

# Spring into Action for Decent Work!

The Early Childhood (EC) Workforce keeps Ontario moving because **everyone** depends on **someone** who depends on early years and child care programs. The work of an Early Childhood Educator is socially important and valuable work. We care for and educate Ontario's youngest during a critical time of their development. We support families, we strengthen communities and, let's not forget, the economy relies on parents participation in the workforce - imagine a day without ECEs and early years staff. ECEs do all of this and more: we support and promote the inclusion of children with disabilities, we encourage social cohesion by celebrating the diversity of the children and families that we care for, and we provide equitable opportunities for all children. ECEs are often the first support for New Canadian families and Indigenous and non- Indigenous ECEs support children, families and communities by providing culturally safe and nurturing programs. ECEs and early years staff are creative, knowledgeable and innovative professionals. Guided by *How Does Learning Happen?*, ECEs collaborate with other practitioners to create engaging environments and experiences that foster children's learning and development. For almost 10 years ECEs have been regulated by the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE), which protects our professional title, holds us accountable to a Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice and ensures the safety and well-being of children.

It is well past time for Ontario's Early Childhood Workforce to experience the professional pay and recognition that they deserve. Join our Professional Pay & Decent Work campaign - our voices are stronger together.

## CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

### DECENT WORK, BETTER FUTURE

**Decent work for Ontario's Early Childhood Workforce must be a pillar of the government's plan to build a better future for children and families in Ontario.** ECEs, parents, and government have a common goal: high quality care and education for our youngest learners. As research shows, ECEs and staff are key to quality. Ensuring better wages and working conditions that support educators to provide high quality care and education must be the foundation upon which we build a better future for everyone in our province.

This year, a big focus of the Professional Pay & Decent Work campaign is to celebrate and showcase the important and valuable work of the Early Childhood Workforce. From sharing our stories as educators, parents and staff, to hosting local events that raise awareness and increase support for improved wages and working conditions - ECEs, staff, children and parents can organize to call for an early years and child care system that puts decent work at its heart.

The AECEO will be working closely with our partners, the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC), Atkinson Centre and Olivia Chow with the Institute for Change Leaders. Together, we are focused

### Shared Vision of Decent Work in Early Years & Child Care

**Fair compensation; full-time, stable jobs; health benefits and pension coverage no matter where you work in the sector; supportive work environments that promote quality, such as, safe and healthy facilities, a staff room, lunch breaks, paid preparation time and equitable access to on-going opportunities for professional learning and growth; a strong professional community; public recognition; increased access to collective bargaining and adequate representation and power in the process of change in the sector.**

**#DECENT WORK**



on strengthening the leadership skills of ECEs, staff, parents and community members so that we can work collaboratively toward our campaign goals. From now until June 2018 (and well beyond) we will be working across the province to ignite leadership and organize communities to take action for decent work. We are going to achieve this in two ways:

1. Offering the Building Skills for Change in Early Years and Child Care leadership training to structure local teams (or “snowflakes”) to organize for decent work across Ontario.
2. Working with a Task Force to develop a Decent Work Charter for non-profit early years and child care organizations and policy recommendations for all levels of government.

## **BUILDING SKILLS FOR CHANGE IN EARLY YEARS AND CHILD CARE**

*People, power, change*

The Building Skills for Change leadership training is scheduled to visit Toronto, Ottawa, Sudbury, Waterloo and Thunder Bay this Spring/Summer (visit [aeceo.ca](http://aeceo.ca) for details and registration). The training is based on the successful work of Marshall Ganz, a Harvard professor who was a key organizing strategist during the Obama U.S presidential campaigns of 2008 and 2012.

Participants who join us for this practical 2 day leadership training can expect to develop their capacity for effective community organizing through five key practices:

- Telling stories,
- building relationships,
- structuring teams,
- strategizing,
- and acting.

Here’s what we mean by community organizing:

Organizing is leadership that enables your people to join forces and turn their combined resources into the power they need to make the change they want.



By introducing ECEs, staff and parents to the snowflake model – an effective organizational structure that distributes power and responsibility, and prioritizes leadership development – we expect to strengthen the capacity of our members and the broader EC workforce to mobilize and organize for change in early years and child care.

## **TASK FORCE**

Under the leadership and direction of Bernice Cipparrone-McLeod, we have established a Task Force with two key functions, they are:

1. Develop policy recommendations to address issues and challenges that were documented during our Mobilization Forums in 2016;
2. Develop a Decent Work Charter for employers to endorse to support our Shared Vision of Decent Work in the Early Years and Child Care sector.

To build consensus the Task Force will release a draft of the recommendations followed by a webinar consultation with members. It is important that AECEO members across the province participate in this important process of developing the AECEO’s policy position. It is important to us that ECEs have ample opportunity to participate in the process of change in the sector.

We aim to publish and promote the final recommendations in October 2017, followed by a strategic plan to collect endorsements and establish a collective call for action. The recommendations will be used to inform both provincial and federal governments.

***See page # 17 for Task Force member bios***

## TIMELINE

### ➤ March – September 2017

During this period we will complete five Building Skills for Change in Early Years and Child Care leadership training sessions. We would love to bring the Building Skills for Change training to other communities in Ontario! If you would like to organize a training session in your community, get in touch with AECEO provincial office, and we can brainstorm fundraising ideas that bring us to you!

### ➤ April 11 2017 is Equal Pay Day!

#### **WEAR RED TO WORK!**

At a 30% pay gap in Ontario, a woman will have to work 15 1/2 months to earn what men do in 12. Women will need to work into April 2017 to earn the same income as their male counterparts did by December 2016. For women who are racialized, disabled, Indigenous, migrant and immigrant, or sexual minorities or gender variant, that means working into May and June - visit [equalpaycoalition.org](http://equalpaycoalition.org) for more information!

**The EC workforce is the poster child of the Gender Wage Gap as many ECEs struggle to support (or even start) their family due to low wages. We also know that affordable, accessible, high-quality child care is key to closing the gender wage gap in Ontario.**

### ➤ May 14, 2017 is Mother's Day!

#### **Launch of the "Share Your Child Care Story" project**

Mother's Day events are being planned to kick off the exciting Share your Child Care Story Project that will run for the duration of the campaign this year. Our goal is to collect and share **hundreds** of child care stories from across the province to highlight the need for a better system of early years and child care that puts decent work for ECEs and staff at its heart.

Everyone has a child care story; we are asking ECEs, staff, parents, children and community members to share their child care stories in support of the AECEO's Decent Work campaign. Reach out to your networks – we all know someone who relies on early years and child care programs!

Your experiences and voices are valuable, let's make sure we are being heard!



Photo courtesy of Institute for Change Leaders

#### **Story Guidelines**

- 3 minutes maximum
- Stories can be in video, written or audio format (if possible a picture should be shared with written & audio stories but only with photo permission)
- Stories should not include any names or identifying information of other people or centres/organizations

#### **Sharing Guidelines**

- Sharing will begin on Mother's Day 2017 and will happen mainly through social media and local media
- When sharing on social media use the hashtags #ECEPower #DecentWork #ChildCareCantWait
- Remember to tag the AECEO, your MPP, Minister Indira Naidoo Harris and Premier Kathleen Wynne when you share stories
- If you've collected stories from ECEs, staff, parents and you want the AECEO to share them for you – or if you have any questions regarding the project please email [Inquiries@aeceo.ca](mailto:Inquiries@aeceo.ca)

➤ **June – September 2017**

Let's get creative over the summer months to ensure that our political leaders hear our message: ECEs need decent work so that we can build a better future for everyone!

- **June 13 2017 is Father's Day!** Plan a "dudes for daycare" event to celebrate dads and dudes who support affordable, quality, non-profit child care and decent work for educators! Gather signatures for the Professional Pay petition and ask dads to share their child care story!
- Strengthen our collective voice by hosting creative events across the province that encourage new allies to join our movement, amplify our voice, and are fun and engaging!
- Plan a child care take over at your MPP's barbeque! Find your MPP here: <http://www.ontla.on.ca/lao/en/getting-involved/contact-an-mpp/the-mpp-as-elected-representative.html>
- Fundraise for the campaign to increase resources and keep up momentum!
- Ask businesses and community organizations to sign and share the AECEO's petition for professional pay
- Provide your feedback on the draft policy recommendations developed by the Task Force

➤ **September – November 2017**

This will be a peak time for actions at Queen's Park and our last chance for change under the current government before the 2018 provincial election a critical time for publicizing and garnering support for the AECEO's policy recommendations.

- **Provincial Week of Action: October 20<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> 2017**  
We will keep you updated as week of action events are organized over the summer and fall! This will be a GREAT opportunity to get media attention on our issue and to increase the visibility of our campaign to the general public.

➤ **November 2017 – January 2018**

This is the pre-election period where parties will be developing the election platforms – a critical time to visit your MPP's constituency office with the AECEO's recommendations! During this period the Task Force will be working on the development of the Decent Work Charter.

➤ **January – June 2018**

During the provincial election campaign we will provide a non-partisan toolkit and resources, including the Decent Work Charter, to support local teams and the broader EC workforce to organize and ensure that decent work for ECEs and affordable non-profit child care is a priority for all voters. During this time we will engage the EC workforce across Ontario in a campaign to push all candidates on our recommendations for professional pay and decent work.



# Task Force Members

**Bernice Cipparrone-McLeod RECE** has been in the early years sector for over thirty years holding positions at various levels in childcare and children's mental health. Bernice has focused her work on social justice issues, creating inclusive environments and leadership development. Bernice has co-authored tools and a textbook to equip students and professionals to meet the diverse needs of children, families and community.

Bernice also worked at a senior level for the Ontario Trillium Foundation (a granting agency of the government of Ontario) where she was able to support local organizations and individuals to build capacity and transform communities.

Bernice has been with George Brown College for the past sixteen year, first as an instructor in the department of continuing education before becoming full-time faculty in 2011 in the School of Early Childhood. Bernice was cross-appointed as the Executive Director of the Atkinson Centre from 2014-2016 where she focused on promoting healthy child development through community engagement, and mentoring and coaching emerging leaders. She continues to teach and represent the Atkinson Centre, collaborating with the AECEO and the OCBCC on the mobilizing early years workforce in the Decent Work Project.

**Janet Dassinger** is a Researcher with the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) where she conducts research and provides support to the CUPE social services sector including preparing government briefs and submissions; assisting with sectoral meetings and conferences; and supporting staff and elected representatives in collective bargaining. Janet is highly experienced in initiating and developing a wide range of workplace training, labour adjustment, and union development/education projects, and in conducting in depth research and policy analysis on labour market issues.

**Bethany Grady RECE** is currently a research officer at the Childcare Resource and Research Unit. Her work includes public education; policy analysis and consultation as well as research design and production of papers and online resources. Bethany has a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Leadership and a diploma in Early Childhood Education from Sheridan. She is passionate about childcare and its importance as a social policy and feminist issue. Her interests include travel, food and a small dog named Moose.

**Natalee Johnson RECE** has been a Registered Early Childhood Educator for over 10 years. She has worked in various childcare centres, summer camps and family programs throughout the GTA. She currently works in Full Day Early Learning. Natalee holds a diploma in Early Childhood Education, a degree in Child and Youth Work and a degree in Professional Studies in Education. Natalee has been featured in the College of Early Childhood Educator video highlighting the different roles of RECE's. Natalee is also an author of the children book "My Magnificent Hair". Natalee wrote the book to support literacy and diversity within communities and learning environments. In the past Natalee has served as a Union Representative in Peel, representing Early Childhood Educators within the school board. Natalee is passionate about Early Childhood Education and believes the early years are the most critical years in a child's development.

Natalee is delighted to serve on the Task Force Team and continuously bring awareness to Early Childhood Education and the importance of Early Childhood Educators role in Early Childhood Education.

**Rachel Langford RECE, PhD** is an Associate Professor in the School of Early Childhood Studies at Ryerson University. From 2006 to 2016 she served as the director of the School. Her research and scholarly work focuses on childcare advocacy and policy development, workforce professionalization, and conceptualizations of care and care work. She is a co-editor of a UBC Press edited volume, *Caring for children: social movements and public policy in Canada*. She has also published widely on inclusion in early childhood settings, early childhood pedagogy and provincial curriculum frameworks. She served for ten years as an AECEO Board member, advocating for a comprehensive human resources strategy for the early childhood education and care workforce in Ontario.

**Sarah MacMillan (MacVicar) RECE** is in her first year of practice as a Registered Early Childhood Educator and is currently working at a non-profit Child Care Centre. She received her ECE diploma in 2016 from Sault College where she served as President of the Sault College Early Childhood Education Chapter Class of 2016 and Vice Chair of Sault College Advisory College Council 2014 – 2015. She is currently studying toward a B.A. in Psychology and has been a volunteer Leader with the Girl Guides of Canada since 2014.

**Ronna MacPherson** is the Human Resources Manager at Andrew Fleck Child Care Services (AFCCS). She provides the HR support and services to the 145+ employees of AFCCS. Typically, AFCCS has over 50 external and internal hires each year.

**Julie Mathien** began advocating for high quality early learning and child care in the early 1970's. She worked for both local and provincial governments to develop policy to increase and improve programs for children and families and experienced ELCC first-hand as a parent. Julie has been involved in a number of studies related to ELCC and taught public policy in the Department of Early Childhood Studies, Ryerson University. From 2007-2012 she was the Director of Early Learning and Child Development at the Province of Ontario during the policy development and implementation of full-day early learning and kindergarten.

**Cathy Taylor** is the Executive Director of Ontario Nonprofit Network. Cathy has been a member of the ONN team since June 2012. Throughout her 25 years working in the non profit sector, including as the founding Executive Director of the Volunteer Centre of Guelph/Wellington, she has been passionate about collaboration and leadership in the sector. Cathy works with sector colleagues from across Ontario and Canada, as well as private sector and government officials, to create an enabling policy environment for non profit organizations. Cathy's roots are in the environmental movement and she has been active in municipal politics. She holds a degree in political studies and history from Queen's University, and attended the Maytree-York University Executive Directors Leadership program. Outside of work, she enjoys time with her family and her garden in Erin, Ontario.