

## ETFO celebrates Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day

**For Immediate Release – October 21, 2021**

TORONTO, ON – Today, on Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) joins Ontarians in recognizing and celebrating child care workers and designated early childhood educators (DECEs) for their exceptional contributions to the development, success and well-being of children.

“Since welcoming DECEs into classrooms as part of the educator team in Full-Day Kindergarten classrooms in 2010, we have seen how their expertise and care strongly benefits the learning and growth of early learners,” says ETFO President Karen Brown. “DECEs play a critical role in supporting the well-being and holistic development of children. They are valued partners who work alongside teachers to ensure every early learner gets a great start—a start that is engaging and inclusive.”

Today, ETFO represents DECEs in 11 school boards in Ontario. Adds Brown, “FDK has been shown to provide lasting benefits for children’s reading, writing, numeracy, self-regulation and social skill development. This is, in large part, due to the play-based learning expertise and leadership of DECEs. ETFO remains a champion and advocate of the FDK program, which is universally accessible and provides an equitable start to school for every learner in the province. We strongly believe that FDK is an investment in human potential that the provincial government should continue to support.”

In February 2021, ETFO released a report, researched and written by Dr. Gordon Cleveland. The report, *Ontario’s Kindergarten Program: A Success Story – How We All Benefit from Quality Public Full-Day Kindergarten*, can be found [here](#).

ETFO represents 83,000 elementary public school teachers, occasional teachers and education professionals across the province. Its Building Better Schools education agenda can be viewed at [BuildingBetterSchools.ca](https://BuildingBetterSchools.ca).