



Winter/Spring
2026

AECEO 75th
Anniversary year
section

AECEO Guiding
Committee on Truth
and Reconciliation

ECE Voices





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CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS**



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COVER AND ABOVE PHOTO: AECEO, OCBCC and Atkinson Foundation staff/members at the Atkinson Foundation's The Good Fight Prize for Decent Work award announcement.

PHOTO CREDIT: Jenna Marie Wakani, Atkinson Foundation

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Families need action: Stand up for Jordan's Principle

AECEO Guiding Committee on Truth and Reconciliation

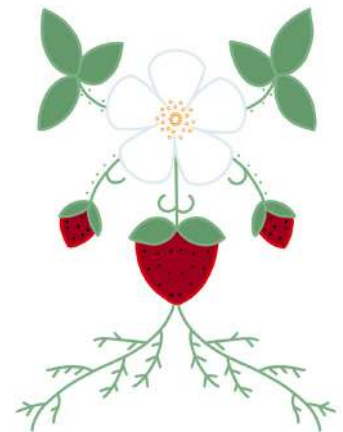
Children in Ontario are being denied or delayed essential supports due to Indigenous Services Canada's (ISC) narrowed interpretation of Jordan's Principle. Jordan's Principle is a child-first principle to ensure First Nations children get the services they need when they need them.

Changes by Indigenous Services Canada in 2025 narrowed eligibility criteria and raised serious concerns for the children and families that the AECEO and the ECE community work with and care about across Ontario and beyond. These changes contradict the spirit and intent of Jordan's Principle and exacerbate existing systemic barriers for First Nations children, particularly in the areas of education, health, and culturally appropriate supports.

As early childhood educators, we know that every child deserves equitable access to the care and supports they need to thrive. Yet many First Nations children are facing barriers and delays to essential health, education, and social services – barriers that violate their basic human rights. Jordan's Principle was meant to end those delays and ensure every child is treated with fairness and dignity.

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ordered Canada to fully and properly implement Jordan's Principle, but Indigenous Services Canada is narrowing access and pushing off-reserve education supports (EAs/ECEs, therapies, travel for services) toward provincial funding.

This has resulted in delays, denials, confusion, and a large backlog (~140,000 requests); children missing school/supports; or going without essential healthcare - emergency health items sometimes refused. Parents are often not informed of their legal options when denied support.



Families and children need help to call on the Governments of Canada and Ontario to fully comply with the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal's decisions to fully implement Jordan's Principle. The rulings are clear. The law is clear. What's missing is full political action.

Let's work together for children's rights to be respected, upheld, and acted on without delay

The AECEO Guiding Committee on Truth and Reconciliation, in solidarity with First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, has launched an e-action to support and amplify their advocacy on the Government of Canada's changes to Jordan's Principle funding.

As early childhood educators and advocates committed to Truth and Reconciliation, we are deeply troubled by this rollback and stand ready to support efforts to challenge and reverse it.

Your voice matters! Please join our advocacy campaign by supporting our E-Action to call on Government and your elected representatives to comply with the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal’s decisions to fully implement Jordan’s Principle.

You Can Take Action Today! Our E-Action automatically sends a letter to the appropriate federal and provincial Ministers, your MP and MPP. Find it online, with more information about Jordan’s Principle, here: https://www.aecce.ca/jordans_principle

Or send your own letter using the template below:

TEMPLATE LETTER:

Subject: Uphold Jordan’s Principle Child-First, Now

I am writing as a concerned Ontario resident. Children in our community are being denied or delayed essential supports due to Indigenous Services Canada’s (ISC) narrowed interpretation of Jordan’s Principle. Jordan’s Principle is a legal obligation. Federal Court decisions (including Cully and Powless) have upheld the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal’s decisions requiring substantive equality, individualized assessments, and reject cost-based or blanket denials.

I call on the government of Canada to:

- 1) Fully comply with the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal’s decisions to end Canada’s discrimination against First Nations children and fully implement Jordan’s Principle;
- 2) Withdraw restrictive operational changes and clear the backlog;
- 3) Implement Cully/Powless in all determinations;
- 4) Ensure transparent, child-first collaboration with First Nations and sector partners.

I call on the government of Ontario to:

- Adopt a child-first stance consistent with Jordan’s Principle.
- Include First Nations and Canadian Human Rights Tribunal parties in discussions with Canada.
- Ensure transparency; reject wholesale downloading that harms children.

As your constituent, I am looking for you to take action on these calls. Please respond with your action plan.

Sincerely,

[Name/email address/location]

Decent Work Project Update

Mobilizing the Early Childhood Workforce in the Movement for Decent

Written by: Amber Straker

Throughout the summer and fall of 2025, the AECEO team has been busy connecting with the early years community; discussing and advocating together for professional pay and decent working conditions. We held campaign activities that share how our policy recommendations are lived every day by Early Childhood Educators and Child Care Workers. We continued to meet regularly with government representatives, staying up to date with new announcements and ensuring the voices and experiences of the workforce are heard by those with decision making power. We worked to deepen our relationships and collaborations with, and support of, the ELCC student body and workforce, partner and community organizations, and other allies. This has strengthened our collective voice and brought more of our community together. Together, we are stronger. Together, we are louder. Together, we will make a difference.

During summer, the AECEO held a Summer Challenge campaign, creating fun and action oriented invitations for participants to care out loud for each other, and about working conditions and wages. Activities included connecting with the AECEO, reading and sharing information with government representatives, inviting others into the movement, encouraging and showing care for our colleagues, and attending a craft and chat session where we dove into all things decent work. Prizes were shared, fun was had, and connections were made. As part of the Summer campaign we held two community visits in Mississauga and Scarborough, bringing the Greater Toronto Area early years community together for an evening of advocacy through crafts, conversation, and care. Thank you to all who joined us!

As we moved into the fall, the second edition of the *Roadmap to Universal Child Care in Ontario* was published. Created in collaboration with our members,

“Our advocacy made an impact.”

the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC) and other community partners and allies, the original *Roadmap* sets out a shared vision of how the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) should be implemented in Ontario. This updated version evaluates the progress that has been made toward key aspects of our shared vision, discusses current issues, and updates the recommended policy interventions to address the evolving context of Ontario’s implementation of CWELCC. Alongside the OCBCC, we called on both the Federal and Provincial levels of government to work together to sign the agreement to continue the CWELCC program for Ontario and to implement these recommendations to achieve bold progress in ELCC system building, funding, affordability, workforce development, and expansion. We recognized the incredible work done by those working in ELCC, held a press conference, and hosted workshops on sharing your story and meeting your MPP.

Our advocacy made an impact. Shortly after a press conference at Queen’s Park with speakers from the

AECEO, OCBCC, and Parents for Child Care all addressing the urgent need for the CWELCC program to continue, both levels of government had begun conversations, and had subsequently signed a 1-year extension to the program. While the extension provides temporary stability for parents and operators, it broke the promise of achieving \$10aDay care by March 2026. Our advocacy will continue.

The fall was also a busy time for connecting and being with the community. The AECEO was grateful to host placement and internship students from many post-secondary institutions over the term, and to offer class presentations that dive into the complex realities of working in the early years, and the ways in which we can come together to create positive change for ourselves and the families and children we care for. AECEO Care Collectives were busy advocating together through

“In very exciting news, our Worth More! campaign won the Atkinson Good Fight Prize!”

relationship building, sharing knowledge, and supporting one another. This often looked like regular virtual check-ins, in person gatherings and events, workshops and presentations, and connecting with local government representatives. We were also able to join many events and connect with folks across the province; attending and speaking at rallies for Policing-Free Schools and supporting striking OPSEU College Workers, participating in the Ontario Mentorship Symposium, joining ECE and Child Care Worker Appreciation Day events, and various conferences, professional learning days, and town hall meetings. We also worked at the national level, attending and participating in symposiums and summits, ensuring that the voices of ECEs were present in national advocacy strategies.

We had an incredible time during our fall AECEO Community Visit, meeting educators in Sault Ste. Marie. A tremendous thank you to everyone who collaborated with us, invited us in and welcomed us with such open

arms. It was an opportunity to connect with students at Sault College, to visit an Algoma Child Care location, and to host an event that brought educators from all areas of our work together. One participant shared that “it was a wonderful gathering that gave hope and inspiration across all sectors”. We are so grateful for the new connections, strengthening old relationships, and planning together for a future where ECEs everywhere are valued and recognized with decent work and professional pay.

We have continued to host our podcast, Circle Time with the AECEO. We collaborated with our partners at the OCBCC to discuss tackling issues in the ELCC field, and heard from the AECEO’s Guiding Committee on Truth and Reconciliation. The year wrapped up with fall updates, celebrating our 75th anniversary, and looking back at 2025. The AECEO has also offered to host external professional development workshops. Thank you to those who have reached out to book our team for your professional development days, team meetings, and gatherings. We are grateful to talk about what advocacy is and looks like, and support ECEs in finding their voice, uncovering how the skills ECEs already have are the foundations of change-making, and discovering how advocacy by and for ECEs is shaping the future of our profession.

In very exciting news, our Worth More! campaign won the Atkinson Good Fight Prize! The Good Fight prize is awarded to a campaign that inspires and enables people to combine their efforts to tip the balance toward change, creating decent work for everyone. It celebrates strength, creativity, and commitment for the movement for decent work. The Worth More! campaign was launched to address the growing workforce shortage and the wage floor set by the provincial government of \$18 an hour. This campaign successfully advocated to improve this wage floor.

It has been a busy and exciting summer and fall this year for the Mobilizing the Early Childhood Workforce in the Movement for Decent Work project. None of this work could be done without you; your connection, collaboration, and care make all the difference. We will continue to fight the good fight alongside you, advocating for decent working conditions and professional pay for all early years professionals.



The AECEO 75th Anniversary Card

For the past seven and a half decades, the AECEO has played a key role in the areas of training, public awareness, certification, networking, and advocacy for the ECE profession in Ontario, making the history of our organization and the history of ECE in Ontario closely intertwined. Generations of early childhood educators and advocates have been part of this history. It is ECEs' dedication, care, and passion that make early childhood education possible in our province.

As we look to the future, we look forward to growing our community and contributing to the early childhood education and care sector in Ontario and beyond. It truly is an honour to represent ECEs and to dedicate our careers to advocating for the wages, working conditions, respect, and recognition that early years professionals deserve.

For our 75th anniversary we reached out to the ECE community to help us celebrate the important work we have done together by sharing a story or memory of the history and legacy of the AECEO on our virtual birthday card. We received so many sweet messages and well wishes and selected a few entries to share below. Huge thanks to everyone who celebrated this big milestone with us and to all who shared about the impact of the AECEO in their careers and lives.

Messages...

From: Suman B.

Happy 75th Birthday, AECEO!

Seventy-five years of courage and unity. From those first nursery educators in 1950 to every one of us standing here today—you've been our voice, our strength, and our home.

You've been our voice in Queen's Park hallways when doors slammed shut.

Our backbone through strikes, pandemics, and decades of "there's no money" excuses.

You turned grief into the Decent Work movement.

Silence into unrelenting demands for wage grids, pensions, and legislation that finally honors the responsibility we carry every single day.

You reminded us—again and again—that what we do is not childcare.

It is the first architecture of every human life.

I joined because I needed to be part of something bigger than my classroom.

I stay because you give me hope that one day, every ECE in Ontario will be paid, respected, and valued the way we deserve.

Thank you for carrying our stories, our struggles, and our dreams for three-quarters of a century. Here's to the next 75 years of building a system as extraordinary as the people who hold it together - and who will never stop demanding it.

From: Kim M.

What an amazing milestone to reach! The AECEO has meant many different things to ECEs through its 75 year evolution. The last few years have made me feel so proud (and supported). The staff team has grown, bringing together an amazing group of people that focus on decent work & pay, centering care in our profession, and bringing ECEs together in safe spaces to grow as advocates and professionals. Yay team, you are rocking it!

From: Amy O.

Happy 75th Anniversary, AECEO!

Being part of the AECEO has been such an important part of my professional and personal journey!

In the early 2000s, the AECEO granted and validated my University degree as a recognition of equivalency — a moment that truly changed my life. It gave me the recognition I needed to become an ECE, even before the College of ECEs existed. That moment launched me into what has now become a 25+ year career in the early learning and child care sector.

I also had the honour of serving on the AECEO Board as the Board Secretary, which gave me valuable experience, a stronger voice, and a deeper connection to a community of educators who care deeply about children and families. Through the AECEO, I found not only support

and mentorship, but also the inspiration to become a leader and advocate for high-quality, universal, inclusive, and affordable child care in Ontario.

I'm so grateful to have been part of this organization's history — and I can't wait to see what the next 75 years will bring.

From: Bernice C.

Happy anniversary! Thanks for keeping the focus on the power of early childhood educators as agents of change, community builders and significant contributors to the well-being of children and families. All of my favourite memories revolve around the numerous Decent Work community events learning from and with ECE's across the province!

From: Aleksandra S.

Happy 75th birthday AECEO! It is taking a great deal of time, energy, commitment, dedication and unwavering support to bring the public's attention to issues in the Early Childhood field. As we are a group of passionate individuals, we can do it and make a difference in the lives of families and children and in the process our communities as well as the entire sector in the province! Congratulations to everyone who has been involved in the past 75 years!

From: Deanne C.

I have been very proud to be a qualified Early Childhood Educator AECEO.C My family life took us to

many different places where I could use my Early Childhood knowledge and skills. Our retirement in Ottawa allowed me to become involved in the Professional Association and create a community Nursery School. We shared our space and knowledge in the development of ECE students and support for the professional association. In my retirement I follow the building of Early Childhood support for children, families and the dedicated people who understand its value.

From: Tammy P.

Happy Birthday AECEO & thank you founders, leaders & members for the commitment, dedication and determination that you put into establishing the best environment for children, families, communities & Early Childhood Educators! I am a proud member of a CARE collective and stand with pride alongside some of the most amazing advocates in the early years field.

From: Tammy N.

I first joined the AECEO because I wanted to feel connected to others who shared my passion for early childhood education. What I found was a community that lifted me up and helped me see myself as part of something bigger. I'll never forget attending my first AECEO gathering—hearing the stories of educators from across Ontario made me feel proud and inspired to add my own voice.

Looking back, I treasure the friendships, mentorship, and advocacy wins we've shared. As

we celebrate 75 years, I'm excited to see how AECEO will continue to empower and inspire the next generation of educators.

From: Eduarda S.

The AECEO was started and continues to exist because of the incredible women behind the scenes. I will always cherish my time at this ground-breaking organization.

From: Jamie W.

Congratulations on 75 years of advocacy, leadership, and dedication to our profession. The AECEO has been such an important voice for Early Childhood Educators in Ontario, and I'm so grateful for the work you've done to uplift and support educators, children, and families over the years. Your dedication to early childhood education has shaped hearts, minds, and futures for generations — and your impact continues to ripple outward in ways words can't fully express.

As an RECE and proud member of this community, I deeply appreciate the way AECEO continues to honour and strengthen our profession.

May this milestone year bring you joy, peace, and the deep satisfaction of knowing how profoundly your work has made a difference. Cheers to all you've accomplished and all the light you continue to bring into the world! Wishing you continued success and impact for the next 75 years and beyond!

From: Rebecca V.

I got inspired to join the AECEO when I was in college and watched teachers and students rally for the rights of early childhood educators. I wanted to be a part of that. To prove to each family and child that we are here to support you, be present with you and fight for you. For equity and inclusion for rights and more. I wanted to have the ability to access the resources of vast knowledge and hands on experiences to learn more of the field. I hope to make an impact on the lives of those I work with and for and by being a part of the AECEO I hope that means positive change to how child care is approached.

From: Donna S.

Congratulations AECEO! I was one of the last educators to earn my ECE equivalency from the AECEO. That was back in 2010, right before the College took over that responsibility. I appreciated AECEO's role in helping professionals like me. 75 years is a huge accomplishment! The AECEO is better than ever!

From: Crystal C.

Happy birthday AECEO! For 75 years this organization has fought for the educators, families, and children this sector is built on, and that work has been invaluable to everyone that has come before and that will come after us. I hope that the AECEO continues to advocate for what we need and continues to inspire us to fight for ourselves, too!

From: Ness K.

Huge congratulations on reaching this important milestone! Your dedication to early childhood education and the support you provide to educators across Ontario has made a lasting impact on countless children, families, and communities. We are proud to stand alongside you in celebrating your achievements and look forward to the next 75 years of leadership, innovation, and advocacy in the field. Happy Birthday AECEO!

From: Nicola M.

I first joined the AECEO in the very early 90s as a new ECE. My supervisor was the President at the time and inspired my interest in advocacy. Not long after I became Certified and am very proud to now be a member of the Board of Directors. Congratulations on 75 years!!

From: Anika K.

Happy 75th Anniversary, AECEO!

Congratulations on this wonderful milestone. Your ongoing commitment to advocating for early childhood educators and elevating the field has made a lasting impact on children, families, and communities across Ontario. Your dedication to early

childhood educators and to nurturing children's growth continues to inspire. Thank you for leading with heart, care, and purpose. Thank you for championing professionalism, equity, and care in early learning. Wishing you continued success and inspiration in the years ahead!

From: Tracy S.

Loud and proud to be a member of the AECEO! We stand on the shoulders of many advocates who lead us to where we are today.

From: Sonia C.

I have many fond memories of working temporarily with the AECEO Board; helping out organizing the AECEO Annual Conference, contacting speakers, connecting with vendors, putting together door prizes and goody bags for participants, etc. We used to meet by the Eglinton Public Library, where Joan Arruda and her team led us in the right direction. I was then an ECE and now I am a centre Supervisor working for the City of Toronto. I am grateful for the opportunities, networking, and strong leadership skills I gained during that time with the AECEO. Thank you and Happy Birthday!

From: Izabela D.

What a remarkable milestone — 75 years of unwavering commitment, compassion, and service to our children and communities. As we celebrate this diamond anniversary, we honor the generations of dedicated leaders, teachers, caregivers, and advocates who have built this legacy of love and learning.

Through every challenge and triumph, the AECEO has remained a beacon of hope, ensuring that every child is given the opportunity to thrive, dream, and reach their fullest potential. Our mission has always gone beyond education — it is about nurturing hearts, empowering families, and strengthening the very foundation of our future.

May this special anniversary remind us all of how far we've come — and inspire us to continue working hand in hand for the welfare and well-being of every child we serve. Here's to 75 years of impact, and to the many more years ahead of growth, advocacy, and transformative care.

Thank you to our wonderful AECEO Members for 75 years of support, fellowship and community! You are essential to the work we do and our ability to take meaningful initiatives on behalf of Early Childhood Educators. Speaking up for ECEs through policy submissions, consultations, and advocacy campaigns, facilitating connections and developing/hosting relevant professional learning opportunities could not happen without you.

AECEO Timeline: 75 Years of Impact

Compiled & edited by Rachel Neville



1950s - 1970s

On November 6, 1950, The Nursery Education Association of Ontario (NEAO) - which would later be renamed and become the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO) - was established. The creation of our organization was in response to the absence of government regulation and formal facilities for training in early childhood studies for “day nursery” staff. Part of this work took the form of AECEO Branches - each with their own board of elected volunteers. These Branches supported advocacy initiatives, hosted local events and meetings, and contributed to the goals of the organization. Over the years since then new branches were added and branches were closed, and at their height there were 24 Branches across Ontario.

In the following years, NEAO/AECEO initiated the first university extension course and the first diploma course at Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson Polytechnical Institute) for preschool teachers. We also established a voluntary Certification Process for preschool teachers. This process recognized and encouraged achievement both in training and preschool teaching. Certificates were awarded to applicants who achieved the required level of training, and whose work in the preschool field was evaluated over a required period of time by certified colleagues. Applicants with out-of-province and out-of-country credentials were required to undergo a “Pre-Certification” process to obtain an AECEO letter of equivalency prior to applying for Certification.

1980s

In the 1980s, the AECEO launched “Week of the Child”. This was an annual public education campaign to raise awareness of the value of Early Childhood Education and early childhood educators. Several years later, the AECEO established a Legislative Recognition committee to advocate for the creation of a professional regulatory body for ECEs in Ontario. The hope was that the establishment of a regulatory body would raise ECEs status as a recognized profession, thereby improving working conditions and raising wages.

1990s

In 1992, the AECEO launched *eceLINK*, a publication for ECE students, frontline practitioners, administrators and supervisors, trainers, and policy makers, covering a wide variety of topics that impact the ELCC sector. In 1994, we revised our Code of Ethics. These were a set of values and principles by which ECEs were asked to adhere to in their practice. A grant was received from the Ministry of Community and Social Services to print and distribute copies of the Code of Ethics to all licensed programs across Ontario. This document continued to be used as the ethical standard in ECE training institutions and child care programs for many years. The following year, French services for the AECEO’s Equivalency Process were transferred to l’AFESE0 (L’Association francophone à l’éducation des services à l’enfance de l’Ontario) to



deliver in the province of Ontario. Prior to this, the AECEO worked with both French and English ECEs in Ontario. In 1996, our name was officially changed to Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario. This change reflected our new role as the professional association and voluntary regulatory body for Early Childhood Educators in Ontario.

2000s

The 2000s ushered in a new era for the AECEO, as we published a position statement on universality, supporting the principle that expansion of early learning and child care services in Ontario should be confined to the non-profit sector. This was the first time we advocated for expansion in the non-profit sector and affirmed our position that child care is a social and public good. The Common Table for Childhood Development and Care was formed by the AECEO, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC), Ontario Association of Family Resource Programs (OAFRP), Home Child Care Association of Ontario (HCCAO), Ontario Early Years Centre Network (OEYCN) and Middle Years Matter Coalition (MYMC). This group was established to promote collaboration in advocacy and delivery of services to children and families in Ontario, the six founding partners established and formed the Steering Committee, and promoted a collaborative membership model. This common table started to shift the work of the AECEO to prioritize community and collaboration, centering advocacy and the voices of those working in the field.

In 2007, legislation establishing the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE) was passed. This in turn changed the identity and purpose of the AECEO. Our work moved away from regulation and professionalization (which was now the role of CECE) and our new identity would emerge in the years to come. In 2009, CECE was granted permission to use the AECEO Code of Ethics in the development of their own document.

2010s

In the 2010s, the AECEO's equivalency and credential assessment process came to an end after almost half a century and this responsibility was transferred to the CECE. AECEO Letters of Equivalency issued on or before Feb. 23, 2014, continued to be recognized by the CECE until Jan. 1, 2023.



The AECEO continued advocating for the best interest of our community by demanding that the province of Ontario keep its promise to provide seamless, full-day, full-year programs for 4 and 5 year olds, outlined by Dr. Charles Pascal, the Premier's Advisor on Early Learning. We supported and advocated for ECEs to be equal partners in the program, with our position stating that the program should, "recognize the specialized body of knowledge, training, and accountability of the Early Childhood Educator as a lead teacher or equal partner in a multi-disciplinary team environment". In September 2010, the Full Day Kindergarten program was introduced and our community celebrated this key component of the blueprint for early learning in Ontario.



Early Childhood Educators
fighting for decent work!



In 2013, the *Professional Pay for Professional Work* campaign to improve compensation for RECEs launched at the AECEO Provincial Conference in Toronto. The AECEO took the lead in addressing principles for continuous professional learning by publishing a discussion paper for member and sector-wide feedback. The AECEO and OCBCC launched a three year initiative, funded through the Ontario Trillium Foundation, to promote the value of licensed child care and the importance of Registered Early Childhood Educators to the delivery of a high quality program. The following year, an award was presented to the AECEO by George Brown College, School of Early Childhood, and the University of Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education for its contribution to the profession. After many years of advocacy by the AECEO and other ECE sector stakeholders, the Ontario Government provided a two dollar per hour wage increase over two years, for child care centre staff and licensed home child care providers in 2015. The AECEO launched a petition calling on the provincial government to fund professional pay for all ECEs

in Ontario regardless of where they work. With the approval of our project, *Mobilizing the early childhood workforce in the movement for decent work* by the Atkinson Foundation, one is able to see the birth of the work taken up by the AECEO presently in 2025 - a pivotal shift toward what the organization is today.

Following significant push back from the ECE community in 2016, the Ontario Government backed off on proposed changes to the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA) ratios, group sizes, and age groupings through concerted ECE community efforts led by the AECEO and multiple ECE sector partners. The AECEO then began mobilization forums - a more concerted effort to go into communities to consult, collaborate, and create advocacy campaigns that reflect the voices of the workforce. These efforts continue today in person and have also been conducted on Zoom to bring together more people across the province.

The “Decent Work” project continued in 2017, with over 4,000 RECEs and early years staff responding to the AECEO’s consultation survey that helped inform recommendations made by the AECEO’s Decent Work Task Force to the Ministry of Education. The policy recommendations, *Transforming Work in Ontario’s Early Years and Child Care Sector*, called for a provincial wage scale with a starting/minimum wage of \$25 per hour. This marked the beginning of the AECEO’s focus on making wage recommendations to the government as part of a push to improve compensation for early years professionals in Ontario.

Throughout this decade, through a series of workshops held in collaboration with the Institute for Change Leaders and the OCBCC, the AECEO developed 5 local Communities of Practice (CoPs) to work with the AECEO as decent work teams to organize and build capacity in their local communities. The AECEO made an active commitment to participate in and support the process of reconciliation with First Nation, Métis and Inuit People and communities in Ontario and across Canada. A Guiding Committee on Truth and Reconciliation was established in 2018 to share knowledge, traditions and teachings, and help to inform the AECEO’s efforts.

In 2018, the Professional Pay petition reached & surpassed the goal of 10,000 signatures. This

incredible participation affirmed the importance of raising the pay of early years professionals in order to support the sector. Responding to this significant advocacy, the Ontario Government released *Growing Together: Ontario’s Early Years and Child Care Workforce Strategy* that included a plan to implement a wage grid that reflects qualifications and experience for all program staff. This was sadly not realized after a new government was elected.

We continued our work in collaboration with the *eceLINK* editorial committee and in 2017 developed a revamped and improved *eceLINK* that included peer reviewed articles. This publication continues today and brings together the work of academics, front line workers, and early years professionals from across the sector.

To close out the decade, the AECEO & OCBCC launched a successful joint campaign calling on the new Ontario Government to continue the Wage Enhancement Grant enacted by the previous government in 2015. This garnered 17,000 signatures on a hard copy petition that was presented in the Ontario Legislature 16 times.

2020s

In March 2020, we hosted a conference focusing on Full Day Kindergarten called, “Framing our Future Kindergarten Summit”. Subsequent roundtables were part of an effort to follow up and address issues discussed at the summit. Later in 2020, the AECEO responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, providing frequently-updated resources for ECEs receiving the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and other financial support. We engaged the community with a Pandemic Pay Letter and campaign advocating that the Ontario government extend the \$4 per hour pandemic pay increase to apply to all staff in emergency child care. We launched the survey *Returning to Work: ECE and early years staff perspectives*, garnering 4000 participants and prompting the writing of our joint report with the OCBCC, *From Reopening to Recovery* released in August. The Federal Speech from the Throne mentioned Early Childhood Educators and a universal child care system. Our #RisingUpForChildCare campaign launched, focusing on frontline ECEs and staff, parents and families experiencing the child care crisis. In November *An insult to educators, children and families: Child care community views on the Ontario*

government's proposed changes to the *Child Care and Early Years Act* report was released by the AECEO and OCBC. Ultimately, the proposed changes to the CCEYA that impacted the work of early years professionals on the floor were not moved forward.

The following year, we continued to support ECEs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and launched a survey called, *Covid Experiences*. The findings of this survey were released in a report called, *Forgotten on the Frontlines*. Soon after, ECEs won vaccine priority in Ontario.

We hosted a Kindergarten Roundtable and Kindergarten Conversations, bringing together and providing space for ECEs working in Ontario's Kindergarten program, resulting in the development and publication of specific resources for this group of ECEs. Also in 2021 the Federal Government invested \$30B into the creation of a Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system. The AECEO and OCBC published, *The Roadmap to Universal Child Care in Ontario* (first edition) detailing policy recommendations for the successful implementation of CWELCC in Ontario. The AECEO and OCBC organized Take Action Tuesdays, a summer campaign inviting educators to engage with *The Roadmap to Universal Child Care in Ontario* through activities that are typically found in child care programs.

After pressure from the AECEO community, the Ontario government signed the CWELCC agreement, indicating their commitment to work with the Federal government to begin system building. The provincial government implemented a "wage floor" of \$18 per hour for ECEs in Ontario. As a culmination to the ongoing Kindergarten Conversations, the AECEO hosted *Voices from the Classroom*, a roundtable with Kindergarten ECEs who shared their stories and experiences.

Throughout the pandemic, through the approval of a new project *Building Leadership and Learning Communities*, we hosted 11 Professional Learning Experiences and Conversations, welcoming 4,200+ participants. In 2022, the AECEO participated in the National Day of Action led by Child Care Now. This initiative included training sessions for community engagement, a resource toolkit of flyers, infographics, media scripts, an MPP breakfast, a Press Conference in the media gallery, and a large rally on the lawn at Queens Park. Local CoPs and child care programs held their own local events.

In 2023, we convened a Conference Committee of ECEs from across the province and various roles in the sector to plan the 2023 AECEO virtual conference. This was the AECEO's first virtual conference, and first provincial conference since 2016. The 2023 AECEO virtual Provincial Conference, *We Raise Each Other Up: ECEs Building Leadership & Learning Communities of Joy, Curiosity, and Hope* welcomed more than 900 participants and 44 ECE presenters across 25 sessions. The conference included virtual networking and discussion lounges, an online gallery of digital posters, other creative formats, workshops, presentations, and small group conversations. The AECEO CoPs were rebranded and CARE Collectives were launched to better reflect the ethos of the groups and support continued expansion of membership.

After months of advocacy, the Ontario government announced the ECE wage floor would be increased to \$23.86 per hour as of January 1st, 2024.

In March, after decades of work by the AECEO community, Ontario saw a historic policy win. Bill C-35: *An Act respecting early learning and child care in Canada* was adopted unanimously by the House of Commons. This enactment set out the Government of Canada's vision for a Canada-wide early learning and child care system. It also set out the Government of Canada's commitment to maintaining long-term funding relating to early learning and child care to be provided to the provinces and Indigenous peoples.

Current Work of the AECEO

As the professional association for ECE's in Ontario, we believe early learning and child care (ELCC) matters for more than any return on investment, or for the construction of a future neoliberal, efficient, and technocratic workforce. ELCC services matter because humans are interdependent and relational, and therefore we must work and care collectively in order to thrive. Caring for children is an ethical and social responsibility that we all share – it is not an individual parental concern from which the government can absolve itself, or a task that is naturalized to women and therefore undeserving of decent work and fair pay. We cannot have policy and funding mechanisms that continue to advance this perspective. In order to achieve our goals of decent work and pay for early years professionals, our key areas of focus include:

Decent Work Common Table	Roadmap to Universal Child Care Policy Briefs & Program Profiles	Listening and Storytelling Campaign
Government Relations	Campaigns	Decent Work CARE Collectives
Cross-sector care worker and movement engagement	Sectoral Strategy	Student and Community Activation
Parent Activation	Member Engagement, Communications, Grant Writing and more!	

We continue to work with our collaborators and project partners to ensure that we have a strong, united voice. These include:

- The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC)
- Atkinson Centre and George Brown College
- Child Care Now (CCN)
- Cross-sector allies (Decent Work & Health, Justice for Workers, Equal Pay Coalition, and more)

This current moment still calls on us to think, act, and do differently in the ELCC sector in order to advance goals of achieving decent work for ECEs and early years staff, who are the key to meaningful care and early learning experiences for children and a steadfast source of trust and dependency for families. We continue our efforts to build and strengthen relationships, solidarity, and allyship across the province and nationally. Further, we are committed to support the reconceptualizing of the discourses we employ to advance a system of public, affordable, and accessible ELCC – services that embrace educators, care, and decent work.

We will be present in this moment and continue to bring the voices of educators to the forefront. We remain committed to doing our work in a way that centers anti-racism, inclusivity, and Indigenous resurgence. This is not the time for disconnected action, it is not the time for individualism, it is not the time for disconnected policy interventions. It is the time for the voices of educators and the ELCC community to be centered, valued, heard, and responded to in policy debate, dialogue, and development. You cannot build a caring system, a caring service, or a caring economy without *caring with* and *for* the caring workforce.

What’s Next for the AECEO?

Looking ahead to the future, we remain committed to responding to the needs of our community and consulting with them to ensure that our work amplifies their voices and concerns. We will continue to grow our community, mobilize the workforce, and work collaboratively with others to build public support and people power working towards advancing a system of collective care and learning that centers decent work. We will continue to leverage the strengths of the early learning and child care workforce and build leadership and capacity in the Decent Work movement, fueled, and led by early childhood educators.

We will continue to resist policies, narratives, and ideologies that center economic efficiencies, autonomy, individualism, and austerity. We remain committed to strengthening our collective thinking and advocacy, community and knowledge mobilization to advancing a vision of Decent Work in the ELCC sector that embraces our human interdependence and therefore the societal value of care and care work.



Here’s to another 75 years of community, solidarity, and connection with the AECEO!



THE GOOD FIGHT

THE GOOD FIGHT PRIZE FOR DECENT WORK

ATKINSON
FOUNDATION

“

THIS ISN'T
THE FINISH LINE.

IT'S JUST
THE START.

ANNOUNCING THE WINNER FOR 2025

THE WORTH MORE! CAMPAIGN FOR CHILD CARE WORKERS

The Worth More! Campaign for Child Care Workers is led by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario, and the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Ontario.

They bring together early childhood educators and child care workers, employers, unions, families, and allies in the fight for fair wages and decent work under Ontario's \$10aDay child care plan.

The result? The wage floor for early childhood educators increased by nearly \$5 per hour. And the fight continues on the need for a funded wage grid, pensions, and better benefits for Ontario's child care workers.

For over 80 years, the Atkinson Foundation has stood with all those who fight for decent work. And while we've selected the 2025 champion, one thing is for certain - the fight for decent work is still far from the finish line.

**Join the fight for decent work
at GoodFightPrize.ca**

**GOOD
FIGHT
PRIZE**

ECE Voices

Sophie Rayner- Grignon

I started drawing ECE portraits in 2016 - I had all these memories, stories, and moments - moments captured on film - that I couldn't share because confidentiality always comes first. So I drew the moments and photos, I drew me at work with a baby, I liked it. The child was suddenly not them but a drawn version that wasn't identifiable.

I decided to draw my entire Centre of 15 educators (I can do anything right?)- I searched the files for photos of everyone and printed copies on my break in secret to surprise everyone. I drew them all by hand back then so each drawing took a couple hours possibly more - thank goodness for digital art. I started in September with the goal of gifting them on the AECEO's and OCBCC annual ECE Appreciation Day in October - I ended up gifting them at Christmas because it took a little longer than I expected. Although it took longer they were still just as special. Many coworkers have moved on to new places but I still get messages of "new office check out my art" - "Merry Christmas - look what's on my tree" - "it's ECE appreciation day and this was one of my favorite educator gifts ever"

So I never stopped drawing moments and I'm always proud to gift an educator their moment.



About this moment: This is trust building in action - mealtimes for a new friend aren't always easy. Eating as a little person is vulnerable so often we may need a bit of extra support as relationships are developing. For this friend, knowing the food is

safe was important as they got comfortable at meals. So "Poison Check" became part of our routine. Sophie take a bite - baby take a bite. Even fake eating worked. So I will never eat a banana the same because of this captured moment.

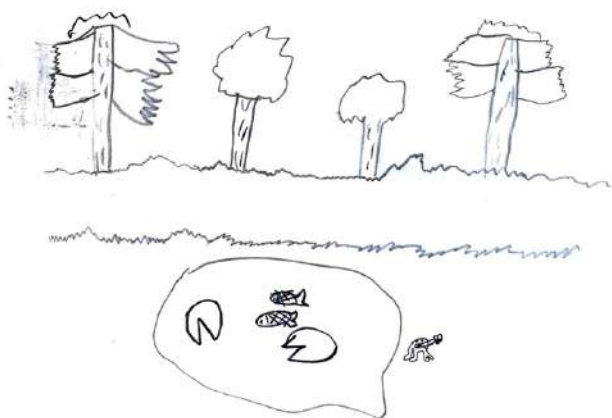
Celebrating our educators: Reflections from Brock University's B.ECE Program

Dr. Jaime Barratt, Dr. Sandra Della Porta, Dr. Dane Marco Di Cesare, Dr. Sally Hooper

Dear Early Childhood Educators

As the AECEO celebrates 75 years of strengthening, advocating for, and uplifting early childhood educators (ECEs) across Ontario, we would like to take the opportunity to pay tribute to the ECEs who come through our Honours Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (B.ECE) degree program at Brock University. We write this piece from the perspectives of four post-secondary instructors who have had the privilege of teaching, learning from, and growing beside the current and future generations of ECEs, teachers, EAs, and beyond. Organized into four vignettes, we provide our reflections and honour our students to remind us of the value our collective contributions have to the field.

Pathway through the forest BY: DUGSI



From Jaime: B.ECE Students Shape our Profession

The B.ECE program is a unique community. It is an online Honours degree that builds upon students' foundational knowledge from their early childhood education (ECE) diploma (or equivalent). Students come into the program with lived experience working in early learning settings. They come to us with questions, hopes, and a desire to deepen their thinking about practice, advocacy, and the profession.



If you've been in one of my courses, you would probably know that I begin each year by introducing myself; a Sheridan College ECE graduate, former toddler teacher, B.ECE and Brock alumni... Most importantly though, I tell my students that, "I am someone who believes in you, values you, and understands you."

I remind students of this because working in this profession is not for the faint of heart. I know this because, despite no longer working in childcare settings, I am still confronted with the realities that ECEs face: emotional labour, systemic pressures, and the gap between value of the work and societal value placed on it. Yet every year, I meet students who arrive with courage. They want to learn, reflect, challenge, advocate, research, and expand who they are as educators and as human beings.

Our students come from every corner of the province and beyond. From break rooms and in the car between jobs, to living rooms and basements so they don't disturb their sleeping families, they join us online for meetings. Every so often I am surprised with a tiny hand holding up a scribbled drawing into the students' laptop camera. All of these interactions remind me that ECE is shaped not only by our knowledge, but by everything we carry with us: our lived realities, emotions, relationships, responsibilities and previous experience.

I think of students [like Jade Grandpre](#), who completed her BECE Honours degree while navigating grief, motherhood, and other unimaginable challenges. She brought her truth and lived experience into [her capstone research on ECE burnout](#)—work that is deeply necessary. She didn't simply graduate from our program; she embodied the perseverance and humanity that continues to hold this profession together.



Stories like this remind me that our students don't become ECEs because the path is smooth and linear. They become ECEs because they *care*. That care shows up in children's drawings taped on the fridge, in the quiet hours students devote to coursework after their families are resting for the evening, and in the courage it takes to learn, unlearn, and reimagine their practice.

As we mark the AECEO's 75th anniversary, I see clearly that our students are the continuation of that legacy. They are the profession's future, and witnessing their journeys unfold is one of the great privileges of my career.

From Dane: Shaping Early Childhood Education through Equity, Care, & Social Justice

In early childhood education, I believe care is most powerful when it is intertwined with equity, responsibility, allyship, and social justice. These principles are not additions to our profession but woven into its very foundation. Each time we as ECEs listen, teach, plan, document, or re-envision next steps, we impact how children experience belonging, develop identity, and embody possibility. Everyday moments create conditions in which children feel seen, safe, and valued.

As such, equity and allyship are core, essential responsibilities. They invite us to be attentive to the children and caregivers we serve, to honour the stories they carry, and to create environments where each child's strengths, identities, and ways of being are welcomed and affirmed. They invite us to reflect on our practice with curiosity and care, continually expanding our capacity to support all children in meaningful ways.

What inspires me, year after year, is watching how our students embrace these commitments. It is empowering to see students bring what they learn into their work, showing up for children, caregivers, and communities with compassion, thoughtfulness, and an awareness of their role in shaping inclusive learning spaces. It is in these moments that I see the future of the profession taking shape, guided by educators who lead with care rooted in social justice.

Equity often becomes most visible when students begin connecting what they explore in their courses with what they encounter in their workplaces and communities. In the *Inclusion in the Early Years* course, students examine inclusion as it relates to disability, accessibility, and special education in early childhood contexts. I see them

approach the coursework with a mix of lived experience and professional curiosity, looking closely at how daily practices shape children's access to participation, how communication influences partnerships with children and their caregivers, and how decision making can create opportunities. This learning becomes more concrete through an experiential learning project on inclusion, where students collaborate with childcare centres to co-create goals that support more equitable and inclusive spaces. I am always struck by the care students bring to their partnerships. In one project, students worked with a centre that was concerned with how overstimulating the environment was for children with sensory needs. Through listening to staff, observing the routines and classroom layouts, and considering various perspectives to understand how best to support these children, the students were able to assist with sensory-friendly modifications and documentation tools that staff could use and enact.



One of the most meaningful parts of teaching in this program is the way critical conversations with students continually shape and strengthen our curriculum. I think of a moment with Amanda Pont-Shanks, a BECE Alumni and Programs and Services Manager for early learning and childcare with the [Métis Nation of Ontario](#). Amanda shared that while she valued the

Indigenous inclusion and perspectives integrated within the program, Métis voices were not explicitly represented. Her insight was framed as an invitation, an opening for us to grow. Our program faculty (and many students) now attend the annual [Métis Nation of Ontario's Early Learning Conference](#), a multiday event that brings together Métis Elders, educators, and community leaders within the ECE community to share knowledge, stories, artistry, and teachings, expanding our understandings in a multitude of ways that we can use to inform and adapt curriculum within our program. It is a powerful reminder that students don't just move through the program; they help shape it, ensuring the values we teach are reflected in the choices we make.

Amanda's impact extends far beyond the program itself. She was [recently awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal](#) for her extraordinary contributions to Métis-led early learning and child care, recognizing the impact of her advocacy, her cultural work, and the programs she has helped shape for thousands of Métis children and families across Ontario.

From Sally: Learning with and from Communities

With students from all over Canada, as well as from countries in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, we are a point of contact for the wider ECE community. Through our students we hope to continue building relationships within this vibrant community by fostering partnerships with families and communities since children thrive in programs where they and their families are valued as active participants and contributors.

During their third- and fourth-year [internships](#), students experience authentic, situational learning opportunities that highlight links between theory and practice in engaging and meaningful ways. In early education and care sites of their own choice and with specific learning goals, students apply their knowledge and skills by engaging with communities, families, and

children to create and implement community and school-based programs that support early learning and development. Examples of internships include participating in early learning programs, kindergarten to grade 3 classrooms, community health agencies, research and advocacy, child and family centres, municipal and provincial government, and non-governmental agencies that address the needs of families, children, and their communities.



mutteo

A student, interested in understanding language and speech development in young children, did her internship with a speech and language pathologist; after graduation from the B.ECE program, she pursued a degree in Speech-Language Pathology. Another student worked at her local library and made a valuable contribution to their children's programming. Two students worked remotely with an aftercare program in Windhoek, Namibia, creating curriculum and workshops to address the social emotion needs of the children and their families.

By engaging in real-world internships, our students communicate the value and importance of ECE and advocate for the well-being of children and families in their communities and to the broader public. We are incredibly proud of the thoughtful, socially responsive directions that our students choose, and commend the meaningful ways they continue to shape and strengthen the professional during and long after they graduate from our program.

From Sandra: Kudos to our Community of Practice

The ECE community has always been tight knit and supportive, reflecting our solidarity. The field wouldn't be where it is today without the collective spirit and shared advocacy of ECEs across Ontario and beyond. This spirit brought the Bachelor of ECE program to fruition in 2011, where Dr. Debra Harwood and Dr. Mary-Louise Vanderlee developed what is now a successful, thriving program. Driven by the Ministry of Education's agenda to enhance our ECE profile, the constant and global attention to the importance of ECE in media reports, as well as Debra and Mary-Louise's critical considerations of what they, as ECEs, would have liked to see in an ECE degree post ECE College diploma, they designed the B.ECE program at Brock University. Clearly, they made the right call, evidenced by our exponential growth over the past decade!

[Since its inception](#), the B.ECE program has been bringing together ECEs from our Ontario community, to build excellence in the field and support ECEs thirst for knowledge, further specialization, and ongoing professional development. As a program, we continuously strive to improve *for* ECEs; by listening to their feedback and engaging in ongoing dialogue, we have been implementing change—transforming our program. It's the students' expertise and professional opinions that have contributed to our success.



Growing Together

Based on student feedback and faculty knowledge base, we've added courses such as *Indigenous Culture and ECE*, *ECE for Sustainability*, *Evaluating the Science Behind the Developing Child*, and *Play, Power, and Culture in ECE*, to the program. Hearing students' positive response to these course additions and learning about their use of knowledge gained in their practice reflects the essence of the program. [Ala Mohammed](#) and [Alyssa Marion](#) are great examples of ways in which our program, along with students' championing for change- together-strengthen the ECE profession. In our dedication to advancing the ECE program/field, we have also moved the program online in 2021, allowing us to meet students' varying schedules and desire for flexibility. Through this, we have also been able to spread the love and welcome ECEs to the program from across Canada and Internationally.



With our diverse cohorts, we bring together ECEs from all over the world, providing a space to share experiences and reflect on ECE work as it varies in different contexts. In fact, our ECEs inspire our own community and scholarly contributions. In our community of practice, we learn from each other, share knowledge, and develop new skills in the field. We strive to deepen thinking, challenge assumptions, and bringing fresh insights to longstanding ECE issues. This, along with students' diverse professional and personal

histories, shape classroom dialogue.

Celebrating our ECEs' Accomplishments

We encourage everyone to check out their recent work presented at the yearly [B.ECE Virtual Symposium!](#) Students' capstone research project is a stellar illustration of the hard work, passion, and dedication ECEs have to the field, where they raise important points about current issues, draw on their experience and build their own professional capacity, creatively designing new ways to transform programming, support and celebrate children's authentic selves, etc.

From their first B.ECE course, to their self-directed internships, and finally their capstone research project, we see students' confidence build, their voices strengthen, and their sense of pride in their work blossom- what a rewarding feeling!

Brock's B.ECE Students' Passion and Dedication

The most notable aspect of the B.ECE program, is that each student can carve their own path expanding on a budding area of interest or honing on a specialization based on newfound knowledge; they have opportunity to harness their voice. We're so proud of our students and their achievements in the program. It's such an honour to be part of their journeys. Stories from students like [Hana Albqaeen](#), [Erika Tilbrook](#), [Holly Scime](#), and [Allynn McLellan](#), are powerful representations of what we have achieved and hope to continue in our delivery of a relevant, responsive B.ECE degree program.

We are so grateful to be in a position where we learn from our students' meaningful experiences, thrive with their perseverance, and grow the ECE field alongside them in our collective, wholehearted, unwavering activism for a brighter world for ECE.

Conclusions

The stories we've shared about our B.ECE students reflect the realities and possibilities of ECE. Through their coursework, internship and research experiences, and community engagement, our students demonstrate resilience and dedication that represent the core value of ECE. Together, these stories of celebration remind us how deeply educators contribute to the caring of children, families, and communities. As we look toward the future, it is educators like these who will continue to shape the early learning profession.



Author Bios

Jaime: Dr. Jaime Barratt (she/her) is a Registered Early Childhood Educator and Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Brock University. Drawing on her experience in early childhood education, she brings a multidisciplinary background in child health, outdoor play and learning, and education. Her current research focuses on fostering Early Childhood Educators' own physical literacy, emphasizing and valuing the vital role they have in promoting young children's health and well-being.

Sandra: Dr. Sandra Della Porta (she/her) is a Registered Early Childhood Educator and an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at Brock University. Building on years of practical experience working with children in various educational settings, she studies teaching and learning as well as power and its relations and dynamics as it exists in the family, informal and formal educational settings, and community contexts.

Dane: Dr. Dane Marco Di Cesare (he/him) is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at Brock University and Chair of the Canada Regional Network of INQYR, a SSHRC-funded international research partnership focused on 2SLGBTQ+ youth resilience. His interdisciplinary work bridges special education, digital technology, literacy, and equity, with a focus on engagement with digital media and spaces.

Sally: Dr. Sally Hooper (she/her) is an Assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at Brock University. With diverse experience in early childhood education settings and schools in Canada and internationally, she has a wealth of knowledge in curriculum development, delivery, and evaluation. Her interests include community development, socio-cultural learning, Montessori education, and comparative education.

University of New Brunswick ECE student project: Feminist ethics of care and how they impact ECEs

Thank you to the following students for their contributions to this section

My name is Yasmeen Shahid. I'm currently working as a Behavioural Educational Assistant in the Junior-Primary grades with the Peel District School Board in Toronto. Before this role, I worked as a toddler and preschool teacher, which really helped shape my passion for working with young children. I'm also a mom of two, so life is always busy! In my free time, I love watching TV series and catching up with friends.

My name is Nicole Morse. I was born and raised in the U.S. and moved to Nova Scotia when I was 20. I'm a proud mom of two, and since settling here, I've been following my passion for working with young children. I graduated from Jane Norman College as an Early Childhood Educator, and I'm currently continuing my journey at UNB, working toward my Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood. Teaching has always been a dream of mine, ever since I was a little girl and I'm excited to be making it a reality. When I'm not studying or in the classroom, I love spending time at the beach, going on adventures with my family, and taking care of our pets.

My name is Roxanne Edgecombe, and I was born and raised in St. John's, Newfoundland, where I still live today but in the beautiful town of Paradise. I'm a proud mom of two amazing girls who keep me busy, especially in the summer, when our lives revolve around baseball games and road trips. I've been working in the childcare field for over 17 years, including running my own day home for seven of those years. Throughout my career, I've had the privilege of building strong relationships with families and supporting children with their unique personalities, interests, and ways of learning. I'm passionate about creating welcoming, playful spaces where every child feels seen and supported. I'm currently continuing my education at UNB, working toward my Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood. Becoming a teacher has always been a dream of mine, and I'm so excited to be taking steps to make it a reality. When I'm not in the classroom or hitting the books, you'll find me spending time with my family, cheering from the bleachers, or enjoying a quiet moment with our dog (Dorothy).

My name is Ashley Morgan, and I'm a mom of two from Newfoundland with a deep passion for teaching and learning. That passion has led me down many different paths. Over the years I've taught gymnastics classes for children, worked as a motorcycle instructor, and spent several years in the Newfoundland and Labrador school system as a Teaching and Learning Assistant. I hold a diploma in Early Childhood Education from College of the North Atlantic, and I'm currently completing my Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education through the University of New Brunswick. I'm especially interested in how children make meaning through play, relationships, and everyday experiences. When I'm not studying or working, I enjoy reading, spending time camping with my family, and taking my young children to their extracurricular activities, I rarely miss a moment.

Ashley Dolomount lives on the west coast of Newfoundland with her husband, 2 teenage sons, 2 dogs and cat. She has worked in Early Childhood Education in multiple capacities for approximately 15 years, currently within the public k-12 school system. She loves working with children and exploring her creativity. She is a feminist advocate. lives on the west coast of Newfoundland with her husband, 2 teenage sons, 2 dogs and cat. She has worked in Early Childhood Education in multiple capacities for approximately 15 years, currently within the public k-12 school system. She loves working with children and exploring her creativity. She is a feminist advocate.

Akter Jahan is a graduate of the University of New Brunswick with a Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education. She has over fifteen years of experience supporting young children in early learning and school settings. She currently works as an Educational Assistant with the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB), Ontario. Her professional interests include mentoring others to pursue careers in early childhood education.

WOMEN'S OPPRESSION IN CHILDCARE

Fitting into a world that wasn't built for us!

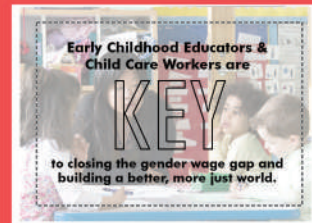


By: Ashley Morgan, Nicole Morse, Roxanne Edgecombe & Yasmeen Shahid



DOING THE WORK

Without the Support!





WE NEED CHANGE



“Early Childhood educator(s) as early childhood educator(s) sufficiently responds to twenty first-century response(abilities) of early childhood education despite uncaring conditions and systems.” (Bruce et al., 2023) Early childhood educators across Canada are rising to the occasion and fulfilling their important roles even when the environment they work in is often challenging, unsupported, under resourced or unjust.

SOMETHING IS CHANGING...

Caring for children means caring for the people who educate and nurture them.

And in some parts of Canada, the tide may finally be turning.

As Menon et al. (2024) state:

“Recent investments by the Federal Government in 2021 to build a Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system have prompted a number of progressive workforce supports, like wage grids, pensions and benefits, and planning time in many Canadian provinces and territories.”

These changes are more than policy shifts—they’re signs of hope.

For many early childhood educators, this feels like a long-overdue move toward a career that is respected, supported, and sustainable.

But the work isn’t done—we need to keep the pressure on to make sure this momentum doesn’t stop here.



UNDervalUED, BUT NOT UNSKILLED

Most of us in early childhood education are women. But too often, our work is dismissed as something we do out of kindness—

not as the skilled, professional work it truly is.

We’re called babysitters,

not educators.

This isn’t just a misunderstanding—

it’s sexism.

As bell hooks reminds us:

“Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression.”

The way ECE is undervalued is part of that larger system feminism challenges.

Fighting for recognition, respect, and fair compensation isn’t just professional—it’s feminist.

And it starts with naming the care, the skill, and the power in what we do.



SOMETHING IS CHANGING...

NEWS ALERT



"IT'S HARD TO DO, BECAUSE THERE IS NOTHING ONE GOVERNMENT (CAN) DO THAT CAN'T BE UNDONE BY THE FOLLOWING GOVERNMENT, UNLESS CANADIANS ARE VERY CLEAR ON THE NEED TO KEEP THIS GOING." (THE CANADIAN PRESS, 2025)





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Feminism Is for Everybody: A Learning Journey Through Bell hooks' Work

Justice, Love, and Education through an
Intersectional Feminist Lens

by Akter Jahan



WHAT FEMINISM REALLY MEANS



"Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression." (hooks, 2015, p. 1)

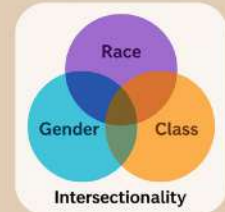


"Feminism must do more than simply advocate for women's rights within existing power structures" (hooks, 2015, p. 1)



As long as women are using class or race power to dominate other women, feminist sisterhood cannot be fully realized. (hooks, 2000)

Feminism must center race, class, ability, and more—not just gender. (hooks, 2015)



"All too often... people believe that feminism is just for women. This is simply not true". (hooks, 2015, p. x)

"Come closer, and you will see: feminism is for everybody." (hooks, 2015, p. xiv)



BREAKING PATRIARCHY: TEACHING WITH LOVE AND JUSTICE

"Patriarchy is the single most life-threatening social disease assaulting the male body and spirit in our nation" (hooks, 2004, p. 1)



"Patriarchy demands of men that they become and remain emotional cripples." (hooks, 2004, p. 3)

"Love is a combination of care, knowledge, responsibility, commitment and Trust" (AfroMarxist, 2020, 18:01)



The heart of every justice movement was an ethic of love. — (AfroMarxist, 2020, 4:26)

WHY FEMINISM IN EARLY CHILDHOOD?

Feminism helps educators:

- Interrupt stereotypes early
- Value and Respect all identities
- Center of empathy and justice
- Make space for emotions
- Teach justice through care



"The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility." (Berea College, 2022, 12:34)

CALL TO ACTION

Imagine a world where we are all free to be ourselves—a world of peace, justice, and possibility. Feminism won't build it alone, but it opens the door to beloved community, where freedom and equality are truly shared. (hooks, 2015, p. xiv)



HOW WILL YOU CARRY BELL HOOKS' VISION FORWARD?

- What will I unlearn today?
- How can I build a beloved community?
- What does love look like in action?



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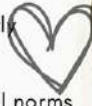
FEMINISM IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The Power of Caring

By Ashley Dolomount

1. What is Feminist Ethics of Care?

- Valuing the work of Early Childhood Educators
- Challenging neoliberal, patriarchal and colonial norms
- Focusing on relationship building, independence and ethical care giving and receiving
- Promoting nurture as central to learning and social justice



"We wonder what caring activism might offer to others, or what we might learn by opening to feminist caring optimism?" (Menon et al. 2024).

3. Feminist Pedagogy

- Building reciprocal relationships; educators and students care for and care with each other
- Fostering independence and shared responsibility
- Actively listening
- Centered on inclusion, empathy and emotional growth and development
- Focusing on human rights
- Materials, decor and activities that are inclusive and challenge traditional gender norms

5. Supporting our Educators

- Supporting educators as professionals and activists
- Valuing and respecting, leading to improved wages, and working conditions
- Social and emotional supports for both educators and students
- Opportunities for discussion conversations and connections about topics that matter

As ECEs we reclaim what is forgotten through feminist ethics of care by choosing to care with and stand in solidarity with early childhood educators understood as early childhood educators. (Bruce, M. & Powell, A. 2023. Pg. 75)

Feminism is the movement against sexism, sexist exploitation & oppression. (b. hooks, 2015)

2. Why does it matter?

- As a profession focused on care, it is often gender stereotyped as "women's work", devalued as less important and more maternal instinct than education based
- These stereotypes and singular minded identities are harmful because they disengage the importance of ethical care and relationships
- This devaluing is silencing and oppressive and often undercompensated

"Rather than reproducing gender hierarchies, an ECEC practice informed by femme theory seeks to cultivate a place where femininity is valued and embraced." (Davies, A. & Hoskin, R.A. 2021. Pg. 112.)

4. Valuing Femininity

- Challenging gender norms of masculinity and femininity
- Encouraging care and kindness in all children, disproving the consideration that emotions and dependency are weakness
- Valuing inclusion and care as strength

"To be emotionally, physically, financially, or politically dependent is thought to reflect a lack of normative functioning, a failure in the face of neoliberal demands for complete autonomy and self-reliance." (Davies, A. & Hoskin, R.A. 2021. Pg.114)



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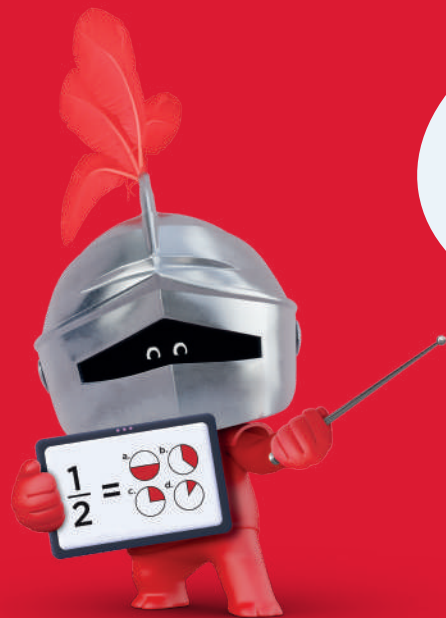
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