

EXPLOITING INTERNATIONAL ECES NO SOLUTION TO LABOUR SHORTAGES



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For the past 50 years, the [Temporary Foreign Workers \(TFW\) program](#) has supplied Canadian employers with low-cost migrant labour.

Temporary work permits are well known in the agriculture, home and health care sectors. Child care has more recently joined the list, with governments in [Quebec](#) and [Nova Scotia](#) actively recruiting early child educators (ECEs) from overseas, along with a massive surge in requests from employers to hire foreign-trained staff.

Worker advocates charge the sudden expansion will take pressure off governments and child care providers to address low wages. For the first time ever the early childhood workforce has some bargaining power thanks to federal investment and agreements with the provinces and territories to lower parent fees and expand access. ECEs are in high demand, but rather than negotiating with provinces to increase earnings to attract and retain educators, Ottawa has loosened the rules which curbed TFW abuses and expanded the number of migrant workers that employers can hire.

Large child care operators aren't the only beneficiaries of the cheap labour pipeline. Private colleges are tapped into the [international student stream](#) growing their early childhood education training programs and filling them with foreign students and promises of Canadian residency and rosy job prospects. But only graduates of publicly funded colleges can apply for residency.

[Deceived foreign students say immigration consultants](#) deliberately misled them, while private schools recklessly over-sold. Many used all their [family's savings to attend](#).

The exploitation of foreign students isn't restricted to private colleges. According to the global education organization [ICEF Monitor](#), half of the 800,000 international students in Canadian schools used recruiters. Universities and colleges offer a kick-back per student at 10 per cent or more of first-year tuition. Ontario's public colleges have agreed to [curb unscrupulous recruitment practices](#), while [Nova Scotia's Minister of Advanced Education](#) accused desperate students of failing to do their homework before arriving.

The mistreatment of international students and educators isn't an argument against inviting them to study and work in Canada. The learning experiences of young children are greatly enriched by their presence.

In dispute is an immigration system that snatches skilled workers from poor countries, forces applicants into using recruiters, treats temporary workers like chattels to be used and disposed of and fuels racism by creating a second-tier workforce to flatline wages.

Foreign born educators shouldn't be left in immigration limbo and Canadian workers shouldn't live in income purgatory. The sooner policy makers are made to realize we have a wage problem, not a labour problem, the better we all will be.