

May 5, 2020

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
5th Floor, 438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

Dear Minister Lecce,

Early Childhood Educators Deserve \$4 Pandemic Pay and Decent Work

The Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO) is the professional association for Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) in Ontario. We are writing to express our deep concerns with the inconsistent and often very low wages of ECEs and child care workers, who are working across the province on the front-lines in emergency child care supporting children and families.

Emergency child care is an essential program that enables other professionals like nurses, personal support workers, and emergency response personnel to care for our communities. Importantly, ECEs and child care workers are themselves *essential workers*; they are caring for and supporting young children while contending with precarity and uncertainty, and navigating a heightened risk for all involved.

ECEs and child care workers, a group of predominantly women workers whose work is often invisible, are experiencing vast discrepancies in wages across the province. While an ECE in Peterborough emergency child care is being compensated at a rate of \$31.53/hour, ECEs in Halton Region are earning \$15.57 – \$18.84/hour – for the same work. Further, as licensed home child care providers delivering emergency care for essential workers are compensated per child with varying enrollment, many of them are facing unsustainably low remuneration.

Early Childhood Educators deserve decent work and professional pay before, during, and after COVID-19. Further, they merit respect and recognition. They must be included in planning and developing programs to ensure they can fully engage in ethical practice while adhering to increased health and safety measures.

To address the inequitable and unjust compensation of ECEs and child care workers in emergency child care across Ontario, the AECEO urges the Government of Ontario to immediately:

- extend the \$4 pandemic pay to apply to all staff in emergency child care.

To ensure compensation commensurate with their professional credentials and reflective of the complex ethical caring work they engage in, the AECEO urges the Ministry of Education to immediately:

- work with municipal partners to ensure a minimum wage of \$25 an hour for all ECEs providing care in Ontario.

The province has already taken steps to recognize the contributions of other front-line workers. It is long overdue that the Government of Ontario officially recognizes and respectfully remunerates ECEs and early years staff, whose care of young children and families is valuable far beyond being a prerequisite for broader labour-market participation. Ontario cannot work without us, and Ontario cannot care well without us.

Sincerely,



Alana Powell,
Executive Coordinator