

Ministry of Education

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Ministère de l'Éducation

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May 3, 2018

Dear Early Years and Child Care Partners,

I am pleased to share *Growing Together: Ontario's Early Years and Child Care Workforce Strategy* with you. This strategy sets the goal of building a stronger workforce by supporting the recruitment and retention of more educators in the early years and child care sector. To access the Workforce Strategy online, please visit <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/growing-together-eycc-workforce-en.pdf>.

Key Action Areas

This Strategy, is a commitment in *Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework*, and includes concrete actions to reflect the value of the work educators do for children and families across Ontario. Taken together, action items under each of these areas will help ensure that more people are drawn to careers in early childhood education and that those already working in the sector will want to stay in the sector. The Strategy includes the following five action areas to support educators:

1. Establishing Fair Compensation
2. Improving Working Conditions
3. Enhancing Skills and Opportunities
4. Valuing Contributions
5. Increasing Recruitment

It is an exciting time for this sector in Ontario. The government has a plan to help 100,000 more children 0-4 years access licensed child care. The 2018 Budget announced an investment of an additional \$2.2 billion over three years in child care to provide increased operating funding across the system and to expand access to child care for First Nations families on reserve. It also includes introducing free preschool for children 2.5 to 4 years beginning in September 2020, and developing a province-wide wage grid, beginning in April 2020. The Workforce Strategy is an important element of these commitments. As the system expands, the need for more educators will only increase. Helping more children access early years and child care programs and services is only possible when there are enough educators to support them and their families.

I want to thank our partners across the Province who provided meaningful insights, advice and solutions. In particular, I would like to thank the members of the Early Years and Child Care Workforce Strategy Technical Advisory Group, who provided valuable insight into the complex issues facing the early years and child care workforce. In addition, I would like to thank R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. for conducting the *Workforce Study for Early Years and Child Care Employees*, which provided us with recommendations to inform the development of the Strategy.

I look forward to building on relationships with our partners, and successes to date, including *Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework* commitments. I will continue to work with educators, partners, and communities to support Ontario's educators – and to develop an early years and child care system that is high-quality, inclusive and child- and family-centred.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Indira Naidoo-Harris". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Indira Naidoo-Harris
Minister of Education
Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care