

# Position paper on a publicly-funded early learning and child care salary scale <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

Access the position paper online [PDF] <sup>[3]</sup>

Access the policy brief online [PDF] <sup>[4]</sup>

## A publicly funded salary scale

Following extensive consultation with Early Childhood Educators, child care workers and sector experts, we have developed a Position Paper to tackle one of the most pressing issues holding back the successful building of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System (CWELCC) in Ontario: the child care workforce crisis. We describe the root causes of the current crisis and recommend a publicly funded salary scale of at least \$30-\$40 per hour for RECEs and at least \$25 per hour for non-RECE staff as part of a comprehensive workforce strategy and compensation framework. Click on the image to find the full Position Paper and Policy Brief.

## Executive summary

- Ontario has a child care workforce shortage amid an increased demand for child care spaces. Currently many child care programs are limiting enrolment because they cannot adequately staff.
- This workforce crisis is now a major roadblock to the successful implementation of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) plan in Ontario. It is slowing planned space expansion and blocking access to child care for many families.
- The root cause of the workforce crisis is low and uncompetitive wages. In 2022, among RECEs in licensed child care in Ontario:
  - 32% earned less than \$20 per hour;
  - 46% earned between \$20 and \$25 per hour;
  - 16% earned between \$25 and \$30 per hour.
- Among non-RECE staff in 2022:
  - 76% earned less than \$20 per hour;
  - 21% earned between \$20 and \$25 per hour.
- While Ontario's CWELCC action plan raised the wage floor to \$19 per hour in 2023, this still makes the effective minimum wage for RECEs in licensed child care more than \$4 less than Alberta, \$8 less than Prince Edward Island, and \$13 less than Yukon. There is no wage floor for non-RECE staff beyond the provincial minimum wage.
- Ontario should immediately implement a province-wide publicly funded salary scale for RECEs and non-RECE staff in early years and child care programs.
  - At least \$30-\$40 per hour for RECEs.
  - At least \$25 per hour for non-RECE staff.
  - There should be annual increases and steps to reward years of service.
  - There should be immediate implementation of benefit and pension plans.
- A salary scale should be based on five guiding principles:
  1. Funding the workforce is funding quality.
  2. Decent compensation for all.
  3. Recognition of qualifications, experience and responsibilities. Development of job roles.
  4. Respect for existing decent wages and collective agreements.
  5. Commitment to a democratic process that meaningfully includes educators.
- Ontario should convene an Early Years and Child Care Worker Advisory Commission to address long-term transformation of the sector including questions of how qualifications, different responsibilities and job roles, knowledge, experience, and other equity measures will be aligned with compensation mechanisms.
- The Ontario and Federal governments should share responsibility and work together to fund compensation.

**Related link:** Roadmap to universal child care in Ontario <sup>[5]</sup>

**Region:** Ontario <sup>[6]</sup>

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recruitment and retention [8]

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#### Links

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