

The Family Supports Institute of Ontario (FSIO), in partnership with the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario (AECEO), is launching a province-wide campaign—including a formal petition—calling on the Government of Ontario to establish a comprehensive salary grid and ensure equitable recognition for RECEs, Legacy Practitioners, and staff working in EarlyON Child and Family Centres and family support programs.

Why is this critical?

Equity and Professional Recognition

Registered Early Childhood Educators performing comparable work across sectors deserve equitable compensation and recognition. The continued exclusion of EarlyON and family support professionals from wage enhancement initiatives devalues their qualifications, suppresses wages, and perpetuates systemic inequities among practitioners who hold the same credentials and uphold the same standards.

Workforce Stability and Retention

Without wage parity, EarlyON and family support programs face ongoing recruitment and retention challenges. Skilled professionals are increasingly compelled to seek opportunities elsewhere or leave the sector entirely. Achieving compensation equity is essential to stabilizing the workforce, reducing turnover, and ensuring continuity of high-quality services for children and families.

Quality and System Coherence

Ontario's vision for a strong early years system depends on a unified, stable, and respected workforce. Wage disparities fragment the system, hinder collaboration, and compromise sector-wide quality. Compensation parity is fundamental to building a cohesive, equitable, and high-performing early learning and care sector.

EarlyON Child and Family Centres and family support programs are cornerstones of Ontario's early learning and care system and they have been excluded. These programs provide vital entry points for families, connect them to essential services (including licensed childcare), strengthen communities, and lay the foundation for lifelong learning. Operating under the Ministry of Education, these programs require staff to be Registered Early Childhood Educators who adhere to the same ethical standards and pedagogical frameworks as their counterparts in licensed childcare.

The Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) initiative represents a historic federal investment—over \$30 billion—to reduce childcare fees for families and implement a workforce compensation strategy for RECEs in licensed childcare. This progress is both significant and well-deserved. **However, a critical gap remains.**

Their exclusion is not only inequitable, but also unsustainable. EarlyON and family support professionals are integral to a high-quality, accessible, and inclusive early years system. It is time to ensure that RECEs, Legacy Practitioners, and program staff in these settings receive the recognition, respect, and wage parity they rightfully deserve.

The time for action is now.