



**ASSOCIATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR**

Position Paper

Government's Ten Year Plan for Child Care Services

It is the position of the Association of Early Childhood Educators (AECENL) that the existing system of child care services does not meet the needs of children, families, communities, employers or those working in the sector. Significant changes are required.

It is the position of AECENL that:

- all families should have the opportunity for their children to access high quality child care that provides a solid foundation for all their future learning and development. It is not predicated on a family's need for child care for the purposes of employment or education.
- high quality child care requires that services are provided by Early Childhood Education (ECE) practitioners with minimally Level II Child Care Services (CCS) certification
- families have a right to child care that is sustainable, affordable and meets their needs in terms of accessibility, type of child care and hours of operation
- communities require leaders and an on-going workforce that is well educated. This requires that children have their development supported in the early years to become effective leaders and workers in the future.

It is the position of AECENL that only high quality child care is acceptable and it can only be provided by those who are educated and knowledgeable in child development and how children learn. Government must establish Level II Certification as the minimum qualification to work with children in the child care system. Government must put measures in place to attract new Level II ECE practitioners and support existing practitioners to reach the required level.

It is the position of AECENL that, while there is a need for many more high quality child care spaces in the province, expansion should not take place until the shortage of qualified ECE practitioners has been addressed. In planning an expansion of the child care system, government must assess the needs of communities to determine their child care needs, develop plans to meet them and provide support in the form of start-up and operating grants with strict accountability requirements.

It is the position of AECENL that, to address the shortage of Level II CCS practitioners: a provincial wage scale based on the existing government classification of CN 24/25 and a benefits package must be implemented; a social marketing campaign must be developed to inform the public that this is a specialized skill set that deserves respect; and that access to training for those who will need to up-grade must be simplified.

It is the position of AECENL that child care must be made affordable to families. To achieve this government must cap the cost to families at \$30.00 per day per child for child care services which receive any government funding. Government must review and revise the Child Care Services Subsidy program to protect the privacy and dignity of families, review eligibility requirements and simplify the application process.

It is the position of AECENL that having two Departments and two strategies on early learning is not productive. Government must combine the two divisions in the Department of Education.

In order for government to realize their commitment to the promotion of poverty reduction, a skilled workforce and strong economic growth, government must put the above measures in place.

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