



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

Position Paper

Recruitment and Retention of a Qualified Workforce

It is the position of AECENL that government must immediately put in place a strategy to recruit, retain and re-attract Level II ECE practitioners.

Level II Child Care Services certification is a two year diploma in early childhood education. This is the standard that should be required of all ECE practitioners. There is currently a severe shortage of people with this level of certification working in the child care system and many of the current workforce have only a 40 – 60 hour course in early childhood education. This level of knowledge is not sufficient to provide the quality of care that children deserve.

Many ECE practitioners feel that they are not respected for the work they do. That is reflected in lack of a provincial wage scale and lack of understanding by the public that ECE practice is a profession that requires a significant skill set.

To increase the number of Level II ECE practitioners in centre and home-based child care Government must:

- improve the wages of currently qualified ECE practitioners by establishing a provincial wage scale based on the existing government classification (with Labrador allowance) and providing benefits such as medical and pension. Changes in the government pay scale to be reflected in the pay scale for ECEs.
- improve the working conditions of ECE practitioners in centre-based child care by promoting a respectful workplace
- increase the number of ECE college graduates by making up-grading more accessible to those currently in the child care system. This would include:
 - funding them to allow them to work for three days per week and pursue their studies for two days with no loss of income
 - developing a competency-based assessment to give credit for their current knowledge
 - establishing a mentoring system to support up-grading students to achieve Level II
 - simplifying the process to enter and continue up-grading
- institute a four year ECE degree program that would allow students to exit at a Level II, III or IV Child Care Services certification
- increase the enrolment and graduation numbers for those studying on a full-time basis
- develop post diploma programs in areas such as infant care, family child care, administration and children with special needs
- develop a social marketing strategy to:
 - promote the benefits of becoming an ECE practitioner
 - inform the public of the elements of a quality child care setting, the skill sets required of ECE practitioners and the value of the work they do related to children's future success in school and afterwards.

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