

# Childhood educators poverty-stricken<sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Lohnes, Michelle

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## EXCERPTS

I graduated with a diploma in Early Childhood Education in 1994. I knew I was never going to get rich, but I didn't think it was going to be this bad 20 years later.

Since my first diploma, I've obtained a second diploma and my certification. In most other professions, this level of training would get you a better salary, but not early childhood educators. I ask myself all the time, "Why doesn't society value what I do? Is it because I'm a woman, or is it because I work with children?"

We have heard society state "we value children," but do we really? Early childhood educators are not paid what we are worth, and we are not babysitters despite what some people think. We have specialized training and skills that are undervalued. Unlike other technical trades, we do not make a living wage and there are no pensions.

I work beside many amazing early childhood educators who have to choose between paying rent or buying food. When I watch my colleagues borrow bus fare from the sunscreen fund to get to work, I ask myself, "How fair is this?" Government workers, nurses or public school teachers do not have to do this, so why do we?

This brings me to the election. Some parties have released their platform on child care, but none of them have mentioned compensation or salary for those who actually deliver that service. A national child-care system must include quality, trained early childhood educators. Without addressing the working conditions of the professionals who ensure quality, how do you expect the program to be delivered?

-reprinted from the Chronicle Herald

**Region:** Nova Scotia<sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** pay equity<sup>[4]</sup>

childcare workforce<sup>[5]</sup>

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