

How to improve opportunities to work in child care ^[1]

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Source: The Tyee

Format: Article

Publication Date: 19 Jun 2023

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

Excerpts

As British Columbia takes steps toward inexpensive, widely available child care, many operators say they desperately need new workers. But barriers prevent immigrants and low-income people from getting and keeping those jobs, say advocates pushing for an overhaul of how child-care workers are supported in their careers.

Immigrants are “in the lowest tier when it comes to employment in the child-care sector, in terms of their wages, in terms of the working conditions,” said Anastasia Gaisenok, director of programs at Pacific Immigrant Resources Society. “They’re a large proportion of the workforce, but they’re really at the bottom.”

For this group, rising tuition costs, mandatory unpaid practicums and low wages make it difficult to enter and succeed in the child-care sector, according to workers and advocates interviewed by The Tyee.

They said five policy changes could smooth the path for aspiring caregivers who are low-income while helping to meet the need for daycare employees expected to rise in B.C.

1. Provide wider access to an existing wage top-up
2. Smooth the path from ‘child minding’ to ‘child care’
3. Enhance financial support of practicum students in need
4. Ease the burden of tuition
5. Create a transparent wage grid

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“There are already lots of women in this country who want to do this work and are well suited for it and willing, and what is required is to just enable access to that employment for them,” said Cervantes.

Region: British Columbia ^[3]

Tags: workforce strategy ^[4]

recruitment and retention ^[5]

immigrant ^[6]

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