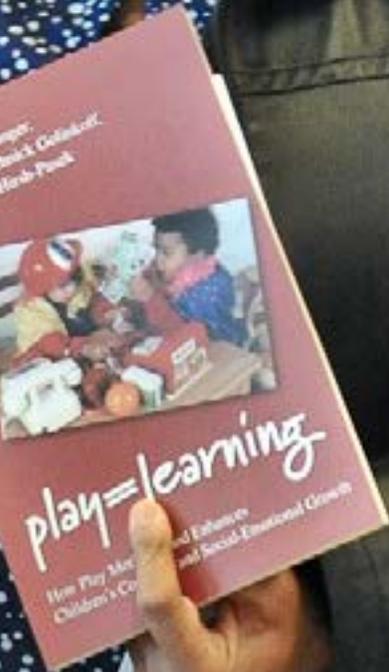


Professional Pay for Professional Work



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Registered Charitable Organization Number: 106732001RR0001

Canada Post Publication Mail Agreement #: 40014752

The eceLINK is a quarterly publication of the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO). Since 1992, the publication has been distributed across Ontario to all our members and affiliate organizations. The eceLINK has a circulation of approximately 3500, reaching Early Childhood Educators working in different early learning and child care settings. They include students, frontline practitioners, administrators & supervisors, trainers and policy makers.

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Early Childhood Educators attend 2013 AECEO Provincial Conference

THE AECEO WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE & THANK THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTORS:

Shellie Bird, Martha Friendly, Rachel Langford, Shannon Sveda, Petr Varmuza

Professional Pay for Professional Work

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

By Rachel Langford, RECE, AECEO President

The AECEO's success in establishing a regulatory college for Ontario early childhood educators and creating a legislated professional credential for ECEs was a fundamental achievement in our mission to improve compensation and career opportunities for all early childhood educators in the province. Now, with the Ministry of Education's focus on modernizing Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in Ontario, the time is right to initiate the next steps in resolving these long-standing issues.

The recent "You Bet We Still Care" report substantiated the need for better wages for ECE professionals if we are ever to tackle the issue of recruitment and retention. Yet there are many challenges ahead and varying opinions on what, and how, the issue of professional pay for ECEs should be addressed.

When the AECEO board decided to focus its advocacy work on *Professional Pay for Professional Work*, we knew that we would face many challenges. Some of these challenges might be called distractions.

In the case of claims for *Professional Pay for Professional Work* and a drive towards realizing this goal we will be challenged by both distractions and possibly driven to distraction by some roadblocks.

The dictionary meaning of a distraction:

Something that distracts one's attention. A related definition of to drive somebody to distraction means a constant irritation that reduces somebody to a state of nervous agitation.

We have identified three distractions that many of us have been vulnerable to and some of which AECEO board members have discussed. Some of these distractions may be hard to hear but it is important to put them on the table for discussion.

We are often asked to produce more and more data because it is never quite right and never quite enough. This elusive search for the perfect data about ECE wages in Ontario can become a real distraction. Rightly many questions related to what data exists and what other data is needed will be raised. Of course, we need data about wages. Some will maintain that we have sufficient data. Front line staff will say that they have all the evidence they need based on their weekly pay. But others will say more data is needed before action can be taken. This particular statement may be said repeatedly. But finding the right data to convince policy makers of the rightness of our claim of *Professional Pay for Professional Work* is a distraction that will likely keep us in a state of nervous agitation, keep us from acting and permit government not to act. Peter Moss, a British early childhood theorist, describes our often desperate need to find the best evidence to prove a claim as a distraction because the search prevents us from seeing that the claim is really value driven and is concerned with ethics and social justice. In other words, a claim for *Professional Pay for Professional Work* is ethical and Ontario early childhood educators are entitled or have a right to professional recognition, status and worthy wages because of the important work they do.

A *Professional Pay for Professional Work* campaign will begin to address a long-standing problem of gender injustice in our field. Therefore a combination of data and the value of gender justice must drive our advocacy work.

A related distraction could also create a climate of fear among

ECEs. The following questions are being raised for example: What will happen to the ECEs who are paid very well if a province-wide wage grid is developed? How will the cost of living in different parts of the province be addressed? These are legitimate questions that need to be answered but could easily distract and immobilize us. While we have to be aware of how changes affect individual early childhood educators, in the end we have to put foremost the best interests of all Ontario early childhood educators.

The second distraction that may set a *Professional Pay for Professional Work* advocacy campaign off course is simply stated this way: *It is unprofessional, selfish, inappropriate, downright bad for ECEs to focus on getting paid more.* Does this statement drive you to distraction? The fact is that we are a profession of predominantly women and we are uncomfortable talking about wages and demanding higher compensation. But another fact is that as women Ontario early childhood educators have subsidized and supported families' ability to pay child care fees with their low wages. A major distraction could be that as women and as early childhood educators we continue to hold that our central focus must always be on children and families and that we cannot be a part of that focus. It is not unprofessional to talk about pay; teachers do it, doctors do it, nurses do it, many of whom are women, and ECEs should do it too.

We often hear that the nature of ECE work, the poor quality of ECE programs and lack of ECE professionalism does not warrant better wages for ECEs. This distraction is most pernicious because it cuts to the heart of what we do and how we act. We cannot allow ourselves to be distracted by these views. We know ECE work is complex. We know that research shows that the quality of ECE programs is associated with the wages of the workforce; in other words, if staff wages are adequate the quality of an ECE program will be good. And we also know that the establishment of the College of Early Childhood Educators signals that we are a profession and professionalism is central to our work.

A fundamental question we have to ask ourselves is: *How is it that the Ontario ECE workforce, considered professionals with a complex set of Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice as regulated by the College of ECE, can experience a decrease in average wages over the last decade as reported by the You Bet We Still Care Study?* Here is where data combined with values is helpful.

We must be alert to these three distractions, discuss them, be conscious of when they are affecting us and reflect on how we respond to them.

STRATEGIES FOR MOBILIZATION

The AECEO proposes three strategies for mobilizing ECE, garnering public support for our advocacy work and shifting the distracting perceptions of ECEs' professional work. Some key advocacy messages combined with constructive collaboration will help to move our campaign forward.

• ECE work as a good job

This message may seem completely counter-intuitive, even contradictory, after talking about low ECE wages; indeed we know ECEs in early childhood programs are struggling in a changing system landscape and are leaving the field for

better positions. But we must persist with this public message because when we communicate that ECE is a good job, when we say that our professional work is a source of pride, then we are also saying that this work is worthy of a good wage. Conversely if we say that ECE work is a bad job, nobody wants it; we are communicating it is not worth the public investment.

How much does an ECE make?

You Bet We Still Care¹ = \$17.29/hr (median)

Ontario Government Licenced Child Care Questionnaire (2012)²

= \$15.67/hr (lowest range median)

= \$19.19/hr (highest range median)

Estimated average = \$17.47/hr

1. www.ccsc-cssge.ca

2. www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/ChildCareQuestion.pdf

This is strengths and assets based approach to demanding *Professional Pay for Professional Work*. We need to profile programs, agencies and post-secondary institutions who have well-compensated professionals, who are often unionized, where there is career mobility and other benefits, and provide us and the government with concrete examples of what is possible if we work together to address low wages. We need these successes to inspire us to work without distraction and towards the goal of *Professional Pay for Professional Work*. With all due respect to our male early childhood educators, this campaign must focus on elevating women in a highly gendered and currently marginalized profession.

• ECEs are professionals

This advocacy message uses our professional "status as women" to move forward towards improved wages. We need to reinforce that ECE is a profession with educational qualifications, a regulatory college and professional learning

requirements. We need to elevate our professional preparation and our work. We need to pose the question: *What are the educational qualifications of early childhood educators, their registration in a regulatory college and professional learning activities worth to employers, parents, society and to ECEs themselves?* We know the answer- they are worth a decent wage. This strengths-based focus on the professional preparation, the competencies and professionalism of Ontario ECEs should lead the demand for *Professional Pay for Professional Work*.

• Constructive collaboration

We need to build on existing support for our campaign and also find new allies to help create a network that will continue to support us during the highs and lows of our advocacy work. An AECEO special committee will collectively work with a range of stakeholders: the Ministry of Education, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, unions, multi- service agencies and others, towards early childhood education and care human resource solutions. We will also seek professional allies, groups and associations: teachers, nurses, doctors, social workers, for example, with whom we now share common professional traits. All of these professions have struggled for recognition, status and worthy wages during their history. Their membership consists of many working parents. They are therefore natural allies who can speak, write and mobilize with us. The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC and the Early Childhood Educators of BC, through their "\$10 a day child care" campaign, provide us with an excellent example of the value of connecting with diverse groups to successfully build support.

We know this work will be hard and challenging. It is difficult to decide which issue to prioritize and it is difficult to foresee which policies in our field will remedy other issues. The AECEO has launched this initiative to begin what we expect will be a contentious though very welcomed debate, and advocacy work which we believe is in the best interests of our members and the Ontario ECE profession.

The AECEO has taken the lead in bringing various perspectives to our members by asking sector stakeholders to share their views and be a part of the constructive dialogue.

The articles in this section have been graciously contributed by a panel of experts who spoke at our May 2013 "*Professional Pay for Professional Work*" panel. We are very grateful for their participation.



Pictured from Left to Right: Panelists Petr Varmuza, Martha Friendly, Donna Lero, Shellie Bird, Rachel Langford, and Moderator Zeenat Janmohamed.

Why is it so hard for early childhood educators to gain professional pay?

By Martha Friendly, Executive Director, Childcare Research and Resource Unit

This has been a fundamental "wicked problem" for the Canadian childcare field almost back to its beginnings. Research has linked low ECE pay to recruitment/retention difficulties, high turnover and staff morale and identified it as a key factor determining quality. Back in 1984, childcare wages were described in a national study as "less than zookeepers' wages".

Despite all this, making improvements in ECE wages to anything like a "professional" level has been painfully slow. Why *has* it been so hard for early childhood educators to gain professional pay? I argue that there are two main "big picture", structural explanations that bear on this.

First: childcare is a market, not a system. Second, the childcare sector is an almost all-female workforce; childcare work can be defined as a female job ghetto.

Context - The state of childcare in Canada

Most people agree that the picture of Canadian childcare today is dismal. Recent data¹ show that expansion has slowed in the last few years – today regulated spaces cover only about 20% of 0-5 year olds. The data show sky-high parent fees. Growth in public funding has been minimal. There are multiple quality issues, including those of unregulated and illegal childcare, while the for-profit sector is growing rapidly. And there are a host of human resource issues. These elements are linked to one another and to the two main structural reasons that make gains in ECE wages an uphill battle.

Reason 1: Relying on the market

Canada relies on a market-model for childcare rather than building a system, with poor results (similar to those in other countries using the market²). Relying on the market affects just about every aspect of childcare that we care about. It means:

- Hit-and-miss service development;
- Limited public funding;
- Consumer-model public financing;
- Limited public management and planning;
- Programming aimed at the market;
- Limited integration of care and education;
- Relying on privatized services/arrangements, including for-profit and unregulated operation;
- Inequitable access;
- Quality taking backseat to budgets/profit;
- Staffing to the minimum – ratios, wages, working conditions.



Using a market model for childcare (limited public funding, relying on fees, fee subsidies and vouchers) usually means severely containing staffing costs, keeping ratios, wages, working conditions and benefits to a minimum. This may be true in both non-and for-profit programs but a profit motive adds additional incentives to keep staffing costs as low as possible. As staffing is the biggest item in a childcare budget, it is the best source of profits—likely why research shows that wages and benefits are usually lower in for-profits.

Reason 2: Childcare is a female job ghetto

Three features of Canada's labour market are understood³ to lead to substantially lower pay for women:

1. Women and men are segregated into different work and workplaces (67% of women work in “women’s occupations” - teaching, nursing, clerical, sales, service jobs;
2. Women’s work is usually paid less than men’s;
3. Women-dominated sectors (and women’s traditional skills and competencies) are undervalued.

The overall gender pay gap clearly affects the childcare workforce, which is 98.2% female⁴.

What are the solutions?

If the childcare market-model doesn’t “work” for early childhood educators, and if Canadian women generally “still ain’t satisfied” (or shouldn’t be) with progress on gender equality, what are the solutions?

The “big picture” need to move to an ECEC system, rather than using the market, has been argued for some years. Moving to a “system” means transformation in such elements as policy development and planning, financing and management (to more public management).

In the shorter term, a move in Ontario to more public management, following the examples of Manitoba and PEI, which use provincially-set (developed in collaboration with the ECE community and unions) salary scales⁵, could play a key role in improving ECE wages.

With regard to the gender pay gap, Mary Cornish’ *10 steps to closing the gender pay gap*⁶ are noteworthy in an overall sense. Step number 4—“Enforce and expand pay equity laws”—is especially pertinent to childcare in the shorter term. Ensuring that childcare programs adhere to the hard-won and (now largely forgotten) Ontario *Pay Equity Act*, and that pay equity at one time made significant improvements in ECE wages—when pay equity adjustments were publicly funded—could play a key role in raising ECE wages.

In conclusion..

Low ECE pay is systemic, and needs systemic responses, not just more money (although more money is clearly needed).

1 Friendly, M. and Beach, J. (2013). *The state of early childhood education and care in Canada 2010: Trends and analysis*. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

2 Friendly, M. (2013). *Market or system: Why kids are still not for profit*. (Powerpoint) http://www.ryerson.ca/ecs/news/news/General_Public/The_A_Word_conf.html

3 Cornish, M. (2013). *10 ways to close Ontario’s gender pay gap*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Online <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/10-ways-close-ontarios-gender-pay-gap>

4 Flanagan, K., Beach, J., and Yarmuza, P. (2013). *You Bet We Still Care! A Survey of Centre-Based Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada*. Ottawa: Child Care Human Resources Sector Council. Online http://www.ccscc-cssge.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/Projects-Pubs-Docs/EN%20Pub%20Chart/YouBetSurveyReport_Final.pdf

5 Quebec, which has no provincial salary scale but has achieved a similar effect through its heavily unionized CPE (non-profit) sector, which uses province-wide sectoral bargaining.

6

1. Treat closing the gap as a human rights priority;
2. Raise awareness of the issue;
3. Develop closing the gender pay gap plans;
4. Enforce and expand pay equity laws;
5. Implement employment equity law and policies;
6. Promote access to collective bargaining;
7. Increase the minimum wage;
8. Provide accessible child care;
9. Mainstream equity compliance into laws and policies;
10. Mainstream equity compliance into workplaces and businesses

Unions and Child Care

by Shellie Bird, Education Officer, CUPE 2201

Decades of research clearly show that early childhood educators (ECE) are the lynchpin to quality early learning and care. Yet decades of chronically low wages, benefits and poor working conditions have made the ECE profession a difficult one in which to build a career.

With the introduction of full-day kindergarten, recruitment and retention in the non-profit child care sector is more pressing and urgent than ever. Effective strategies are needed to address what decades of research and advocacy alone have been unable to: improve wages and benefits; recruitment and retention of a skilled and stable workforce and high quality child care.

This article provides a thumbnail sketch of what research has told us about wages and benefits in the sector and what they mean for retention, recruitment and quality. Pulling on a number of research studies I will show that unionization is a key strategy for dealing with low wages and benefits, recruitment and retention and advancing a professional ECE workforce and quality early learning and child care in Ontario.

What the Research Tells Us



The first major study on wages¹ and benefits, the 1984 Taskforce on Child Care, found that ECE’s earned less than half of what was earned in similar occupations. The 1991 “Caring for a Living” study found ECE wages were comparable to those of parking lot attendants. The 1998 You Bet I Care study found that ECE’s cited the need for better salaries as the most important thing to make child care a more satisfying profession. The YBIC study found that 76% of staff and 73% of centre directors identified poor pay and promotion opportunities as among the most negative aspect of the job.

The 2002 study, *Unionization and Quality in Early Childhood Settings*, used data collected from two You Bet I Care studies to do a statistical comparison between unionized and non-unionized child care settings and found that:

- Staff turnover was much lower in unionized centres with staff indicating they expected to be working in the same centre in a years’ time.
- Centre directors reported that recruitment and retention is easier in unionized settings.
- Unionized centres are more likely to provide better wages and benefits and a measure of longer-term security such a disability insurance, extended health benefits, life insurance and pension coverage.
- Unionized centres are more likely to provide supports to ECE’s such as paid preparation time, a staff lounge and compensation for staff meetings held after hours².

This study concluded that unionized centres act in ways and have characteristics that support high quality programs, including more trained staff and slightly better child/staff ratios. And that unionization is beneficial not only for the ECE workforce but also for children.

There are several reasons why unionized centres make progress on improving wages, benefits and working conditions.

- More attention is paid to workforce issues. Unions support staff to collectively improve their work lives.
- Unionized staff has opportunity to analyze workload, health and safety and other supports that help them function well in their jobs.
- The collective agreement and collective bargaining provide the opportunity to devise solutions to improve working conditions that are directly related to quality. Staff with manageable workloads and health and safety protection work in environments that support them to do their work well.
- Unions have been front and centre in the push for government funding and together with other child care advocates, have achieved some successes.
- Unions representing public sector workers believe part of their mandate is to preserve and improve services. Political and legislative activism is a way to reach these goals.
- Unions believe that a complementary and fundamental approach to improving services is to ensure the workforce is treated fairly and is well supported in their work to care for children.³

Professionalism has often been used as a counterpoint to unionization. Unions have at times felt marginalized from discussions around professionalism because of an attitude that labour opposes it⁴. In fact, unions believe professionalism has a role to play in supporting and recognizing the knowledge and skills ECE's require to carry-out the important work they do.

For labour, unionization and collective bargaining are central to achieving the characteristics of professionalism for all who work in the sector. Collective agreements, which stipulate work provisions and benefits, help staff to carry-out their work and recognize their contributions in the provision of quality services. In this way, unionization fosters and supports professionalism, improves wages, benefits and working conditions and quality early learning and care!

¹ Doherty, G et al You Bet I Care! Canada-wide Study on: Wages, Working Conditions and Practices in Child Care Centres. 2000 Centre for Families, Work and Well-Being, University of Guelph

² Doherty, G & Forer B. Unionization & Quality in Early Childhood Programs. 2002 Ottawa

³ Beach J, Bertrand, J & Cleveland G Our Childcare Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration A Labour of Love 1998 CCHRSC Ottawa

⁴ Costigliola B, Kass J The Union Advantage in Child Care: How Unionization Can Help Recruitment and Retention 2003 Child Care Connections

Low wages, the cost of caring

by Petr Varmuza - Researcher (You Bet We Still Care)

A recent survey¹ by Child Care Human Resource Sector Council revealed that while Early Childhood Educator wages in Ontario are higher than in most of the provinces (with the exception of Quebec), they actually declined by 2.7% since the last comparable survey published in 1999². In retrospect, it perhaps would have been more appropriate for authors of the You Bet We Still Care report to write that Ontario wages for Early Childhood Educators were "not as low".

The You Bet We Still Care (YBWSC) report's median³ hourly wage of \$17.55 is similar to wages reported recently by a survey of child care operators carried out by the Ontario government in 2012⁴. This translates to \$36,477 annual gross income assuming an eight hour working day and year-round employment. Regardless where one lives in Ontario, this certainly is not what one would call a "living wage" that would ensure a family of more than two people beyond living in poverty.

Yet, at the same time, child care costs are out of reach for most middle class families resulting in licensed child care programs being increasingly dependent upon either the well-off or subsidized families.

Staffing costs are a major component of child care costs and, in turn, the early childhood educators who work directly with children (program staff) make up the majority of the staffing cost. Often, other than increasing the price of care, keeping ECE wages low is seen as the only answer to keeping the child care prices low enough to attract families to the service.

Child care sector wages, like any other sector that functions without a sector-wide compensation and price-setting mechanism, vary across Ontario depending on the region and market conditions.

The YBWSC data show higher wage rates in urban areas than in rural areas (\$18.24/hour vs. \$16.00/hour). The data also shows as well that there are substantial differences in wage rates between specific regions (\$20.05 in Toronto to \$16.00/hour in 705 and 249 area codes).



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Staffing costs are a major component of child care costs and, in turn, the early childhood educators who work directly with children (program staff) make up the majority of the staffing cost. Often, other than increasing the price of care, keeping ECE wages low is seen as the only answer to keeping the child care prices low enough to attract families to the service.

Yet these differences in wages are nowhere close to the difference in wages for program staff that belong to a union compared to program staff that don't. This notable difference between unionized staff wages compared to non-unionized staff wages occurs even in centres located in the same region. Across Ontario the unionized staff median wages are \$7.00/hour higher than non-unionized staff - and in no area is the difference between unionized and non-unionized wages less than a difference of \$5.60/hour. On an annual basis, this translates to as much as \$14,616 per year in higher salaries for unionized staff.

Similarly, the YBWSC survey also found significant differences between unionized and non-unionized staff in benefits. Unionized staff have consistently higher levels of additional medical coverage, RRSP or pension plan contributions, paid maternity leave and other types of benefits. In the end these differences in unionized staff wage and benefit levels compared to non-unionized staff help to account for differences in the proportions of staff who are working more than one job or who are looking for another job (30.1% of non-union staff vs. 20.3% of union staff).

All the same, two important points still need to be recognized here:

1. not every unionized child care job is well paid or comes with good benefits and,
2. the median annual wage for unionized child care staff of approximately \$48,000 per year is *also* nowhere near what it should be. And along similar lines, it is also important to recognize that not all non-unionized jobs in child care are poorly paid and come with fewer benefits.

Another word of caution is necessary: although higher wages and better working conditions are generally associated with higher quality of care, they, by themselves, do not guarantee high quality of care. Indeed there are many other factors that contribute to quality, including organizational motivation, program leadership, and ongoing training and professional development. As well, market conditions are part of the mix that influences the quality of child care. Furthermore, any comparisons of wages and working conditions are most meaningful on local community level. In other words, addressing the differences in wages *within* a given community maybe be more effective and productive than comparing wages between diverse areas of the province.

It is *within* a given community where the issue of market based system delivery comes into focus. It is important to understand that the child care market includes all types of care that children are in – including the substantial majority of children who are in unregulated, informal care arrangements. This understanding of the full market is critical to improving the wages and working conditions of child care staff in a region. In classical economic theory the child care market works “perfectly” when the supply of child care of expected quality matches the demand at a price that parents are willing to pay. Thus, the supply of regulated child care is limited because not enough customers are willing to pay more for their child care and the government does not invest enough in fee subsidies or operating grants to lower the prices. In practical terms this means that even if all parents were convinced about the benefits of high quality regulated child care, the price of the care might determine if, and how much, they are willing to purchase.

Neo-liberal economists would have us believe that ECE wages are fair because they are determined by the child care market; yet there are many reasons why child care markets do not universally deliver high quality care at affordable prices

(even) without taking advantage of program staff through low salaries and inadequate wages:

- Governments fail to understand the societal benefits of high quality early learning and care and therefore do not provide sufficient investment to share the costs of child care with the current users.
- Owners, for-profit and non-profit, attempt to keep the wages as low as possible in order to provide low or competitive fees; for parent boards this represents a conflict of interest they need to address.
- Those who work in child care are often reluctant or unable to stand up for their own interests; this is the conflict that is common to “caring” professions – balancing the personal need to earn a fair, living wage with the commitment to the profession of caring for the wellbeing of children and families.

Much of the current advocacy focuses on increasing the affordability of regulated child care through capping the maximum fees that parents would have to pay, hoping to emulate the \$7 per day child care program in Quebec. Similarly the \$10 per day campaign in British Columbia hopes to generate massive public support for expansion of affordable child care. However, providing funding that reduces prices, be it through operating grants or expanding fee subsidy eligibility, does not necessarily help to improve staff compensation... certainly not in the short term.

In more realistic terms, it is difficult to expect a significant investment by the provincial government without expectation of reducing the long waiting lists. And yet, just providing more funding without specifically targeting compensation of program staff does not necessarily lead to higher wages, especially in communities with long waiting lists, and parents are not able to pay more than they are already paying.

There are no quick or easy solutions to improving the working conditions and compensation for early childhood educators. Many have taken the road of organizing and joining a union to promote a balance between a fair compensation and caring. In the long term, to effect a meaningful change, **all** individuals employed in child care need to be more aware, organized and acting with a united voice within their sector, their own communities and the provincial and federal scene; until then they will be always on the bottom of funding priorities. Waiting for handouts that rarely or never come is a self-defeating strategy.

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

2 This article draws upon the responses from 947 Ontario-based program staff that have responded to questions about wages and benefits; all the respondents possessed an ECE degree (or equivalent) and they were working in preschool classrooms.

3 In other words, half of the respondents earned less than this amount and half made more.

4 A 2012 survey of licensed child Care by Government of Ontario reported a “low range” median of \$15.67 and a “high range” median of \$19.19 hour, translating to an average hourly wage of approximately \$17.47. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/ChildCareQuestion.pdf>

Moving Toward Greater Professional Recognition

Another Successful Event for the AECEO!



Our 2013 Provincial Conference once again brought together RECEs from across the province to learn and share strategies for taking the profession to the next level. Centennial College’s beautiful Progress Campus provided a perfect setting for our professional development event. The faculty and staff at Centennial are to be commended for their support and exceptional hospitality.

Among the highlights at this year’s event was a panel presentation that posed the question “what should ECEs earn?”. Entitled “**Professional Pay for Professional Work**” this panel featured experts on the subject of ECE wages who shared valuable information while at the same time encouraging constructive dialogue around strategies. Articles based on these presentations can be found in this issue of the LINK. Look for more information about our upcoming campaign on professional pay coming soon.

We could go on about the success of this event but instead we will let our delegate’s speak for themselves.

FEEDBACK FROM OUR DELEGATES

94 percent found the workshops to be informative

100 percent felt the panel presentation topic was relevant

93 percent learned something new from the panel presentation

98 percent said the panel presenters were knowledgeable about the topic

MORE FROM OUR DELEGATES

"Thank you for the opportunity and helpful resources"

"I just wanted to say that the overall conference was amazing and really well done! Congratulations on all the hard work!"

"The full day class was very informative and I left here feeling empowered to do the best job I can in educating our children and preparing them for the future."

"This was my first attendance at an AECEO conference and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Especially the Friday night panel discussion – it was great to hear everyone's opinions and the answers to important questions.

Great Conference!"

"Excellent Conference! My understanding of the future of the AECEO is much clearer now. I was so pleased to see so very many committed people. Thank you for continuing the work for RECEs in Ontario."

"I enjoyed every moment of the conference. The workshop was very informative. It provided some valuable information that I will be able to use in my career. The presenters were excellent, they were very knowledgeable in the topic and that made the day worthwhile.

I am looking forward to future conferences.

Thanks for a great Professional Development experience."

"I really enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to be a part of this conference. It was my first attending and I hope to attend more in the future. The workshops were helpful and I have shared with my colleagues the information that I was given at the conference. Thank you and I look forward to next year's conference."

"Thank you for a very well planned conference that offered workshops for a variety of professional development needs. There were so many great speakers and topics that it was hard to choose. The AECEO staff made me feel welcome. Looking forward to next year!"

"It was a very wonderful conference. I was able to see many professionals that care about the ECE field. I was able to know more about this field also. I am looking forward to attending the AECEO conference for next year."



Acknowledgements

The Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals and organizations for their support and contribution to our conference.



Centennial College
College of Early Childhood Educators
Creative Hands
CUPE 2201
George Brown College
Johnson Insurance
Louise Kool & Galt
Nunu Educational Products
Pearson Canada
School of Early Childhood Studies, Ryerson University
Sonsuh Educational Supplies
Spectrum Educational Supplies
Supreme Learning

Lily Breton
Lynn Haines
Robin Lister
Katie Krutzelmann
Bernadette Summers
Shannon Sveda
Leah Yuyitung

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR PRESENTERS

"A Special Thank you to our Presenters for their valuable contribution of time and expertise - we couldn't have done it without you"

EARLY BIRD DRAW RESULTS

CONGRATULATIONS to the following 10 individuals who were awarded a complimentary 1 year electronic membership with the AECEO for registering before our Early Bird Deadline.

LaTisha Blades
Saeed Walji
Dan Duffin
Cathy Alston

Brenda Stannard
Jennifer Elliott
Syeda Rizvi

Ruth Houston
Erica Bauer
Melanie Ross

2013 Provincial AGM Results

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MOTIONS

Motion #1 - CARRIED

To change the AECEO's bylaws as outlined in Appendix 1 (Bylaw revisions chart) in order to:

A) Allow the AECEO to conduct electronic and mail-in votes and electronic meetings.

B) Make minor administrative updates/changes, and to comply with Ontario's new Not-For-Profit Corporations Act that comes into force July 1, 2013.

Motion #2 - CARRIED

To change the AECEO's bylaws as outlined in Appendix 1 (Bylaw revisions chart) in order to:

Update AECEO branch governance structure as outlined in Appendix 2 (Terms of Reference)

Thank you to all who were able to attend and participate in this year's Annual General Meeting

SPECIAL THANKS & APPRECIATION TO OUR PARLAMENTARIAN

ROBIN LISTER



Member Consultation Ongoing Professional Learning

The recent Branch Rejuvenation Initiative launched in early 2012 allows for, and will depend on, more member engagement than ever before. Starting this September, and continuing annually, members will have an opportunity to provide feedback around their ongoing professional learning needs. The feedback collected will help us to identify and facilitate the delivery of professional development events in your branch.

In September we will be releasing an online survey as well as offering face-to-face consultation sessions in selected branches. Facilitated by your local Branch Chair, these interactive meetings will provide you with some perspective on what your fellow members are saying. Stay tuned for more information coming via your AECEO Professional E-bulletin.

The AECEO believes strongly that increased access to professional learning opportunities can only happen through capacity building efforts among like-minded stakeholders. Therefore, many of the professional learning activities we will offer in the future will be coordinated through collaborative efforts that utilize local partners and stakeholders. We also recognize that in some communities there exists an abundance of professional learning activities being offered by resource centres, OEYCs, community colleges and others. In these instances we will work collaboratively with these local partners.

We hope you will assist us in meeting your professional learning needs by taking part in this important consultation process.

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Supporting ECE Students

AECEO engagement initiatives



By Shannon Sveda

The AECEO is the voice for Early Childhood Educators in Ontario. As such we are committed to remaining current with the needs of both present and future members. One of the areas of need that the AECEO has identified is student engagement. Students who are enrolled in early childhood education diploma and degree programs are the future of this field and of the AECEO. This focus on ECE students and new graduates in particular is part of a broader movement towards the inclusion of younger members of the field in the organization. Student engagement strategies have been successful for other membership-driven organizations like the AECEO, in terms of member recruitment and conference attendance, as well as other positive outcomes for existing members (Sladek, 2011).

After conducting research to determine what types of supports exist for ECE students in Ontario, it was determined that the AECEO would address the issue of student engagement in three ways; through a student survey distributed through educational institutions across the province, through the creation of a devoted student portal on the AECEO website and by using social media as a way to actively engage



students in discussion and the creation of relevant content.

The survey is the most critical element of the student engagement strategy, as it is essential

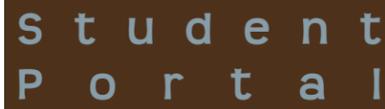
that feedback is received from students themselves to ensure there is an accurate assessment of student-perceived needs and interests. In partnership with educational institutes, the survey will be distributed to both part time and full time students across the province in order to ascertain the diverse needs of ECE students in Ontario. The survey will be designed to be completed quickly to encourage responses

and to provide opportunities for students to evaluate already identified potential areas of interest and express their own needs and interests. Members can support this effort by encouraging ECE students to take a few minutes to complete the survey. The AECEO will benefit from input from as many students as possible in order to tailor the content of the web portal and to guide student engagement strategies to be effective in both recruitment and retention of new student members. As a token of appreciation for their time and feedback students who complete the survey will receive an electronic copy of a special student edition of the eceLINK.

A web portal is "a site serving as a guide or point of entry to the World Wide Web and usually including a search engine or a collection of links to other sites arranged especially by topic" (Merriam-Webster, 2013).

The AECEO student portal will contain a collection of links and created content that is directly related to the field of early childhood education and the student experience. The content will include early childhood development, caregiving and education philosophies, as well as information on local, provincial and national organizations related to early childhood education and care.

The portal will support the entire range of student experience, from prospective students to new graduates. Included in the portal will be information on Early Childhood Education programs across the province, including the offered formats of the program and post-diploma programs as well as links to articles related to starting a career. The content will be updated and added to in response to the feedback received from students through the initial survey, as well as any



ongoing feedback received once students begin to access the portal. The links contained in the portal will support students and provide one centralized hub to access much of the information they may require throughout their time as a student.



The final component of the student engagement strategy will be to actively engage ECE students through social media.

Many of the students currently enrolled in early childhood education programs belong to Generation Y, also known as "Millennials"; this generation has been raised with technology and has an expectation towards immediate feedback (Sladek, 2011). Much of this generation is already actively engaged online through social media and therefore it makes the most sense to engage them in a setting with which they are already familiar. The use of social media sites like Twitter and Facebook will allow for engagement with AECEO staff and members and also between students across the province. Additionally it will support student created content and provide ongoing feedback so that changes can be made to continue to meet student needs. As the AECEO is the voice for Early Childhood Educators across Ontario, it is important that the student voice is included.

Sladek (2011) found that Generation X and Y had three desires when it came to pursuing involvement in a professional association; the desire to lead, the desire to learn and the

desire to make a difference. The AECEO's student engagement strategy will provide opportunities for all three. The student portal will support students' learning by providing them with access to information that is relevant to their interests and needs, as well as connecting them with organizations in their own communities where they can access other professional supports such as lending libraries and professional learning opportunities. Through engaging with students by using social media and providing opportunities for them to give feedback and to create content, students will grow their leadership skills and be able to influence the content and direction of the student portal and perhaps even the AECEO as an organization. The goal of this endeavor is to nurture future leaders and members in the association so that it will grow and thrive for many years to come. The AECEO is committed to finding new ways to support and benefit its members and is confident that this student engagement strategy will be beneficial for ECE students and professional AECEO members alike.

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Shannon Sveda has a diploma in Early Childhood Education from Sheridan College and a BA in Early Childhood Studies from Ryerson University. She is currently a student in Ryerson's MA in Early Childhood Studies program. Shannon also works in the Early Childhood Education program at Sheridan College and runs the website canadianece.ca. Shannon is a former president of the Halton Branch. During her placement with the AECEO Shannon worked on the student portal project and has volunteered to continue her involvement.

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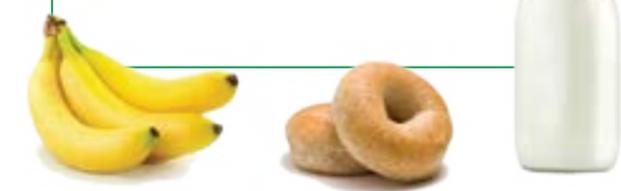
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