

OUR CHILD CARE WORKFORCE



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Canada

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Major study points to solutions to child care labour shortage

A major new study by the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council finds that only about half of early childhood education graduates are working in child care within two years after graduating. *Working for Change: Canada's Child Care Workforce*, points the way to solutions for addressing the critical labour shortage in the early learning and care workforce.

The study is a follow-up to the 1998 report, *Our Child Care Workforce*, and is the only labour market update on the sector in the past six years. "Our report is very timely," said sector council chair, Joanne Morris. "As the federal government starts to move on its commitment to a national child care program, it will be even more urgent to find ways to guarantee a skilled, sustainable workforce to provide high quality child care services."



Working for Change concludes that in order to make inroads on the pressing human resource issues in child

care, governments must put in place comprehensive child care policies and provide sufficient funding to the sector. As well, the sector council must work with governments and its child care and labour partners to support progressive child care policies.

The study proposes eight recommendations to give the sector council a basis for developing a concrete plan to ensure skilled and qualified people enter and remain in the child care workforce. The recommendations include promoting increased pay and benefits, developing a recruitment and retention strategy, improving leadership practices, and fostering partnerships with the education and research communities, government departments and related sectors.

MEETING DEMAND

Working for Change provides an updated profile of the regulated child care workforce. The study, funded by the Government of Canada's Sector Council Program, gives an overview of the considerable changes to child care policies, regulation and funding since 1998, as well as identifying demographic shifts. All of these factors af-

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Major study points to solutions to child care labour shortage

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fect workforce demand, and wages, working conditions, training requirements and employment opportunities in the sector.

The report also demonstrates that the work environment, skills and recognition challenges identified in the

original sector study remain: overall low income levels, few benefits, difficult working conditions, lack of respect and recognition, high staff turnover and barriers to training. Only the Quebec government has taken a comprehensive approach to addressing many of these issues.

SCARCE FUNDING,
FRAGMENTATION

In addition, scarce funding and uncoordinated policies and standards in many jurisdictions have caused concerns about the uneven quality of child care programs.

These concerns have made it difficult to attract and retain a qualified child care workforce, including capable supervisors.

Working for Change also notes that many recent funding and policy decisions have increased the number of new programs and initiatives that operate apart from regulated child care, further fragmenting services and the workforce.

The study concludes that strong and supportive public policy, together with the solutions outlined in the report, will help to ensure a workforce that is fairly compensated and valued for its contribution to early childhood education and care. Such a workforce is vital to guaranteeing high quality services to Canada's children.

It's time for change

The sector council has developed a labour market strategy to build a quality workforce as a key component of a quality child care system. With its broad expertise and experience in child care, the sector council looks forward to playing an active role in the consultation process on a national child care program. We don't yet know what form the government's promised program will take, but there's no doubt that it will include the creation of additional child care spaces. This means there's an even greater need to find ways to increase the number of skilled and trained people in the child care workforce. Key areas include better training and education, and funding to improve wages, benefits and working conditions, so that child care will be seen as an attractive career choice.

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An online Labour Market Update

Visit us at www.ccsc-cssge.ca to access the *Working for Change* report and companion documents produced as part of the sector council's Labour Market Update study, conducted in 2003 and 2004:

Working for Change: Canada's Child Care Workforce, Executive Summary, provides a comprehensive summary of the main report.

Profiles and Case Studies tells the story of 20 individuals working in various sectors and capacities in early childhood education, and examines the roles played by the cities of Toronto and Vancouver in supporting regulated child care.

Literature Review includes a review of government, academic and child care sector sources, as well as relevant literature from the health, education and community sectors, and from labour unions, advocacy and professional organizations. The review identifies the key themes and issues relevant to the child care labour market contained in research and reports produced since 1998.

The documents are all available on CD-ROM. Limited quantities are also available in hard copy. Contact: info@ccsc-cssge.ca.

Child Care for a Change!

The sector council was well represented at the *Child Care for a Change: Shaping the 21st Century!* conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba in November. This was the first major event focusing on child care policy in more than 20 years. Hosted by the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD), the conference presented a unique opportunity for child care sector leaders, government officials, academics, activists and members of the workforce to come together and discuss key issues. Look for follow-up on child care workforce issues at the conference in the next issue of the sector council bulletin.

Tackling root causes key to recruitment challenges

Recruitment and retention problems in child care need immediate and simultaneous action to improve job satisfaction, work environment and recognition, says a study sponsored by the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council.

Written by researchers Gillian Doherty and Barry Forer, *Shedding New Light on Staff Recruitment and Retention Challenges in Child Care* analyzes recruitment and retention data collected for the 2001 *You Bet I Care!* study. Funded by Social Development Canada, the report explores why some child care centres experience difficulty attracting qualified staff or have a high number of staff who want to quit or leave the field.

The study confirms well-known workforce issues as predictors of recruitment and retention challenges in child care, including:

- Low wages.
- Few benefits.
- A lack of promotion opportunities.
- Staff feelings that their job is not respected.
- A low average level of ECEC staff training.
- Centres with staff that have a relatively short period of service.

- Staff perceptions that they must leave child care to earn more or work in a higher-status job.

Burnout of directors and staff also emerges as a key predictor of staff recruitment and retention problems.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The report says that making child care a viable and attractive occupation requires comprehensive strategies to improve wages and benefits, increase access to affordable training and promote respect for the occupation. Tackling staff burnout, creating a positive organizational climate and providing appropriate training and support for directors are also priority areas.

Effective measures to address root causes are urgently needed to avert a child care labour shortage in Canada. This can only be accomplished through the development of a well supported and publicly funded child care system.

Management in child care project takes off

A new sector council project, *Supporting Administration and Management (SAM)*, seeks to ensure that supervisors and administrators have access to the skills and resources they need to carry out their roles effectively. The project builds on the *Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners* developed for front-line child care workers by the Canadian Child Care Federation.

Enhancing leadership capacity in child care is a long-standing issue in the sector. For example, the 1998 *Our Child Care Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration* report noted a lack of career and professional development opportunities for

many caregivers. The 2004 follow-up report, *Working for Change*, points to the need for better pedagogical leadership and human resource management skills in child care.

The SAM project represents an important step in meeting the need for appropriate training programs and supports to assist child care managers and administrators. Ensuring trained and skilled leadership will help address recruitment and retention prob-

lems in the field, while enhancing the quality of child care programs. Future phases of the SAM project will include identifying training and curriculum gaps and establishing resources and tools to address these gaps.

The first phase of this three-phase project focuses on completing an occupational analysis on administrative/leadership positions in child care over the next 20 months.

What do occupational standards consist of?

Occupational standards generally have three components, outlined in a written statement of: the skills and abilities required to perform the job; the core knowledge required to perform the job; and the standards of ethical practice expected of practitioners in the occupation.

Comings and goings

The sector council continued to grow throughout the spring and summer, welcoming two new staff members and saying goodbye to another.

Strong public policy needed, says advocacy organization

The Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC) has released a comprehensive policy paper to support the development of a pan-Canadian child care system. The policy paper, *From Patchwork to Framework: A Child Care Strategy for Canada*, says that accessible, high quality child care can only exist in the presence of a strong public policy framework.

The paper points out that while the federal government's election promises and commitment to a child care system for Canada represent a social victory, new funding alone will not produce the desired outcomes. Currently, the federal/provincial/territorial Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care (March 2003) is the sole policy at the federal level dedicated to child care. The paper goes on to say that a successful child care system in Canada cannot exist in the absence of an adequate infrastructure, accountability mechanisms, and accompanying family supports.

From Patchwork to Framework was developed out of a year-long citizen engagement process sponsored by the CCAAC and funded by the Women's Program, Status of Women Canada. The findings are based on research documenting the essentials of quality services and the lessons learned by other countries that have had comprehensive early learning systems in place for decades. For more information visit the CCAAC web site at : www.childcareadvocacy.ca.

After more than two years as coordinator of the sector council, *Judy Woodard* has moved on. The first staff member to join the organization, Judy was directly involved in the successful transition from round table to sector council. Judy was a valued member of the sector council team whose hard work and dedication will be missed.

Kathryn Ohashi joined the sector council as financial and administrative coordinator in June 2004. Kathryn comes to us with an MBA in International Business and extensive project management and finance experience.

Samantha Peek became the sector council's first information and project coordinator in April 2004. Over the past four years Samantha has worked as a communications consultant for the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and CIBC Corporation, and spent time as a front-line child care worker.

There have also been many changes within the sector council.

This October, the sector council said goodbye to Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC) representative *Maryann Bird*. Over the past three years, Maryann has been a vibrant and powerful voice for advocates across the country on the sector council.

Christine McLean has taken Maryann's place as CCAAC representative on the sector council and executive committee. Christine is the former chair of the CCAAC board of directors and past CCAAC representative for Newfoundland and Labrador. She has been involved in child care in the province since 1988 as an early childhood

education (ECE) consultant, ECE instructor and registrar of Child Care Services Certification, and as a former chair of the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Newfoundland and Labrador. She is currently a child care services policy analyst for the provincial government.

The sector council congratulates *Sandra Griffin* on her new position as chief of staff for the federal Minister of Social Development, Ken Dryden. As the Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCF) representative on the sector council and executive committee, Sandra was a key contributor to the growth and development of the sector council over the years.

Barbara Coyle has taken over Sandra's duties, both as executive director of the CCCF and as CCCF representative on the sector council and executive committee. Barbara has been with the CCCF for almost nine years, most recently working as the organization's senior director, development, marketing and communications. She has more than 20 years experience in the corporate and voluntary sectors, and successfully completed a Masters in Management degree for Voluntary Sector Leaders through McGill University more than a year ago.

CONGRATULATIONS to the sector council's *Sheila Davidson*. Sheila has accepted a position as the City of Vancouver's new child and youth advocate, after 12 years as executive director of Simon Fraser University's Childcare Society.

Introducing our directors at large

This issue of the bulletin profiles the sector council's directors at large. Profiles of sector council representatives from the pan-Canadian child care organizations and unions representing child care workers appeared in the January 2004 issue of the bulletin.

Gyda Chud is vice-chair of the sector council and director of the Centre for Professional and Continuing Studies at Vancouver Community College (VCC). She has more than 30 years experience in child care, both professionally and as a member of several provincial and national early childhood education and care organizations. Gyda was the founding chair of the Child Care Human Resources Steering Committee to the sector study, as well as of the Child Care Human Resources Round Table, the predecessor to the sector council.

Dixie Lee Mitchell has been involved in child care for 28 years in various capacities – from a centre director to her current profession as a child care consultant in New Brunswick. She is a past executive board member of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada and a past regional president of Early Child Care and Education New Brunswick. Dixie's work focuses primarily in Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal and Inuit child care communities,

building inclusive environments for all children and supporting families.

Joanne Morris is chair of the sector council and a faculty member at the College of the North Atlantic's Early Childhood Education program. She has more than 30 years experience in child care, including time as a practitioner, policy analyst and trainer. She was a member of the steering committee to the sector council, the trainer/educator representative on the Child Care Human Resources Round Table, and is a past chair of the Association of Early Childhood Educators—Newfoundland and Labrador, and a past president of the Canadian Child Care Federation.

Noreen Murphy is executive director of Churchill Park Family Care Society in Calgary, Alberta. She has more than 20 years experience in middle and senior management in child care and has served on numerous boards of directors and committees of child care organizations, including the Calgary Regional Association for Quality Child

Care, Alberta Association of Family Day Home Services and the Alberta Alliance of Family and Children's Services. She played a key role in founding the Alberta Child Care Network and was its first facilitator. She was also the in-child's-home-care representative on the Child Care Human Resources Round Table.

Jasbir Randhawa is the owner and operator of Jasbir's Family Day-home, a licensed facility in Whitehorse, Yukon, and has been involved in child care for 20 years. She is the past president and communication liaison for the Yukon Child Care Association, president of Kaushee's Place, a women's transition home, and senior vice-president of the World Sikh Organization. Jasbir is also the past Yukon representative on the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada.

Kathy Reid is the provincial director of the Child Care Branch in the province of Manitoba and represents provincial/territorial directors of early childhood education and care on the sector council. She trained as an early childhood educator and worked in the child care field before joining the provincial government in 1975. She has been involved in child care for more than 30 years as a student, front-line practitioner, licensing official, policy-maker and parent.

A call for sector council directors

Here's an opportunity to be part of an organization dedicated to moving forward on the human resource issues in child care. Applications are invited for three at-large positions on the sector council's board of directors. Each position is for a two-year term.

Applicants should be able to demonstrate some of the following qualities:

- Expertise in child care sector human resource issues.

- Leadership in the child care sector.
- Familiarity with a broad range of child care issues related to inclusion, diversity, rural/urban perspectives, research, training, and child care delivery models.

The sector council particularly welcomes applicants with experience in Aboriginal child care, family child care and school age care.

Board members are expected to:

- Help inform the field of the organization's progress and plans through their own networks.

- Volunteer and participate in working groups from time to time.
- Attend weekend board meetings approximately three times a year.

Interested applicants should contact the sector council's financial and administrative coordinator, Kathryn Ohashi, at info@ccsc-cssge.ca, or by mail: Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, 3rd Floor, 323 Chapel St., Ottawa, ON, K1N 7Z2. Note that completed applications and references must be received by **February 14, 2005**.

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