



## Child Care Human Resources Sector Council Conseil Sectoriel des ressources humaines des services de garde à l'enfance

### Media Release

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### Working conditions key to success of Ottawa's child care plan

Wages and working conditions are so poor in many licensed child care settings that staff are taking their child development expertise elsewhere. Staff turnover has long plagued the child care sector but a new study released today by the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, says the situation has never been worse.

Ironically, the recent influx of federal funding for early childhood initiatives has contributed to the problem. Many provinces have by-passed child care to use their federal funds to develop health and education programs for young children where early childhood educators can apply their training with less hassle and for more money.

“People who want to work with young children now have options beyond nursery schools or child care. Unfortunately many ECE graduates are planning for careers in anything but child care,” says Joanne Morris of St. John's, chair of Council.

*Working for Change: Canada's Child Care Workforce* found today's ECE graduates less willing to put up with 10-11 hour days, in under resourced programs where they are often required to play the role of custodian rather than educator. This problem is compounded by the need for strong leadership in managing ECE programs. More than half the ECE students surveyed for the study plan to work in other children's programs. A staffing review found only 42% are still working in child care five years after graduation.

The study's findings suggest the federal government's plan to add tens of thousands of new child care spaces over the next five years may be fall short unless workforce issues are addressed. “Quality child care cannot happen without trained staff”, says Council member Raymonde Leblanc of Montreal.

The study points to Quebec's experience. When confronted with a staffing wall during the rapid expansion of its child care system the province responded with a new program curriculum and other quality improvements; an aggressive recruitment campaign; innovative in-service staff training opportunities; and, new funding for training institutions. Pushed by the unions, the province followed up with pensions, benefits, a substantial wage boost and a province-wide salary scale that has kept the Quebec plan on track.

Accountability mechanisms are critical to ensure workforce conditions are addressed, says Vancouver's Gyda Chud, the Council's vice-chair. "Otherwise governments can create programs, but there will be no one to work in them."

The full report and supporting documents are available at [www.ccsc-cssge.ca](http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca).

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The CCHRSC is a pan-Canadian; non-profit organization dedicated to moving forward on human resource issues in child care. The Sector Council brings together child care, labour organizations, and other sector representatives to develop a confident, skilled and respected workforce.

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