

Nova Scotia ECE wages and retention top agenda of upcoming meeting ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

Wages, recruitment, and the retention of Nova Scotia's Early Childhood Educators are topics expected to dominate the agenda of an upcoming meeting of the Early Learning and Child Care Engagement Table.

"Ensuring Early Childhood Educators are compensated fairly is an urgent priority. We have publicly committed to this fall and are working to advance this and put more money in their hands as soon as possible," reads an email statement attributed to Becky Druhan, Nova Scotia's Education and Early Childhood Development minister.

Druhan states an update on ECE compensation rates will be communicated soon, adding that "this work is decades overdue."

That update can't come soon enough for ECEs like Jillian MacIsaac who despite advancing her education to earn her Level 2 certification, still struggles to pay her bills.

"I don't have enough money to save, I certainly don't have enough money to have any kind of retirement plan. I know many of my co-workers who are older, who are retiring in poverty, or forced to work longer than they would," she said.

MacIsaac says her wage has remained stagnant even with more than a decade's experience working in the sector.

"It really feels like we're drowning a little bit. Like, the tide is getting higher and we're stuck in the same spot," she said.

Her comments come two weeks after dozens of ECEs rallied outside of the Nova Scotia legislature, calling on the provincial government to speed up the delivery of the sector's new compensation package.

Druhan's email statement didn't indicate whether the government will waver from its fall timeline. Nova Scotia is in the midst of implementing the federal government's Canada-wide early learning and child care plan, which aims to reduce child care fees across the country to an average of \$10-a-day by 2026.

Part of that commitment includes adding 1,500 new licensed daycare spots and reducing fees by 50 per cent by the end of 2022.

MacIsaac says the 25 per cent fee reduction that's currently implemented has already led to increased demand in childcare centres.

"It would be amazing if the government would prioritize their ECEs as well as their families because we need support as well," she said.

Region: Nova Scotia ^[3]

Tags: living wage ^[4]

early child development ^[5]

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