

# Child-care workers to keep provincial wage grant <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

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## EXCERPTS

More than 39,000 chronically underpaid child-care workers in Ontario will continue to receive a \$2-an-hour provincial wage grant, the Star has learned.

Thursday's provincial budget was silent on the grant, worth \$203 million in 2018-19, and child-care advocates had feared the worst.

But sources close to the government confirmed Friday the grant will continue for another year and that an announcement will be made "in the coming days."

"This is wonderful news," said Carolyn Ferns with the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. "It really means a lot to our members."

The wage grant is part of \$1.7 billion in proposed funding for the province's child care and early years programs outlined in Finance Minister Vic Fedeli's introduction to the budget.

Thursday's budget also announced up to \$1 billion over five years to create 30,000 new licensed child-care spaces in schools and another \$390 million for a child-care tax credit families can use on a broad range of care, including nannies and camps.

NDP and Liberal MPPs presented petitions in the legislature in February signed by more than 12,000 early childhood educators (ECEs) urging the Ford government not to axe the wage grant. But despite their pleas, Education Minister Lisa Thompson refused to assure workers their pay was safe.

"The child-care community really worked hard on this, signing petitions, calling and writing their MPPs," Ferns said. "And it seems to have made a difference.

"People were really nervous about this, so it's really good for them to have this confirmed," Ferns added.

The grant was introduced by the previous Liberal government in 2015 to boost wages for child-care workers and to narrow the gender wage gap in the predominantly female workforce.

It applies to all front-line staff in child-care centres earning less than about \$27 an hour, or the average wage of ECEs in full-day kindergarten.

According to provincial statistics, 16 percent of ECEs and 57 percent of untrained staff in child-care centres earn less than \$15 an hour.

Under the previous Liberal government, the wage grant was supposed to continue for another year until a provincial wage grid for child-care workers was introduced in 2020. The wage grid was part of a broader workforce strategy to improve working conditions and encourage more ECEs to build careers in the sector.

The Ford government has not yet commented on whether it is interested developing a wage grid for the sector.

**Related link:** Protecting what matters most: 2019 Ontario Budget <sup>[3]</sup>

**Region:** Ontario <sup>[4]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/19/04/child-care-workers-keep-provincial-wage-grant>  
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