LITERATURE REVIEW REPORT

Supporting Employers in Canada's ECEC Sector

**Child Care
Human Resources
Sector Council**

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Section 1: Introduction And Methodology

1.1 About the CCHRSC

The Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC) is a pan-Canadian, non-profit organization dedicated to moving forward on the human resource issues in the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector. The Council brings together national partners and other sector representatives to develop a confident, skilled and respected workforce valued for its contribution to early childhood care and education.

The CCHRSC's mission is to provide a sectoral structure for moving forward on human resource issues, through cooperative and collaborative actions that enhance the efforts of national partners and the early childhood education and care workforce. CCHRSC strategic priorities include:
- Foster improved skills development that is responsive to the sector requirements;
- Enhance sectoral human resource management practices to respond to recruitment and retention challenges;
- Develop mechanisms to increase the portability/recognition of credentials;
- Increase access to labour market information, and develop better definitions and an increased understanding of labour market trends and issues in the sector;
- Provide leadership and coordination on HR issues.

A review of literature related to the human resources-related issues facing employers in the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector was conducted in order to provide a context for interpreting the primary data collected for the *Supporting Employers in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Project* (i.e. survey data, focus group data, interview data). While the various issues facing the ECEC sector are discussed independently in this report, most of the issues are interrelated and should be thought of as such.

1.2 About the Project

The early childhood education and care sector is diverse and contains a mix of governance models and employment settings. There is no consistent national policy or approach to ECEC, with each Canadian province/territory maintaining its own system of regulation, funding arrangements and policy. As a result, the context in which employers work varies by province and territory. In addition, employers operate in a wide range of governance models and employment setting. This contributes to a lack of a clear definition and information about who ECEC employers are, the range of employers' human resources needs and how those needs can best be met. It is based on this environment that the *Supporting Employers in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Project* was initiated.

1.2.1 Project Objectives

The primary objectives of the *Supporting Employers in Early Childhood Education and Care: Phase 1* project are to:
- Improve the understanding of employer governance models in regulated early childhood education and care sector settings;
- Document the human resources (HR) needs of employers in different regulated settings and contexts;
- Determine employers' perspectives on how best to address human resource issues in the sector; documenting innovative tools or practices that already exist;
- Identify and prioritize solutions that could help employers address human resource issues
- Determine what tools could be developed subsequently to address prioritized HR issues.

1.2.2 Project Reports

The information gathered for the *Supporting Employers in Early Childhood Education and Care Project* has been used to create a variety of reports and documents that help to define key findings. In addition to this *Literature Review*, the following documents have been created:
- ***Executive Summary*** – This report summarizes key findings and recommendations from the *Main Report: Supporting Employers in ECEC Project*.
- ***Main Report*** – This document provides an in-depth analysis of all findings of the *Supporting Employers in ECEC Project*, including the results of the literature review, employer survey, key informant interviews, focus groups and related recommendation.
- ***Summary Profiles of Employer Governance Models*** – This report provides brief profiles of the main governance/employer models identified during the research process.
- ***Mapping of HR Issues*** – This report identifies the range of governance/employer models, the size/scope of operations, and the associated human resources issues of employers in each province/territory.

Preliminary Project Findings and a series of articles entitled ***Employers Models in Canada's Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Sector*** were also produced in October 2008. Both documents are available on-line at: www.ccsc-cssge.ca

1.3 Literature Review Purpose and Methodology

The *Literature Review Report* provides a review of relevant literature and documents on the ECEC sector, with a focus on human resources issues. The literature review was conducted in order to provide background and context to the findings of the *Main Report,* specifically with regards to the following project goal:
- Document the human resources (HR) needs of employers in different regulated settings and contexts.

The literature reviewed was identified using a number of methods. As a first step, previous research and reports on the ECEC sector were reviewed. Using this information as a starting point, additional information was gathered via web searches. Searches were also conducted in academic databases, including Business Source Complete and Academic Search Complete. However, the academic databases contained little information specifically on human resources issues in the ECEC sector.

Further, there was little information available on the human resources issues facing specific governance models. That is, the human resources identified in this review apply to the sector as a whole, and may or may not apply to specific governance models. However, based upon stakeholders' opinions gathered for the *Main Report* via key informant interviews, focus groups and the Employer Survey, the issues identified in this report apply to all governance models.

1.4 Format of the Literature Review

The *Supporting Employers in Early Childhood Education and Care – Literature Review Report* is organized into the three sections outlined below.
- *Section 1: Introduction and Methodology*
- *Section 2: Overview of Human Resources in the ECEC Sector*
- *Section 3: Human Resources Issues*
- *Section 4: Conclusions*

Section 2: Overview Of Human Resources In The ECEC Sector

2.1 Overview of the Sector

As discussed in the *Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators (CCHRSC, 2006)*, the term "early childhood education and care" has traditionally been used to describe the sector. Over the past few years there has been much discussion about how the sector should be referred to, with a variety of terms under consideration. As stated in the *Occupational Standards* "it is understood that the discipline or knowledge base is early childhood education and care, and that one of the places where this discipline is commonly practised is in an early childhood education and care setting." For the purpose of this report, the term "early childhood education and care (ECEC)" will be used to encompass the various terms that are applied to the sector as a whole.

The early childhood education and care sector is a diverse setting that contains a mix of governance models and employment settings. Governance is the "process through which [ECEC organizations] make important decisions, set priorities, solve their problems and render account".[1] A review of ECEC by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) detailed that the majority of regulated ECEC operates privately, usually on a not-for-profit basis by parent groups, voluntary organizations or other non-profit entities (77%), or on a private, for-profit basis by individuals or businesses.[2] In addition to these models of ECEC delivery, there are other models in operation in Canada, including: ECEC in post-secondary institutions, hospitals, workplaces and government settings; First Nations (on and off-reserve); Inuit communities of settings; as well as parents as employers.

There is no consistent national policy or approach to early childhood education and care, with each Canadian province/territory maintaining its own system of regulation, funding arrangements and policy.[3] However, each province/territory has a program of regulated ECEC for children age 0 to 12 that includes ECEC centres and regulated family child care (see Appendix B for definitions of child care delivery models).[4] According to the OECD, the majority (approximately 80%) of regulated ECEC spaces are centre-based and approximately 20% are family child care. The distribution of centre-based and family child care varies greatly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. For example, the proportion of regulated family child care ranges from approximately 1% of the total supply of spaces in the Atlantic Provinces to almost one-third (32%) in Yukon. The relative amount of funding provided to ECEC employers also varies greatly from one provincial/territorial jurisdiction to the next.

The cost of providing ECEC services is most often shared between parents (through user fees) and the federal, provincial/territorial and municipal governments.[5] The majority of operating revenue comes from parent fees, with parents being eligible for various forms of fee supplements from both the federal and provincial/territorial governments. A review of the ECEC sector in Canada found that approximately half (49.2%) of ECEC employer revenue derives from parent fees, 30.5% from government fee subsidization, and an additional 17.5% from various grants.[6] Generally, there is little public funding for ECEC facilities or other infrastructure.[7]

[1] Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC (2007) Good Governance of Child Care: What Does it Mean? What Does it Look Like?
[2] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2003) Early Childhood Education and Care – Canada: Country Notes.
[3] OECD (2003) Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care: Canadian Background Report
http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/41/36/33852192.pdf
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] Doherty, G., Lero, D.S., Goelman, H., LaGrange, A., and Tougas, J. (2000) *You Bet I Care!: A Canada-wide Study on Wages, Working Conditions, and Practices in Child Care Centres*. http://action.web.ca/home/cfwwb/attach/ybic_report_1.pdf
[7] OECD (2003) Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care: Canadian Background Report
http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/41/36/33852192.pdf

2.2 Who is the Employer in Early Childhood Education and Care?

2.2.1 Definition of Employer

The term "employer" can be used in multiple ways, but in general describes the relationship between an individual and the entity for whom that person performs work. The Canada Labour Code[8] defines employer as follows:

(a) any person who employs one or more employees, and

(b) in respect of a dependent contractor, such person as, in the opinion of the Board, has a relationship with the dependent contractor to such extent that the arrangement that governs the performance of services by the dependent contractor for that person can be the subject of collective bargaining.

A definition of employer may also depend on whether one is referring to the legal employer (i.e. the entity that writes the cheques) or the organization for whom a person regularly works at the centralized, or decentralized, local level. For example, an individual working in an ECEC centre run by a private corporation would have the corporation as the legal employer. However, this does not necessarily mean that the legal owner of that corporation would be knowledgeable about the human resources issues in the ECEC sector. In this case it may be the centre director, or perhaps an area manager who would be most knowledgeable.

As one of the key goals of the *Supporting Employers in Early Childhood Education and Care Project* was to determine the HR needs and issues facing the ECEC sector from the employers' perspective, with the purpose of developing HR tools, the "employers" of interest for this study were not always the legal employers. That is, in order to gather the most useful and relevant information, those individuals at ECEC organizations whom can best speak to the HR issues and needs facing that organization were included in consultations. In many cases this was also the person who would be considered the legal employer (i.e. the entity that directly employs the workers), though in other cases this was a director, manager, supervisor or board member or an organization.

Thus, for the purpose of this study, the person most directly involved in HR issues, such as recruitment and retention of staff, training, setting workplace standards, etc., is considered the "employer". A description of the human resources and governance responsibilities of employers/administrators can be found in the section below.

2.2.2 Human Resources and Governance Tasks of "Employers"

Until recently (2006), the role of employer/administrator in ECEC had not been clearly defined. Further, as the main focus of training for the sector has been ECE training for practitioners, many "employers" were promoted into their role because they were good practitioners, but not necessarily because they had the necessary educational or experiential background for the role of "employer".[9] Consequently, many "employers" lack a background and formal training in human resources. In August 2006, the first set of Occupational Standards were developed for employers/administrators (administrators, managers, supervisors), and since then there has been a more clearly defined and sound basis on which to develop the necessary curriculum and training for "employers". The *Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators* developed by the CCHRSC

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[8] http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/showdoc/cs/L-2/bo-ga:s_1::bo-ga:s_2/20071016?command=searchadvanced&caller=AD&search_type=bool&shorttitle=Canada%20Labour%20Code&day=16&month=10&year=2007&search_domain=cs&showall=L&statuteyear=all&lengthannual=50&length=50&page=2
[9] Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2006). *Career Promotions and Recruitment Strategy Project: Executive Summary*.

outline the required tasks and associated knowledge of a "capable" administrator in the sector. The term "capable" means that a person has the "level of skills and knowledge required to do a job safely and properly."[10] While the *Occupational Standards* detail additional areas, the human resources and governance tasks and knowledge areas are particularly relevant to the current project, and are discussed with the intent of helping to define who the "employer" is in the ECEC sector. Depending on the organization, the "employer" may be responsible for some, most, or all of these tasks.

Key Human Resources Tasks

1. *Recruits Staff*: includes determining staffing needs, advertising for staff, interviewing/screening prospective staff, hiring staff and orienting staff.
2. *Manages Staff*: includes motivating staff, supervising staff, evaluating staff, supporting and addressing staff behaviour, maintaining staff records, and conducting staff meetings.
3. *Manages Professional Development (PD)*: includes determining PD needs, identifying PD opportunities, and providing for PD opportunities.
4. *Manages Labour Relations*: includes following employment standards, establishing and implementing working conditions, and managing problem solving and conflict resolution.
5. *Manages External Human Resources* (e.g. students, volunteers, consultants, families): includes determining requirements for external HR, screening and engaging external HR, orienting external HR, monitoring external HR.

Key Governance Tasks

1. *Participates in Organizational Policy Development*: includes maintaining awareness of current legislation, contributing to development of governance policies, developing operational policies and guidelines, and monitoring and evaluating policy.
2. *Plans for the Organization*: includes assessing community needs for ECEC, developing strategic, business and annual operational plans, developing ongoing communications strategy, and marketing services and activities.
3. *Relates to Relevant Governing Authority*: includes advising and supporting the function of governing authorities, preparing and presenting reports, and implementing direction from the governing authority.

2.2.3 Employment Settings and Governance Models

The early childhood education and care workforce operates in a variety of employment settings and governance models. While it was one goal of this project to determine the extent of various models across Canada and there are many individual differences between operations, in general, employment settings can be grouped into the following categories:

- Non-profit organizations (parent run, community run or cooperatives with voluntary sector boards);
- Commercial operations (sole proprietor, partnerships, corporation);
- ECEC in post secondary institutions, hospitals or public sector settings (college, municipal government or school board operated); and,
- First Nations (on and off reserve), Métis, and Inuit, Head Start, etc.

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[10] Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2006) *Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators*.

2.2.4 Effective Governance in Early Childhood Education and Care

The report *Good Governance of Child Care: What Does it Mean? What Does it Look Like?* written by Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC (2007) outlines key aspects of effective early childhood education and care governance models. These aspects were initially created to compare existing ECEC operations to an ideal system that provides high quality care, is affordable, accessible, publicly funded and accountable. There are two broad contexts which can be used to evaluate ECEC governance: public policy context and governance model context. The specifics of each context are discussed here as a means to identify "exemplary practices" in ECEC governance.

Public Policy context is the broader context in which an early childhood education and care organization/system operates. Aspects of an ECEC system that define "good governance" would be:
- *Universal* (as opposed to targeted) access;
- Supported by *strong public policy* ensuring the workforce and employer/administrator has appropriate education, wages and working conditions;
- *Affordable* (e.g., parent fees no more than 20% of service revenue);
- *Publicly funded*; and,
- *Accessible* to all of the population.

Aspects of the **governance model** itself that defines "good governance" would be that the model/organization:
- Has a *clear mandate* for assessment of need, planning, development and delivery of services;
- Is *accountable* to the community (ensuring standards/regulations are met, has transparent financial processes and is responsive to community needs);
- Promotes *coordination* and integration of services;
- Promotes *equitable access*;
- Is *inclusive and responsive to diversity*; and,
- Is *community-controlled*.

2.3 Human Resources and Quality Early Childhood Education and Care

There is a link between effective human resources management and leadership in the ECEC sector and the provision of high quality education and care. This link has been succinctly summarized by the recently produced Ontario report *Investing in Quality*.[11] With experts drawn from the practitioner, scholarly, and policy and service delivery communities, Ontario's *Investing in Quality* report argues that investments in quality ECEC, and particularly in human resources, yield proven positive outcomes for children, families, society and the economy. The report posits that for young children, early learning and care are inextricably linked.

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[11] Expert Panel on Quality and Human Resources (2007) *Investing in Quality: Policies, Practitioners, Programs and Parents: A Four-Point Plan to Delivery High Quality Early Learning and Care Services in Ontario*.

The report argues that there are four key reasons for investing in high quality care and the human resources necessary to provide such care:

- **The early years are crucial to healthy child development**. For children from all backgrounds, high quality early learning and care experiences contribute to the development of self-confidence, social skills, a decreased risk of behavioural challenges, positive feelings about learning, and higher scores on standardized tests.
- **Young children benefit from knowledgeable practitioners who understand their distinct learning and care needs**. Knowledgeable, well-supported, and well-compensated ECEC professionals are more likely to provide high-quality education and care. The knowledge of organization leaders is also crucial to program quality.
- **More families want their children to benefit from high quality early learning and care programs**. As parents and communities become more aware of the importance of early childhood development, demand for affordable, high-quality care grows.
- **Investing in the very young is the most efficient investment society can make**. There is a growing consensus that high-quality early ECEC and education experiences have not just significant benefits for individual children, families, and communities, but that such experiences have long-term economic and social benefits for society as a whole. In fact, investment in early childhood yields a higher economic return than post-secondary education or job training programs and decreases risk of need for correctional services, remedial education, and social assistance later in life.

With the above factors in mind, the authors outline the urgency of human resource concerns in the sector – without adequate levels of well-trained staff, the positive contribution the ECEC sector makes, for children, families, and communities, cannot be as effective. Thus, the ability to provide high quality education and care is directly related to many, if not all, of the key human resources issues discussed below.

Section 3: Human Resources Issues

This section constitutes the main body of the *Literature Review Report* and provides a review of a variety of human resource issues facing the Canadian ECEC sector that were prominent in the literature. This section is structured around the following ten key issues:

1. Recruitment and Retention
2. Ongoing Professional Development
3. Compensation: Wages and Benefits
4. Attitudes/Respect for the Profession
5. Policy and Funding
6. Health and Well-Being
7. Aboriginal Children, Families, and Communities
8. Meaningful Inclusion: Diverse Children
9. Diverse Workforce
10. Gender

Based upon the literature reviewed, the ten key issues above form the core of this review. While it is these issues that are discussed in depth, there was a number of additional human resource-related challenges that arose in the course of this review that are not discussed at length, but do affect human resources in the sector. These include:

- Insufficient promotion of ECEC as a career[12]
- Lack of clear career ladder[13]
- Insufficient opportunities for career advancement[14]
- Concerns with job security, stability, stress, and satisfaction[15] [16]
- Competition for ECEC staff from other human service professions, from related sector such as education, and/or from federally-funded early childhood development programs[17] [18]
- Aging workforce[19] [20]

The key human resources issues identified via the secondary data collection for the *Main Report* (i.e., key informant interviews, focus groups, Employer Survey) are similar to the key issues noted above. The key HR issues identified during that research process are:

1. Internal HR Capacity and Leadership
2. Recruitment and Retention
3. Training and Professional Development
4. Compensation (Wages and Benefits)
5. Respect for Profession/Recognition of Value of ECEC

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[12] Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2006). *Career Promotions and Recruitment Strategy Project: Executive Summary*.
[13] *Ibid*.
[14] Doherty et al (2000) *You Bet I Care!: A Canada-wide Study on Wages, Working Conditions, and Practices in Child Care Centres*. http://action.web.ca/home/cfwwb/attach/ybic_report_1.pdf
[15] Beach, J., Bertrand, J., Forer, B., Michal, D., and Tougas, J. (2004) *Working for Change: Canada's Child Care Workforce: Main Report* (Ottawa, ON: Child Care Human Resources Sector Council). http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca/english/pdf/research/CCHRSC20main_en.pdf
[16] Doherty, et al. (2000).
[17] Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2006). *Career Promotions and Recruitment Strategy Project: Executive Summary*.
[18] Beach et al (2004).
[19] *Ibid*.
[20] Doherty, et al (2000).

These five topics are the key human resources issues identified by the sector stakeholders consulted during the research process. There were also additional HR issues identified that arose on a less frequent basis, which are similar to the secondary issues identified above. For a full discussion of they human resources issues identified, see Section 4 of the *Main Report*.

3.1 Recruitment and Retention

Throughout the literature review, recruitment and retention of staff were identified as key human resource issues in the early childhood education and care sector. It became apparent that although recruitment and retention are key identifiable issues, they are intertwined with questions of compensation, attitudes toward the profession, policy and funding, and gender (all discussed in a more detail below). Thus, while recruitment and retention of qualified staff is clearly an issue, they are perhaps best discussed via the other contributing factors impacting employers.

3.2 Training and Professional Development

3.2.1 ECE Post-Secondary Training

In order to meet the goals of improving both recruitment and retention, there is a need to support individuals to obtain the education and qualifications they need to provide high quality services.[21] Such support is required because there are multiple barriers to accessing the education and training needed to provide high quality care: cost, credit transfer from one institution to another, scheduling conflicts with ECEC sector employment, language and/or cultural barriers, and training investment versus earnings capacity.[22] At the same time there are diverse regulatory frameworks in provinces and territories for the level of education and staff balance of certifications required to work in regulated ECEC.[23] The Child Care Human Resources Sector Council's (CCHRSC) *People, Programs and Practices: A Training Strategy for the Early Childhood Education and Care Sector in Canada* sees education and training as an important part of human resource development for the sector. The study proposes three key areas requiring work:

- In order to enhance the size and capacity of the trained ECEC workforce, there is a need to define the core roles for early childhood educators and directors.
- In order to enhance the quality and consistency of education and training for the sector, there is a need to put in place voluntary accreditation structures for post-secondary early childhood education programs.
- In order to enhance both access to early childhood education and effectiveness of ECEs, there is a need to focus on professional development, mentoring/coaching, methods of ECE delivery, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), and international credentials.[24]

These recommendations highlight the need for more clarity in terms of HR-related regulatory processes, improvements to consistency and quality of ECE training and education, and improved access to traditional and innovative training, education, and credentialing processes.

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[21] Expert Panel on Quality and Human Resources (2007).
[22] OECD (2003).
[23] Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2006). *Career Promotions and Recruitment Strategy Project: Executive Summary*.
[24] CCHRSC (2007). *People, Programs, and Practices: A Training Strategy for the Early Childhood Education and Care Sector in Canada*.

ECE education in Canada encompasses certificate, diploma, and degree programs. Offered in approximately 120 publicly funded colleges and universities, programs have been found to have much in common even though they vary a great deal in length. Credit transfer is an important issue not because of the variance in curricular content, but because of curriculum organization: course and practicum requirements are widely variable, making credit transfer difficult.[25] An additional concern is that those who provide family child care (care provided by an individual in their place of residence) have limited time to access to post-secondary programs, and often rely on training from either approved ECEC agencies or workshops and conferences. However, these educational experiences are unlikely to translate into course credit if an individual goes on to seek an ECE certification.[26]

Curricular content also presents a challenge. Research suggests that training programs prepare Early Childhood Educators well for preschool and centre-based care, but that ECE curricula too often provides limited training in the following areas: infants/toddlers, school age children, interactions with families, children with special needs, Aboriginal children, and ECEC settings of linguistic, racial, and/or cultural diversity including children who are newcomers to Canada or whose parents are recent immigrants.[27]

3.2.2 Professional Development

In the case of ongoing professional development, cost, scheduling conflicts, language/cultural barriers, and training investment versus earnings capacity are particularly pertinent. However, cost and inability to be away from the workplace have been cited by ECEC workers as the most common reasons for not participating in professional development.[28] By extension, where there are labour force shortages, staff will have increased difficulty in obtaining release from their work schedules. Professional development activities must thus be undertaken during evenings and weekends.

The Governor of the Bank of Canada, David Dodge, recently argued that Canada requires a system of incentives for encouraging continuous learning and skill upgrading, in addition to an infrastructure to deliver training. Incentives and an infrastructure for delivering further training may be particularly important in the next two decades, as labour force growth in Canada slows.[29] Professional development is vital to work in ECEC. For example, a recent study found that, in general, there is not a high level of knowledge about recent findings in early brain development among ECE workers. Debbie Zambo, author of the study, suggests that workshops should be offered on this issue, that ECEs be encouraged to attend, and that workshops be paid for. In addition, she recommends that such information be made more easily available in those venues most commonly cited by ECEC workers as sources for professional information (magazines, television, and the internet).[30]

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[25] Cited in OECD (2003).
[26] OECD (2003).
[27] Cited in OECD (2003).
[28] OECD (2003).
[29] "Canada's competitiveness depends on developing youth, retaining older workers," *Canadian HR Reporter* 18.
[30] Zambo, D. (2007) Childcare Workers' Knowledge About the Brain and Developmentally Appropriate Practice, *Early Childhood Education Journal*, http://www.springerlink.com/content/p75628381785r702/.

The CCHRSC has identified a need to encourage skill development and further training among the existing ECEC workforce.[31] Those working in the field place a high value on professional development, seeing it as beneficial for the workplace as a whole because information can be shared.[32] This view concurs with recent thinking in human resources development research, which suggests that knowledge sharing within organizations can be an effective means of building staff capacity and success.[33] At the same time, however, there is awareness that undertaking professional development provides rewards in terms of performing one's job more effectively, but provides little in the way of formal recognition (i.e. pay increases or advancement).[34]

Professional development activities for those in leadership roles have also been identified as an area for further action. One study found that managers had high levels of knowledge in ECE, but often required additional training to effectively fulfill a leadership role.[35] Those working in leadership roles require skills and knowledge in program management, staff mentorship and motivation, and parent and community liaison.[36] At the same time, managers and directors also have responsibilities for the professional development of the staff they work with. The CCHRSC's *Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators* locates the management of professional development as part of the administrators' role, and includes responsibility for the following: determining professional development needs, identifying professional development opportunities, and providing for professional development opportunities.[37]

3.3 Compensation: Wages and Benefits

Wages and benefits in the ECEC sector as a whole have long been recognized as making an important contribution to challenges in recruitment and retention.[38] [39] [40] Concerns with compensation also have multiple impacts on working environments in the sector. In Quebec, for example, strong provincial financial and regulatory support has mitigated some of these issues by providing for a workforce that is well-paid in comparison to most other jurisdictions.[41] However, Québec still faces challenges in terms of staff recruitment and retention, which provides evidence that the relatively low wages of the sector are not the only contributing factor to recruitment and retention issues. Research by the Human Early Learning Partnership at the University of British Columbia found that even where a wide variety of tax benefits and bonuses are taken into account, Canada still ranks low (14 of 16 OECD countries) in terms of ECEC benefit packages, ranking below the US, which is generally regarded as a "laggard" in policy that pertains to families.[42]

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[31] Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2006) *Career Promotions and Recruitment Strategy Project: Executive Summary*.

[32] Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2006) *Career Promotions and Recruitment Strategy Project: Executive Summary*.

[33] Ipe, M. (2003) Knowledge Sharing in Organizations: A Conceptual Framework, *Human Resource Development Review* 2, 337-59.

[34] Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2006). *Career Promotions and Recruitment Strategy Project: Executive Summary*.

[35] Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2006). *Career Promotions and Recruitment Strategy Project: Executive Summary*.

[36] Expert Panel on Quality and Human Resources (2007).

[37] Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2006) O*ccupational Standards for Child Care Administrators* (Ottawa, ON) http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca

[38] Doherty, et al (2000).

[39] Expert Panel on Quality and Human Resources (2007).

[40] Beach et al (2004).

[41] Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2006) *Career Promotions and Recruitment Strategy Project: Executive Summary*.
http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca

[42] Human Early Learning Partnership (2006) Child Care Services: Investing in a Sustainable Future for BC, (Vancouver, BC).

Statistical evidence on ECEC workforce retention in Canada suggests that poor labour force attachment is not the main reason staff leave the field. In other words, the literature suggests that the sector does not typically employ people with unstable work characteristics. Rather, decisions to leave the sector are deliberate, pertain to cost-benefit analyses made by individuals, and are more likely to occur where individuals possess higher levels of educational attainment.[43]

Although there was a great deal of variance across jurisdictions and locations, the average annual employment income of ECEC workers in 2001 was approximately $21,000[44] significantly less than the $33,470 average across the country.[45] Benefits, including pensions and disability plans are rare. For family child care providers, the issue of compensation and benefits is compounded as most are self-employed and therefore ineligible for employment-related benefits,[46] including maternity and parental leave, Employment Insurance, and paid sick days and other protections provided for under labour legislation.[47]

3.4 Attitudes/Respect for the Profession

Societal attitudes toward ECEC are an important aspect of the current human resource challenges, and have been recognized as an HR barrier for many years.[48] Work in the sector is generally not well understood, and this factor, combined with generally low wages, continues to keep the sector from receiving any respect as a profession.[49] These attitudes contribute greatly to the attraction and retention difficulties facing the sector. Doherty et al's 2001 *You Bet I Care!* report found that recruitment and retention can be linked not just to wages and working conditions, but also to the way in which ECEC is perceived, both by parents and communities, and by society at large. A lack of recognition of the ways in which ECEC work provides crucial benefits to society has an impact on the sector's ability to attract and retain workers.[50] It is difficult to attract a quality workforce to a sector that is not valued.

More recent research also supports this view. In a 2008 study completed with employers in BC social service sector workplaces (including ECEC), attitudes toward the profession emerged as a key issue. It was felt by employers that early childhood education workers were too often viewed as "babysitters" rather than professionals. The authors suggest this perceived lack of respect points to a need for public education regarding the importance of quality ECEC and a clear demonstration of the benefits of being in a positive social and educational environment at a young age.[51] Furthermore, this lack of respect arises from a lack of understanding of the skills and knowledge required to undertake ECEC work.[52] [53]

[43] Cleveland, G.H & Hyatt, D.E. (2002) Child care workers' wages: New evidence on returns to education, experience, job tenure and auspice, *Journal of Population Economics* 15: 575-97.
[44] Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, *Child Care Wages and A Quality Child Care System.* http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca
[45] *OECD (2003) Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Canadian Background Report* (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/41/36/33852192.pdf.
[46] Beach et al (2004).
[47] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2003) *Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Canadian Background Report* http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/41/36/33852192.pdf.
[48] Doherty, et al (2000).
[49] Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2006). *Career Promotions and Recruitment Strategy Project: Executive Summary.*
[50] Doherty et al. (2000).
[51] Siggner, R. (2008) *Exploring Recruitment and Retention Issues for BC's Community Social Service Sector Employers* (Vancouver, BC: Social Planning and Research Council of BC).
[52] Beach et al (2004).
[53] "Who's Watching the Kids? The State of Child Care in America," *Knowledge@Wharton* (2000) http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article.cfm?articleid=257.

However, awareness of the important role of early childhood in social and intellectual development has increased, though some argue that public policy for ECEC has not kept pace with these changes.[54] And indeed, attitudes toward the capabilities of those working with young children are continually reflected in the scholarly literature of the field. Increasingly, early child education and care professionals are viewed in the literature as having roles that go beyond strictly care or education. Early childhood education and care workers also serve families in various ways, and require information and training on this aspect of their professional life.[55] Particularly in the case of families experiencing stress, ECEC workers have the opportunity to generate strategies that are empowering for families, that help stressed families "find new hope and renewed purpose."[56]

Scholars working in early childhood education fields also highlight the expertise of early childhood education and care professionals to foster dialogue and partnership with the medical community. For example, in a recent study of childcare providers' role in the early detection of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) the authors argue that staff trained in ECEC programs are much more well-situated to screen children for ASD than are pediatricians.[57] The dissemination of this type of research is particularly important because of the traditional epistemological authority of the medical community in matters pertaining to the well-being of children. Evidence of increasing awareness of ECEC practitioners as part of a holistic, community-based approach to meeting the needs of children with special needs suggests that attitudes are changing about the skills, abilities, and professionalism of the ECE workforce.

However, this type of research presents an additional challenge for the ECEC sector. There is the danger that responsibilities previously viewed as under the purview of more highly paid professions will be offloaded onto the sector.[58] However, this type of research also positions early childhood educators more appropriately as key partners in integrated and multidisciplinary approaches to children's wellness. Increasing awareness at every level about the capacities of ECE professionals has a role to play in changing attitudes toward the sector.

[54] Beach et al (2004).
[55] Swick, K.J. & Williams, R.D. (2006). An Analysis of Bronfenbrenner's Bio-Ecological Perspective for Early Childhood Educators: Implications for Working with Families Experiencing Stress, Early Childhood Education Journal, 33.5.
[56] Swick & Williams (2006)
[57] Branson, D., Vigil, D.C., and Bingham, A. (2008) Community Childcare Providers' Role in the Early Detection of Autism Spectrum Disorders, Early Childhood Education Journal.
[58] Branson, D., Vigil, D.C., and Bingham, A. (2008) Community Childcare Providers' Role in the Early Detection of Autism Spectrum Disorders, Early Childhood Education Journal.

3.5 Policy and Funding

The key human resources issues facing the sector, including recruitment/retention, compensation, attitudes, and working conditions cannot be considered in a vacuum. These issues are intrinsically related to policy, funding, and infrastructure. For a number of years, policy and funding regulations have been a major point of discussion in the ECEC sector.[59] An understanding of the issues facing the sector and discussion of any potential solutions should be examined in the context of the policy surrounding ECEC both at the Federal and Provincial/Territorial levels.

Effective policies and associated funding has been identified as a key factor in providing high quality early learning and care to children.[60] The recently released Ontario-based report, *Investing in Quality* makes multiple recommendations on this issue.[61] The report recommends the development of a regulatory environment that supports high quality, inclusive, integrated early learning and care services that are supported with increased public funding. In addition, the researchers recommend developing province/territory-wide quality standards for ECEC programs, including local systems to monitor quality. Similarly, the authors recommend revising or establishing education requirements for the profession that reflect the increasingly complex demands of practice while providing opportunities for practitioners to obtain educational opportunities. Lastly, the authors recommend gathering data and conducting research to guide workforce and service planning and developing partnerships and collaborations to address human resources issues (among other systemic issues).[62]

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has also undertaken a review of policy as it pertains to early childhood education and care in Canada. The results and recommendations from this report agree with the above-noted study.

In terms of access to and equity of early learning and ECEC opportunities, the OECD recommends continuing efforts to expand access while promoting greater equity of opportunity. As much as possible, it is recommended to include children with special educational needs in public early development/education services. In addition, the OECD recommends reinforcing policies to support and include Aboriginal children (see below for a further discussion of Aboriginal issues in ECEC).

The OECD also makes several recommendations intended to improve the quality of care, including the creation of a national quality framework for early childhood services and developing the infrastructure at the provincial/territorial level to ensure effective implementation of the framework. It is also suggested that early childhood education and care workers undergo professional reviews and that initial and in-service training of staff is strengthened. Further, it is recommended that publicly-funded, high quality interventions are provided in all disadvantaged areas and that attractive indoor and outdoor learning environments are available. Lastly, as noted in the *Investing in Quality* report, coordinating Canadian policy research through funding would be of benefit.

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[59] Child Care Advocacy Forum, "Campaigns".
[60] Expert Panel on Quality and Human Resources (2007).
[61] Expert Panel on Quality and Human Resources (2007) *Investing in Quality: Policies, Practitioners, Programs and Parents: A Four-Point Plan to Delivering High Quality Early Learning and Care Services in Ontario.*
[62] Expert Panel on Quality and Human Resources (2007).

Working for Change, an extensive review of the ECEC sector labour market, argues that there are four main policy areas that need to be addressed in order to improve the current human resource pressures in the ECEC sector:[63]

1. A general policy framework that clearly recognizes the central role of ECEC to early childhood development strategies. A regulated ECEC system is the most practical way to deliver widespread, publicly supported early childhood development and learning. Regulated ECEC is designed to ensure the well-being of children through programs that support cognitive, social, emotional and physical development and to support labour force participation of parents.

2. Coherent public policies across the sector to effectively manage the demand for ECEC and early childhood educators. The demand for qualified early childhood educators is in large part dictated by the public policy directions of each province or territory. Policies are inconsistent across jurisdictions when it comes to funding, eligibility for service, access, regulation, monitoring and improving quality of care. Most governments do not have defined goals for ECEC or target levels of service. This situation makes it difficult to predict the demand for a qualified workforce.

3. Sufficient funding of the sector. Quality ECEC requires significant investments of public dollars to maintain stable programs, make them affordable to parents, and to provide reasonable wages, benefits and working conditions for staff and caregivers.

4. Labour market information to guide decision making. There is no regularly collected pan-Canadian ECEC information, nor is there a clear distinction between those who work in different settings and varying positions within the ECEC sector. It is impossible to delineate those who work in ECEC centres, or in family child care and/or with differing age groups.[64]

Taken together, these policy recommendations focus on the need to move the importance of ECEC for children, families, and the economy to the foreground. These recommendations also highlight the need to develop consistent and coherent policy across jurisdictions, the need to improve funding, and the need for labour market information that more accurately depicts the ECEC workforce.

3.6 Health and Well-Being

The health and well-being of staff members can be a key issue for ECEC employers.[65] As the sector faces difficulties with recruitment and retention, having a healthy available workforce becomes all the more critical. When it comes to the health of ECEC workers, the majority of research tends to concentrate on infectious diseases; however, injury has actually been found to have a greater impact on the sector.[66] The physical demands encountered by front line workers on a day-to-day basis (e.g. bending, lifting, physical activity) can lead to a variety of physical injuries. In fact, the variety of physical demands of working with children has led to the development of recommended ergonomic interventions in ECEC centres.[67] In a US study, ECEC workers showed a high level of awareness and implementation of such ergonomic recommendations. However, the

[63] Beach, J., Bertrand, J., Forer, B., Michal, D., and Tougas, J. (2004) *Working for Change: Canada's Child Care Workforce: Main Report* (Ottawa, ON: Child Care Human Resources Sector Council). http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca
[64] Beach et al (2004).
[65] First Call BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, Results of Early Childhood Education (ECE) Staffing Survey: October/November 2007 (Vancouver, BC: First Call BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, 2007), http://www.firstcallbc.org/pdfs/EarlyChildhood/1-staffing%20survey.pdf.
[66] Bright, K. & Calabro, K. (1999) Child care workers and workplace hazards in the United States: Overview of research and implications for occupational health professionals, *Occupational Medicine* 49.
[67] King, P.M., Gratz, R., Scheuer, G. and Claffey, A. (1996) The ergonomics of child care: Conducting worksite analyses, Work 6.

majority of ECEC workers were nonetheless experiencing musculoskeletal pain in the workplace, and further research will likely be undertaken in an attempt to improve this situation.

Staff stress and burnout have also been identified as key issues in the retention of workers in the sector. Recent research in the field of human resources development argues that although burnout is most often understood in the workplace to be an individual issue related to job demands or 'personality', organizational culture (the unwritten norms and values of how employees are valued) is a more powerful factor in employee burnout.[68] The authors of this study suggest that increased autonomy in the workplace is the key. This suggests that the skills of ECEC employers or administrators at creating a positive working culture is critical. For example, where employees have more discretion in deciding the processes involved in completing a task, they also have a "buffer" against stress and are at lower risk for burnout.[69]

3.7 Aboriginal Children, Families and Communities

Early childhood education and care providers in Aboriginal communities face many of the issues discussed in this review, in addition to some unique human resource challenges. As noted above, in its review of the Canadian early childhood education and care context, the OECD recommends that continued work be done to reinforce policies to support and include Aboriginal children in early childhood education and care.[70]

It has been argued that access to culturally appropriate early childhood programs and services is a key part of Aboriginal communities building of strength, citizenship, and wellness communities.[71] Programming for Aboriginal children is most successful when Indigenous knowledge is at the heart of design and delivery and where community "embeddedness" – a relationship that is *more* than partnership – is an operating principle.[72] These principles have relevance for human resources, and indeed, key human resources issues are implicated in the *Handbook of Best Practices in Aboriginal Early Childhood Programs*[73]. The *Handbook* identifies issues pertaining to funding, facilities and programming, which are all closely connected with human resource issues such as wages, recruitment and retention. In actuality, all of the best practices for Aboriginal Early Childhood Programs have direct implications for human resources. From staffing levels and curriculum expertise to staff members with strong ties to communities and commitments to local culture and language, effective Aboriginal early childhood programming requires capacity, precision, flexibility, and a strong commitment to working as a collaborative member of the community. In particular, there is a well-defined need for staff with particular specializations beyond ECE certification, but also educators and administrators who are highly skilled in collaborating with communities in curriculum development and employing Indigenous knowledge at the heart of programming approaches.

[68] More than Job Demands or Personality, Lack of Organizational Respect Fuels Employee Burnout, *Knowledge@Wharton* (2006). http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article.cfm?articleid=1600
[69] More than Job Demands or Personality, Lack of Organizational Respect Fuels Employee Burnout. *Knowledge@Wharton* (2006). http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article.cfm?articleid=1600
[70] OECD Education Directorate (2004).
[71] Greenwood, M. (2005). Children as Citizens of First Nations: Linking Indigenous health to early childhood development, *Pediatric Child Health* 10.
[72] Greenwood, M. (2005). Children as Citizens of First Nations: Linking Indigenous health to early childhood development, *Pediatric Child Health* 10.
[73] BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (2003) *Handbook of Best Practices in Aboriginal Early Childhood Programs* http://www.acc-society.bc.ca/files_new/pdf_documents/Best%20Practices%20Handbook%202003.pdf

Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada have also put forward a similar document on quality practices, envisioning programs that are holistic, comprehensive and integrated. Effective practices would view children in the larger context of families and community, would promote health and well-being of Inuit children and families, be based on Inuit values, traditions, and delivered in local languages.[74] In terms of human resources specifically, Pauktuutit recommends that effective Inuit programs include Inuit staff, provide local (i.e. within the community) professional development opportunities, recognizes life experiences as qualification for potential staff, involves Inuit in the design of training programs, and implements mentorship programs for new staff.[75]

In addition, children with special needs have also been identified as an important issue for Aboriginal communities.[76] In a labour market context where administrators and managers report difficulties in hiring and retaining qualified staff, and where funding levels and formulas continue to be contentious, both in policy and practice, the growing body of literature and policy on Aboriginal ECEC suggests that the requirements of Aboriginal communities (including building capacity within communities as well as more appropriately recognizing extant capacities) should play a key role in any national ECEC human resources agenda.

3.8 Meaningful Inclusion: Diverse Children

The population of children requiring care has always been as diverse as the population in general, but there is a growing recognition of the benefits that can accrue to all in an inclusive ECEC system. But such a system requires a highly skilled workforce and appropriate supports to education and care. Children with disabilities or special needs, those who are newcomers or have distinct cultural backgrounds, and those from low-income backgrounds all have distinct needs.[77] Equity of access and meaningful inclusion are reliant on a knowledgeable and skilled workforce, and on funding to provide supports where needed.

The need for addressing cultural and linguistic diversity in early childhood settings is relatively well established. One researcher in the late 1990s studying the cultural diversity of children commented that early childhood educators had to anticipate and plan for a more linguistically and culturally diverse population, which required knowledge and skills specific to the care of linguistically and culturally diverse children.[78] And indeed, those working in ECEC are expected to undertake work in language acquisition with children who are learning English or French primarily outside the home, where necessary. Although recent research on second language acquisition has disproved the once commonly held theory that children speaking a different language at home and in an educational setting puts them at a disadvantage (indeed, it is quite the opposite),[79] those working in ECEC nonetheless often require training in this type of work.

At the same time, ECEC professionals are also involved with families from diverse backgrounds. Knowledge and skills that go beyond empathy are required to work effectively with families – particularly for those

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[74] Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada (2007) *Piaranut / For Our Children: Quality Practices for Inuit Early Childhood Education Programs* http://www.pauktuutit.ca/pdf/Piaranut_ENG.pdf.
[75] Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada (2007).
[76] Palmentier, M. (2005) *Building a Community of Communities: Results & Discussion of the National Roundtable on Aboriginal ECD: What Can Research Offer Aboriginal Head Start* (Aboriginal Head Start in Urban & Northern Communities and Centre of Excellence for Children & Adolescents with Special Needs).
[77] Jane Beach et al (2004).
[78] Green, E.J. (1997) Guidelines for Serving Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Young Children, *Early Childhood Education Journal* 24.
[79] Souto-Manning, M. (2006) A Critical Look at Bilingualism Discourse in Public Schools: Autoethnographic Reflections of a Vulnerable Observer, *Bilingual Research Journal* 30.

experiencing such stresses as financial difficulties, domestic upheaval, or recent immigration.[80] Information on effective skills and strategies for a diverse population is available, but barriers to professional development and a relative lack of focus on these matters in early childhood education programs present challenges to the workforce building its overall level of skill in this area.[81]

As early ECEC settings grow increasingly inclusive, the skills and knowledge required to provide high quality care for children with special needs continues to be a concern. While there is little doubt that effective ECEC can have "profound countervailing effects" for children with special needs,[82] in terms of specific human resources needs associated with effective inclusion, the recently produced *Child Care Services Needs Assessment: Newfoundland and Labrador*[83] cites several recommendations for ECEC organizations providing services to children with special needs. Firstly, programs should inquire into the training needs of ECEC providers with respect to children with special needs and explore the options for meeting their needs. Secondly, the report recommends strengthening collaboration between ECEC providers and those currently identifying, assessing and providing resources to children with special needs. Finally, services should strengthen their ability to include children with special needs in their programs.

Taken together, these suggestions highlight the need to develop a clearer sense of what ECEC professionals require in terms of training, the need to develop multi-organizational networks in order to improve care, and the need, overall, to support ECEC organizations towards improved inclusion.

3.9 A Diverse Workforce

It is becoming more common in human resource development research to discuss how employers undertake "the strategic utilization of the variety of talents in their heterogeneous employee populations."[84] In other words, workplaces are increasingly diverse and those with leadership responsibility are increasingly interested not just in finding the common knowledge necessary to an effective workplace, but also in leveraging the strengths of a diverse staff.[85] The ECEC workforce is diverse in a variety of ways. Although the gender of the workforce is quite homogeneous (96% are women), the population is ethnically diverse, which is reflective of trends in immigration and of the constitution of the population in general.[86]

[80] Swick and Williams (2006).
[81] Doherty, et al (2000).
[82] "Who's Watching the Kids? The State of Child Care in America." *Knowledge@Wharton* (2000). http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article.cfm?articleid=257.
[83] Blakie, P.R. (2003) *Child Care Services Needs Assessment: Newfoundland and Labrador* as cited in Don Gallant and Associates (2007) Examination of Recruitment and Retention Issues for the Child Care Workforce in Newfoundland and Labrador - Final Report. http://www.aecenl.ca/images/pdfs/IAS/r%26rinlrpt.pdf
[84] Horwitz, S.K. (2005) The Compositional Impact of Team Diversity on Performance: Theoretical Considerations, *Human Resources Development Review* 4, 219.
[85] Shoobridge, G.E. (2006) Multi-Ethnic Workforce and Business Performance: Review and Synthesis of the Empirical Literature, *Human Resource Development Review* 5, 92-137.
[86] Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2006). *Career Promotions and Recruitment Strategy Project: Executive Summary*.

A diverse workforce has both advantages and challenges. There is a well-recognized need for ECEC settings to meet the needs of Aboriginal children and children from diverse linguistic, racial, and/or cultural backgrounds,[87] and a workforce that reflects the overall demographics of Canada can certainly be seen as a strength in meeting this goal. However, those who are newcomers to Canada or who possess experience not currently recognized by regulatory systems face employment barriers. For newcomers, language and cultural differences can present barriers,[88] as can difficulties having foreign credentials assessed appropriately.[89] Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) has also emerged as an important issue for a diverse workforce. Systems that recognize prior learning are important for those with international educational credentials and they are seen as crucial for building an effective workforce for Aboriginal children.[90]

3.10 Gender: Working Women, Working Conditions, and Wages

The ECEC sector is complexly linked with large-scale shifts in gender and employment in Canada. Women form the vast majority of the ECEC labour force, and the availability of ECEC is connected to women's ability to participate in the labour force generally.[91] Early childhood education and care support is typically figured into ratings of "Best Employers" for women,[92] and a lack of available ECEC spaces can keep women out of the workforce. As one author succinctly put it, the ECEC sector "contributes to the productivity of other sectors and to gender equality."[93] Women therefore bear the bulk of the burden – both as employees and as workers in other professions – when there are difficulties in the ECEC sector.

There is an increasing awareness of the need to account for gender in human resource development strategies.[94] And, indeed, given that women are predominant in the ECEC workforce, gender is an important consideration in human resource issues. Providing employment flexibility has been identified, in a comparative international context, as an important overall factor in improving women's employment outcomes. Flexibility in scheduling, unanticipated leave (e.g., child illness), anticipated leave (e.g., long-term care of family member), work location, and overall career flexibility (e.g., parental leave) have been identified as key factors in women's labour force outcomes.[95] In the Canadian ECEC sector, some aspects of flexibility are simply not possible. Work location cannot be altered for someone working in a ECEC centre. However, other aspects of flexibility that govern women's success in the labour force – particularly those relating to flexibility in hours and leave – can be difficult to meet in contexts where workforce shortages collide with the stringent and necessary regulations about staff-child ratios.

[87] Cited OECD (2003).
[88] OECD (2003).
[89] Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2007) *People, Programs and Practices: A Training Strategy for the Early Childhood Education and Care Sector in Canada* (Ottawa, ON).
[90] Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada (2007).
[91] Hansen, K., Joshi, H., & Verropoulou, G. (2006) Childcare and Mothers' Employment: Approaching the Millennium, *National Institute Economic Review* 195, 84-102. See also Brown, D. (2004). Quality Child Care is Quality HR, experts say: Government funded child care should release full potential of female workforce, reduce stress on parents, *Canadian HR Reporter* 17.
[92] Joo, B., & McLean, G.N (2006) Best Employer Studies: A Conceptual Model from a Literature Review and a Case Study, *Human Resource Development Review*, 5.
[93] Rolfe, H. (2006) Employment and Child Care: Introduction, *National Institute Economic Review*, 195.
[94] Bierema, L.L., (2002) A Feminist Approach to HRD Research, *Human Resource Development Review* 1, 244-68.
[95] Boushey, H. (2005) Family-Friendly Policies: Boosting Mothers' Wages (Washington, DC: Centre for Economic and Policy Research).

Statistical analysis of wages in the Canadian ECEC sector suggests not just that gender is an issue in the relatively low institutional value placed upon ECEC work, but that women working in ECEC professions are paid less, on average, than those working other in female-dominated professions requiring similar levels of education. At the same time, however, evidence suggests that experience, tenure, and education are all rewarded in wages. In other words, gender is a factor, but there is some compensatory incentive to move forward within the profession. Nonetheless, wages and benefits in the profession as a whole do contribute to staff turnover.[96]

Although the need to attract men to the field is often mentioned, doing so successfully is a challenging activity. As one study argues, wages and gender mutually reinforce each other: female domination of a sector's workforce can reduce relative wages and relatively low wages deter male employment.[97] However, research also suggests that increasing the number of men working in the sector would be beneficial. Not only are they needed in order to meet labour force pressures, their increased presence in the ECEC sector can challenge stereotypes about the work itself while also providing different types of role models for children and different types of care.[98]

[96] Cleveland and Hyatt (2002).
[97] Smith. M. & Lyons, M. (2006) Crying Wolf? Employers, Awards and Pay Equity in the New South Wales Children's Services Industry, *Employment Relations Record* 6, 58.
[98] Rolfe (2006).

Section 4: Conclusions

The key goal of the *Supporting Employers in Early Childhood Education and Care – Literature Review Report* was to discuss the human resources issues facing the sector, as identified in the current literature. An additional goal of the Project was to identify innovative or effective practices currently used in the sector. The sections below provide a summary of the key issues discussed previously, with particular attention to innovative/effective practices or recommendations that are of relevance to the current project.

Though a limited number of practices were identified through the literature review, employers, employer councils, child care organizations, labour organizations, non-governmental and governmental bodies are enacting many innovative and exemplary HR practices. These practices were identified via the research processes of the *Main Report*. As the present document is intended to focus on information gleaned from the literature, interested readers should refer to *Section 5* of the *Main Report* for an extensive discussion on these practices.

4.1 Summary of HR Issues

4.1.1 Recruitment and Retention
As noted throughout this report, recruitment and retention are intrinsically linked to most, if not all, of the other issues facing the sector. In actuality, all of the HR issues facing the ECEC are intertwined and should be thought of as so. Thus, action taken regarding one issue (e.g., recruitment and/or retention) would almost certainly involve action regarding other HR issues facing the sector (e.g., compensation, attitudes towards the profession, education). Thus, while no specific practices were identified to improve recruitment and retention capabilities of employers, there are several practices discussed in the sections below which would help employers with these issues.

4.1.2 Training and Professional Development
In order to meet the goal of improving recruitment and retention, there is a need to support individuals to obtain the education and qualifications they need to provide high quality services. Employers require staff that can effectively provide high quality education and care. Thus, having an adequately trained staff (including staff who remain up to date via professional development) is a necessity for addressing recruitment and retention issues. There are several barriers to accessing education and professional development activities such as cost, difficulties in transferring credit from one institution to another, and training versus earnings capacity. The CCHRSC has developed a Training Strategy that focuses on the provision and recognition of ECE training which provides detailed information on this complex issue.

Research has provided evidence that many employers were promoted into their role because they were skilled ECEs, not necessarily because they had the required HR background and training. This impacts the ability of employers in the sector to effectively perform their management role. This also supports the need for HR management and leadership-specific training for the sector. The *Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators* are a useful tool that can be used to communicate the core HR management and leadership competency areas for employers and help structure training/education activities regarding this role.

4.1.3 Compensation: Wages and Benefits

Wages for ECEC workers in Canada are generally low, though there is a wide range of variability across the country. Benefits, including pensions and disability plans are rare. While low wages and lack of benefits cannot be said to be the sole contributing factor to the recruitment and retention issues facing the sector, they are certainly one of the key contributing factors. Thus, while increasing wages and benefits would almost certainly help improve recruitment and retention of staff, this alone would not entirely solve these challenges.

4.1.4 Attitudes/Respect for the Profession

Societal attitudes towards ECEC have a significant impact on many of the HR issues facing the sector, including recruitment and retention and wages and benefits. Work in the sector is generally not well understood nor respected. It is difficult to attract and keep workers in a field that is generally not valued or respected. While awareness of the important role of early childhood in social and intellectual development has increased, respect for (and compensation of) the sector has not commensurably grown. However, if research that details the importance of the early years and the positive impact the ECEC can have on children, families and society at large continues to be published, this will help improve attitudes towards, and respect for, the ECEC sector.

4.1.5 Policy and Funding

There is no consistent national policy or approach to early childhood education and care, with each Canadian province/territory maintaining its own system of regulation, funding arrangements and policy. All of the HR issues discussed in this report are embedded within the policy, funding and infrastructure settings of Canada as a whole and within each province and territory. Several research studies have recommended the development of a regulatory and funding environment that supports high quality education and care, which may include requirements for education that reflect the complex demands of the sector (including regulations regarding "employer" HR qualifications). Policy that recognizes and supports the key role that ECE plays in society, and the critical role of HR management and leadership, is suggested as necessary for any improvement in the HR issues facing the sector.

4.1.6 Health and Well-Being

The health and well-being of the ECEC workforce is directly related to the ability of employers to maintain sufficient staffing levels. As employers face challenges with recruitment and retention, having a healthy available workforce becomes all the more crucial. Early Childhood Educators face physical and psychological demands, which can lead to both physical injuries and staff stress and burnout. Research has suggested that an employer's ability to create a positive working environment is critical to maintaining staff health.

4.1.7 Aboriginal Children, Families and Communities

Services for Aboriginal children and families has been identified as a particular area that needs to be addressed in policy and practice. While ECEC providers in Aboriginal communities face many similar challenges as other providers, they also face additional challenges unique to their communities. It has been recommended that services in Aboriginal communities (and for Aboriginal children in general) be based upon community values, traditions and local culture and language. For employers in the sector, this may place an even greater challenge on the ability to find staff with the necessary skills and qualifications.

4.1.8 Meaningful Inclusion: Diverse Children

The ECEC sector is as diverse as the population of Canada, and as such, the provision of services for children from diverse backgrounds may pose a human resource challenge for employers in the sector. Children with

disabilities or special needs, those who are newcomers or have distinct cultural backgrounds, and those from low-income backgrounds all have distinct needs. These distinct needs have to be met by staff with the proper training and/or experience. Thus, while there is a growing recognition of the benefits that can accrue to all in an inclusive ECEC system, finding individuals who have the training or skills, or accessing further training/professional development for current staff, poses an HR challenge for employers wishing to provide high quality care.

4.1.9 A Diverse Workforce
Workplaces are becoming increasingly diverse and those with leadership responsibility are increasingly interested not just in finding the common knowledge necessary to an effective workplace, but also in leveraging the strengths of a diverse staff. This again influences the skills required by employers/administrators in the sector, and may signal an area for future training/professional development. In addition, there is a need for a system of foreign training/credentials recognition to enable employers to access the pool of skilled, foreign-trained ECE professionals.

4.1.10 Gender
Women form the vast majority of the ECEC labour force, and the availability of ECEC is connected to women's ability to participate in the labour force generally. While there are workplace options that have been shown to increase women's labour force attachment (e.g. flexibility in scheduling, unanticipated leave, anticipated leave, and work location), the nature of the ECEC sector limits many employers' ability to provide such options. However, an examination of the types of non-monetary benefits that employers can provide may have a significant impact on increasing their ability to retain and/or recruit staff.

4.2 Conclusion

One of the most significant findings of this literature review is that the ECEC sector is extremely complex, with various intertwined human resources issues and challenges. Staff recruitment and retention challenges, issues regarding training and professional development, wages and benefits and attitudes towards ECEC are closely linked. All of the HR issues discussed are embedded within policy, funding and infrastructure of ECEC nationally, provincially/territorially and locally. While there is a significant research base detailing the human resources needs facing the sector, there are few resources that specifically focus on the "employer" in ECEC. In fact, this general shortage of information regarding the "employer" in ECEC was one of the contributing factors to the initiation of the *Supporting Employers in Early Childhood Education and Care Project*.

It is with that in mind that any discussion of potential recommendations regarding the HR issues facing employers is left to the *Main Report* for this project. While some effective practices, or areas for potential practice development, have been identified above, it is only by integrating the information of this literature review report with that gathered during the research process for the *Main Report* that well-rounded recommendations can be formulated.

The *Main Report* contains the 12 broad recommendations that were designed to address the key human resources issues identified via the literature review and ECEC sector stakeholder consultations (including an extensive consultation process with ECEC employers). A summary table of the issues and recommendations is given below as reference. However, interested readers should consult the *Main Report* for a full discussion of the issues and recommendations.

Summary of Key Human Resources Issues and Recommendations

Issue	Recommendation
1. All HR issues and solutions are embedded within the context of infrastructure, funding and policy. There is a need for the development and funding of a sustainable infrastructure for the early childhood education and care sector.	Policymakers develop and fund an infrastructure that can sustainably support the key stakeholder groups of the early childhood education and care sector (e.g., employer/administrators, employees, employer councils, ECEC organizations/professional associations, training/pedagogical leaders, CCHRSC, etc.).
2. a) A lack of clarity about who the "employer" is and the governance model of early childhood education and care organizations from the employer perspective; and, b) A general lack of HR expertise, capacity and knowledge on behalf of employers/administrators (e.g. directors, owner/operators, board members, managers, supervisors).	Create opportunities to enable employers to gain and share knowledge and develop and improve HR understanding and capacity.
3. a) A need for ECEC-specific HR standards and policy in government regarding training; and, b) a need for more defined formal post-secondary curricula addressing ECEC specific HR knowledge/skill areas.	a) Establish comprehensive regulations/standards regarding training/education requirements for early childhood education and care administrators; b) post-secondary training institutions develop curricula specific to ECEC *human resources management* in line with developed policy.
4. A lack of HR tools to support the implementation of sound HR practices specific to the ECEC sector.	Develop and disseminate HR tools specifically designed for the ECEC sector to support the implementation of sound HR practices.
5. General lack of awareness of the importance of developing/continuously improving the skills related to the "leadership" role of employers/administrators in early childhood education and care.	Enable employers to gain knowledge and experience in relevant aspects of ECEC sector leadership to ensure effective, productive and positive workplace environments.
6. Insufficient curriculum and programs addressing the leadership role of the employer/administrator in early childhood education and care.	Develop curriculum and programs dealing with leadership role of employer/administrator in early childhood education and care and supply resources to enable employers pursue such programs.
7. a) General lack of public understanding/recognition of the (professional) requirements for and benefits of high quality early childhood education and care; b) negative perception of ECEC as a valuable and viable career option.	a) Create a culture of professionalism visible to employers, staff, parents, students and the overall community; b) provide information on and publicly recognize the benefits to children, families and society at large of exemplary early childhood education and care practices; c) develop social marketing/promotional strategies for the early childhood education and care sector (see CCHRSC – Career Promotions and Recruitment Strategy).

Summary of Key Human Resources Issues and Recommendations Continued

Issue	Recommendation
8. a) Inability to recruit high quality trained staff to the early childhood education and care field; b) a proportion of graduates of ECE programs are entering the sector without the skills required by employers; c) some of the students being encouraged to pursue an ECE degree/diploma are those that have relatively lower educational skills.	a) Enable employers to provide both monetary and non-monetary benefits and a positive working environment (also recommended to improve retention); b) ensure training and curriculum is in line with the needs of employers and c) actively encourage students with the necessary skill sets to pursue a career in the sector.
9. High rates of staff turnover and attrition.	Provide a range of retention tools, strategies and training to those in leadership roles (e.g. administrators, employers, board members, supervisors) on effective retention strategies. Note: Recommendation 8 a) also applies to retention (i.e., enable employers to provide both monetary and non-monetary benefits and a positive working environment);
10. a) A shortage of available qualified graduates/job candidates with adequate training and an overall lower numbers of students with the necessary skill sets entering training for ECE; b) limited variety of training formats for ECE	a) Encourage and facilitate ECE training/education by providing incentives and financial supports; b) give recognition of the value of training/education; c) recognition and portability of credentials of ECE training/education between jurisdictions (e.g. credential recognition systems); d) develop and promote provincial/territorial and pan-Canadian curriculum frameworks for ECE education and additional alternate modes/formats for ECE training (e.g. credential recognition systems).
11. Limited access to and participation in professional development (PD) opportunities due to: the availability of replacement staff, cost of training/PD, timing (e.g., evenings, weekends, full-time study) and access to relevant/new opportunities.	Establish and provide support for various PD opportunities (including Professional Resource Centres), which will enable employers to facilitate their own and their staff's training/PD.
12. The majority of early childhood education and care organizations do not have adequate financial resources, resulting in low wages and a lack of benefits.	a) Encourage stakeholders to collaborate to identify innovative practices to increase wages and benefits; b) develop legislation/policies to increase dedicated funding levels for ECE compensation.

Appendix 1: References

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