Decent Work and Ontario’s Early Childhood Workforce

There’s no going back.

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Decent Work in Ontario

AECEO & OCBCC’s survey heard from Early Childhood Educators and child care workers:

• 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.
Educators’ Stories

• “While trying to implement a high quality program, we are making sure our space is clean with many extra cleaning protocols, which takes a lot of time away from the children.”

• “High anxiety, high stress, faster approaching and more intense feelings of burnout, more feelings of situational depression.”

• “We have no more planning time yet we were given more work to do and I’m not just talking about increased cleaning and sanitizing....There is also no space to spend your unpaid lunch hour as only two people can be in the staff room, so we are forced to sit in storage rooms on floors.”

• My mental health and anxiety has increased a lot. Crying on the job, overwhelmed with no support.”

• “I was aware that I was committing myself to an underpaid and undervalued field, but it has never been more obvious than now. My focus has shifted from quality education and experiences, to sanitization and cleaning.”

• “I leave work every single day feeling exhausted, hopeless, frustrated and emotional.”
Entangled Problems

Market system perpetuates and entrenches inequities, individualism, technical approaches and efficiencies

Centering and dominance of colonialism, whiteness, developmentalism, neoliberalism

Care/education divide contributes to persistent devaluing of care and caring

Policy, funding, pedagogical path dependency
What matters...

- ECEC isn’t just about affordable/safe spaces for children while parents go to work
- ECEC is a place where educators, children, families and communities are living and being together – they are world-making places
- They are political and ethical spaces –
  - who is included?
  - who is able to live well?
  - how do we respond, engage, care for one another?
  - what does our pedagogy do/create?
A Path-Breaking Plan for Ontario Child Care

The Challenge
• Decades of reliance on our current market-based arrangements and path dependencies could lead our governments to only tinker around the edges rather than make big changes.

The Opportunity – There is no going back!
• Federal funding could more than double Ontario’s current child care budget and aims to publicly fund services directly.
• The federal plan opens up possibilities to reimagine and meet the 3 big ideas:
  • Affordable fees;
  • Decent work;
  • Enough public and non-profit spaces for all.
A Path-Breaking Plan: Putting the 3 Big Ideas for Child Care into action

1. Affordable fees
2. Decent work
3. Enough public and non-profit spaces for all

1. Affordability strategy
2. Workforce strategy
3. System building and expansion strategy
Ontario Early Childhood Sector Decent Work Charter

**Belonging**
Recognition of staff as valued professionals

**Expression**
Quality work environments

**Well Being**
Professional Pay & Compensation

**Engagement**
Professional Learning
2. Decent work

- Implement a **wage grid** that ensures a **$25 per hour** starting wage, with commensurate compensation package.

- Develop and establish **Decent Work Standards** to support pedagogical practice. Decent Work Standards should align with the AECEO’s Decent Work Charter and include:
  - the provision of daily, collaborative, on-site paid planning time
  - permanent paid sick and emergency leave days;
  - engagement in communities of practice;
  - paid time for professional learning;
  - an Early Childhood Workforce Learning Framework that ensures meaningful professional learning opportunities, mandates Anti-Racism training, commits to Truth and Reconciliation, and enhances pathways to acquiring and upgrading qualifications.

- Form a standing **Advisory Committee** that is representative of the ECEC workforce, including Black, First Nation, Metis, Inuit and Racialized educators, to coordinate and inform policy development.
PROVINCIAL ADVOCACY TIMELINE

1. PARTNER AND ALLIES MEETINGS
   Collaborate, brainstorm

2. PRE-NEGOTIATION
   Organize & prepare for negotiation campaign

3. NEGOTIATION TACTICS
   Tactics to respond to negotiation process

4. FEDERAL ELECTION?
   Tactics to engage in public education on Path-Breaking Plan

5. POST/PRE ELECTION
   Organize & prepare for election campaign

6. JUNE 2022 Provincial Election

Review, Respond

3 Big Ideas & Path-Breaking Plan
Get Involved!

Join us for our webinar:
“Next Steps for Child Care Advocacy in Ontario”
June 15th, 7pm

- Introducing the Path-Breaking Plan for Ontario Child Care
- Sharing our new Toolkit for Action
- Highlighting local advocacy initiatives and inspiring new action.