

Thousands of early childhood educators to benefit from new supports and wage boosts ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

VANCOUVER – Early childhood educators (ECEs) who provide vital services to B.C. children will be better supported by a new recruitment and retention strategy as part of the Province’s ChildCare BC plan.

The B.C. government is investing \$136 million to support quality child care, and its new Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy will help support ECEs by providing wage enhancements, on-the-job training opportunities and other measures designed to support professionals at the centre of B.C.’s child care system. The strategy also includes \$16.3 million from the Government of Canada for ECE bursaries and professional development.

“The first years of life are essential to the sound development, future well-being and learning progression of children,” said the Honourable Harjit S. Sajjan, federal Minister of National Defence and MP for Vancouver South. “That is why I am pleased that the Government of Canada and the Government of British Columbia are working together to better support early childhood educators who have an extraordinary opportunity to help children in their earliest stages of life.”

“Early childhood educators are the heart of B.C.’s child care system, and their passion and dedication are key to setting B.C. kids on the path to future success,” said Katrine Conroy, B.C.’s Minister of Children and Family Development. “As we build new licensed child care spaces, we know that we also need to build the ECE workforce. Our government appreciates the important work early childhood educators do every day, and with this strategy, we aim to support ECEs throughout their career – because when we invest in child care, everyone benefits.”

Through the new strategy, the B.C. government aims to encourage more people to become or stay on as ECEs to give children the best possible start in life. By improving recruitment and retention, more B.C. families will have access to high-quality, stable child care programs. Addressing recruitment also supports child care providers, who have cited a lack of qualified ECEs as a key hiring challenge.

The strategy is part of the provincial government’s three-year \$136-million investment to boost the quality of B.C.’s child care system and recognize ECEs for the work that they do.

“It’s time that early childhood educators are treated and supported like the professionals they are,” said Katrina Chen, B.C.’s Minister of State for Child Care. “Early childhood educators, next to parents, are children’s first teachers, and the work they do needs to be valued. We’re taking the first step in truly acknowledging and supporting child care providers in B.C. in a concerted, substantive and organized way.”

Under this strategy, ECEs and prospective ECEs will benefit from:

A \$1-per-hour (approximately \$2,000/year) wage enhancement in early 2019, for those who work at licensed facilities that have been approved for the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (retroactive to Sept. 1, 2018). There will be a further \$1-per-hour lift in April 2020 (to bring the total increase to approximately \$4,000/year).

A \$10-million investment, through the federal-provincial Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, to create an enhanced and expanded ECE Education Support Fund that will be administered by the Early Childhood Educators of BC. This fund will provide:

Increased ECE Student Bursary funding (\$500 per course, up from \$300 per course).

- A new payment schedule to reimburse students sooner for the cost of their education.

- Access to a new ECE Workforce Development Fund for current employees within child care programs, which will provide up to \$5,000 per semester to assist with the completion of upgrading credentials, including paid time to complete practicum placements and reimbursement of travel costs.

- A \$7.4-million investment through the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training to fund spaces for 620 new ECE graduates at post-secondary institutions throughout B.C. over the next three years.

Access to a variety of professional development opportunities – such as peer networks and courses – that will support ECEs to undertake

ongoing professional learning and stay current on emerging research, trends and practices in the early care and learning sector.

A pilot program to test the feasibility of alternative pathways to training, such as work-integrated learning, that may offer more flexibility to students working in the child care sector.

A process to review the Child Care Occupational Competencies and create new ECE standards of practice to make sure they reflect the current methods and quality standards of the child care sector.

Under ChildCare BC, government is making the most substantial investment in child care in the province's history, investing more than \$1 billion in child care over the next three years.

Quotes:

Melanie Mark, B.C.'s Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training –

"Affordable, quality child care is something B.C. families deserve and need, and ensuring we have enough skilled child care providers is a crucial piece of the puzzle. Investing in affordable early childhood education in B.C. is an investment in the future of this province."

Sonia Furstenuau, Cowichan Valley MLA and opposition critic for child care –

"This recruitment and retention package starts to better align early childhood educators with their teacher counterparts in the school system. I'm looking forward to continuing to work with the government to improve the child care system for children, families and child care professionals."

Margaret Hastie, Langara College ECE alumnus and new ECE –

"The knowledge and experience that I have gained through the Early Childhood Education Diploma Program at Langara College will benefit me for many years to come. I learned so much about working with children and their families, and I am looking forward to starting my career at this exciting time of change for child care in British Columbia. I received three bursaries through the Early Childhood Educators of BC, which greatly helps my family as I transition from school into the workforce."

Related link: Early care and learning recruitment and retention strategy ^[3]

Region: British Columbia ^[4]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/18/09/thousands-early-childhood-educators-benefit-new-supports>

Links

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