

New Brunswick press release: \$28 million invested in wages for early childhood educators ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

FREDERICTON (GNB) – The provincial government announced today an investment of \$28 million over four years to support wage increases for early childhood educators beginning in 2019-20.

“Your government recognizes that low wages are one of the greatest challenges impacting the recruitment and retention of qualified early childhood educators,” said Education and Early Childhood Development Minister Brian Kenny. “This funding will help provide stability for operators of child care facilities across the province and ensure New Brunswick’s children are getting the highest-quality care and learning experience possible.”

The funding, which will be rolled out over four years beginning in 2019-20, will raise wages from \$16 an hour to \$19 an hour for trained early childhood educators by 2022-23. According to a recent study by the Conference Board of Canada, New Brunswick has the lowest average wages for early childhood educators in the country. This investment is intended to bring wages for early childhood educators in line with other jurisdictions across the country.

Through the Quality Improvement Funding Support Program, the government is investing over \$26 million in wage support for early childhood educators in 2017-18.

“The YMCA of Fredericton is thrilled to host such an important announcement for early childhood educators across the province,” said Peter Kelly, director of child care, YMCA of Fredericton. “As leaders in child care, the YMCA of Fredericton provides safe and quality care to our children. It is a great step forward by our government to recognize the difficult work educators do on a daily basis and the support our community needs. We pride ourselves on being a quality, affordable, accessible, and inclusive centre in our community. Infant care is most definitely an unmet need the YMCA of Fredericton has been looking to offer. With this announcement, it is now in our future.”

Within the early learning and child care sector, the staff turnover rate has been about 28 per cent over the last few years. High turnover rates can impact the continuity of learning for children. Research consistently indicates that early childhood educators are the single most important factor for the provision of high-quality early learning and child care that supports children’s physical and psychological well-being and promotes their overall development.

Today’s announcement is in addition to the federal-provincial, three-year agreement that commits \$71 million to improve early learning and child care for preschool-aged children in the province. This funding will be used to support initiatives intended to improve early learning and child care. For example, it will:

- Transform at least 300 current child care providers into designated New Brunswick Early Learning Centres which is intended to provide more affordable, accessible, inclusive and high-quality early learning and child care services.
- Set a lower fee policy so families most in need can access high-quality and affordable child care.
- Provide more spaces for infants and toddlers to address gaps within both the anglophone and francophone communities.
- Implement an inclusion policy for children facing diverse needs at designated New Brunswick Early Learning Centres.
- Foster the vitality of Acadian and francophone communities through the development of guidelines for language acquisition and cultural identity.
- Increase professional learning opportunities for all early childhood educators.

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