

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND
FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

Early Childhood Educator
Wage Enhancement
(ECE-WE)

Funding Guidelines
2022/23

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1. Introduction

Recruiting and retaining a skilled, knowledgeable Early Childhood Educator (ECE) workforce is a key factor in implementing [ChildCareBC](#). Improving the recruitment and retention of ECEs contributes to enhancing the overall quality of early childhood programs throughout British Columbia and supports the commitment to speed up the creation of new licensed child care spaces so that more families have access to quality child care in their community.

The ECE Wage Enhancement (ECE-WE) is part of a broader [Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#) to support the development of a stable, qualified, and skilled professional ECE workforce, and recognizes early care and learning as a sustainable and valued career.

The ECE-WE is available to all ECEs (including ECEs who are also owner/operators) directly employed by and working in eligible licensed child care facilities.

2. What's New for 2022/23

The ECE-WE has increased by \$2 per hour, to a total of \$4 per hour. This increase came into effect September 1, 2021 with payment implemented in March 2022. Please see "ECE Employees in Unionized Facilities" for further information on applicability for unionized settings.

Effective April 1, 2022, eligibility for the ECE-WE is expanded to all provincially certified ECEs directly employed by and working in eligible licensed facilities, regardless of the percentage of time they spend working in direct care of children. Please see "ECE Staff Eligibility" for further information and Appendix A for updated definitions.

3. Who is Eligible?

Receipt of the ECE-WE is dependent upon the following three factors, as detailed in the subsequent sections and Table 1:

1. Eligibility of an Organization/\$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre;
2. Eligibility of facilities that are owned/operated by the Organization; and
3. Eligibility of ECE Employees (employed or self-employed by the Organization/facility).

Organization Eligibility

Organizations must be enrolled in [Child Care Operating Funding](#) (CCOF) Base Funding or operate as a [\\$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre](#) to participate in the ECE-WE. Participation in the ECE-WE is voluntary, meaning Organizations can decide whether or not to apply. However, while participation is voluntary, in order to receive the ECE-WE, Organizations must apply on behalf of their eligible ECE Employees.

Facility Eligibility

Organizations may have either a single facility that delivers licensed child care in one location, or multiple facilities delivering licensed child care in a variety of settings. For administering the ECE-WE, funding will be provided based on each facility's physical address/location rather than by facility licence. For ECEs working at each facility to be eligible for the ECE-WE, the facility must be approved to participate in the [Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative](#) (CCFRI), if eligible, or be approved as a [\\$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre](#).

If a facility chooses not to enroll, is not approved to enroll, or is otherwise not permitted to participate in CCOF Base Funding, the CCFRI, or the \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre initiative, ECEs working at that facility will not be eligible for the ECE-WE.

While an Organization may have multiple facilities, each facility's eligibility for the ECE-WE is assessed separately. Additionally, a facility that has opted in to the ECE-WE cannot opt-out during the term of their Funding Agreement.

ECE-WE Opt-in for CCFRI-ineligible facilities

ECEs who are employed/self-employed at Licensed Child Care Facilities that are not eligible for CCFRI funding (i.e., facilities that do not offer child care in the CCFRI Eligible Care Categories) may still be eligible for the ECE-WE, if the facility is enrolled in CCOF Base Funding or operates as a \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre.

Please note that ECEs working in facilities offering a combination of eligible CCFRI Eligible Care Categories and ineligible child care programs – i.e., Preschool (ineligible) and Infant/Toddler (eligible) – are also eligible for the ECE-WE, as long as the facility is enrolled in the CCFRI for the CCFRI Eligible Care Categories.

Example: Organization A has three facilities (Facility 1, 2 and 3) in receipt of CCOF Base Funding. Facilities 1 and 2 are eligible for the CCFRI, and Facility 3 is ineligible. Facility 1 has opted in and been approved for the CCFRI, while Facility 2 has not opted in to CCFRI. In this scenario, Facilities 1 and 3 are eligible to receive the ECE-WE.

ECE-WE Ineligible Facilities

Facilities **ineligible** to participate in the ECE-WE include, but are not limited to:

- Facilities operating under an organization that is not enrolled in CCOF Base Funding or \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre Funding;
- Facilities that provide care to CCFRI Eligible Care Categories and are eligible for the CCFRI, but have not applied or have not been approved for the CCFRI; and/or
- Facilities that do not have ECE Employees.

ECE Staff Eligibility

Eligible Staff

To be eligible, ECEs must:

- Hold a valid Early Childhood Educator, Infant and Toddler Educator, and/or Special Needs Educator certificate issued by the [BC ECE Registry](#);
- Be in Good Standing (see Appendix A: Definitions) with the BC ECE Registry; and
- Be an ECE Employee (see Appendix A: Definitions) directly employed or self-employed on a full- or part-time or substitute basis by a Licensed Child Care Facility that is in receipt of CCOF or is a \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre and has been approved by the Ministry to opt in to both the CCFRI (if eligible to do so) and the ECE-WE.
- An ECE working as a Supported Child Development (SCD)/Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD) Worker who is directly employed by a Licensed Child Care Facility is also eligible for the ECE-WE

Ineligible Staff

Staff that are **ineligible** to receive the ECE-WE include individuals who do not hold active ECE certification issued by the BC ECE Registry and/or who are not directly employed or self-employed by a Licensed Child Care Facility or \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre.

Ineligible individuals include, but are not limited to:

- ECEs working as Supported Child Development Consultants (see Appendix A: Definitions);
- SCD/ASCD Workers who are employed and paid by SCD/ASCD programs directly and assigned or deployed to a Licensed Child Care Facility (see Appendix A: Definitions);
- ECE Assistants;
- Responsible Adults;
- Volunteer (unpaid) staff;
- ECEs who are employed as independent contractors; **Note:** this does not include owners/part-owners of a facility participating in the ECE-WE;
- ECEs caring solely for their own children.

Important notes on staff eligibility:

The intent of the ECE-WE is to support ECEs working in a licensed setting.

Government recognizes that ECE Assistants and all Early Care and Learning Professionals are important to the sector and support the overall provision of quality care. At this time, however, eligibility for the ECE-WE is limited to certified ECEs.

Government is responding first to the most urgent needs within the sector. This includes increasing ECE staffing and responding to the critical need for trained and qualified early childhood educators, as well as improving families' access to affordable child care. In addition, the purpose of targeting this wage enhancement to certified ECEs is to encourage more individuals to obtain their certification.

Facilities that choose to employ a higher number of ECEs than what is required under the Child Care Licensing Regulation are eligible to report Hours Worked by all ECEs employed at the facility, regardless of staffing ratio.

ECE Employees in Unionized Facilities

Approved Organizations with facilities that employ unionized ECEs may be eligible for the ECE-WE, as reflected in Table 1 below, provided they have reached a local agreement with their union to amend their collective agreements to implement the ECE-WE.

Unionized ECE employees working at approved Organizations/facilities may qualify for the ECE-WE if their wages are set through local agreement negotiations. In some instances, recently ratified collective agreements have set out a process for ECEs whose wages are set through these local agreements to access the ECE-WE.

Organizations with facilities that have provincially-funded child care programs (i.e., the province funds more than 50% of the program) where unionized ECE wages are set through Joint Job Evaluation Plan classification and wage grids currently do not qualify for the ECE-WE. In these cases, Government's Low- Wage Redress funding supports ECE wage adjustments that exceed those available through the ECE-WE.

Table 1: ECE-WE Eligibility in Unionized Environments

Type of Unionized Employer	Description	Eligibility for ECE-WE
1) Community Social Services Employers' Association (CSSEA) Member -- provincially funded ECEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer is a CSSEA Member and subject to collective agreement with the Community Social Services Bargaining Association (CSSBA). • Receives more than 50% of their <u>child care operating costs</u> from the Province. • Employers must pay unionized ECE wages according to the CSSEA Collective Agreements. The rates are set through CSSEA's Joint Job Evaluation Plan (JJEP) wage grids. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not eligible. Government's Low-Wage Redress funding supports ECE wage adjustments.
2) CSSEA Member – non-provincially funded ECEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer is a CSSEA Member. • Receives less than 50% of their child care operating costs from the Province – not eligible for Low-Wage Redress funding for child care operations. • Some employers have been paying ECEs according to CSSEA Collective Agreements (i.e., as per JJEP wage grids) while others have been paying ECEs at rates lower than JJEP wage grids (these lower ECE rates are set through local side agreements that modify the CSSEA Collective Agreements). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible. The ECE-WE funding will partially offset the cost to employers of matching or narrowing the gap with the new JJEP rates to be established per the 2019-2022 CSSEA Collective Agreement. • Subject to confirmation they are paying the JJEP wage rates or, if a lesser amount, a side agreement has been concluded to implement the ECE-WE.
3) All Other Unionized Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any other unionized employers (public, non-profit, or private) with a collective agreement that includes ECEs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be eligible, contingent on confirmation that the Employer has reached an agreement with their union to amend their collective agreements in order to implement the ECE-WE.

4. Program Contacts

For information about CCOF, CCFRI and the ECE-WE, please call the CCOF Program:

Telephone: 1 888 338-6622 (option 2) – 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday

Online: gov.bc.ca/childcareoperatingfunding

For information about \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres, please call:

Telephone: 1 888 338-6622 (option 7) – 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday

Email: MCF.Prototype@gov.bc.ca

For information about ECE certifications and renewals, please call the Early Childhood Educator Registry:

Telephone: 1 888 338-6622 (option 3) – 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday

Online: gov.bc.ca/earlychildhoodeducator

Appendix A: Definitions

CCFRI Eligible Care Categories: One or both of the Under 36 Months care category and the 3 Years to Kindergarten care category.

Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI): Funding provided by the Ministry to eligible licensed child care Organizations (Group and Family) in receipt of CCOF Base Funding for facilities offering child care in the CCFRI Eligible Care Categories and approved to enroll in the CCFRI, on the condition that such Organizations abide by the requirements set out in the CCOF Funding Agreement and reduce parent fees for children enrolled in the CCFRI Eligible Care Categories by a prescribed amount.

Child Care Operating Funding (CCOF Base Funding): Funding provided by the Ministry to enrolled licensed child care Organizations on a per-facility basis to assist with the day-to-day costs of running a Licensed Child Care Facility.

Early Childhood Educator or ECE: Any individual who holds a current Early Childhood Educator, Infant and Toddler Educator, or Special Needs Educator certificate issued by the BC Early Childhood Educator Registry which has not expired, been suspended, or cancelled.

Early Childhood Educator Registry (ECER): The legislated authority responsible for the certification of ECEs and ECE Assistants; for the recommended approval of post-secondary educational institutions offering early childhood education programs; and for the investigation of practice concerns regarding ECEs and ECE Assistants.

ECE Employee: An ECE employed at the Provider's Facility on either a full-time, part-time, or substitute basis, but does not include ECEs whom the Provider engages as an independent contractor. An ECE Employee also includes:

- The owner or co-owner of a Facility so long as such owner or co-owner is an ECE;
- ECEs primarily working in an administrative function; and
- Supported Child Development Workers (see definition below).

Employer: The owner or part-owner of a Licensed Child Care Facility participating in the ECE-WE. Under the ECE-WE, owners may be eligible to receive the ECE-WE provided they hold valid ECE certification in good standing and are working at such facility or facilities.

Employer Health Tax or EHT: An annual payroll tax implemented in January 2019 that applies to For-Profit employers with total B.C. remuneration greater than \$500,000 and Non-Profit employers with a B.C. remuneration greater than \$1,500,000.

Employer Health Tax (EHT) Reimbursement: The funding that the Ministry provides to Organizations enrolled in the ECE-WE if those Organizations are required to pay the EHT. This funding offsets additional EHT payment obligations that those Organizations may incur as a result of participating in the ECE-WE.

Good Standing: Having no outstanding balances owing to the Ministry unless a Ministry approved payment plan is in place and being complied with to the Ministry's satisfaction. Also, in the case of:

- An ECE certification: the status of a certification, where an ECE holds a valid ECE certificate issued by the Director of the BC ECE Registry that is not suspended, cancelled, or expired; and,
- An Organization/\$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre that is a society or corporation: a status of good standing with BC Registries and Online Services.

Hours Worked: Regular or overtime hours where an ECE Employee (see definition above) is paid wages for activities at a facility.

Hours Worked do not include:

- Sick time, parental leave, long-term disability, vacation, unpaid leave; or,
- Time spent solely in the care of children for whom the ECE Employee is a Parent (as defined herein) or is otherwise a parent or person standing in the place of a parent.

Licensed Child Care Facility: The physical location of child care services operated by the Organization/\$10 Day ChildCareBC Centre for which a valid child care facility licence has been issued under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and as outlined in Schedule A of the Organization's CCOF Funding Agreement or the \$10a Day ChildCareBC Centre's Funding Agreement.

Maximum Hours: 195 Hours Worked each month by each ECE Employee.

Organization: The Provider under an existing CCOF Funding Agreement with the Ministry.

Parent: A parent, or a person standing in the place of a parent, with respect to a child enrolled in an Enrolled Space at the facility.

Statutory Benefits: The Employer's cost of the statutory group benefits associated with the increased wages provided as a result of this ECE-WE funding. Statutory group benefits include:

- Employment Insurance (EI);
- Canada Pension Plan (CPP);
- Workers' Compensation Insurance, through WorkSafeBC;
- Statutory Holiday Pay;
- Vacation Pay; and
- Other such benefits as may be statutorily imposed during the term of the contract period.

Statutory Benefits Funding: Funding provided by the Ministry to offset the increased costs of Statutory Benefits associated with the ECE-WE. Note: Statutory Benefits Funding amounts are adjusted on January 1 of each year as required to reflect any changes to federal tax rates.

Supported Child Development Consultant: Staff of a contracted agency who provides a range of training and consulting services to child care operators/staff and families to support full participation of children with support needs. When required, these consultants determine eligibility for enhanced staffing supports (support worker hours).

Supported Child Development/Aboriginal Supported Child Development Support Worker:

Eligible: Any ECE working as a SCD/ASCD Worker who is directly employed by a Licensed Child Care Facility is eligible for the ECE-WE.

Ineligible: Any ECE who is employed and paid by the SCD/ASCD program directly, and is assigned/deployed to a Licensed Child Care Facility; any SCD/ASCD Support Workers who do not meet the criteria as detailed under ECE Staff Eligibility.

\$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre: A child care facility that has entered into a contract with the Ministry to participate in the \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre program.