



Forgotten on the frontline: A new report finds Ontario's child care workforce at a breaking point; major investments needed to address staffing crisis

A new survey of Ontario's early years and child care workforce finds that nearly half of Ontario's ECEs have considered leaving the sector since the beginning of the pandemic. With child care centres in Ontario remaining open, child care workers are reporting decreased job satisfaction and high levels of stress and burnout. The report from the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario and the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care found that among child care workers surveyed:

- 54% reported decreased job satisfaction
- 89% reported an increase in job-related stress.
- 43% reported that they have considered leaving the sector since the onset of the pandemic
- 13% were actively looking for opportunities outside the sector.
- 20% have seen work hours increase, but of those only 9.3% reported an increase in wages.
- 36% reported a decrease in planning time.

ECEs and child care workers report that understaffing means that cleaning and sanitizing time cuts into time spent directly working with children.

"The work of early childhood educators and early years staff has always been valuable, yet, underappreciated. The pandemic has shown that child care is essential, but it has also exacerbated the challenges facing the child care workforce. Educators are the heart of our child care and early years programs and it is past time they are respected and valued with decent work and professional pay." said co-author Alana Powell, Executive Coordinator of the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario.

"This report is a wake-up call to government about the child care staffing crisis. Already child care directors have reported having to reduce programs hours and close rooms due to a lack of staff. If there is not meaningful action from the federal and provincial governments to support the workforce, there will be further program instability and centre closures." said co-author Carolyn Ferns, Policy Coordinator of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care.

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