

Day highlights the need to attract and retain early childhood educators ^[1]

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Excerpts

Oct. 18 is Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day.

On the day that recognizes their commitment and hard work, there are also calls for improved wages and value on the impact of early childhood education.

Mayor Brian Bigger read a proclamation Tuesday recognizing the day at Tom Davies Square on Tuesday.

"We care about our young people and this is a profession that doesn't always get the accolades or the appreciation or recognition," Bigger said.

"And so being the 22nd year we are celebrating this awareness day."

Lois Mahon has worked as a registered early childhood educator for 50 years and now consults within the sector. She said there needs to be a better understanding of the value of the profession to understand its worth.

"Early childhood educators are working with children at that young age when their brain is just developing," Mahon said.

"They are providing all kinds of high quality external stimulus to build neurons to build that brain and so from our perspective, early childhood educators are really human developers."

Mahon said there is a staffing crisis in the early learning sector.

Right now, the starting wage is \$18 an hour. She said it should be a minimum of \$25 to attract and retain ECE's.

"We know that high quality early learning and child care is a significant determinant of population health and well-being," Mahon said.

"We know that those brains are being built. We need to recruit and retain high-quality educated people to work with kids and to provide that kind of care. It's an investment in our future."

The city said there are more than 75 licensed child care centres in Greater Sudbury that provide English, French and Indigenous programming. More than 1,000 people work in this sector, including more than 600 registered early childhood educators.

Region: Ontario ^[3]

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