Your Return Address

Date

The Honourable Rebecca Schulz MLA
204 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

RE: Early Learning & Childcare Workforce Vaccinations

Dear Minister Schulz,

My name is (insert name here) and I am (insert scope of work here; connection to the field)

Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) work with an unmasked, unvaccinated, and vulnerable population. Despite vigilant efforts to mitigate the transmission of COVID in early learning spaces, ECEs are in regular direct contact with young children, many of whom cannot wear masks and do not yet understand physical distancing.

Because of the incredibly essential nature of the work they do, the majority of child care programs have remained open during provincial shutdowns, even during school closures. The early childhood workforce has proven to be truly essential to the health, well-being and economy of our communities and it is essential that we protect them. The need for action is urgent; we need vaccinations for ECEs now.

We are seeing various regions in Canada and the U.S. refocus their vaccination strategy to prioritize ECEs. Because of recent outbreaks, regions in Ontario have begun prioritizing vaccinations for all of their frontline Early Childhood Educators. In its recommended vaccination schedule, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States suggests that states vaccinate child care workers in Phase 1b; this group comes behind only health care workers and residents of long-term care facilities. We ask that Alberta also prioritizes ECEs immediately.

The following risk factors emphasize the need for early prioritization of the ELCC workforce:

* Increased transmission risks for the Variants of Concern in young children and recent increases in case numbers in early childhood settings
* Risk of transmission within a congregate environment
* Risk of exposure to infection, as many children experience asymptomatic infections which make them difficult to diagnose
* Risk of disruption to care being provided, which is critical to the mental, behavioural and developmental health of children and their parents ability to work

For months, they have been labeled critical workers and heroes for their role in keeping Alberta going in the face of a pandemic. Now, with vaccinations underway, ECEs have found themselves snubbed by the very people who continue to praise them for stepping up in a crisis. We look forward to seeing leaders take bold and immediate action regarding an effective vaccination strategy that includes ECEs. The health and well-being of our families, children and those responsible for their care depends on it.

Sincerely,

(insert name and title here)

Cc:

Association of Early Childhood Educators Alberta info@aecea.ca

Children’s Services Critic, Rakhi Pancholi, Rakhi.Pancholi@assembly.ab.ca

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