

“Unappreciated and underpaid”

Early Childhood Educators in Nova Scotia

Christine Saulnier and Lesley Frank





CCPA

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Executive Summary

THIS REPORT PROVIDES a snapshot of what it is like for Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) to work in the Early Learning and Child Care sector in Nova Scotia. Understanding which factors contribute to employers' ability to recruit and retain highly-educated ECEs is critical to the provision of care that families depend on across our province. This is especially critical when we face a shortage of ECEs.¹ Indeed, 82% of the employers who answered our survey indicated that they had trouble recruiting and retaining qualified staff in the past year. It is thus imperative to carefully consider what ECEs shared about the reasons they resign from current positions and the factors that ECEs believe would improve their work experience and make working in the sector more satisfying. In their words, ECEs are feeling “unappreciated and underpaid.” Inadequate supports to implement changes in the system and a lack of replacement workers making it hard to take time off, means that they are burning out. ECEs' working conditions are really our youngest children's learning and care conditions and can either hinder or enable the development of a high quality, sustainable early learning and child care system.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

The provincial government, along with support from the federal government, needs to ensure there is sufficient funding for:

- an ECE *workforce development strategy* with adequate resources for professional development, fair wages and benefits and;
- *additional training spaces and bursaries to offer affordable, if not free, educational opportunities* in our public post-secondary programs.

Ultimately, the success of a workforce strategy depends on building an actual *system* of early learning and child care, driven by quality and safety. A strategy to retain current ECEs and recruit others within the patchwork of programs will undoubtedly fall short. The destabilizing impact of the rollout of pre-primary is evidence of the need to improve implementation in a system-wide fashion to ensure no further changes in one program has negative consequences on another part of the system. A seamless, provincial child care system would address “the triple market failure of high fees, low wages, and lack of regulated, centre-based spaces”.² As Findlay and Saulnier have outlined, such a system needs to be built on evidence-based principles, including that of universality, where all children have equal access to quality play-based learning and care opportunities.

- **ECEs are considerably discontented about wages and benefits in the workforce.** Despite the implementation of wage benchmarks and the funding commitments by the provincial government to improve wages, only a small percentage (22%) of ECEs thought that their pay was fair considering their background and skills. Moreover, a significant portion (67%) felt that their salary does not adequately reflect the work that they do. This predominantly female profession suffers from societal expectations that all women face when they do this kind of work—it is assumed to take very little skill and that women do it because they love it and thus, they do not deserve to be fairly compensated. The outdated 2012 benchmark (\$16.55) the government used is inadequate.

Recommendation: ECEs in Nova Scotia deserve a fair benchmark; we recommend either \$18.10, the national median hourly wage for 2016 (the last available data), or \$19.52 which would bring their wages to 60% of median hourly wages of Nova Scotia teachers. As it stands, the most recent data (2016) shows that ECEs in Nova Scotia still earn the lowest wages in the country (\$16.05).

- **ECEs report lack of public understanding and respect for their profession.** Far from glorified babysitters, as is the misconception,

the Nova Scotia ECE workforce is highly educated with 75% of ECEs in our sample with specialized early learning training and a post-secondary education credential, as required to be licensed. ECEs are not ‘day care’ workers, they are educators who provide quality child care and early learning opportunities to our youngest community members when they need it the most.

Recommendation: A campaign aimed at dispelling myths and misconceptions about ECEs should be developed, along with funding support for the profession, including exploring setting up a regulatory college. The government should also ensure that it continues to strengthen what education and training is required as part of licensing and regulation.

- **There are disparities and differences based on regional location and between centre types (size and auspice) that factor in ECE’s decision to accept or leave a job in the sector.** The research indicates some trend toward higher wages in more urbanized centres in Central Nova Scotia. This can be partially attributed to more higher-level classified staff in the Central region, but not entirely. ECEs from non-profits centres reported experiencing higher levels of supportive personnel practices and other benefits compared to for-profit, with very few exceptions reported. Unionization is an advantage for ECEs. While there was not a wage premium for unionized ECEs (the wage grid being the key determinant of wages), the total compensation package, as well as personnel practices were enhanced for ECEs working in unionized centres and especially pre-primary sites.
- **In the absence of a system’s approach, pre-primary is destabilizing the sector because the government has made part of the sector more attractive to workers, causing problems throughout the sector.** School based pre-primary workers ranked highest for access to paid sick days and health benefits and most strikingly, access to pension (67% of those in pre-primary report having access compared to 12% in for-profit and 16% in the non-profit sector). ECEs and directors identified pre-primary rollout as a pressing problem facing their centres.

Recommendation: Building a quality child care *system* aimed at child health and well-being, universal access, inclusion and quality learning goals requires sufficient funding across the system.

- **There is a need for more data on this sector.** The last available data from a comprehensive survey of centre-based early learning and child care in Canada was released in 2012, by the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, which is now disbanded. While our survey was based largely on that previous survey, the data collected is only a snapshot and not as comprehensive.

Recommendation: The government should fund the regular collection of data about the ECE workforce that includes a comprehensive workforce survey.

Research method: a survey

The primary data in this report comes from the answers to an online survey delivered to ECEs and employers in Nova Scotia from June 4th to July 30th, 2018. The questionnaire was used to develop a profile of issues related to recruitment and retention of child care educators in Nova Scotia. The key questions focused on: pay and benefits in the sector, education and training, job satisfaction, employment patterns, personnel practices and other factors that impact ECE's willingness to stay in their current position or in the sector at all. The questions in the survey were developed based on the survey previously administered in the National YOU BET WE STILL CARE! Report (YBWC) conducted by the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC). Our questionnaire focused on ECE staff, with a short survey for directors/employers.³ In addition, while this survey was largely based on the YBWC survey, which was last administered in 2012, the answers are not necessarily comparable because they include different samples and methodologies. See Appendix 1 for more detail on the survey including the recruitment process, sample size and the survey's limitations. See Appendix 2 for details on the survey respondents.

What is an Early Childhood Educator?

It is important to consider what we mean by an Early Childhood Educator (ECE), especially since there seems to be a public perception, that arguably infiltrates government as well, that they are glorified babysitters.⁴ The Nova Scotia Community College describes ECEs as those who “plan education programs that help to nurture the physical, psychological and social well-being

A day in the life of an Early Childhood Educator¹¹

Our day begins early, preparing the room for the arrival of the children. The parents and each child are welcomed. The relationships established between the parents and Early Childhood Educators allow for a smooth transition and create the foundation for future learning. There is an open-door policy and ongoing communication with the parents. Educators are continually monitoring and complete formal evaluations twice a year. These evaluations assess each child's social, emotional, cognitive, language, gross and fine motor development. An Early Childhood Educator plans, implements, facilitates and reflects on activities throughout the day. The children enter into a flexible environment that promotes learning through play. In the morning and afternoon an open snack is available over an extended period of time, to provide nutrition and allow for flexibility. The children have the choice to continue their play or have something to eat. Small group activities allow specific interests to be investigated or the children can go outside for some active exploration. A circle gathering or sharing time provides the children with the opportunity to share their thoughts and make new discoveries with their peers. Lunch is provided, family style where educators and children wash their hands and sit together to enjoy the meal. It is a wonderful opportunity for social interaction. Each day the children have a nap or quiet time. Looking at a book or completing an independent activity can provide the opportunity for the child to have a rest. In the afternoon areas of interest, inside or outside, allow for experiential learning. Early Childhood Educators provide quality care in a safe and nurturing environment.

of children and their families.”⁵ Upon completion of the NSCC's program, educators are ready to apply their knowledge and skills to work with infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school-age children in a variety of settings, and:

- Create a warm, caring, stimulating and fun learning environment
- Employ effective communication strategies for working with children, parents, early childhood educators and other professionals
- Assess children's abilities and skills to develop programs that emphasize “the development of the whole child as a unique individual.”⁶

In Nova Scotia, ECEs work in regulated child care centres, family home day care agencies, pre-primary programs, early intervention programs, family resource centres and other settings. ECEs plan, organize and implement programs for children from infancy to 12 years old. In order to work in a licensed child care centre, family home day care agency or pre-primary program, it is a legal requirement for the ECE to acquire a license to practice based on a provincial classification system.

There are five classification levels for ECEs in Nova Scotia: Entry Level, Levels 1, 2, 3 and School Age Approval. These classification levels are defined by the Nova Scotia government⁷ as follows:

- **Entry Level:** completion of Orientation for Staff Working in Licensed Child Care Facilities.
- **Level 1 Classification:** completion of orientation for child care staff, Level 1 course work and guided workplace experience (learn more about level 1)
- **Level 2 Classification:** completion of an approved college program in early childhood education.
- **Level 3 Classification:** completion of a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or completion of Level 2 requirements and a bachelor's degree.
- **School Age Approval:** completion of orientation training and a bachelor's degree that qualifies a person to plan and deliver developmentally appropriate programming for school-age children.

At any regulated centre in Nova Scotia there are also requirements for a mix of staff levels. According to the Day Care Regulations, two-thirds of the staff working with children must meet the training requirements laid out in the regulations, which ensure educator to child ratio requirements in the facility have the required classification levels.⁸ By 2021, the government will “require all early childhood educators entering the regulated child care profession to have a degree, diploma, certificate, or paraprofessional recognition through a competency-based assessment.”⁹ Staff must also have Criminal Records Check, Vulnerable Sector Check and Child Abuse Registry Search.¹⁰

Changes and Challenges: The Early Learning and Child Care Sector in Nova Scotia

AMONG THE MOST significant program and policy changes in the Early Learning and Child Care Sector (ELCC) in Nova Scotia over the last five years¹² are:

- Introduction of universal pre-primary
- Development of Nova Scotia Early Learning Curriculum Framework
- Implementation of a quality improvement system (Quality Matters)

The government committed to offering universal pre-primary to all four-year-olds in the province by the year 2020.¹³ In terms of access to child care, this is the most important development in at least a decade. The pre-primary rollout does mean that some families have access to free early learning programs for at least part of the day for part of the year, with some additional government commitment to address before and after school care.¹⁴ While improved access to care is good news for Nova Scotian families, the survey data show that both program staff and directors/employers experienced the destabilizing effect of the implementation of the pre-primary program on the sector. Most notable, the survey data highlights the continuing and

deepening divide between early learning and the more recognized and rewarded school-based learning. For example, when ECEs were asked if they thought they could make more or achieve higher status if they changed jobs within the sector, many said they could if they took a pre-primary job. Further, both ECEs and directors identified pre-primary rollout as a pressing problem facing the sector. Directors pointed to problems of recruitment and retention as ECE staff leave licensed child care centres to take positions in the schools. ECEs reported additional pressure on those that stayed with no educator replacements available and the effect of losing the most highly qualified staff.

The government is implementing an early learning curriculum framework.¹⁵ The framework is important as a guide for early childhood educators who work with children from birth to age 8. They will use the framework to create play-based, stimulating environments. It is undoubtedly an important benchmark for quality early learning.

In January 2018, the provincial government released *Quality Matters*, which is “a province-wide early childhood continuous quality improvement system.”¹⁶ The goal is to tie provincial funding for licensed child care centres to the development and implementation of quality improvement plans. This is undoubtedly a laudable goal and the government is to be commended for the framework development, which is evidence-based and informed by international research and practice.

This quality improvement system along with the early learning curriculum are incredibly important developments, however their implementation is being downloaded onto a sector that is unable to cope under the pressures that have been placed on them from rapid changes, and without sufficient funding to implement them, including adequate compensation of staff time to do the work. This is evidenced in the ECEs responses to what they thought the most pressing problems facing their centre were this year in an open-ended question. We grouped their answers into the top 14 most noted, not in any order of urgency or importance:

- Pre-primary roll out (e.g. losing staff, losing children, closure) (the reason most often cited as the biggest challenge)
- Recruitment and retention (high staff turnover, not enough educators, keeping trained staff)
- Working conditions (e.g. long days, ratios too large, lack of promotion, hard to get time off, no breaks, no programming time, heavy

cleaning duties, burnout, unpaid overtime, staff absenteeism and lack of substitutes and support staff

- Lack of support for special needs children (e.g. no special needs assistance, ratio too large, lack of support staff, inadequate funding)
- Government changes (e.g. pre-primary, fee cap, curriculum change)
- Staff morale
- Lack of supplies
- Issues with director/boss (lack of communication to staff from management, not enough positive feedback, poor management; director unavailable)
- Inadequate government funding
- Wages and benefits (e.g. no benefits, no raises and underpaid, unfair wages, inadequate sick time, no pension)
- Internal staff relations
- Limited space
- Lack of parent involvement, issues with parents
- Lack of recognition by public of the profession

Directors and employers were also asked what were the three most pressing problems facing their centre this year. They identified:

- Staff engagement
- Retention and recruitment (trained staff, quality staff, lack of level 2 and 3)
- Sick time/substitute coverage
- Time frame provided by grants
- ECE morale
- Financial stability
- Wages for employees (can only pay bottom of scale)
- Appropriate staffing support

- Labour force shortage
- Less funding
- Lack of training requirements
- Paying a competitive salary
- Pre-primary roll out
- Child enrollment

The remainder of the report delves deeper to understand more about this workforce and provide insights into recruitment and retention issues in the sector.

ECE Education and Training

STAFF EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS and training matter greatly as a determinant of the quality of learning and care provided.¹⁷ The Nova Scotia ECE workforce is a highly educated workforce, with 75% of ECEs in our sample having a post-secondary education credential. The profile of our ECE sample reported a higher level of post-secondary credential compared to the sector as a whole in Nova Scotia based on the most recent Statistics Canada which reported that 65.6% of ECEs have a post-secondary education, either a diploma (47.6%) or bachelor's degree (18%).¹⁸

Additionally, 12% of ECE respondents are currently enrolled in a formal education program; 44% of those in an ECE degree program, 30% in an ECE diploma program and 15% in a certificate program.

While almost all of level 1 (93%), level 2 (94%) and level 3 (93%) ECEs had participated in professional development in the last 12 months, this was the case for only 56% of entry level ECEs. However, entry level ECEs were more likely to be enrolled in an educational program than their counterparts.

Qualitative comments indicated some concerns were raised about inter-provincial recognition of credentials. For example, one respondent shared: “I have completed a full year, full time program at X community college in X province, which here in NS is only equivalent to a three course and work placement education.”

While there was a high level of educational attainment, over a tenth of the respondents in formal education, and a high level of on the job professional development, there are still some barriers to accessing affordable educational opportunities. As one respondent said, “If I had my boss pay for my education, I would love to be able to go back to school and complete my level 2.” While there is some funding available to pay for the courses, both ECEs and employers indicated that the staffing shortage is making it very difficult to find replacement staff if employees want to take professional development.

The Nova Scotia government must ensure that it retains the highly qualified educators that exist in Nova Scotia. Education and training are key to quality in the sector. “Well-established research confirms that quality in early education programs depends on responsive staff trained in child development who are resourced and valued for the work they do.”¹⁹ Indeed, the government should consider that UNICEF “recommends at least 50 percent of staff have three or more years of post-secondary training, and 80 percent of staff working directly with children have postsecondary training in child development.”²⁰

ECE Wages

THE SURVEY DATA indicates considerable discontentment about wages in the ECE workforce. One respondent wrote, “Pay is horrible in child care in Nova Scotia.” Another respondent wrote that ECEs are “unappreciated and underpaid.” Another wrote: “ECEs need to be paid more for what they do.”

- 22% thought that their pay was fair considering their background and skills
- 67% felt that their salary does not adequately reflect the work that they do

Concerns about wage disparities, whether between provinces, centre types or between regions were noted in qualitative comments (see A day in the life an Early Childhood Educator) further supported by the evidence in the quantitative data (discussed later in this report). One respondent made the point that part-time staff are not eligible for raises or benefits.

ECE’s Concerns about Wages: In their own words

- *“Part-time staff are not eligible for raises or benefits”*
- *“If I moved away from Nova Scotia I could make more.”*
- *“Pay is different all over Canada.”*

TABLE 1 ECE Gross Pay Monthly (Fulltime 32 or more hours per week) Self-Reported

Gross Pay	Monthly (\$)	Annual (\$)
Mean	2,865	34,286
Median	2,947	35,360
Minimum	1,300	15,600
Maximum	4,767	57,200

TABLE 2 ECE Median Pay by Classification Level (Self-Reported)

Wages by Classification Level	Annual Gross Pay (median) (\$)
Entry Level	23,920
Level 1	31,239
Level 2	35,360
Level 3	37,692
School-age approval	38,376
No formal credentials	21,164

- *“I would make more money in pre-primary (though overall less because fewer hours per week at 30 paid versus 40)”*
- *“Pre-primaries are offering more per hour” (this was repeatedly mentioned)*
- *“I do think I could earn more if levels were recognized the same province to province.”*
- *“There are lots of differences between centres when it comes to pay and benefits.”*

Wage Determination

The provincial government acknowledges that, “research shows that low wages and lack of benefits lead to low quality child care, as well as high staff turnover.”²¹ As per a recent report on early childhood education by the OECD, “salaries are one of the most relevant factors of working conditions, affecting job satisfaction and teachers’ effectiveness in the school literature.” Moreover it states, “there is evidence that low salaries influence staff behaviour towards

children and increase turnover rates.”²² A meta-analysis studying the factors that affect the quality of care provided and child outcomes concluded that “stability in care has been found to be strongly and consistently positively related to child outcomes” and that “high staff turnover is associated with lower quality service and poorer child outcomes.”²³ Furthermore, “low salaries deter skilled professionals from choosing to work as ECEC staff.”²⁴ In light of what we know about the need for adequate compensation for the health of the sector, and considering the high rate of discontentment with wages displayed in the survey data, further analysis of the provincial wage regulation is warranted.

How are wages determined and how should they be determined?

The Early Childhood Education Report (ECER)²⁵ sets the benchmark for ECE salaries at two-thirds of those earned by primary teachers; Nova Scotia’s ECEs are paid about 53% of a teacher salary and thus have some way to go reach that benchmark (the median wages are \$33,384 compared to \$62,758 respectively).²⁶

In June of 2016, the Nova Scotia government indicated that it would provide funding to qualified centres to bring ECE wages in Nova Scotia to the 2012 Canadian average.²⁷ This ‘average’ was obtained as part of the 2012 YBWC survey, which found a median gross hourly wage of \$12.84 per hour for ECEs in Nova Scotia, \$16.50 to be the Canadian median hourly and \$30,146 the annual full-time, full-year gross salary in Canada. The government has offered multiple grants to support wage enhancement to bring up this average.²⁸

The Nova Scotia government justified choosing the 2012 target because they said it was the only available data for a wage benchmark. The Atkinson Centre does publish a report every year that includes the median hourly salary for all provinces, based on data which is obtained from Statistics Canada.²⁹ In 2016, the average full-time wage of ECEs in Nova Scotia was reported to be \$16.05.³⁰ The government set a fairly meaningless benchmark, therefore, because the ECEs were only 45 cents shy of this benchmark. In 2012, *Nova Scotia ECEs had the lowest wages in the country and the most recent data still shows that they have the lowest wages in the country.* The national average is \$19.52 (2016). Since one of the most important determinants of quality is wages, it is concerning to see such low wages and inadequate access to benefits that would support recruiting and retaining, highly trained staff.

TABLE 3 ECE Full-Time Salaries, Provinces (2016)

Province/Territory	ECE FTE Salaries (\$) 2016
NS	\$33,384
SK	\$34,611
PE	\$35,818
NB	\$36,379
BC	\$37,690
AB	\$37,856
MB	\$38,230
ON	\$38,875
NT	\$40,251
NL	\$43,594
NU	\$46,779
QC	\$48,027
YK	\$56,409

Source Statistics Canada, 2016 cited in *Early Childhood Education Report 2017*.

TABLE 4 NS ECE Wage Floor by Classification Level

Classification Level	Wage Floor (gross per hour)
Level 1	\$15
Level 2	\$17
Level 3	\$19
School age Approval	\$17

Source SCHEDULE "A" Quality Investment Grant (QIG)—Program Support Funding, Government of Nova Scotia, 2018.

What about a living wage for ECEs? As the CCPA-NS has calculated, a living wage would need to be \$19 for Halifax and just over \$17 for Antigonish.³¹ Had the provincial government opted for a benchmark of \$18.11, which is the 2012 national average adjusted for inflation, it would have been closer to a living wage.

In 2016, the Nova Scotia government instituted a wage floor based on classification levels (see table 4).³²

The ECEs expressed specific concerns about the wage grid itself. Some respondents were frustrated that the grid did not take into consideration years of experience. One respondent said, "Classification hurts my pay status

without taking years of experience into consideration! 34 years in this field.” This was similarly expressed by another ECE, “I have been a level 2 ECE for 22 years and am earning the same hourly rate as a newly qualified level 2.” Other respondents found the difference between the grid levels did not fairly reflect the difference in qualifications, with one respondent saying, “I also think it is ridiculous that as an ECE level 3 from X university who graduated in 2014 is only making \$2 more than someone just out of college as a level 2.” The grid does not consider difference in ECE roles either, with one respondent expressing frustration saying, “I make the same amount of money as a supervisor that a brand new ECE out of school would make.”

When the government instituted the wage grid and offered the first wage enhancement grants, it acknowledged that not all ECEs would see an increase because some were already earning the wage floor amount or above. The government reported 36% of level 1 trained ECEs would not receive a wage increase, as well as 15% of level 2 and 18% of level 3.³³ The grant guidelines also explicitly stated that if there was still funding after this priority was met, funding may be used to support wages for:

1. untrained/entry level staff who are required for ratio;
2. any additional trained staff;
3. substitute staff;
4. implement a wage scale to recognize experience.

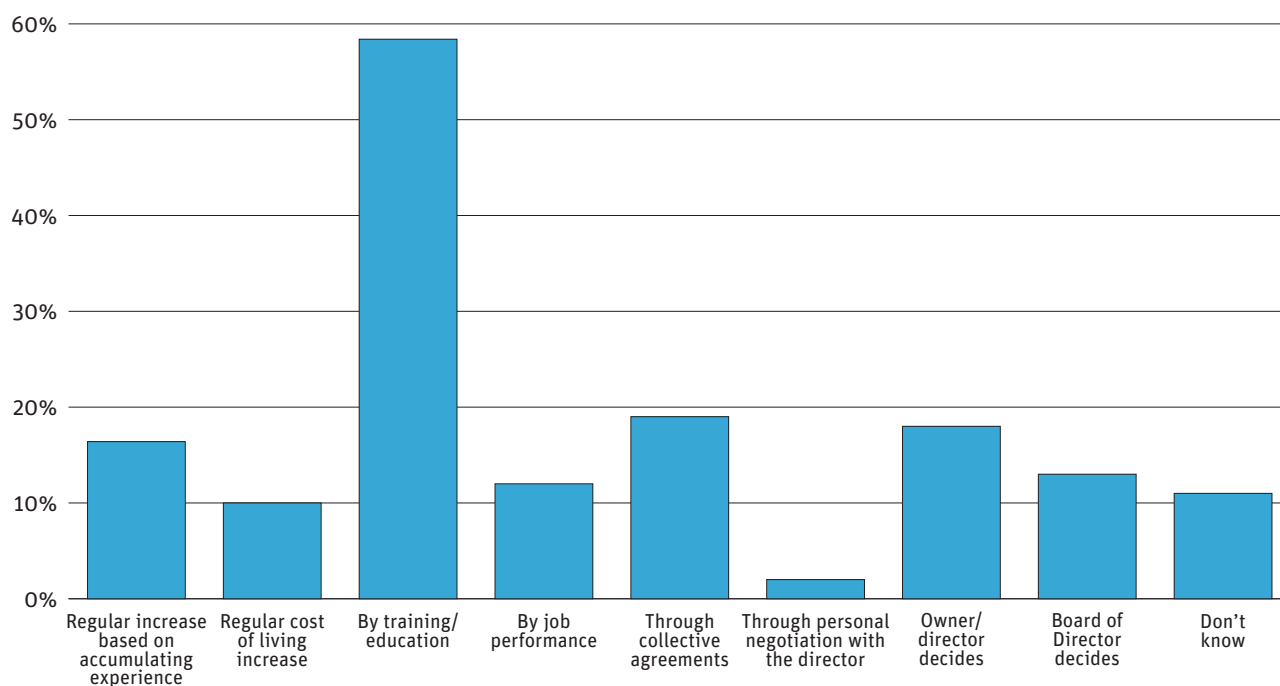
However, the funding appears to only have helped those centres that were paying below the minimum benchmarks. In addition, the government instituted a fee cap on parent fees,³⁴ which meant centres had to seek other kinds of private funding if they wanted to increase wages themselves.

When ECE respondents were asked if their salary increased, 33% said they have not gotten an increase in the last two years. This likely indicates just how much centres were relying on the wage grant and that few were able to increase wages beyond the initial funding priority.

While the grid is a key determining factor for wages, respondents also reported that wages were determined in different ways. The table below outlines their responses on how their wages are determined (note that this does not add up to 100 because they could answer more than one).

Respondents also had the option to choose ‘other’ and let us know how wages are determined. One respondent wrote: “once a year, we’ll get a raise. The bosses give each of us what they feel we deserve.” Other respondents

FIGURE 1 Determination of Wages



said their wages were determined by the only school board (CSAP) or by education centres (English-language school-based) for the pre-primary or by chief and band council.

Unpaid for Essential Tasks

Not only do ECEs deserve fair, living wages for the work that they do, they need to be compensated for what is sometimes unpaid. They report working 1.75 hours per week unpaid overtime at the centre (median) and additional 2 hours outside of the centre (e.g. preparing work related materials at home). They wrote about not being compensated for work that is essential and expected of them, “I think our centre should pay for the amount of unpaid work we do on our own for the children (e.g. weekly programming, development progress reports).” When employers were asked only 29% said their centres offered paid time to communicate with parents and 50% offered regular paid preparation time.

ECE Benefits

LOW WAGES, ACCOMPANIED by a lack of benefits, have an impact on recruitment and retention, and thus on staff turnover and quality of care provided. The ECE respondents were asked if they had access to any of the following benefits:

- Paid sick days
- Paid personal days
- Maternity top-up
- Parental top-up
- Health benefits
- Access to pension/RRSP
- Reduced child care fees

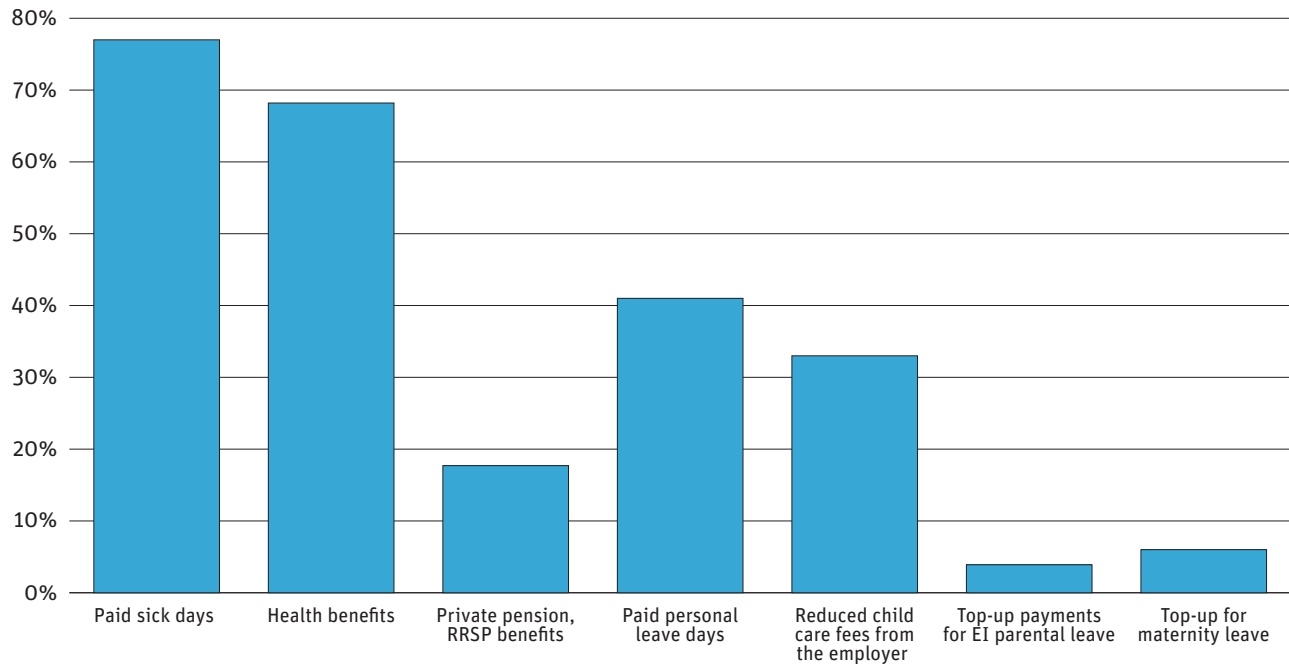
9.1% of ECEs report having none of the benefits asked about in the question.

A significant portion of ECEs do have access to paid sick days (77%), but a much smaller portion have access to paid personal leave days (41%). Only 29% felt they had enough time off for vacation.

When asked about health benefits, 68.2% of ECEs report having access.

Very few ECEs report access to private pension or RRSP benefits via their workplace (17.7%). Compared to other Nova Scotia workers, Statistics Canada

FIGURE 2 Access to Benefits



reports that in 2016, 44.6% had access to a workplace pension plan, which is still concerning low.³⁵

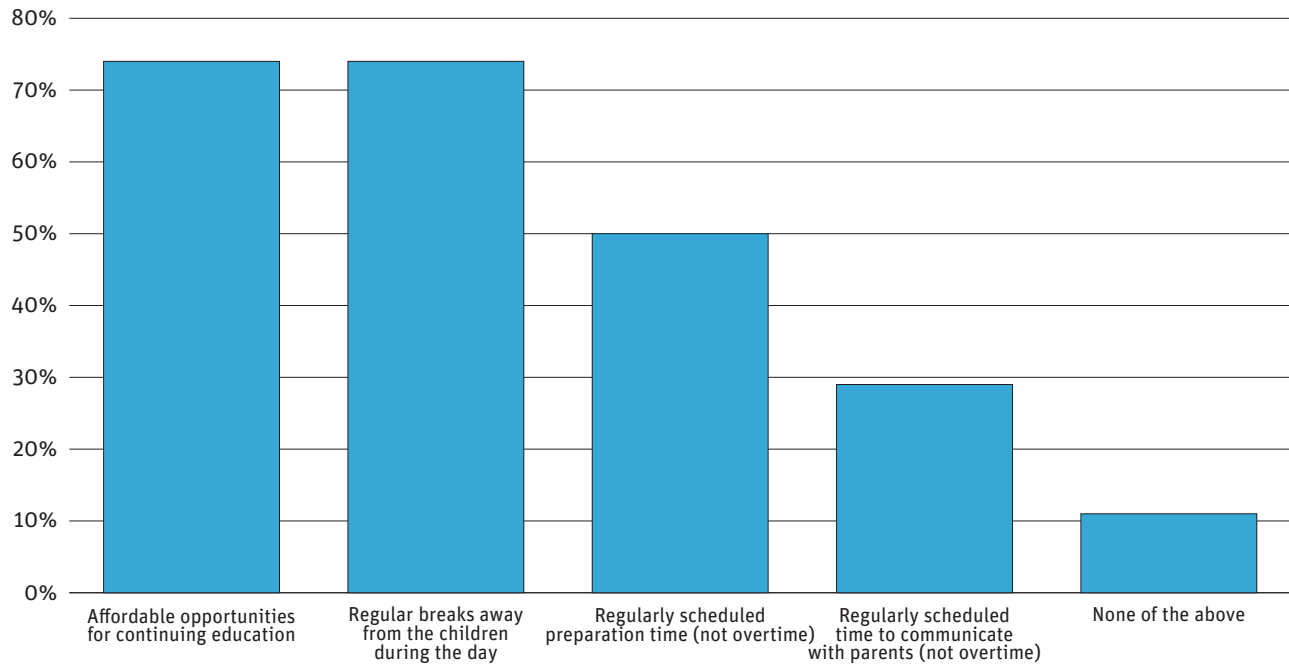
Even fewer ECEs have access to top-ups for maternity leave and parental leave with 6% and 3.9% respectively.³⁶

60% of ECEs said that their benefits had stayed the same in the past two years, with 6% saying they had actually gotten worse, while 14% said they had improved.

A few of the respondents did report other benefits including paid snow days and non-stat holidays off with pay.

Benefits certainly factor into decisions about whether to take a job or remain in a job. An ageing workforce would likely weigh factors, such as whether a position includes health benefits and access to pensions, very highly. Our educators must be supported to provide the best possible care to our children. They need to have access to paid sick days and be able to take them. They need access to adequate vacation time in order to be rested and not burnout from a job that has a high level of stress. A stable, healthy, and rested workforce is critical to building a quality early learning system that our children deserve.

FIGURE 3 Personnel Practices Offered by Employers



Personnel Practices and other benefits

The development of a qualified workforce requires support for healthy working conditions and an organisational climate that promotes positive staff-child interactions. Employers/directors were asked whether they provided staff with personnel practices that would support the ECEs and thus help foster quality learning environments. A high percentage of respondents did indicate that their centres offer affordable opportunities to continuing education (though we did not probe how, i.e. whether this meant they offered paid release time and/or financial assistance for professional development costs). The practice that the fewest centres offered was paid time to communicate with parents (29%). 50% offered regular paid preparation time. Others mentioned having access to a “professional development fund” and an “emergency staff fund.”

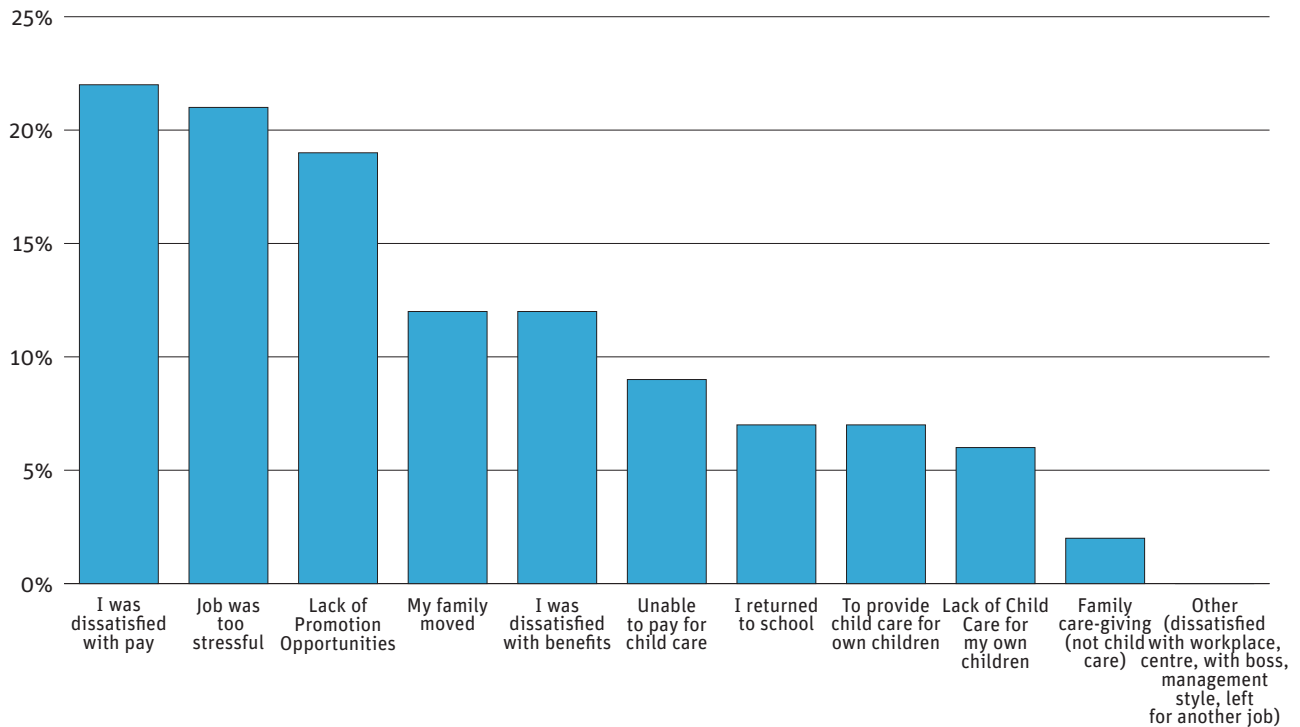
Recruitment and Retention

THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, along with support from the federal government, has invested in the ECE sector for strategic growth,³⁷ and in the rollout of the universal pre-primary.³⁸ There is undoubtedly a critical need for ECEs in the province and no room to lose any qualified staff, especially given that it is an ageing workforce. Moreover, turnover affects the quality of the learning environment provided to children.

Given the level of skill and education in this workforce, it is especially concerning to see the level of discontentment, frustration and overall dissatisfaction with their current working conditions. One ECE wrote this, which is a poignant summary of what the data is highlighting:

“I have a degree in education. I am 36 and completely burnt out by the industry. The demands and expectations are incredible for one person to manage. There needs to be definite reorganizing of the field. I am so disappointed by the experiences I have had with directors and coworkers who are just so overworked that passion and protocol regularly go out the window.”

FIGURE 4 ECEs Reasons for Resigning



Would you choose child care if you were choosing a career now?

There are different types of turnover and the most concerning is when an ECE leaves the occupation all together. 61% of respondents said they would choose child care if they were choosing a career now. That means a full 39% would not choose the profession and likely are not encouraging others to do so.

ECEs reasons for resigning

62% of respondents report having resigned from a child care position before. Understanding the reasons ECEs had left previous jobs does highlight key barriers to retention, with pay and benefits, and the stress of the job accounting for the top reasons (see *Figure 1*). Lack of promotion opportunities was also important with 19% of respondents citing this as a reason they left a previous position. The child care needs of ECEs was a key reason for leaving

as well, whether because they couldn't pay for it, they didn't have access to it, or they choose to stay home with their own children.

Several respondents also mentioned having to pay for supplies themselves.³⁹ One ECE wrote this: "We even buy craft materials and art supplies with our own money for the class as our centre is always short of materials."

ECE Job Security and Promotional Opportunities

- 15% felt that they were not progressing in their job as rapidly as they would like.
- 6% felt that their chances for promotion were good.
- On a scale of 1–5, 49% felt that their job was very secure (5) and another 27% felt it was secure (4).

Given the overall shortage of qualified ECEs, it isn't surprising that many reported that their jobs were secure, however it is concerning to see that many might feel stuck in the positions they are in. As one respondent said they would leave if somewhere else was "Offering room to grow." Another wrote, "There's no real opportunity to advance in child care, it may be available once every 10 years." Another ECE respondent wrote, "There are few opportunities for Level 3 ECE because many centres do not have the funding or other resources to hire or create such positions, although many would like to."

What key factors would support recruitment and retention?

Employer/Director Responses

When the directors were asked whether they had difficulty recruiting new, or retaining current ECEs in the past year, 82% said yes.

The directors were asked to evaluate the extent to which a set of interventions would have helped to recruit or retrain staff. They noted ‘promoting more respect for people working in child care’ and ‘providing more support services and funding to centres caring for children with special needs or challenging behaviours’ as the most likely to help. Their third and fourth choices were better salary and improving benefits.

ECE Perspective

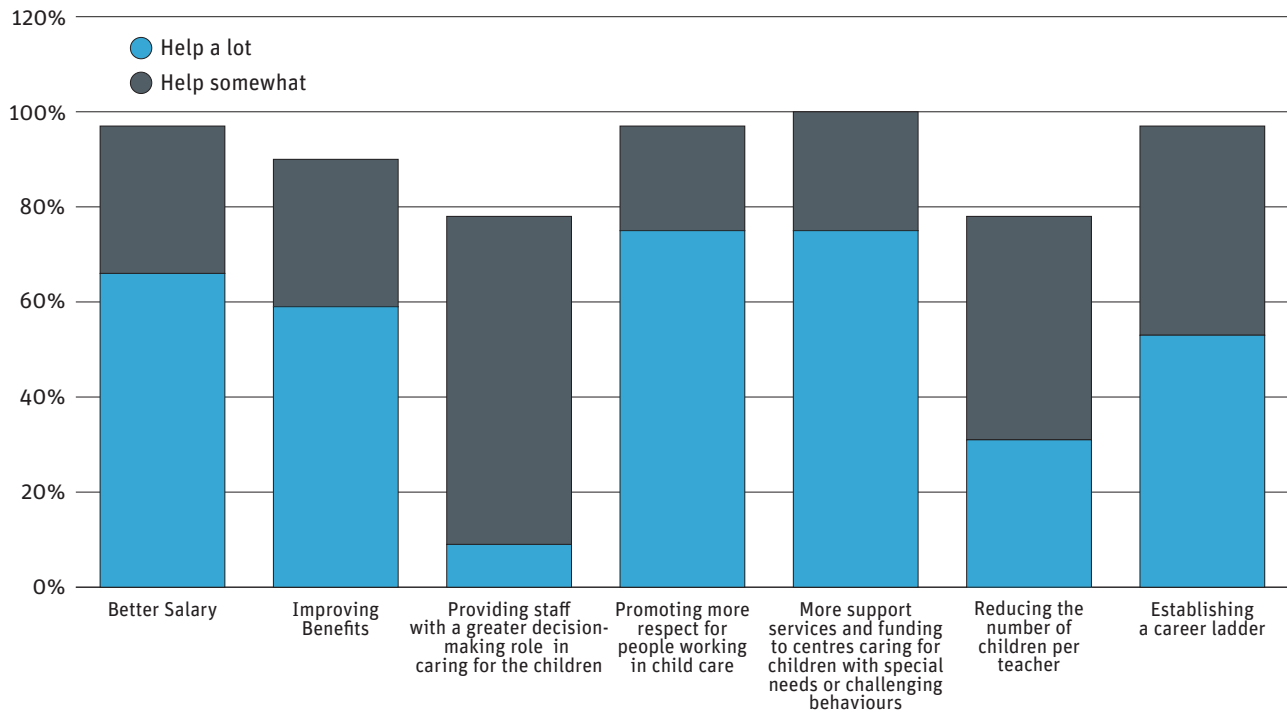
ECEs could also choose these options in reference to what conditions would make working in the child care field more satisfying, and thus presumably support their retention. ECEs chose better salary and improved benefits as their top options that would help a lot or help somewhat. Their third choice was promoting more respect for people working in the child care field. Tied for fourth position was more support services and funding to centres caring for children with special needs or challenging behaviours, along with additional government funding for provincial wage grade implementation and public funding for a seamless child care system (note these latter two options were not offered to the directors). ECEs ranked reducing the student to teacher ratio as their last choice, though 88% still thought this change would help a lot or help somewhat.

In addition to these factors, current working conditions, job security and a supportive workplace were important considerations. For example, when ECEs explained in their own words why they wouldn’t leave even though they thought that they could have higher wages or more status somewhere else, one wrote: “Some centres pay more but the atmosphere and staff are so good together I wouldn’t want to leave!”

Another ECE respondent explained why they would remain in their current position:

“I don’t feel that as a level 1 even with 18 years’ experience, that I would get anything close to what I’m paid now. Our starting salary is higher than most places. Our grants are split evenly among staff because we all work

FIGURE 5 Factors to Support Recruitment and Retention: Employer Responses



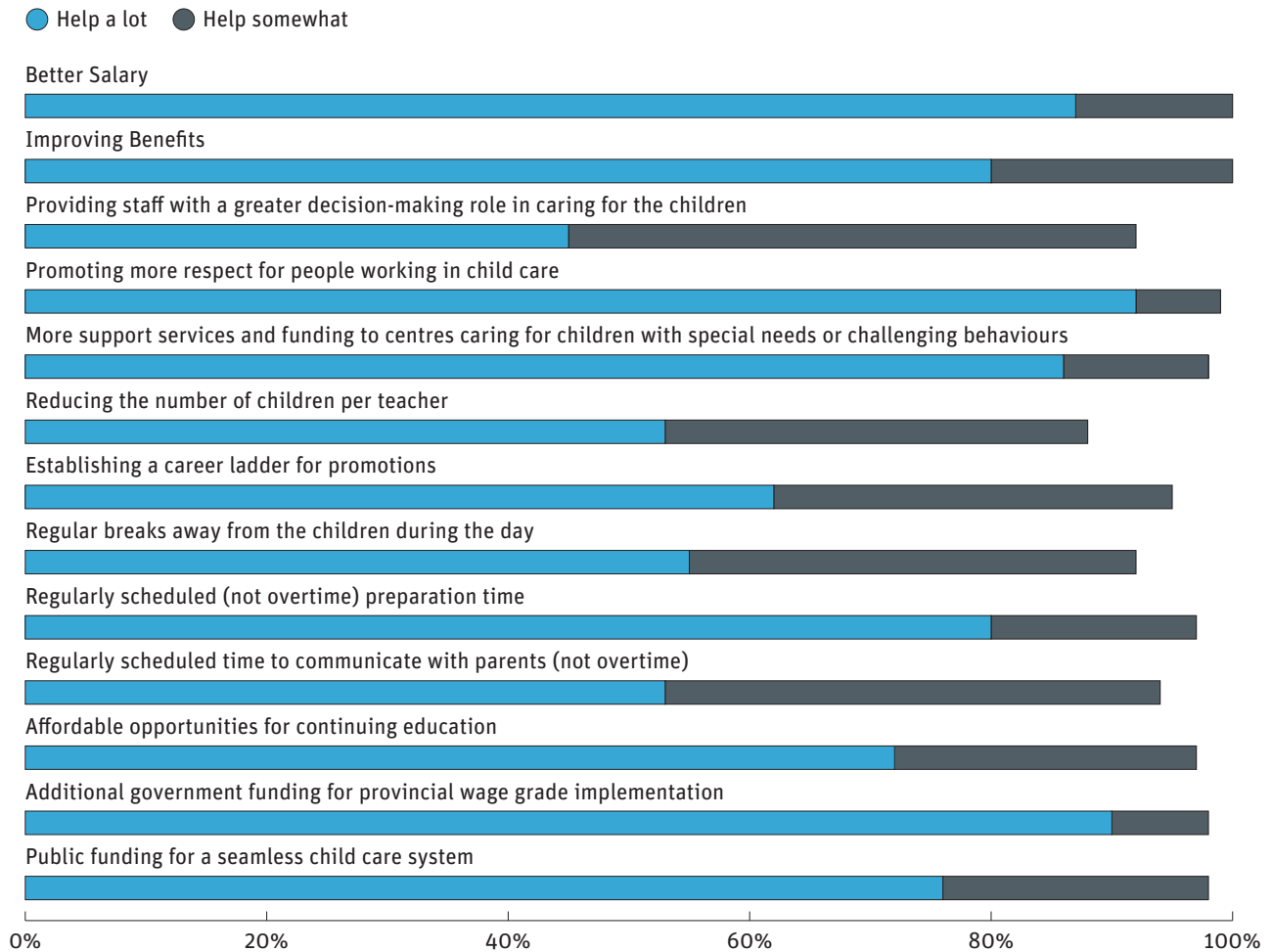
hard, and no one deserves more than anyone else. *It's a great place to work for so many reasons.*"

One ECE respondent thought they could leave, but that "The only other option in my area is pre-primary and the lack of hours, pay and benefits are not worth leaving a secure position. *Also, my Centre staff are supportive, enthusiastic, and overall great to work with.*"

Age Considerations

Age is an important consideration when designing recruitment and retention strategies. The low percentage of respondents who were aged under 30 (22%) is concerning, though not significantly less than the 2012 national statistic which was 25%. This was down from 58% in 1991 (YBWSC, 2014). While there is an increasing aging population in Nova Scotia generally effecting workforce age profiles, the survey data indicate that recruitment

FIGURE 6 Making Child Care More Satisfying: ECE Responses



and retention issues vary by age and keeping younger worker in the sector is cause for concern.

We found that a higher percentage of younger workers (aged under 40), had resigned from a previous position. While a higher percentage of younger workers would choose child care, a lower percentage of them expected to stay in child care in one year. While most older workers are committed to staying, and fewer have resigned, they were less likely to indicate that they would choose child care if they had to do it all over again. Older workers think they have less of a chance of promotion than younger workers, though all ECEs expressed there being few opportunities for promotion. In addition, a higher percentage of younger workers (41% of those aged 20–29) received a

wage increase in the last two years and the lowest percentage (12%) of those who received a wage increase were the oldest groups of workers (aged 50 plus). Younger workers are the least satisfied with the amount of vacation time they receive (14% of those aged 20–29 think they have enough vacation compared to 34% of workers aged 40–49). 91% of those aged 50 plus think that their salary is not adequate for the work that they do compared to 55% of those aged between 20 and 29, and 66% overall.

Centre Differences

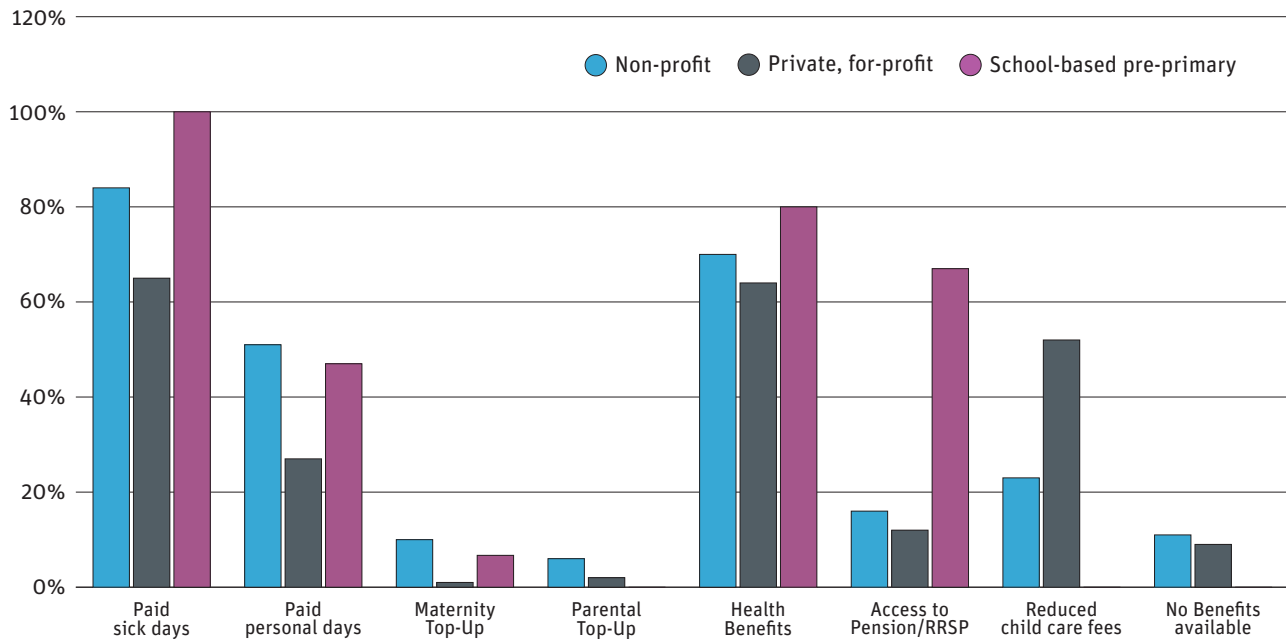
31% of respondents said that they thought they could earn more money or achieve a higher status position if they moved centres. Many ECEs talked about leaving to take pre-primary school-based jobs because these positions pay more per hour, and have better benefits including more time off and pensions. They also talked about leaving for promotion opportunities whether to be paid as level 3 elsewhere, or management/director job, or to take support/inclusion coordinator positions.

ECEs thought a move would make a difference because of variations in pay and benefits by province, by centre size and geographic location (rural vs central; Nova Scotia versus other provinces) and by centre type (non-profit vs for-profit and unionized versus non-unionized). They also cited differences in the ways that centres determined wages with some ECEs seeking positions at centres that provide better annual increases and consider experience or/and performance when determining wages and wage increases. There are also a wide range of differences they pointed to regarding benefits offered with some centres offering paid vacation, sick leave, “Christmas” bonus, pension and medical, dental. In some centres the ECEs have less unpaid work (e.g. weekly programming, development progress reports) and ECEs do not purchase their own craft materials and art supplies.

Centre Auspice: Non-Profit compared to For-Profit

ECEs feelings about their work varied by the type of centre they worked in. For example, when reflecting on whether they would choose a career in child care if they were choosing now, those working in a school-based program were the most likely to indicate yes (77%), compared to those working in non-profit child care (61%). Those working in a for-profit centre were the least likely to choose child care as career now at 59%.

FIGURE 7 Access to Benefits, by centre type



Overall only 28% of all ECEs felt their benefits were adequate. However, this varied by type of work place as only 24% of those in for-profit centre felt this compared to 28% of those in non-profits. A much higher percentage of those working in school-based pre-primary thought their benefits were adequate (54%). School based pre-primary workers ranked highest for paid sick days, and health benefits. The non-profit centre ECEs reported having the highest percentage of access to paid personal days (51%), which was much higher than the for-profit, and slightly higher than the school-based pre-primary. The most striking difference given the aging structure of the population, is access to pension/RRSP whereby 67% of those in pre-primary had access compared to 12% in for-profit and 16% in the non-profit).

When asked if they had gotten a raise in the last two years, 71% of those ECEs working at non-profit centres compared to 67% of ECE's working in the for-profit sector report receiving an increase.

Median wages by centre type/pre-primary can be affected by a higher concentration of upper level or lower level ECEs working in different work places. The chart below shows that there wasn't significant variation of level concentration across the centre types/pre-primary except with pre-primary having fewer level 1s and no entry level, but with some who have no formal

TABLE 5 Wages by Centre Type (Gross Pay per year, full time) Self-Reported

Type	Median (\$)
Non-Profit	35,000
For-Profit	35,360
School-based pre-primary	33,800
Total	35,360

TABLE 6 Level by Centre Type (percentage of respondents)

Level	Non-Profit	For-Profit	Pre-primary School based
Entry Level	6	2	0
Level 1	19	23	7
Level 2	54	52	60
Level 3	21	22	27
School age approval	1	2	0
No formal credential	0	0	7

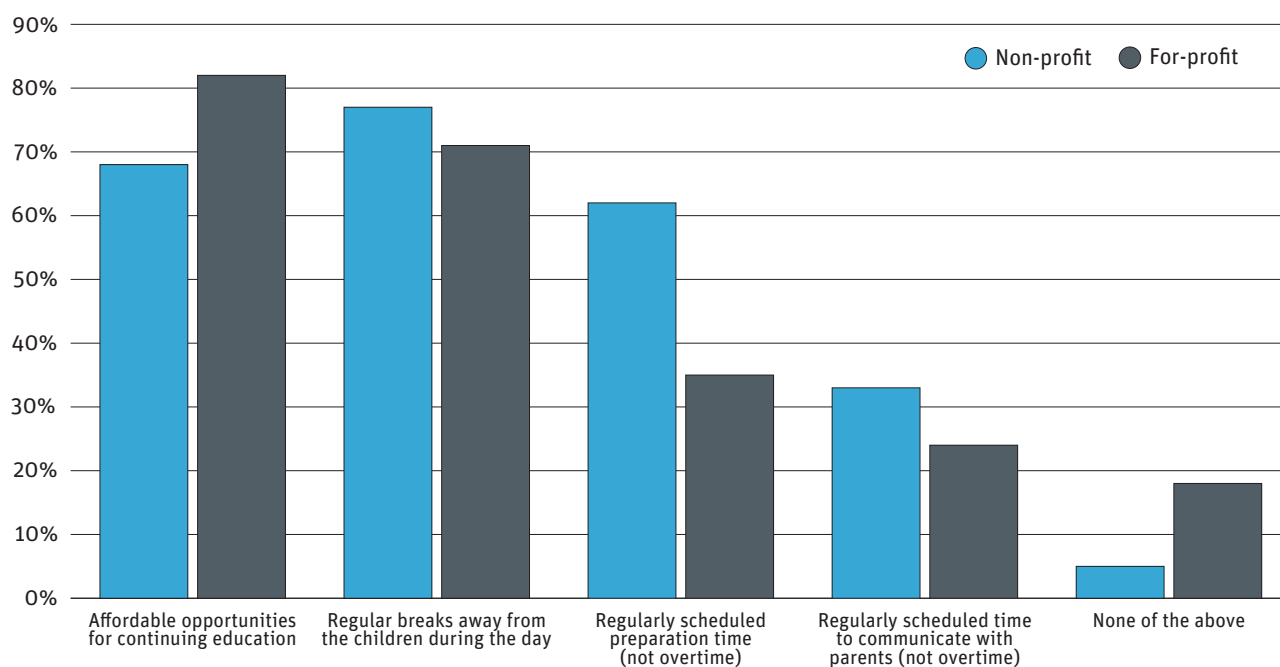
credentials. The differences between the for-profits and non-profits does not appear to be due to classification level of employees.

When it comes to personnel practices and other benefits, non-profits do provide better practices with the exception of affordable opportunities for continuing education. Slightly more ECEs who work at non-profits have access to regular breaks away from the children (77% compared to 71%), and slightly more have regularly scheduled paid time to communicate with parents (not overtime) (33% compared to 24%). The starkest contrast is regarding regularly scheduled preparation time (not overtime), with 62% of those ECEs who work in the non-profit sector noting they had access to this practice, compared to only 35% in the for-profit sector.

Employer/Director Perspectives on Recruitment and Retention: by Centre Type

While all types of centres experienced a high level of difficulty recruiting staff, non-profit centres had more trouble recruiting compared to for-profits (91% and 71% respectively).

FIGURE 8 Differences based on Centre Type: other benefits and personnel practices (percentage)



Both ECEs and Directors were asked their thoughts on the extent that certain factors would help with recruitment. For-profit directors' responses varied somewhat from non-profit directors and showed some disconnect with ECEs responses about what would make work in the field more satisfying. For example, while 75% of non-profit directors felt better salary would help a lot, 50% of for-profit directors thought so. Similarly, 70% of non-profit directors thought improving benefits would help a lot compared to 42% of for-profit directors.

Unionization

Is there a union advantage for ECEs? Previous research on the role of unions in the child care sector, concluded that “unions exert a positive influence in child care workplaces and in the sector generally. Furthermore, when the benefits to child care workers and services are taken into account, unionization emerges as an important strategy for dealing with recruitment and retention.”⁴⁰

TABLE 7 Employer/Director Perspectives on Recruitment and Retention: by Centre Type

	Non-Profit	For-Profit
Better Salary		
Help a lot	75 (Rank 2)	50 (tied 3)
Help somewhat	25	42
Not help	0	8
Improving Benefits		
Help a lot	70 (rank 3)	42
Help somewhat	25	42
Not help	5	17
Providing staff with a greater decision-making role in caring for the children		
Help a lot	5 (rank last)	17
Help somewhat	80	50
Not help	15	33 (rank 1)
Promoting more respect for people working in child care		
Help a lot	80 (rank 1)	67 (rank 2)
Help somewhat	20	25
Not help	0	8
More support services and funding to centres caring for children with special needs or challenging behaviours		
Help a lot	65 (rank 4)	92 (rank 1)
Help somewhat	35	8
Not help	0	0
Reducing the number of children per teacher		
Help a lot	20	50 (tied 3)
Help somewhat	55	33
Not help	25 (rank 1)	17
Establishing a career ladder		
Help a lot	55	50 (tied 3)
Help somewhat	45	33
Not help	0	17

TABLE 8 Unionized vs not Unionized Wages (Self-Reported)

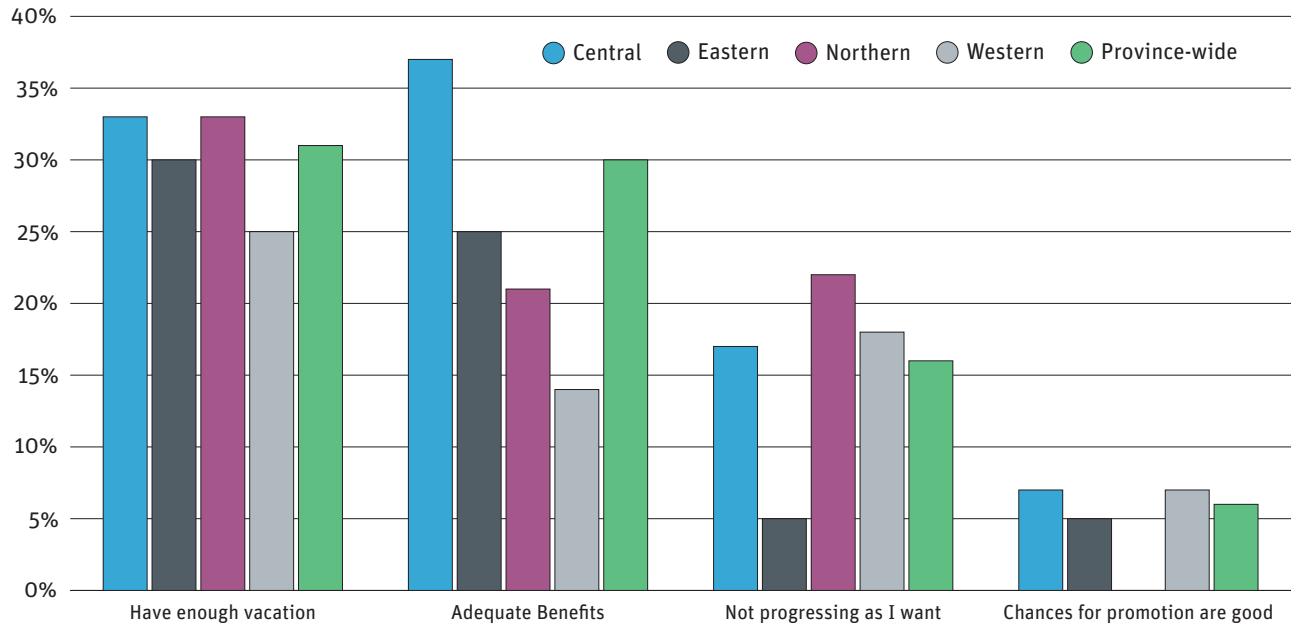
Union status of centre	Full Time Gross Pay (median)
Unionized	34752.25
Non-unionized	35360.00

TABLE 9 Where the ECEs worked: Unionization by Type of Centre

Type of Centre	Percentage unionized
A non-profit centre	39
A private, for-profit centre	0
A school-based pre-primary program	47

24% of the ECEs respondents report being represented by a union. To some extent the data does show that there is a union advantage, though for some of the factors the advantage is slight, for others quite significant. Of those who worked at a unionized workplace in Nova Scotia, 21% of ECEs reported seeing their benefits improve (in the past two years) compared to 11% in the non-unionized sector. A higher percentage of unionized staff thought their chances for promotion were good (10% versus 6% for non-unionized). More unionized workers thought that they had enough vacation compared to non-unionized (33% compared to 28%) and a higher percentage that their benefits were adequate (35% versus 26%). 81% thought they would still be doing child care in one year versus 79% of those non-unionized. Of those who said they had not resigned from a child care, 47% were unionized compared to 35% non-unionized. Of those who said they had resigned, a lower percentage of unionized workers said they did so because of job stress (19% of unionized versus 23% of non-unionized ECEs). The ECEs self-reported data shows that there was no reported wage advantage between unionized and non-unionized centres, rather wages are slightly higher in those reporting to be non-unionized. However, a higher percentage of those reporting receiving a wage increase were unionized staff at 79%, compared to 64% for non-unionized staff. *Table 9* shows that of all the ECEs in a union, 87.5% work a non-profit centre and 12.5% work at a school-based pre-primary program. However, only 39% of those working at non-profit centres and 47% of those working in a school-based pre-primary program indicated they were in a union.

FIGURE 9 Job Satisfaction, by region of work



Regional Variation

One respondent noted regional disparities as the reason she resigned a job and moved to take a job in the city, she wrote:

“I lived in a small town (Northern) being a level 1 and 10 years’ experience I was getting almost 30 hours per week no benefits, very stressful environment and no respect. I moved to (Central zone) got a job within hours of putting out resumes they pay me above wage, I get sick days, 10 vacation days plus 50% off child care and lots of respect.”

Regional differences were also seen on questions that asked for reflections on child care as a career choice. For example, the percentage of ECEs who said they would choose child care as a career if they were choosing now did vary geographically with 55.3% saying they would choose child care in the Central zone, 79.2% in the Eastern Zone, 78.6% in the Northern Zone, and 63.6% in the Western Zone.

There was also regional variation on whether they expect to be doing child care in one year whereby those in the Western and Central region were more likely to expect that they wouldn’t be (both 24%), to only 12.5% in the Eastern region, and 10.7% in the Northern region.

TABLE 10 ECEs by level, within the regions (%)

Level	Central	Eastern	Northern	Western	Total
Level 1	25.7	8.0	3.4	17.6	19.8
Level 2	37.5	88	82.8	70.6	53.4
Level 3	30.6	4.0	6.9	5.9	21.1
Entry Level	4.9	0	3.4	2.9	3.9
School-Age Approval	1.4	0	3.4	0	1.3
No formal credentials	0	0	0	2.9	0.4

TABLE 11 ECEs Employed: By Types of Centres by Region

Type of Centre (%)	Central	Eastern	Northern	Western
Non-profit	50	52	42	55
For-profit	47	38	56	28
School based, pre-primary	3	10	3	17

TABLE 12 Wages by Region (gross pay per year, full time), Self-Reported

Region	Mean	Median
Central	34566.21	35557.60
Eastern	33702.10	35360.00
Northern	35089.52	35139.00
Western	32862.85	35360.00

A higher percentage of ECEs in Central region reported having adequate benefits (37%) compared to a low of 14% in Western. Similarly, a higher percentage said they had enough vacation in Central (33%) compared to Western (25%). The highest proportion of those ECEs who felt they were not progressing as they want were in the Northern region. All regions reported very low chances for promotion.

By region—26% resigned in the Central zone because of job stress compared to 13% in Eastern, 14% in Northern and 15% Western. In Central 7% resigned for lack of child care compared to 6% in Western, 4% in Northern and none in Eastern. 46% of Northern region ECEs think they could earn more at another centre as did 43% of Northern, 33% of Western and 26% of Central.

TABLE 13 Average Full Day Fees by Region, 2016/17

Region	Infant Full Day	Toddler Full Day	Preschool Full Day
Central	\$43.00	\$37.00	\$37.00
Eastern	\$40.00	\$31.00	\$31.00
Northern	\$37.00	\$33.00	\$32.00
Western	\$34.00	\$31.00	\$30.00

* SCHEDULE "A" Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Early Years Branch, Early Childhood Development Services Terms and Conditions for funding: Quality Investment Grant (QIG) - Program Support Funding (PSF), (Nova Scotia: Government of Nova Scotia, 2018),

The provincial government has regional disparities written into the structure of the grant program. For example, the parent fees caps instituted for centres vary by region. While it is the case that there are higher waged earners in the Central region of the province, this does not necessarily justify these disparities. Rental for some centres may be less in some parts of the province compared to others, however, the need to have more decentralized service in rural communities might also be considered an additional expense.

Conclusion: Build a system

THE DATA IN this report point to the need for a workforce development strategy with adequate resources for professional development, fair wages and benefits.

The bottom line is that the provincial government must eliminate the complicated grant programs and roll the funding into a plan for a system, not unlike our public education system. Building a system, driven by quality and safety, requires a plan developed in collaboration with local communities, with funding tied to realizing that vision. The quality system must be affordable and accessible. This system must be adequately funded to prioritize ensuring quality care that is inclusive of children's diverse social, cultural, linguistic, physical abilities and needs. The system must support self-determined planning of Indigenous services on and off First Nation reserves. Sufficient funding must be allocated for public accountability measures within the system including data, research, democratic participation and public reporting.

This report does not explicitly address child care access issue for families, though this is undoubtedly tied to whether there are staff available to provide quality learning and child care opportunities. However, even if staff are recruited and retained, too many families cannot afford existing child care fees, which range from a high of \$910 per month for infants, \$825 for toddlers, to \$823 for preschoolers in Halifax.⁴¹ The province does offer a subsidy

program for parents who are working, or enrolled in an education program, and whose income is low enough to qualify. Even for those who do qualify, many are left with fees that are still too high for them to afford. Moreover, children’s care and learning opportunities should never be contingent on this kind of criteria. Of course, even if families are deemed eligible, they still have to find suitable child care.⁴² Research and evidence warns against this targeted approach to child care.

The current patchwork of programs has a lot of ifs, mayes and unknowns that have been exacerbated by the rush to implement pre-primary when challenges already existed to provide sufficient infant care and care in rural communities.⁴³ Even with the recent agreement for additional funding from the federal government, the additional spaces are nowhere near what is needed.⁴⁴ There are just over 34,000 children (aged 0–3) in Nova Scotia and only 4776 regulated and licensed spaces that covers 14% of those kids.⁴⁵ Labour market participation rates tells us that the majority of mothers are in the workforce during their children’s early years, with 71.25% of mothers with babies (up to one year old) and 80.5% of those with children aged 2–4 working.⁴⁶ While Nova Scotia has seen an improvement in its rating for early childhood education, the Atkinson Centre’s report on Early Childhood Education still only rates Nova Scotia as an 8.5/15.⁴⁷ One of the benchmarks is that the province needs to devote at least 3% of the provincial budget to early childhood education, which would require a doubling of what is currently invested.

Appendix 1: Survey Methodology Details

THE SURVEY WAS administered online and hosted by Hosted in Canada surveys.⁴⁸ Participants were recruited at a conference and tradeshow for Early Childhood Educators and using social media (Facebook and Twitter). The survey was confidential and no personal information was collected that could be used to identify the individual. Each respondent who completed the survey was eligible to win a prize (an iPad) using a separate contest entry form that was not linked to the participant's survey response. The survey was open for just under 60 days, until we reached an acceptable number and geographic diversity of respondents. The survey was also available to be completed in French. The survey was launched on June 4, 2018. The full survey tool is available upon request. The survey was also made available at the Nova Scotia Child Care Association's annual conference and trade show in June, where the researchers had a table for both days offering ECEs the opportunity to fill out the survey in-person and submit a separate paper ballot for entry into the prize draw. These paper survey responses were entered manually into the online survey database.

The data was analyzed using SPSS software. Open ended questions were small in number and answers have been included to ensure that first voices are heard in the report.

Sample size

A total of 297 ECEs answered the survey and 49 directors, for a total of 346. To enable participation, very few questions were mandatory, therefore we have excluded the nonresponses in all of the percentages provided. Our sample was restricted to staff at licensed full-day child care centres in Nova Scotia that provide spaces for infants, toddlers, and/or preschool age children, as well as school-based pre-primary programs. Questions were asked to identify the staff position i.e. Whether director/employer or working directly with children. The questions focused on gathering information about staff who work directly with children in these centres, however some questions were tailored for directors/employers. Note that while demographic information was asked of the ECE respondents, none was asked of the directors/employers.

In October 2017, there were 271 licensed centres, which represents about 60% of the licensed sector. There were 37 pre-primary school-based sites set up in October 2017.⁴⁹ A full list of licensed care can be obtained using the child care directory.⁵⁰

For a population of 1700, at a 95% confidence level, a sample of 314 or more is recommended, which provides a confidence interval of plus or minus 5%. The population number is based on the number of Early Childhood Educators employed in the province.⁵¹ The high-end number (3,160) was taken from Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, those who have ECE credentials and are employed but not necessarily in the sector. The low-end number of 1700 ECEs was provided by the Nova Scotia government in personal correspondence and only counts ECEs working in the licensed sector.

To answer the survey, one had to first answer whether they spend most of their day with a classroom or group of children in their centre or whether there are a Director/Employer. The preamble to the survey said: “This questionnaire is for staff members who are working directly with children, as well as directors/employers of full-day child care centres in Nova Scotia that provide spaces for infants, toddlers, and/or preschool age children, as well as school-based pre-primary programs. This survey is NOT meant for those who: work as a casual, are in a support role (e.g. kitchen support, etc.) or who do not currently work in a licensed centre-based program or school-based pre-primary program in Nova Scotia (unless you are on maternity or parental leave or temporary leave from a position you will return to after your leave).”

The data, unless otherwise noted, is reported in percentages, excluding nonresponses in the percentage calculations. The wage and income data

are reported using median unless otherwise noted. Median is a measure of central tendency that divides one half of the population from the other.

How representative was the sample?

While our sample was not random or designed to be representative of ECEs, analysis of the data does indicate that ECE respondents were very closely aligned in terms of age and gender profile, regional location, and centre type (auspice) of the sector. According to the provincial government, ECEs are employed as follows: 53.9% in Halifax (Central region), 12.1% in Annapolis Valley (Western region), 12.1% Northern, 11.4% in Southern and 9.9% in Cape Breton (part of Eastern region).⁵² The percentage of non-profits in 2017 was 44%, with our sample having a slightly higher composition.⁵³ In 2016, 21% of those with an ECE in Nova Scotia were aged 15–24, 30% of ECEs were aged 25–34, 22% aged 35–44, 17% aged 45–54, 7% aged 55–64 and 3.3% aged 65+.⁵⁴

Limitations of the Study

The survey results were limited to full-day child care centre and pre-primary school-based workforce. The survey was online and therefore was limited to those able to access a computer and with a level of computer literacy that allowed them to complete the survey. Outreach was done to various organizations to ensure that the survey link was circulated but those notifications were mostly restricted to those who had access to email. Some paper posters were printed, and centres were encouraged to post them but no outreach was done to all centres to ask for this to happen. The survey was mainly circulated via social media (Twitter and Facebook). The link to the survey was open and thus anyone could have answered it. The data was cleaned to control for any ineligible responses. The survey was only available in English and French and thus was limited to those comfortable to answer in those two languages.

Appendix 2: Survey Results

ECE staff respondents

A total of 297 ECEs answered the survey and 49 directors, for a total of 346. Unless otherwise stated, all data is referring to ECEs and not directors/employers.

- 98% of ECEs identified as female, with 1% male and 1% non-binary
- 9% of ECEs identified as a member of a visible, racial or linguistic minority. (Note that nobody filled out the French survey.)
- 26% of ECE respondents reported belonging to the Nova Scotia Child Care Association

Age of ECEs

Age range	Percentage (%)
20–29	22
30–39	41
40–49	23
50+	14

Where the ECEs work

All efforts were made to obtain respondents from ECEs working in licensed programs⁵⁵ in geographic locations across the province, as well as in non-profit, for-profit and school-based pre-primary programs.

Type of Centre

Type of Centre	Percentage of ECEs (%)
A non-profit centre	50
A private, for-profit centre	43
A school-based pre-primary program	7

Location of Centre

Region	Percentage (%)
Central	63
Eastern	10
Northern	13
Western	14

In terms of specific programs (they could answer more than one), ECEs reported working as follows:

- 30.6% in a program for children with special needs
- 9.4% in a school-based pre-primary program
- 1.7% in Grandir en français
- 17% in a before and after school care program (primary to age 12)
- 41.4% in the Early Years Centres

Classification Level of ECE Respondents

Classification Level	Percent (total sample) (%)
Entry Level	4
Level 1 Classification	19
Level 2 Classification	54
Level 3 Classification	21
School-Age Approval	2

ECE Employment Patterns

ECE Respondents reported working:

- at their current centre for 4.9 years (median) and 4.1 in current position;
- 40 hours per week (median);
- 1.75 hours per week unpaid overtime at the Centre (median) and additional 2 hours outside of the centre (e.g. preparing work related materials at home).

84% reported working year-round, and 13% reported working 10 months of the year (not all of whom are in school-based, pre-primary which represented only 7% of respondents).

Current position of ECEs

Current position of ECEs	Percentage (%)
Assistant ECE	6.2%
ECE	77.7%
Supervisor	16.1%

Assistant ECE: refers to a person who works with children under the direction of another teacher, a supervisor, or the centre director.

ECE: refers to a person who has primary responsibility for a group of children. This person may also have supervisory responsibilities for assistant teachers.

Supervisor: refers to a person who has primary responsibility for a group of children and also has supervisory responsibilities for teachers.

Directors and Employers Profile

Centre Type	Percentage of respondents (%)
Non-profit Centre	56
For-Profit Centre	44
Pre-primary, School-based	0
A multi-site, multi-service organization	52
A standalone centre	48

While the director/employer's profile is similar to the ECEs for centre-type, ECEs were not asked about multi-site organizations but there were

slightly fewer director respondents from standalone centres than multi-site, multi-service organizations. The increase in these types of operations was flagged as needing further consideration in the YBWC 2012 study, regarding whether there were distinct challenges for human resource practices or other issues that arise. Given the significant percentage of these organizations, this warrants further consideration.

Care provided	Percentage of Centre Directors/Employers (%)
Infant (0–17 months)	63
Toddler (18–35 months)	95
Preschool (3–5 years old)	98
Children aged 5+	81
Children with special needs ⁵⁶	90
An early intervention program	24
Four plus	3
Grandir en français	8
English as a second language program	0
Special needs program	61

Notes

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55 Note that the survey was targeted to ECEs and Directors/Employers of licensed child care centres and not licensed family home child care, unregulated family child care, family resource programs, or before and after-school program that do not require a license.

56 Special needs defined as: Children with a physical or intellectual disability identified by a professional such as a physician or speech therapist. It also includes children diagnosed as medically fragile as well as, children with significant emotional difficulties.



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