

# \$5.4M in funds boost Sask. childcare wages by \$2 per hour <sup>[1]</sup>

Early childhood educators are welcoming the additional funding given they have been dealing with staffing shortages.

**Author:** Simes, Jeremy

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## EXCERPTS

In partnership with the province, the federal government is investing \$5.4 million to provide early childhood educators with a wage increase of up to \$2 per hour as the industry continues to face staffing challenges.

Announced Thursday, a joint news release from the province and Ottawa stated the wage top-up is meant to improve quality in the sector, as well as to attract, retain and grow the workforce.

The release stated the wage increase will also help address compensation needs for educators.

“Early Childhood Educators are at the very heart of the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system,” said Karina Gould, the federal minister for families, children and social development, in a statement. “Today’s announcement in Saskatchewan is another meaningful step toward ensuring the work of these professional educators is valued throughout their lifelong career.”

Early childhood educators have long raised concerns about staffing shortages in the industry, which they say could potentially compromise the province’s plan to meet its goal of having 28,000 new regulated spaces be operating within the next five years.

They have said some spaces have gone unfilled because there aren’t enough staff.

Addressing these challenges, the federal and provincial governments have offered new programs and incentives, including free training and courses through Saskatchewan post-secondary schools.

Prior to this new wage top-up, the province and federal government had announced in November 2021 to increase wages by up to \$3 per hour for qualified educators. This was funded through a one-time federal grant of \$17 million.

Ottawa has invested \$1.1 billion into the program to bring \$10-a-day childcare to Saskatchewan by March 2026. Since the start of September, the province said parent fees for regulated child care have been reduced by an average of 70 per cent.

The province said early childhood educators will be able to learn more about the wage increase later this month.

“This announcement is a wonderful step to help stabilize the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) workforce during these challenging times,” said Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association Executive Director Georgia Lavallee, in a statement. “Early Childhood Educators are the heart of ELCC and we look forward to continued support and investments into the workforce.”

Going forward, the province said it intends to implement a new wage grid for early childhood educators by the end of this year or early 2023.

**Region:** Saskatchewan <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** workforce <sup>[4]</sup>

wages <sup>[5]</sup>

Canada-wide agreement <sup>[6]</sup>

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