

Fall 2005

**A BULLETIN OF THE
CHILD CARE HUMAN
RESOURCES SECTOR COUNCIL**



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Canada

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Workforce issues figure in child care agreements, but details vary

The six federal-provincial-territorial early learning and child care agreements in principle signed in the spring and summer identify recruitment and retention strategies as a priority for developing quality services. However, the agreements with Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta vary in specifics about each province's plans to support the workforce and improve child care.

All provinces or territories with agreements are expected to file strategic child care plans by the end of the year in order to access federal transfers from 2006-2007 to 2009-2010. In the current fiscal year, every province and territory can access budgeted funds.

Manitoba and Ontario already have child care strategies in place that contain measures to attract and support qualified staff.

For example, **Manitoba** has prioritized Workforce Stabilization and Development through a new forgivable loan program for tuition, a recommendation included in the Manitoba Child Care Association's labour market strategy, said Debra Mayer, author of the strategy and chair of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada. Also included are \$1.4 million over two years to double early childhood education (ECE) college seats, a Recruitment Fund (\$750,000) to provide a total payment of up to \$3,000 per trained ECE recruited back to the field, and money

for a substitute replacement fund. The province has also increased grants to centres to enable them to pay salaries to ECEs on the Manitoba Child Care Association's Phase IV Salary Scale.

"It is very exciting to see that this is all happening," said Mayer. "If there's anything missing it's at the leadership development level where we also will need to have tuition support for people to take advance-level training. But there's always next year!"

In **Ontario**, the province's Best Start program has earmarked \$106 million towards wage improvements for child care workers province-wide over three years. The government's Best Start progress report indicates that plans are also underway for a new College of Early Childhood Educators to "establish high professional standards for quality child care and early learning programs." As well, the government has set up two expert panels: one to look at curriculum; the other to deal with issues such as recruitment, retention and

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Workforce issues figure in child care agreements, but details vary

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attractiveness of the profession, compensation, status and recognition, and training and qualifications. The human resources expert panel report is due in December 2006.

"We are focusing on many things at one time," said Quality and Human Resources Expert Panel chair Dr. Donna Lero. Dr. Lero is the Research Director (Families) for the Centre for Families, Work and Well-Being at the University of Guelph. "We want to look at qualifications at entry-level, for lead teachers and for directors, but also are very concerned about retention and providing training and appropriate compensation at every level. We also need a skilled and committed workforce that reflects the diversity of Ontario."

All of these issues are important, said Dr. Lero, because studies indicate "that the quality of staff is one, if not the strongest, contributor to quality in children's experiences in early learning and

care programs. Staff themselves know the value of the contribution they make and we need to value it more through compensation and recognition of the critically important work they do."

In other provinces:

- One of **Nova Scotia's** priority areas in the agreement is "improved retention and training supports for early childhood educators and child care providers." The province is developing a five-year plan based on its summer consultations, and parent and workforce surveys on child care. The province had already set up a wage grant under previous federal/provincial agreements, but has yet to make clear whether any new funding from the federal budget for fiscal 2005 will go towards enhancing wages.
- **Newfoundland and Labrador** also held consultations with stakeholders in June, with recruitment and retention of staff emerging as a main area of concern. The province currently has an educational supplement paid to staff who apply, in recognition of the education they have already obtained. The province also has plans

to develop public awareness about the importance of the jobs of early childhood education and care.

- The **Saskatchewan** government has set up a working group of representatives from government, the province's two child care associations and training organizations, to oversee a labour market study of the needs of licensed child care centres. The labour market update will include a survey of staff in the sector as well as efforts to get feedback from former child care staff about why they left the field and what might bring them back in. The study will be completed by mid-December.
- **Alberta** has not yet indicated how it will distribute federal child care funding for fiscal 2005. Some in the sector hope that the province will increase staff support and quality enhancement funding to centres and family day home agencies involved in the province's accreditation program.
- At time of writing, the federal government was actively engaged in negotiating agreements with the remaining provinces and territories.

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ECE Affinity Group

New network launched !

The Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC), in partnership with the sector council, has just established the ECE (early childhood education) Affinity Group. To join the list-serve, visit the sector council's web site at www.cccsc-cssge.ca and click the ECE Affinity Group link on the home page. The affinity group is a vehicle for members of the ECE training community to share ideas and improve coordinated actions around labour market initiatives in the child care sector.

Reaching our sector in better ways

After months of research and analysis, the sector council's communications and web site project is nearing completion, with the new web site set to launch in January 2006.

The development of a communications strategy was critical to the success of the project. Produced after a series of stakeholder interviews and surveys, and an environmental scan, the strategy provides an in-depth analysis of Canada's child care sector and the role the sector council plays. As the foundation for the council's communication and outreach activities over the next three years, the strategy identifies communications goals and a series of activities designed to achieve them.

Much of the council's future material will be designed to reach key audiences like child care and labour organizations, policy makers, and educational institutions and training organizations.

A successful branding initiative—to ensure that all sector council material is easy to identify and shares a common look—was also completed as part of the project. The results can be seen on sector council print material, such as the 2005 research paper series, the annual report, and the upcoming revamped

web site.

The web site will feature detailed information on the child care workforce, profiles of those working in the field, and early childhood education and career resources. It will also feature regular updates on the work of the sector council; child care research, news and events; and government initiatives. Quick and easy-to-use, the new site will ensure child care human resources information is readily accessible to all.

Project updates

The sector council is looking forward to launching the Training Strategy Project and the Career Awareness Project – Phase 1, by winter 2005.

Training strategy

Increasing the number of qualified people in the workforce is recognized across Canada as a critical challenge in child care. This challenge, combined with an aging workforce and training requirements that vary from one province or territory to the next, points to the need for a coordinated and consistent approach to child care training in Canada. The *Training Strategy Project* seeks to address these challenges, and ultimately, to address the need to dramatically increase the number of qualified and trained people who work in the sector.

The first phase of this two-phase project has three key elements:

- surveys/focus groups with students, faculty, and employers to correlate training with retention;
- developing a research paper examining existing research on child care training; and
- developing an options paper on ways to move forward.

Phase One will lead to the development of a training strategy designed to in-

crease the capacity of the child care workforce. This strategy will be put into action in Phase Two.

Career awareness

The *Working for Change* labour market update reports identified an urgent need to increase awareness and understanding of the value of child care as a career. As Canada develops a child care system, expansion of new spaces means an increased number of people will be needed to work in the field. The *Career Awareness Project – Phase I* will lay the foundation for an outreach project designed to address this challenge. Phase I will be research driven, evaluating existing career promotion strategies and materials to identify areas for development at the provincial, territorial and pan-Canadian levels. From there, a pan-Canadian career awareness strategy will be developed. Phase II will focus on putting the strategy into action using a variety of outreach tools and activities designed to increase respect for child care as a career and, in turn, attract more people to the sector.

Spreading the word about *Working for Change*

Sector council representatives were out at conferences and meetings this spring to present the findings of the council's recent labour market report, *Working for Change: Canada's Child Care Workforce*. Working in teams of two and three were council members Gyda Chud, Sheila Davidson, Gay Pagan, Jamie Kass and Marta Juorio, staff members Diana Carter and Samantha Peek, and researcher Jane Beach. The presenters discussed the labour market update study in well-received workshops and panels held at meetings and conferences sponsored by the Manitoba Child Care Association, the Early Childhood Educators of B.C., the Association of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario, the Toronto District School Board and a co-sponsored conference of the Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association, Canadian Child Care Federation, and the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development.

Comings and Goings

We say goodbye to Gyda Chud, longtime sector council member and recent vice-chair.

Gyda was one of the sector council's pioneers, chairing the original Child Care Human Resources Steering Committee to the sector study. She was the former chair of the sector council and chair of the Child Care Human Resources Round Table, the sector council's predecessor. Gyda brought to the council 30 years of experience in child care, as well as depth, continuity and humour to our work. "Gyda has made a tremendous impact on the sector council and all of us who have worked with her," said the council's current chair Joanne Morris. Gyda is currently director of the Centre for Professional and Continuing Studies at Vancouver Community College.

The sector council also thanks the following outgoing members for their important contribution, and the experience and skills they brought to the organization:

Noreen Murphy was with us for five years, first as a representative on the Child Care Human Resources Round Table and more recently as a director at large on the council. Noreen made a significant contribution to the policies that guide our work and was committed to building a strong foundation for the organization.

Jasbir Randhawa, who recently completed a one-year term as director at large on the council, was instrumental on the working group for *Shedding New Light*, a report on the staff recruitment and retention challenges in the sector. Jasbir championed home child care issues throughout her term.

Trista Thompson represented the National Union of Public and

The sector council is pleased to welcome Tina Bergeron to the team! As our new administrative coordinator, Tina will be instrumental in the day-to-day operations of the sector council.

General Employees during her term on the council. Trista was a strong voice for the child care workforce and her first-hand perspective on front-line issues was key to the work of the sector council.

Welcome new directors at large

Denise Gilbert has been involved in child care for 22 years. She is executive director of Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham, Ontario, which operates 19 child care centres in the region. She also chairs the Durham Region Child Care Forum and the ECE Advisory Committee for Durham College.

Maureen Hall is the director of family and children's programs at Today's Family – Caring for Your Child. The Hamilton, Ontario, agency provides services for about 2,500 children and their families. Maureen is a child and youth worker and is re-enrolled in the human resources program at a local college. She is a past board member and a current member of the Home Child Care Association of Ontario.

Bonnie Traverse is a member of the Aboriginal Child Care Early Learning Committee, the Aboriginal Child Care Early Learning Network and the Manitoba Child Care Association. Bonnie was also a First Nations Human Resources Development Strategy day care coordinator working with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

Now Available

Labour Market Research papers

This fall, the sector council released a series of background papers that zero in on key human resources issues arising from the 2004 labour market update study, *Working for Change: Canada's Child Care Workforce*. Visit our web site at www.ccscc-cssge.ca to download your free copy or call 1-866-411-6960 for more information. Details below:

A snapshot of the child care workforce

This paper provides a statistical profile of Canada's child care workforce, including valuable information on everything from age and education to diversity and gender.

Child care wages and a quality child care system

The wages and benefits of the workforce are important factors in the sector's recruitment problems and high staff turnover, resulting in lower quality child care. This paper examines earnings, the impact of education on income, and the impact that trends in child care expansion and funding could have on wages.

Organizations and unions: supporting the child care workforce

For the child care workforce, gaining more respect and improving wages are two critical related factors: recognition helps mobilize support for the funding needed to get higher wages, and higher wages increase recognition. This paper looks at three important strategies for achieving these critical goals: professionalization, unionization and advocacy.

The future child care workforce: perspectives of early childhood education students

What views do early childhood education (ECE) students have about child care, their training programs, and their work prospects after graduation? This paper examines key issues affecting ECE students and provides their perspective first-hand.

Medal winner

Marta Juorio, the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada representative on the sector council, received a Commemorative Centennial Medal from the Saskatchewan government in September. Marta was recognized for her “work with children, her dedication to bettering their lives, her professional contribution to the field of child care and her advocacy for high quality, universally accessible child care at both the provincial and federal level.”

New web site set to launch!

Stay up-to-date on the latest child care human resources issues and watch for our new look, coming soon at www.ccsc-cssge.ca.

We've moved

Please contact us at our new address:

151 Slater St, Suite 714

Ottawa, ON

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Our phone numbers remain the same:

Toll-free: 1-866-411-6960

Local: 613-239-3100

Occupational standards to help with training, support

The draft occupational standards developed by the sector council this spring reflect a strong stakeholder consensus around the key areas of responsibility for child care administrators, including supervisors and directors.

The draft standards will be discussed and validated at the fall 2005 sector council board meeting and at provincial multi-stakeholder workshops to be held early in 2006. The workshops will include representatives from a broad range of stakeholders such as training institutions, child care organizations, provincial governments, large and small centre-based child care, family (home) child care, unionized centres, licensing bodies, and those who work with children who have special needs.

The standards are part of the council's project to support administration in child care management and are the product of three spring workshops with child care administrators: one in each of eastern and western Canada, and one for francophone practitioners.

The main reason for developing the standards is to improve training and support for those who hold administrative positions in child care. The Canadian

Child Care Federation has developed well-received occupational standards for practitioners, but currently there are no cross-Canada standards for child care administrators. The sector council's recent labour market update report, *Working for Change*, underscored the need for measures to improve management and leadership practices, supports and training in child care.

“In conversations we've had with people across the country, it's clear that the sector as a whole really needs and wants standards for administrators as well as those that already exist for practitioners,” said sector council executive director Diana Carter. “They see them as a key tool to move forward on critical child care management issues.”

The draft identifies the tasks, skills, abilities and knowledge required of child care administrators, and once finalized will help to pinpoint training and support gaps that need to be addressed.

Bridging care and education

The key policy issues around integration between kindergarten and child care programs will be the focus of a symposium at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in Toronto on November 3 and 4. Human resources, program design, governance and financing, and curriculum are the central issues participants will be discussing. The symposium is being sponsored by the Integration

Network, set up to develop policy recommendations on the lack of bridging between “care” programs in child care centres and “education” (kindergarten) programs in the schools.

Visit www.inproject.ca for registration and program details, and to download the discussion paper, *Integration for a Change: How Can Integration of Services for Kindergarten-Aged Children Be Achieved?*

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