



September 10, 2021

Hon. Katrina Chen

Minister of Children and Family Development
Room 134, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Chen,

Recently, my office has received several emails from daycare operators and employees expressing frustration over the delay of your government's promised ECE wage enhancement.

Daycare providers have recently been informed the additional \$2 per hour wage enhancement for Early Childhood Educators, promised in government's spring budget, will now be paid as a lump sum payment in March of 2022.

Many ECE workers were relying on this pay increase coming into effect this month and are only now learning they must wait a further six months. This is a group of employees that are scarce and in high demand. The purpose of the enhancement was to encourage entry into the profession and support retention. This delay in payment accomplishes neither of these things and only serves to further disappoint ECE workers.

Despite assurances from your government that there would be a, "...smooth implementation of the wage enhancement," I am sure that you and your Ministry are aware this delay creates additional challenges to the payroll and taxation procedures for daycare providers and their employees.

In the spirit of openness and transparency, I hope your Ministry can help answer the following questions so that I can then relay them to the daycares and the ECE workers:

- What circumstances — budgetary or otherwise — arose that have forced your Ministry to alter its fiscal plan and retroactively administer the ECE-WE in March 2022?



- Why didn't your Ministry add the additional \$2 per hour to the process that already exists for paying the current wage enhancement?
- Why did your Ministry not provide ECE workers with prior warning to ensure they could plan their personal budgets and staffing around your Ministry's change in its fiscal plan?
- How will your Ministry support daycare providers who will have the additional costs associated with the complex administration of retroactive pay for multiple employees?

Most daycares are small, independent, women run organizations with employees who are predominantly women. The existing administrative requirements to comply with the current Childcare BC programs are already significant. This delay in payment has discouraging consequences to ECE workers, daycares and government resources, and will do little to help ease the incredible staffing and salary strains childcare and ECE workers are currently burdened with.

At a time when we need to be encouraging — rather than discouraging — people to enter the childcare and early childhood education workforce, this decision will create significant challenges, not only for our childcare workers, but for all British Columbians who are desperate for affordable and accessible childcare.

I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Karin Kirkpatrick

Opposition Critic for Childcare & Family Development
MLA for West Vancouver-Capilano

cc: Shirley Bond, MLA, Interim Leader of the Official Opposition