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Media Release

New report recommends BC Early Childhood Educators earn at least \$30-\$40/hour.

The creation of new child care programs is not happening fast enough in BC, or across Canada. The major roadblock to expansion is the worsening Early Childhood Educator (ECE) staffing crisis.

To address this issue, the BC government committed to develop and implement an ECE wage grid.

With this commitment in mind, the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC and Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC) conducted a scan of ECE wages and wage grids across Canada, including a detailed analysis of ECE wages in BC. The study confirms that:

1. **BC has fallen behind** - In terms of Canada-wide progress toward an ECE wage grid; and in terms of effective minimum ECE wages.
2. **To be competitive and effective, wages in BC's promised grid now need to be at least \$30-\$40/hour**
- Depending on qualifications, experience, and years of employment.

Six other provinces are now implementing ECE wage grids - BC has only promised one. That needs to change!

“Recruitment and retention of qualified early childhood educators has always been a challenge due to historically low wages, the lack of pensions and other benefits, and tough working conditions” said Emily Mliczko, Executive Director of the ECEBC. “But post-pandemic, the situation is worse than ever, with 45% of programs losing more staff than they can hire.”

How high do wages need to be in BC's promised wage grid? As it stands, even with existing BC government top-ups, the average wage for ECEs with a post-secondary certificate or diploma, who work directly with children, was just \$24.32/hr in 2022. Some qualified ECEs today earn as little as \$20.75/hr.

“Our analysis shows that a competitive wage for ECEs in BC is now at least \$30-\$40/hr, depending on qualifications and years of employment. In other words, to recruit and retain the qualified educators necessary for existing & new programs - and end families' desperate search for quality child care - the province needs to raise wages for many ECEs by at least \$10/hour” confirmed Eric Swanson, Third Space Planning, who carried out the primary analysis in this report.

While the BC and federal governments continue to make child care fees more affordable, without a fair and competitive ECE wage grid we will never achieve the high quality, \$10aDay child care system that families – and our economy – need.

The full report can be accessed at: www.10aday.ca/at_least_30_40_hour

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