

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND
FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

Early Childhood Educator
Wage Enhancement
(ECE-WE)

Funding Guidelines
2021/22

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1. Introduction

Recruiting and retaining a skilled, knowledgeable Early Childhood Educator (ECE) workforce is a key factor in implementing the [Childcare BC plan](#). Improving the recruitment and retention of ECEs contributes to enhancing the overall quality of early childhood programs throughout British Columbia and supports our commitment to accelerate the creation of new licensed child care spaces so that more families have access to quality child care in their community.

The ECE Wage Enhancement (ECE-WE) is part of a broader [Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#) to support the development of a stable, qualified, and skilled professional ECE workforce, and recognizes early care and learning as a sustainable and valued career.

The ECE-WE is available to Front-line ECEs (including those who are also owner/operators) working in eligible licensed child care facilities.

2. What's New for 2021/22?

Statutory Benefits Funding amounts are adjusted on January 1 of each year as required to reflect any changes to federal tax rates.

3. Who is Eligible?

Receipt of the ECE-WE is dependent upon the following three factors, which are detailed in the subsequent sections and in Table 1:

1. Eligibility of an Organization;
2. Eligibility of facilities that are owned/operated by the Organization; and
3. Eligibility of ECE Employees (employed or self-employed by the Organization/facility).

Organization Eligibility

Organizations must be enrolled in [Child Care Operating Funding](#) (CCOF) Base Funding to participate in the ECE-WE. Participation in the ECE-WE is voluntary, meaning Organizations can decide whether or not to apply. However, while participation is voluntary, organizations must apply on behalf of their eligible ECE Employees in order to receive the ECE-WE.

Facility Eligibility

Organizations can be a single facility that delivers licensed child care in one location, or a group of multiple facilities delivering licensed child care in a variety of settings. For administering the ECE-WE, funding will be provided based on each facility's physical address/location rather than by facility licence.

For ECEs working at each facility to be eligible for the ECE-WE, the facility must be eligible and approved to participate in the [Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative](#) (CCFRI) or be approved as a [Universal Child Care Prototype Site](#).

If a facility chooses not to enroll, is not approved to enroll, or is otherwise not permitted to participate in CCOF Base Funding, the CCFRI or the Universal Child Care Prototype Site initiative, ECEs working at that facility will not be eligible for ECE-WE.

While an Organization may have multiple facilities, each facility's eligibility for the ECE-WE is assessed separately.

Additionally, a facility that has opted in to the ECE-WE cannot change their decision throughout the duration of their Funding Agreement.

ECE-WE Opt-in for CCFRI-ineligible facilities

Front-line ECEs who are employed/self-employed at Licensed Child Care Facilities that are not eligible for CCFRI funding (i.e. facilities that do not offer child care in the CCFRI Eligible Care Categories) may still be eligible for the ECE-WE, if the facility is enrolled in CCOF Base Funding.

Please note that Front-line ECEs working at facilities offering a combination of CCFRI Eligible Care Categories and ineligible child care programs are also eligible for the ECE-WE, as long as the facility is enrolled in the CCFRI for the CCFRI eligible care categories. A combination of eligible and ineligible care may be a facility that offer Preschool (ineligible) and Infant/Toddler (eligible) care.

Example: Organization A has three facilities in receipt of CCOF Base Funding. Facilities 1 and 2 are eligible for the CCFRI, and facility 3 is ineligible. Facility 1 has opted in and been approved for the CCFRI, while facility 2 has not opted in to CCFRI. In this scenario, facilities 1 and 3 are eligible to receive the ECE-WE.

ECE-WE Ineligible Facilities

Facilities ineligible to participate in the ECE-WE include, but are not limited to:

- Facilities operating under an organization that is not enrolled in CCOF Base Funding;
- Facilities that provide care to CCFRI Eligible Care Categories and are eligible for the CCFRI, but have not applied or have not been approved for the CCFRI; and/or
- Facilities that do not have ECE Employees.

ECE Staff Eligibility

Eligible Staff

To be eligible, ECEs must:

- Hold a valid Early Childhood Educator, Infant and Toddler Educator, and/or Special Needs Educator certificate issued by the [BC ECE Registry](#);
- Be in Good Standing with the BC ECE Registry; and
- Be a Front-line ECE Employee directly employed or self-employed on a full- or part-time/casual basis by a Licensed Child Care Facility that is in receipt of CCOF and has been approved by the Ministry to opt in to both the CCFRI (if eligible to do so) and the ECE-WE.

Ineligible Staff

Staff that are ineligible to receive the ECE-WE include individuals who don't hold active ECE certification issued by the BC ECE Registry and/or who are not working in a Front-line capacity.

Others who are ineligible include, but are not limited to:

- ECEs working as Supported Child Development (SCD) Consultants and/or SCD Support Workers;
- ECEs primarily working in an administrative function;
- ECE Assistants;
- Volunteer staff;
- ECEs who are employed as independent contractors; **Note:** this does not include owners/part-owners of a facility participating in the ECE-WE who work in a Front-line capacity;
- ECEs caring solely for their own children.

Important Notes on staff eligibility:

The intent of the ECE-WE is to support ECEs working in a Front-line capacity providing Direct Care to children in a licensed setting.

Government recognizes that ECE Assistants and all Early Care and Learning Professionals are important to the sector and support the overall provision of quality care. At this time, however, eligibility for the ECE-WE is limited to certified ECEs.

Government is responding first to the most urgent needs within the sector. This includes increasing ECE staffing and responding to the critical need for trained and qualified early childhood educators, as well as improving families' access to affordable child care. In addition, the purpose of targeting this wage enhancement to certified ECEs is to encourage more individuals to obtain their certification.

Facilities that choose to employ a higher number of ECEs than required under the Child Care Licensing Regulation are eligible to report Hours Worked by all Front-line ECEs employed at the facility, regardless of staffing ratio.

ECE Employees in Unionized Facilities

Approved Organizations with facilities that employ unionized Front-line ECEs may be eligible for the ECE-WE, as reflected in Table 1 below, provided they have reached a local agreement with their union to amend their collective agreements to implement the ECE-WE.

Unionized Front-line ECE employees working at approved Organizations/facilities may qualify for the ECE-WE if their wages are set through local agreement negotiations. In some instances, recently ratified collective agreements have set out a process for ECEs whose wages are set through these local agreements to access the ECE-WE.

Organizations with facilities where the province funds more than 50% of the child care program(s), resulting in unionized ECE wages that are set through Joint Job Evaluation Plan

classification and wage grids currently do not qualify for the ECE-WE. In these cases, Government’s Low-Wage Redress funding supports ECE wage adjustments that exceed those available through the ECE-WE.

Table 1: ECE-WE Eligibility in Unionized Environments

Type of Unionized Employer	Description	Eligibility for ECE-WE
1) Community Social Services Employers’ Association (CSSEA) Member – provincially funded ECEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer is a CSSEA Member and subject to collective agreement with the Community Social Services Bargaining Association (CSSBA). • Receives more than 50% of their <u>child care operating costs</u> from the Province. • Employers must pay unionized ECE wages according to the CSSEA Collective Agreements. The rates are set through CSSEA’s Joint Job Evaluation Plan (JJEP) wage grids. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not eligible. Government’s Low-Wage Redress funding supports ECE wage adjustments.
2) CSSEA Member – non-provincially funded ECEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer is a CSSEA Member. • Receives less than 50% of their child care operating costs from the Province – not eligible for Low-Wage Redress funding for child care operations. • Some employers have been paying ECEs according to CSSEA Collective Agreements (i.e., as per JJEP wage grids) while others have been paying ECEs at rates lower than JJEP wage grids (these lower ECE rates are set through local side agreements that modify the CSSEA Collective Agreements). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible. The ECE-WE funding will partially offset the cost to employers of matching or narrowing the gap with the new JJEP rates to be established per the 2019-2022 CSSEA Collective Agreement. • Subject to confirmation they are paying the JJEP wage rates or, if a lesser amount, a side agreement has been concluded to implement the ECE-WE.
3) All Other Unionized Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any other unionized employers (public, non-profit, or private) with a collective agreement that includes ECEs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be eligible, contingent on confirmation that the Employer has reached an agreement with their union to amend their collective agreements in order to implement the ECE-WE.

4. Program Contacts

For information about CCOF, CCFRI and the ECE-WE, please call the CCOF Program office:

Telephone: 1 888 338-6622 (option 2) – 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday

Online: gov.bc.ca/childcareoperatingfunding

For information about ECE certifications and renewals, please call the Early Childhood Educator Registry:

Telephone: 1 888 338-6622 (option 3) – 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday

Online: gov.bc.ca/earlychildhoodeducator

Appendix A: Definitions

CCFRI Eligible Care Categories: One or both of the Under 36 Months care category and the 3 Years to Kindergarten care category.

Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI): Funding provided by the Ministry to eligible licensed child care Organizations (Group and Family) in receipt of CCOF Base Funding for facilities offering child care in the CCFRI Eligible Care Categories and approved to enroll in the CCFRI, on the condition that such Organizations abide by the requirements set out in the CCOF Funding Agreement and reduce parent fees for children enrolled in the CCFRI Eligible Care Categories by a prescribed amount.

Child Care Operating Funding (CCOF Base Funding): Funding provided by the Ministry to enrolled licensed child care Organizations on a per-facility basis to assist with the day-to-day costs of running a Licensed Child Care Facility.

Direct Care: Directly responsible for and engaged in the care and supervision of Enrolled or Drop-in space children in a Licensed Child Care Facility.

Early Childhood Educator or ECE: Any individual who holds a current Early Childhood Educator, Infant and Toddler Educator, or Special Needs Educator certificate issued by the BC Early Childhood Educator Registry which has not expired, been suspended, or cancelled.

Early Childhood Educator Registry (ECER): The legislated authority responsible for the certification of ECEs and ECE Assistants; for the recommended approval of post-secondary educational institutions offering early childhood education programs; and for the investigation of practice concerns regarding ECEs and ECE Assistants.

ECE Employee: An ECE employed at the Contractor's Facility on either a full-time or part-time basis, who works in a Front-line capacity, , but does not include ECEs whom the Contractor engages as independent contractors. An ECE Employee also includes:

- The owner or co-owner of a Facility so long as such owner or co-owner is an ECE working in a Front-line capacity; and
- Casual ECE Employees working in a Front-line capacity.

Employer: The owner or part-owner of a Licensed Child Care Facility participating in the ECE-WE. Under the ECE-WE, owners may be eligible to receive the ECE-WE provided they hold valid ECE certification in good standing and are working in a Front-line capacity at such facility or facilities.

Employer Health Tax or EHT: An annual payroll tax implemented in January 2019 that applies to For-Profit employers with total B.C. remuneration greater than \$500,000 and Non-Profit employers with a B.C. remuneration greater than \$1,500,000.

Employer Health Tax (EHT) Funding: The funding that the Ministry provides to Organizations enrolled in the ECE-WE if those Organizations are required to pay the EHT. This funding offsets additional EHT payment obligations that those Organizations may incur as a result of participating in the ECE-WE.

Front-line ECE: An ECE Employee (which includes an ECE owner/operator of the applicable licensed child care operation) who works in either a full-time or part-time capacity and who spends:

- (i) 50% or more of their Hours Worked (see definition below) providing Direct Care to enrolled or drop-in children in that licensed child care setting; and,
- (ii) the remaining percentage of their Hours Worked performing child care related duties for that licensed child care, which could include administrative activities necessary for the child care operation.

Good Standing: Having no outstanding balances owing to the Ministry unless a Ministry approved payment plan is in place and being complied with to the Ministry's satisfaction. Also, in the case of:

- An ECE certification: the status of a certification, where an ECE holds a valid ECE certificate issued by the Director of the BC ECE Registry that is not suspended, cancelled, or expired; and,
- An Organization that is a non-profit society or corporation: a status of good standing with BC Corporate Registry and Online Services.

Hours Worked: Regular or overtime hours where an ECE Employee (see definition above) is paid wages for Front-line activities at a facility.

Hours Worked do not include:

- Sick time, parental leave, long-term disability, vacation, unpaid leave; or,
- Time spent solely in the care of children for whom the ECE Employee is a Parent (as defined herein) or is otherwise a parent or person standing in the place of a parent.

Licensed Child Care Facility: The physical location of child care services operated by the Organization for which a valid child care facility licence has been issued under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and as outlined in Schedule A of the Organization's CCOF Funding Agreement.

Maximum Hours: 195 Hours Worked each month by each ECE Employee.

Organization: The Provider under an existing CCOF Funding Agreement with the Ministry.

Parent: A parent, or person standing in the place of a parent, with respect to a child in an Enrolled or Drop-In space at an Organization's child care facility.

Statutory Benefits: The Employer's cost of the statutory group benefits associated with the increased wages provided as a result of this WE funding. Statutory group benefits include:

- Employment Insurance (EI);
- Canada Pension Plan (CPP);
- Workers' Compensation Insurance, through WorkSafeBC;
- Statutory Holiday Pay;
- Vacation Pay; and
- Other such benefits as may be statutorily imposed during the term of the contract period.

Statutory Benefits Funding: Funding provided by the Ministry to offset the increased costs of Statutory Benefits associated with the ECE-WE.

Universal Child Care Prototype Site: A child care facility that has entered into a contract with the Ministry to participate in the Universal Child Care Prototype program.