

Low pay for ECEs a threat to affordable childcare ^[1]

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Excerpts

You can expand child care space. You can make it affordable for families at \$10 per day.

But advocates say if early childhood educators aren't getting compensated enough, and leaving the profession at this rate, space and affordability won't mean much.

The wage floor for ECEs this year is \$19 an hour, with annual \$1 increases that tops out at \$25 an hour.

"It's not enough to make a difference, to really recruit or retain enough staff," said Carolyn Ferns, the policy coordinator with the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. "It doesn't make child care competitive with other parts of the sector, or other sectors."

The workforce crisis, she said, has only gotten worse since the \$10 a day plan was introduced, at a time where demand for child care is going up because of the lower cost.

...

She said programs have worked to try and increase wages over the years, but in the old system, programs were mostly funded through parent fees.

"Basically, if they wanted to raise wages, they had to raise parent fees," Ferns said. "The challenge was that fees were already unaffordable, so lots of centres, wages kind of stagnated for that reason."

With a Canada-wide system, she said fees are frozen so there aren't mechanisms for child care centres to just up wages on their own. Budgets have to be submitted to municipalities, who operate as system service managers.

This is why she said the push is to governments to provide the solution.

And the solution, Ferns said, needs to be more than some PR campaign that says child care is a great place to work. It actually needs to be made a great place to work, and it starts with fair compensation.

Region: Ontario ^[3]

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recruitment and retention ^[5]

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