



A highly trained, qualified and well-compensated ELCC workforce is essential to ensure the availability of high-quality child care.

Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) and other members of the ELCC workforce do important, skilled and essential work, but often earn low wages and lack benefits such as pensions, paid sick leave, and paid vacation. The recruitment and retention of qualified ECEs is a long-standing challenge across Canada, which has been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, general labour force shortages, and recent high inflation.

To address these challenges, work is underway with all provinces and territories to advance the development of a multilateral workforce strategy based on the pillars of recruitment, retention, and recognition. The strategy will help address challenges associated with recruiting a high-quality ELCC workforce, retaining ECEs in the sector, and recognizing the contribution of ECEs to the wellbeing of every child in their care.

What are the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the ELCC workforce? To what extent is it difficult/easy to recruit skilled educators, train them, and retain them?

What are you hearing from your community about:

- working conditions;
- paid pedagogical support;
- access to pre-service education;
- competency development and professional learning;
- inclusivity/discrimination?

Are there innovative approaches for training programs and/or professional development opportunities that have proven successful for the ELCC workforce? If possible, please provide examples of those innovative approaches and/or training programs and tell us why you think they are successful.

Child care can have a profound influence on childhood development, including language skills and cultural identity. Bilateral agreements signed with all provinces and territories (except Quebec) include clauses that protect and respect the rights of official language » %

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As more and more families seek child care under a Canada-wide system, wait lists are continuing to grow, with some parents reporting that they remain unable to return to the workforce full time because of difficulties trying to secure a space for their child. The Government of Canada is working with provinces and territories to create 250,000 new regulated child care spaces across the country by March 2026 to increase access to affordable child care options for families, no matter where they live.

To support this goal, the federal government previously announced the [ELCC Infrastructure Fund](#). The Fund provides an additional \$625 million over four years to provinces and territories to support not-for-profit and public child care spaces in underserved communities, such as rural and remote regions, high-cost and low-income urban neighbourhoods, and communities that face barriers to access, including racialized groups, Indigenous Peoples, official language minority communities, newcomers, as well as parents, caregivers, and children with disabilities and parents working non-standard hours.

[New measures from Budget 2024](#) to build more affordable child care spaces and expand the Canada-wide ELCC system were announced in March 2024. These measures include:

- Launching a new Child Care Expansion Loan Program that will offer low-cost loans and non-repayable contributions to not-for-profit and public child care operators;
- Establishing a new capacity building program to help providers apply for funding through the Child Care Expansion Loan Program;
- Offering Canada Student Loan forgiveness for early childhood educators living in rural and remote communities; and
- Increasing training for early childhood educators.

How can the above Budget 2024 measures be best leveraged for expansion of the Canada-wide ELCC system in your, or your organisation's, experience and/or opinion?

Please consider:

- What supports are in place when ELCC providers in your community are trying to increase spaces or start a new ELCC service?
- What barriers exist when ELCC providers in your community are trying to increase spaces or start a new ELCC service?
- How can not-for-profit ELCC providers be better supported in expanding access to ELCC spaces?
- What design features of the announced measures would be important to you?

Are there innovative approaches to expansion that have proven successful for the ELCC workforce? If possible, please provide examples of those innovative approaches and tell us why you think they are successful.

Has the introduction of wage supports, such as hourly increases, wage floors, wage top ups or wage grids helped to ensure the availability of the ELCC staff required to support expansion of ELCC spaces? Why or why not?

