



Conversations Fact Sheets

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Supporting a vibrant child care workforce

We begin by focusing on the workforce & propose

- THAT the Government of Prince Edward Island commits to a five-year Early Learning and Child Care Wage Grid with wages in line with PEI Educational Assistants.
- THAT Anyone working in an Inclusion Support Assistant role is required to be certified by the PEI certification board.
- THAT Certified Inclusion Support Assistants are added to the Early Learning and Child Care Wage Grid equivalent to Level II or Level III Early Childhood Educator, based on educational background.
- THAT the Government of Prince Edward Island makes investments to develop and implement a workforce strategy that will allow the system to support the growing needs of families and the Island economy.

We represent Prince Edward Island's over 5000 children in licensed Early Learning and Child Care Centres across Prince Edward Island. Let's work together to create a Quality Child Care System!

Certified Early Childhood Educators

In the Preschool Excellence Initiative report, *Securing the Future for Our Children (2010)*, the Government of Prince Edward Island committed to:

“ A five-year wage grid with annual increments of three percent will be put in place. This will bring wages more in line with regional averages and encourage former early childhood educators to return to the field. Further, enhanced wages will encourage new entrants to consider a rewarding career in the early learning profession - and promote more stability and continuity in Island children’s early learning.

The wage grid for early childhood program staff and supervisors is as follows:

Wage Grid for Early Learning Centres				
Original Wage Grid (2010)	Staff Level	Current Avg. Pay	New Start, Yr 1	New End, Yr 5
	Director (Level 3) - post diploma	\$15.00	\$21 .00	\$23.64
	Certified (Level 2) - 2 year program	\$12.00	\$15.00	\$16.88
	Certified (Level 1) - 1 year certificate (new)	\$10.00	\$13.50	\$15.17
	Certified Entry (new)	\$10.00	\$12.00	\$13.50
	Special Needs Assistant	\$10.21	\$11.71	-
- to be determined				

As of September 2010, Government will implement a new Wage Enhancement Program for all certified early childhood educators in the province. This wage enhancement will ensure a minimum salary of \$15/hour for all certified early childhood educators. Certified staff in the new Early Years Centres will also receive \$15/hour under the wage grid. ”

Per the above commitment, wages should have increased by 24% over the past eight years. To date, there has been a total of 4% increase.

Certified Inclusion Support Assistants

Certified Inclusion Support Assistants/Special Needs Assistants are critical to providing learning and support to children with special needs. However, this position is not required to be filled with a staff person with post-secondary education. As a result, this position is also excluded from the Wage Grid.

Employers report to the ECDA of PEI the frequency of losing trained educators to the higher paying position of Educational Assistant within the public schools branch.

The difficulty in hiring Inclusion Support Assistants is impacting the ability of centres being able to meet the child care demands of families with children with special needs.

Educators with post-secondary education credentials in early childhood education or human services have specialized knowledge of child development, program development for all children including scaffolding children's learning through play, supporting healthy social and emotional development and guiding children's behaviour.

Improving wage rates for Inclusions Support Assistants in child care centres would lead to better employee recruitment and retention rates, therefore ensuring services are available to the more than 124 children enrolled across PEI centres, and many more waiting for care, who require additional support.

To receive special needs funding, a centre is not currently required to hire a Certified Inclusion Support Assistant.

Employees who currently provide inclusion support services in Early Learning and Child Care are considered non-certified on the Wage Grid and currently earn minimum wage (\$11.55 per hour).

Early Childhood Educator vs. Educational Assistant

Fact: Required qualifications are identical

Fact: Wage Difference 37.71%

The wage gap between a Level III Early Childhood Educator with a 2-year diploma and an Educational Assistant in the public education system with a 2-year diploma continues to expand year over year.

Year	Level II ECE	Educational Assistant	Wage Difference
2010	\$ 15.00	\$ 20.09	(-\$5.09) or 29.01%
2016	\$ 15.30	\$ 22.41	(-\$7.11) or 37.71%

Note: Collective Agreement (CUPE Local 3260), Educational Assistants effective until April 31, 2018*

In the Collective Agreement between the Education Negotiating Agency and the Canadian Union of Public Employees (Union Local 3260) effective April 1, 2016 – March 31, 2018, the pay band for Educational Assistants, in the public-school system, begins at \$22.74 and caps at \$27.07.

Casual Educational Assistants earn \$18.19 per hour.