

ECEBC Calls for a Fully Qualified Early Childhood Educator Sector

Since 2011 the Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC) has committed to a vision of a public, relational, and ethical system that enshrines the human rights of children and ensures equitable access to high-quality, affordable, accessible child care, as outlined in the Community Plan for a Public System of Integrated Early Care and Learning (also known as the \$10aDay Plan). Central to this vision is the right to work alongside fully qualified colleagues who have the knowledge and specialized skills to engage in this complex profession. The realities the sector now faces due to limited and inadequate legislation which has created gaps in a fully qualified sector, rather than enhancing the profession. We are hearing from our members that the deskilling of early childhood educators is contributing to serious retention and quality issues. Recruitment and retention strategies should seek to create quality early childhood environments that support children and educators.

We are calling on the provincial government to implement the following actions:

1. Support current Early Childhood Educator Assistants (ECEA) to obtain full qualifications as Early Childhood Educators. This pathway should ensure that all ECEAs are currently enrolled in a BC government-approved post-secondary ECE program that leads to a certificate to practice with the ECE Registry as an early childhood educator within five years or less.
2. Update the Child Care Standards of Practice and Occupational Competencies, ensuring current research and pedagogy are reflected to support high quality practice.
3. Amend legislation to require a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education as the new educational standard for the profession, with a minimum of a Diploma (two years) as the credential for those entering the field.
4. A workforce strategy that is unique to early childhood educators that clearly outlines benchmarks for a total compensation package that includes a wage grid, benefits and working conditions that align with the role of the educator, credentials and experience.

Addressing the educator shortage requires a vision of a fully qualified workforce, as stated in the [\\$10aDay Plan](#). Strategies thus far are perpetuating the child care crisis and adding stress to an already extremely fragile system. Overwhelmed educators who are taking on additional burdens due to gaps created by the lack of qualified staff are continuing to leave the sector in unprecedented numbers. As indicated in the [Evaluation](#) Report of the Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy in BC (2021), 45% of employers are losing more staff than they can hire, and 27% of employers were unable to register children in programs due to a lack of qualified staff.

“The BC and Federal Government have a unique opportunity to build a child care system that not only supports families but also creates spaces that children can flourish in, alongside conditions that will stabilize the workforce”, Christina Dicks, ECEBC Board Chair. As an organization, ECEBC has been advancing early childhood education and care since 1969. ECEBC is the collective voice to advance professional and personal commitment to the value of early care and learning by empowering the sector through education, collaboration, and leadership. These recommendations will support a necessary transformation to ensure a sustainable and stable educator sector.