

More early childhood educators receive increased wages ^[1]

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Backgrounder ^[3]

EXCERPTS

Budget 2022 is making life better for more early childhood educators (ECEs) in British Columbia by expanding the wage enhancement to include all ECEs directly employed by child care facilities, including those in administrative positions.

“Investing in the people who deliver child care is investing in children, families and communities,” said Katrina Chen, Minister of State for Child Care. “We recognize the important role ECEs play in caring for children, and Budget 2022 takes further steps to ensure educators are well-supported through enhanced wages, in addition to bursaries and professional development opportunities that we are supporting with our federal partners.”

On April 1, 2022, the eligibility for these wage enhancements expanded to ensure more ECEs will benefit. Previously, the \$4-an-hour wage enhancement program was only available to front-line ECEs working directly with children. Budget 2022 is providing nearly \$80 million over the next three years to expand this enhancement to all ECEs directly employed by licensed child care programs, including Supported Child Development and Aboriginal Supported Child Development professionals with ECE certification.

“For me, the wage enhancement has made a major difference on my self-worth and self-esteem as an early childhood educator in Squamish,” said Carol Ann Misquitta, an ECE at Busy Bees In-home Multi-age Childcare. “After 15 years in the field as an educator providing essential, valuable, meaningful and intentional education to children, the wage enhancement was proof that the Province of B.C. finally recognizes and values my contribution to its economy and my community. The \$4-an-hour wage enhancement has made an incredible difference to retain more educators and, along with bursaries, it’s encouraging more ECEs to go back to school and become certified.”

In feedback to the Province, many ECEs indicated that, for many years, they didn’t receive the recognition and compensation they deserve for their role. This led to a staffing shortage throughout the province, making it harder for families to find the child care they need. Wage enhancements aim to help address these concerns and are part of the Province’s larger strategy to recruit and retain more people to this rewarding and in-demand career. In partnership with the Government of Canada, B.C. will also develop a professional wage grid for ECEs.

“The B.C. government has shown a clear understanding of the important role and value of ECEs for children, families, and communities in B.C.,” said Emily Gawlick, executive director, Early Childhood Educators of BC. “The wage enhancements are an integral step toward ensuring early childhood educators are recognized as professionals and more fairly compensated for their important work.”

The Province has provided three wage enhancements to ECEs since the launch of the ChildCareBC plan in 2018, with the latest increase doubling the current wage enhancement to \$4 an hour, retroactive to September 2021. Child care providers received the retroactive lump sum payment in March and have 30 days to distribute it to early childhood educators that qualified for the wage enhancement prior to the expanded eligibility.

Since 2018, the Province has invested more than \$93 million to provide early childhood educators with a wage enhancement. In 2021-22, more than 10,000 ECEs received the wage enhancement each month.

Region: British Columbia ^[4]

Tags: wages and working conditions ^[5]

child care workforce ^[6]

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