



ECEBC | early childhood
educators of BC

Celebrating 50 Years. 1969 – 2019

March 4, 2019

Dear ECEBC Members and Friends,

The past 12 months has been a time of great change for many early childhood educators. With a new investment of \$1.1 billion over 3 years we in the early care and learning sector have been asked to focus on the big picture, to work harder and to be adaptable to change. We are on this journey of change together and although we acknowledge that there has been bumps along the way, this is positive change - a way forward and a new era for early care and learning.

As ECEBC marks its 50-year anniversary we celebrate the longevity of the organization and the dedication of all those who have contributed over the past 5 decades. As Kay Britton ECEBC president 1974-1976, stated, *"We are determined that the children entrusted to us shall be housed in quality facilities that meet the children's and teacher's needs... We are determined that our salaries shall rise above the poverty level... We are determined that support services for children, parents, and teachers should be available immediately on request. Too many of us have seen one or two years go by with nothing, except the teachers' efforts, being extended to help and rehabilitate a child in need..."* Although the language has changed since Kay spoke to these issues, we continue to be determined to see a system that guarantees this for all educators, families and children.

Early childhood educators are the heart and backbone of an early care and learning system and should be compensated for their special knowledge and the important contributions they make. ECEBC has and will continue to call on government to continue in their forward direction for better compensation and working conditions for the professional workforce. This is critically important as we have seen the sector struggling for too many years.

As the first increase to wages in 20 years, we see the wage enhancement recently announced, \$1 per hour for certified ECE's (increasing to \$2 next April) as a positive acknowledgement. However, it is just a start and we are asking government to be bold and address the crisis with recruitment and retention of ECE's. The next step needs to be the development of a provincial wage grid embedded in the BC governments recruitment and retention strategy as a long-term solution.

ECEBC's chair, Charlene Gray affirms, "The success of every new child care initiative hinges on the professional ECE workforce. In order for families to access high quality child care and preschool programs, it is imperative that there are enough certified early childhood educators to staff those programs. In order to attract and retain ECEs, they must be paid a fair wage for the important work that they do."

ECEBC has recently been made aware of an organization that has been promoting increased parent fees, beyond the approved fee reduction initiative, as a way to raise wages. We ask, "How does this support the bigger picture?" How does adding more financial stress to young

families create a sustainable system? We cannot move forward by negatively affecting the very children and families we care for. We do not support this as the direction to go, as it does not build a public system. Like other strategies in the past, this is a band-aid solution that does nothing to promote high quality, affordable, accessible early care and learning. Relief for families is an important part of creating a real child care system in B.C, as is increasing wages and education support for ECEs.

There is still much more to do. We have only touched the tip of the iceberg and it is our professional duty to keep moving forward. We are strong, we are resilient, and we are capable.

Standing Strong Together,

ECEBC

For additional information please contact:
Emily Gawlick- executive.director@ecebc.ca
Charlene Gray- cggray@shaw.ca