



Early Childhood Care & Education New Brunswick
Soins et éducation à la petite enfance Nouveau-Brunswick

Today, the child care industry in the province of New Brunswick is united in their shock and mistrust of the provincial government. We stand united across districts as licensed home centers, licensed early learning centers and licensed school age programs. Today, we also stand united in both official languages throughout the province.

In January 2018 through a Liberal initiative, Minister Kenny committed 28 million to increase the wages of trained ECEs throughout a four year period. A celebrated initiative by all certified ECE educators, industry leaders and operators. This commitment was recommitted through the new government and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development on January 22, 2019.

On April 11, 2019, a letter signed by Diane Lutes, Director of Early Childhood Services, Anglophone sector, and Josee Nadeau, Director of Early Childhood Services, francophone sector, redefined what a trained educator is, limiting this benefit to less than ten percent of the workforce.

“As part of the overall vision for early learning, the Department of Education and Childhood Development is pleased to announce that effective April 1, 2019, the hourly wage top-up provided for educators with a two-year ECE diploma or bachelor degree in early childhood education or a related field will increase by \$.75/hour to \$5.75hour.”

Prior to yesterday’s announcement, the government was encouraging and funding educators to take the one-year ECE program but today they are now saying, that it is insufficient; causing alarms. Why is this alarming? Today, certified early childhood educators with 5, 10, 15 plus years’ experience no longer qualify for the promised \$0.75. We are standing up for these front-line educators and all certified educators working in the province. Further alarming and causing crisis in this industry is the fact that ECE certified educators are migrating from the childcare industry to other department of education positions where they are recognised at a \$26.00/hr salary. Janice Sutherland from Home with a Heart said, “this news will further cripple our industry as today it is difficult to nearly impossible to secure one year certificate graduates.” Melody Munro of Wee College commented that “the PC government set an agenda to have full transparency but has blindsided the early childhood educators of this province.”

The announcements are misleading to the public and once again significantly impacting the front line educators. As we stand together, we are dealing with one of two situations. Are we dealing with a Progressive Conservative government finding an underhanded way to say they fulfilled their promise yet significantly reducing the funding to the sector or are we dealing with department officials not being completely transparent in relaying the industry needs and the crisis we face? Has Minister Cardy been misinformed by the department, as a \$1 million investment at .75 cents per hour, would mean only 10 percent of trained ECEs could perhaps be eligible for the wage increase.

Either way, we are united in fighting for the early childhood educators who are essential in fulfilling the bilateral agreement entered by our province to meet the obligations as set forth by the federal government. Government is promising families’ accessible, affordable, and inclusive care/education, yet they need to understand that in order to accomplish their goals, they need to recognise and value the educators. It goes without question that the bilateral agreement will fail without industry’s support.

Meetings are being held province wide for educators, administrators and operators to voice their thoughts and concerns and to solidify a course of action moving forward. At this time we have not had a response back from the government regarding their abrupt change in training and qualifications. We remain open to discussions that would rectify this immediate impending crisis.

Jean Robinson
President
ECCENB-SEPENB