



Saskatchewan Early Learning Leaders Caucus

A Canadian Child Care Federation Committee

Valuing children means valuing their educators.

High-quality child care requires a qualified early learning and child care workforce valued for the important work they do. They must be supported through fair compensation and benefits, reputable working conditions, viable career opportunities and ongoing professional learning.



Now is the time and opportunity to create transformational change. Saskatchewan needs a high-quality ELCC system created for all.

Saskatchewan families need more access to affordable, quality child care spaces. Simply expanding the supply of regulated child care and reducing fees will not create a high-quality system. The solution must also include a plan to improve the educational preparation, ongoing learning, working conditions and compensation of early childhood educators across the province.



Targets

The Government of Saskatchewan needs to develop a comprehensive ELCC workforce strategy to meet its child care space targets and the estimated 4,500 additional ECEs required. The strategy should include targets that place value on the ELCC workforce and the critically important work that they do; targets focusing on increasing the size and capacity of a professional workforce, educational preparation, ongoing learning, compensation and good working conditions. It should ensure the workforce is well-prepared to provide truly inclusive programming that meets the individual needs of all children. Creating a comprehensive strategy demonstrates the Government's commitment to building a system.



Compensation

The ELCC workforce should be valued for their essential contributions to the well-being, development and learning of Saskatchewan's children and as a support for families. To value qualified educators, the Government of Saskatchewan must look beyond a wage grid and consider compensation through competitive salary scales, appropriate formal education and professional learning incentives, paid sick and vacation time, and comprehensive benefit and pension provisions. The lack of recognition and respect contributes to high staff turnover, low job satisfaction and morale, and the inability to recruit and retain qualified educators.



Working Conditions

To support educators, the Government of Saskatchewan must create integrated environments that foster enjoyable and good working conditions. Better working conditions acknowledge the important work ECEs do. This should include paid non-contact hours for planning, family engagement, collaboration with inclusion specialists and professional learning; funding for well-designed and situated facilities with space for quality learning, staff planning and respite; and funding for professional learning during work hours. Long work hours, insufficient relief and inadequate environments are contributing to challenges in recruitment and retention.



Career pathways

To ensure recruitment and retention of qualified educators and specialized inclusion staff, opportunities for career advancement with appropriate compensation are important considerations for the Government. Funding for the expansion of public post-secondary ELCC programs, including online, flexible and regional delivery options; develop new post-diploma programs in ELCC management, inclusion and pedagogical leadership; academic pathways for Level I, II and III educators; funding support for English Language Learners entering into public post-secondary ELCC programs; and new investments in pedagogical networks of learning.