

B.C. receives additional ECE support funding ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The provincial and federal governments are joining up to provide increased funding for early childhood education (ECE) opportunities, including financial support for training and professional development. The new funding is a part of the ChildCareBC plan, a provincial effort to increase child care opportunities in B.C.

The ECE Education Support Fund provides bursaries of up to \$5000 to those in school for early childhood education, whether they are beginning their training or upgrading. An investment of \$49.2-million by the Government of Canada has increased the capacity of the fund, which has provided thousands of bursaries in 2022 alone, and over 12,000 since its inception in 2018. A total of \$25.5 million has been earmarked to provide further ECE bursaries in the next three academic years.

“Early childhood educators are the workforce behind the workforce that drives our economy,” said Katrina Chen, B.C.’s Minister of State for Child Care.

“Delivering on our commitment to families to improve access to quality child care requires qualified ECEs, which is why we’re helping to cover the costs of training and professional development opportunities for ECEs. They deserve both recognition and the opportunity for advancement in this important profession.”

The Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy, a government document outlining strategies for childcare centres to hire and keep ECE staff, is a part of the 10-year ChildCareBC plan. In addition to the new funding for the ECE Education Support Fund, the strategy has taken other actions to hire and retain new childcare professionals. Recently, the provincial government increased ECE compensation by \$4 per hour, bringing the median wage to \$25 per hour for workers in the field. The addition of 151 educational spaces is also outlined in the strategy.

Locally, the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) offers a Aboriginal Early Childhood Education program. Students of the program are educated in a wide range of childcare and childhood development topics, including nutrition, health, safety, and literature. A recent announcement by the BC Ministry of Education saw the addition of multiple dual credit ECE courses made available to high school students, allowing them to gain post-secondary credits in the field.

“There is no child care system without a strong and skilled workforce of early childhood educators,” said Karina Gould, federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

“Supporting the valuable work of early childhood educators is key to the success of a high-quality child care system, especially as we build more child care spaces across the country.”

For more information on the ECE Education Support Fund, or to apply for a bursary, visit www.ecebc.ca/ece-education-support-fund ^[3].

Region: British Columbia ^[4]

Tags: child care ^[5]

staff funding ^[6]

Canada-wide agreement ^[7]

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