



Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement Funding Guidelines

2026 – 2027

Released December 2026

The Ministry of Education and Child Care acknowledges the territories of First Nations throughout B.C. and is grateful to carry out our work on these lands.

As the ministry is committed to reconciliation, we acknowledge the rights, interests, priorities and concerns of all Indigenous Peoples – First Nations, Métis and Inuit – respecting and acknowledging their distinct cultures, histories and rights.

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1 Introduction

Recruiting and retaining a skilled and knowledgeable Early Childhood Educator (ECE) workforce is essential to delivering on the goals of the [ChildCareBC](#) plan. A stable and well-supported ECE workforce improves the quality of early childhood programs across British Columbia and enables the expansion of licensed child care spaces - ensuring more families have access to high-quality care in their community.

The Governments of British Columbia and Canada have partnered to increase ECE wages through the ECE Wage Enhancement (ECE-WE), which is a key component of the broader [Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#). This initiative supports the retention of a qualified professional ECE workforce and affirms early care and learning as a valued and sustainable career.

The ECE-WE provides a wage top-up to ECEs who are directly employed in eligible licensed child care facilities. The ECE-WE is designed to supplement - not replace - existing wages.

2 Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement Eligibility

Eligibility for the ECE-WE is determined across three key categories:

1. Provider eligibility
2. Eligibility of the licensed child care facilities operated by the provider; and
3. Eligibility of ECE employees, including those who are self-employed

2.1 Provider Eligibility

To participate in the ECE-WE, providers must either:

- Be enrolled in [Child Care Operating Funding](#) (CCOF) base funding, or
- Operate as a [\\$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre](#)

Participation in the ECE-WE is voluntary. However, providers who choose to participate must submit an application on behalf of their eligible ECE employees in order to receive the wage enhancement.

2.2 Licensed Child Care Facility Eligibility

To qualify for the ECE-WE, the licensed child care facility must meet one of the following criteria:

- Be enrolled in the [Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative](#) (CCFRI), or
- Operate as a \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre outside of the Operating Funding Model test

An exception exists for licensed child care facilities that are not enrolled in CCFRI and do not charge parent fees. These licensed child care facilities may also be eligible for the ECE-WE.

Providers may apply for the ECE-WE at any time, with funding applied on a go-forward basis. Eligibility is determined based on the physical address or location of each facility, rather than by facility licence. A provider may operate a single facility or multiple facilities across different settings; however, each facility's eligibility is assessed individually.

A provider may choose to unenroll a licensed child care facility from the ECE-WE but must first submit a written request to the Ministry. Unenrollment is only effective once approved in writing by the Ministry, which will confirm the date that the licensed child care facility's participation ends.

Facilities **ineligible** for the ECE-WE include (but are not limited to):

- Facilities operated by providers not enrolled in CCOF base funding or \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre funding
- Licensed child care facilities eligible for the CCFRI but not participating
- \$10 a Day ChildCareBC centres that are part of the Operating Funding Model test because they are testing a wage and compensation standard; and/or
- Licensed child care facilities that do not employ ECEs

2.2.1 Unionized Licensed Child Care Facilities

Unionized licensed child care facilities may be eligible to receive the ECE-WE. To qualify:

- The collective agreement governing the employment of ECE employees at the licensed child care facility must explicitly agree to the provider's enrolment in the ECE-WE or
- The provider must have a written agreement with the union agreeing to enrolment in the ECE-WE

The amount of wage enhancement provided to unionized licensed child care facilities depends on whether the provider is classified as a public sector or non-public sector employer:

- Non-public sector employers are eligible for \$6.00 per hour worked by each eligible ECE employee
- Public sector employers may be eligible for \$4.00 per hour worked by each eligible ECE employee

Unionized facilities should contact their union representative to confirm specific facility eligibility.

2.2.2 Wage Enhancement Rates by Licensed Child Care Facility Type

The wage enhancement portion of ECE-WE funding is calculated based on hours worked by each eligible ECE employee, up to a maximum of 195 hours per month. The wage enhancement rates are:

- \$6.00 per hour
 - For licensed child care facilities operated by non-public sector employers
 - For licensed child care facilities operated by public sector employers that are members of the Community Social Services Employers' Association (CSSEA) and employ non-unionized ECEs
- \$4.00 per hour
 - For licensed child care facilities operated by CSSEA-member public sector employers that employ unionized ECEs
 - For all licensed child care facilities operated by public sector employers that are not a member of CSSEA

The ECE-WE is intended to supplement existing wages. Providers **are not permitted** to use ECE-WE funding to replace either base wages or scheduled wage increases. Providers are not permitted to reduce the wage enhancement rate; for example, by offsetting it against other compensation.

If a licensed child care facility's eligibility status changes during the term of the agreement (e.g., due to a change in union status or employer classification), the ministry can, at its discretion, determine when the new wage enhancement rate takes effect.

2.3 Staff Eligibility

Eligible Staff

To qualify for the ECE-WE, an individual must:

- Hold a valid certificate issued by the [BC ECE Registry](#) as an Early Childhood Educator, Infant and Toddler Educator, or Special Needs Educator. The certificate must be active (not suspended, cancelled, or expired); and
- Be directly employed or self-employed as an ECE (see [Appendix A: Definitions](#)) at a licensed child care facility that:
 - Receives CCOF base funding and is enrolled in both the CCFRI and the ECE-WE, or

- Operates as a \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre¹ and is enrolled in the ECE-WE

ECEs who: (i) work as Supported Child Development (SCD) or Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD) workers or (ii) own or operate a licensed child care facility may qualify for the ECE-WE provided they meet the eligibility requirements listed under “Eligible Staff.”

Ineligible Staff

Ineligible individuals include, but are not limited to:

- Those without an active ECE certificate issued by the BC ECE Registry (including suspended, cancelled, or expired certificates)
- ECEs not directly employed or self-employed by an eligible licensed child care facility
- SCD and ASCD consultants (see [Appendix A: Definitions](#))
- SCD and ASCD workers who are employed and paid directly by the SCD and ASCD program and assigned or deployed to licensed child care facilities
- ECE Assistants
- Responsible Adults
- Volunteers (unpaid staff)
- ECEs working as independent contractors (**note:** this does not include owners or part-owners of eligible licensed child care facilities)
- ECEs caring solely for their own children

Maximum Hours Eligible for ECE-WE

ECEs may receive the wage enhancement for up to 195 hours per month worked in an eligible licensed child care facility. Hours worked (see [Appendix A: Definitions](#)) beyond this limit are not eligible for ECE-WE funding.

Additionally, sick leave taken beyond the entitlement outlined in section 49.1(1)(a) of the [Employment Standards Act](#) is not eligible for ECE-WE.

Important Notes on Staff Eligibility

The ECE-WE is designed to support certified ECEs working in licensed child care facilities. While government recognizes the valuable contributions of ECE Assistants and other members of the child care workforce, the current focus is on addressing the most urgent needs in the sector –

¹ ECEs working at \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres participating in the Operating Funding Model test are not eligible for the ECE-WE as they are testing a wage and compensation standard.

specifically, increasing the number of qualified ECEs and expanding access to affordable, high-quality child care.

By targeting the wage enhancement to certified ECEs, the initiative also aims to encourage more individuals to pursue ECE certification.

Licensed child care facilities that employ more ECEs than required under the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) may report hours worked by all certified ECEs, regardless of staffing ratios.

3 Statutory Benefits, Premiums and Employer Health Tax

Statutory Benefits and Premiums

The Ministry compensates providers with additional funding to offset the increased cost of statutory benefits and workers' compensation premiums arising from the ECE-WE.

The funding amount is adjusted annually on January 1 to reflect any changes in statutory benefit or premium rates. Additional information including the breakdown of the funding amount by percentage of each type of benefit and premium is available on the ECE-WE [website](#).

Employer Health Tax

Eligible licensed child care facilities that are subject to the [employer health tax](#) (EHT) may receive reimbursement from the ministry to cover any increase in EHT obligations related to 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: 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)

A funding program that helps make child care affordable for families by providing funding to enrolled licensed child care providers to reduce and stabilize monthly child care fees.

Child Care Operating Funding (CCOF) Base Funding

Funding that assists eligible licensed family, in-home multi-age, and group child care providers with the day-to-day costs of operating a licensed child care facility.

Early Childhood Educator (ECE)

An individual who holds a valid Early Childhood Educator, Infant and Toddler Educator, or Special Needs Educator certificate issued by the BC Early Childhood Educator Registry. The certificate must not be expired, suspended, or cancelled.

ECE Assistant

An individual who holds a valid Early Childhood Educator Assistant certificate issued by the BC Early Childhood Educator Registry.

Early Childhood Educator Registry (ECER)

The legislated authority responsible for certifying ECEs and ECE Assistants, recommending recognition of post-secondary early childhood education programs, and investigating practice concerns related to ECEs and ECE Assistants.

ECE Employee

An ECE employed at a licensed child care facility on a full-time, part-time, or substitute basis. An ECE employee includes licensed child care facility owners, ECEs working primarily in administrative roles, as well as Supported Child Development (SCD) and Aboriginal SCD (ASCD) provided the supported child development workers are directly employed at the licensed child care facility. It does not include ECEs engaged as independent contractors.

Employer Health Tax (EHT)

The employer health tax is an annual tax on an employer's B.C. remuneration paid to employees and former employees in a calendar year beginning on January 1, 2019.

Hours Worked

Regular or overtime hours for which an ECE employee is paid to work at a licensed child care facility, including sick leave within the prescribed limits under section 49.1(1)(a) of the [Employment Standards Act](#). Hours worked do not include:

- i. Parental leave, long-term disability, vacation, or unpaid leave
- ii. Sick leave beyond the prescribed number of days; or
- iii. Time spent caring solely 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 where child care services are provided under a valid child care facility licence under the [Community Care & Assisted Living Act](#), as outlined in the provider's CCOF or \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre funding agreement.

Provider

An organization or licensed child care facility with an existing CCOF or \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre funding agreement.

Public Sector Employer

As defined in section 1 of the [Public Sector Employers Act](#).

Supported Child Development Consultant

Staff of a contracted agency who provide training and consulting services to child care facility owners, operators, staff, and families to support the inclusion of children with support needs. When required, these consultants also determine eligibility for enhanced staffing supports (support worker hours).

Supported Child Development and Aboriginal Supported Child Development Worker

Provides enhanced staffing support to enable meaningful participation of children with support needs. May work directly with individual children or across the program. Workers may be:

1. Funded by the SCD and ASCD program but hired directly by a licensed child care facility;
or
2. Employed and paid by the SCD and ASCD program and assigned to a licensed child care facility

\$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre

A licensed child care facility that has entered into a funding agreement with the ministry to participate in the \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centre program.