

## Supporting early childhood education

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HSA President Val Avery was invited to speak as a special guest at the Early Childhood Educators of BC conference in May.

HSA served as a sponsor for the conference and Avery took part in a panel discussion on building professionalism.

"As a union, we are committed to working to advocate for the many professions we represent, including early childhood educators," said Avery in her remarks.

"HSA has historically had an interest in supporting the ECE sector and the people who work in it. In 2011, HSA's Board of Directors endorsed the Community Plan for a public System of Integrated Early Child Care and Learning, advanced by ECEBC and the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC."

An important element of that plan is the vision for building workforce capacity, with a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education as a new educational standard, a diploma as a minimum credential for providers, and support for existing ECEs and providers to upgrade their qualifications."

Avery spoke of how the plan would create Early Years Centres that would provide the core of services delivered by the new public early care and learning system. These would be required to:

- cap parent fees at \$10 per day for full time and \$7 per day for part time

- meet improved staff education and wage levels at an average of \$20 an hour plus 20 per cent benefits
- welcome all children, including those with special needs
- address demonstrated community need
- offer play-based programs consistent with BC Early Learning Framework or Aboriginal frameworks.

The conference also saw HSA member Glenda Burrows acclaimed for a position on the ECEBC board of directors.

Burrows, a senior child care licensing officer at Central Community Health Centre, also serves as chief steward and as a constituency liaison. She is a strong supporter of early intervention services for children with special needs.

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