLOs) to receive credit for courses and/or advanced-level standing.

Applicants must submit a PLAR Application Form and a PLAR Self-Assessment Form to be considered for PLAR. If eligible and accepted, applicants will then complete the following requirements to be assessed for PLAR: A master professional portfolio, a reference check, and an interview.

Most placements and theory courses in the ECE program are eligible for PLAR. However, the final two placements in Level 4 of the program, CASE 2002 (CASE 12a) and CASE 2003 (CASE 12b), are not eligible for PLAR. Applicants can attempt to challenge a maximum of 75% of program hours or courses. In order to maintain residency, a minimum of 25% of the program courses must be completed at St. Lawrence College.

Placements

CASE 1000 (CASE 104):

The first placement, CASE 1000 (CASE 104), is an observation placement. This placement is not age specific. For the purpose of PLAR, it is required that applicants have recent work experience as an entry-level educator in an early learning environment.

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CASE 2000 (CASE 2a and CASE 2001 (CASE 2b):

The placements in Level 3 are significantly more extensive than the first placement. Students are responsible for the children's health and safety practices, engaging with parents and families, supporting children's emotional well-being, and planning and implementing a play-based curriculum. Each placement in Level 3 and 4 must be completed with a different age group and within a different agency and/or early learning setting. Therefore, for the purpose of PLAR, applicants must have extensive work experience within different early learning settings. In order to receive PLAR credit for both CASE 2001 and CASE 2002, applicants must have relevant work experience with a minimum of two different age groups. All work experience must have been completed within the last five years.

> **Each of the placements, and therefore, each PLAR, needs to be done with a different age group: Infants (birth to 18 months); Toddlers (18 months to 2.5 years); Preschool (2.5 years to 6 years); Kindergarten (3.5 years to 6.5 years); School-age (before and after school program 6 years to 12 years).**

If successful in your PLAR attempt, you will receive credit for the placement course, as well as the specific age-group requirement.

Prerequisites

Each placement course code is a prerequisite for the next one. Therefore, each placement must be completed in the order indicated and each placement, or PLAR, must be completed prior to the next one starting. If you are challenging a placement, you must have your PLAR portfolio assessed **before** you can start the subsequent placement (or PLAR). Paperwork submission and placement start dates will still be adhered to, and it is the student's responsibility to manage their time effectively to ensure that the PLAR portfolio is submitted on time. Students will be deemed ineligible to start placement if the prerequisites are not met.

It is also the student's responsibility to register for a planned placement and submit all pre-placement documentation by the semester-specific due date, regardless of if they are challenging a pre-requisite placement via PLAR. For example, if a student is hoping to receive credit for the first placement, CASE 1000, and then plans to complete the next placement, CASE 2000, they must still adhere to all placement paperwork submission requirements regardless of the status of their PLAR.

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Application and Payment for PLAR

Applicants must apply for PLAR via our Pathways website **HERE**. As required for the initial PLAR application, applicants must submit the following documents online through our Pathways website:

1. ECE PLAR Application Form
2. ECE PLAR Self-Assessment and Course Map Form

> **ECE PLAR Application Form and ECE PLAR Self-Assessment and Course Map Form must be submitted online to:**
> **https://www.stlawrencecollege.ca/forms/ece-online-plar-application-form**
> **by the semester specific application due date (listed on page 10)**

If a PLAR application is **not** received by the semester-specific due date, **PLAR challenges will not be accepted** and students will need to wait until the next semester to apply, pay and submit portfolio or register for the course.

Payment is **not** required at the time of application. Once the application has been reviewed and approved, students will receive an email notification confirming their eligibility to proceed with a PLAR portfolio submission. This notification will include the PLAR fees owing and instructions for payment.

ECE PLAR Assessment Requirements

Applicants in the online ECE program applying for PLAR will be assessed based on the program's Vocational Learning Outcomes. This assessment will consist of the following three requirements, which each PLAR applicant will be required to complete:

1. Submission of Master PLAR Portfolio
2. Interview with Program Coordinator
3. Employer reference check

Master PLAR Portfolio Requirements

Electronic Portfolio Format: Applicants are required to create an electronic professional portfolio. These portfolios must be completed using Microsoft One Note. Students at St. Lawrence College have a free subscription to all Microsoft tools, using their SLC student credentials. Click **HERE** for helpful information and tutorials on using Microsoft One Note.

Before attempting to compile your portfolio, it is important that you carefully review the St. Lawrence College **PLAR – Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition manual** for guidelines on how to assemble a learning portfolio for PLAR.

1. **Resume**
   - Resume must include the following:
     a) Name of agency/agencies
     b) Age group(s) that you have worked with
     c) Time frame worked at each agency (e.g., September 2022 – Present)
     d) Brief job description for each employment in an early learning setting
     e) All ECE related training, certifications, and professional development

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2. Reference Letter
- Reference Letter must include the following:
  a) Written by the director or supervisor from the current place of employment. Must be a registered member of the College of ECEs and in good standing.
  b) Letter must be on company letterhead
  c) **Letter must include the following:**
  d) Time worked at the agency, including years/months and hours per week
  e) Job description, including age group of children
  f) Discuss student's job performance and capacity regarding the specific ECE program vocational learning outcomes (see VLOs below)
  g) Full contact information of the Director/Supervisor completing reference letter

3. Feedback Forms
- Complete Feedback Forms (evaluations) for each placement that you hope to achieve credit through PLAR. Feedback Forms will be emailed to applicants after application is approved. These feedback forms are used in placements and reflect the placement core competencies. For the purpose of PLAR, students will complete the same evaluations based on their professional work experience.
  a) Students will complete the "student" sections. Workplace supervisor/director (must be a RECE) will complete the "cooperating educator" sections.
  b) Complete "Final" sections, only. For the purpose of PLAR, "midterm" sections do not need to be completed.
  c) CASE 1000 is not age specific. This Feedback Form can be based on one age group or a combination of different age groups where experience has been gained.
  d) CASE 2000 and CASE 2001 are age specific. Therefore, please select the age-specific Feedback Form that reflects the age group that you have experience with. CASE 2000 and CASE 2001 must be completed with a different age group for each. For example, CASE 2000 = preschool and CASE 2001 = infant.

4. Vocational Learning Outcomes (VLO)
- Brief description of how each vocational learning outcome has been accomplished through professional work experience (see VLOs below). For example:
  a) Definition of what each VLO means to you and the profession
  b) Why is each VLO is important to you, the children, the families, your colleagues, and the profession
  c) Explain how you have already met each VLO and learned through your work experience. Provide specific examples of how you implement the specific VLO in your everyday work

5. Documentation
- Provide a minimum of **three different types of documentation for each VLO**
  a) Documentation is used to support/confirm each VLO and what you have discussed in the descriptions above.
  b) Examples of documentation:
    - ✓ Curriculum plans
    - ✓ Learning stories and observations
    - ✓ Agency policies and procedures
    - ✓ Photographs with explanations

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- ✓ Menu plans
- ✓ Local public health policies and procedures that you follow
- ✓ Reference letters

Interview with Program Coordinator

Once your application has been processed and accepted, you will receive an email confirmation from the program coordinator, Erin Kehoe. This email will be sent to your SLC student email account and will contain a booking link to select an interview day and time.

PLAR interviews will be conducted via Microsoft Teams. Once you have signed up for a meeting time, an invite with a meeting link will be sent to your student email account.

Prior to the start of your interview, you must submit a copy of your Resume and Course Map Form (see template below). If you do not submit these documents to the program coordinator in advance of your interview, your interview will be cancelled, and no rescheduling will be permitted.
The purpose of this interview is to discuss your professional work experience and alignment with the program of study. In addition, this is your opportunity to ask any questions about your PLAR portfolio before submission.

During the interview, computer cameras must be turned on, and audio must be in good working condition. Please practice and ensure all technology is working prior to your interview. Click **HERE** for helpful tutorials for using Microsoft Teams.

If you are unable to attend your scheduled interview, please use the same booking link to cancel and/or reschedule your interview time a minimum of 48 hours in advance of your interview time.

Any interview that is not attended or not cancelled according to the above 48-hour policy will not be rescheduled. This will terminate your PLAR application for the specific semester.

PLAR Reference Check

Upon submission of your PLAR portfolio, a reference check will be completed based on the formal reference letter provided in your portfolio. This reference check will be sent directly to the author of the reference letter via the contact information provided.

Reference Checks will be emailed directly to the reference contact. References will be asked to complete and submit a questionnaire via Microsoft Forms. This questionnaire will confirm details in resume, portfolio, and overall workplace performance and professional capacity.

References must be a director or supervisor of a licensed childcare centre or early learning setting or a principal at a Ministry of Education school. References must be a registered member of the College of Early Childhood Educators or an Ontario Certified Teachers, and both must be in good standing.

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Appendix

Early Childhood Education Vocational Learning Outcomes

1. Create learning contexts to enable, build and maintain caring, responsive relationships in partnerships with children, families, and communities that value and respect social, cultural, and linguistic diversity including Indigenous peoples' worldviews and Francophone identity.

2. Co-create, facilitate, and reflect upon inquiry and play-based early years and childcare programs and pedagogical approaches to support children's learning, holistic development, and well-being following children's capabilities, interests, ideas, and experiences.

3. Co-design and maintain inclusive early learning environments to value and support equitable, accessible and meaningful learning opportunities for all children, their families, and communities in a range of early years and child care settings.

4. Collaborate with children, families, colleagues, agencies and community partners to create, maintain, evaluate, and promote safe and healthy early learning environments to support independence, reasonable risk-taking and healthy development and well-being.

5. Use observation strategies to identify children's strengths and challenges and to ascertain when children and families might benefit from additional support or community resources.

6. Use professional communication in interactions with children, families, colleagues, employers, the regulatory body, government authorities, and children's service agencies to meet legal and ethical standards of the early years sector.

7. Act in accordance with relevant legislation, regulations, College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, agency policies and procedures, and principles of evidence-informed practice and reflect upon their impact on one's own role in early years and child care settings.

8. Identify, report, and document when a child is in a situation of perceived risk for, or actual neglect or abuse, in accordance with legislation, the College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, policies and procedures.

9. Create and engage in partnerships with families, communities, colleagues, interdisciplinary professionals, authorities and child service agencies to advocate for quality early years and child care programs and services.

10. Engage in reflective practice and continuous professional learning in accordance with principles of lifelong learning, evidence-informed practices in the early years sector and requirements of the College of Early Childhood Educators.

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Course Map Form

Student Name:
Student ID Number:
Date:

Instructions:
Review the program website for descriptions of each course. Click **HERE**. Identify each of the courses you wish to challenge through PLAR. List the relevant work experience that relates to each course that you hope to receive credit for. This is a similar format to the Self-Assessment Form in your application. Make sure to include the name of the agency, dates of employment, and brief job description as it relates to the specific course.

Level 1	PLAR Experience
CHIL 1004	
COMM 110	
EARL 4	
EARL 40	
EARL 1000 (6)	
HEAL 200	
GENE	

Level 2	PLAR Experience
CASE 1000 (104)	
CHIL 1005	
EARL 3	
EARL 61	
EARL 1001 (36)	
EARL 1002 (30)	
GENE	

Level 3	PLAR Experience
BEHA 2008 (1026)	
CASE 2000 (2a)	
CASE 2001 (2b)	
EARL 5	
EARL 2000 (38)	
EARL 2001 (24)	
GENE	

Level 4	PLAR Experience
CASE 2002 (12a)	Ineligible for PLAR
CASE 2003 (12b)	Ineligible for PLAR
EARL 8	
EARL 46	
COMM 49	

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2025-2026 PLAR Dates

Semester	Application & Fee Deadline	PLAR Portfolio Due	PLAR Assessment and Outcome Confirmation
Fall 2025	August 22, 2025	November 28, 2025	December 18, 2025
Winter 2026	December 19, 2025	March 27, 2026	April 23, 2026
Summer 2026	April 24, 2026	July 31, 2026	September 4, 2026

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