
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2021AEST0004-000111
Jan. 22, 2021

Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training
Ministry of Children and Family Development

Expanded education for people who care for young British Columbians

VICTORIA – More educational opportunities are on the way for people looking to build careers in the high-demand field of early childhood education and provide high-quality child care to more B.C. families.

To help meet the growing need for early childhood educators (ECEs) and connect people with good jobs, government is investing \$1.26 million to add 108 ECE seats at public post-secondary institutions throughout the province.

“The funding we’re announcing today will support training for more early childhood educators to care for our kids and give them the best start on the road to learning,” said Anne Kang, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training. “I’m proud to be part of a government investing in innovative programs to enable people impacted by COVID-19 to upskill or reskill so they can advance their own careers while supporting parents of children to do the same.”

Programs will be delivered in two ways. The majority of seats will be delivered through a work-integrated learning (WIL) approach. This will give ECEs the opportunity to become certified while gaining important work experience in the sector.

For example, Northern Lights College in Dawson Creek will offer an online, provincewide “basic” ECE certification through a WIL program. This approach will fund two groups of participants who are already working in the child care field to upgrade to become fully certified as ECEs.

Seats will also be delivered through a traditional delivery model of in-person or online, followed by a field practicum where students can integrate theory and practice in a supportive, supervised environment.

Programs are planned for five public post-secondary institutions beginning in January 2021:

- Camosun College, Victoria – 16 seats
- Capilano University, North Vancouver – 24 seats
- Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, Lytton – 12 seats
- Northern Lights College, Dawson Creek – 44 seats
- Selkirk College, Castlegar – 12 seats

“Early childhood educators are at the heart of child care in B.C., with the pandemic further highlighting how vital their work is to the well-being of families and communities,” said Katrina Chen, Minister of State for Child Care. “Creating new ECE training opportunities is an important part of Childcare BC, our 10-year plan to build a universal, affordable and inclusive child care system for families throughout our province.”

In addition to expanding the number of ECE seats at post-secondary institutions, the Province is delivering a record investment of approximately \$16 million to fund 8,000 student bursaries, and more than 13,000 ECEs have received a wage enhancement of up to \$2 per hour.

Government's investment in early childhood education resources is a crucial part of B.C.'s economic recovery plan to help thousands of people upskill or reskill and find their place in the post COVID-19 economy. Targeted investments will help create opportunities through short-term training for in-demand jobs and Indigenous community-based skills training and education.

StrongerBC: BC's Economic Recovery Plan outlines the steps government is taking to help people, businesses and communities recover and come out of COVID-19 stronger and better prepared to meet the challenges ahead. The total provincial response to the COVID-19 pandemic exceeds \$8.25 billion.

Quotes:

Cindy Page, chair, early childhood education and care program, Northern Lights College, Dawson Creek –

“Northern Lights College continues to build on its commitment to experiential learning with an additional work-integrated-learning program in early childhood education starting in February 2021.”

Carol Burbee, faculty lead, early childhood education and care program, Northern Lights College, Dawson Creek –

“Northern Lights College's work-integrated-learning program will welcome approximately 25 students who are employed in early learning environments around the province. These students will engage in an innovative college curriculum designed to connect to their work intentionally and holistically. This new cohort of students will be ready to apply for the ECE registry's basic certification in 11 months and will be well equipped to step into leadership roles in the field.”

Emily Gawlick, executive director, Early Childhood Educators of BC –

“The early childhood profession is unique and requires specialized knowledge and education. Investments, such as these announced today, reduce barriers to education for ECE students and support the profession as a whole. The Province's continued support for education is welcomed.”

Quick Facts:

- Investing in health and human services sector education means people are getting trained for high-demand jobs and British Columbians can get the care they need now and for the future.
- ECEs help shape learning experiences for children from birth to five years – the time when 85% of brain development occurs.
- In addition to this new investment, government has provided \$7.4 million since 2018 to create an additional 895 ECE training spaces.

Learn More:

Fast-track skills training opportunities in B.C.'s Economic Recovery Plan:

<https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/jobs-and-opportunities>

Childcare BC: <https://www.gov.bc.ca/ChildcareBC>

ECE Education Support Fund: <https://www.ecebc.ca/ece-education-support-fund>

The ECE bursary is available at 32 post-secondary institutions throughout B.C. For more information and to apply, visit: www.ecebc.ca/programs/student_bursary.html

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