

A Portrait of Canada's Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Workforce (2009)



**Child Care
Human Resources
Sector Council**

A Portrait of the Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce

This report provides a statistical overview of the labour market situation in the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector. Consistent and accurate information on the ECEC sector is relatively scarce because there is no regularly collected pan-Canadian survey and the Census data are collected once every five years. The data for this report were obtained from standard Census tables and a custom tabulation of the 2006 Census data. The Census provides information that is collected from 20% of all households and is the most detailed and consistent data on people by their occupation, industry, education and earnings. These data provide an in-depth look at the ECEC sector. The following discussion first examines the ECEC workforce or labour force using a broad definition of the sector, and then focuses more narrowly on those who work in different types of child and care, their education and income.

Who is in the workforce?

Most of those who work in the early childhood education and care sector are included in the National Occupational Classification (NOC) category:

- Early Childhood Educators and Assistants (NOC 4214) (see Figure 1).

Three additional NOC groups that are members of the broader ECEC workforce include:

- Elementary School and Kindergarten Teachers (NOC 4142)
- Elementary and Secondary School Teacher Assistants (NOC 6472)
- Babysitters, Nannies and Parents' Helpers (NOC 6474)

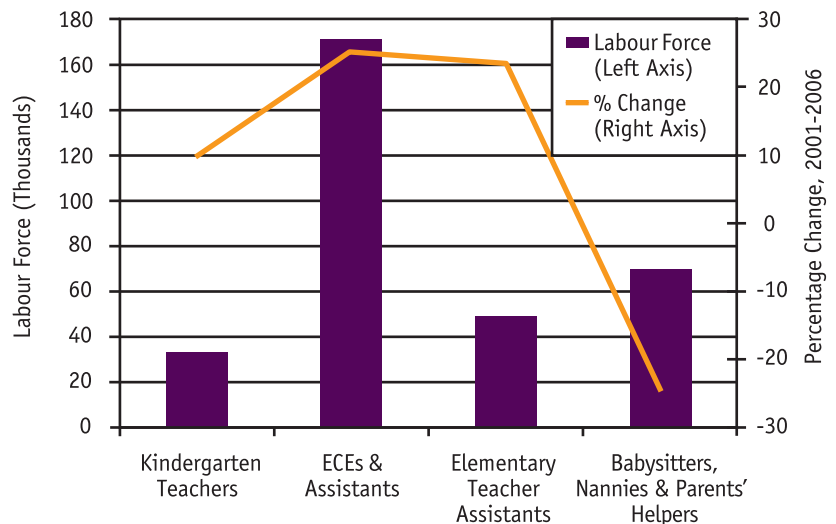
The Broader ECEC Workforce

Members of the broader ECEC labour force¹ include an estimated:

- 170,340 early childhood educators (ECEs) and assistants or 100% of NOC 4214
- 69,785 babysitters, nannies and parents' helpers or 100% of NOC 6474
- 49,600 teaching assistants who work with children under the age of 12 or an estimated one half of all elementary and secondary school teachers assistants (NOC 6472)
- 32,700 kindergarten teachers or an estimated one eighth of all elementary and kindergarten teachers (NOC 4142)

This brings the total ECEC workforce to approximately 322,425.

Figure 1: The Broader ECEC Workforce



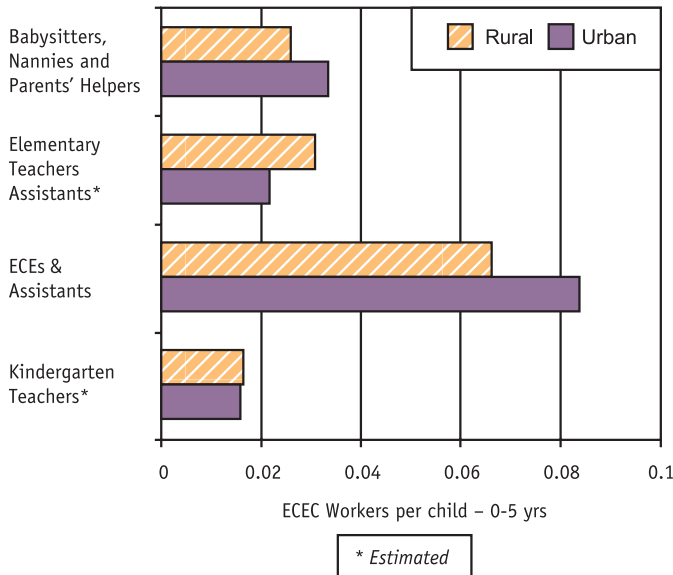
¹ Labour force is by definition equal to both employed and unemployed.

Most of those employed in the broader ECEC sector—163,580 in 2006—are employed as ECEs and assistants. In comparison there are 64,960 babysitters, nannies, and parents’ helpers, an estimated 47,650 teacher assistants and 32,100 kindergarten teachers.

Rural vs. Urban

There is a distinct difference between urban and rural area coverage, defined as the number of people employed in these occupations relative to the number of young children aged 0-5 years (see Figure 2). For example, in urban areas across Canada there are roughly eight ECEs and Assistants for every one hundred children, so the ratio is around 0.08.

Figure 2: Greater ECEs & Assistants Coverage in Urban Areas



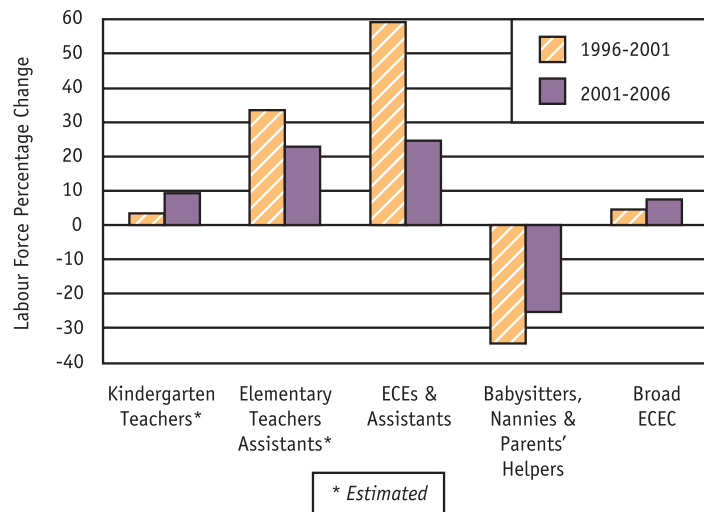
There are relatively more ECEs and assistants and babysitters, nannies and parents’ helpers per young child in the urban areas than in the rural areas. In contrast, it is estimated that there are more elementary teachers assistants per child in the rural areas, and there are roughly comparable numbers of kindergarten teachers per young child in the urban and rural areas.

Increasing ECEC Workforce and Employment

The estimated size of the broader ECEC workforce increased by 4.8% between 1996 and 2001, and by 7.7% between 2001 and 2006. Most of the increase was concentrated in two occupations: ECEs and assistants and teaching assistants (see Figure 3). There was a large decrease in the number of babysitters, nannies and parents’ helpers from 1996 to 2006. By occupation the percentage increases (or decreases) from 2001 to 2006 are:

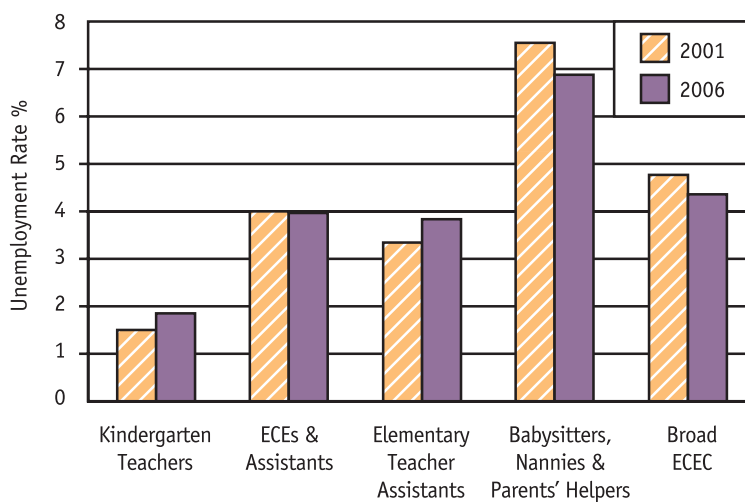
- 24.9% for ECEs and assistants
- 9.5% kindergarten teachers
- 23.1 teaching assistants
- -24.8% babysitters, nannies and parents’ helpers.

Figure 3: ECEs and Assistants Fastest Growing Occupation



The number of people employed in the broader ECEC workforce increased by 8.2% from 2001 to 308,300 in 2006. This increase is larger than the rise in the overall labour force, which means that the number of unemployed people available to work in the ECEC sector shrank over this period from 14,300 to 14,100 and the unemployment rate fell from 4.8% to 4.4%. As of 2006, the lowest unemployment rate among occupations in the ECEC workforce was an estimated 1.8% for kindergarten teachers and the second lowest was for elementary teaching assistants at an estimated 3.8%. The unemployment rate for ECEs and assistants was 4.0%. Unemployment was highest for babysitters, nannies and parents' helpers at 6.9% (see Figure 4). In comparison the unemployment rate for all occupations was 6.6% in 2006.

Figure 4: Low Unemployment Rate in Many ECEC Occupations



Education

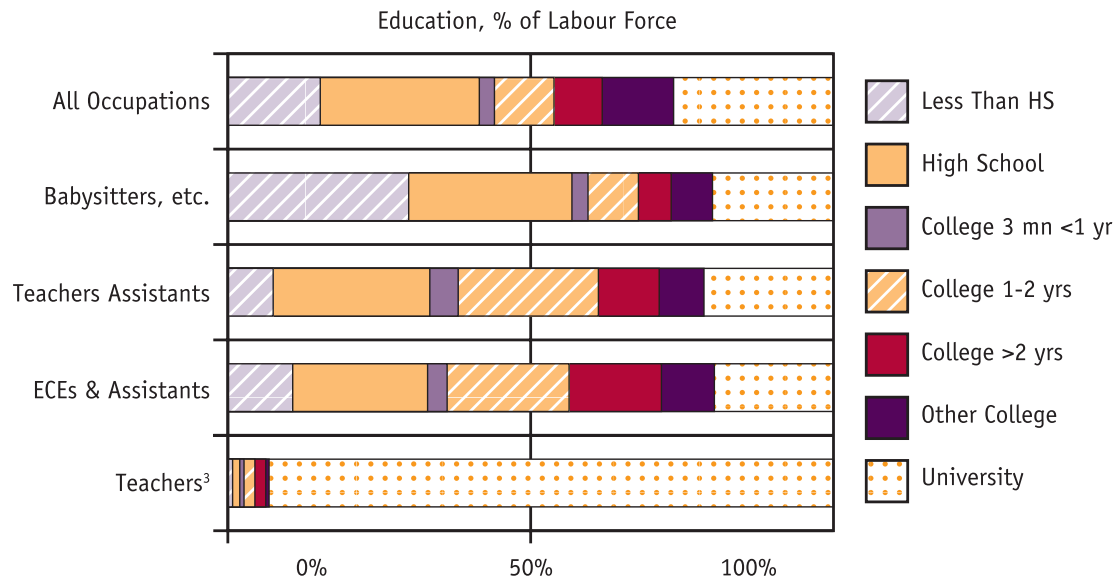
A higher proportion of people in the ECEC sector have a post-secondary credential (a one-year certificate, a two-year diploma or a three- or four-year university degree) compared to the overall workforce. More specifically:

- 67% of ECEs and Assistants have a post-secondary credential
- 67% of Teacher Assistants have a post-secondary credential
- 98.2% of Teachers have a post-secondary credential²
- 43% of Babysitters, Nannies and Parent Helpers have a post-secondary credential

Thus, on average, 77% of the ECEC workforce have a post-secondary credential compared to 58% of the total workforce in Canada.

Most of these post-secondary credentials are concentrated at the college level (see Figure 5). Most of the workers in the occupations in the broader ECEC sector have relatively less university education at the bachelors level and above than the overall workforce. The one exception is teachers who have a significantly higher proportion of people with a university degree.

² Kindergarten teachers cannot be specifically identified in the Census data, so the following sections on education and earnings will report the information for all kindergarten and elementary teachers.

Figure 5: Level of Schooling in Broader ECEC Workforce

Earnings

ECEs and assistants earned much less than other workers and less than most women in other occupations. Median full-year full-time income for 2005 was:

- All Occupations: \$41,401
- Women: \$35,830
- Elementary and Kindergarten Teachers: \$57,166
- Teaching Assistants: \$27,488
- ECEs and Assistants: \$20,155
- Babysitters, Nannies, and Parents' Helpers: \$15,239

Where They Work

There are different types of early childhood education and care related industries and each tend to employ certain types of occupations. Private households overwhelmingly employ babysitters. Schools employ mostly teachers and teaching assistants. The North American Industry Classification (NAICS) industry 'Child Day-Care Services' employs primarily ECEs and assistants. Of the 163,580 people working as ECEs and Assistants in 2006, 141,390 worked in the child care services industry and 10,940 by the elementary and secondary school system. The remaining 11,250 people are spread over a number of industries. Most of the people employed in the child day-care services industry are ECEs and Assistants, with close to 80% of all employees in the child day-care services industry being ECEs and assistants. Most of the people working in child care centres and family child care would be recorded as working in this industry.

³ Kindergarten teachers cannot be specifically identified in the Census data, so the following sections on education and earnings will report the information for all kindergarten and elementary teachers.

Early Childhood Educators and Assistants

The single largest occupation in the ECEC sector is the Early Childhood Educators and Assistants, with 163,580 employed people in 2006. As a result, the next section focuses exclusively on information pertaining to ECEs and Assistants.

In order to focus more closely on those who are likely to be employed in child care centres and family child care only those who are ECEs and assistants and work in the “Child Day-Care Services” industry will be included in the following estimates. The number of ECEs and assistants who work in child care centres is estimated based on the number of people who state that they have a usual place of work in the Census, while those who work in family child care are based on the number of people who state that they work at home. Although this approach is not perfect, it provides an idea of the number of people who work in child care centres versus the number of people in family child care. Based on this approach, the number of ECEs and assistants in 2006 was:

- 90,185 in child care centres
- 47,665 in family child care

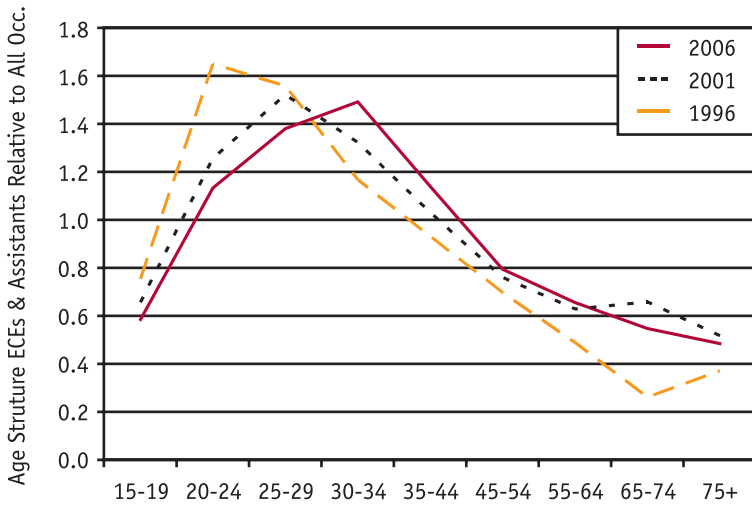
Gender

More than 96% of ECEs and assistants are women. This is the sixth most female dominated occupation in the country, after Medical secretaries (99%), Dental assistants (98%), Secretaries (except legal and medical) (98%), Legal secretaries (98%), Dental hygienists and dental therapists (97%), but ahead of Court recorders and Medical transcriptionists (96%), Dietitians and Nutritionists (95%), and Audiologist and speech-language pathologists (94%).

Age

The ECEs and Assistants workforce is relatively young in relation to all occupations. This can be seen in the chart on page 7, which shows the relative age structure of the ECEs and assistants compared to all occupations. There is a larger share of ECEs and assistants workforce in the age groups between 20 and 34, while there are proportionately fewer people in the older age cohorts. As the ECEs and assistants workforce ages, the largest relative difference is shifting to older age cohorts. In 1996, ECEs and assistants workforce had a relative large share of people in the 20-24 age cohort. By 2001, that cohort had become five years older and the 25-29 cohort was relatively large, by 2006 the 30-34 age cohort was the largest. In each successive period the relative size of the largest cohort became smaller. And at the same time the importance of older cohorts for the ECEs and assistants has increased. From 1996 to 2006, the proportion of the ECEs and assistants workforce aged 45 or more rose from 18.7% to 29.0%—an increase of 10.3%, compared to 9% for all occupations. ECEs and assistants also saw a large drop in the percentage of workers under 25—a 6.4% drop compared to 0.3% rise for all occupations.

Figure 6: ECEs and Assistants Younger Than Average Occupation



ECEs and Assistants: Education in Depth

There is a significant degree of variation in the level of schooling for ECEs and assistants across Canada. The territories and Newfoundland have a relatively

high proportion of the workforce with less than high school education. PEI, Quebec and Ontario have the highest proportion of ECEs and assistants who possess a post-secondary diploma or degree.

Figure 7: Large Variations in Education of ECEs and Assistants

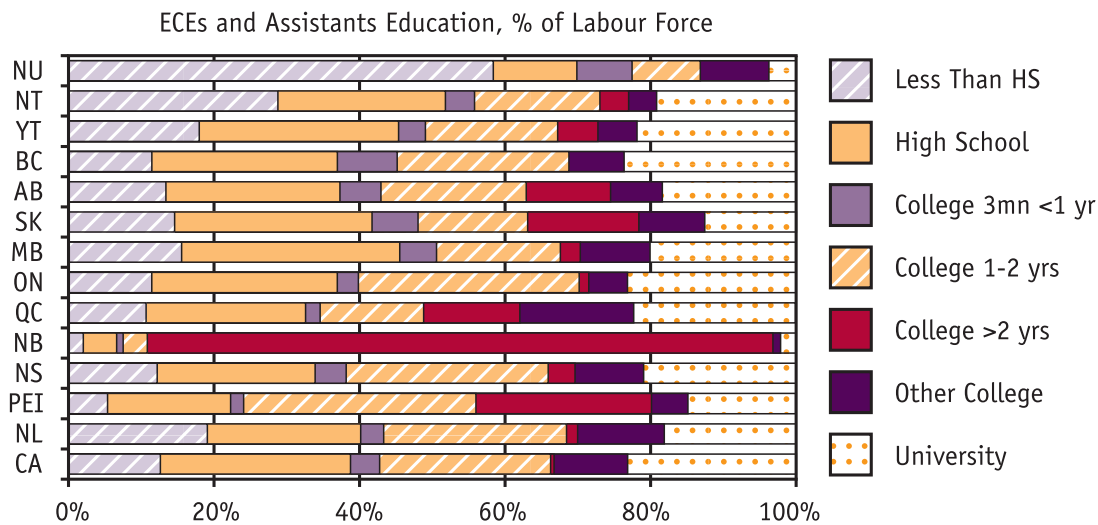
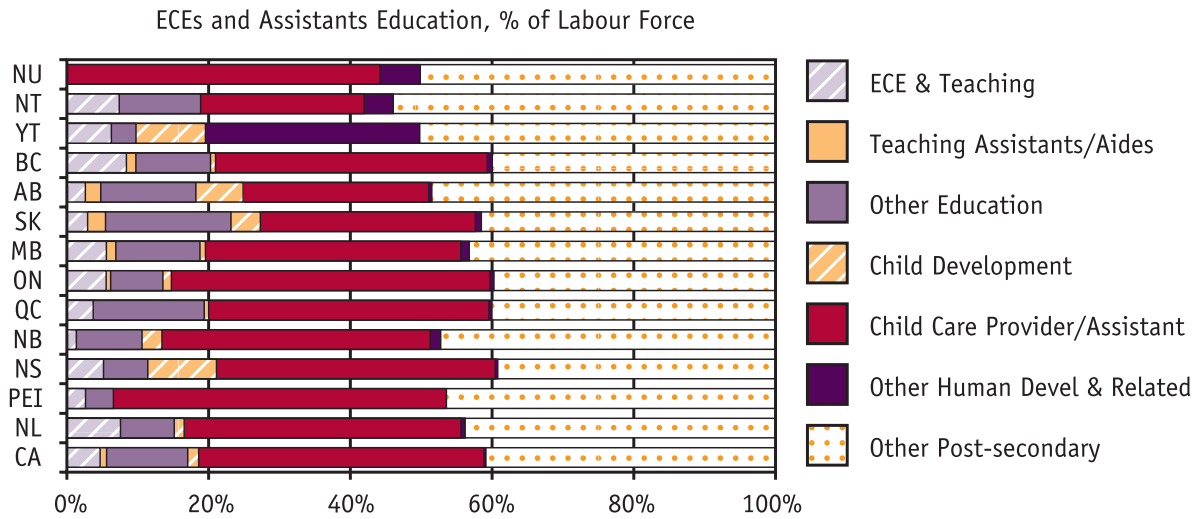
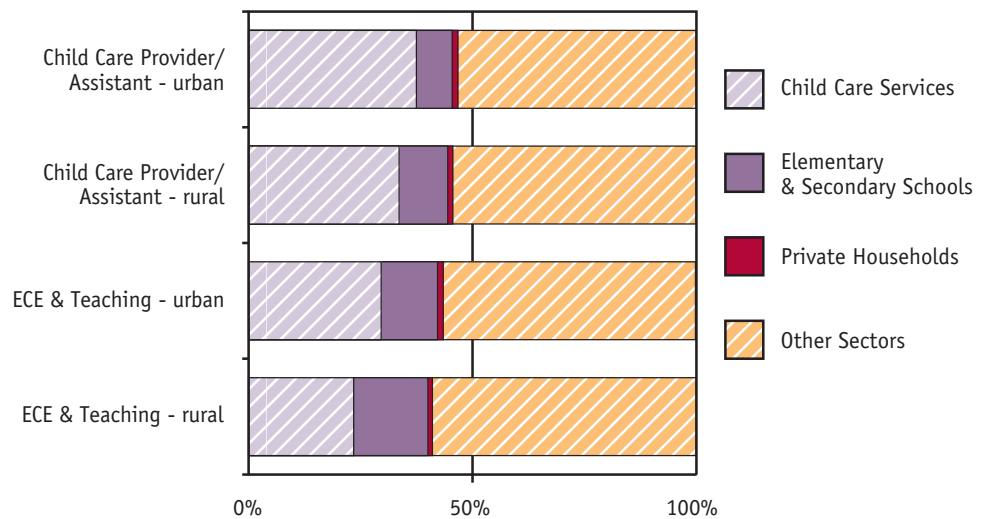


Figure 8: Differences in Types of Post-Secondary Education



In terms of the field of post-secondary study, the two most common credentials are early childhood education at the college and university levels (see Figure 8).³ However, the majority of child care workers do not possess a child care related major. For example, close to 40% of the ECEs and assistants workforce possess a post-secondary degree that is not child care or education related. Of the two early childhood education programs mentioned above, more than half of the people with these major fields of study do not work in school, child care services or private households. They are finding employment in other sectors or are dropping out of the labour market altogether (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Most Educated ECEs Outside ECEC Sector



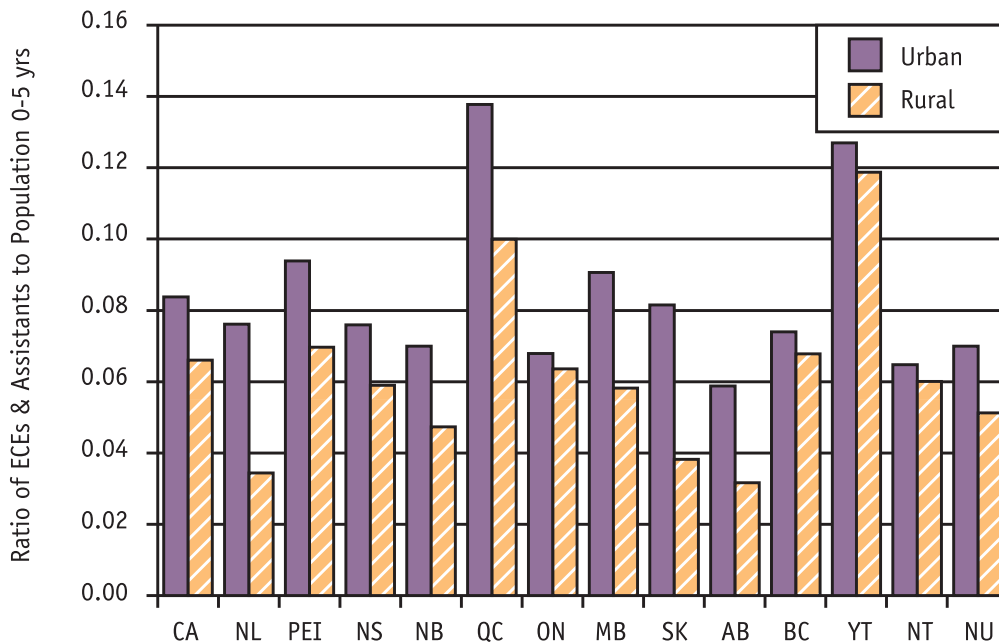
³ According the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) these ECE programs are called “child care provider/assistant” at the college level and “early childhood education & teaching” at the university level.

Rural vs. Urban

There is a considerable variation in the number of employed ECEs and assistants across the country. In order to make the comparison meaningful, it is helpful to compare the number of employed ECEs relative to the total number of children aged 0-5 in each province and territory. In 2006, Quebec and Yukon had considerably more ECEs and assistants per child than other provinces and territories (see Figure 10). Alberta had significantly fewer ECEs and assistants per child than other provinces and territories, while

Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Nunavut and Northwest Territories were also below the national average. There is also a considerable variation in the coverage between urban and rural areas. In general, rural areas have far fewer ECEs and assistants relative to young children than urban areas. There were particularly large differences between rural and urban areas in Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec and Manitoba.

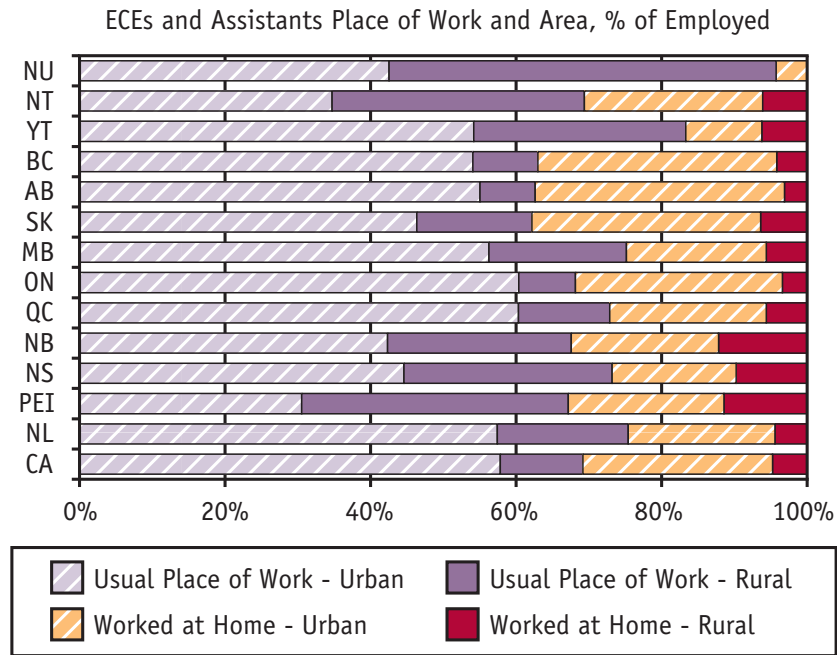
Figure 10: Large Variations in ECEs and Assistants Across Canada



There is also considerable variation in the composition of employment of ECEs and assistants across the country when examined from the perspective of child care centres versus family child care, and whether the employment is in rural or urban areas (see Figure 11). In most provinces and territories the single largest group is workers in child care centres


(usual place of work) in urban areas. And the smallest group is family child care providers (worked at home) in rural areas. In most provinces the number of family child care providers in urban areas is the second largest, while in the territories, PEI, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick child care centre workers in rural areas represent the second largest group.

Figure 11: ECEs and Assistants Differ in Place of Work Across Canada



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