

B.C. falling behind on wages for early childhood educators amidst staff shortage: Report ^[1]

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Excerpts

British Columbia is falling behind on wages for early childhood educators (ECEs) compared to other provinces as it expands its \$10-a-day child care program, a new report has found.

In 2021, the provincial government committed to developing a wage grid for ECEs that would create competitive salaries and improve recruitment and retention in the profession. The grid, or a timeline for its implementation, has not yet been announced.

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A July report from that organization and Early Childhood Educators of BC found the “effective wage” for ECEs in B.C. is \$20.75 per hour – less than their counterparts in Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick and Yukon.

The effective wage is defined as a jurisdiction’s minimum possible wage, factoring in publicly-funded ECE wage supports and the starting point on any applicable wage grid.

“If we look at the average wage for ECEs in the province, it’s just \$24.32 an hour,” Gregson said. “This is why people are leaving the sector and not entering in the first place.”

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Manitoba, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec and Prince Edward Island all have wage grids for ECEs.

The report compared the effective wage for ECEs in all provinces and territories to the average wage for all workers across the economy of each jurisdiction, and found those with wage grids were the closest to reaching parity between ECEs and the average wage for everyone else.

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B.C.’s commitment to a wage grid came as part of its 2021 Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement with the federal government. That agreement also outlined both governments’ goal to have full implementation of \$10-a-day regulated child care spaces by the end of 2026.

“Work to deliver on this commitment is underway, including establishing a timeline for (wage grid) implementation,” Lore wrote in the statement.

“In the meantime, we are providing a \$4-per-hour wage enhancement to more than 15,000 ECEs, helping bring the median wage to \$26 per hour. We anticipate being able to share more information later this year.”

Related link: Early childhood educator wages in British Columbia – Recommendations for a wage grid of at least \$30–\$40/hour ^[3]

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