

**Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO)
Submission to the Ministry of Finance 2019 Pre Budget Consultations**

We support Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) in their professional practice and advocate for the recognition and appropriate compensation of the profession. RECEs are fundamental to high quality early learning and child care (ECEC) in Ontario.

Summary of Budget Action Recommendations

- 1. Commit to continuing the \$2/hour Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG) and immediately extending it to include RECEs in other sectors including EarlyON staff**
- 2. Develop and implement a publicly funded province wide wage scale with a \$25/hour minimum wage for RECEs and commensurate compensation for early years staff, a benefits package, including paid sick and personal leave days; we advise the Government to commit at least \$375 million as a first step to establishing the wage scale**

In addition, we support the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC) in their call for stable investments to the child care system. We recommend the Ontario government:

- Maintain stable funding levels to licensed child care to ensure consistent service for over 400,000 Ontario children. This should include maintaining general allocations to Consolidated Municipal Service Managers/District Social Services Administration Boards (“system managers”, CMSMs and DSSABs), steady progress on Ontario’s expansion strategy and fee stabilization support.
- Continue the \$2/hour WEG while working towards a wage scale. Since 2015 this grant has helped support staff recruitment and retention in licensed child care; and reduced poverty by supporting employment and income security.
- Ensure all funding is indexed to inflation.

To make the transition to a high-quality child care system, the AECEO and the OCBCC call on the Ontario government to commit to:

- Affordable Fees: Allocate \$635.5 million as a down payment on affordability; begin transition to operational funding in child care centres to support low fees or no fees.

- Decent Work: Implement a provincial workforce strategy to ensure all staff have professional pay and decent work, including committing \$375 million as a first step to establishing a province-wide wage scale for Registered Early Childhood Educators and early years staff with entry level pay for RECEs of \$25/hour.
- Expand public and non-profit spaces: Allocate a further \$500,000 to strengthen the current Expansion Strategy to grow the non-profit and public child care sectors.
- Immediately follow through on implementation of *Growing Together, Ontario's Early Years and Child Care Workforce Strategy (Growing Together)*.

As a first step, while developing a wage scale, we call for the immediate continuance of the \$2/hour WEG. RECEs work in a variety of settings, including EarlyON centres and Full Day Kindergarten. Their wages and working conditions are included in our calls for improvements to compensation and benefits for all RECEs in Ontario.

Working toward the goal of transformational change in the the provision of a high-quality early years and child care system will be a multi-year process. Such change will not be successful without the well-compensated, stable, professional early childhood workforce that Ontario's children deserve.

Sincerely,



Rachel Lafferty
Executive Coordinator