



March 1, 2023

Ref: 285756

Thank you for your email advocating for Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) in British Columbia.

ECEs are essential to kids, families and communities in BC. It is ECEs who ensure that child care in our province provides opportunities for connection, learning, growth and safety for our youngest.

We have made unprecedented progress together, working with community, providers, parents, and early childhood professionals. And there is more to do.

Whether it's opening new spaces, investing in quality, or supporting the inclusion of all children and families – ECEs are at the heart of all the work.

In 2018, the province introduced the [10-year ChildCareBC plan](#) to address the many years of neglect within the child care sector. An important aspect of the plan is the [Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#), which focuses on ways to attract, retain, and support early childhood professionals.

Since 2018, the province has committed more than \$600 million through to the 2024/25 fiscal year to support ECEs and other early childhood professionals, by:

- Providing 12,500 bursaries to more than 6,500 students studying in ECE post-secondary programs to help cover the costs of their education;
- Creating [1,713 new ECE student spaces](#) at 16 public post-secondary institutions, including opportunities for work integrated learning so ECE Assistants and ECEs who want to upgrade their education can continue to work to support their families while improving their skills and advancing their careers;
- Investing in new [Dual Credit Programs](#) in 30 school districts across BC, allowing students in Grades 11 and 12 to begin their ECE post-secondary training, while earning credits to graduate;
- Giving international ECEs with a qualified, permanent job offer priority access to apply for permanent residency under the [Provincial Nominee Program](#), creating an immigration pathway for ECEs and helping employers secure qualified staff;

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- Enhancing wages by \$4 per hour for all provincially certified ECEs directly employed by and working in licensed child care facilities; and
- Providing support for ongoing professional development, including [bursaries](#), [peer mentoring](#), and resources on the [BC Early Years Professional Development Hub](#).

More recently, through a partnership with the Government of Canada, BC has committed to developing and implementing a wage grid for ECEs. The development of a wage grid is complex and will take time to get right. To make sure we do get this right, we will work in consultation with stakeholders and partners throughout the child care sector.

Recognizing that wage pressures for ECEs are immediate, the province doubled the ECE Wage Enhancement (ECE-WE) to \$4 per hour, effective September 2021, and expanded eligibility in April 2022. The ECE-WE serves as an integral step towards ensuring ECEs are recognized as professionals and fairly compensated for their important work. In my short time as Minister of State, I've heard from ECEs who shared that the wage enhancement meant they were able to stay in the sector and able to continue doing the work they love.

Early data suggests that these investments are having a positive impact. The number of new ECE certifications has been trending upward over the past year, and it is estimated that around 91 percent of ECEs working in licensed child care settings in BC stayed in the sector over the last fiscal year. In addition, enrolment in public post-secondary ECE programs was 40 percent higher in 2020/21 compared to 2017/18.

Thank you, again, for taking the time to share your thoughts, and for your continued advocacy for Early Childhood Educators. I encourage you to sign up for the [ChildCareBC Bulletin](#) to receive regular updates to your inbox about changes to child care programs and information about upcoming initiatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Grace Lore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Grace" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Lore".

Grace Lore
Minister of State for Child Care

pc: Premier's office correspondence unit