

Measures to support recruitment and address staff shortages in early learning and child care sector ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Access online [EN] ^[2]

Access online [FR] ^[3]

EXCERPTS

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As part of the joint provincial and federal Early Learning and Child Care Action Plan, on January 1, 2022 the cost of regulated child care will be reduced from the current rate of \$25 per day to \$15 per day. In recognition of the added staffing and recruitment pressures this shift may generate, today the Honourable Tom Osborne, Minister of Education, announced measures to support operators in the short-term and to bridge to the full implementation of the Action Plan by 2025-26.

Effective January 1, 2022 the base rate of pay for Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) working in regulated child care services under the Operating Grant Program will increase from \$14 to \$15 per hour, while the base rate of pay for administrators will increase from \$16 to \$17 per hour. This change is being made in anticipation of the work of a federally funded consultant who will conduct labour force adjustment analysis specific to ECEs in order to develop a wage-grid by the end of 2022, with full implementation by 2023.

To increase the pool of available qualified staff in the short-term, the department is today launching a Primary Teacher Pilot Program and has expanded eligibility for the existing Casual Caregiver Pilot Program.

The Primary Teacher Program will permit child care centres to hire provincially certified primary teachers (active or retired) to fill short-term vacancies and absences. Unlike the existing Casual Caregiver Program, participating primary teachers will:

- Be permitted to work as a single caregiver in a preschool or toddler age room;
- Will not require supervision from a qualified ECE; and
- Will not be limited to a number of consecutive working days or working days per year.

This temporary pilot program will run until the end of 2023, at which point it will be re-evaluated based on success and the availability of qualified ECEs in the province.

The Casual Caregiver Program was first introduced in November 2020. During the first year of the pilot, 21 per cent of regulated child care services in the province participated and hired either one or two casual staff.

To expand eligibility for the program, going forward long-term employment and workforce impacts of COVID-19 will be accepted as a reason for participation, as will the filling of short-term vacancies. To improve the effectiveness of the program, participating centres with more than five homerooms will be permitted to hire a third casual caregiver, and casual caregivers can be used as part of the caregiver-to-child ratio for covering short-term vacancies, breaks and lunches.

To coincide with the move to \$15 per day for regulated child care for pre-school, full day childcare on January 1, rates for "school aged" spaces in regulated child care services will also be adjusted as follows:

- The rate for full-day (such as during school breaks, professional development days, unforeseen school closures, etc.) will change from \$25 per day to \$15 per day;
- Half-day rates (school breaks) will change from \$14 per day to \$10 per day;
- Before and after school rates will change from \$16 per day to \$10 per day; and
- After school only rates will change from \$14 per day to \$8 per day.

Quote

"As work progresses on the Early Learning and Child Care Action Plan, and we put in place the long-term structures and partnerships to create a more affordable, more accessible early learning and child care sector, we recognize that there are current challenges to address. The measures announced today will help operators recruit qualified professionals to fill vacancies, and will increase compensation for qualified ECEs and the important work they do."

Honourable Tom Osborne

Minister of Education

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