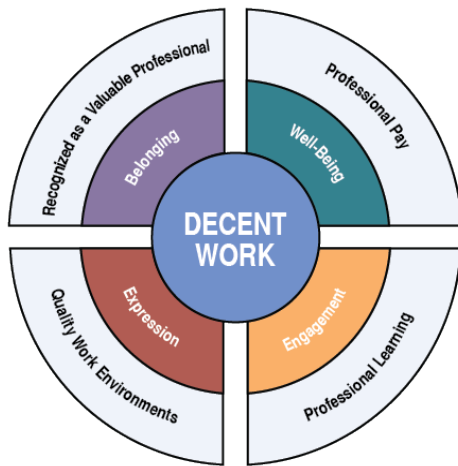


Ontario Early Childhood Sector Decent Work Charter: Supporting Document

Making Decent Work



In 2010 the government of Ontario embarked on an ambitious plan to modernize the early childhood sector. The process began with the migration of early childhood programs and services from the Ministry of Child and Youth Services to the Ministry of Education and the

implementation of Full-Day Kindergarten. Other strategies included updating legislation and the accompanying regulations, the creation of a framework designed to bring coherence to the sector followed by an inspirational pedagogical document.

These are bold steps to move the sector forward as a means of increasing the quality, affordability and accessibility of services to children and their families.

The Ministry has also increased investments in the sector and we commend the efforts made to date. At the same time, academics, researchers, and advocates all agree that investments in the work force is also key to achieving this overall plan to sustain the modernization of the sector.

The Ontario Early Childhood Sector Decent Work Charter has been developed by the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO) Decent Work Taskforce as one of the components to mobilizing a collective effort to achieve greater recognition and improved compensation and working conditions for those employed in the sector.

The primary purpose of this Charter is to promote a vision for decent work within organizational cultures in the early childhood sector (child care, child and family programs, licenced home child care, full-day kindergarten, etc). This requires organizations to commit to pursuing the development of high quality jobs and the structures, policies and practices to support organizations and individuals in implementing the principles that contribute to decent work.

When organizations commit to the principles of decent work, they are creating quality workplace environments that will in turn support the foundations that underpin individual, family and community well-being. These include the economic and social structures that promote improved child outcomes.

The AECEO and partners are committed to working with Government and the early childhood sector to ensure the conditions necessary for the implementation of the Ontario Early Childhood Sector Decent Work Charter are created and supported.

Defining Decent Work (examples)

Recognition of staff as valued professionals

Commitment to establish and maintain structures and resources, internally and externally that recognize the critical role early childhood staff perform in the delivery of quality programs.

- Fair and transparent process for recruitment and promotion, including equity and diversity policies
- Policies that support succession planning and practices that cultivate and recognize leadership, including strategies for mentoring and coaching staff
- Policies and practices that recognize and support educators in fulfilling the CECE Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice
- Organizational recognition and reinforcement of the valued role of registered early childhood educators in all workplaces i.e. staff have appropriate level of autonomy in daily decision making and are recognized as knowledgeable, professional teaching team partners

Professional Pay/Compensation

Commitment to establish and maintain strategies to provide professional pay for professional work

- Fair compensation aligned with education, experience and responsibility
- A plan for annual salary increases to adjust for the cost of living
- Benefit Packages (extended health, pension/RRSP)
- Creative strategies to facilitate full year salaries/employment and limiting of spilt shifts and short term contracts
- Participation in available funding opportunities designed to support wages

Professional Learning

Commitment to establish and maintain structures and resources to support early childhood professionals in all aspects of ongoing professional learning

- Resources (including time and funding) to participate in professional learning along with colleagues
- In-service opportunities provided
- Support and resources to mentor students
- Performance appraisals provide opportunities to both recognize accomplishments and to identify and support career development aspirations and strategies

Quality work environments

Commitment to establish and maintain structures and resources that promote belonging, inclusion, diversity, well- being, engagement and expression in the work environment.

- Boards of non-profits have the breadth of experience and skills to set the vision and direction of the organization and to provide effective leadership based on sound principles and practices

- Practices & strategies that promote effective upward and downward communication and open and transparent communication amongst staff, parents and volunteers
- Creating accessible, inclusive, collaborative, responsive, respectful and safe work cultures, including fair and transparent policies and procedures
- The provision of clear and meaningful job descriptions
- Provision of resources and equipment to support staff in meeting quality standards i.e. paid planning time
- Ensuring that accessible complaint and dispute resolution practices are clearly articulated and consistently implemented
- Policies and practices with promote health and well being
 - Paid wellness and sick days, and vacation time
 - Programming time and break time are separated
 - Policies that promote consideration for employee schedules
 - Staff rooms contain space for rest and professional resources
 - Stress reduction strategies (e.g., team building opportunities)
 - Anti-violence and anti-harassment policies, practices and codes of conduct, including zero tolerance for disrespectful behaviour
 - Joint occupational health and standards committees
 - Access to qualified supply educators to replace educators

Commitments and Actions

- A) **As a sector:** working collaboratively and with other key stakeholders (policymakers, funders, unions and community partners) to create the conditions needed to support decent work in the early childhood sector.
- B) **Individual organizations/employers:** will strive to implement decent work practices through a staged approach that is aligned with secured funding.
- C) **Societal:** working collaboratively with sector partners, local communities and other decent work movements to create the conditions needed to support decent work for all.

A) **As a sector:**

- a. Highlight decent work practices across diverse workplaces
- b. Develop joint training and other shared human resource management strategies
- c. Advocate for fair provincial wage scale and associated public funding
- d. Advocate for improved working conditions and compensation packages
- e. Increase access to full-time/full-year employment, connect part-time positions across organizations
- f. Develop retention strategies
- g. Improve recognition of the profession
- h. Create opportunities for shared practices

B) **Individual organizations/employers:**

- a. Sign the Ontario Early Childhood Sector Decent Work Charter in support of the overarching principles of decent work
- b. Promote and participate in advocacy initiatives toward creating the conditions to support decent work across the sector

- c. Create a phased organizational decent work implementation plan with assistance from the resources being made available in Phase II of the Charter

C) Societal:

- a. Work collectively to support provincial and federal labour market policies and employment standards that will provide decent work for all in Ontario
- b. Participate and support advocacy and public policy efforts towards an affordable, quality child care system - allowing parents to work full time or pursue further education and training
- c. Use a decent work lens in the purchasing of external goods and services
- d. Endorse, support and promote campaigns and initiatives for decent work (e.g. minimum wage/living wage campaigns)

Moving Forward – A Decent Work Implementation Plan

Phase I: September – November 2017

- Develop a Decent Work Charter for endorsement by early childhood sector organizations/employers
- Conduct consultations to develop policy recommendations to the Ontario Government that will support organizations/employers in the implementation of Decent Work practices

Phase II: November 2017 – March 2018

- Publish and promote decent work policy recommendations to the Ontario Government that will create the conditions to allow decent work practices to be implemented in the sector
- Develop a strategic plan to establish a collective call for action and conduct a provincial advocacy campaign to influence the Ministry of Education's Workforce Strategy to ensure implementation of the decent work policy recommendations
- Develop/disseminate resources that will encourage and assist Early Childhood Sector organizations in implementing the commitments and actions associated with the Ontario Early Childhood Sector Decent Work Charter
- Develop mechanisms for individuals/employers to document and share their success at cultivating and sustaining decent work

The Ontario Early Childhood Sector Decent Work Charter has been adapted from the charter created by Toronto Neighbourhood Centres

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