



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

Position Paper

ELCC Supplement

Prior to his election Minister Kirby stated that his government would make funding available to increase the amount of the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Supplement. It is the position of AECENL that this funding should be used to differentiate the amount provided to Level I ECEs and Level II ECEs working directly with children.

AECENL supports the direction that Government is taking towards having Level II Child Care Services (CCS) Certification as the minimum requirement for those working with children in the child care system. By requiring those who currently hold Entry level to up-grade to Level I Certification, and making access to up-grading more accessible, government is demonstrating that they are aware of the importance of a well qualified workforce in the provision of the high quality care children require to be successful in the school system and beyond. AECENL also supports the increased amounts of the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Supplement for Level I ECEs and operators who hold Level II CCS Certification.

However, the exclusion of any increase in the ELCC Supplement for those holding Level II Certification and are not operators is of great concern to AECENL. To date government has recognized the differential in the skills that those with Level I and Level II CCS Certification have brought to their work with children. This appears no longer to be the case. For those working in child care centres, Level II ECEs who are not operators are the only group who have not received any increase in the ELCC Supplement and Level I ECEs now receive the same amount as Level II ECEs. AECENL is very concerned about the message this sends to the field and to the public about the value of the work this group does on the floor with the children.

The more qualified an ECE is, the higher the level of care provided to the children. By excluding Level IIs who are not operators, the additional (and necessary) expertise that they bring to their work with children appears to be discounted. Apart from the financial considerations, the negative effect on morale is likely considerable and causing stress in the workplace between those who receive an increase and those who do not. While the vast majority of ECEs have the professionalism to try not to have this affect their work, it is not a situation that is conducive to the provision of quality child care. This negative effect may be compounded by increasing the turnover of staff in centres.

Government's position that this is intended to encourage more Level II ECEs to leave working directly with children to become operators of centres is misguided. Their value to the system is in working with the children and not necessarily as operators. For some, they have no desire to leave a position working directly with children and become an operator, for others they may lose benefits

they currently have if they change their place of employment and for still others there may be no position in their area that they can access.

AECENL is also very concerned that leaving out this group will not enhance the recruitment and retention of more ECEs with Level II CCS Certification in the child care system. Instead of providing financial incentives to leave the floor and become operators, government would be better served by a two-pronged approach and provide the incentive, not only for those with Entry Level to up-grade, but also for those with Level I CCS Certification to increase their knowledge and skills by up-grading to Level II. At this time, there need not be the same initiatives focussed on up-grading provided to those with Entry Level, but some recognition should be given that Level II CCS Certification is desirable.

While an argument can be made that graduates with Level II CCS Certification receive a \$5,000.00 grant towards the cost of tuition, graduates are better off financially by leaving with Level I CCS Certification, foregoing the grant and receiving the \$6,600.00 ELCC Supplement and a salary for that year.

AECENL supports the direction that government is taking towards the development of a child care system and is willing to work with government to find a way to have all those holding Level II CCS Certification receive an increase in their ELCC Supplement when the ELCC Supplement is reviewed this fiscal year as stated in *Caring For Our Future Provincial Strategy for Quality Sufficient and Affordable Child Care..*

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