

# The child care community moves forward together

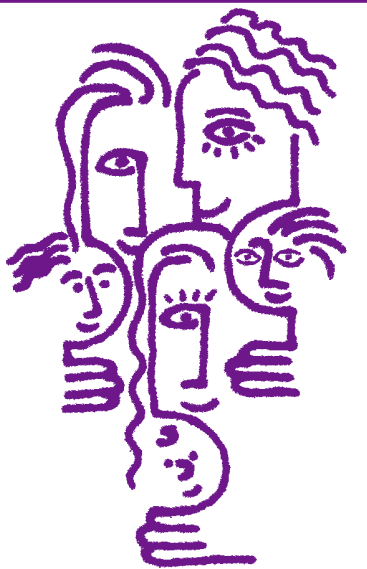
CHILD CARE  
SECTOR STUDY

UPDATE

December, 1999

**A bulletin of the Child Care Human Resources Transition Committee**

Our  
Child Care  
Workforce



**What's round, a potential voice for the child care community to address human resource issues, and hoping to take its first breath in April 2000?**

**Stumped? This Child Care Sector Study Update contains the answer and lots of other information about what's happened since the May 1998 launch of the report, Our Child Care Workforce. You'll read about community reaction to the child care sector study, which examined caregivers working in regulated home care, licensed child care centres, school age programs, nursery schools and caregivers providing unregulated child care in their own or in children's homes, as well as other child care settings. If you haven't heard about the study yet, there's information on that too. You'll also meet the people behind the immediate follow-up activities to the study. They**

**form the Child Care Human Resources Transition Committee, a working group of 11 charged with exploring the establishment of a sector council as a way of moving the recommendations of Our Child Care Workforce forward. Most important, you'll find a proposal the committee has developed to give a strong voice to caregiver issues in the study.**

**And that brings us to the riddle above. The answer is: a Child Care Human Resources Round Table. Please read on to find out more about this proposed body. Keep a constructively critical, but open mind. This is new, exciting ground our sector is breaking! We've laid a good foundation for working together through the sector study process. Now, our aim is to build on this base to effectively tackle the many challenges facing today's child caregivers.**

## A strong, collective voice

What's the most effective way to make sure the recommendations in *Our Child Care Workforce* are implemented? The Transition Committee is proposing the creation of a Child Care Human Resources Round Table, to be formalized at a national symposium in April 2000. Below we'll try to answer some of the questions you undoubtedly have about this Round Table. But we hasten to add we don't have all the answers yet. The concept and details of the Round Table are still evolving.

### What is the Child Care Human Resources Round Table and why is it needed?

The Round Table is a formalized mechanism with designated "seats" for organizations and individuals from various constituencies of the child care community. *It is not a new organization*, but rather a gathering or ongoing forum that brings together designated organizations and individuals from the child care community. It is not membership-based and its structure would evolve over time.

The Round Table will enhance the impor-

tant work being done by child care organizations on human resource issues, and provide a national focus for these issues. Currently, there's no one existing organization that is able to provide a Canada-wide framework for the range of human resource issues facing all segments of the child care sector. There was strong support for the creation of such a sector-wide body during the sector study consultations with the child care community and government.

# Our Child Care Workforce highlights caregiver issues

*Our Child Care Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration* is a ground-breaking report, launched in May 1998, on the challenges facing the more than 300,000 people, overwhelmingly women, who provide child care services in Canada.

The study found that although caregivers play a vital role in healthy child development, they receive poor wages and few benefits, have limited access to the education and training they need to do their jobs, and get little recognition for their important contribution. The report also highlighted the chronic underfunding and lack of coherent public policy for the child care sector. It concluded that action in all of these areas is essential to ensure high quality child care.

The committee was assisted by a team of consultants who carried out the research and wrote the report. Funding came from Human Resources Development Canada.

*Our Child Care Workforce* recommends that child care organizations look at ways to work together to support caregivers in all aspects of their occupation, and push for funding and policy changes to child care.

The report also calls on the federal and provincial governments to

provide policy leadership on the reforms necessary to meet the needs of children, families and providers.

Unique in its field

*Our Child Care Workforce* is different from other child care studies. It looks at child care from the caregiver's perspective, focusing almost exclusively on the human resource and training issues faced by caregivers. It includes all the different types of child care—regulated home care, licensed child care cen-

tres, school age programs, nursery schools, unregulated child care in caregivers' or children's homes and other child care settings—and examines the sector as a whole. Its process provided a way for all stakeholders in child care to have a voice around human resource issues. It provided an unprecedented opportunity for the child care community to come together as never before and develop stronger ties among its different constituencies.

Inclusive representation

The study was initiated in 1996 and conducted over a two-year period. It was undertaken by a steering committee of representatives from child care organizations, professional associations, unions, advocacy groups, postsecondary institutions, government, researchers, and resource and support programs.

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## The Child Care Human Resources Transition Committee

A lot of good reports end up sitting on a shelf. But not this one! From the start, the 35-member sector study steering committee was adamant that there needed to be follow up on how to move the report's recommendations forward. And that's how the Child Care Human Resources Transition Committee was born: its members were appointed by the steering committee before it disbanded. The transition committee's task was to follow up on the sector study's recommendation to explore the establishment of a child care sector council.

The members of the transition committee come from across Canada. Their child care experience reflects the perspectives of centre-based and home care, child care organizations, labour, training institutions and government. The committee members are:

**Sandra Beckman**  
**Maryann Bird**  
**Louise Bourgon**  
**Gyda Chud (chair)**  
**Lee Dunster**  
**Kathleen Flanagan Rochon**  
**Jamie Kass**  
**Joanne Morris**  
**Mab Oloman**  
**Marg Rodrigues**  
**Laurel Rothman**

(Sandra Beckman recently replaced Dianne Bascombe, and Maryann Bird replaced Wendy Atkin.)

## What is the purpose of the Round Table?

The role of the Round Table would be to move forward the recommendations of *Our Child Care Workforce* and address other child care human resource issues that emerge as priorities.

The Round Table would promote collaborative action within and beyond the child care sector.

It would enhance the ability and capability to work on human resource issues by building on existing experience and expertise and through actions such as:

- providing a forum for identifying common ground and shared goals;
- initiating, fostering, and reinforcing dialogue among the sector's diverse communities;

- generating activities and action plans that build upon the current efforts of the sector;
- identifying and exploring child care needs and trends with regard to their repercussions on work organization, wages and working conditions, training and continuing education;
- initiating and/or supporting actions that will lead to the recognition of the social and economic impact of the child care workforce; and
- creating reference and/or work groups from within and beyond the child care community to advise on and assist with specific projects and activities.

## What are human resource issues?

The term "human resources" includes a range of issues related to caregivers. Here are some specific human resource issues included in the sector study:

- wages, benefits and working conditions;
- qualifications and experience;
- turnover rates;
- opportunities for advancement;
- work environment and job satisfaction;
- career and education paths;
- portability of credentials;
- government licensing and regulations;
- training and human resource development programs and options; and
- advocacy, professionalization and unionization.

## How might the Round Table carry out its role?

Here is an example that focuses on the issue of caregiver wages and working conditions.

- The Round Table could help co-ordinate efforts by child care and related organizations to push forward on this issue. It might do this by:
- calling a meeting of child care organizations, women's organizations and labour to discuss strategies for a campaign and how to obtain funding;

- finding out what organizations need by way of concrete communications support for a public education campaign, providing this support, and co-ordinating an overall campaign;
- initiating research that no other organization has done or will likely do, such as a study on the impact of various strategies to enhance wages and working conditions.

## Who would sit at the Round Table?

The initial composition is proposed as follows:

- One appointed representative from each of two national child care organizations and from the two labour organizations representing child care workers:
  - The Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCCF)
  - The Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC)
  - The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)
  - The Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)
- One representative from each of these constituencies: centre-based child care, regulated family child care, unregulated family child care, in-home caregivers, school age child care, researchers, trainers, employers/parents, the related workforce (e.g. from resource centres, early intervention programs), and federal/provincial/territorial governments (ex officio).

The Round Table would also be able to establish reference groups and working groups as necessary to broaden participation and draw on expertise from women's groups, teachers, advocacy groups, human resource specialists and others as appropriate.

## To whom would the Round Table be responsible?

Collectively, the Round Table's overall responsibility would be to the broader child care sector through reporting on the activities the table undertakes. The Round Table would also be accountable to its funders for carrying out approved projects.

The Round Table representatives from the four key organizations would be responsible to their constituencies through their respective organizations' accountability structures. Individual members of the Round Table would be responsible for representing the broad perspectives of their constituencies on human resources issues, and articulating their constituencies' needs with others in the child care sector.

## How will Round Table members be selected?

Criteria for the application process will ensure that the Round Table reflects the diversity of the child care sector and cuts across geographic regions. A call for applications will follow. A selection committee of representatives from the four national organizations and two members of the working group not seeking appointment to the Round Table will recommend eight people for an inaugural term, including at least two members of the transition committee to ensure continuity. A national symposium, planned for April 2000, will formalize the appointments.

## How would the Round Table be funded?

The Round Table would take a project-based approach, and seek funding from the Sectoral Partnership Initiatives Program and Child Care Visions Program of Human

Resources Development Canada. When matching project funds would be required, these would come from in-kind contributions, such as volunteer hours.

# What can you tell us about the symposium in April 2000?

About 100 individuals will be invited to participate in this two-day symposium to be held in Ottawa in April. They will be selected from provincial and national child care organizations, related social policy organizations, the labour and research communities, postsecondary institutions, provincial and federal governments and the less organized child care community. The goals of the symposium will be to:

- develop a common understanding

of the human resource issues facing the child care sector;

- identify priorities for action;
- endorse the Round Table; and
- formally appoint the members of the Round Table.

Are there any other activities planned between now and the symposium?  
In June, 1999, the Transition Committee convened the first gathering of the

four national organizations that were asked to serve as the "core" of the Round Table—the Canadian Child Care Federation, the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, the Canadian Labour Congress and the Confédération des syndicats nationaux. Representatives from these four organizations will meet again prior to the symposium to consider their roles, responsibilities and ways in which they can best work together to support the Round Table.

Plans are underway for a Child Care Labour forum—the first of its kind in Canada. The forum will be an opportunity for unionized members of the child care workforce to identify priority areas and activities for labour stemming from the recommendations in *Our Child Care Workforce* and to gather support for the proposed Round Table.

## How can you become involved?

Since *Our Child Care Workforce* was launched, interest in the report and the related package of publications has been remarkable. The 1-800 toll free line has been incredibly busy with callers from across Canada requesting material and offering support for the report and its recommendations. Because of the high demand, some documents have been reprinted several times. Several Transition Committee members have facilitated discussions on the report at meetings and conferences to very positive responses.

If you haven't yet read *Our Child Care Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration*, or related print material, please contact:

Child Care Human Resources Steering Committee  
c/o 383 Parkdale Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1Y 4R4  
Phone: (613) 729-5289 or 1-800-858-1412  
Fax: (613) 729-3159  
E-mail: [cccf@sympatico.ca](mailto:cccf@sympatico.ca)

If you have questions or comments about the proposed Round Table, we welcome them! Please use the Fax Back form on this page to share your comments with the Transition Committee. Remember: the development of the Round Table is still in process and we continue to define and refine our vision and our plans. We might not yet have the answers you seek. Still, your thoughts and questions will be helpful as we plan the symposium and generate a list of important "Q's and A's" to address at the gathering.

[How to find out more about applying](#)

The application package for membership on the Round Table will be widely distributed to organizations across the country in January 2000. We welcome your early interest for application and invite you to call 1-800-858-1412 for more information and to request an application package.

## Sector Study Fax Back

TO: The Child Care Human Resources Transition Committee  
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FROM: Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Here are my comments and/or questions about the proposed Child Care Human Resources Round Table:

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