



## **ECEBC BULLETIN**

### **WHY A \$20 STARTING WAGE FOR ECE IS NECESSARY**

The Early Childhood field is in crisis in BC! Many Early Childhood Educators are leaving the field and it is difficult to recruit new people. Research shows and your voices tell us that this is occurring because of wages/benefits that are too low to make a living wage.

The Early Childhood Educators of BC believes that the benchmark of \$20 an hour is a realistic entry level wage for early childhood educators. We realize that reaching this benchmark will create many challenges but we must face these challenges to make the \$20/hour a reality. In order for this to happen, a process must occur; a process of dialogue that articulates the value of our work and explains why we can no longer be tied to a market system that pays our wages based on a user fee. We can think of no other occupation that ties its wages to the user's ability to pay.

The Government of BC is committed to developing Strong Start Programs for preschool aged children in many schools across the province. They have committed their programs to hire early childhood educators for \$20 an hour. If an early childhood educator is worth \$20 in the school system, why is she not worth \$20 in the community based child care centre for performing the same work?

For decades we have worked with families. We are very aware of the impact our demands will have. We sincerely regret that the lack of government commitment has brought us to this place and that our actions may create hardships for these families and children for whom we deeply care. At the same time, we recognize that the services we provide are vital to the health and well being of families and that our childcare system is in jeopardy if we do nothing to keep trained and qualified ECEs in the field. Therefore the Early Childhood Educators of BC is committed to waging a campaign in order to ensure \$20 an hour becomes the benchmark for a liveable entry wage.

Today, programs across BC that provide critically necessary child care services to their communities are faced with the increasingly challenging situation of recruitment and retention. Early childhood educators, with post secondary education and training, are saying:

“NO! I can no longer work in this profession unless I am adequately compensated for my work. My work is valuable and it is necessary. My work positively impacts the children and families with whom I work. It is no longer possible for me to subsidize the child care system on my low wage. Our stress level has gone beyond what we thought we could handle. It is time for change”.

This is what it costs – a starting wage of \$20 an hour and it needs to start now.

Stand up for \$20 an hour for Early Childhood Educators. You're worth it!