



February 23, 2023

Ms. Kristine Parsons, RECE
Council Chair
College of Early Childhood Educators
438 University Avenue, Suite 1900
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

Dear Ms. Parsons,

On behalf of more than 2,400 designated early childhood educators (DECEs) who are members of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), I am writing to request that the College implement a membership fee freeze for the next few years.

Early childhood educators are among the lowest paid education professionals in the province. As you know, the provincial government's passing of Bill 124 in 2019 imposed a one per cent cap on salary increases across the public sector. This has been particularly challenging for our DECE members. According to Statistics Canada, the inflation rate currently sits at 6.9 per cent, having been as high as 8.1 per cent earlier this year. Like many in this province, DECE members have seen a significant decline in purchasing power as the average cost of living continues to steadily outpace salary increases.

At ETFO's most recent Annual Meeting, DECE members expressed genuine concerns with the financial stresses they face given the rising cost of living in Ontario and beyond. For many, this financial burden is in addition to other challenges members have endured throughout the pandemic. The College certainly appears to recognize this, as evidenced by the recent College launch of the *People Connect* resource that aims to "prioritize the mental health and wellness needs of members." The September 19, 2022 *College Talk* post about this resource states the following:

All members can be proud of how the profession rose to the challenge throughout the pandemic and cared for children and families under difficult conditions. Your strength under great stress is extraordinary, and we recognize it has taken a toll on many.

Our DECE members simply cannot afford a further increase to their cost of living, nor should they be expected to manage any additional stress to their health and wellness that a fee increase would add.

This call is echoed by the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario on behalf of their RECE members. RECEs working across all sectors are experiencing similar challenges regarding the cost of living and cannot afford increased professional fees.

The values of the College are outlined on your website and include the goal of “Transparency and Accountability,” which states that processes “are open [and] information is clear and accessible to members and the public.” As such, in the event that the College does begin to contemplate an increase to fees in future years, we ask that ETFO, AECEO and our members be consulted.

On behalf of our DECE members, we thank you in advance for considering this request.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Karen Brown'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'B' at the end.

Karen Brown,
President, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

In partnership with the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Lyndsay Macdonald'. The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a large 'L' at the beginning.

Lyndsay Macdonald
President, Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario