



Activating the recommendations related to teachers in early childhood education

“Just as teachers support us all, we must support teachers.”

Antonio Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General

The High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession was convened by the United Nations Secretary General in response to the global teacher shortage. The Panel brought together academics, ministers, former presidents, and teachers and students and their unions. Tasked with providing policy advice for governments to ensure that every child's right to a professionally-trained, qualified, and well-supported teacher is fulfilled, the Panel identified [59 recommendations](#).

The recommendations cover a broad range of topics, including: pay, conditions and job security; professional practice; gender, equity and diversity; social dialogue and collective bargaining; technology and the future of work in education; and education financing.

These broad and progressive recommendations are a unique opportunity to effect real change for millions of teachers and students around the world.

What are the Panel's recommendations on early childhood education teachers?

The Panel specifies that all 59 recommendations apply, as relevant, to all education levels and streams. However, there are some recommendations that early childhood education (ECE) unions will find particularly useful when advocating for ECE personnel.

Recommendation 7 → Increase investment in early childhood education

The chronic underfunding of the ECE sector is particularly pronounced in low and middle-income countries (UNICEF, 2019). However, inadequate public financing of ECE is widespread globally. As a result, the sector is highly privatised and inequitable. The Panel calls for international benchmarks on education financing to be met by every country, funded by tax mobilisation and protected from austerity.

- 7. Quality education is not possible without adequate financing. Funding for public education should be guaranteed at a level of at least 6 per cent of gross domestic product and 20 per cent of total government expenditure, as set out in the Education 2030 Framework for Action, and should allow for increasing investment per capita in education. Such spending should be transparent and shielded from austerity measures, including in policies promoted by international financial institutions. Tax revenue should allow for sustainable education financing.*



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Recommendation 36 → Fair pay for ECE personnel

The Panel calls for commensurate fairness between the salaries of teachers at different levels of education and for gender pay equity. The early childhood sector is dominated by women. The high level of feminization and gender inequality in the ECE workforce has been linked to its lower status, lower salaries, and poorer working conditions (UNICEF, 2022) compared to teachers at primary and secondary levels. The Panel's recommendations in this area can be an important advocacy tool for education unions fighting for better salaries for early childhood educators.

- 36. Teachers should receive salaries and benefits at the same level as compared to other professions with similar educational requirements. Gender pay equity should be ensured, and there should be commensurate fairness between salaries at different levels of education, including early childhood education and TVET.*

Recommendation 37 → Decent working conditions

The Panel also underscores the need for decent working conditions for all teachers, including an end to precarious employment, manageable workloads and work-life balance, and conditions that foster teacher well-being. Findings from [El research](#) revealed that ECE personnel have been among the education workers whose employment conditions were most affected by the pandemic and today, underfunding and teacher shortages significantly impact personnel in the sector. The issues covered in recommendation 37 echo many of the long-held demands of education unions in the early childhood sector.

- 37. Working conditions should also provide for stable contractual forms; a safe and healthy workplace; manageable teacher-to-student ratios; support structures for managing problematic student behaviour; balanced workloads; safe, affordable and adequate housing; relevant, quality and accessible training and professional development opportunities; equitable access to technology and other resources; adequate social protection and pensions; and working-time arrangements (including duties beyond classroom teaching such as lesson preparation, marking and out-of-class student and parent engagements) that allow for adequate rest and work-life balance.*

Recommendation 4 → Comprehensive teacher policies to attract and retain teachers

The Panel underlines the need for every government to develop policies on the teaching profession in collaboration with teacher unions. These policies should be comprehensive and holistic, with the aim of attracting and retaining a diversity of teachers in the profession at all levels. Improving the attractiveness of the ECE profession is imperative. Improving the salaries and working conditions of ECE personnel is crucial to attract male (and more female) personnel into the profession.



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4. *All governments should adopt, implement and regularly revise, as needed, comprehensive and holistic national teacher policies, aligned with national priorities and the overall education strategy and plan, through social dialogue with representative teachers' organizations and in consultation with other stakeholders. National teacher policies should cover attraction to the profession and recruitment; initial training; deployment; career pathways; in-service training and professional support; employment; and working conditions, including retention, reward, recognition and remuneration commensurate with qualifications. National policies should also address teaching standards; governance; management; well-being; assessment of teachers and monitoring of quality; and strategies for inclusion and diversity, including policies aimed at gender equality, such as attracting male teachers at the early childhood and primary levels, ensuring career development and upward mobility for female teachers, and attracting women into science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. Such policies should be based on an analysis of current research and disaggregated data on teachers.*

Recommendation 21 → Quality training

The Panel calls for teachers at all levels to be highly qualified, with a first-level higher-education degree specified as a minimum standard. ECE personnel are too often un/under-qualified, due to the lack of attractiveness of the profession and insufficient investment in the sector. Governments should provide quality training for ECE personnel. Training provided by private institutions must be publicly regulated and quality controlled.

21. *Teachers at all levels should at minimum have a first-level higher-education degree, and ideally a master's degree or equivalent. Higher-education institutions should be coordinated, regulated and monitored to ensure coherence, comparability and quality in teacher education. Private providers of teacher education should be appropriately regulated to ensure quality.*



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Education International is committed to working with member organisations that represent early childhood educators to make sure that these recommendations become a reality.

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