

Meeting Summary: The Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care Engagement Table (ELCCET)

Meeting 2: August 13, 2022, 9:30 am – 4:30 pm

Recap:

The second meeting of the Minister's Early Learning and Child Care Engagement Table (ELCCET) was held on August 13th, 2022 and focused primarily on Early Child Care Educators (ECEs). Key topics of discussion were ECE compensation, implementation of wage options, the Excellence in Early Childhood Education Workforce Strategy and providing input on a marketing campaign to convey the value and role of ECEs as childcare professionals. Table members also reflected on the priorities they identified in June, and provided additional thoughts.

Agenda:

1. Welcome from Education and Early Childhood Development Minister, Becky Druhan
2. June meeting recap
3. ECE wage roll-out: planning and administrative considerations
4. Excellence in Early Childhood Education Workforce Strategy
5. ECE advertising: campaign concepts for feedback

Summary:

- 1. Welcome from Education and Early Childhood Development Minister, Becky Druhan**
 - We are building a system of childcare. Transforming brings many questions, for which we do not yet have all the answers. This is a multi-year process. Prioritization is important.
 - It is important to foster a positive culture of change where those delivering and those receiving the vital service of childcare feel connected and confident in the path forward.
 - Our priority is getting more money in the hands of ECEs this Fall. This will require consideration around implementation and how to practically distribute funding to providers and agencies.
- 2. August meeting recap**
 - Table members reflected upon and shared additional considerations regarding the priorities they identified in June.
 - Many questions remain, particularly about the role for all operators in a publicly funded system and how they may choose to fit within it.
 - Operators are looking for more information about what it means to be part of a publicly funded childcare system, noting information will help build trust between the stakeholders involved i.e., what we are moving from, and what we are moving to.
 - Transformation is a multi-year journey and change needs to happen incrementally.
 - There is work to be done around inclusion and accessibility. It will be important that families with different care needs and schedules can access care for their children at various ages and stages.
 - Caring for the children of shift workers is an ongoing challenge.

- There's a need for certainty around what a future funding model will look like so that operators can make long-term business planning decisions.

3. ECE wage roll-out: planning and administrative considerations

- Higher ECE wages are coming this Fall.
- There are many logistical considerations around implementation as there will be complexities involved in administering the wage increase. Operators will need support through the new process.
- The Department will need to communicate early and often throughout the process.
- Wages are currently funded through a wage floor. One consideration for wages is to use a wage scale approach, where wages would be standardized for ECEs across the sector.
- Family Home Child Care (FHCC) providers need to be considered. When there is clarity around possible payment approaches, consultation with the FHCC Coalition should occur.
- Implementation considerations include being mindful of privacy, being transparent, demoing reporting tools with operators early so they can become familiar with any new requirements, clearly communicating who receives pay, transferring funds to operators in advance of payroll, and creating a user-friendly reporting process.

4. ECE Workforce Strategy

- The Excellence in Early Childhood Education Workforce Strategy is actively being implemented
- There are many bursary opportunities to support new people entering into the profession and programs to support employees looking to upskill or have their experience recognized
- Any employer or employee that is interested should visit the Department's website for the latest: www.ednet.ns.ca/ece/training

5. ECE advertising: campaign concepts for feedback

- A public awareness campaign to recognize Early Childhood Educators is under development
- The Table discussed campaign themes and language
- Suggestions include focusing on language that demonstrates the professionalism of ECEs. For example: ECEs are compassionate and caring educators with a passion for the work they do. They are the heartbeat of child care. ECEs support families, parents and communities and develop meaningful, life-long connections.