

# Educator Wages in British Columbia

## Q&A

### August 2022

**ALONG WITH GOOD BENEFITS** and improved working conditions, fair wages are an important part of an accessible, high-quality child care system. In BC and across Canada, inadequate wages have led to the challenge we now face recruiting and retaining qualified early childhood educators and other program staff. In 2019, the BC government began to address this issue by implementing wage enhancements, which currently 'top up' ECE wages by \$4 per hour. While welcome, wage enhancements maintain inequitable wages across regions and programs in our fragmented child care sector. We need a different approach.

A competitive, publicly funded provincial wage grid would not only raise wages but do so systematically. A wage grid can provide consistency, fair wages, and recognition of the essential and valuable work of educators in child care programs. Creating a provincial wage grid should be part of a broader effort to build a child care system — one that ensures high quality, universal accessibility, and affordability.

With funding from Women and Gender Equality Canada we are undertaking a 30-month project to advance a competitive provincial wage grid for educators. With input and advice from our advisory committee, our project partners the Early Childhood Educators of BC and Pacific Immigrant Resources Society, and a range of equity-seeking groups, we are engaging ECEs in advocating for the full implementation of a provincial wage grid as recommended in the Roadmap to \$10aDay.

Below are a series of questions about wages and wage grids that our advisory committee is hearing from the sector, and our answers.

### **Question 1: How do I know if my employer is receiving the \$4/hour wage enhancement (ECE-WE)?**

**Answer:** According to the Government of BC website, providers approved to participate in the ECE-WE are required to notify their eligible ECEs and collect a written acknowledgement. Parents and child care staff can call the Child Care Service Centre at 1-888-338-6622 for information about a program's ECE-WE opt-in status.

**Question 2: What is the minimum amount ECEs must be paid if their employer has been approved for the ECE-WE?**

**Answer:** The minimum amount ECEs must be paid is the provincial minimum wage (as of June 1, 2022, \$15.65) plus an additional \$4 per hour if their employer is participating in the ECE-WE, for a total of \$19.65 per hour currently.

**Question 3: Who is currently eligible to receive the ECE-WE?**

**Answer:** Effective April 1, 2022, eligibility for the ECE-WE was expanded to all provincially certified ECEs directly employed by and working in eligible licensed facilities, regardless of the percentage of time they spend working in direct care of children (including ECEs who are also owner/operators).

For specific details, see the ECE-WE funding guidelines.

**Question 4: Are stand-alone preschools (not affiliated with a larger organization and so not enrolled in CCFRI) eligible for the ECE-WE?**

**Answer:** According to the ECE-WE funding guidelines, ECEs working in licensed preschools may still be eligible for the ECE-WE, if the facility is enrolled in CCOF Base Funding or operates as a \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre.

**Question 5: If I receive the ECE wage enhancement will that impact the yearly increase that my employer gives me?**

**Answer:** The legal requirement is for employers to pay at least the BC minimum wage and, if they are participating in the ECE-WE, the additional \$4/hour. Some employers may also be parties to collective agreements and required to pay and increase wages according to the terms of those agreements. Other employers may choose to offer higher rates of pay and increase wages at their discretion.



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**Question 6: Why are ECEAs currently not eligible for the \$4 wage enhancement?**

**Answer:** According to the ECE-WE funding guidelines document (2022), "Government is responding first to the most urgent needs within the sector. This includes increasing ECE staffing and responding to the critical need for trained and qualified early childhood educators, as well as improving families' access to affordable child care. In addition, the purpose of targeting this wage enhancement to certified ECEs is to encourage more individuals to obtain their certification."

The Roadmap to \$10aDay recommends a strategy for the provincial government to encourage responsible adults, ECE assistants, and others in the sector to attain their ECE credential by providing improved access to post-secondary education and implementing a competitive province-wide wage grid that includes all program staff.

**Question 7: Will ECE assistants and other educators be included in a wage grid?**

**Answer:** Our recommended wage grid includes ECEAs, as well as ECEs with certificates, diplomas, and degrees. In addition, we recommend adding related child care staff positions into the wage grid such as responsible adults, family child care providers, school age educators, etc.

**Question 8: How does a wage grid recognize years of experience, not just education?**

**Answer:** To promote and retain qualified educators, effective wage grids reward qualified and experienced staff with increasing wages. Grids generally incorporate different levels for different qualifications as well as additional steps for years of service. Wages increase with each level and step.

**Question 9: Who pays for higher educator wages if parents are contributing a maximum fee of \$10aDay?**

**Answer:** We recommend that the government increase funding to child care programs in order to reduce fees to \$10aDay and increase educator wages and benefits.

**Question 10: How can the government afford to fund the wage grid?**

**Answer:** Child care that is responsive to the uniqueness of children and their families, while also being affordable, will benefit children, families, educators, and the economy. That's why the research consistently shows that public investment in effective child care systems more than pays for itself. Equally important is the BC government's commitment to gender equity.

**Next Step**  
A Competitive, Publicly Funded Provincial Wage Grid is the Solution to BC's ECE Shortage

Read the 2020 *Next Step* report from ECEBC and the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC that recommends an ECE wage grid with required wages and pay levels for all educators.

**Wondering about a wage grid?** Read the 2020 *Next Step* report from ECEBC and the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC that recommends an ECE wage grid with required wages and pay levels for all educators.

A wage grid is a system that determines how much an employee is paid, usually based on factors such as qualifications and years of service.

We recommend a wage grid that:

- Is competitive (offering wages comparable to similarly qualified professionals);
- Reflects and respects qualifications, experience, gender parity and equity;
- Encourages, and compensates for, additional education;
- Is regularly reviewed, updated, and increased as required to ensure it remains competitive and equitable;
- Is publicly funded, and integrated with overall child care policy, recognizing and funding child care as a system; and
- Is part of an overall strategy to improve wages, benefits, and working conditions of ECE professionals.

**The BC government is developing but has not yet confirmed a provincial wage grid for educators in the child care sector.**

The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC gratefully acknowledges the support of Women and Gender Equality Canada



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**child care  
advocates**  
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**Questions?** We'd love to hear from you. 604.515.5439 or [info@cccabc.bc.ca](mailto:info@cccabc.bc.ca)