

More than 65,000 new child care workers will be needed to meet expected demand for \$10-a-day child care in Ontario ^[1]

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Child care advocates are calling on the Ford government to get serious about a child care workforce strategy and salary scale as new estimates show that tens of thousands of new staff will be needed to meet anticipated demand for \$10-a-day child care.

"We need the Ford government to understand the scale of the challenge. To meet the anticipated demand for \$10-a-day child care, we need a comprehensive and long-term workforce strategy. It's the only way to ensure access for families," said Carolyn Ferns, of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC).

A recent Financial Accountability Office (FAO) report estimated that in addition to the 71,000 child care spaces that the Ontario government has committed to creating, Ontario will ultimately need close to 227,146 more spaces to meet the anticipated demand from families for the popular \$10-a-day child care program. Based on these figures researchers and advocates now estimate that at least 65,000 additional staff will be required to meet demand, including at least 32,500 Registered Early Childhood Educators.

Even just to achieve the 71,000 spaces that the Ford government has committed to creating will require approximately 16,000 new child care workers.

"Early Childhood Educators are the heart of child care programs; fulfilling the goals of \$10-a-day child care will be impossible without addressing the workforce crisis. Early Childhood Educators know that we can only solve the workforce shortage through decent work and pay for all workers in child care," said Rachel Vickerson, Executive Director of the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO).

The AECEO and OCBCC call for a workforce strategy to include:

- A salary scale starting at \$25 per hour for all child care workers and \$30 per hour for Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs);
- Benefits and pensions;
- Paid sick days;
- Professional development time;
- Paid programming time.

RECE Joy Adeola shared that to improve retention in the child care sector Ontario needs to address the critical issues of low salaries and burnout.

"I've seen people burn out at work and cry, and not come back. It's hard to come in everyday when the salary is so low and the expectations are so high. We do so much and we are worth more," says Adeola.

Educators and advocates are urging the government to pass MPP Bhutla Karpoche's Bill 49, Early Years and Child Care Worker Advisory Commission Act, 2022. The Bill would establish a body to set a salary scale and decent work standards for all workers in child care.

Region: Ontario ^[3]

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workforce strategy ^[5]

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