
NEWS RELEASE COMMUNIQUÉ

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Ministry of Education and Child Care
Employment and Social Development Canada

Supporting early childhood educators strengthens child care

RICHMOND – Additional funding for early childhood educators (ECE) is helping recruit and retain staff in the child care sector, leading to a more supported workforce and better outcomes for children and families.

“When child care professionals feel supported, children and their families are also better supported and we are all better off,” said Mitzi Dean, B.C. Minister of State for Child Care. “We know there is no child care without the dedicated and skilled professionals who provide that care. These provincial and federal investments, which include post-secondary bursaries, peer mentoring and other professional-development opportunities, are some of the ways we are recognizing them.”

ECE students, including those just beginning their educational journey and those already working in the field and upgrading their credentials, will benefit from an additional \$45 million for the ECE Education Support Fund. The fund, managed by Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC), provides as much as \$5,000 per semester for eligible ECE students.

“Early childhood educators are at the heart of the early learning and child care system,” said Jenna Sudds, federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. “Today’s announcement is a meaningful step in recognizing their essential work and ensuring they have the support they need throughout their studies and careers, while growing an affordable, high-quality child care system for families in British Columbia.”

Approximately \$11 million in additional funding for new and ongoing professional learning opportunities is being provided for programs, such as the ECE Peer Mentoring program and the Early Years Professional Development Bursary program. Three organizations are working with the government to provide the programs to support child care professionals, and in doing so, give families peace of mind that their children are receiving the highest level of care.

“The ECE Peer Mentoring program has allowed me to remain in the field that I love when I was burned out and ready to leave,” said Tammy Jackson, ECE. “It provided me with the encouragement, professional development, tools and support to thrive in my profession rather than just survive. It is my belief that the program not only positively impacts the educators involved, but it has a positive impact on the children and families we work with.”

As part of ChildCareBC, the Province is investing in ECEs and child care professionals to ensure the child care sector can expand and grow to meet the needs of families in B.C. Increasing recruitment and retention of ECEs and child care professionals is a shared priority between the Province and the federal government.

The ECE Education Support Fund is supported by provincial investments and federal funding

under the 2021-22 to 2025-26 Canada-British Columbia-Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

Quotes:

Emily Mliczko, executive director, ECEBC –

“Early childhood educators are the foundation of a robust early years system. Each investment in this profession continues to support this dedicated sector and is welcomed. ECEBC informs and advocates for continued enhancements and investments.”

Laura Doan, associate professor at Thompson Rivers University and founder of the Peer Mentoring program –

“Peer Mentoring communities of practice serve as a place where educators find mutual support, respect and care. It is a safe enough place for educators to be able to ask questions, share ideas, advocate, listen, provoke and grow. Our research has shown that educators who take part in the program have an increase in confidence, leadership, development, learning and professional identity, and are sustained so they are able to continue in their chosen field and avoid burnout.”

Shari Rockliff, ECE –

“In our community of practice, when someone in the group feels defeat, another will provide them with support that rebuilds hope. When change is needed within the child care sector, our voices are heard across the province. The strength of this peer-mentor group is truly influential.”

Quick Facts:

- The overall number of ECEs has increased by approximately 4,000 from 10,400 in 2018-19 to 14,400 in 2023-24.
- The number of active ECE certificates has been trending upward, increasing by 11% since the end of 2023-24 fiscal year.
- More than 13,000 eligible ECEs per month receive a wage enhancement of as much as \$6 per hour.
- In January 2024, the Province introduced the new ECE specialized certification grant, which provides eligible ECEs an annual grant of \$2,000 or \$3,000 based on their specialized certification.
- The Government of Canada made a transformative investment of more than \$27 billion over five years as part of Budget 2021 to build a Canada-wide early learning and child care (ELCC) system with provinces and territories (PTs), including to increase the quality of ELCC through valuing the early childhood workforce and providing it with training opportunities.
- In addition, the Government of Canada provided \$420 million in 2021-22 for PTs to support the recruitment and retention of ECEs, in recognition of the workforce’s central role in providing high-quality ELCC.

Learn More:

To find out more about becoming an ECE, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/teach/training-and-professional-development/become-an-early-childhood-educator>

To learn more about the Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention strategy, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/recruitment-retention-strategy>

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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What to know about supports for ECEs and child care professionals

Early childhood educators and child care professionals are benefiting from approximately \$56 million in new and additional investments for the following programs:

Post-secondary support:

- Education Support Fund managed through Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC) - \$45 million over three years

Professional learning:

- Administration and Management in Child Care managed by Westcoast Family Centres Society - \$600,000 over three years
- Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Peer Mentoring program managed by ECEBC - \$2.1 million over three years
- Early Childhood Pedagogy program managed by University of Western Ontario's Early Childhood Pedagogy Network - \$2.4 million
- Early Years Professional Development (EYPD) Bursary program managed by Westcoast Family Centres Society - \$4.5 million over three years
- EYPD hub managed by ECEBC on behalf of the EYPD hub partnership - \$67,000
- Learning Outside Together program managed by ECEBC - \$900,000 over three years
- Let's Talk About Touching program managed by ECEBC - \$350,000 over three years

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