

Migrant Rights and Early Childhood Education

Who Migrant ECEs Are

Migrant early childhood educators are a core part of Ontario's early years system. Immigrants and non-permanent residents made up over a third of those employed in child care in 2021, according to Dr. Pottie-Sherman. International student enrollment in post-secondary ECE programs rose more than 15 percent from 2021/22 to 2023/24. A significant proportion of ECEs today are migrants on work permits. These educators bring real skills and knowledge to the communities they work in. They care for children. They support families. They hold up a system that could not run without them.

The Problem: Expiring Permits, No Path to Status, & Low Wages

Ontario once prioritized ECEs through the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program. Immigration policy has since changed. The federal government has capped temporary resident work permits - meaning thousands of educators face looming work permit expiry dates. Many have already been pushed out of their roles, away from their colleagues, and out of their homes.

Previous pathways to permanent residency are now also closed. Without permanent status, and facing expiring permits, migrant educators and child care workers face additional power imbalances which make speaking up and advocating for themselves difficult. In addition, newcomer early years professionals face post-migration challenges, language barriers, racism, discrimination, and exploitation.

When one section of the care workforce is facing these vulnerabilities caused by temporary immigration status, it worsens the issues of low wages and working conditions, retention and lack of supports for all workers in the sector. The solution, then, is to raise the floor for everyone.

The Solution: Renew Work Permits & Status for All

A strong collective voice changes what is possible. Led by migrant early years professionals and rooted in care, we come together to advocate for immigration policy that respects and recognizes the role newcomer early years professionals play. We advocate for permanent resident status for all.

Both the AECEO and MWAC hear from early years professionals and their colleagues about the barriers to securing permanent status. We are organizing to create a community of support, collectively take action to end the injustice, and ensure fairness for all.

About the Organizations

The Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO) has been the professional association for Early Childhood Educators since 1950. Our mission is to build and support a strong collective voice for ECEs to participate in and influence positive change that benefits ECEs, children, families, and communities.



The Migrant Workers' Alliance for Change (MWAC) is building a member-led organization of migrant workers, students, refugees, and families to win worker and immigration justice. We advocate for permanent resident status for all. The Alliance is a member of and serves as the secretariat for the Migrant Rights Network and Migrant Rights Network – Ontario.

Want to Learn More? Want to Get Involved?

- **Get connected with the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change**
 - [Website](#)
 - [Instagram](#)
- **Listen to Circle Time with the AECEO episode 22** with special guest Sarom Rho from the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change.



[Listen on Spotify](#)



[Listen on YouTube](#)

- **Join us on September 17, 2026 at Together, Not Alone: Migrant Justice in ECE**

The AECEO is currently working with MWAC to bring information and resources to members of our community who are navigating the immigration system. Join us on Sept 17th for an info session where we will discuss the impacts of temporary work status in ECE and how this affects everyone in the sector, centering the challenges faced by early years professionals who have precarious status.

Register today!

AECEO Membership makes projects like this resource document possible. Join or renew your membership today to support the AECEO.
aeceo.ca/our-community/#become-a-member

