

January 26, 2026

Dear Federal, Provincial and Territorial Forum of Ministers Most Responsible for Early Learning and Child Care:

Since its announcement in April 2021, the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) plan has been more than a policy shift—it is a program that is fundamentally transforming early learning and child care (ELCC) services for Canadians. It has been a game-changer for working families, providing the dependable services they need to secure their economic future during their child-rearing years. As we look back over the last five years, we see that what began as a response to employment and economic vulnerabilities for women and families exposed by the pandemic is evolving into a pillar of Canadian life.

This national child care plan did not just answer a call; it fulfilled a promise to generations of women and families. By dramatically improving affordability, CWELCC is providing families the breathing room to survive in a challenging economy and is enabling women to participate more meaningfully in the workforce, regardless of their postal code. It is moving us from where child care was a barrier to one where it is a bridge to opportunity.

At the center of this transformation is the ELCC workforce. We have finally begun to properly recognize the Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) and providers who are the heart and soul of this system—and the key to quality and its success. These passionate professionals do not merely "mind" children; they shape the learning trajectories and emotional well-being of our next generation. Through the plan, government leaders and the public have come of age in understanding that high-quality pedagogy and fair compensation with benefits are inextricably linked. Indeed, Canadians now see clearly that supporting this workforce is synonymous with building a better, stronger Canada.

As you prepare for the Federal/Provincial/Territorial meetings at the end of January, the weight of furthering this legacy rests with you. We know that sustainability and equitable access are top of mind, and we acknowledge that system-building is a marathon, not a sprint—K-12 education and healthcare likewise took time and perseverance to build. You have begun the difficult work of addressing decades of interrelated issues, but the data is undeniable: **the CWELCC plan is working**, as noted by the Prime Minister in March 2025 that “it is estimated that for every dollar invested in child care, the economy gets \$2.80 in return – a testament to the fact that affordable child care is good for families, and good for our country”. The positive impact on families, women, and the economy is measurable and profound.

Therefore, we urge you to not only stay the course, but to strengthen your commitments.

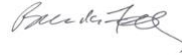
We have come too far to turn back or dilute the vision now. We need to continue with the approach at hand—a plan thoughtfully designed by ELCC experts and policy makers to weather storms and build foundations. Now is the time to strengthen CWELCC, supporting the vision and framework that is delivering results.

Parents want it, economists value it, and children deserve it. By protecting the integrity of this system, you are not just managing a portfolio; you are engaging in nation-building at a critical moment in our history.

On behalf of the following organizations,



Taya Whitehead  
Chair  
Canadian Child Care Federation



Brenda Ferguson  
Chair  
Home Child Care Association of Ontario



Jodie Kehl  
Executive Director  
Manitoba Child Care Association



Emily Mliczko  
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Early Childhood Educators of BC



Skye Taylor  
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Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta



Cheryl Crowther  
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Leadership Team



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Joanne Morris  
Chair  
Early Childhood Educators Human Resources Council