

A Summary of Recommendations for Legislative Change

Words Matter

Update the outdated child-care-related terminology in Alberta's legislation

1. Change the name of the Child Care Licensing Act to the *Early Learning and Child Care Licensing Act*. Throughout the act and regulation, replace all references to “child care” with “early learning and child care.”
2. Change the term “day care program” to “centre-based early learning and child care program.”

Give early childhood educators the respect they deserve

3. Adopt the term “early childhood educators” to replace the current classifications of “child development supervisor,” “child development worker,” and “child development assistant.”

Acknowledge that well-qualified early childhood educators are the foundation of a high-quality early learning and child care system

4. **Recognize the importance of well-qualified early childhood educators in the preamble to the act.**

Legislate new certification classifications

5. Replace the current three-level certification system (child development assistants, child development workers, child development supervisors) with the classifications early childhood educator I (ECE I, which is transitional), early childhood educator II (ECE II), early childhood educator III (ECE III) and early childhood educator IV (ECE IV).

Early Learning and Child Care Matters

Recognize the importance of high-quality early learning and child care

6. Recognize the importance of quality early learning and child care in the preamble to the act.

7. Enshrine Alberta's goals for high-quality early learning and child care that
 - helps children reach their potential and fully develop their talents and abilities
 - helps children develop the resilience, determination, confidence, creativity and critical thinking skills that prepare them for school, work and life
 - helps children develop strong communication and social skills
 - helps children develop into responsible citizens who value democratic rights and freedoms and make a positive contribution to society
 - teaches children the importance of peace, equality, friendship among all peoples and inclusion within society of people who are different
 - instills respect for nature, for the environment, and for social and cultural diversity

Children Have Rights

Legislate protection for the rights of children, including the right to high-quality early learning and child care

8. Recognize the rights of children in the preamble to the act. Recognize that high-quality early learning and child care is a critical component of the education to which every child has a right.

Legislate protection for children's right to play outdoors and enjoy nature

9. Amend the Child Care Licensing Regulation to incorporate the Get Outside and Play organization's recommendations for outdoor play. These include
 - increasing the amount of outdoor space required for children in licensed early learning and child care programs
 - instituting minimum daily outdoor playtime requirements

All Children Matter

Phase in and enforce new minimum education requirements across the system

10. Legislate new minimum requirements for higher educational qualifications for early childhood educators in all parts of the regulated system.

Update and clarify the legislative requirements for private babysitters

11. Legislate appropriate minimum standards for private babysitters. These should include a requirement for private babysitters to post, at the entrance to their premises, a notice informing parents that they are not regulated and not monitored by government.
12. Legislate clear and appropriate maximums for the number of children that private babysitters can care for at any one time.

Early Childhood Educators Matter

Legislate and phase in new minimum requirements for higher educational qualifications

13. Legislate and phase in a two-year diploma in early childhood education as the new minimum standard for early childhood educators in all parts of the regulated system.
14. Legislate a requirement for early childhood educators to develop personalized educational upgrading plans that outline the pathways they will take to meet the new minimum standards.

Legislate credential maintenance requirements

15. Legislate a requirement for ongoing credential maintenance. Include ongoing professional learning as one requirement for certification renewal.

Early Childhood Educators Need Top-Quality Programs

Provide early learning and child care education through public post-secondary institutions

16. Provide early learning and child care education through public post-secondary institutions and recognized Indigenous colleges and universities.

Early Childhood Educators Need to Specialize

Require specialization in early learning and child care

17. Legislate a requirement for all early childhood educators who work in licensed and regulated child care programs to have specialized early learning and child care education.

Eliminate equivalencies

18. Remove the provision for educational equivalencies from the Child Care Licensing Regulation. Implement a bridging plan to help child care providers whose certification is based on an educational equivalency to upgrade to the new standard.

Early Childhood Educators Need a Broad Range of Education

Require organizational management or pedagogical leadership education for all program directors and managers

19. Legislate and phase in a requirement for all early childhood educators who work as program directors to be certified as ECE IIIs, a classification that requires a post-diploma certificate in management or pedagogical leadership in addition to a two-year diploma specializing in early learning and child care.

Early Childhood Educators Need Ongoing Professional Development and Support

Require mandatory ongoing professional learning

20. Legislate a requirement for ongoing professional learning for all early childhood educators in all sectors of the regulated system. Ongoing professional learning should be a requirement for credential maintenance.
21. Legislate a requirement for early childhood educators to develop annual professional learning plans that show what education, training, skills development or pedagogical development activities the individuals will undertake each year to improve their qualifications and maintain their certification status

A Curriculum Framework Provides a Foundation

Build a quality system founded on evidence-based curriculum

22. Adopt Alberta's early learning and child care curriculum framework, *Flight* (Makovichuk et al. 2014), in all licensed and regulated child care programs in the province.