



Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement Funding Guidelines

2025 – 2026
Effective April 2025



ChildCareBC

The Ministry of Education and Child Care gratefully acknowledges that we carry out our work on the traditional territories of First Nations around B.C.

The Ministry is committed to reconciliation and we acknowledge the rights, interests, priorities, and concerns of all Indigenous peoples in BC, respecting and acknowledging their distinct cultures, histories, and rights.

Table of Contents

1 Introduction	3
2 ECE-WE Eligibility	3
2.1 Provider Eligibility	3
2.2 Facility Eligibility	4
2.3 ECE Staff Eligibility.....	6
3 Statutory Benefits and Employer Health Tax.....	7
4 Program Contacts	8
Appendix A: Definitions	9

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 by the employer.

2 ECE-WE Eligibility

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

1. Eligibility of a Provider/\$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre;
2. Eligibility of Licensed Child Care Facilities that are owned/operated by the Provider; and
3. Eligibility of ECE Employees (employed or self-employed by the Provider/Licensed Child Care Facility).

2.1 Provider Eligibility

Providers 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 Providers can decide whether or not to apply. However, while participation is voluntary, in order to receive the ECE-WE, Providers must apply on behalf of their eligible ECE Employees.

2.2 Facility Eligibility

Providers may include 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. Generally, for ECEs working at each Licensed Child Care Facility to be eligible for the ECE-WE, the Provider must be enrolled in the [Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative \(CCFRI\)](#), with respect to those Licensed Child Care Facilities, if eligible, or operate as a [\\$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre](#). However, Licensed Child Care Facilities that do not charge parent fees may be eligible for the ECE-WE, despite not participating in the CCFRI. Providers can apply at any time to begin receiving the ECE-WE on a go-forward basis.

While a Provider may have multiple facilities, each Licensed Child Care Facility's eligibility for the ECE-WE is assessed separately. A Licensed Child Care Facility may unenroll from the ECE-WE only if the facility has provided the Ministry with written notice of its intention to unenroll and the Ministry approves the request in writing. If the unenrollment is approved, the Ministry will determine the effective date of the Licensed Child Care Facility's unenrollment from the ECE-WE Program.

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

- Facilities operating under a Provider that is not enrolled in CCOF Base Funding or \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre Funding;
- Facilities that are eligible for the CCFRI, but are not participating
- \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres participating in the Operating Funding Model test (as they are testing a wage and compensation standard); and/or
- Facilities that do not employ ECEs.

Unionized Facilities

Unionized Licensed Child Care Facilities may be eligible for the ECE-WE, provided the collective agreement governing the employment of ECE Employees at the Facility explicitly identifies enrolment in the ECE-WE or there must be written agreement with the union, to the same effect. The amount of the enhancement at a unionized Licensed Child Care Facility will depend on whether they are a public sector employer (eligible for \$4/hour) or a non-public sector employer (eligible for \$6/hour). Unionized Licensed Child Care Facilities should contact the Union Representative to discuss specific facility eligibility.

Facility receipt of the \$4 vs. \$6 wage enhancement

For ECE Employees who are paid on an hourly rate, the ECE-WE is based on Hours Worked by each ECE Employee (up to a maximum of 195 hours per month per ECE Employee) calculated based on the following funding rates:

- If the Licensed Child Care Facility is not a Public Sector Employer, the funding rate for each eligible Facility is \$6.00 per Hour Worked by each ECE Employee.
- If the Licensed Child Care Facility is a Public Sector Employer that is not a member of the Community Social Services Employers' Association, the funding rate for ECEs employed at each Licensed Child Care Facility is \$4.00 per Hour Worked by each such ECE Employee;
- If the Licensed Child Care Facility is a Public Sector Employer that is a member of the Community Social Services Employers' Association, and:
 - ECE Employees at the Licensed Child Care Facility are unionized (meaning ECE employment at the Licensed Child Care Facility is governed by a collective agreement), the funding rate for each such Licensed Child Care Facility is \$4.00 per Hour Worked by each eligible ECE Employee;
 - ECE Employees at the Licensed Child Care Facility are non-unionized (meaning ECE employment at the Licensed Child Care Facility is not governed by a collective agreement), the funding rate for each such Licensed Child Care Facility is \$6.00 per Hour Worked by each eligible ECE Employee;

If the Licensed Child Care Facility becomes eligible for a different funding rate, as referenced above during the term of the Agreement, the Ministry can, at its discretion, determine when the new funding rate comes into effect.

2.3 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](#) which has not been suspended, cancelled, or expired; and
- Be an ECE Employee (see [Appendix A: Definitions](#)) at a Licensed Child Care Facility that is in receipt of CCOF and enrolled in the CCFRI and the ECE-WE or is a \$10 a Day site. For clarity, the definition of “ECE Employee” includes an ECE working as a Supported Child Development (SCD)/Aboriginal SCD Worker who is directly employed by a Licensed Child Care Facility.

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 an eligible 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;
- 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.

ECE-WE Maximum Hours

ECEs may only receive the ECE-WE for hours worked in an eligible facility up to the maximum allowable number of hours, which is 195 hours per month. Any hours worked over and above 195 hours in a month by eligible ECEs are not eligible for the ECE-WE.

Important notes on staff eligibility

The intent of the ECE-WE is to support ECEs working in a Licensed Child Care Facility.

Government recognizes that ECE Assistants and all child care 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.

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.

3 Statutory Benefits and Employer Health Tax

Statutory Benefits Funding

The Ministry provides Statutory Benefits Funding to Providers eligible for the ECE-WE to compensate them for increased statutory benefit payment obligations arising from the ECE-WE Funding.

Statutory Benefits Funding amounts are adjusted on January 1 of each year as required to reflect any changes to statutory benefit rates, and are posted on the ECE-WE website.

Employer Health Tax

Eligible Licensed Child Care Facilities that are subject to the Employer Health Tax (EHT), are entitled to receive EHT Reimbursement from the Ministry to offset any increase in the EHT they are required to pay as a result of the ECE Wage Enhancement Funding.

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: 10aDayCentres@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

Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI): Enhances child care affordability for families by offering funding to eligible, licensed child care providers to reduce and stabilize monthly child care fees.

Child Care Operating Funding (CCOF) Base Funding: Base Funding assists eligible licensed family, in-home multi-age and group child care providers with the day-to-day costs of running a 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 been cancelled.

Early Childhood Educator Assistant: An individual who holds a valid early childhood educator assistant certificate, issued by the BC Early Childhood Educator Registry under section 27 of the CCLR;

Early Childhood Educator Registry (ECER): The legislated authority responsible for the certification of ECEs and ECE Assistants; for recommending recognition 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 a Licensed Child Care Facility on a full-time, part-time, or substitute basis, and includes an owner of a Facility, ECEs primarily working in an administrative function, and Supported Child Development support workers or Aboriginal Supported Child Development support workers, provided the supported child development worker is directly employed at the Facility, but does not include an ECE engaged as an independent contractor.

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.

Hours Worked: Regular hours or overtime hours for which an ECE Employee is paid to work at a Licensed Child Care Facility and sick leave taken by an ECE Employee provided that Hours Worked do not include:

- i. parental leave, long-term disability, vacation, or unpaid leave;
- ii. any sick leave taken in excess of the prescribed number of days under section 49.1(1)(a) of the **Employment Standards Act**; or
- iii. time spent solely caring for children for whom the ECE Employee is a Parent 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 Provider/\$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 Provider's CCOF Funding Agreement or the \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre's Funding Agreement.

Provider: The organization under an existing CCOF or \$10 a Day 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 or a child in a drop-in space at the facility.

Public Sector Employer: Has the meaning given to it in section 1 of the **Public Sector Employers Act**.

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 each month to offset the increased costs of statutory benefits obligations for ECE Employees as a result of the ECE-WE.

Supported Child Development Consultant: Staff of a contracted agency who provides a range of training and consulting services to child care facility owners, operators and 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: Provides enhanced staffing support to enable meaningful participation of one or more children with support needs. May work directly with individual children or may provide support across the program. They may either be 1) funded by the SCD/ASCD program but hired directly by a Licensed Child Care Facility; or 2) employed and paid by the SCD/ASCD program directly and assigned/deployed to a Licensed Child Care Facility.

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