

November 30th, 2023
Day of Action for Early Learning & Child Care

ONTARIO



DAY OF ACTION AT QUEEN'S PARK

The OCBCC & the AECEO participated in a press conference at to share why the recently announced workforce strategy is not a long-term solution for the **severe shortage of child care workers in Ontario**.

Currently:

- Child care providers are **limiting enrolment because they cannot staff**;
- Thousands of families are stuck on waitlists;

Meanwhile:

- **More than half** of ECEs & child care workers **don't qualify** for the new wage supports

"The new wage floor **fails to bring parity and fairness** across the early years in child care sector"

[Watch the press conference here!](#)



Carolyn Ferns, Policy Coordinator at OCBCC

Registered Early Childhood Educators Sumayya & Patrícia shared stories about their **struggle to find good jobs** in the Early Learning & Child Care sector.



"**This system needs ECEs like me.** But I look ahead and wonder how I will be able to stay in the sector that I have trained for, that I am passionate about – if **decent work and pay remain so hard to find**"

Sumayya Bobat, RECE

"I would love nothing more than to work with preschoolers again, but how can I when **the wages are not even enough to survive?**"

Patrícia Borges Nogueira, RECE



[Watch the press conference here!](#)

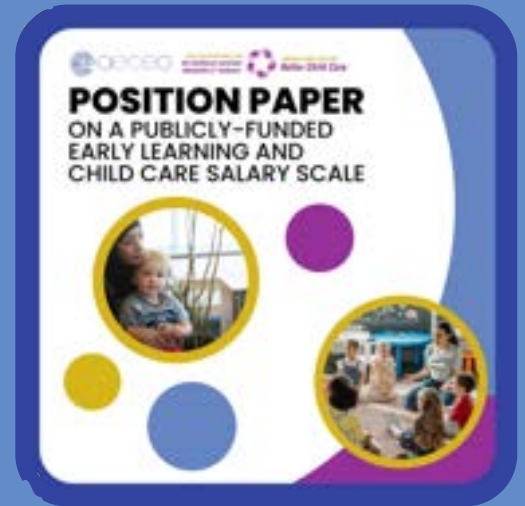
"We need to recruit new ECEs. We need to reattract those who have left the sector. We need **investments from both the provincial and federal government** towards supporting and paying the workforce a decent wage"

Carolyn Ferns

Our Position Paper on a Publicly-Funded Early Learning & Child Care Salary Scale lays out what the sector needs to **solve the workforce crisis and expand child care access**.

The OCBCC and AECEO continue to call for a workforce strategy that includes:

- **Minimum of \$25/hour for all child care staff**, with a **salary scale for RCEs** starting at \$30/hour;
- Annual increases and steps to reward years of service;
- Implementation of benefit and pension plans.



To read the position paper, [click here](#).

Highlights from the rally at Queen's Park

WORTH MORE!



The beautiful weather and the energy from the crowd made the **Worth MORE!** rally one to remember. **ECE Power** was in the air!

We heard from **educators who've left early childhood education and care** in the hope of finding work that offers better wages and better working conditions. ECE students shared **they won't be able to afford working in child care** upon graduation.

"As an ECE, I know I cannot do my job without every other worker in my centre. **This wage increase for RCEs only is not enough to fix the crisis.** We will not be divided. We stand in solidarity with all child care workers. **Everyone in child care** deserves to be paid a good wage and to have the conditions they need to do their work well and have good lives"

"Students are dropping out of ECE programs because **we cannot afford to work in the profession we want to work in**"

"We're expected to **give it all our well-being** and all our time to not be able to manage our own lives because **we are trying to make things work in a system that is clearly not working**"



"I cannot go back to a job where I'm **disrespected, undervalued, underpaid & underappreciated.**"

"I should be appreciated. I should be valued and recognized as the **professional, capable, intelligent, resourceful, qualified Early Childhood Educator** that I have trained so **hard to be**"

"I shouldn't have to worry about affording groceries or car insurance. **I shouldn't have to pick between my medications.** I shouldn't have to ask my parents for loans to put gas in my car to get to work"



"I do love working with children and **I do want to stay in this field,** but I do not want to work **a job that pays an unliveable wage**"





"It makes me incredibly sad that **I'm having to leave the early childhood sector in order to provide for my family** now and create a financially stable future"

"Educators are leaving the field after an average of 3-5 years. I'm unfortunately going to be part of that statistic. **I want to stay in the field but it's unrealistic how things stand now**"



"Quality child care centres exist, but they are underfunded. Their hands are tied. **If they don't get the funding, how are they supposed to increase wages?**"



"Across the care sector, we are **overworked and underpaid. We want CHANGE!** If we stay in the early years sector, **we are the ones who are going to make that change happen.**"

"I'm a student, I am going to be an educator and I'm a mother. From all these identities I can say **we're definitely WORTH MORE than what we are getting**"



STUDENTS TAKE ACTION!

Ontario's early years and child care sector needs a real salary scale with comprehensive benefits that *transforms* working in child care **from a job to a career**

In the midst of **an ongoing staffing crisis and growing demand for spaces**, the federal and provincial governments need to work together to **attract and retain as many educators as possible**



ECE students are critical to building the Canada-wide early learning & child care system. It is fundamental that their voices and needs are heard so we can **build a strong foundation for CWELCC**

ECE students from around the province took the stage at the **Worth MORE!** rally at Queen's Park to share their perspective as the new members of the workforce



Here's what they shared:

- **RECEs are being forced to leave their jobs** in early learning & child care due to **low pay, lack of benefits/supports**
- RECEs are going back to school to qualify for **career paths that are less demanding and better compensated** than working directly in child care
- **Students are dropping out of ECE** programs for careers in fields that require the same amount of schooling but pay higher wages
- **ECE grads are leaving ELCC within 3-5 years** because they can't afford to support themselves or plan for the future



Fleming College in Peterborough, ON

Prior to the Day of Action, ECE students shared information about early learning & child care with their peers at a tabling event on campus



ECE students and instructors shared early learning & child care information and resources on campus, raising awareness and getting others to take action



Fleming ECE students participated in the **Worth MORE!** rally at Queen's Park in Toronto



George Brown College in Toronto, ON

GBC student advocates held sign-making events and organized a pre-rally meet up to walk from campus to Queen's Park together



Fanshawe College in London, ON

Students and instructors joined London-area advocates and travelled to Toronto for the **Worth MORE!** rally at Queen's Park



LOCAL ACTIONS

Nov. 30th was a day filled with **solidarity** and **community power**! Across the province, early learning & child care staff, ECE professors & students, children, families and community members **came together to raise public awareness** about the workforce crisis. Ontario early learning and child care advocates marked the Canada-Wide Day of Action for Child Care by sharing information and engaging with their local communities

The Peterborough community brought the action to the streets with a **Dots for Spots** mid day rally...

Compass Early Learning & Care in Peterborough, ON



... and **shone a light on the child care crisis** with an evening rally!



Superior Children's Centre in Wawa, ON

Children and educators marked the Day of Action with art, hot chocolate & treats!



Mural reads *Hands aligned:
Together we stand*

Families received information & **took action!**

Rising Oaks Early Learning in Kitchener-Waterloo, ON

Educators taking part in the **Dots for Spots** action with the children in their care!



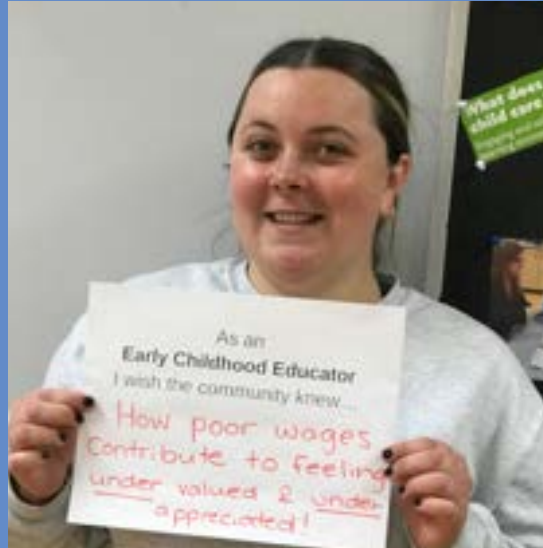
Staff at Rising Oaks prepared displays with crucial information about ELCC & the workforce crisis with families

As an Early Childhood Educator I wish the community knew...

"How much work we put in our daily documentation that records the development of each child"



"Our work doesn't end when the children go home"



"How poor wages contribute to **feeling undervalued & underappreciated**"

Emmanuel at Brighton Child Care Centre in Waterloo, ON

As a RECE/Early Learning Professional, I wish the community knew...

As a Register Early Childhood Educator,
I wish the community knew
that I dream about and love
their Kiddos so very much!
Their success is my biggest
wish!

"That I dream about and love their kiddos so very much! **Their success is my biggest wish!**"

"Oh just **how much we love and care** for all the littles we have the honour to learn with and grow beside! They are our world!"

As an Early Learning Professional,
I wish the community knew
oh just how much we love
and care for all the littles
we have the honour to learn
and grow beside. ♡ ♡ ♡
♡ They are our world!! ♡
♡ ♡ ♡ ♡
WORTH MORE!

As an Early Learning Professional,
I wish the community knew

How many of us need a second job,
and put off creating our own families

"How much *emotional work* we put in
along with the *physical work*, and the

[UNPAID] AFTER HOURS

efforts we put into our programs"

"How **many of us need a second job** and
put off creating our own families"

As an Early Learning Professional,
I wish the community knew

How much "emotional work" we put in
along with the draining "physical work", and
the after-hours efforts we put into
our programs

"We are not babysitters. **We are professionals**"

As a Register Early Childhood Educator,
I wish the community knew

My college age child is
paid as much as I am
for his 2nd co-op work
term. While ECE students
are not paid for their
work terms

WORTH
MORE!

"My college age child is **paid as much as I am for his
2nd co-op work term**. While ECE students are not
paid for their work terms"

As an
Early Childhood Educator
I wish the community knew...

We are not babysitters
We are professionals.

**"We get paid as much as someone who works
at Starbucks.**

We deserve more pay"

As an
Early Childhood Educator
I wish the community knew...
We get paid as much
as someone who works
at Starbucks.
We deserve more
pay.

As a Register Early Childhood Educator,
I wish the community knew

just how much is expected of
workers in this 'pink collar'
profession. Beyond the most
important part we are cleaners,
gardeners, laundry women, snow
removers, etc.

As an historically female
dominated workforce, we are
not appropriately compensated
for this important work

WORTH
MORE!

"Just **how much is expected of workers** in
this 'pink collar' profession. Beyond the most
important part, we are cleaners, gardeners,
laundry women, snow removes, etc. As a
historically female dominated workforce, we
are not appropriately compensated for this
important work"

As a Register Early Childhood Educator,
I wish the community knew
That RECE's work their entire career below
poverty wage and retirement age for
an RECE is 75 (with a part time
job). The wage scale is mis-represented
under-valued and unacceptable.
Raise your voice with us... we
are worth more!

WORTH

"That RECE's work their entire career below poverty wage and **retirement age for a RECE is 75(with a part time job)**. The wage floor* is misrepresented, undervalued & unacceptable. Raise your voice with us... **we are worth MORE!**"

*edited from the original text, which said wage scale. Ontario currently does not have a salary scale for early learning & child care staff.

"How important relationships are to having high quality programs"

STAFF RETENTION = QUALITY ECE PROGRAMS

\$\$\$\$ = STAFF RETENTION

As an Early Learning Professional,
I wish the community knew
How important relationships are to
having high quality programs.
Staff retention = quality ECE programs
\$\$\$ = staff retention

As a Register Early Childhood Educator,
I wish the community knew
how complex + hard this
job is. Rewarding? YES!
Draining? Equally so.

"How complex + hard this job is.
Rewarding? YES! Draining? Equally so"

"The care, dedication & continual professional learning (& so much more) we do on a daily basis. **Reduced fees for families are important & support our communities, but what about us?** We need better pay to reflect the work we do & to retain educators that ripples to quality care children & families deserve

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The care, dedication & continual
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ripples to quality care children & families deserve.

WORTH MORE

As an Early Learning Professional,
I wish the community knew
That ECE-s are essential
in keeping the economy,
the healthcare system, and the
fabric of society functioning.
ECE-s are Superheroes.
ECE-s are worth more!

WORTH MORE!

"That ECEs are essential in keeping the economy, the healthcare system, and the fabric of society functioning. ECEs are **SUPERHEROES!** ECEs are worth more!"

"I think about the future and feel like I won't be able to be financially stable as an individual. I feel like I need a partner for a second income - which I'm hoping for, but for others who don't want that... how are they supposed to be financially stable with rates as they are right now?"

As an
Early Childhood Educator
I wish the community knew...
We went to school
and got an education
for this profession.
We deserve more!

"How **physically demanding** this job is! Knees, shoulders & backs often give out due to lifting/bending/tiny furniture/constant movement. But **we don't have pensions + don't make enough to save for retirement**"

"You can't put children first if you put educators last!"

Our heartfelt thanks to the teams at **Emmanuel at Brighton & RisingOaks** for sharing their stories and experiences with the world on the Day Of Action. We really appreciate your vulnerability and strength ☑

As a Register Early Childhood Educator,
I wish the community knew

I think about the future and feel like I won't be able to be financially stable as an individual. I feel like I need a partner for a second income - which I'm hoping for, but for others who don't want that... How are they supposed to be financially stable with rates as they are right now?

**WORTH
MORE!**

"We went to school and got an education for this profession. **We deserve more!**"

As a Register Early Childhood Educator,
I wish the community knew

how physically demanding this job is! Knees, shoulders & backs often give out due to lifting/bending/tiny furniture/constant movement.
BUT we don't have pensions + don't make enough to save for retirement.

As a Register Early Childhood Educator,
I wish the community knew

You can't put children first if you put educators last!

WORTH

#ECE POWER

As a parent, having access to quality early learning and child care means...



With parent fees reduced to 50%, the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care plan is bringing a welcome relief the families who have been able to access CWELCC spaces.

Accessible, affordable, high quality early learning & child care can be **life-changing** for children and families.

As part of the Canada-Wide Day of Action for Early Learning & Child Care, parents from Emmanuel at Brighton Child Care Centre and RisingOaks Early Learning were invited to share what accessible child care means to their families

My family **saved \$6000** last year!



The severe shortage of early childhood educators & child care workers is **a major barrier to expanding affordable spaces** and bringing this essential social infrastructure to every community in Ontario.

As a Register Early Childhood Educator,
I wish the community knew
that as exciting as Universal
Child Care is, Ontario's
proposed funding model will
make it precarious to pull off.
Staffing is a struggle across
the sector already + compensation
is less than desirable. **WORTH MORE!**

As a RECE, I wish the community knew... "That as exciting as universal child care is, Ontario's proposed funding model will make it precarious to pull off. **Staffing is a struggle across the sector already** + compensation is less than desirable"

The impact of accessible child care goes way beyond finances.

Having access to quality Early Learning & Child Care means...

As a parent, having access to quality early learning and child care means...

Knowing my children are well cared for, learning, building skills and relationships. It is invaluable.

"Knowing my children are **well cared for**, learning, building skills and relationships

It's invaluable"

"I can **survive** the demands of working full time. When my child runs into his classroom with a smile,

I know I can face the day"

As a parent, having access to quality early learning and child care means...

I can survive the demands of working full time. When my child runs into his classroom with a smile, I know I can face the day.

"I am able to trust that my child is cared for by **qualified, compassionate educators** who are paid what they deserve!"

"It also means that **I can continue the hard work** of keeping our vulnerable community housed while I work during the day and my child is at school. THANK YOU!"

As a parent, having access to quality early learning and child care means...

I am able to trust that my child is cared for by qualified, compassionate educators who are paid what they deserve!

It also means that I can continue the hard work of keeping our vulnerable community housed while I work during the day and my child is at school. THANK YOU!

WORTH MORE!

"I can go work outside of the home and know that my child is thriving thanks to the amazing education **workers that deserve fair compensation"**

As a parent, having access to quality early learning and child care means...

I can work outside of the home and know that my child is thriving thanks to the amazing education workers that deserve fair compensation!

WORTH MORE!

As a parent, having access to quality early learning and child care means...

having access to support and a partnership in a child's development and a lot of love ♡

WORTH MORE!

"Having access to **support and a partnership** in a child's development and **a lot of love"**

As a parent, having access to quality early learning and child care means...

1. Comfort and confidence that my children are in a Healthy, Safe & Quality Learning Environment!
 2. A good Quality of Life for Society that the Next generation has a Meaningful beginning in the early formative years!
- WORTH MORE!**
- RAKI FAMILY

"1. **Comfort** and **confidence** that my children are in a healthy, safe & quality learning environment!"


2. A **good quality of life** for society that the next generation has a meaningful beginning in the early formative years!"

"The world to us! It's not just that we're able to work, but that **our kids are able to grow and play and learn** with the support of ECEs & child care staff. ECEs are worth so much more!"

As a parent, having access to quality early learning and child care means...

the world to us!
It's not just that we're able to work, but that our kids get to grow and play and learn with the support of ECEs and child care staff. ECEs are worth so much more!

WORTH MORE!



"I can go to work knowing that my kids are having a blast while learning and **developing beautiful relationships** in their own incredible community"

As a parent, having access to quality early learning and child care means...

I can go to work knowing that my kids are having a blast while learning and are developing beautiful relationships in their own incredible community.

WORTH MORE!

"Having **a community to lean on**, stability & nurture for my child and the joy of seeing her grow into herself surrounded by people helping & encouraging her to do it"

As a parent, having access to quality early learning and child care means...

having a community to lean on, stability & nurture for my child and the joy of seeing her grow into herself surrounded by people helping & encouraging her to do it.

WORTH MORE!
Lyric Brimble

As a parent, having access to quality early learning and child care means...

EVERYTHING!

It means I can continue to work knowing my girls are well looked after

"EVERYTHING!"

It means I can continue to work knowing my girls are well looked after "



Why is Early Learning important to you?

"**Helps children to grow** through play, speech, and motor skills"

We waited 4 years for our first spot!
Signed up before delivery. We ended up missing a combined 2.5 years of work!
I loved the time w/ my kids but hate that it wasn't by choice

"We waited 4 years for our first spot! Signed up 6 months before delivery. **We ended up missing a combined 2.5 years of work!** I loved the time w/ my kids but hate that it wasn't by choice"

"Opportunities for kids to interact with & learn from each other and caring educators"

Opportunities for kids to interact with and learn from each other and caring educators



In whatever way you were able to get involved – calling your elected representative, engaging on social media campaigns, or sharing your early learning & child care story – **thank you for using your voice.**