

# Choosing a Career as an Early Childhood Educator



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Department of Education and Early Childhood

Development

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## **INTRODUCTION**

A career in early childhood education offers a range of opportunities to work with young children and their families – children from birth through 12 years of age.

This document provides information about where you can work, what it is like to be an early childhood educator (ECE), what education and training is available, what financial support is available, and who to call for more information.

## **CAREER PATHWAYS**

Multiple career paths are available to early childhood educators:

### **Licensed Child Care Centres**

Child care centres are licensed under the authority of the Day Care Act and Regulations. This ensures that standards pertaining to the health, safety, and general well-being of children are maintained. The delivery of quality early childhood education programs involves educators with program and child development expertise who work in partnership with families and provide play-based, inclusive programming to nurture the best developmental outcomes for young children. Licensed child care centres hire early childhood educators, cooks, and support staff. Recruitment is the responsibility of child care centre operators.

Online directory of all facilities by name, type, and/or location:

<https://nsbr-online-services.gov.ns.ca/DCSOnline/ECDS/loadSearchPage.action>

### **Family Home Day Care Agencies**


Family home day care agencies are licensed under the authority of the Day Care Act and Regulations to approve, manage, and monitor private care providers in their homes. Licensing is voluntary for in-home care providers themselves. Licensing provides in-home care providers with professional support and help to enhance their services. Agencies hire trained consultants to support the care providers. Individuals who provide child care in their own home may choose to register with an agency to become an approved home. Recruitment is the responsibility of the agency.

Online directory of all agencies by name and/or location:

<https://nsbr-online-services.gov.ns.ca/DCSOnline/ECDS/loadSearchPage.action>

### **Pre-Primary Programs**

Pre-primary programs are child-centered, play-based programs for four-year-old children the year before they start school. These programs help children transition into the school system and give children the best start to succeed in school and life. Programs are established in various schools across the province and staffed by early childhood educators (ECE).



ECEs have the background and expertise to support early childhood learning and development and the relationship building skills to welcome families into a school community. Recruitment is the responsibility of the seven Regional Centres of Education and the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP).

Available positions are posted on their individual websites:  
<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/our-schools-boards>

### **Other career opportunities**

- Childhood Development Intervention Services <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/families/earlyinterventionprograms.shtml>
- Family Resource Centres <https://novascotia.ca/coms/families/prevention-and-early-intervention/family-resource-centres.html>
- Literacy-based programs for children and families
- Any other setting where young children and their families are the focus of the program's purpose

### **Wages and salaries**

Wages are at the discretion of the employer and vary according to level of education and experience, the type of work to be undertaken, and the number of hours worked per week.

**ECE diploma:** An ECE with a two-year diploma from a recognized college who works in a government funded regulated childcare centre starts at a minimum rate of \$17/hour (about \$30,000/year). Wages increase depending on circumstances such as the area and type of work, experience in the field among other reasons.

**Undergraduate degree:** An experienced ECE with a degree can earn up to \$72k or higher depending on the opportunity, education (such as a Child and Youth Study degree), and employer.

ECEs can work for a variety of organizations, such as regulated child care centres, regional centres for education, and public sector organizations like family resource, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, early intervention, and colleges and universities.

Examples of positions:

- trained ECE staff (level 1, 2, 3, School Age) and Pre-Primary Program
- program staff responsible for pre-primary program and early childhood education
- developmental intervention staff responsible for providing specialized services to children
- training instructors

## LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

### Nature of the Work

**ECEs:** plan, organize, and implement programs for children from between the ages of infancy and 12 years

**ECE assistants:** provide care for infants and preschool- to school-age children under the guidance of early childhood educators

ECEs – and, in some cases, ECE assistants – are employed in regulated child-care centres, family home day care agencies, pre-primary programs, early intervention programs, family resource centres, and other settings where early childhood education services are provided. Supervisors of early childhood educators and assistants are included in this group.

### Job Duties

- Plan, implement, and assess developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor learning environments for young children.
- Design programs based on the observed competencies interests and needs of children using an in-depth knowledge of child development.
- Establish and carry out a daily program that incorporates child-directed play-based activity, care routines, and transition times.
- Facilitate meaningful play experiences and interactions that support children to express themselves by listening and responding with questions or comments that extend conversations.
- Use a variety of techniques that include modelling, observing, questioning, demonstrating, and reinforcing to nurture pro-social development.
- Use knowledge of child development and developmentally appropriate strategies to support the development of self-regulation skills.
- Plan and carry out experiences that foster an understanding of a variety of cultures and value systems.
- Provide play materials and experiences that promote diversity and acceptance in interactions and attitudes.
- Participate in short-term and long-term program planning and authentic assessment.

## **Interests and Skills**

To pursue a career in this field, you should have an interest in human growth and development, and a desire to make a difference in the lives of young children and their families. Good health and physical stamina are needed. You must respect children and families, be open-minded, imaginative, and resourceful. You need to be able to work cooperatively with a team. Strong communication skills and the ability to nurture positive relationships are essential.

Training programs across the province provide students working towards a credential in Early Childhood Education with the necessary operational skills to support day-to-day activities as well as knowledge of childhood development.

For instance, ECEs

- Have an in-depth knowledge of emotional, social, physical, cognitive, and language development of young children.
- Are role models for children by building positive relationships which reflect a respect for diversity and inclusion.
- Create diverse, inclusive, and safe environments that support early learning experiences.
- Design, implement, and reflect on how best to create engaging play-based early learning environments that reflect the children's interests and competencies.
- Have strong observation skills and ability to clearly document and reflect on those observations for assessment and planning purposes.
- Continually strive to increase their knowledge to remain current with best practices in early learning and child care.

## **Job requirements**

Licensing by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is required for work as an early childhood educator in Nova Scotia:

**Level 1 Classification:** A combination of experience and completion of some ECE program courses offered by a recognized training institution is required.

**Level 2 or 3 Classification:** Completion of a two-year college program in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree in child development is required.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### Diploma Program Training Institutes

Region/Area	Training Institute
Halifax/Metro	Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education
Truro/Central	Jane Norman College
Cape Breton/Sydney	Island Career Academy
Cape Breton/Sydney	NSCC – Marconi Campus (alternative year enrolment intake)
Annapolis Valley	NSCC – Kentville Campus (annual enrolment intake)
South Shore/Yarmouth	NSCC – Burrigge Campus (alternative year enrolment intake)
Northern	NSCC – Cumberland (alternative year enrolment intake)
Provincial – French	Université Sainte-Anne (online only)

*\*NSCC alternate enrolment intake: 2018: Cumberland; 2019: Marconi and Burrigge; Kentville annually)*

### Degree Program Opportunities

Region/Area	Training Institute
Halifax/Metro	Mount Saint Vincent University, Child and Youth Study

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Early Years Branch offers financial support through the continuing Education Program to child care staff interested in attaining an Early Childhood Education (ECE) credential part-time while working in licensed child care centers or family home day care agencies.

Further information on the program can be found on the department website: <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/pd/ContinuingEducation.shtml>

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Early Years Branch of the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development can provide more information.

- Visit their website at <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/>
- Email: Complete the general contact form found at: <https://edapps.ednet.ns.ca/Surveys/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=m61M484#>
- Phone the general enquiries line and ask to speak to the Coordinator of Family Home Day Care & Early Childhood Education
  - o 902-424-5168
  - o 1-888-825-7770 (toll free)



