

June 2003

*A bulletin of the Child Care
Human Resources Round Table*

Our Child Care Workforce



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An exciting transition to sector council status

We're getting there! The Round Table is just months away from transforming itself into the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC).

We've been hard at work putting things in place—from deciding on the council's name and new governing structure, to defining the council's mandate and work, and developing a communications strategy for a fall launch. All of these issues will be captured in our Results-based Management Accountability Framework (RMAF), which is simply a new planning tool required for government-funded activities.

The change to sector council status—announced in the January issue of this bulletin—is very good news for all of us in child care.

"Becoming a sector council acknowledges the importance of the child care workforce to society and to the economy," said Round Table Chair Gyda Chud. "It also means a stronger capacity to address workforce issues in the sector, new opportunities for funding for projects and the ability to raise the profile of the important link between child care providers and quality services."

WHAT WILL WE DO?

The sector council's mandate will be to find ways to ensure a skilled workforce that provides high quality early childhood care and education. The council will analyze pressing workforce issues and promote innovative policy directions to address longstanding problems in the sector.

"The child care workforce is the single most important factor that affects the level of quality of child care services," said Chud. "Those who work in the sector—almost all women—are competent, creative, committed and skilled individuals who derive great satisfaction from their work. However, we need action on critical workforce

issues: the need for respect and recognition for the important work of child care, fair pay and benefits, good working conditions and access to appropriate training that meets the changing needs of families and caregivers."

The sector council's first priority will be to focus on the growing and serious problem of recruiting and retaining skilled workers to provide early childhood care and education to Canada's children in their early years.

The CCHRSC will be non-profit and will join the Canadian Child Care Federation and the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada as another pan-Canadian child care organization. But the council will not be member- or affiliate-based. Rather, it will bring together the federation, the advocacy association, the major labour organizations representing child care workers and representatives from the diverse parts of the sector to deal specifically with issues affecting the workforce. The sector council will complement and build on the work of other child care organizations and the Round Table.

HOW WE GOT HERE

The move to sector council status came about when Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) changed the conditions and requirements for sector councils. No longer are these organizations required to achieve self-sufficiency within six years—a condition the child care sector had been unable to meet. As well, HRDC approved funding within a sector council framework for our proposal for enhanced communication, an executive director and tools for planning and evaluating our work. We have this funding until March, 2004.



The sector council's

At the Round Table meeting in April, members approved a proposal for a new governance structure for the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC). Here are the highlights.

The CCHRSC will be accountable to the child care workforce and reflect the rich diversity and uniqueness of the sector.

The council's governing body will be the **Board of Directors**. The board will be comprised of 18 to 20 members:

- **12 organizational directors**
 - 3 representatives from the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada.
 - 3 representatives from the Canadian Child Care Federation.
 - 6 directors are from the major labour organizations representing child care workers: 2 from the Ca-

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nadian Union of Public Employees, 2 from the Confédération des syndicats nationaux and 2 from the National Union of Public and General Employees.

- **6 to 8 directors are directors-at-large**, with one ex-officio director representing provincial and territorial governments.

An **Executive Committee** of 6 will guide the sector council's work between board meetings. The committee will include equal representation from child care organizations, labour organizations and Directors-at-Large. The officers of the Executive Committee will be the Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary/Treasurer.

WAYS OF WORKING

The Sector Council will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner, and in a way that enhances the efforts of the national partners and childcare workforce.

What is a sector council?

There are more than 30 sector councils in Canada, mainly related to industry. Child care is the first social sector to join the ranks of sector councils—an important step in recognizing the value of the child care workforce. Sector councils involve workers, employers, unions, educators, government and other stakeholders. Representatives from these groups come together to analyze sector-wide human resource issues and propose strategies to address workforce challenges.

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A call for sector council directors

The Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC) is accepting applications for the six to eight Directors-at-Large on its founding board. Applicants should be able to demonstrate some of the following qualities:

- Knowledge of child care human resource issues and practice.
- Familiarity with various delivery models, for example, centre-based care, regulated and unregulated family child care, and in-home child care.
- Demonstrated leadership and commitment to promoting the child care sector.
- Knowledge of inclusion issues, and ethnic and cultural diversity.
- Familiarity with both rural and urban child care perspectives.

A nominating committee will select candidates for the new board of directors. This committee is comprised of four organizational representatives and two constituency representatives

from the Round Table. The two constituency representatives will not be re-offering to sit on the sector council.

If you are interested in serving as a CCHRSC director, contact us to receive an application package:

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• Fax: (613) 239-0533 • E-mail: roundtable@on.aibn.com

Please note that your application must be received no later than Friday, September 12, 2003.

Watch for our launch date

It's going to be a great fall this year! That's when the launch of the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council will take place. We'll send out details and post them on our web site as they are firmed up. Visit us at www.cchrrt.ca (English); www.trsgc.ca (French).

Study aims for action on workforce issues

The Labour Market Update Study is in full swing, gathering lots of valuable information that will help the Round Table recommend ways to deal with the growing recruitment and retention problems in the child care sector.

The 15-month LMU project builds on the 1998 sector study, *Our Child Care Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration*. The project will update the data since the sector study's publication, examining the impact of demographic and child care policy initiatives since 1998 on human resource issues in the regulated part of the sector. It will look at factors that influence recruitment, retention and recognition in the child care field, such as wages, working conditions, health and safety concerns, skills, and the values society places on the occupation. The study is being funded by Human Resources Development Canada.

The LMU project has two main

parts. The first is an environmental scan, which involves a literature review, analyzing demographic and labour market information, and gathering information from provincial/territorial and federal governments, labour groups and child care organizations. The second part involves consultation with the field and relevant partners through a survey of early childhood education students in eight post-secondary institutions, focus groups and key informant interviews.

"We've completed the survey with seven of eight post-secondary institutions," said the project's principal researcher, Jane Beach. "We had a very good response rate and are very excited about the many stu-

dents who gave us permission to contact them in future so that we can follow their career paths. This will give us good information about what people in early childhood education are doing with their work and study lives."

RANGE OF ISSUES

The survey looked at a range of issues, from the language most commonly spoken in the student's home and how well students felt prepared to work with children, to their future work plans.

Beach said that five dominant human resource-related themes have emerged from the literature review: quality-related issues, job security and stability issues, public attitudes

and awareness, inclusion and the relationship between early childhood development and child care.

Focus groups are being held with front-line staff and caregivers; kindergarten and preschool teachers; unions representing child care workers; and government officials, trainers, researchers and other experts in the field. The focus groups will be completed by the end of June.

"Once again we are fortunate to be able to conduct this type of research," said Sheila Davidson, the chair of the Round Table steering committee guiding the study. "Our goal is to use it to make a real difference in human resource matters for the people working in the field."

Public links quality with trained, well paid providers

A recent national poll indicates that Canadians want a publicly funded child care system, with trained and appropriately paid child care providers.

The poll, *Perceptions of Quality Child Care*, was sponsored by the Canadian Child Care Federation and the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada. It shows:

- 90 % of Canadians want a nationally coordinated child care plan that gives all children access to quality child care.
- 86% say "there can be a publicly funded child care system that makes quality child care available to all Canadian children."

The poll results demonstrate that the public believes good child care is vital to a child's

development. The findings also indicate that the public links trained, well paid providers to quality services:

- 88% support increasing the wages of child care providers.
- 79% believe that child care providers who have more training provide better care.
- 94% of Canadians believe the most critical years for brain development are the first six years.
- 88% believe that regardless of family background, poor quality child care hurts a child's development.

The results also point to a positive shift in public perceptions of child care itself. Two-thirds of the public view it as a developmental service. Only 17% view it as "babysitting."

The poll was conducted by Millward Brown Goldfarb and administered to a random national-proportionate sample of 1,200 people between November 27, 2002 and December 12, 2002. The results of such a sample are accurate to within +/- 2.9%, 19 out of 20 times.

The full poll results and backgrounders will be made available on the CCCF and CCAAC web sites. Visit www.cccf-fcsge.ca and www.childcareadvocacy.ca.

Monitoring child care dollars

A message to the provinces and territories: the child care sector is watching your follow-through on the intergovernmental agreement on child care.

In March, the provinces and territories signed on to the Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care. These governments made a commitment to spend their portion of the child care allocation in the February federal budget on regulated early learning and child care programs for children under six. The budget allocation is \$900 million over five years, with only \$25 million in the first year and \$75 million on the second.

A number of the agreement's provisions affect the child care workforce:

- The money can be spent on several areas, including capital and operating funding, fee subsidies, wage enhancements, training, and professional development and support, quality assurance and parent information and referral.
- The agreement also says that effective approaches to child care are based on availability and accessibility, affordability, quality, inclusiveness and parental choice. It further stipulates that "examples of initiatives that support high quality early learning and child care could include enhancements to training and support, child/caregiver ratios and group size, compensation, recruitment and retention, physical environment, health and safety and learning environment."

"This agreement indicates that there is an understanding of the importance of having trained staff in the sector who are paid decent wages," said Round Table Chair Gyda Chud. "But it is also only a very modest, if not meager, first step in terms of what really is required to support the workforce adequately."

Chud noted that annual, public reporting is part of the agreement. The sector must make sure investments are made in the identified areas, and specifically in areas that support the child care workforce.

REGIONAL ACTION ON AGREEMENT

As part of the monitoring process, it's essential to track provincial announcements on child care spending that directly affects human resource issues. Already, several provinces have said there will be more money for child care:

- The **Saskatchewan** government has announced it will put \$1.8 million towards licensed child care spaces; \$1 million to increase child care subsidies by an average \$20 per child per month; and \$200,000 towards wage and human resource requirements in licensed child care centres. The \$3 million allocation is made up of \$2.2 million in provincial funding and \$800,000 from the federal government.
- In **Manitoba's** April budget, the government announced \$6 million in additional operating grants to centres, family child care and nursery schools in order to increase wages and incomes for service providers. The \$6 million represents an 8.6 per cent increase for child care over last year's budget. This money will support the government's five-year-plan for the sector. Since 2000, funding for child care in the province has increased by about 41 per cent to nearly \$76 million.

- **Yukon's** child care centres and family day homes will receive \$230,000 in "emergency" government funding. Half will go to direct operating grants based on "set-up" licensed spaces. These are spaces a program is staffed for, regardless of whether or not the space is occupied. The other half of the money will go to child care provider wages.

Child care advocates in the regions view these announcements positively on the whole, but caution that the amounts still fall short of answering the concerns of the sector.

ECEs recognized for commitment, skill

Thirty-one early childhood educators were honoured in May with a Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Early Childhood Education. This new award recognizes outstanding early childhood educators whose dedication and skill have instilled a love of learning in children and helped prepare them to take on life's challenges.

The award is an extension of the Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence. It provides certificates of excellence worth \$5,000 and certificates of achievement worth \$1,000. Nomination guidelines for the 2003-2004 awards will be available in the fall. (For more information visit: <http://pma-ppm.ic.gc.ca>.)

Congratulations to these special early childhood educators:

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Tracy Doyle, Tignish

QUÉBEC

Denis Archambault and **Marie Josée Portelance**, Masson-Angers; **Geneviève Provençal**, Drummondville; **Sylvie Michaud**, Neufchâtel

ONTARIO

Pamela Blanchfield, Niagara Falls; **Valerie Charlie** and **Keith McCrady**, Thunder Bay; **Janet MacDougall**, Toronto; **Vi Matheson**, Oakville; **Jamie Lee Millen**, Hamilton; **Sonia Tavares**, Mississauga; **Andrea Zadow**, Ottawa

MANITOBA

Tammy Gingras, **Donna Huyber** and **Rosemarie Klein**, Langruth

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Elizabeth Reid, Vancouver; **Anise Abdulla**, Coquitlam; **Parin Almidhamed**, Burnaby; **Glenice Barber**, Sidney; **Genevieve Boden**, Duncan; **Lesley Henderson**, Comox; **Valerie Lavallie**, Coquitlam; **Al Lawrence**, Duncan; **Leanna Logan**, Vancouver; **MaryLou Sharpe**, Nanaimo; **Rosalind Turcotte**, Victoria

YUKON

Elizabeth Kaye, Old Crow; **Jasbir Randhawa**, Whitehorse

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Rhonda Latimer and **Norma Shaw**, Hay River

Nfld. and Labrador education supplement counts

There is anecdotal evidence that suggests the educational supplement for certified early childhood educators in Newfoundland and Labrador is having a positive impact on retention.

Although an evaluation report says it's too soon for definitive results, "the research group found that the supplement helps people to say they will stay in the field," says Round Table member Joanne Morris, an educator in the early childhood education faculty at the College of the North Atlantic. The supplement—now in its second year—is paid annually to certified early childhood educators who have additional early childhood care and education (ECCE) credentials and work in licensed child care centres. Morris said the sector wants in-

creases to the supplement as new federal early childhood development dollars come to the province. An early childhood educator with a two-year ECCE diploma will receive a \$4,160 supplement when the current funding levels out in the third year; those with a one-year ECCE certificate will receive \$2,080.

The supplement is one of several human resource-related measures the provincial government has implemented in the child care sector. In the 2002-2003 academic year, non-repayable tuition grants were awarded to support about 50 students in the

two-year early childhood education diploma programs.

In addition, four years ago the government made it mandatory for all practising early childhood educators and family child care providers in the regulated sector to become certified by June 1, 2003. But "hundreds have not met the deadline," Morris said. "Four years is too short and turnover is still high. With so many new people still coming into the system on a regular basis it's hard to keep up with the certifications." Morris said the sector was lobbying for an extended deadline.

Nothing but cuts in BC

The BC government is rolling back the wages of many child care providers to 1998 levels as part of its \$50 million cut to the sector over a three-year period. The impact of these cuts will be far-reaching, negatively affecting child care providers, and children and their families. Already, programs are closing, more than 10,000 families have lost all or part of their child care subsidy, and increasing numbers of children are in unlicensed settings or on their own before and after school. A flyer issued by the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC in May summed it up: "Child care month: nothing to celebrate!"

"Historic" decision gives family child care workers union rights

The Québec Labour Tribunal has given family child care providers the right to unionize and negotiate their working conditions, a decision that could have far-reaching implications for the sector.

The ruling says that since all aspects of the work of family child care providers in the province are under the control of Les centres de la petite enfance (CPE), the workers cannot be considered independent contractors exempt from labour laws.

In her decision, Tribunal Judge Suzanne Hardman said that child care providers in two CPEs, La Rose

des vents and La Ribouldingue, receive a stable income (based on the \$5-a-day parent fee for child care in Quebec and a per-child contribution from the CPEs), making them financially dependent workers. There are 10,000 family child care providers in Québec.

More than 40 per cent of the province's \$5-a-day child care spaces in the CPEs are in family child care. Unlike their counterparts working in centre-based care, family child care providers do not receive benefits or paid vacations, cannot be absent except in emergencies, work 10 hours a day five days a week, and are not entitled to Employment Insurance, worker's compensation or maternity leave.

Unionization was one of the strategies advanced in the sector study, *Our Child Care Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration*, to improve the wages and working conditions of child care providers.

The Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN), the major union representing child care workers in Québec, hailed the decision as "historic" and as giving family child care providers "the right to improve their deplorable working conditions." The CSN and the Centrale des syndicats du Québec have 68 applications pending to unionize family child care providers in various parts of the province.

The employers and the government have until early June to appeal the decision.

A big welcome to our first executive director!

We're pleased to announce the appointment of Diana Carter as the first executive director of the Round Table.

Diana was appointed executive director in mid-February. She brings to the Round Table extensive experience as a senior manager in children's programs and services in both community and government sectors.

Diana was previously executive director of the Big Sisters of Ottawa-Carleton for 16 years. She was at Big Sisters during the organization's merger with Big Brothers, and has experience in organizational and governance model development. This expertise is a bonus for us as we move to sector council status.

Since coming on staff, Diana has immersed herself in child care and human resource issues in the sector, as well as doing the daily work of overseeing our many activities and projects during this important period of organizational transformation. It's a lot to step into right away, but she's obviously up to the challenge!

How to reach us

To obtain a copy of our operational plan, or give us feedback on any of the projects you've read about in this bulletin or any other issues related to our work, contact us at:

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An award- winning group

In the January issue of the bulletin we reported that Sandra Griffin, representative of the Canadian Child Care Federation on the Round Table, had received a Golden Jubilee Medal of Queen Elizabeth II. We're delighted to report that several other current and former Round Table members have also received Golden Jubilee medals:

- **Gyda Chud**, Coordinator, Early Childhood Education, Vancouver Community College, and chair of the Round Table.
- **Debra Mayer**, child care consultant and CCAAC organizational representative on the Round Table.
- **Joanne Morris**, Early Childhood Education Faculty, College of the North Atlantic in St. John's, Nfld., and trainer/educator constituency representative on the Round Table.
- **Maryann Bird**, executive director of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada and former Round Table organizational representative (CCAAC).
- **Gillian Doherty**, researcher and former research constituency representative on the Round Table.
- **Lee Dunster**, Project Director, Family Child Care Training Project and former unregulated family care representative on the Round Table.

The Golden Jubilee medal recognizes "Canadians who have made a significant contribution to their fellow citizens, their community or to Canada."