

42% of N.L. early childhood educators plan to leave the field. Low wages are driving the exodus ^[1]

Province can't afford to lose ECEs, says federation of labour president

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Excerpts

A new report from the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour says 42 per cent of the province's early childhood educators are considering finding a new job because of low wages and a lack of benefits.

The report released Thursday surveyed 520 educators, or ECEs. Fifty-seven per cent of respondents said they don't receive health or dental benefits through their work, 80 per cent don't have a pension, and 90 per cent don't know when they'll be able to retire.

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In a statement sent the morning after this article was originally published, the Department of Education said "as of April 1, child care service providers participating in the Operating Grant Program are able to schedule an additional five days of paid service closures to allow for more paid time off for their staff."

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As well, the statement listed several financial initiatives to bolster ECEs in the province, including \$70 million allocated in Budget 2024 for the continuation of the ECE wage grid, a \$5,193 bonus for child care administrators, a \$5,178 Labrador allowance for ECEs and administrators, and a \$5,178 bonus for certified Francophone ECEs. As well the Department noted a recruitment and retention grant where ECEs can receive \$2,500 upon certification and re-certification up to a maximum of \$7,500. Additionally, they say \$2.7 million from this year's budget is going toward grants and bursaries for ECE students and professionals.

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The survey also recommended the province require and fund 10 paid sick days and daily lunch breaks through the operating grants and require and fund annual paid vacation.

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The province implemented a new wage grid for ECEs in March 2023, but the survey reported 31 per cent of respondents didn't see a salary increase as a result.

McCormick said the survey also expressed interest from ECEs to unionize, along with the desire to have ECEs become part of the province's public sector pension plan.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced plans to expand \$10-a-day child care in Canada Thursday, which includes an additional \$60 million set aside for grants for child care centres. Ottawa will also offer student loan forgiveness to rural and remote early childhood educators.

Related link: The child care crisis is a workforce crisis ^[3]

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Region: Newfoundland ^[5]

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/24/04/42-nl-early-childhood-educators-plan-leave-field-low-wages-are-0> [2] <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/ece-report-no-benefits-1.7158494> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/24/04/child-care-crisis-workforce-crisis> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/24/01/child-care-programs-need-more-cash-says-researcher-nl-releases> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7851> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/benefits> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9118> [8] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/unionization> [9] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9284>