

TO: Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs)
District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs)

FROM: Holly Moran
Assistant Deputy Minister
Early Years and Child Care Division

DATE: November 16, 2023

SUBJECT: Ontario's Child Care Workforce Strategy

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to implement the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system. We are pleased to announce the introduction of the Ontario Child Care Workforce Strategy which will support the recruitment and the retention of qualified professionals, help achieve system growth, and ensure increased access to high quality licensed child care in the province. The Ontario Child Care Workforce Strategy will continue our commitment to support Ontario's child care and early years professionals by implementing better wages and working conditions, supporting career laddering and entry to the profession, and building the profile of the profession by implementing new programs and building on existing initiatives.

Workforce Compensation

Extensive consultations with the sector emphasized the need for improved wages to support recruitment and retention of Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs). Building on the Wage Enhancement Grant and the current workforce compensation under CWELCC, the Ontario Child Care Workforce Strategy will continue to improve wages for RECEs employed by licensees participating in CWELCC.

In 2024, the wage floor will increase from \$20 per hour to \$23.86 per hour for eligible RECE program staff and from \$22 per hour to \$24.86 per hour for Supervisors and RECE Home Child Care Visitors. The wage floor will then increase by \$1 per hour each year up to 2026.

Wage Floor (Per hour)

	RECEs	Supervisors/RECE HCC Visitors
2024	\$20.00 to \$23.86	\$22.00 to \$24.86
2025	\$21.00 to \$24.86	\$23.00 to \$25.86
2026	\$22.00 to \$25.86	\$24.00 to \$26.86

In 2024, eligibility ceiling for the annual \$1 increase will increase for eligible RECE program staff to \$26 per hour and \$29 per hour for Supervisors and RECE Home Child Care Visitors. The

eligibility ceiling will then increase by \$1 per hour each year up to 2026. The eligibility ceiling is not a wage cap. Employers can choose to pay RECE wages above the eligibility ceiling.

Wage Ceiling for Annual Wage Increase (Per Hour)

	RECEs	Supervisors/RECE HCC Visitors
2024	\$25.00 to \$26.00	\$25.00 to \$29.00
2025	\$25.00 to \$27.00	\$25.00 to \$30.00
2026	\$25.00 to \$28.00	\$25.00 to \$31.00

Professional Development and Mental Health Support (\$18.5 million per year)

Access to continuous professional learning opportunities can support higher levels of staff engagement, growth, recognition, professional efficacy and improve satisfaction. Beginning in 2024, the ministry will continue supporting professional development by funding up to one paid Professional Development day for all staff working in licensed centre and home-based care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres. The funding can be used to:

- implement new professional learning strategies;
- build on existing approaches; and/or
- provide mental health and resilience training

Innovation Fund (One-time \$5 million in 2024)

Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards are expected to engage and collaborate with local community partners to develop, build upon and implement innovative strategies to support the recruitment and retention of the child care and early years workforce. In 2024, the ministry will provide one-time funding of \$5 million to establish partnerships with employers, schools, postsecondary institutions, municipalities and school boards to develop local solutions to support students and address RECE workforce issues. The Innovation Fund will also provide an opportunity for municipalities to address local needs. Additional details related to the implementation of the Innovation Fund will be provided in the near future.

Expansion of Early Childhood Education Qualifications Upgrade Program (ECE QUP) (an additional \$2 million per year)

The ministry funds the ECE QUP which supports individuals working within the early years sector who have been accepted to an Ontario College of Applied Arts and Technology program to pursue their Early Childhood Education (ECE) diploma and become eligible to apply for membership with the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE). As of 2024, the ministry will enhance the base funding for the administration of the ECE QUP to support workforce recruitment and retention in the child care and early years sector. The ECE QUP includes a Francophone and First Nation, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) (including on-reserve) program component, which prioritizes applicants living and/or working in these communities.

Additional Supports

Ontario’s Child Care Workforce Strategy includes other key measures to further support recruitment and retention of RECEs across the province. These actions include:

- removing barriers for certified teachers and persons with child/youth care or recreation diplomas or degrees to work in licensed child care centres serving children six years and older.
- expanding the Dual Credit program in secondary schools so students can get early exposure and credit towards a career as an early childhood educator.
- clarifying via regulatory amendments that student placements can be completed at their place of work if the candidate is already working in licensed child care.

Next Steps

Thank you for your commitment to building a strong and knowledgeable workforce. We will communicate additional details in the coming months and look forward to working together to implement Ontario's Child Care Workforce Strategy.

If you have any questions, please contact your Early Years Advisor or Financial Analyst (contact list can be found on the [ministry website](#)).

Sincerely,

Original signed by

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Early Years and Child Care Division
Ministry of Education

c: Early Years Advisors, Programs and Service Integration Branch
Financial Analysts, Financial Accountability and Data Analysis Branch