

The Association for Early Childhood Educators of Newfoundland and Labrador (AECENL) is a non-profit organization dedicated to professionalism in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and to quality child care and education for young children. The association is run by 13 volunteer board members who also work full-time in the early learning and child care (ELCC) field (currently 8 board members are frontline ECEs and the remaining board members are other ELCC professionals). The association also has 6 staff who are responsible for delivering certification, orientation courses, assessment of the Trainee Education Bursary and coordinating professional learning opportunities for ECEs across the province. AECENL is an affiliate member of the Canadian Child Care Federation, which enables the association to support ELCC both provincially and nationally.

What does AECENL do to support ECEs?

AECENL delivers **Child Care Services Certification**. Being certified is one of the key components that identifies ECEs as professionals.

AECENL facilitates **Orientation Courses**. Orientation Courses provide a point of entry to work in the ELCC field, they also provide a way for individuals to add classifications to their certification. AECENL currently has seven different courses infant; preschool; school-age; family child care; refresher course; a post-secondary summer student temporary certification course; and a casual caregiver module.

AECENL assesses the **Trainee Bursary** for payment by the Department of Education. The bursary provides financial relief to those who hold Trainee Level and are completing their ECE Certificate at a provincially recognized post-secondary institution.

AECENL offers a wide variety of **professional learning opportunities** for ECEs. They have developed on-line workshops and orientation courses. AECENL has hosted many webinars for ECEs and have facilitated full day PL events in each region annually as well as their annual provincial conference. AECENL also has a PL Lending Library with resources that include pre-made workshops for groups to borrow and books for self-study. The association also has a PL Grant Fund to help offset costs for regulated child care settings to host their own PL events.

AECENL maintains connections through **social media** platforms which includes a public Facebook page and three private Facebooks pages (Community Outreach, Early Learning Framework and an Administrators page).

AECENL has a **Loose Parts Trading Post** where members can come and select materials to keep and take back to their ELCC programs. The board is currently looking into ways to be able to provide this in other regions.

AECENL created and delivers the annual **Joanne Juteau ECE scholarship**.

AECENL has provincial licence for ECEs (and all residents of NL) to **access free resources from the Science of Early Childhood Development (SECD)** that can be used for PL, as a resource and can be shared with families.

AECENL **promotes the ELCC sector**, highlighting the importance of early learning, the rights of children and that ECEs are instrumental in supporting child development. Promotion has been done through radio campaigns, social media and by doing presentations at high schools, colleges and public events

also by participating at career fairs and other public events. AECENL also **coordinates ECE Week annually**, having it proclaimed by government and facilitates events that highlight ECEs as professionals.

AECENL **advocates for ECEs provincially and nationally**. AECENL has worked hard over the years to build positive relationships with different government departments, post-secondary institutions, other organizations and stakeholders. By building these relationships AECENL is regularly invited to participate on committees and are included in consultations, round table discussions, forums and symposiums where we have an opportunity to share our recommendations and ideas. AECENL also provides written submissions that includes position papers, letters to the Minister and/or other departmental staff, e-mails and phone calls. Over the years AECENL has advocated and provided recommendations, some of the items that have been addressed are the ECE workforce, certification, quality, inclusion, regulations/legislation, OGP, Jr. Kindergarten, ELCC Supplement, financial initiatives for upgrading, access to PL, ratios, Pre-K and issues pertaining to retention and recruitment. AECENL's biggest focus over the last year has been the provincial ECE wage scale. AECENL has been advocating for a wage scale that includes both years of experience and levels of certification (including Trainee Level) as well as role (e.g. administrator). AECENL has also been advocating for a benefit package that includes medical and dental benefits, a pension or RRSP plan, paid sick days and province wide and/or regional close out PL days for ECEs. AECENL represents their members!



We respectfully acknowledge the territory in which we work as the ancestral homelands of the Mi'kmaq and Beothuk. We also recognize the Inuit of Nunatsiavut, the Inuit of NunatuKavut, and the Innu of Nitassinan, as the original people of Labrador.