



Nova Scotia Child Care Association
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Halifax, NS B3L 4H9

Hon Karen Casey
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
4th Floor, Brunswick Place
2021 Brunswick Street P.O. Box 578
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2S9

Dear Minister Casey,

The Nova Scotia Child Care Association (NSCCA) is writing to you regarding one aspect of the implementation of the DEECD Action Plan on Early Childhood, **Wage Support Funding (WSF)**, and the impact it may have on our Members who are Early Childhood Educators. Over the month of October NSCCA heard from some of its members that the (WSF) has been presenting some problems for them. The Executive Committee of NSCCA dialogued on the information in an attempt to separate out the discreet effects from the broader effects of implementing the WSF. An aspect of NSCCA's mandate is supporting its members and our mandate does not directly involve programs' administration and funding processes in their service delivery. However what we heard was that our members' practices are affected and this has an impact on our mandate.

Before we could decide as a board what action to take, we needed to clarify the effects on programs so we could identify what was affecting our members directly and hence what actions we could take within our mandate. To define the issue as it affects programs, we invited representatives from the Non Profit Directors Association and the Private Licensed Administrator's Association to attend our November Board meeting and frame the issue relative to their mandates and to inform the Board of what actions they were taking.

With this information and our key messages our board decided to write a letter to you to outline the effects that aspects of WSF may have on our members. This letter is what the Board has identified and is one means of supporting our members. The process which we have engaged in also provides our staff and Board Members with information that they can use for referral of members to the appropriate organizations.

We have paired our concerns with NSCCA's key messages:

NSCCA Key Message:

Quality Early Childhood Education must be delivered by trained Early Childhood Educators

- NSCCA is concerned that the shortfall that appears to have resulted in a program's income may result in hiring teaching staff with lower DEECD Classification levels and in particular staff without Early Childhood Credentials. This has an impact on the quality of programming.

NSCCA Key Message:

Early Childhood Educators must be held accountable to an occupational standard of practice and Code of Ethics in a mentoring culture.

- NSCCA is concerned that the shortfall that appears to have resulted in programs' income may result in hiring teaching staff with lower DEECD Classification levels (as above). Commitment to established standards of practice and awareness, skill and use of ethical decision making are essential and are less probable with individuals who do not have an EC credential and hence an Early Childhood context in applying ethics and standards of practice.

NSCCA Key Message:

Early Childhood Educators must be recognized as the key ingredient to providing quality Early Childhood Education programs

- NSCCA is concerned that the disparity caused amongst staff of varying classifications without currency given to experience, for instance, a MSVU CYS graduate fresh out of university given DEECD classification level of 3 will receive the same wage of more experienced ECE with DEECD classification level of 3. A trained Early Childhood Educator with practical experience to back up theory and education is a very important ingredient to providing quality programs.

NSCCA Key Message:

In their provision of quality programming Early Childhood Educators must be well trained, fairly compensated, and supported through a stable and professional workforce

- NSCCA is concerned about the destabilizing effect of the WSF because of the disparities and its effect on quality of programming and standards precipitated by the WSF and its implementation.
- NSCCA is concerned that the income shortfall programs are experiencing may have had the unintended consequence of reducing the hours of staff and they will forego any increase in income in a world where the cost of living is raising.
- NSCCA is concerned that an unintended consequence of both the WSF and the parent fee cap will affect retention of qualified, experienced early childhood staff, hence affecting the quality of the programs for children.

NSCCA Key Message:

High quality Early Childhood Education is best achieved through Early Childhood Educators who engage in continuous growth and development.

- NSCCA is concerned that access to professional development and continuing education opportunities for NSCCA's members will decrease with the shortfalls in program incomes that are predicted.

NSCCA realizes that the funding model is a work in progress as is the WSF and is confident that the perspective that we have provided for you will inform the process as the model evolves. We appreciate the consideration that you can give to our perspective.

Sincerely,

E. Elaine Ferguson M.Ed.

Chair, NSCCA