

Ontario's child care wage floor increase brings financial relief for some educators, but leaves too many behind

After consistent advocacy from the Ontario child care community, since the announcement of an \$18 per hour wage floor in 2022, the Provincial government has now been forced to increase the wage floor for RECEs in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system to \$23.86 per hour.

"This change is a *direct result* of the advocacy and care of thousands of ECEs and it shows what we can do together. This change is only one step, and there is much more to do to build a sector that serves our values. But we know that when ECEs and their allies raise their voices and *care out loud*, we win." said Alana Powell of the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO).

"This announcement of wage improvements – midway through Ontario's CWELCC action plan – is an admission by the government that wages in the child care sector are far too low, and that boosting wages is key to solving the workforce crisis. These have been key demands of our Worth More campaign." said Carolyn Ferns of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC).

But the Ontario government's announcement does not go nearly far enough and does not provide transformational change. The OCBCC and the AECEO have demanded a salary scale and a proper funding formula. This announcement only sharpens our focus on the changes that the sector needs.

"The increase in the wage floor simply continues the Ontario government's failed approach, one which subsidizes low-wage employers with public funds while doing nothing for programs that have worked to be decent work employers and raise wages over the years. If the Ontario government is going to double down on a failed policy, we will double down on our advocacy." said Ferns.

By tying the new wage floor to school board wages, the Ontario government is also acknowledging that creating parity across the broader early years and child care sector is important. But the government fails to solve this problem by leaving too many workers out.

"There are no wage improvements for non-RECE staff, like Early Childhood Assistants, and cooks who are vital to running a quality child care program. There are no increases for RECEs who currently make above the ceiling, or those working in licensed home child care or EarlyONs or the broader early years and child care sector." said AECEO's Alana Powell.

So while this announcement is good news for some, it is not a long-term solution. The OCBCC and AECEO continue to demand:

- A salary scale of at least \$30-\$40 per hour for RECEs.
- At least \$25 per hour for non-RECE staff.



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- Annual increases and steps to reward years of service.
- Immediate implementation of benefit and pension plans.

The OCBCC and AECEO will be bringing these demands to Queen's Park on November 30th as part of a Canada-Wide Day of Action for Child Care.

Ontario's early years and child care sector needs a real salary scale with comprehensive benefits that turns work in child care from a job to a career, as called for in our [Position Paper on a Publicly-Funded Early Learning and Child Care Salary Scale](#).

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