



WSP-ECE Handbook Insert: ECE Wage Grid Guidelines

April 2026

Education and Early Childhood Development



Introduction

The Canada-New Brunswick Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement continues to build on the success of the designation of New Brunswick Early Learning Centres and New Brunswick Early Learning Homes. New Brunswick's vision is to ensure access to a high-quality, affordable, and inclusive early learning and child-care system that families can rely on and where every child receives the necessary services to reach their full potential. Ensuring parents have access to affordable, quality, and inclusive early learning and child-care services supports a parent's ability to participate in the workforce, while also providing children with meaningful learning experiences from a young age.

The key elements of quality childcare services include a stable workforce that is knowledgeable, experienced, and caring. Wages that are clearly articulated and predictable play an important role in the recruitment and retention of qualified Early Childhood Educators (ECE). Effective November 01, 2022, to further support the recruitment and retention of qualified Early Childhood Educators, the Government of New Brunswick implemented an ECE Wage Grid for educators working in designated NB Early Learning Centres and NB Early Learning Homes with children 0-5 years and for school age educators working in licenced early learning and childcare facilities in New Brunswick.

Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge the contribution of the early learning and childcare operators who have been integral in the development of these ECE Wage Grid Guidelines:

The Francophone and Anglophone sector Working Groups,
and the Operator Engagement Table members.

Thank you for your thoughtful participation and commitment to building a stronger and more stable ECE workforce for New Brunswick children and families.

Canada-New Brunswick Canada-Wide Early Learning and Childcare Agreement

Canada 

New  Nouveau
Brunswick

ECE Wage Grid

The ECE Wage Grid sets out the required minimum hourly wage rate operators must pay eligible educators, effective **April 1, 2026**.

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Level 1	\$23.69	\$24.99	\$26.35	\$27.79
Entry Level	\$17.12	\$18.16	\$19.27	\$20.42

ECE Wage Grid Funding Amounts

	Step 1		Step 2		Step 3		Step 4		
	Designated 0-5	School Age	Designated 0-5	School Age	Designated 0-5	School Age	Designated 0-5	School Age	
Level 1	\$10.34	\$7.79	\$11.64	\$9.09	\$13.00	\$10.45	\$14.44	\$11.89	Wage Support Funding*
	\$13.35	\$15.90	\$13.35	\$15.90	\$13.35	\$15.90	\$13.35	\$15.90	Operator Minimum Contribution
	\$23.69	\$23.69	\$24.99	\$24.99	\$26.35	\$26.35	\$27.79	\$27.79	Minimum Hourly Wage Rate
Entry Level	\$3.77	\$1.22	\$4.81	\$2.26	\$5.92	\$3.37	\$7.07	\$4.52	Wage Support Funding*
	\$13.35	\$15.90	\$13.35	\$15.90	\$13.35	\$15.90	\$13.35	\$15.90	Operator Minimum Contribution
	\$17.12	\$17.12	\$18.16	\$18.16	\$19.27	\$19.27	\$20.42	\$20.42	Minimum Hourly Wage Rate

* Wage Support Funding includes a \$2.55 Minimum Wage Offset in Designated 0-5 facilities.

Note:

- EECD provides a minimum wage offset of \$2.55/hr, as part of the WSP-ECE funding, for educators working with children 0-5 years in a Designated Facility.
- Educators working exclusively in non-designated facilities with children 0 - 5 years will continue to receive a wage top-up of \$7.25 per hour for Level 1 and a wage top-up of \$3.15 per hour for Entry Level.

Typical ECE Annual Salary

The annual ECE salary is based on an average of **36 hours** per week:

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Level 1	\$ 44,348	\$ 46,781	\$ 49,327	\$52,023
Entry Level	\$ 32,049	\$ 33,996	\$ 36,073	\$38,226

Salary amounts do not include the additional 14% administration fees. Mandatory Employee Related Costs includes:

- *Employment Insurance (E.I.)*
- *Canada Pension Plan (C.P.P.)*
- *4% or 6% for Vacation Pay*
- *WorkSafeNB*

Eligibility**Who is eligible for the ECE Wage Grid?**

- Educators and Administrators, working directly with children, in designated New Brunswick Early Learning Centres.
- Operators of designated New Brunswick Early Learning Homes.
- School Age Educators working in licensed Early Learning and Childcare facilities.
- Untrained Relief Staff working in designated New Brunswick Early Learning Centres (see restrictions below).

ECE Wage Grid – Levels and Steps

The ECE Wage Grid is based on recognized training and relevant experience at each funding Level. It includes two (2) Funding Levels: Entry Level and Level 1, and four (4) Steps.

As the employer, operators are responsible for determining the eligibility and assessment of the Step an educator is eligible for.

Note: All educators will be assessed in the same manner across all facility types for Levels and Steps.

Level Criteria

Funding Levels are determined based on the following qualifications and training:

Level 1:

- Certificate or Diploma in Early Childhood Education
- Related degree in Education or Early Childhood Development
- Unrelated degree

Entry Level:

- Introduction to Early Childhood Education
- School Age Educators (untrained)
- Relief Staff (untrained)

Mandatory training requirements for **Level 1 and Entry Level** educators working in Designated Facilities with children 0-5 years:

- New Brunswick Curriculum Framework for Early Learning and Childcare, OR
- Curriculum éducatif des Services de garde francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick

Note:

- School Age educators are exempt from curriculum training.
- Levels will continue to be assessed and assigned by EECD as per the WSP-ECE guidelines.

Step Assignment Criteria

Step Assignment applies to the following categories:

- **New educators**
- **Relief staff**
- **Conditionally approved educators**
- **Educators moving from Entry Level to Level 1**
- **Educators moving from a conditional approval**

The assignment of a Step will be determined by the operator using the following criteria:

- An educator must provide the operator with documentation demonstrating relevant years of experience working with children 0-12 years for Entry Level funding.
- An educator must provide the operator with documentation demonstrating relevant years of experience working with children 0-12 years since completion of the recognized training for Level 1 funding. (see Relevant Work Experience below).
- The operator will assess the documentation and determine the Step the educator is eligible for based on their relevant experience.
- When assessing relevant work experience, one year of relevant work experience is a minimum of 750 hours working directly with children 0-12 years.
- Operators must confirm that the educator has met all of the requirements for the requested Funding Level and Step at the time of submission in the Operator Portal.
- Documentation demonstrating the relevant experience must be maintained in the educator's staff file and is not required to be sent to EECD unless requested.
- WSP-ECE applications must be submitted a minimum of five (5) business days prior to the start of the next WSP-ECE reporting period.
- **WSP-ECE funding will begin upon approval by EECD.**
- **Operators will be solely responsible for WSP-ECE wage top-up provided to educators prior to the approval of educators in the Portal. Retroactive adjustments will not be provided.**

Step Increase Criteria

For an educator to be eligible for a Step increase, the following conditions must be met:

- It has been 12 months or more since the last Step Increase (or Step Assignment), AND
- The educator has obtained a minimum of 750 hours of relevant work experience within the last 12-month calendar year, AND

- If applicable, 10 hours of training related to the curriculum used at the Designated Facility as per Licensing Regulation – ECS Act 11.1(3)(4).

Note: Educators who are conditionally approved in the WSP-ECE are not eligible for a step increase until the mandatory training requirements are completed.

To request a Step increase for an educator, the operator must complete the following:

- The application for a Step increase must be submitted by the operator in the Portal, confirming that the educator has met all requirements.
- Documentation demonstrating relevant experience and completion of 10 hours of training related to the curriculum must be maintained in the educator’s staff file and is not required to be sent to EECD unless requested.

Step Increase Guidelines:

- An educator will remain at their currently approved Step until requirements are met for moving to the next Step on the ECE Wage Grid.
- Only one (1) Step Increase will be approved within a 12-month period after a step assignment has been approved.
- Step increases must be submitted a minimum of five (5) business days prior to the start of the next WSP-ECE reporting period.
- **Funding at the new Step will begin upon approval by EECD.**
- **Retroactive adjustments will not be provided.**

Note:

- Operators and educators will receive an e-mail notification on the anniversary date to advise that an educator may be eligible for a Step Increase.
- It is the operator’s responsibility to ensure that, if applicable, all Step increase requests are submitted for approval starting on the anniversary date.
- Educators who have been at their current Step for one year or more, based on their anniversary date, will be approved upon submission by the operator in the Portal.
- Step Increase requests cannot be approved prior to the anniversary date. Requests for a Step Increase for all other applications will be reviewed by EECD.

When an educator completes the training required to advance from Entry Level to Level 1, they will commence at Level 1, Step 1.

Relevant Work Experience

For the purpose of the ECE Wage Grid, relevant experience is defined as experience working directly with children 0 – 12 years.

Examples of relevant work experience could include:

- Early Childhood Educators
- Teachers
- Inclusion Support Workers
- Educational Assistants
- Human Services
- Other occupations with specific knowledge of child development

Examples of how relevant work experience could be assessed, include:

- Resumes
- Reference Checks
- Letter of Reference
- Professional Portfolios
- Other

How to Determine an Educator's Step Based on Years of Relevant Work Experience

Step	Relevant Years of Experience
1	0 to less than 1 year
2	1 to less than 2 years
3	2 to less than 3 years
4	3+ years

Note: Steps are determined based on the years of relevant work experience starting from the date the recognized training was completed. **When an educator completes the training required to advance from Entry Level to Level 1, they will commence at Level 1, Step 1.**

Conditional Applications

All educators conditionally approved in the WSP-ECE program, will remain at Step 1 of their approved Level, regardless of their years of experience, until they have completed the following mandatory training requirements for Level 1 and Entry Level:

- Introduction to Early Childhood Education **OR**
- Introduction to Early Learning and Child Care.

When mandatory training requirements have been met, the operator will reassess the Step the educator qualifies for based on their relevant years of experience at that funding Level, as per the Step Assignment criteria above.

Untrained Relief Staff

Untrained Relief Staff are short-term or on-call employees, who temporarily replace an educator, and work 88 hours or less per month.

- Untrained Relief Staff will **remain at Entry Level, Step 1** on the ECE Wage Grid **unless** they choose to complete the Introduction to Early Childhood Education course.
- All Untrained Relief Staff approved in WSP-ECE prior to November 01, 2022, will remain at Entry Level, Step 3 on the ECE Wage Grid.

Maternity and Paternity Leave

Maternity and/or paternity leave are not considered a break in service. Upon return to work, educators may be eligible for a Step Increase if it has been 12 months or more since the last Step Increase. The following will apply:

- The minimum of 750 hours of relevant work experience **is not applicable** for an educator returning from a Maternity and/or Paternity Leave.
- If applicable, the 10 hours of training related to the curriculum used at the Designated facility, as per *Licensing Regulation – ECS Act 11.1(3)(4)* requirement, **must be met** prior to a Step Increase being assigned. Training may be completed during maternity and/or paternity leave or upon return.
- Only one Step Increase will be approved within a 12-month period.

Exceptions - Special Privilege Clause

For the purpose of the ECE Wage Grid, the following exceptions will apply:

- All educators and administrators approved in WSP-ECE prior to November 01, 2022, will remain at Step 3 of their current funding Level on the ECE Wage Grid.

- Educators currently approved in WSP-ECE, who work in a Designated Facility with children 0-5 years and or a licenced early learning and childcare facility providing school age services on November 01, 2022, **AND** who are registered in a Post-Secondary ECE certificate or diploma program prior to September 01, 2022, will be eligible upon completion for Level 1, Step 3 on the ECE Wage Grid under the following conditions:
 - Documentation demonstrating registration in a recognized ECE certificate or diploma program must be provided to the operator by December 1, 2022.
 - Operators must upload documentation demonstrating enrolment in the Operator Portal by December 01, 2022.
 - Documentation demonstrating enrolment must be maintained in the educator's staff file.
 - 1-year ECE program (or the 1st year of a 2-year ECE program) must be completed by November 1, 2023.

Other

The ECE Wage Grid will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Operators must update their Staff Handbooks with any changes.

Contact Information

For further information, please contact the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development:

- By phone at: 1-833-221-9339 (toll-free)
- By e-mail at: WSPECE-PSSPEG@gnb.ca