

Calls continue for the province to do more to address a workforce crisis in child care ^[1]

Author: Taylor, Casey

Source: City News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 1 Aug 2023

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

Excerpts

Childcare may be getting cheaper but the waitlists are also growing longer and experts say the province needs to do more to address a growing workforce crisis in child care or risk the success of its \$10/day daycare deal with the federal government.

“It used to be that we would put up job a posting for early childhood educators and we would have hundreds of applications—but that’s no longer the case,” said Lori Prospero, chief executive officer (CEO) of RisingOaks Early Learning Ontario.

More often now, Prospero said job postings tend to result in applications from as few as three or four qualified candidates.

...

Workers feel undervalued

At the heart of the problem, according to Prospero, is a sense among many early childhood educators the services they provide aren’t properly recognized and valued.

“We often think of early childhood education as [simply] that care component, and certainly it’s needed because of the age of the children we serve, but there’s so much learning and richness that happens in the care and in the education that’s provided,” Prospero said.

“Brain development happens, 90 per cent [of it], between birth to age five,” she added. “So it’s a significant opportunity to really make a difference in the longer-term outcomes for children when we have high-quality early learning and care.”

Propsero said it’s an issue her Kitchener-based child care centres are now looking to tackle with a new strategy of their own, focusing on what she claims are three key areas: leadership development, workplace wellness, and a human resources growth plan.

She said the first is aimed at increasing leadership capacity while the second focuses on things like how the pandemic and current conditions are impacting overall wellbeing, engagement, culture, performance, and more.

“And then, if we think about expansion under the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) program, we know that we can’t expand without being able to meet the number of early childhood educators that are required,” said Prospero.

She said that’s where the HR growth plan comes into play.

...

In that vein, Prospero said the current provincial wage floor of \$19/hour is not nearly enough to draw people into a potential career as an early childhood educator let alone keep people already on the job from leaving.

...

It was revealed in June the province had drafted, but not yet released, a new child care workforce strategy based on consultations conducted earlier in the year with dozens of groups, including advocates, experts, operators, and more.

Nearly two months later, however, and details of that new provincial strategy remain under wraps.

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: CWELCC ^[4]

workforce crisis ^[5]

workforce strategy ^[6]

wages ^[7]

crisis-child-care

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/23/08/calls-continue-province-do-more-address-workforce-crisis-child-care> [2]

<https://kitchener.citynews.ca/2023/08/01/calls-continue-for-the-province-to-do-more-to-address-a-workforce-crisis-in-child-care/> [3]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9278> [5]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9284> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9283> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/wages>