

Tuition-Free Early Childhood Educator Training Information Sheet

Child Care Centres and Homes - April 2026

- The original *Canada-Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement* signed with the federal government spanned April 2021 to March 2026. One of the key pillars in this agreement was quality. This included the recruitment and retention of early childhood educators, or ECEs, who work in regulated child care centres.
- To support the recruitment and retention of ECEs the Ministry of Education established funding agreements with post-secondary institutions for tuition-free ECE training and professional development. Agreements were first established in 2021-22 with Collège Mathieu, Saskatchewan Institute of Indian Technologies (SIIT) and Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Agreements were extended to Dumont Technical Institute and six Regional Colleges in 2022-23.

The Ministry of Education also provided \$3 million in funding for bursaries to Saskatchewan Polytechnic, SIIT and Collège Mathieu.

- The tuition-free training resulted in:
 - 6,500 training seats and 3,700 professional development seats being offered; and,
 - A 52 per cent increase in the number of certified ECEs between March 2021 and December 2025, including an 84 per cent increase in the number of ECE Level IIIs, far exceeding the 15 per cent target in certified staff per in the agreement.

Effective July 1, 2026

- Starting in the 2026-27 academic year, the focus will be on supporting the workforce at the entry level (ECE Level I) and on leadership training through Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association. The shift from broader tuition-free training will allow additional funding to be directed toward core operating costs for the sector.
- *The Child Care Regulations, 2015*, require individuals to hold a minimum of an ECE Level I to work for more than 65 hours per month. Supporting the delivery of tuition-free ECE I training will continue and allow those who are currently working in the sector with no certification to meet minimum training requirements and work full-time in a child care centre.
- At this time, the Ministry of Education plans to maintain the Tuition Reimbursement Grant to support ECE training in the province. The grant is available for individuals who work in a regulated child care facility to assist with tuition and book costs for courses required toward ECE certification. Child care employers apply for tuition reimbursement on behalf of their ECE staff who have successfully completed post-secondary courses that lead to certification as an ECE I, II or III.
- Funding for bursaries will wind down. Agreements with Saskatchewan Polytechnic, SIIT and Collège Mathieu have been extended to March 2027, to allow the institutions to fully distribute all bursary funds originally allocated to students.

- Other student support programs are continued. Up to \$15,000 in Canada Student Loan Forgiveness is now available for ECEs living in rural and northern communities with populations of less than 30,000 and ECEs who study full-time have access to Saskatchewan Graduate Retention tax credits.

For Additional Information:

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