

## For Immediate Release

## Press Release

YWCA Halifax  
October 11, 2022

### YWCA Halifax responds to new Nova Scotia Early Learning Wage Framework

[KJIPUKTUK/HALIFAX] On the release of the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's new wage framework on Tuesday, October 11th, 2022, YWCA Halifax is pleased that the importance of adjusting the wage floors for those working in early childhood education is being addressed.

"While it's vitally important that we continue to reduce parent fees and increase the number of licensed spaces to ensure accessible early learning for families and children across the province, it is equally significant that Early Childhood Educators in Nova Scotia are paid wages that will attract and retain them in the sector," says **YWCA Halifax Executive Director Miia Suokonautio**. "Many centres are currently unable to operate at their licensed capacities because they can't find teachers to meet ratio requirements."

"I have started to notice and feel a shift in morale lately and I'm having a difficult time keeping up with turnover. For the first time in more than 30 years in the sector, it's me who is exhausted trying to keep staff morale positive," says **YWCA Halifax's Director of Early Learning Kerri Johnson**. "Early childhood educators have been feeling badly about the job and many have begun re-evaluating their career choice. Better pay will go a long way, particularly with increases to the cost of living."

YWCA Halifax commends the Department for recognizing the importance of ensuring that ECE staff as a key strategy for: attracting and retaining talent, meeting licensing capacity of centres, ensuring high quality care, supporting staff morale, and as an instrument of economic justice for workers.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has listed the living wage for Halifax as \$23/hour in 2022. It is disappointing that none of the ECE Levels are at this rate and only by 2026 will Level 2s and 3s reach this threshold.

**Rachel Shepherd** a mother of a preschooler at the YWCA's Early Learning Centre in Spryfield says, "Parents entrust their children into the care of these fabulous teachers. Knowing that they haven't been able to put oil in their tanks even while they work full-time teaching our children just seems wrong."



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The YWCA commends the Department for including Director and Assistant Directors in the framework and that wages will continue to increase over the next five years. The inclusion of benefits and retirement plans in 2023 will also be key in workforce development.

“The Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care System is the largest investment in childcare in our lifetimes and is the result of more than a half century of advocacy by organizations like the YWCA,” says **Suokonautio**. “We have a lot of catching up to do. This is a good first step.”

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