

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
AND CHILD CARE

Early Childhood Educator  
Wage Enhancement  
(ECE-WE)

Funding Guidelines  
2023/24

---

RELEASED November 2023



# Contents

- 1. Introduction ..... 2
- 2. What’s New for 2023/24..... 2
  - Rate Increase..... 2
  - CCFRI Expansion ..... 2
  - Statutory benefit changes ..... 2
- 3. Who is Eligible? ..... 3
  - Organization Eligibility ..... 3
  - Facility Eligibility ..... 3
  - ECE Staff Eligibility ..... 4
- 4. Program Contacts ..... 5
- Appendix A: Definitions ..... 6

# 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 and is intended to increase the existing wages for eligible ECEs. The ECE-WE cannot be used to replace wages or scheduled wage increases, nor can the wage top-up amount be reduced.

## 2. What's New for 2023/24

### Rate Increase

As of December 1, 2023, the ECE-WE will increase by \$2 per hour, to a total of \$6 per hour, for eligible ECEs employed by non-public sector employers. ECEs employed by public sector employers, as defined in the *Public Sector Employers Act*, are not eligible for the \$2 per hour increase but will retain access to the \$4 per hour wage top-up if eligible. Please see "Who is Eligible" for further information.

### CCFRI Expansion

As of September 1, 2023, facilities offering care to children in preschool and/or school aged children (Grade 1 and above) are eligible for the [Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative](#) (CCFRI) and must be enrolled in order to be eligible for the ECE-WE. Facilities not approved to participate in the CCFRI as of September 1, 2023 will no longer be eligible to participate in the ECE-WE. For information about when and how to apply, please visit the [CCFRI website](#).

### Statutory benefit changes

#### ***National Day for Truth and Reconciliation***

In March 2023, B.C. passed legislation to recognize September 30 as a statutory holiday in British Columbia. To ensure ECEs receive the ECE-WE on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, child care providers will be able to claim ECE-WE for hours paid to employees on the holiday even if they are closed, subject to the Maximum Hours (see definition under *Appendix A*). While child care providers typically do not claim the wage enhancement for statutory holidays, this change is included for 2023 as the holiday was not included in 2023/24 statutory benefits funding amounts.

#### ***Legislated Paid Sick Days***

Effective January 1, 2022, a new entitlement was introduced under the BC Employment Standards Act (ESA) to provide all eligible employees with up to five days of paid sick leave per employment

year for any personal illness or injury. As of September 1, 2023, subject to the Maximum Hours (see definitions under *Appendix A*), child care providers will be able to claim ECE-WE for hours paid to employees on the five ESA paid sick days, despite the exclusion of sick time from the Hours Worked definition.

### 3. Who is Eligible?

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

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 enrolled in the [Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative](#) (CCFRI), if eligible, or operate as a [\\$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre](#). [Organizations](#) can apply at any time to begin receiving the ECE-WE on a go-forward basis.

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 without prior written approval from the Ministry.

#### ***Facilities with Unionized ECEs***

Facilities that employ unionized ECEs may be eligible for the ECE-WE, provided they have reached a local agreement with their union to amend their collective agreements to implement the ECE-WE. Providers should contact their Union Representative to inquire about specific facility eligibility.

#### ***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 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 ECEs, 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.

ECEs working outside of the public sector generally receive lower wages and fewer extended benefits than their public sector counterparts. Through the collective bargaining process in 2022, public sector unions have negotiated wage increases for their members of at least 12.75% over three years under the

Shared Recovery Mandate. Recognizing this, government is targeting the \$2 per hour increase effective December 1, 2023 to those ECEs in licensed, eligible facilities who have not benefitted from these recent wage increases, with the intent of stabilizing the overall ECE workforce.

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.

## 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](https://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](mailto: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](https://gov.bc.ca/earlychildhoodeducator)

# Appendix A: Definitions

**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

to work at a facility, provided that 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. ECE-WE funding is included in the taxable gross pay when calculating statutory benefits, and benefits paid to ECE Employees will be paid at a rate that includes the ECE-WE. 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, and are posted on the [ECE-WE website](#).

**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.