

PROFESSIONAL PAY for PROFESSIONAL WORK



Continuing the movement for the ECE workforce

Video discussion guide

September 2016

Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario

Introduction

This document was created to guide and support individual reflection and group discussion in relation to the presentations video recorded at the Professional Pay for Professional Work event, *Continuing the Movement for the ECE workforce*, at Conestoga College on November 28, 2015. This event was a follow up to a previous panel, *Professional pay for ECEs: How do we get there?*, that took place at Conestoga in March 2015. The event was organized in partnership with AECEO members from Waterloo/Kitchener and Guelph/Wellington and the Early Childhood Professional Resource Centre and Conestoga College.

The videos in this series include the six presentations that took place at the event. Panelists discussed the issues and solutions for professional pay for ECEs in Ontario from their unique perspectives.

The moderation and participant discussion that took place after the panel presentations is not provided on video to protect the privacy of participants. However, many of the reflection questions included in this document are inspired by the questions and conversations that took place in between and after the presentations.

Using the video discussion guide

This guide can be used individually or in a community of practice to extend your learning from the content in the videos. Suggested readings are also included to further extend your individual learning and group conversations.

It is recommended that you watch the videos in the order they are presented in this guide, and stop to reflect and discuss after each video. Individuals or groups may choose to cover the videos and other materials through a number of sessions as it may be too much content for one session.

Supporting your professional learning

These materials can be used to support your continuous professional learning. As identified in the Continuous Professional Learning program from the College of Early Childhood Educators, self-directed learning and communities of practice are key strategies to fulfilling our professional and ethical continuous learning responsibilities. You can use these materials to lead and engage in your own professional learning independently or within a community of practice¹

These materials may be particularly useful if you have identified policy and/or advocacy as a specific area that you would like to focus on for your continuous professional learning. Understanding and using the content included in these materials also support all RECEs' ethical responsibilities to our colleagues and profession, and to the community and society, as outlined in our Code of Ethics.

From code of ethics (p. 11)

C. Responsibilities to Colleagues and to the Profession

Early Childhood Educators interact with colleagues and other professionals in ways that demonstrate respect, trust and integrity. Through their conduct, Early Childhood Educators strive to enhance the status of the profession in their workplaces and in the wider community. Early Childhood Educators value lifelong learning and commit themselves to engaging in continuous professional learning to enhance their practice. They support experienced colleagues, those who are new to the profession and students aspiring to the profession.

D. Responsibilities to the Community and to Society

Early Childhood Educators value and engage in collaboration with community agencies, schools and other professionals. Early Childhood Educators recognize that they contribute to community and society by advocating for and promoting an appreciation of the profession, children and early learning.

¹ College of Early Childhood Educators (2014). *Reflective practice and self-directed learning booklet*. Retrieved from <http://college-ece.ca/en/Members/Pages/CPL-Program.aspx#question1>

Video one – Martha Friendly²

Discussion/reflection questions

Martha talks about the childcare market – why is this concept important? What are the implications of this model for the provision of licensed childcare in Ontario?

Martha talks about childcare being a female segregated occupation – why does this matter? What are the implications of this reality on licensed childcare in Ontario and the ECE workforce?

Martha identifies that wages and working conditions are a systemic problem that need a systemic solution. What does she mean by this? How does this influence how we talk about the issues and what the solutions are?

Do you agree with Martha's comments? Why or why not?

Further reading:

Halfon, S. & Langford, R. (2015). Developing and supporting a high quality childcare workforce: What are the barriers to change? *Our Schools/Our Selves*, 24(4), pp. 131- 134.

https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2015/09/OS120_Summer2015_Workforce.pdf

² See all presenter bios on page 8

Video two - Shellie Bird

Discussion/reflection questions

Shellie identifies advocacy, professionalization and unionization as “3 pillars” that are needed to support the ECE workforce. How do you feel about this idea? Are these things present in your working context? Why or why not?

Shellie mentions that the role of advocacy is “critical but it also has limitations” – What might be some limitations with advocacy?

Shellie identifies different aspects of professionalization including the establishment of the College of ECEs. She notes that even though people expected that regulation through the College would result in improved wages and working conditions, in reality this did not happen. Why has the establishment of the College not supported better wages and working conditions for all RECEs? What factors does Shellie identify?

How have unions improved wages and working conditions for ECEs and child care staff?

Unionization can sometimes be a contentious topic in the ECE field. Why do you think this is? What are some ways that we can address such issues?

Further reading:

Beach, J., Bertrand, J., Forer, B., Michal, D. & Tougas, J. (2004). *Working for change: Canada's child care workforce: Executive summary*. Ottawa, ON: Child Care Human Resource Sector Council.

http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/Projects-Pubs-Docs/1.4WorkingforChangeExec_Eng.pdf

Video three - Nancy Dickieson

Discussion/reflection questions

Nancy Dickieson highlights data from the annual survey of wages in licensed child care conducted by the Kitchener/Waterloo regional government. Were you surprised by what the data showed about wages in the various programs?

Why is it important for the regional government to collect this data? How can this data support the goals of professional pay for professional work?

Nancy indicates that a higher percentage of for-profit centres pay lower wages. Why do you think this is the case? What other differences may exist in for-profit centres because of lower wages?

Nancy is a public servant/government worker in regional government. What can public servants and/or regional governments do to support professional pay for ECEs?

Further reading:

Artuso, L. (2015). County of Wellington Child Care General Operating Grant: Funding for Quality and Decent Work for the Child Care Workforce. *ECELink Winter 2015*. Toronto, ON: Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario

https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/aeceo/pages/889/attachments/original/1473866218/Funding_for_quality_decent_work_child_care_workforce_ARTURO.pdf?1473866218

Video four - Laura Coulman

Discussion/reflection questions

Laura presented data that shows a wide range of wages for ECEs working in licensed child care. What are some of the variables that create differences? How might this variation in working conditions impact the ECE workforce?

Laura highlights the impact of low wages on the percentage of ECEs looking for another job. What does this mean for quality in programs? How can we use this information to advocate for better wages?

Laura argues that the truth is that, "good child care costs a lot of money". Why is this not something we talk about often? How might this 'truth' impact conversations around professional pay for professional work for ECEs?

Further reading:

Flangan, K., Beach, J. & Varmuza, P. (2013). *You bet we still care! A survey of centre-based early childhood education and care in Canada: Highlights report*. Ottawa, ON: Child Care Human Resources Sector Council.

http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/Projects-Pubs-Docs/EN%20Pub%20Chart/YouBetSurveyReport_Final.pdf

Video five - Lorna Reid

Discussion/reflection questions

Lorna talks about the various positions she worked in as an ECE. What are some of the significant differences in the settings that she identifies? Do these different settings still exist? What settings would you want to work in? Why or why not?

Lorna identifies a number of initiatives and reports that have happened over the years and provided solutions for the ECE workforce issues that are still occurring. What has thwarted progress on these plans? What is the impact of this slow and sometimes stalled progress on the ECE community?

Lorna identified the closure of high quality programs including municipally operated centres and college lab schools. What is your experience with these types of centres closing in your communities? Did your community see this as a collective loss? What concerns did Lorna identify about these specific centres closing?

Lorna is the director of a child care program. She identified how she manages wages and working conditions for staff alongside funding cuts at the child care program. What can directors/owners do to support professional pay? What tools did Lorna use? What challenges did she face?

Further reading:

Report of the Expert Panel on Quality and Human Resources, (2007). Investing in quality: Policies, practitioners, programs and parents. Toronto, ON: Government of Ontario.

http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/documents/topics/earlychildhood/investing_in_quality.pdf

Video six - Shani Halfon

Discussion/reflection questions

Shani identified the principles underlying the development of regional wage scales for ECEs working in regulated childcare. Why are these principles non-negotiable?

Why would the discussion paper on regional wage scales in regulated child care concern ECEs working in settings other than regulated child care?

What are some potential issues with getting feedback on the discussion paper from various stakeholders? What would inspire people to provide feedback and get engaged with the discussion?

Shani identifies that the AECEO needs to build capacity to move professional pay forward. What are some opportunities and barriers for building capacity through the AECEO to advocate for the ECE workforce?

Further reading

Whitebook, M. & Darrah, R. (2013). Rights, Raises and Respect for Early Childhood Teachers: A four decade perspective. *Exchange July/August 2013*.

http://www.irl.berkeley.edu/cscce/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Rights_Raises_Respect_Whitebook-Darrah_2013.pdf

Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (2015). *Wage scales for RECEs in regulated childcare in Ontario: A discussion paper*.

http://www.aeceo.ca/regional_wages_scales_for_reces

About the presenters

Martha Friendly has been a researcher and activist on early childhood education and child care since the mid 1960s. As the founder and long-term Executive Director of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit in Toronto, Martha specializes in child care policy research, working with other researchers, social justice, labour and advocacy groups towards a common goal of a universal high quality national child care program for all families and children. She is the author of several books on child care policy, many academic articles, reports, chapters and popular pieces, a regular commentator on child care policy in the media and writes a popular blog. Last year she was one of the partners organizing ChildCare2020, a national policy conference aimed at ensuring that child care is a federal election issue in 2015. In 2015, Trent University awarded Martha an honorary Doctor of Laws degree.

Shellie Bird has worked for 20 years as an early childhood educator in a community-based non-profit child care centre working with infants and toddlers in downtown Ottawa. She currently serves as the Union Education Officer of CUPE Local 2204, which represents 300 ECE's, child care specialist, cooks cleaners and clerical staff in 12 centres in the City of Ottawa. Shellie has been a passionate advocate for early learning and child care and a trade union activist for 30 years. She has held executive board positions with provincial advocacy organizations and currently sits on the board of directors of the Child Care Advocacy Association Canada. She has held elected or appointed positions in her Union on the CUPE Ontario Division, Executive Board, Co-chair of the Child Care Committee of CUPE Ontario and currently on the National Child Care Working Group of CUPE National.

Nancy Dickieson, Director of Children's Services, Region of Waterloo. Nancy has worked in the field of early learning for 25 years plus as an educator, consultant and administrator. In her position, Nancy provides system leadership to the Region early learning community. Nancy is passionate and dedicated to creating a quality system that respects children and supports parents and educators.

Laura Coulman is a Registered ECE and is sitting on this panel today as a PhD candidate in the Applied Psychology and Human Development programme at OISE/University of Toronto, Early Learning Cohort. When she's not reading about Thomas Hobbes and about Critical Disability for her thesis; she is busy working as a child care planning and policy analyst in Wellington. Laura truly believes that a comprehensive Early Childhood Education and Child Care system can exist in this country but she also thinks work on any kind of an early childhood system that does not also address ECE wages and working conditions is just doing "busy work."

Lorna Reid Director, University of Guelph Child Care and Learning Centre. Lorna has worked in the Early Learning and Child Care field for over 40 years in progressively more senior positions. She completed a Bachelor of Applied Science, Child Studies, at the University of Guelph in 1973 and a Master of Education from U of Toronto, OISE, in 1982. After Lorna's retirement from the Region of Peel in 2010, she returned to U of T to work on a PhD in Early Learning. In May 2011, she returned to the University of Guelph as the Director of the Early Learning and Child Care Centre. Lorna has seen a lot of change over the many years in early learning and child care. Her vision remains the same: systems in which all children and families can access the high quality early learning and child care services that they need or want.

Shani Halfon was the Interim Coordinator at the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (2014-2015). A Registered Early Childhood Educator, Shani completed an MA in Early Childhood Studies at Ryerson University, where she focused her research on professionalism from the perspective of Early Childhood Educators. Shani has worked in ECEC policy and advocacy for the past four years, first at the Childcare Resource and Research Unit and currently at the AECEO. Shani is interested in building capacity within the sector to better understand policy issues from the front line and the intersection of advocacy and professionalism for ECEs and the child care workforce.



For more information on our Professional Pay for Professional Work Campaign,
visit our website <http://www.aeceo.ca>