



Quality Investment Grant (QIG) Operator Guide

Compensation Funding and Fee Reductions
Updated: March 9, 2026
Effective: April 1, 2026

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Overview of Guide Updates

The QIG Operator Guide is updated as needed to reflect changes to the grant program. Please see below an overview of guide updates.

- ✓ Updated wage scales reflecting economic increases effective April 1, 2026
- ✓ Updated funding rates reflecting economic increases effective April 1, 2026
- ✓ Updated information on economic increases for red-circled employees
- ✓ Updated funding rates to recognize increased per diems for untrained and entry-level staff
- ✓ QIG online claim form updated reporting periods for 2026/27

NOTE: If there are any discrepancies between this Operator Guide and a Licensee's/ Operator's 2026-27 funding agreement, the content of the 2026-2027 funding agreement prevails.

Five key things you will learn about in this Guide:

- 1 About the Quality Investment Grant (QIG)
- 2 What a wage scale is, and how to place/move an ECE employee on it
- 3 Funding eligibility
- 4 Wage Compensation and Fee Reductions
- 5 Where to go for resources and support

About the Quality Investment Grant (QIG)

The Quality Investment Grant (QIG) has been developed by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) and is available to funded licensed child care centres in Nova Scotia to support fee reductions and compensation for early childhood educators (ECEs). The QIG focuses on those who work directly with children as required to meet ratio requirements under the [Early Learning and Child Care Act and Regulations](#).

Funding for the QIG is provided by the Province of Nova Scotia and the Government of Canada, with funding from the [Canada-Nova Scotia Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement](#).

About this Guide

This Guide provides information for licensed child care centres that receive QIG funding and outlines processes and related information. Please review each section of the Guide carefully and as frequently as needed. There is a [glossary](#) of key terms at the end of the Guide, and if you need help or have questions, support and resources are described on [page 18](#).

Note: The [Early Learning and Child Care Act](#) and the [Early Learning and Child Care Regulations](#) provide final authority on all matters relating to child care. If an aspect of this Guide is different, adhere to what is stated in the *Act* or *Regulations* and report any such discrepancies by email to ecdsgrants@novascotia.ca by s.

Wage Compensation Funding

What is a Wage Scale?

Wage scales have been developed for classified Early Childhood Educators (ECEs), Assistant Directors, Inclusion Coordinators, and Directors. All employees on the scale must work in provincially-funded, licensed child care centres.

A wage scale is a standardized pay approach to establish wage parity across a sector. The scale determines how much an employee will be paid, based on their level of education and years of experience.

Within each wage scale, there are two components:

1. Levels: Pay range aligned to the classification level of an ECE (Level 1, 2, 3, or school age approval)
2. Steps: Based on cumulative years of experience (Steps 1-5)

Wage scales have been developed to increase and standardize wages for ECEs provincially, recognize education and years of experience, create greater equity within and across programs, decrease staff turnover, and support improved working conditions. Wage scales are standard practice in publicly funded sectors, e.g. education, care sectors, and civil service.

For QIG funding, all ECEs employed as an ECE, Assistant Director, Inclusion Coordinator or Director must be paid their corresponding wage rate on the scale, regardless of whether the employee is working in or out-of- ratio. Employers cannot set their own rates of pay. Exceptions were made for ECE employee rates which were higher than the wage scales on October 10, 2022. There is a scenario outlined on [page 9](#) of this Guide.

QIG funding only addresses wages, and does not include benefits, or other financial incentives offered by employers (i.e, annual bonuses and recruitment offers).

For the detailed wage scales developed for ECEs, Directors and Assistant Directors/Inclusion Coordinators, refer to [Appendix A](#) 'Wage Scales'.

Education Premium: Advanced Practitioner Program (APP)

An education premium is an additional amount of compensation paid to qualifying employees in recognition of their education.

ECEs who have completed the Advanced Practitioner Program (APP) are eligible for an education premium of \$1.50 per hour. This amount is added to their wage rate according to the wage scale. Funding for the APP premium and 15% MERCs will be provided to operators for eligible employees.

Please note: Five years of experience is required for acceptance to the APP; therefore, this premium may only be applied to Step 5. Refer to [Appendix C](#) for the APP Education Premium funding rate.

Wage Increases: Education, Experience, and Economic Increases

Wage increases occur for an employee after they have accumulated a full year of experience at a certain level, when they upskill, or when they move to a leadership role. This may be on their anniversary date of hire, date when they have accumulated 1080 hours worked at a particular step, or date from certification if they worked full time.

When applicable, economic adjustments may occur across all wage scales consistent with overall public sector wage increases. Economic adjustments such as this generally occur on an annual basis.

In accordance with the government's administrative directive, ECE wages increased by 2% effective April 1, 2026. These increased rates are reflected in the 'Wage Scales' in [Appendix A](#). Information about economic increases for employees with red-circled rates of pay can be found on [page 14](#).

There are three separate wage scales for trained ECEs



Early Childhood Educators



Assistant Directors &
Inclusion Coordinators



Directors

Each employee will be placed on a level and step based on the following two criteria:

1. Levels: ECE Provincial Classification (Level 1-3)



Confirmation of classification is required before being placed or moved between a level on the wage scale. **Fully classified means there are no longer any conditions on your classification, and all requirements for classification have been fulfilled.**

A [Guide to Classification and Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators](#) is available on the EECD website. For questions related to ECE classification, contact classification Services at Classification@novascotia.ca or 902.424.3431



2. Years of Experience (Step 1-5)

Each step represents one year of employment (at least half-time, or 1080 annual hours) as a trained ECE (Level 1, 2, 3 or school age approval) at each Wage Scale Level.

Moving to a new step occurs after the employee acquires the necessary experience at each level until the employee reaches step 5 on the wage scale. Employees remain at step 5.

An employee should work at each step for at least one year AND 1080 hours (i.e., must be working more than half-time for the full year to move to a new step). That is, if an employee does not work more than 1080 hours within a year they would not progress to the next step until they have worked at least 1080 hours. An example of this, and other scenarios is provided in [Appendix B 'Wage Scale Examples'](#).

Only accumulated experience as a level 1, 2 or 3 classified ECE, or equivalent, is considered.

Please note: if an ECE works less than 1080 a year, they are still required to be paid the wage scale rates.

How to place and move employees on a Wage Scale

It is the employer's responsibility to place employees and to retain documentation related to placement, i.e., classification, resume.



See Appendix B for examples of placing an employee on the wage scale.

Movement on the Wage Scale:

Levels:

As employees advance their training and obtain higher ECE classifications (e.g., from Level 1 to 2), **they should be moved to the pay scale at the next Level.** Employees will stay at the same step when advancing levels (i.e., they will not be expected to move to the bottom step when moving to a new level. **Step 5 remains Step 5).**

Steps:

An employee shall advance a step every 12 months (on the anniversary date of hire), if they have worked more than half time (e.g., 1080 hours in a 12-month period).

Moving to a new scale:

If an employee changes roles (e.g. from ECE to Assistant Director), they move to a **new wage scale**, and remain at the same **level and step**.

1

Gather employee ECE Provincial classification to assign appropriate Level

- Reference the classification documentation on file for each employed ECE to confirm the classification

2

Determine how many years the employee has been working to assign appropriate Step

- Years of experience is defined as cumulative years working as a trained ECE (comparable NS classification, e.g., diploma, degree) in any provincial, national or international child care setting (i.e., centre, family home, etc.)

Example: A Level 1 ECE who has 2.5 years of experience is on Level 1 - Step 3. They continued their education and received confirmation of a Level 2 ECE classification. This now puts them on Level 2 - Step 3.

Example of Wage Scale Movement					
Level (NS Classification)	Step 1 < 1 year (Minimum)	Step 2 1-2 years	Step 3 2-3 years	Step 4 3-4 years	Step 5 4-5 years +
Level 1	An ECE obtains higher classification				
Level 2/School Aged Approval					
Level 3	Anniversary date of hire (until step 5)				

Note: Employees on parental leave have their absence counted towards step progression.

Employees Paid above Wage Scale (red-circled)

With the introduction of the wage scale in 2022, there were a small number of existing employees being paid a higher wage than the wage scale rates. These staff had their rate of pay 'red circled.' **This means they will not lose pay and will continue to earn this red-circled hourly pay rate.**

Some important notes about employees who had their rate red-circled:

A red-circled rate is a rate of pay, as of October 10, 2022, authorized above the maximum rate for that level/step on the wage scale.

- No employee is eligible for a red circled rate after October 10, 2022
- This rate is employee, and centre specific. It is not transferable.

An employee who has their rate of pay red-circled who moves to a new centre does not receive that same rate of pay. They would be placed at the respective level and step for their years of experience.

If an employee who has their rate of pay 'red-circled' chooses to end their employment with a child care centre, the wages of the new employee hired to replace the former employee will be set based on the applicable wage scale. A new employee cannot 'inherit' a red-circled rate of pay held by a previous employee.

If an employee who has their rate of pay red-circled increases their level of education or moves into another position at a higher wage scale, their pay will be based on the higher of the existing above scale rate or the new wage scale rate.



Example:

An employee is a Level 2 ECE – and has been working for five years. They would be placed on Level 2 – Step 5 on the wage scale. However, that employee is earning \$1 more per hour than the corresponding rate. They are 'red-circled'. Their wage will only increase through economic adjustments ([page 10](#)), or through upskilling or moving to a leadership role if the new corresponding wage rate is greater than their red-circled rate.

Economic Adjustments: Employees with Red-Circled Rates

Employees who had their rate of pay red-circled on October 10, 2022, when the new wage scales were announced, are eligible for economic increases as announced by the province in line with broader public service increases.

In respect to the April 1, 2026 wage scale increases of 2%, if a centre employs an ECE with a red-circled rate, increased funding for economic increases will be based on the March 31, 2026 wage scale rate, not the red-circled rate. It is at the discretion of the employer whether they provide a pay increase to the employee based on 2% of the red-circled rate or 2% of the applicable wage scale rate. The increase cannot exceed the 2% economic adjustment.

Additional information on economic adjustment funding for red-circled employees can be found on [page 14](#).



Funding Eligibility Section

Funding Eligibility

Child care centres across the province vary in size, with their organizational structures determined by each employer. While government outlines staff-to-children ratios and Director requirements in [the Early Learning and Child Care Regulations](#), it does not mandate a specific organizational structure for a centre. How a program is structured remains at the discretion of the operator.

The employer pays the full wage, and based on bi-weekly claims to EECD, receives QIG funding as a contribution to the total wage. The following provides the calculation used to determine how government will provide funding under the QIG.

Wage Scale Funding Methodology

Funding is provided to employers based on an employee's placement on the wage scale and their hours worked according to the Wage Scale Funding Rates listed in [Appendix C 'Funding Rates'](#).

Wage Scale Funding Rates have been calculated based on the following formula:

Wage Scale Funding Rates	=	Historical QIG Amount Historical QIG per diem rates converted to an hourly wage	+	Incremental Hourly Funding $\left[\begin{matrix} \text{new wage} \\ \text{scale} \end{matrix} \right] - \left[\begin{matrix} \text{historical} \\ \text{QIG wage floor} \end{matrix} \right]$	+	MERC 15% Mandatory Employment Related Costs (MERC) for the incremental wage funding
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Example: A Level 2 ECE at Step 3 of the Wage Scale will be funded at \$19.64 per hour (April 1, 2026)

ECE Level 2 – Step 3

\$19.64/hr QIG Funding Amount	=	\$5.50/hr Historical QIG Amount	+	\$12.29/hr Incremental Funding	+	\$1.84/hr MERC Funding																
EECD will fund centres based on actual hours worked by employees. This is contributed through QIG.		In the past, QIG paid a per diem rate. Per diems have been converted to hourly rates (assuming an 8-hour workday) \$5.50/hr = \$44/day ÷ 8hrs/day <table border="0" style="width: 100%; font-size: small;"> <tr> <td>QIG</td> <td>Historic</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hourly</td> <td>Per diem</td> </tr> </table>	QIG	Historic	Hourly	Per diem		This is the additional funding provided to increase staff wages from the historic wage floor to the new wage scales \$12.29/hr = 29.29hr - 17.00/hr <table border="0" style="width: 100%; font-size: small;"> <tr> <td>Incremental</td> <td>New Wage</td> <td>2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Funding</td> <td>Scales</td> <td>Wage Floor</td> </tr> </table>	Incremental	New Wage	2022	Funding	Scales	Wage Floor		15% is added to the incremental funding amount to cover mandatory employment related costs \$1.84/hr = \$12.29/hr * 15% <table border="0" style="width: 100%; font-size: small;"> <tr> <td>MERC</td> <td>Incremental</td> <td>MERC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Amount</td> <td>Funding</td> <td>Rate</td> </tr> </table>	MERC	Incremental	MERC	Amount	Funding	Rate
QIG	Historic																					
Hourly	Per diem																					
Incremental	New Wage	2022																				
Funding	Scales	Wage Floor																				
MERC	Incremental	MERC																				
Amount	Funding	Rate																				

What constitutes a Director and Assistant Director varies from centre to centre. However, both roles are expected to have additional responsibilities. For sample descriptions refer to the [Child Care Human Resources Sector Council - HR Toolkit](#).

Eligible Hours

All actual hours worked by ECEs employed by a centre will be submitted to EECD for payment. Funding will be provided based on the Wage Scale Funding Rates outlined in [Appendix C](#).

The maximum allowable hours will be based on the required in-ratio staff for a program's full operating hours (e.g., 7 am-6 pm is 11 hours). Staff requirements will be based on the number and age of children enrolled.

Funding will be provided for actual hours worked and will only be provided if the full hourly wage according to the wage scale is paid to the employee.

Hours worked by staff who work in more than one centre or location are reported based on the actual hours worked in each centre/location. The total hours worked cannot be claimed twice. For example, a Director who works 15 hours a week in Centre A and 20 hours per week in Centre B would report accordingly on each QIG claim form, and not 35 hours for each location.

Eligible Hours for Directors and Assistant Directors

Based on the wage scale provided for Child Care Centre Directors and/or Assistant Directors, the following chart details the weekly hours eligible for funding. Of these hours, a portion may be claimed as out-of-ratio hours.

Facility Total License Capacity	Eligible Total Hours (weekly)	Eligible Out-of-Ratio Hours (weekly)
24 children & under	- Up to 100% of operating hours per week - Hours can be shared between a director and/or an assistant director	Up to 50% of operating hours to a maximum of 20 hours per week.
25 children & above	- Up to 100% of operating hours per week for a director - Up to 100% of operating hours per week for an assistant director - Total hours combined cannot exceed 80 hours per week	Up to 100% of operating hours to a maximum of 40 hours per week

The hours for the Director or Assistant Director will be funded at the wage scale funding rates noted in [Appendix C 'Funding Rates'](#), and employees in these roles will earn wages at the wage scales noted in [Appendix A 'Wage Scales'](#). If there are any excess, in-ratio hours worked beyond this, they may be claimed and will be funded at the ECE wage scale funding rates based on in-ratio required hours. For example:

Example:

- A centre that operates 10 hours per day and is licensed for 50 children can have a combined total of 80 hours funded for Director/Assistant Director hours each week. Up to 40 of these hours can be claimed as out-of-ratio.
- A centre that operates 3.5 hours per day and is licensed for 24 children can have a combined total of 17.5 hours funded for Director/Assistant Director hours each week. Up to 8.75 (17.5 hrs x 50%) of these hours can be claimed as out-of-ratio.

Funding for hours worked for any one person will not exceed the greater of a centre's operating hours or 30 hours per week for work performed in one or more centres. Where any one person works in more than one centre, operating hours will be based on the centre that has the highest operating hours.

Eligible Hours for ECEs and Inclusion Coordinators funded under the Inclusion Support Grant (ISG)

Any hours worked by ECEs funded through ISG will not be reported on the QIG claim form. However, any in-ratio, non-ISG hours worked by these staff members, not funded under ISG, may be claimed under QIG.

Entry Level and Untrained Staff

While we recognize it takes many staff roles to operate a child care centre successfully, entry-level and untrained roles have not been included in wage scales at this time.

Entry-level and untrained staff will continue to be funded for in-ratio hours based on funding rates noted in [Appendix C](#). Funding rates have been increased to reflect publicly announced increases to the provincial minimum wage.

Funding rates have no relation to any wage scale and it is at the employer's discretion what wage to provide for these employees.

Employees with Red-Circled Rates of Pay

An employee who has their hourly rate of pay red-circled may be included in the QIG claim form however, government funding will only be available up to the maximum amount on the published scale, i.e., step 5 associated with their classification level. Government funding will be provided based on employees' level and step on the wage scale.

For economic adjustments, the percentage increase cannot exceed the percentage applied to wage scales. If an employer chooses to provide the economic increase based on the employees red circled rate of pay, they may, however, additional funding required beyond established funding rates must be funded by the employer.

Economic increases funded by government must be directly applied to the employee's red circled rate of pay. Therefore, if the associated wage scale level and step increase is \$0.10 per hour, that full \$0.10 must be added to the red circled employee's hourly rate.



Example:

An employee is an ECE, Level 3 – Step 5. At the time the wage scale was introduced, the employee's rate of pay was \$34.25. Since this is higher than the current ECE Level 3 Step 5 wage scale rate of \$32.196, the employee's pay rate is considered red-circled.

When a 2% economic adjustment was announced the ECE wage scale, Level 3 – Step 5, increased from \$31.56 to \$32.19, a difference of \$0.63. The employer must provide the \$0.63 increase to the employee with the red-circled rate, increasing their pay from \$34.25 to \$34.94.

At the employer's discretion, they may provide this employee an economic increase of up to 2% of their red-circled rate. This would mean an increase of \$0.69 ($\$34.25 \times 2\%$), increasing their hourly rate to \$34.94. The employer will receive \$0.63 plus MERCs from the Department. The remaining increase, \$0.05, must be funded by the employer.

Absences

Funding for paid leave, apart from Holidays as noted below, is included in the 15% MERC and is paid to the employer when actual hours worked are reported. When employers pay staff for leave, these hours are therefore NOT reported on the QIG form.

Any substitute employees that work to provide in-ratio coverage while staff are on leave are eligible for funding under QIG.

Holidays

The [Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code](#) outlines requirements for paid holidays for six days of the year (New Year's Day, Heritage Day, Good Friday, Canada Day, Labour Day and Christmas Day), plus Remembrance Day as outlined in the following link: [Holiday Pay | novascotia.ca](#). Per the website:

To qualify for these holidays, an employee must:

1. be entitled to receive pay for at least 15 of the 30 calendar days before the holiday, and
2. have worked on their last scheduled shift or day before the holiday and on the first scheduled shift or day after the holiday

Any staff entitled to receive pay during a holiday noted under the Labour Standards Code and paid by their employer, can be claimed on the QIG claim form for hours paid by the employer. In addition:

- Employers who collect fees and pay staff (and do not require staff to use vacation days) for any other holidays, e.g., Easter Monday, Natal Day, are also eligible for funding for these days.
- Employers who close for a holiday, or any other days during the year, and do not pay their staff are not eligible for funding.

Overtime

Overtime pay is required by the [Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code](#) after any employee works more than 48 hours per week. Additional wages for overtime are not eligible for QIG funding and must be provided by the employer. If this becomes an issue for any centre, we encourage you to [reach out](#) to discuss your individual situation further.

Fee Reductions

Funding to offset fee reductions is provided through the QIG grant. Funding for the reduction is provided dollar for dollar based on enrolled children and program fees paid. The Fee Reduction Schedule of Rates is below:

Fee Reduction Rates (effective December 31, 2022)	
Infant (0-18 months)	\$23.00
Toddler (18-35 months)	\$18.25
Preschooler: Part Day (36 months and older)	\$4.50
Preschooler: Full Day (36 months and older)	\$18.25
School Age: Full Day	\$10.00
School Age: Before School & After School	\$6.00
School Age: After School Only	\$4.50
School Age Before School Only	\$3.00

Fee Reductions: Mixed Age Groups

For mixed age groups, centres are required to have staffing in place for the lowest age in attendance. Therefore, fees charged are usually at that rate. Fee reductions in this case can be provided at the rate charged to families.

QIG Claim Process

The QIG claim process to receive funding for ECE wage compensation and fee reductions is completed using a single online form.

Reporting Periods

The QIG claim form information is collected bi-weekly based on fixed reporting periods. Refer to [Appendix D](#) for 2026/27 reporting periods.

Reporting periods are fixed, however, if an operator wants to submit two reporting periods once per month to adapt to a monthly payroll process, this is at the operator's discretion.

QIG Claim Form Submission and Payment Process

The QIG claim form allows operators to easily submit information related to wage compensation and fee reductions. Operator information is saved in the online form and can be edited for future reporting periods. For new operators, a link to the online form will be provided upon signing of a QIG funding agreement.

Information collected as part of the form includes the following:

Space Information

- Licensed Capacity per age group (e.g., infant, toddler)
- Average daily enrollment
- Program Vacancy
- Wait List
- Operating Hours

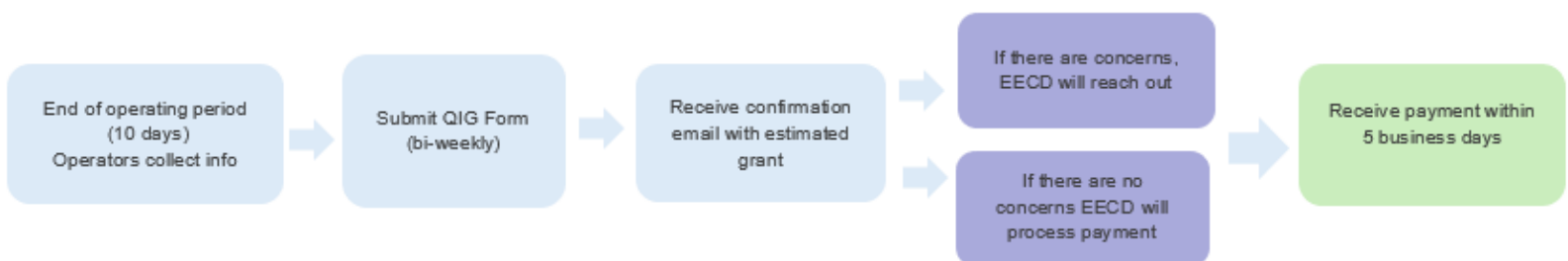
Fee Reduction

- Daily Fee
- Total days enrolled per age group (infant, preschooler etc.)

Wage Compensation Funding

- Position type & Level – Director, Assistant Director, ECE
- Advanced Practitioner Program (APP)
- ECE classification Number
- Step on Wage Scale (1-5)
- Number of hours worked (bi-weekly)

The process for form submission and payment is as follows:



Support, Resources, and Feedback

If after reviewing this guide you have questions or require additional support contact the Department through the channels below.

Website	
	www.childcarenovascotia.ca/ECECompensation The website contains up to date information, including information on classification, regulations, sector memos and frequently asked questions.
Funding Support Team	
	A centralized email has been set up to answer questions related to grant funding. ECDSGrants@NovaScotia.ca

Advanced Practitioner Program – A rigorous post-diploma certificate program that allows qualified ECEs to advance their knowledge and competence in a specialized area of practice, such as infants and toddlers, young children, outdoor play, or pedagogical leadership.

Canada-Nova Scotia Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement – The Federal-provincial agreement which includes Federal and provincial investment from 2026 to 2031. To find out more visit <https://childcarenovascotia.ca>

Classification – Refers to the accreditation of a Level 1, 2, 3, and school age approval Early Childhood Educator including that of infant, toddler, preschool, and school aged children. A [Guide to Classification and Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators](#) or, contact classification Services at Classification@novascotia.ca or 902.424.3431

Early Learning and Child Care Act and Regulations - The approved government administrative directives that provide final authority on all matters relating to child care in Nova Scotia. The full Act and Regulations can be found on the NS Early Learning and Child Care website. [Link to Act](#) & [Link to Regulations](#)

Early Childhood Educators (ECE) – Early Childhood Educators are trained professionals who create safe and interactive learning environments where children develop social skills, build self-esteem, and become lifelong learners – making it one of the most important and rewarding careers in education.

Entry-Level and Untrained Staff - These are the staff that work with children and support the operations of a child care Centre, but have not received ECE Level 1, 2, 3, or school age classification.

Employer – Refers to Centre Operators or the corporate entity/society.

Employee – Refers to those who work in provincially funded child care settings.

Inclusion Support Grant (ISG)– Provides financial support to Licenses who commit to the provision of high quality inclusive programs and assume full responsibility in promoting the social, emotional, physical, cultural, linguistic, and cognitive development of young children, which leads to positive lifelong benefits for children, families and communities

Licensee – Means [the person or agency in whose name a license has been issued] OR [individual, partnership, group, company, or Board of Directors in whose name a license to operate a Child Care Centre under the Early Learning and Child Care Act has been issued].

Mandatory Employment Related Costs (MERCs) – Refers to payments an employer is required by law to make in respect of its employees. This includes Employment Insurance (EI), Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Workers Compensation Premiums (WCP), Vacation pay etc.

Quality Investment Grant (QIG) – Means funding to Licensees to supplement fee reductions, wages, and mandatory employment-related costs to ensure families receive the benefits of reduced fees, and employees are paid at the prescribed wage scales.

QIG Claim Form- Online form to report employee information related to wage compensation and fee reductions. Form to be submitted bi-weekly for fixed operating periods.

Ratio Staff – The number of child care staff required to meet the staff-to-children ratios that are set out in Section 34 of the Regulations.

Red-Circled Employees/Employees paid above scale: Refers to an employee who is paid above scale due to their hourly wage being higher than the corresponding step on the wage scale as of October 10, 2022. This rate is employee and centre specific.

Wage Scale – A wage scale is a standardized pay approach that determines how much an employee will be paid based on their level of education and experience. There are three wage scales: ECE, Assistant Director/Inclusion Coordinator, and Director.

Years of Employment – The cumulative number of years an employee has been working as a trained ECE (or equivalent role) in any provincial, national or international setting (i.e. centre, family home, etc.).

Appendix A: Wage Scales Effective April 1, 2026

The wage scales for all trained ECEs, Directors, Assistant Directors and Inclusion Coordinators (Effective April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027) working in provincially funded licensed child care centres in Nova Scotia are as follows:

Province of Nova Scotia Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Wage Scale Effective April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027					
NS Classification*	Step 1 <1 year (Minimum)	Step 2 1-2 years	Step 3 2-3 years	Step 4 3-4 years	Step 5 4-5 yrs+ (Maximum)
Level 1	\$ 25.61	\$ 26.39	\$ 27.18	\$ 28.00	\$ 28.83
Level 2 / School Age Approval	\$ 27.61	\$ 28.44	\$ 29.29	\$ 30.17	\$ 31.07
Level 3	\$ 28.60	\$ 29.47	\$ 30.35	\$ 31.25	\$ 32.19

*Level, 1, 2, 3, school age approval, according to the [Early Learning and Child Care Act and Regulations](#)

Province of Nova Scotia Director Wage Scale Effective April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027					
NS Classification*	Step 1 <1 year (Minimum)	Step 2 1-2 years	Step 3 2-3 years	Step 4 3-4 years	Step 5 4-5 yrs+ (Maximum)
Level 1**	\$ 30.73	\$ 31.64	\$ 32.61	\$ 33.58	\$ 34.60
Level 2 / School Age Approval	\$ 33.12	\$ 34.11	\$ 35.14	\$ 36.19	\$ 37.28
Level 3	\$ 34.32	\$ 35.34	\$ 36.40	\$ 37.51	\$ 38.62
333Rates of pay are 20% higher than the corresponding ECE wage scale to recognize the additional responsibilities and role they perform in the centre.					

*Level, 1, 2, 3, or school age approval according to the [Early Learning and Child Care Act and Regulations](#)

**A facility director who began working as a facility director before May 1, 2012, must have at least a level 1 classification.

Province of Nova Scotia Assistant Director/Inclusion Coordinator Wage Scale Effective April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027					
NS Classification*	Step 1 <1 year (Minimum)	Step 2 1-2 years	Step 3 2-3 years	Step 4 3-4 years	Step 5 4-5 yrs+ (Maximum)
Level 1	\$ 28.18	\$ 29.02	\$ 29.90	\$ 30.79	\$ 31.70
Level 2 / School Age Approval	\$ 30.36	\$ 31.26	\$ 32.20	\$ 33.17	\$ 34.16
Level 3	\$ 31.44	\$ 32.40	\$ 33.36	\$ 34.37	\$ 35.40
Rates of pay are 10% higher than the corresponding ECE wage scale to recognize the additional responsibilities and role they perform in the centre					

*Level, 1, 2, 3, School Age Approval according to the [Early Learning and Child Care Act and Regulations](#)

Please note: Advanced Practitioner Program Premium of \$1.50 may be added to compensation for eligible ECEs.

Appendix B: Wage Scale Examples

An ECE has 1.5 years of experience as a Level 2 ECE, and they were initially placed on Level 2 - Step 2.

However, they have just completed additional education, becoming a Level 3 ECE. Due to this change, they will move to Level 3 - Step 2.

Example of Movement Level 2-Step2 to Level 3-Step 2

Level (NS Classification)	Step 1 <1 year (Minimum)	Step 2 1-2 years	Step 3 2-3 years	Step 4 3-4 years	Step 5 4-5 yrs+ (Maximum)
Level 1	25.61	26.39	27.18	28.00	28.83
Level 2/ School Age Approval	27.61	28.44	29.29	30.17	31.07
Level 3	28.60	29.47	30.35	31.25	32.19

An ECE has 2 years and one month of experience as a Level 1, and 10 months of experience as a Level 2. Initially, they will be placed on Level 2 – Step 3. (Total of 2 years and 11 months).

One month later they reach 1 full year of experience as a Level 2, they will move to Level 2 - Step 4.

Example of Level 2-Step 3 to Level 2-Step 4

Level (NS Classification)	Step 1 <1 year (Minimum)	Step 2 1-2 years	Step 3 2-3 years	Step 4 3-4 years	Step 5 4-5 yrs+ (Maximum)
Level 1	25.61	26.39	27.18	28.00	28.83
Level 2/ School Age Approval	27.61	28.44	29.29	30.17	31.07
Level 3	28.60	29.47	30.35	31.25	32.19

A Level 1 who has been working as a classified ECE for 8 years is initially put on Level 1 – Step 5.

The employee furthers their education and earns their Level 2. This moves them to Level 2 - Step 5.

Example of Level 1 — Step 5 to Level 2 – Step 5

Level (NS Classification)	Step 1 <1 year (Minimum)	Step 2 1-2 years	Step 3 2-3 years	Step 4 3-4 years	Step 5 4-5 yrs+ (Maximum)
Level 1	25.61	26.39	27.18	28.00	28.83
Level 2/ School Age Approval	27.61	28.44	29.29	30.17	31.07
Level 3	28.60	29.47	30.35	31.25	32.19

Appendix C: Funding Rates Effective April 1, 2026

Below are the funding rates effective April 1, 2026:

Province of Nova Scotia Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Wage Scale -Hourly Funding Rates Effective April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027					
NS Classification*	Step 1 <1 year (Minimum)	Step 2 1-2 years	Step 3 2-3 years	Step 4 3-4 years	Step 5 4-5 yrs+ (Maximum)
Level 1	\$ 16.70	\$ 17.60	\$ 18.51	\$ 19.45	\$ 20.40
Level 2/School Age Approval	\$ 17.70	\$ 18.65	\$ 19.64	\$ 20.65	\$ 21.68
Level 3	\$ 17.04	\$ 18.04	\$ 19.05	\$ 20.09	\$ 21.17

*Level, 1, 2, 3 , School Age Approval according to the [Early Learning and Child Care Act and Regulations](#)

Province of Nova Scotia Director Wage Scale Hourly Funding Rates Effective April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027					
NS Classification*	Step 1 <1 year (Minimum)	Step 2 1-2 years	Step 3 2-3 years	Step 4 3-4 years	Step 5 4-5 yrs+ (Maximum)
In and Out of Ratio Hours Worked					
Level 1**	\$ 19.14	\$ 20.19	\$ 21.30	\$ 22.42	\$ 23.59
Level 2 / School Age Approval	\$ 20.13	\$ 21.27	\$ 22.45	\$ 23.66	\$ 24.91
Level 3	\$ 19.25	\$ 20.42	\$ 21.64	\$ 22.91	\$ 24.19

*Level, 1, 2, 3, School Age Approval according to the [Early Learning and Child Care Act and Regulations](#)

**A facility director who began working as a facility director before May 1, 2012, must have at least a level 1 classification.

Province of Nova Scotia Assistant Director/Inclusion Coordinator**Wage Scale - Hourly Funding Rates Effective April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027					
NS Classification*	Step 1 <1 year (Minimum)	Step 2 1-2 years	Step 3 2-3 years	Step 4 3-4 years	Step 5 4-5 yrs+ (Maximum)
In and Out of Ratio Hours Worked					
Level 1	\$ 17.93	\$ 18.90	\$ 19.91	\$ 20.94	\$ 21.98
Level 2 /School Age Approval	\$ 18.90	\$ 19.95	\$ 21.03	\$ 22.14	\$ 23.28
Level 3	\$ 18.12	\$ 19.22	\$ 20.33	\$ 21.50	\$ 22.68

*Level, 1, 2, 3, School Age Approval according to the [Early Learning and Child Care Act and Regulations](#)

**Inclusion Coordinators are not eligible for out of ratio hours under QIG

Province of Nova Scotia Entry-Level and Untrained Effective April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027		
Position Type	Hourly Funding Rate (April 1, 2026)	Hourly Funding Rate (Oct 1, 2026)
Entry-Level	\$5.64	5.70
Untrained	\$5.37	5.42

Province of Nova Scotia Advanced Practitioner Program Wage Premium Funding Rates* Effective April 1, 2026 - March 31, 2027	
Position Type	Hourly Premium Funding Rate
Level 2	\$1.73
Level 3	\$1.73

* The Advanced Practitioner Program Premium is \$1.50 a day. The funding rates above includes 15% MERC

Appendix D: Reporting Periods

Reporting Period	Start Date	End Date
1	April 1, 2026	April 10, 2026
2	April 13, 2026	April 24, 2026
3	April 27, 2026	May 08, 2026
4	May 11, 2026	May 22, 2026
5	May 25, 2026	June 5, 2026
6	June 8, 2026	June 19, 2026
7	June 22, 2026	July 3, 2026
8	July 6, 2026	July 17, 2026
9	July 20, 2026	July 31, 2026
10	August 3, 2026	August 14, 2026
11	August 17, 2026	August 28, 2026
12	August 31, 2026	September 11, 2026
13	September 14, 2026	September 25, 2026
14	September 28, 2026	October 9, 2026
15	October 12, 2026	October 23, 2026
16	October 26, 2026	November 6, 2026
17	November 9, 2026	November 20, 2026
18	November 23, 2026	December 4, 2026
19	December 7, 2026	December 18, 2026
20	December 21, 2026	January 1, 2027
21	January 4, 2027	January 15, 2027
22	January 18, 2027	January 29, 2027
23	February 1, 2027	February 12, 2027
24	February 15, 2027	February 26, 2027
25	March 1, 2027	March 12, 2027
26	March 15, 2027	March 26, 2027
27	March 29, 2027	March 31, 2027