

Shedding New Light on Staff Recruitment and Retention Challenges in Child Care

Prepared for the Child Care Human
Resources Sector Council



Authors: Gillian Doherty, Barry Forer

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The Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC) welcomes the opportunity to share this timely and topical report with you. *Shedding New Light on Staff Recruitment and Retention Challenges* was commissioned by the CCHRSC—a pan-Canadian, non-profit organization dedicated to moving forward on human resource issues in the child care sector. This study focuses on further, more in-depth analysis of data collected from child care centres for the *2001 You Bet I Care!* (YBIC) project, a study well known to our sector.

The findings of the *Working for Change* report are especially relevant now, at a time when child care is high on the government agenda. As we move into a period of promised government commitment, the momentum needed to propel the child care agenda forward is building. Political will, coupled with the knowledge and experience of child care advocates, is necessary to effectively address the many challenges facing the sector and its workforce.

Across the country, child care workers contend with issues ranging from low income levels; few benefits; a lack of respect and recognition; little support; and barriers to training. In a sector that requires an immense physical and emotional investment, failure to address these human resource issues has led to high levels of burnout and frustration among staff. In turn, the challenge of recruiting and retaining a skilled child care workforce has become increasingly difficult. Today, the child care sector is facing a recruitment and retention crisis. As the “*Shedding New Light...*” report shows, the long-term absence of adequate public policy and funding have resulted in the low wages and poor working conditions that plague the sector. This makes it very difficult to attract a potential workforce and retain the existing one. With a large number of child care workers moving out of the field for higher wages and improved working conditions, Canada faces a critical child care labour shortage.

Now more than ever, there is a serious need to reevaluate Canada’s approach to child care. The answer to meeting child care needs rests in improved policy, funding, and support for the workforce. This can only be accomplished through the development of a well supported and publicly funded child care system. The work of the CCHRSC, together with all child care, labour, and advocacy organizations, is to bring evidence-based research to light and use it as a foundation for action.

The CCHRSC would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to Gillian Doherty and Barry Forer, whose effort and dedication made this report a reality. To the child care centre staff and directors across Canada who so generously contributed their time and experience, our deepest respect and admiration. A special thank you to the original YBIC! project research team—Doherty, Lero, Goelman, LaGrange, and Tougas—and to the CCHRSC project Working Group who provided support and guidance throughout the project. Our sincere appreciation to Human Resources Development Canada for funding this study and for continuing to support the work of the CCHRSC.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study undertook additional analyses of data originally collected for the 1998 *You Bet I Care! A Canada-Wide Study on Wages, Working Conditions and Practices in Child Care* report. The results of the analyses were used to identify factors that predict:

- An individual staff person expressing an intention to leave their child care centre for reasons associated with the centre or the child care field rather than normative life events such as an anticipated family move to another community.
- An individual expressing an intention to leave the child care field for reasons associated with the field.
- A centre with staff retention problems.
- A centre with a high staff turnover rate in the previous 12 months.
- A centre reporting a major problem recruiting qualified permanent teaching staff in the previous 12 months.

The strongest finding was that indicators of burnout predict an individual's intent to leave the centre, the proportion of staff in a centre intending to leave, and an individual who intends to leave the field altogether. Indicators of burnout in the director strongly predict a centre with staff retention problems, actual turnover rate, and difficulties recruiting new staff.

The strongest other predictors of one or more of the outcomes noted above are:

- Low wages and poor compensation-related benefits.
- Lack of benefits that improve daily working conditions, e.g. a coffee break or paid preparation time.
- Staff dissatisfaction with wages, benefits and promotion opportunities.
- Staff perception that their occupation is not respected by others.
- The average level of ECCE training of centre staff.
- Staff overall have worked at the centre for a relatively short time.
- Staff believe they have to leave the field in order to earn more or attain a higher status position.

Other factors that lead to one or more of the outcomes include: relatively little attention paid to staff needs, lack of clarity around staff responsibilities and centre requirements, and little social support in the workplace, e.g. from a supervisor and/or co-workers.

The final chapter, Chapter 5, discusses the predictors of the recruitment and retention challenges faced by child care centres. The chapter includes strategies that might be used to address this situation such as unionization, which predicts fewer staff recruitment difficulties. Chapter 5 also discusses issues around staff burnout and some ways to combat it.

The report concludes that the recruitment and retention challenges faced by child care centres result from a complex and dynamic interaction of several contributors. Addressing each contributor separately would help but is not sufficient to make child care an attractive and viable occupation. Solving recruitment and retention problems in child care requires a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach. This approach must take into account and simultaneously address: (1) the need to moderate the stress in the job; (2) compensation (wages, benefits and working conditions); (3) the accessibility of ECCE training; and (4) the current low level of public respect for the job.

The table on the following page provides a summary of the predictors of all seven retention and recruitment outcomes.

A glossary of terms is presented at the end of this report, immediately after the References.

Table 1: Predictors of all seven retention and recruitment outcomes

Predictors	Staff level outcomes		Centre level outcomes				
	Intent to leave centre	Intent to leave field	Intent to leave centre	Intent to leave field	Centre turnover	Retention difficulties	Recruitment difficulties
1st Tier (HIGH for one or more outcomes)							
Indicators of staff burnout	1	1	1	1	3	3	
Length of time working at the centre	3		2	3	1	2	3
Centre turnover rate						1	1
Staff education					3	2	1
Current feelings about child care as a career		2		1			
2nd Tier (MEDIUM for one or more outcomes)							
Higher status or pay only possible if leave field		2		2			
Indicators of director burnout					3	3	2
Staff wages		3				3	2
Perceived job security at centre	2		3				
3rd Tier (LOW for one or more outcomes)							
Auspice			3	3			
Perceptions about promotion within the centre	3	3		3			
Perceptions of respect				3			
Centre benefits that improve working conditions					3		
Staff satisfaction with supervisor			3				
Feelings about pay, benefits, and promotion	3						
Centre budget devoted to wages and benefits						3	
Percentage of staff engaged in recent PD					3		
Unionized staff							3
Centre has extended hours					3		
Supportive, collegial relations among staff				3			
Director perceptions of staff-director relations						3	
% staff resigning from a previous child care job					3		
Director intends to leave centre within one year				3			

Note: Each cell containing a number indicates that the predictor in that row has a statistically significant relationship with the outcome (in the model). Where cells are empty, the relationship is not statistically significant for the model. The number 1 indicates the strongest significant predictors of each outcome, with importance scores of larger than 30 for the model. The number 2 indicates the medium strength significant predictors, with importance scores between 20 and 30 for the model, and the number 3 indicates the lowest strength significant predictors, with importance scores under 20 for the model.

1.1 Context

In 2001, 65.8% of mothers whose youngest child was less than age three were in the labour force as were 73.4% of women whose youngest child was age three to five. Most of these working mothers were employed full-time (Statistics Canada, 2003). While they are at work, many mothers rely on child care centres to look after their children. Research has consistently and convincingly demonstrated that stability of relationship between staff and children is crucial for the provision of the type of child care that promotes each child's well-being, growth and development.

Centres right across Canada are struggling with staff recruitment and retention problems. This is not a new phenomenon. In 1992, the report from a Canada-wide survey linked the already evident crisis in recruitment and retention with the poor wages and benefits and the low status afforded to people who work in the child care sector (Canadian Child Care Federation/Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, 1992). The continued recruitment and retention challenges being experienced by centres was highlighted in the Child Care Sector Study report (Beach, Bertrand and Cleveland, 1998) and by a subsequent 1998 Canada-wide survey of wages, working conditions and practices in child care centres (Doherty, Lero, Goelman, LaGrange and Tougas, 2000).

In addition to poor wages and benefits and low status other contributors to recruitment and/or retention problems have become evident. These include, but are not limited to:

- Increased expectations on the workforce and what appears to be an increased incidence of staff leaving the field because they find the work too stressful.
- A workforce with a higher level of education than found in the 1992 survey but still facing the same limitations on advancement in the field as existed then. This reality is now coupled with an increased availability of higher paying, higher status jobs in other fields such as the elementary school system.
- The aging of the child care workforce.

Staff working in child care centres are expected to include children with special needs in their daily program, work with children who have challenging behaviours, assist immigrant children from very different cultures to learn English or French and adapt to new ways of doing things, provide information and support for immigrant and other families, and support employed parents struggling to balance family and work responsibilities. In many cases the pre-service training obtained by staff did not provide adequate preparation for these responsibilities and this lack is not rectified by in-service training or the availability of consultation. Both the 1991 and the 1998 Canada-wide surveys asked directors to identify the most common reasons for their staff leaving voluntarily in the previous 12 months. In 1991, the three most commonly cited reasons were dissatisfaction with the pay, return to school, and family move (Canadian Child Care Federation/Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, 1992). In

1998, the three reasons cited most frequently were dissatisfaction with the pay, family move, and found the job too stressful. In five provinces, over 25% of directors cited stress as one of the three most common reasons for staff resigning (Doherty et al., 2000).

The career ladder in child care centres continues to be assistant teacher, ¹ teacher, supervisor and director. In 1998, only 28% of assistant teachers, 23% of teachers, and 30% of supervisors thought they had a chance of being promoted at their centre. When asked if they thought they would have to leave the field in order to make more money or achieve a higher-status position, 73% of assistant teachers, 75% of teachers, and 76% of supervisors responded 'yes' (Doherty et al., 2000).

Centre directors report anecdotally that increasing numbers of centre staff in their early 40's are beginning to consider the implications of few if any savings and no pension plan other than Q/CPP. Those who have portable skills start looking around for another career that will enable them to save money for their retirement. Often these people in their early 40's are centre directors or supervisors — the leaders in the child care field. In 1998, on a Canada-wide basis, 22% of teachers and 19% of supervisors who left their centre for another job went to one in a field completely unrelated to child care or children's services (Doherty et al., 2000).

1.2 Purpose of the study

To undertake further analyses of the existing data collected on wages, working conditions and practices in child care centres as part of the *You Bet I Care!* Project in order to identify the factors that predict:

- An individual expressing an intention to leave the centre in which they work for reasons associated with the centre or the child care field rather than normative life events such as an anticipated family move to another community.
- An individual expressing an intention to leave the child care field for reasons associated with the field.
- A centre with a high proportion of staff intending to leave the centre.
- A centre with staff retention difficulties.
- A centre having a high staff turnover rate in the previous 12 months.
- A centre reporting that in the previous 12 months recruiting qualified permanent staff had been a major problem.

To identify the strongest predictors for each of the above situations and discuss how they may influence each other.

¹ Following the convention used in the *You Bet I Care!* Survey, the term 'assistant teacher' refers to an individual who works with children under the on-going supervision of another person. The term 'teacher' refers to a person who is responsible for a group of children.

To discuss the factors that appear to reduce:

- Staff intention to leave their centre or the field.
- Actual staff turnover rates.
- Centre recruitment problems.

To provide information able to inform the development and implementation of strategies to reduce the current staff recruitment and retention difficulties being experienced in the child care field.

1.3 Methodology

The *You Bet I Care!* Study involved sending questionnaire packages to a sample of potential centre participants identified from lists of currently licensed centres provided by each province and territory. Each package consisted of a centre questionnaire that sought information about the children served, centre finances and centre policies and practices and questionnaires that sought information from and about the director and the teaching staff. Questionnaire packages were sent to all centres in jurisdictions with less than a 100 centres and to a randomly selected third or slightly more of the centres in other jurisdictions. A total of 848 completed centre questionnaires, 861 completed director questionnaires and 4,154 completed staff questionnaires were returned. The return rates were 47.2% for centres and 47.9% for directors. It is not possible to estimate the return rate for staff questionnaires since there is no way of knowing how many staff in a centre were actually given the staff questionnaire by their centre director.

The first step in the present study was to identify all the variables from the staff, director, and centre questionnaires to be considered as potential predictors of recruitment and retention difficulties. Selection of potential predictors was done on the basis of findings from other research and hypotheses regarding the causes of retention and recruitment problems in child care put forward in the professional literature. Each of the authors independently identified a list of potential predictors, with the final list composed of all variables identified by either or both of the authors. Over 100 predictors were identified as potentially important to include in the analyses. Appendix A identifies the list of potential predictors for intention to leave the centre and/or the field. The list of potential indicators for turnover, problems retaining staff and problems recruiting staff is presented in Appendix B.

Two Databases

Once these variables were identified, two databases were created. The first database was formed at the individual staff level of analysis, with one record for each responding staff member. Each record contained all of the staff, director, and centre variables that were identified in the above selection process. Therefore, each staff record had the individual's responses for the identified staff questionnaire items, the response of the director of the centre in which they work for the identified director items, and the centre responses for the identified centre items. All staff from the same centre necessarily had the same scores on the director and centre

items. If the centre and/or director questionnaires were missing for a responding staff, the items from these questionnaires would be missing in the individual's record.

The second database was formed at the individual centre level of analysis, with one record for each centre. Again, the database was constructed to include all of the staff, director, and centre variables identified as potentially important. This was straightforward for the director and centre variables, as only one director at most could respond for each director or centre questionnaire. However, for each centre, the number of responding staff members ranged from 0 to 24. In order to capture the potential staff variables in one record, it was necessary to summarize each variable across all staff at each centre. For example, for the staff item, "Do you think you will be promoted within this centre?" the summary variable used was the proportion of responding staff from that centre who responded "no." For staff variables with a continuous distribution (rather than yes/no), the summary variable used was the mean (the average) score for all staff at that centre. An example of this is the item on gross hourly wage for which the mean was calculated for each centre. One of the issues about summarizing staff variables at the centre level is what to do when the number of staff responding from a particular centre is low. For instance, if there is only one responding staff member that individual's responses might reflect opinions quite different from those of the other staff and could bias the summary scores for that centre. For this reason, a rule was created to select only those centres with at least two responding staff members for all centre level analyses.

Limitations of the database

This study used data that had already been collected as part of another study, the prime purpose of which was not the exploration of factors correlated (associated) with or predictive of either recruitment or retention difficulties. While using already collected data was cost/effective, it also restricted the analyses to what had been collected in the original survey. There may be other factors associated with or predictive of recruitment or retention difficulties that could not be identified in the present study because the required data were not available.

Levels of Analysis

Two of the outcomes of interest, intention to leave the centre and intention to leave the field, can be conceptualized at either the staff or centre level of analysis. As an example, let us consider intention to leave the centre. At the staff level of analysis, the research question is, "Which set of variables best explains which individual staff members stated an intention to leave the centre?" At the centre level of analysis, the research question is, "Which set of variables best explains the percentage of staff in each centre stating an intention to leave the centre?" In this report, the results for both the staff and centre levels of analysis are included. The other three outcomes of interest in this study (centre turnover rates in the previous 12 months, perceived difficulties in recruiting qualified, permanent teaching staff, and perceived difficulties in

retaining qualified, permanent teaching staff) can only be analyzed at the centre level of analysis.

Types of Regression Analyses Used

For each of the outcomes of interest, some sort of regression analysis was ultimately used to determine the best set of predictors. Depending on how the outcome under consideration was measured, one of two types of regression analyses was appropriate — either multiple regression or binary logistic regression.

Importance Scores

In regression analyses, there are generally two main results that are reported. The first is an overall measure of goodness-of-fit or effect size — in other words, the strength of the predictors as a group. There are different ways of measuring goodness-of-fit, depending on the type of regression, but they are typically reported as a number from 0 to 1, with the higher scores indicating better fit — a stronger set of predictors.

The second main reported result is the significance of each of the predictors in the model.² Thomas, Hughes, & Zumbo (1996) and Thomas & Zumbo (1998) have developed a way of measuring the importance of predictors for both linear multiple regression and binary logistic regression. These Importance Scores were calculated for all outcomes of interest. For any set of predictors, the Importance Scores add up to 100, so each score can be considered as the percentage that each predictor contributes to the goodness-of-fit of the model.

Analysis Steps

Regardless of the particular outcome variable, the same 12 steps were followed to eventually identify the best explanatory model.

1. Calculating the correlation³ between all of the potential predictors⁴ (from all three questionnaires as identified in Appendices A and B) and the outcomes of interest.
2. Selecting as candidate predictors only those (from all three questionnaires) with a correlation of .1 or higher with the outcome of interest. The potential predictors that met this

criterion are identified in Appendices C, D and E.

3. Conducting three separate regressions — one for the candidate staff predictors, one for the candidate centre predictors, and one for the candidate director predictors.
4. Identifying the significant predictors of the outcome of interest from each of the three regressions using a stepwise approach.
5. Combining these three sets of significant predictors in one stepwise regression to identify one overall model for the outcome of interest.
6. Redoing the regressions from step (3), but this time using a backwards approach to identify the three sets of significant predictors.
7. Combining this new set of significant predictors in one backwards regression to identify an additional overall model for the outcome of interest.
8. Comparing the significant predictors in the model from steps (5) and (7), and choosing only those predictors that appeared in both overall models.
9. Calculating the Importance Scores for each of the predictors from step (8).
10. Removing all predictors with Importance Scores under 5 (approximately).
11. Conducting one last regression with the remaining predictors to establish the final explanatory model.
11. Recalculating the Importance Scores for the predictors in the final explanatory model.

1.4 How this report is organized

- **Chapter 2, *Intention to Leave the Centre and Turnover Rates***, presents and discusses the findings related to predictors of: (1) individuals who intend to leave their centre within one year, (2) centres that have a high proportion of staff who intend to leave within one year, (3) centres that had experienced high staff turnover in the previous 12 months, and (4) centres where retaining qualified, permanent staff had been a major problem in the previous year. This chapter illustrates the important role played by staff burnout when individuals decide to leave the centre. The proportion of staff with a two-year ECCE credential is an important prediction of a centre with retention problems.
- **Chapter 3, *Intention to Leave the Field***, presents and discusses the findings related to individuals who express an expectation of no longer being in the field in three years and the proportion of staff intending to leave the field in any given centre. This chapter identifies the high concurrence between the findings and the hypotheses that have been presented by the field to explain the high proportion of people who leave it such as the low remuneration levels and the lack of respect in society for the occupation. Staff burnout was found also to be a strong predictor of individuals intending to leave the field.
- **Chapter 4, *Centres Experiencing Staff Recruitment Difficulties***, presents and discusses the findings related to centres that report that recruitment of qualified permanent teaching staff was a

² The term model, as used in this paper, refers to the set of predictors which, when combined, explain the outcome in question, for example, the set of predictors that best explains an individual's intention to leave their centre within the next 12 months.

³ The term correlation refers to the extent to which two variables are associated with each other at a better than chance level, for example, the extent of association between staff who support children's attempts to communicate verbally and children's verbal skills.

⁴ A predictor is a variable used to explain an outcome. For example, staff wages and promotion opportunities are two potential predictors of the proportion of child care staff who intend to leave the field.

major problem in the previous 12 months. The proportion of staff with a two-year ECCE credential and average staff wage level are both strong predictors of recruitment difficulties.

- **Chapter 5, Moving Forward**, discusses the predictors of the recruitment and retention challenges faced by child care centres and provides information about strategies that might be used to address them. The chapter also discusses staff burnout — what it is and the contributors to it — and some ways to combat it.

A glossary of terms is provided right at the end of this report, immediately after the References.

“By failing to meet the needs of the adults who work in child care, we are threatening not only their well-being but that of the children in their care.”

Marci Whitebook, Carolee House, and Deborah Phillips, 1990, p.3.

2.1 Introduction

In 1998, staff turnover rates for the previous 12 months were 21.7% on a Canada-wide basis with a range from 15.0% in Prince Edward Island to 44.8% in Alberta (Doherty et al., 2000). This chapter identifies the most significant predictors⁵ of four situations that represent different ways of exploring contributors to staff turnover. The four situations are:

- Individuals expressing an intention to leave their centre within one year.
- The proportion of staff within a centre expressing an intention to leave the centre within one year.
- Centres that report retaining qualified permanent staff as having been a major problem in the previous 12 months.
- Centre’s staff turnover rates in the previous 12 months.

2.2 Overview of the findings

Consistent with other research, predictors of staff turnover, as measured by one or more of the above approaches, include:

- Wage level.
- Availability of benefits
- Degree of satisfaction with wages and benefits.
- Perceived likelihood of promotion at the centre.

A low average length of time that staff have worked at the centre is a strong predictor of a centre with a high proportion of staff who intend to leave, a centre with staff retention difficulties, and a centre with a high turnover rate in the previous 12 months. Frequent staff changes, as indicated by a short average length of time that staff have worked at the centre, mean that the remaining staff must repeatedly assist children to cope with disrupted relationships, orient new staff, and establish new working relationships. This reality increases workload and stress and may contribute to decisions to leave the centre.

A low percent of a centre’s staff with a least a two-year ECCE credential predicts staff retention difficulties and centre turnover

⁵ A predictor is a variable used to explain an outcome. For example, a high proportion of staff in a centre that are burned out predicts a centre with a high turnover rate.

rate. Education related to the provision of child care has been found to be a moderator of stress for the individual and makes a challenging job easier to do. Absence of knowledgeable, skilled co-workers makes the job more difficult, even for a well-trained person, and contributes to stress and frustration.

Indicators of staff burnout predict intention to leave at both the individual and centre level, the extent of a centre’s difficulty retaining staff, and actual staff turnover rates. Low wages, dissatisfaction with wages and benefits, lack of job clarity,⁶ and low levels of ECCE training have all been identified in other research studies as predictors of staff burnout (Goelman and Guo). The strongest contributor to burnout in child care appears to be the inherently stressful nature of the job coupled with the absence or inadequate availability of moderators of stress such as support from others and job clarity (Manlove, 1993; Pines and Maslach, 1978; Todd and Deery-Schmitt, 1996). Burnout is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

The availability of things that promote job clarity, such as a written job description, a regular written performance appraisal, and a staff policy manual, predict actual turnover rates, though not with the same degree of strength as the other predictors noted above. Stress and interpersonal conflict are reduced when staff understand the nature and scope of their job, the roles of others in the centre, and the centre’s expectations.

Table 2.4, at the end of this Chapter, illustrates the strongest predictors of: (1) a centre with a high proportion of staff who intend to leave within 12 months; (2) a centre reporting staff retention difficulties; and (3) a centre with a high turnover rate in the previous 12 months.

2.3 The sample

The findings related to intention to leave the centre, whether they pertain to an individual’s intention to leave or a centre with a high proportion of staff intending to leave, and centre turnover rates are based on data from 3,852 individuals working in 1,073 centres.⁷ There is some overlap in the samples related to individuals’ intention to leave the centre and intention to leave the field since 345 respondents expressed an intention to do both.

⁶ Job clarity refers to the extent to which policies, procedures and responsibilities in a centre are explicitly defined and communication patterns are clear and consistent (Jorde-Bloom 1988).

⁷ A total of 848 usable centre questionnaires were obtained by the *You Bet I Care!* Project. However, in some situations staff from a specific centre had sent in completed staff questionnaires even though the director had not returned completed centre and/or director questionnaires. The data from all the completed staff questionnaires were used for analyses at the individual level resulting in a representation from 1,073 centres. For analyses at the centre level, variables taken from the staff questionnaire were only used for centers with at least two completed staff questionnaires.

2.4 Predictors of intention to leave the centre

2.4a The link between expressing intent to leave and actually doing so

In 1998, 15.5% of the 4,154 staff respondents to a Canada-wide survey on wages, working conditions and practices expressed the expectation that they would no longer be working at their centre in one year (Doherty et al., 2000). Wanting to leave a job does not always result in actually leaving; realities such as lack of alternate jobs may intervene. Nevertheless, centre staff who express an intention to leave often do so. A study that surveyed teaching staff in 28 centres and checked whether each individual was still working at the centre 12 months later found that those who had said they intended to leave were more than four and a half times as likely to have left than those who did not (Manlove and Guzell, 1997). In the present study, we found a moderate but statistically significant correlation ($r = .211, p < .001$) between the proportion of staff intending to leave a centre and the actual turnover rate at the same centre during the previous 12 months.

2.4b Methodology

Two sets of analyses were done to explore predictors of intention to leave the centre. The first set focused on individuals who had expressed an intention to leave; the second set looked at the proportion of staff at each centre who expressed an intention to leave. Conducting analyses at the centre level, in addition to at the individual level, increased the possibility of identifying centre and director characteristics that are important predictors.

2.4c Findings

Table 2.1 illustrates the significant predictors that emerged as a result of analyses combining the strongest predictors from each of the staff, centre and director questionnaires. The table also identifies the importance score – the relative strength for each of the significant predictors in the final model.⁸ Importance scores always add up to 100 regardless of the number of predictors that finally emerge as statistically significant.

Feeling frustrated with the job, the strongest predictor in Table 2.1, is an indicator of burnout (Jackson, Schwab and Schuler, 1986; Maslach and Pines, 1977; Whitebook, Howes, Darrah and Friedman, 1982), as is lack of work-related fulfillment when,

for example, a person feels that the job does not make good use of their skills and abilities (Maslach and Pines, 1977; Maslach and Jackson, 1981; Jackson, Schwab and Schuler, 1986; Pines, 1982). Believing that the centre could be doing a better job, but being unable to do anything about it, reflects a sense of powerlessness, which is another indicator of burnout (Iverson, Olekains, and Erwin, 1998; Pines, 1982; Pines and Maslach, 1978).

The finding that a shorter length of time working at the centre for the individual or a shorter average period for staff as a group predicts intention to leave is consistent with our finding that retention problems are greater and turnover levels higher the less time staff have worked at the centre. A centre where staff remain for a relatively short period of time is one with frequent changes. This, in itself, is stressful and may contribute to some of the remaining staff deciding to leave.

In summary, the predictors identified in Table 2.1 related to a centre with a high proportion of staff intending to leave present the picture of a centre where:

- A high proportion of staff show indicators of burnout.
- The staff have, on average, been at the centre for a relatively short period of time.
- The perceived level of job security at the centre is low.
- The centre is likely to be under commercial auspice.
- The mean (average) score on staff degree of satisfaction with their supervisor is low.

⁸ The term model, as used in this paper, refers to the set of predictors which, when combined, explain the outcome in question. For example, the set of predictors that best explains and individual's intent to leave the field. A predictor is a variable used to explain an outcome.

Table 2.1: Predictors of intention to leave the centre

Predictors	Importance score. <i>Individuals who intends to leave</i>	Importance score. <i>Centres with a high proportion of staff intending to leave</i>
I feel frustrated by this job (↑ agreement by individual or staff collectively, ↑ intent to leave)	25.3%	28.1%
Level of perceived job security at the centre (↓ perceived security by individual or staff collectively, ↑ intent to leave)	22.8%	17.9%
Length of time working at the centre (↓ time by individual or average for staff, ↑ intent to leave)	15.2%	19.9%
Age of individual or average age of staff (↓ the age, ↑ intent to leave)	9.5%	Not a predictor
My job makes good use of my skills and abilities (↓ agreement by individual or staff collectively, ↑ intent to leave)	8.9%	9.8%
I know the centre could be providing a better service, but there is nothing I can do about it (↑ agreement, ↑ intent to leave)	6.8%	10.5%
Feelings about pay, benefits and promotion (↓ overall positive feelings about these variables, ↑ intent to leave)	6.5%	Not a predictor
Perception of promotion chances at the centre (↑ perception that promotion is not likely, ↑ intent to leave)	4.8%	Not a predictor
Auspice (↑ intent to leave for commercial auspice)	Not a predictor	7.6%
Mean score on staff degree of satisfaction with their supervisor (↓ score, ↑ intent to leave)	Not a predictor	6.1%

Note: • The sign ↑ indicates higher, more, greater; the sign ↓ indicates less or lower.
 • The importance score indicates the relative strength of each predictor. The total importance score for all predictors is 100.
 • Shading indicates an indicator of burnout.

The final model of intention to leave the centre at the individual staff level of analysis had eight significant predictors, with a goodness-of-fit index ⁹ of .363. The final model for intention to leave the centre at the centre level of analysis had seven significant predictors, with a goodness-of-fit index of .325. The maximum goodness-of-fit index score is 1, and so the variables in these models together show a strong effect.

⁹ The term goodness-of-fit refers to the extent to which a group of predictors explains the scores on an outcome variable. For example, the extent to which the group explains the difference between a centre with low staff turnover and one with high turnover.

2.5 Predictors of a centre having staff retention difficulties

A total of 116 centres (14.6% of our sample) reported that they had experienced a major problem in retaining qualified, permanent teaching staff in the previous 12 months. In the first set of analyses conducted to identify the predictors of retention difficulties, the strongest predictor by far was the centre's actual turnover rate in the previous year. As one of six predictors, it accounted for 41.4% of the total importance score. Given the fact that high turnover is the obvious outcome of retention difficulties, we decided to re-run the analyses with turnover excluded as a possible predictor to allow other predictors to emerge. This did occur, see Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Predictors of centres where retaining staff is a major problem when the already-determined predictor of actual turnover rate in the previous 12 months is removed

Predictors	Importance score
Average number of years staff have worked at the centre (↓ years, ↑ retention problem)	28.3%
Percent of staff with a two-year ECCE credential (↓ percent, ↑ retention problem)	24.7%
I take pride in my centre (↓ staff members' agreement, ↑ retention problem)	12.6%
Average staff before tax hourly wage (↓ wage, ↑ retention problem)	10.9%
Level of director agreement with the statement, Because of job demands, I have difficulty finding time for self-rejuvenation (↑ agreement, ↑ retention problem)	10.7%
Percent of centre budget going to staff wages and benefits (↓ percent, ↑ retention problem)	9.0%
Level of director agreement with the statement, My staff and I work well together as a team (↓ agreement, ↑ problem)	4.3%

Note:

- The sign ↑ indicates higher, more, greater; the sign ↓ indicates less or lower.
- The importance score indicates the relative strength of each predictor. The total importance score for all predictors is 100.
- Shading indicates an indicator of burnout.

The seven predictors in Table 2.2, taken together, have a goodness-of-fit index of .472. This high value means that these predictors do a strong job of accounting for the difference between centres that identify staff retention as a major problem and those that do not.

The predictors identified in Table 2.2 present the picture of a centre with retention problems as one where:

- The average length of time staff have worked at the centre is short.
- The proportion of staff who have completed a two-year ECCE credential is low.
- Staff are showing signs of burnout (low staff agreement with the statement, "I take pride in my centre").
- The average staff before tax hourly wage is low.
- The director is feeling stressed and showing signs of burnout (director agreement with the statement, "Because of job demands, I have difficulty finding time for self-rejuvenation").
- Only a small percent of the centre budget is used for staff wages and benefits.
- The director does not feel that she has a good working relationship with her staff (low level of director agreement with the statement, "My staff and I work well together as a team").

As noted above, the strongest predictor in the initial analysis was centre turnover rate in the previous 12 months. High turnover, by the stress it places on the staff who remain, begets turnover. The search for new staff puts tremendous pressure on the director who must recruit and select new staff and the other staff who orient them to the children and the centre's ways of doing things. The likelihood of the remaining staff having to cope with a succession of substitutes is high given the current recruitment difficulties across the whole country (Ferguson, 2002). Staff also have to develop a new working relationship every time someone leaves and a replacement is hired. *"Like any team process, it takes time and effort to establish the communication between teachers necessary to create and maintain a smoothly-operating classroom"* (Whitebook, Sakai and Howes, 1997, p. 53). When a director is feeling overwhelmed and is burning out, she lacks the enthusiasm and psychological resources to provide the level of support that stressed staff need.

2.6 Predictors of centre turnover rate

In 1998, on a Canada-wide basis, 21.7% of teaching staff had left their jobs in the previous 12 months (Doherty et al., 2000). The turnover rate varied by province/territory from a high of 44.8% in Alberta to a low of 15.0% in Prince Edward Island. Table 2.3 presents the predictors of a centre's turnover rate.

Table 2.3: Predictors of centre turnover rate

Predictors	Importance score
Average number of years staff have been working at the centre (↓ years, ↑ turnover)	38.2%
Number of daily working conditions benefits such as paid coffee breaks, paid preparation time, paid release time for P.D. available to staff (↓ number, ↑ turnover). See Appendix A-9 for the full list.	14.7%
Percent of staff with less than one year of ECCE training (↑ percentage, ↑ turnover)	11.9%
Percent of staff who had participated in professional development in the previous year (↓ percentage, ↑ turnover)	8.0%
My job makes good use of my skills and abilities (↓ staff agreement, ↑ turnover)	6.4%
Level of director agreement with the statement, I have reasonable control over important decisions that affect the program or staff (↓ agreement, ↑ turnover)	5.9%
Centre is open extended hours (↑ greater for centres that are)	5.5%
Level of director agreement with the statement, I feel physically exhausted at the end of the day (↑ agreement, ↑ turnover)	4.9%
Percentage of staff who have resigned from a previous child care job (↑ percentage, ↑ turnover)	4.5%

Note:

- The sign ↑ indicates higher, more, or greater; the sign ↓ indicates less or lower.
- The importance score indicates the relative strength of each predictor. The importance score for all predictors combined is 100.
- Shading indicates an indicator of burnout.

The nine predictors in Table 2.3 account for 20.1% of the variance (the difference) across centres in their turnover rate. This indicates that the predictors have a good level of strength.

Table 2.3 presents the picture of a centre with a high turnover rate as one where:

- The average length of time that staff have been working at the centre is relatively low.
- There are few benefits that improve daily working conditions, such as paid preparation time.
- The average level of staff ECCE training is low.
- Few staff had participated in professional development in the previous 12 months.
- Staff are showing signs of burnout.
- The director is showing signs of burnout.
- The centre is open extended hours.¹⁰
- Some staff have resigned from a previous child care job.

There were nine other predictors of turnover that emerged from the analyses of each of the three questionnaires individually (staff, centre and director) that failed to emerge in the final analyses done by combining the significant predictors from each of the three questionnaires, as shown in Table 2.3. The following two predictors for which this is the case are particularly relevant to the Chapter 5 discussion of the importance of a positive organizational climate:

- The extent to which the following are available: written job descriptions, written job contracts, written salary scale, staff manual, regular written performance appraisal, formal grievance procedures (↓ these available, ↑ turnover). These variables all increase job clarity.¹¹
- The extent to which adult needs are addressed, for example, the provision of a room for staff use only, a separate staff washroom, a resource room or staff library for staff use (↓ available, ↑ turnover).

The other seven predictors of turnover that did not emerge in the final model are: (1) length of time the director has been working at the centre (↓ time, ↑ turnover); (2) director does not expect to be working in the centre in one year (↑ turnover); (3) percent of staff in the centre with a two-year ECCE credential (↓ percent, ↑ turnover); (4) level of staff agreement with the statement, “My centre provides a well-rounded program for the children who attend,” (↓ agreement, ↑ turnover); (5) staff perception of opportunities for promotion in the centre, ↓ perception of possible promotion, ↑ turnover); (6) staff overall satisfaction with pay (↓ level of satisfaction, ↑ turnover); and (7) level of director agreement with the statement, “I know the centre could be providing a better service but there is nothing I can do about it” (↑ director agreement, ↑ turnover).

¹⁰ Being open extended hours is rare. In 1998, fewer than 1% of centres were open on the weekend and only 0.8% were open after 7pm (Doherty et al., 2000).

¹¹ Job clarity refers to the extent to which policies, procedures and responsibilities in a centre are explicitly defined and communication patterns are clear and consistent (Bloom, 1988). Its presence has been found to reduce staff stress.

Collectively, these nine other predictors indicate the importance for staff retention of the degree to which the director is burning out and intending to leave the centre, the extent of burnout among staff, the extent to which the workplace gives a message of valuing its staff (through, for example, wage levels, meeting the needs of staff such as a separate staff washroom and engaging in practices that support job clarity), the perceived availability of promotion opportunities and the percent of staff in the centre with a two-year ECCE credential.

2.7 Summary

The issue of staff turnover was explored through examination of four different situations: (1) an individual's intention to leave the centre; (2) centres with a high proportion of staff intending to leave; (3) centres where staff retention was a major problem in the previous 12 months; and (4) centres with a high staff turnover the previous year. Table 2.4 summarizes the predictors found that have an importance score of 10% or higher.

Table 2.4: The strongest predictors for each of three situations and their importance scores

Predictors	Centre with a high proportion of staff intending to leave within 12 months	Centre reporting staff retention as a major problem in the previous 12 months	Centres with a high staff turnover rate in the previous 12 months
Average length of time staff have worked at the centre	19.9%	28.3%	38.2%
Staff show indications of burnout	48.4%	12.6%	
Proportion of staff with a two-year ECCE credential		24.7%	11.9%
Director shows indications of burnout		10.7%	10.8%
Level of perceived job security at the centre	17.9%		
Extent of benefits that improve daily working conditions			14.7%
Staff average before tax hourly wage		10.9%	

Note: The above table only identifies the strongest predictors, those with an importance score of 10% or more.

A centre with a short average length of time that staff have worked there is one with frequent changes. Frequent change is stressful and makes an already challenging job more difficult. This, plus the example of others who have left, may result in staff thinking of leaving and in many cases actually doing so.

Contributors to burnout include the following working conditions: low wages; poor benefits; relatively little attention paid to meeting staff needs, e.g. no separate staff washroom; lack of job clarity; and lack of social support in the workplace, e.g. from a supervisor and/or co-workers (Goelman and Guo, 1998). Burnout as a predictor in Table 2.4 may, in part, reflect one or more of these conditions. However, the strongest contributor to burnout in child care appears to be the inherently stressful nature of the job coupled by a lack or inadequate availability of moderators of stress such as support by others in the workplace (Manlove, 1993; Pines and Mashlach, 1978; Todd and Deery-Schmitt, 1996).

The proportion of staff in a centre with a two-year ECCE credential is important for two reasons. First, education related to child development and the provision of child care assists people to understand children's needs and behaviours, to have realistic expectations of children and to be effective in their work, all of which reduces stress. Second, the absence of knowledgeable, skilled co-workers makes it difficult for even a well-trained person to provide the type of care that they know should be provided, a situation that increases stress and frustration.

“In spite of all these [positive] aspects of my job I may be unable to continue working within the field. The wage I am making will not continue to sustain me. To get my position I took two-and-a-half years of college and to pay for this I had to take out student loans. These are very costly to pay back.”

Note from a Manitoba staff person, quoted in Doherty et al., 2000, p. 94.

3.1 Introduction

In 1998, 22.2% of the 4,154 teaching staff respondents to a Canada-wide survey on wages, working conditions and practices in care centres expressed an intention to leave the child care field within three years (Doherty et al., 2000). After removing those staff whose intention to leave the field was for reasons unrelated to the field itself, such as personal reasons or retirement, the percentage expressing an intention to leave child care dropped to 19.3%.

This chapter identifies the strongest predictors of:

- Individuals expressing an intention to leave the field.
- Centres with a high proportion of staff expressing an intention to leave the field.

3.2 Overview of the findings

As was the case for intention to leave the centre, burnout, with an importance score of 49.4%, is the strongest predictor of intention to leave the field (see Table 3.1). The other strong predictors, those with an importance score of 10% or higher, are:

- Would not choose child care as a career now (knowing what I know).
- A belief that it would be necessary to leave the field in order to earn more money or achieve a higher status position.
- A perception that few groups respect the provision of child care as an occupation.
- Low before tax hourly wage.

The other less powerful but still important predictors to emerge, in order of their degree of importance, are:

- Staff dissatisfaction with their relationships with their co-workers (indicating a centre with a low level of supportive relationships among staff).
- The average staff length of time working at the centre is short (indicating a centre experiencing frequent staff changes).
- The centre operates under commercial auspice.

- Staff dissatisfaction with pay, benefits and promotion opportunities at the centre.
- The director intends to leave the centre within 12 months.

Some of the above predictors indicate the reason why staff burnout is the strongest predictor of intention to leave the field. Wages at the low end of the continuum, dissatisfaction with wages and benefits, staff perception of child care as an occupation that is not respected, and lack of social support at work, e.g. from co-workers and/or supervisor, have all been identified as contributors to staff burnout by other research studies (Goelman and Guo, 1998). A director who is intending to leave the centre within 12 months for reasons connected with the centre or the field may also be burned out and unable to provide staff with the support they need.

3.3 The sample

The findings related to intention to leave the field are based on data from 3,861 individuals for the staff level of analysis, and 1,073 centres for the centre level of analysis. Of those individuals expressing an intention to leave the field within three years, 345 also expressed an intention to leave their centre within one year.

3.4 Predictors of individuals expressing an intention to leave the field

3.4a Methodology

Two sets of analyses were done to explore predictors of intention to leave the field. The first set focused on an individual's intention to leave the field, the second set looked at the proportion of staff in each centre who intended to leave child care. The individual level reflects each person's perspective while the centre level, which uses the mean (the average) or the proportion of all the staff responses, is better able to provide a collective view.

3.4b Findings

Table 3.1 illustrates the strongest predictors of an individual intending to leave the field when analyses were done combining the strongest predictors from each of the staff, centre and director questionnaires. Burnout is the strongest predictor with the three indicators of burnout accounting for half (49.4%) of the total importance score.

Table 3.1: Predictors of an individual intending to leave the field

Predictors	Importance score
If you were choosing a career now, would you choose child care? (if answer no, ↑ intent to leave the field)	25.3%
I feel frustrated by this job (↑ agreement, ↑ intent to leave the field)	25.3%
Do you think you would need to leave the child care field in order to earn more money or achieve a higher status position? (if answer yes, ↑ intent to leave the field)	17.4%
My work gives me a sense of accomplishment (↓ sense of accomplishment, ↑ intent to leave the field)	12.6%
My job makes good use of my skills and abilities (↓ agreement, ↑ intent to leave the field)	11.5%
Before tax hourly wage (↑ intent to leave the field for those earning less)	8.1%

Note: • The sign ↑ indicates higher, more, greater; the sign ↓ indicates less or lower.
 • The importance score indicates the relative strength of each predictor. The importance score for all predictors combined is 100.
 • Shading indicates an indicator of burnout.

The model in Table 3.1 has a goodness-of-fit index of .369. This indicates that these predictors together have a large effect on whether or not an individual intends to leave the child care field for reasons associated with the job.

Two predictors in Table 3.1, ‘would not choose child care again’ and ‘I feel frustrated by this job,’ account for over 50% of the total importance score. We re-ran the analyses with these two predictors *excluded* to see if other predictors would emerge and thus provide additional information about what contributes to an individual’s intention to leave the field. As illustrated by Table 3.2, four new predictors did emerge. Two of these are widely recognized indicators of burnout (feeling emotionally drained at the end of the day and not taking pride in one’s workplace) while one indicates a sense of insufficient control over the daily work. Lack of opportunity to make decisions at work is highly correlated with burnout in child care staff (Pettygrove, Whitebook and Weir, 1984), social workers (Pines and Maslach, 1978) and health care workers (Iverson, Olekalns, and Erwin, 1998). The fourth new predictor in Table 3.2 is a perception of poor promotion opportunities in the centre.

Table 3.2: Predictors of an individual intending to leave the field when the already-determined predictors of ‘would not choose child care as a career’ and ‘I feel frustrated by this job’ are removed.

Predictors	Importance score
Do you think you would need to leave the child care field in order to earn more money or achieve a higher position?(if answer yes, ↑ intent to leave the field)	23.5%
My work gives me a sense of accomplishment (↓ sense of accomplishment, ↑ intent to leave the field)	20.5%
My job makes good use of my skills and abilities (↓ agreement, ↑ intent to leave the field)	14.4%
I feel emotionally drained at the end of the day (↑ agreement, ↑ intent to leave the field)	11.2%
Before tax hourly wage (↑ intent to leave the field for those earning less)	9.7%
I take pride in my centre (↓ agreement, ↑ intent to leave the field)	9.5%
I have reasonable control over most things that affect my satisfaction with the job (↓ agreement, ↑ intent to leave the field)	6.2%
Do you think you will be promoted at this centre? (if answer no, ↑ intent to leave the field)	4.8%

Note: • The sign ↑ indicates higher, more, greater; the sign ↓ indicates less or lower.
 • The importance score indicates the relative strength of each predictor. The importance score for all predictors combined is 100.
 • Shading indicates an indicator of burnout.

3.4c Would not choose child care as a career now

In Table 3.1, the response ‘would not choose child care as a career now’ accounts for 25.3% of the predictive strength of the group of predictors identified. Given its predictive power, we decided to explore what predicts an individual who, knowing what they now know, states that they would not choose child care as a career (see Table 3.3). Four of the seven predictors in Table 3.3 are indicators of burnout. The other three predictors reflect the realities of the field: (1) people working in child care feel that the occupation is not respected by others outside the field; (2) the short hierarchy of positions in child care centres means limited opportunities for advancement in either role or salary level; and (3) wages and benefits in child care are poor.

Table 3.3: Predictors of an individual stating that they would not choose child care as a career now

Predictors	Importance score
I feel frustrated by this job (↑ agreement, ↑ intent to leave the field)	28.8%
Do you think you would need to leave the child care field in order to earn more money or achieve a higher status position? (if answer yes, ↑ would not choose child care again)	25.6%
My work gives me a sense of accomplishment (↓ sense of accomplishment, ↑ would not choose child care again)	13.8%
Sum of the groups perceived as generally respecting the individual as a child care professional (↓ number, ↑ would not choose child care again)	11.8%
My work I do is stimulating and challenging (↓ stimulation and challenge, ↑ would not choose child care again)	8.8%
I feel emotionally drained at the end of the day (↑ agreement, ↑ would not choose child care again)	5.7%
Feelings about pay, benefits and promotion opportunities (↑ the negative feelings, ↑ would not choose child care again)	5.7%

Note:

- The sign ↑ indicates higher, more, greater; the sign ↓ indicates less or lower.
- The importance score indicates the relative strength of each predictor. The importance score for all predictors combined is 100.
- Shading indicates an indicator of burnout.

3.5 Predictors of the proportion of staff in a centre who intend to leave the field

Table 3.4 identifies the strongest predictors of the proportion of staff in a centre who intend to leave the field.

Table 3.4: Predictors of the proportion of staff in a centre who intend to leave the field

Predictors	Importance score
Percent of staff who would not choose a career in child care again (↑ percent, ↑ intent to leave the field)	53.1%
Percent of staff who feel they need to leave the field to obtain more money or achieve a higher status position (↑ percent, ↑ intent to leave the field)	12.8%
Percent of staff agreeing that their job gives them a sense of accomplishment (↓ percent, ↑ intent to leave the field)	11.8%
Mean score on staff satisfaction with their relationship with co-workers (↓ satisfaction, ↑ intent to leave the field)	7.2%
Mean length of time staff have worked at the centre (↓ time, ↑ intent to leave the field)	6.4%
Auspice (higher percent of staff intending to leave the field in commercial centres)	4.5%
Director intends to leave the centre within one year ↑ intent to leave the field among staff	4.2%

Note:

- The sign ↑ indicates higher, more, greater; the sign ↓ indicates less or lower.
- The importance score indicates the relative strength of each predictor. The importance score for all predictors combined is 100.
- Shading indicates an indicator of burnout.

The model with the seven predictors in Table 3.4 has a high goodness-of-fit index of .307. This indicates that the seven predictors collectively are strong in their ability to predict the proportion of staff intending to leave the field.

A low mean score on staff satisfaction with their co-workers is one predictor of a high proportion of staff intending to leave the field. In the You Bet I Care! Study respondents were given a list of statements about how they might feel about their colleagues and asked to check off each one that reflected their feelings. A low score indicates that the individual checked off more descriptions of negative feelings, for example, “I feel I can’t trust my colleagues,” than positive feelings such as, “My colleagues support and encourage me.” Social support is an important buffer against stress

and burnout in child care (Fleischer, 1985; Phillips, Howes and Whitebook, 1991), therefore it is not surprising that its lack predicts intention to leave the field.

In Table 3.4, a director who intends to leave the centre within 12 months is another predictor of a high proportion of staff in the centre intending to leave the field. When a director is intending to leave for reasons other than retirement or moving to another community, as is the case in our sample, she herself may be burnt out and less able to provide support for her staff.

Higher intention to leave child care among people working in the commercial sector may reflect the tendency of this sector to pay lower wages and provide fewer benefits than the non-profit sector

as demonstrated by Doherty, Friendly and Forer (2002) using the *You Bet I Care!* data set.

One particularly strong predictor, percent of staff who would not choose child care as a career now, accounted for 53% of the importance score for all the predictors in Table 3.4. Because this particularly strong predictor could be obscuring other predictors, the analyses looking at the proportion of staff in a centre intending to leave the field were re-run leaving out the item related to whether the individual would choose child care as a career again.

As indicated in Table 3.5, three new predictors emerged as a result of the re-analyses:

- I feel frustrated by this job.
- Few groups respect me as a child care professional.
- A perception of little likelihood of promotion at the centre.

The model in Table 3.5 with nine predictors has a goodness-of-fit index of .238, somewhat reduced after removing the large effect of the “would not choose child care again” item.

Table 3.5: Predictors of the proportion of staff in a centre intending to leave the field after the already-determined predictor ‘would not choose child care again as a career’ is removed

Predictors	Importance score
Percent of staff who think they need to leave the field in order to earn more money or achieve a higher status position (↑ percent, ↑ proportion expecting to leave the field)	19.7%
Percent of staff indicating frustration with the job (↑ percent, ↑ proportion expecting to leave the field)	16.4%
Mean score for the sum of all groups identified as generally respecting the respondent as a child care professional (↓ score, ↑ proportion expecting to leave the field)	15.7%
Percent of staff indicating that their job gives them a sense of accomplishment (↓ percent, ↑ proportion expecting to leave the field)	13.7%
Mean score on relationship with co-workers (↓ score, ↑ proportion expecting to leave the field)	9.2%
Average teaching staff length of time working in the centre (↓ the time, ↑ proportion expecting to leave the field)	8.2%
Auspice (higher percent of staff intending to leave the field in commercial centres)	6.1%
Director intends to leave the centre within one year, ↑ intent to leave the field among staff	5.8%
Percent of staff who think they will be promoted in the centre (↓ percent, ↑ proportion of staff expressing intent to leave the field)	5.4%

Note: • The sign ↑ indicates higher, more, greater; the sign ↓ indicates less or lower.
 • The importance score indicates the relative strength of each predictor. The importance score for all predictors combined is 100.
 • Shading indicates an indicator of burnout.

3.6 Summary

Staff burnout emerged as the strongest predictor of an individual who intends to leave the field and of a centre with a high proportion of staff intending to leave child care. The second strongest predictor is ‘would not choose child care as a career now’ (knowing what I know). As illustrated in Table 3.3, the predictors of this reaction are: (1) a belief that it is necessary to leave the field in order to earn a higher salary or achieve a higher status position; (2) a feeling that child care is not respected as an occupation; and (3) dissatisfaction with pay, benefits and promotion opportunities.

Table 3.6 summarizes the predictors of intention to leave the field in three categories: predictors related to staff; predictors related to directors; and predictors that reflect the centre. Three of the predictors in Table 3.6 — poor promotion possibilities (lack of a career ladder), low wages and poor benefits, and a perception that others do not respect you as a child care professional — were identified in the Sector Study report (Beach, Bertrand and Cleveland, 1998) as major concerns that must be addressed to enable the child care sector to build a stable workforce capable of providing high quality care.

Table 3.6: Summary of predictors of intention to leave the field and their relative importance

	Predictors	Importance score	
		Individual intending to leave the field	Centre with a high proportion of staff intending to leave the field
Staff	Staff believe it is necessary to leave the field in order to earn more money or attain a higher status position	25.6%	19.7%
	Staff feel their job as a child care professional is not respected	11.8%	15.7%
	Before tax hourly wage is low	9.7%	Not a predictor
	Average length of time that staff had worked at the centre (few the years, the greater the likelihood of staff intending to leave the field)	Not a predictor	8.2%
	Individual dissatisfied with pay, benefits and promotion opportunities at the centre	5.7%	Not a predictor
Director	Intends to leave the centre within the year	Not a predictor	5.8%
Centre	Lacks a supportive, collegial relationship among staff	Not a predictor	9.2%
	Operates under commercial auspice	Not a predictor	6.1%

Note: The above table does not include the two strongest predictors — staff burnout and ‘would not choose child care as a career again.’ Neither column adds to 100% because of the exclusion of these two very strong predictors.

“As early childhood provision expands, it has been challenging to meet the increase in demand for trained staff.....As the demand for staff increases, employers have turned to entry level, less skilled and credentialed workers to make up the gap, which may compromise the quality of provision. ... As a long-term solution [to recruitment problems] it would seem that the status, pay and working conditions of the workforce need to be addressed.”

Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), 2001, p. 103.

4.1 Introduction

Recruitment of qualified, permanent staff was identified as a major problem by 24% of the completed centre questionnaires returned in a 1998 Canada-wide survey on wages, working conditions and practices in child care centres (Doherty et al., 2000). Some jurisdictions in Canada permit centres to operate without the number of trained staff required by the regulations because trained staff are not available. Recruitment of trained staff is a particularly severe problem in provinces where school boards hire people with

two-year ECCE credentials as teaching assistants and provide substantially better wages and benefits than those available in the child care field.

4.2 Overview of the findings

The centre’s actual turnover rate in the previous 12 months is the strongest predictor of a centre experiencing staff recruitment difficulties. The next strongest predictors are:

- Only a small proportion of the staff has a two-year ECCE credential.
- Low average before tax hourly wage.
- The average period of time staff have worked in their current position is low.

4.3 The sample

The findings related to predictors of difficulties recruiting permanent, qualified staff are based on data pertaining to the 848 centres for which a completed centre questionnaire, a completed director questionnaire, and at least two completed staff questionnaires are available.

4.4 Predictors of recruitment problems

Table 4.1 illustrates the strongest predictors of a centre facing recruitment problems when analyses were done combining the strongest predictors from each of the staff, centre and director questionnaires.

Table 4.1: Predictors of problems in recruiting permanent, qualified staff

Predictors	Importance score
Centre turnover rate in the previous 12 months (↑ turnover, ↑ recruitment problem)	31.9%
Percent of staff with a two-year ECCE credential (↓ percent, ↑ recruitment problem)	25.6%
Level of director agreement with the statement, Because of job demands, I have difficulty finding time for self-rejuvenation (↑ agreement, ↑ recruitment problem)	11.7%
Percent of staff under age 25 (↑ percent, ↑ recruitment problem)	8.6%
Level of director agreement with the statement, There is too little time to do all that needs to be done (↑ agreement, ↑ recruitment problem)	8.0%
Centre’s fees for three to five-year olds (↓ fee, ↑ recruitment problem)	6.7%
Unionization (↓ recruitment problems than non-unionized centres)	4.7%
Level of director agreement with the statement, My centre really supports the families of the children who are attending it (↓ agreement, ↑ recruitment problem)	2.7%

Note: • The sign ↑ indicates greater, the sign ↓ indicates less.
 • The importance scale indicates the relative strength of each predictor. The importance score for all predictors combined is 100.
 • Shading indicates an indicator of burnout.

In the initial analysis, reported in Table 4.1, turnover rate and the percentage of staff with a two-year ECCE credential accounted for 57.5% of the total importance score of 100. The next strongest predictor had an importance score of only 11.7%. The analyses were re-run with turnover rate excluded to determine whether the strength of this predictor obscured other predictors. As illustrated in Table 4.2, two new predictors emerged, average staff before tax hourly wage and staff length of time in their current position. The percent of staff under age 25 and centre fees no

longer emerged as predictors. Non-unionized status remained a predictor.

The seven predictors in Table 4.2, with the strong predictor of centre turnover excluded, collectively have a goodness-of-fit index of .401, down from .513 for the model with turnover included, but still accounting for a large amount of the difference between centres that do or do not have a major problem recruiting qualified, permanent staff.

Table 4.2: Predictors of problems recruiting permanent, qualified staff when the already-determined predictor of turnover rate is removed

Predictors	Importance score
Percent of staff with a two-year ECCE credential (↓ percent, ↑ recruitment problem)	30.6%
Staff average before tax hourly wage (↓wage, ↑ recruitment problem)	24.2%
Staff average number of years in current position (↓ years, ↑ problem)	11.7%
Director agreement with the statement, Because of work demands, I have difficulty finding time for self-rejuvenation (↑ agreement, ↑ recruitment problem)	11.3%
Director agreement with the statement, There is too little time to do everything that needs to be done (↑ agreement, ↑ recruitment problem)	11.2%
Director agreement with the statement, My centre really supports the families of the children who are attending it (↓ agreement, ↑ recruitment problem)	5.5%
Unionization (↓ recruitment problems than non-unionized centres)	5.4%

- Note:
- The sign ↑ indicates greater, the sign ↓ indicates less.
 - The importance scale indicates the relative strength of each predictor. The importance score for all predictors combined is 100.
 - Shading indicates an indicator of burnout.

4.5 Summary

The centre’s turnover rate in the previous 12 months is the strongest predictor of problems recruiting permanent, trained staff (see Table 4.1). When turnover rate is removed, as was done for Table 4.2, the percent of staff with less than a two-year ECCE credential accounts for 30.6% of the importance score of the seven predictors combined, indicators of burnout in the director account for 28.0%, and staff average before tax hourly wage accounts for 24.2%.

The greater the turnover rate, the more frequently the director has had to deal with recruiting and interviewing potential new staff. Perception of recruitment as a “major problem” may in part have to do with the need to repeatedly engage in these stressful and time-consuming activities. Having a relatively high proportion of staff with less than a two-year ECCE credential might result in the director specifically seeking staff who have a two-year credential. This would make the job of recruitment harder since the potential pool of such people is smaller.

Three of the director predictors are indicators of burnout. A director who feeling overwhelmed and battling her own burnout would find it hard to summon up the energy and enthusiasm for recruitment and interviewing so would be more likely to experience the tasks as a major problem.

The positive impact of unionization may be a reflection of the better compensation packages provided by unionized centres in comparison to centres that are not unionized (Doherty and Forer, 2002).

The strength of staff average gross hourly wage as a predictor of recruitment problems noted in Table 4.2 supports the assertion by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), quoted at the beginning of this chapter, that addressing recruitment difficulties in child care requires improving compensation levels for people working in this field.

“ Child care is surely one of the most demanding occupations an individual can enter. The physical stamina alone required for the daily functions of preparing activities, providing instruction, supervising projects, setting limits, handling collisions, arbitrating disputes and maintaining the learning environment is immense. What makes the role so potentially stressful, however, is that this physical outpouring is coupled with a tremendous emotional giving. Teachers must comfort, console, and nurture children and still find a reservoir of emotional energy to meet their own needs. Most can handle this challenge only if the environment in which they work supports their needs.”

Jorde-Bloom, 1989, p. 26.

5.1 Introduction

In 1998, nearly a fourth (21.7%) of teaching staff left the centre they were working in for another job (Doherty et al., 2000). This represents a major challenge to the effort to provide all children with high quality child care. Consistency of relationship between adult and child enables the adult to better understand the child's developmental level and unique ways of communicating. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of sensitive and appropriate responses to children by staff. Research has consistently found an association between high levels of staff turnover and low scores on measures of the quality of adult/child interaction and/or the overall quality of the child care program (Helburn, 1995; Kontos and Fiene, 1987; Phillips, Howes and Whitebook, 1991). Given the importance of children's early years for their development, it is imperative that the issue of high staff turnover rates be addressed.

Concern about turnover rates is magnified by the fact that many staff who leave their centre leave child care altogether, thereby depleting the availability of experienced staff. When directors were asked in 1998 to identify the types of jobs staff had taken after leaving the centre voluntarily, 38.1% identified the new job as being outside the child care field (Doherty et al., 2000). The same study found that 51.0% of directors reported that recruiting qualified permanent staff had been a challenge in the previous 12 months. Recruitment and retention difficulties are not a new problem for Canadian child care centres. They were identified as having reached crisis proportions by a Canada-wide survey

conducted in 1991 (Canadian Child Care Federation/Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, 1992) and in the subsequent Child Care Sector Study report (Beach, Bertrand and Cleveland, 1998).

5.2 Overview of the findings

The present study used information collected as part of the *You Bet I Care!* Project (Doherty et al., 2000) to explore the contributors to retention and recruitment challenges by identifying the predictors of: (1) an individual intending to leave their centre; (2) a centre with a high proportion of staff intending to leave; (3) an individual intending to leave the child care field; (4) a centre with staff retention difficulties; (5) a centre that had a high turnover rate in the previous 12 months; and (6) a centre reporting that recruiting permanent qualified staff was a problem.

We found that one or more of the above six situations is predicted by:

- Low wage levels.
- Few benefits.
- Staff dissatisfaction with their pay, benefits and promotion opportunities.
- The average level of staff ECCE training in the centre is low.
- Staff perception that the occupation of child care provision is not respected.
- Staff belief that it is necessary to leave the field in order to earn more money or attain a higher status position.

These findings are consistent with those of other research studies. For example, a large multi-state American study found that staff with salaries at the lower end of the continuum left their jobs at twice the rate of those with higher salaries (Whitebook, Howes and Phillips, 1990). The same study noted that low salaries were accompanied by poor benefit packages. A Canadian study reports that individuals with higher levels of ECCE training also have higher levels of job satisfaction (Pence and Goelman, 1987).

Indicators of staff burnout are the strongest of all the predictors for:

- Individuals intending to leave their centre.
- A centre with a high proportion of staff intending to leave it.
- Individuals intending to leave the child care field.

Staff burnout has been implicated as a major factor contributing to the high turnover in child care by previous research (Manlove and Guzell, 1997; Pines and Maslach, 1978; Todd and Deery-Schmitt, 1996; Whitebook et al., 1982). One study found that staff reporting emotional exhaustion, an indicator of burnout, are nearly two and a half times more likely to express an intention to leave their centre than other staff (Manlove and Guzell, 1997).

Intention to leave the centre and intention to leave the field are both predicted by commercial auspice. In previous research using the *You Bet I Care!* dataset, Doherty, Friendly and Forer (2002) found that, as group, commercial centres pay lower salaries, provide fewer benefits, and to hire a smaller proportion of staff with a two-year ECCE credential. Being a unionized centre predicted fewer recruitment problems. Again using the *You Bet I Care!* dataset, Doherty and Forer (2002) report higher gross hourly wages for staff in unionized as compared to non-unionized centres and overall better benefit packages and daily working conditions. These may all be important factors in the ability of unionized centres to attract new staff.

The other predictors of one or more of the six outcomes of interest noted above are: (1) the staff body as whole has only been working at the centre for a short period of time; (2) a perception among staff that promotion chances at the centre are limited; (3) the level of perceived job security at the centre is low; (4) staff dissatisfaction with the support provided by the supervisor and/or their co-workers; (5) director burnout; and (6) the director intends to leave the centre within 12 months.

5.3 The content and format of this chapter

This chapter discusses predictors of recruitment and retention challenges in child care and provides information about strategies that might be used to address the predictors. It does this through seven sections:

- Wages and benefits.
- Promotion opportunities.
- Opportunities to acquire ECCE training.
- Staff perception of a lack of respect for the occupation.
- The importance of a positive organizational climate.
- The key role of the director.
- Burnout

An eighth section, towards a solution, notes that the recruitment and retention challenges faced by child care result from a complex and dynamic interaction of a number of contributors. Therefore, the current recruitment and retention crisis must be addressed through a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach that takes into account and simultaneously addresses: (1) the inherent stress of the job and the need for moderators of stress; (2) compensation and related workforce issues such as few promotion possibilities; (3) accessibility to ECCE training; and (4) the current low level of respect for the job among the general public.

5.4 Wages and benefits

The present study found that wages at the low end of the continuum and/or dissatisfaction with wages and benefits predicted: (1) individuals intending to leave the centre; (2) higher turnover rates in centres; (3) retention and recruitment problems; and (4) individuals intending to leave the field. These findings are

consistent with several large multi-state American studies that report low wages and few benefits are major reasons for turnover in child care centres (Doherty, 1999).

Being a unionized centre was found to predict fewer recruitment problems. In previous work using the *You Bet I Care!* data set, Doherty and Forer (2002) report substantially higher gross hourly wages for both assistant teachers and teachers in unionized as compared to non-unionized centres and overall better benefit packages and daily working conditions. These better remuneration packages may be an important factor in the ability of unionized centres to attract new staff.

The importance of wage level as a contributor to leaving child care is supported by the affirmative response from 72.6% of staff and 66.7% of directors when asked, “Do you think that you would have to leave the child care field in order to earn more money or achieve a higher status position?” (Doherty et al., 2000).

Several provinces, including Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan, have taken specific steps to improve the income levels of people providing child care. The Québec government provided \$125 million to enhance the wages of centre staff and the income of family child care providers over a four-year period beginning in 1999/2000. Subsequently, staff morale and retention improved and there has been an increased interest among young people in child care as a career (Tougas, 2002).

5.5 Promotion opportunities

A perceived lack of promotion opportunities was found in the present study to predict a higher level of individuals intending to leave the centre and also a higher level intending to leave the field altogether. The lack of opportunities for promotion in child care has been identified in previous Canadian studies as contributing to turnover problems (Beach, Bertrand and Cleveland, 1998; Canadian Child Day Care Federation/Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, 1992).

Inevitably, there are relatively few supervisor and director positions available for experienced frontline staff who want to move to a higher position. Opportunities for horizontal moves to a different job without jeopardy to salary and status level afford another way to recognize and reward experience by providing new and meaningful roles for people who have been in the field for a number of years. An American study found that involvement as a mentor in a formal mentoring program reduced the incidence of leaving the field among experienced child care staff by almost a third (Whitebook and Bellm, 1996). Other possible horizontal moves for experienced staff include acting as a practicum supervisor for ECCE students, teaching in a college ECCE training program, providing program consultation to other child care programs, or participating in child care research studies.

5.6 Opportunities to acquiring training

The present study found that the average level of ECCE training among the staff in a centre predicted: (1) the extent to which a centre had experienced staff retention problems in the previous year; (2) centre turnover rates in the previous 12 months; and (3) recruitment difficulties. Education related to child development and the provision of child care assists the individual to understand what needs to be done, to experience success in the job, and acts as a buffer against the intrinsic stress of the occupation (Manlove, 1993). These realities probably contribute to the finding that centres with a higher proportion of staff who have a two-year ECCE credential experience fewer difficulties retaining staff. The association between average staff levels of ECCE training and recruitment difficulties may reflect a situation where a director in a centre with few trained staff is specifically seeking someone with a two-year ECCE credential and therefore has a smaller pool of potential candidates.

In 1998, 18.2% of staff in Canadian child care centres either lacked any ECCE training or had only completed a course lasting less than one year (Doherty et al., 2000). The 1998 human resource study of child care in Canada identified lack of access to ECCE training as a major challenge facing the sector (Beach, Bertrand and Cleveland, 1998). It noted that staff are receptive to training and understand its importance but access is limited for many by financial cost, the geographic location of training opportunities, course schedules that conflict with work responsibilities for people already working in the field, and the sensitivity of course content to the ethnocultural and linguistic backgrounds of potential students. The report urged various parts of the child care community and the provincial/territorial governments to commit to making ECCE training and education more accessible. A national symposium in November, 2003 confirmed the continued need to address access to training and to make it easier for individuals to obtain ECCE credentials (Canadian Child Care Federation, 2003).

One province, Québec, has directly addressed the barrier of cost, at least for people already working in the sector, by providing financial support to staff who are enrolled in college-level ECCE courses and compensating centres who need to hire substitute staff while permanent staff are taking courses. This government initiative has increased the proportion of trained people in the province (Tougas, 2002). Many colleges have started to address the accessibility issue by providing courses through distance education so that students can access them regardless of their geographical location and at times that are convenient for them (Morris, 2003).

5.7 Staff perception of a lack of respect for the occupation

People working in child care know that doing the job well requires specific knowledge and a broad variety of skills and abilities. However, their self respect, job satisfaction and ultimately

their commitment to the job is constantly eroded by their recognition that society considers child care a low status, low skilled position. In the present study, the less the centre staff as a group felt that their job is respected by others, the higher the proportion of staff who intend to leave the field. The perception among staff that their job is not respected by the general public seems to be increasing. In 1998, only 8.2% of staff felt that their work was respected by the society at large (Doherty et al., 2000), down from the already very low rate of 16.0% found in a 1991 survey (Canadian Child Day Care Federation/Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, 1992). Society's lack of respect for child care as an occupation contributes to low wages and poor benefits, fuels difficulties recruiting students into ECCE education programs, and contributes to staff leaving child care for positions that are given more public respect such as working in the school system as a teacher's assistant.

The governments of Manitoba and Québec have each undertaken public education programs specifically to attract more students into the child care field. In Manitoba, there has been a renewed interest in child care as a career as evidenced by student interest at career fairs and reports from colleges that interest and enrolment in ECCE courses has increased (Kathy Read, Director Child Day Care, personal communication). In Québec the public education campaign also is credited with the increased enrolment in ECCE training programs (Tougas, 2002). In both provinces, these public education campaigns have been accompanied by government funds specifically to increase staff wages.

Centre practices and working conditions also convey messages regarding the extent to which staff are respected. For example, giving staff genuine opportunities to express opinions and influence centre decision-making conveys the message that staff ideas and experience are valued by the centre. The opposite message is given when little attention is paid to meeting staff needs, for example through the provision of a separate staff washroom and paid preparation time. In the present study we found that the extent to which staff feel they have opportunities for input into centre decisions predicts the proportion of staff in a centre who intend to leave within 12 months and is significantly correlated with turnover rates. The extent to which attention is paid to meeting staff needs predicts turnover.

5.8 The importance of a positive organizational climate

The term organizational climate refers to the unique atmosphere that characterizes a workplace. In some centres staff are dynamic and enthusiastic about their work and there is a general air of warmth and nurturing. In others, discontentment and tension seem to permeate the air and the mood appears to be competitive and harsh. A positive organizational climate in a centre nurtures the personal and professional growth of staff, reduces stress, lessens burnout and assists in the retention of

staff. Research has found “a strong and statistically significant correlation between job commitment and overall organizational climate” in child care centres (Jorde-Bloom, 1995, p. 22).

Jorde-Bloom (1988) provides comprehensive suggestions on how to develop a positive organizational climate in a centre. She presents ten dimensions that, when implemented as a package, result in a centre with in a positive, supportive work environment. These dimensions are: (1) collegiality, the extent to which staff support and trust each other; (2) opportunities for professional growth; (3) supervisor support; (4) role and job clarity; (5) fairness and equity in the distribution of wages, benefits and opportunities for promotion; (6) opportunities for staff to participate in centre-wide decisions; (7) agreement among staff on the philosophy, goals and objectives of the centre; (8) emphasis on good planning; (9) a physical setting that supports staff in their work and addresses staff needs; and (10) a centre willingness to adapt to change.

In the present study, some of the Jorde-Bloom’s dimensions of a positive organizational climate were predictors of one of the outcomes of interest. The availability of things that support job clarity, the extent to which staff feel that centre policies and procedures are well defined, and the degree to which the needs of staff are addressed are predictors of a centre’s turnover rate in the previous 12 months. There is a strong correlation between centre turnover and the extent to which staff feel they have opportunities for input into decision-making related to the program and its policies. The extent of staff satisfaction with the support given by their supervisor is a predictor of the proportion of staff who intend to leave their centre within 12 months. The proportion of staff in a centre who intend to leave the field is predicted by the extent to which staff report a supportive, collegial relationship with co-workers.

5.9 The key role of the director

The director’s role in a child care centre is both central and complex. The role includes but is not limited to being budget analyst and manager, personnel manager, assessor of centre needs, curriculum developer and public relations coordinator. The director sets the standards to be followed by staff and has a powerful influence on the centre’s organizational climate through her ability to foster collegiality among staff and provide opportunities for them to have a role in centre decision-making (Bloom, 1992).

In 1998, 77% of centre directors in a Canada-wide survey reported feeling pressured by lack of time, 48% said they were often or usually physically exhausted by the end of the day, and 37% reported often feeling emotionally drained (Doherty et al., 2000). These descriptions are all indicators of stress and burnout. In the present study, we found that indicators of burnout in a director are predictors of staff retention problems, high turnover rates, and recruitment difficulties.

Paula Jorde-Bloom and Marilyn Sheerer, who have done substantial examination of the work environment in child care centres, suggest that the stress experienced by many directors reflects, and is caused by, their lack of formal preparation to assume the director role (Jorde-Bloom and Sheerer, 1992). The wide range of competencies required to successfully fill the role of director extends far beyond those that can be acquired as part of a two-year ECCE diploma program.

In 1998, while 66.4% of the respondents to the *You Bet I Care* director questionnaire agreed that specific coursework in administration of a child care program should be required for directors by provincial/territorial regulations, only 27.7% actually had any formal training in administration or program management (Doherty et al., 2000). Increasing the proportion of directors who have training for their role requires addressing the realities that they are working at a demanding job, face time constraints, and may feel inhibited by the fact they have not attended a formal education program for many years. Courses aimed at directors need to be grounded in adult learning theory, encourage participants to share their experiential knowledge and provide each other with support, and take place at times and/or use a format that can accommodate the director’s work responsibilities (Jorde-Bloom and Sheerer, 1992).

Directors also need social support. While excellent support can be given to staff by their colleagues and supervisors, the specific stresses of being a centre director are best understood by someone else in the role. In some communities, such as Edmonton and Winnipeg, centre directors have formed a director support group that meets on a regular schedule and provides a forum for providing support, discussing problems and exchanging information. In other situations, experienced directors undertake to mentor directors who are new to the role.

5.10 Burnout

“It is our belief that the causes of burnout [in child care] lie not so much in the unique personality traits of the individual as in the situational pressures arising from the job.”

Maslach and Pines, 1977, p. 112.

5.10a What is burnout?

Burnout is characterized by physical and emotional exhaustion, lack of a sense of personal accomplishment in one’s work and, eventually, the development of negative feelings towards and alienation from the people being served (Goelman and Guo, 1998). In the present study, we found that indicators of burnout among staff were the strongest predictors of leaving the centre and of leaving the field, and thus the current recruitment and retention crisis, see Table 5.1.

Burnout is equally a crisis when people who are burned-out continue to work with children in child care programs. The inevitable development of negative feelings towards and alienation from the people being served — the children and their families — effects the quality of the care received by all the children with whom the person is in contact. A burned-out child care provider

cannot summon the emotional strength to pick up on children's feelings and needs and thus provide the responsive, sensitive care so essential for children's well-being and development. Working with a burned-out colleague is also very stressful for other adults in the child care setting.

Table 5.1: Indicators of staff burnout as predictors of intention to leave the centre and of intention to leave the field

Outcome	Importance score
Intent to leave the centre within 12 months	
• An individual's intention to leave the centre	41.0%
• The proportion of staff intending to leave the centre	48.4%
Intent to leave the field within three years	
• An individual's intent to leave the field	49.4%
• The proportion of staff in a centre intending to leave the field	11.8%

The total importance score for all predictors of a variable of interest such as an individual's intention to leave the field is always 100. Therefore, the importance score of 49.4% for staff burnout as a predictor of an individual's intention to leave the field indicates that this variable is a very strong predictor of this outcome.

5.10b Contributors to staff burnout

The strongest contributor to staff burnout in child care centres is the inherently stressful nature of the job, as noted in the quote at the beginning of this chapter, when it is coupled by lack or inadequate availability of moderators of stress such as support from others in the workplace, job clarity, and adequate training for the job (Manlove, 1993; Maslach and Jackson, 1981; Todd and Deery-Schmidtt, 1996).

Goelman and Guo (1998) identify the following as other contributors to staff burnout found by researchers:

- Low wages.
- Few benefits.
- Staff dissatisfaction with wages and benefits.
- Little attention is paid to meeting the needs of staff.
- Lack of opportunities for staff to have input into centre decision-making, especially when it impacts on their job.
- A low level of ECCE training.
- Unclear, ambiguous job descriptions and/or conflicting demands at the same time.
- Lack of social support in the workplace.

Some of these other contributors, such as lack of social support and no or little ECCE training, reflect the of moderators of stress.

5.10c Early indications that a staff member is burning out

A study on burnout among staff in child care settings identifies the early signs of burnout as being repeated lateness, increased absenteeism due to illness, a noticeable decrease in the individual's energy level, and a perceptible increase in the individual complaining about matters such as the children's behaviour and lack of parental involvement. As the burnout process continues to develop, the individual displays increasing signs of boredom with the job, engages in more frequent negative discussions and conflict with other staff, and shows increasing signs of irritability (Seiderman, 1978).

5.10d Combating burnout

Research has found that the potential stressors that are an integral part of working in child care, such as competing demands occurring at the same time and the emotional stress of meeting children's needs all day, can be moderated (lessened) by the following variables:

- Social support in the workplace.
- Job clarity — policies, procedures and responsibilities that are explicitly defined and communication patterns that are clear and consistent.
- Opportunities for staff to have real input into centre decision-making, particularly in regard to their own job.
- Training related to child development and the provision of child care.

For ease of discussion, these four moderators of stress in the child care workplace will be discussed separately. In actuality, sources and moderators of stress interact in a dynamic fashion whereby clusters of variables that are potential sources of stress interact with other clusters that act as moderators. The dynamic interaction between

the two clusters contributes to whether or not the individual burns out (Deery-Schmitt and Todd; 1992; Todd and Deery-Schmitt 1996).

Social support in the workplace

According to Marshall (2000), social support refers to the degree of consideration, information, and task assistance provided by an individual's personal network in the organization. When the workplace fosters friendly, supportive relationships among staff, a sense of trust and team spirit develops and staff feel free to express their opinions and seek assistance from their colleagues. Friendly, supportive relationships among staff in child care settings have been found to be associated with reduced levels of burnout (Iverson et al., 1998; Manlove 1994; Maslach and Pines, 1977; Seiderman, 1978; Stremmel, Benson and Powell, 1993).

Maslach and Pines (1977) feel that social support in the workplace is most effective when it is an integral part of the centre's culture. They state on p. 12 that:

“Formal or informal programs in which staff members can get together to discuss problems, and to get advice and support, are another way of helping them to cope successfully with job stress. Such a support system provides staff members with opportunities for analysis of both the problems they face and their personal feelings about them, for humor, for comfort, and for social comparison. Contrary to the beliefs of some skeptics (who felt that such a system would only provide the staff with another chance to “chit-chat” rather than work), these support groups serve a very valuable function for their members. Burnout rates seem to be lower for those professionals who have access to such as system, especially if it is well developed and supported by the larger institution.”

Using a sub-sample from the *You Bet I Care!* dataset (responses from Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario), Marshall (2000) found that having a supervisor who is supportive, encouraging and provides helpful feedback modifies stress and predicts less likelihood of staff showing indicators of burnout.

A study conducted in a group of child care programs reports that the extent of supervisor support is a major determinant of centre turnover rates (Fleischer, 1985). In the present study, we found that a low mean score on staff satisfaction with their supervisor, for example, a low level of satisfaction with the extent to which the supervisor provides helpful feedback, predicts a centre with a high proportion of staff intending to leave it.

Mentoring, is a process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, teaches, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal development. Mentoring new or inexperienced staff may be an integral part of the centre's culture and involve the explicit assignment of an experienced staff person as mentor. The mentor may also be a centre colleague who undertakes the role voluntarily or someone from another organization.

Mentoring has been identified as particularly helpful for new ECCE graduates in their first year of employment as they struggle to reconcile their student idealism with the realities of the work setting (Doherty, 2000). An evaluation of a Canadian mentoring program found that novice practitioners believed that the mentoring process had assisted them to get through the initial period of self-doubt as new graduates (Ferguson, Ferguson, Singleton and Soave, 1999).

Mentoring programs for people working in child care have been established in both Canada and the United States and provide a good source of information about what works and does not work. The Partners in Practice Project based in Halifax has developed a specific mentoring model that recognizes the different needs of students, new graduates and experienced staff (see <http://www.partnersinpractice.org>). People who have been involved in implementing mentoring programs note that it is essential to distinguish the mentoring role from that of a supervisor. To engage in supervisory activities, such as formal performance evaluation, is believed to interfere with the openness and trust which is essential for a successful mentoring relationship (Whitebook and Bellm 1996). Other lessons learned from experience include the mentor's need for specific training before engaging in mentoring, the need for an infrastructure that recruits, screens, and trains potential mentors and provides an on-going mentor mutual support group and the need for core funding to provide financial stability for the mentoring program.

Job clarity

Job clarity refers to the extent to which policies, procedures, and responsibilities are explicitly defined and communication patterns are clear and consistent (Jorde-Bloom 1988). It is not uncommon

in child care centres to find teaching assistants, teachers and supervisors all engaged in similar activities. Stress and interpersonal conflict is reduced when staff members understand the nature and scope of their job and the individual's understanding of their responsibilities matches others' expectations. Research has found that role ambiguity among staff in child care centres contributes to low morale and burnout (Boyd and Paisley, 1989; Kontos and Stremmel, 1988; Manlove, 1993; Whitebook, Howes, Darrah and Friedman, 1981). In the current study, we found that higher levels of turnover were predicted by the lack of things that provide job clarity such as written job descriptions, a staff manual, and regular performance appraisals.

Decision-making opportunities

Jorde-Bloom (1988) defines decision making as the degree of autonomy given to staff and the extent to which they are involved in making centre-wide decisions. She suggests that when teaching staff have some input into the development of policies, centre practices, and the way they do their own job, they are more likely to feel that they have some control over what happens to them and as a result to feel less stressed. Using a sub-sample from the *You Bet I Care!* data set, Marshall (2000) found that the extent to which teaching staff feel they have opportunities to make decisions affecting their work predicts the extent of indicators of burnout. Other studies report a correlation between limited opportunity to make decisions related to their job and burnout in child care centre staff (Pettygrove, Whitebook and Weir, 1984), social workers (Pines and Maslach, 1978) and health care workers (Iverson et al., 1998).

Level and type of education

Education related to child development and the provision of child care enables teaching staff to understand what needs to be done in order to be effective in their work. Feeling competent in the job can serve as a buffer against stress by enabling staff to feel that they are making a positive difference in children's lives (Manlove, 1993). The research on the relationship between ECCE education and burnout has yielded mixed results. Some researchers have reported that higher levels of ECCE education are associated with higher feelings of accomplishment in the job and lower levels of burnout (Manlove, 1993; Maslach and Pines, 1977; Powell and Stremmel, 1989). Others have found that higher levels of education are sometimes associated with higher levels of stress and decisions to leave the field (Todd and Deery-Schmitt, 1996). Stremmel, Benson and Powell (1993) suggests that people with higher educational levels may experience higher levels of stress due to the discrepancies between their level of education and view of themselves as professionals and the reality of the low status afforded people working in child care and the poor wages and benefits. People working in child care spend considerable amounts of time juggling competing demands and providing emotional support to children (and sometimes also to the children's parents). The physical and emotional stress involved and the on-going requirement to meet the needs of others can result in burnout.

Maslach and Pines (1977) note that many people working in child care have not received any preparation for coping with the emotional stressors of the work before they actually begin doing it. They suggest that pre-service education include specific discussion about the personal stress inherent in the job, the sources of the stress, the possible emotions that it may cause in the individual and effective techniques for dealing with stress.

5.11 Towards a solution

Research over the past twenty years has identified four clusters of variables that contribute to the on-going recruitment and retention challenges faced by the child care sector:

- A highly demanding job with multiple roles, conflicting demands and a significant level of responsibility coupled with lack or insufficient availability of moderators of stress such as support by co-workers and supervisors, education that provides the knowledge and skills to do the job well, and job clarity.
- Workforce issues, specifically low wages, poor benefits, poor working conditions and lack of career mobility.
- Barriers to accessing education that will provide the knowledge, skills and abilities to do the job well. This applies to staff working solely with children and to supervisors and directors whose roles require additional knowledge and abilities.
- Lack of respect for the importance of child care among politicians and the general public. This undermines staff self-esteem and job satisfaction and contributes to the continuation of low wages and poor benefits.

The recruitment and retention challenges faced by child care result from a complex and dynamic interaction of several contributors. Addressing each contributor separately would help but is not sufficient to make child care an attractive and viable occupation. Recruitment and retention challenges in child care must be addressed through a comprehensive multi-pronged approach that takes into account and simultaneously addresses: (1) the inherent stress of the job and the need for moderators of stress; (2) compensation (wages, benefits and working conditions); (3) training accessibility; and (4) the current low level of respect for the job by the public at large. We know from a large body of research that child care capable of supporting and enhancing children's well-being and development requires consistency of relationship between children and adults. Given the high use of child care by children under age six and the importance of the early years in children's development, the current recruitment and retention challenges in child care is a crisis that must be addressed now. The children of Canada deserve no less.

Original list of potential predictors of intention to leave:

- The centre in one year
- The child care field within three years.

Staff questionnaire
Section A: Child care experience

- A – 2: What are the ages of the children in the group with which you spend most of your time?
- 0 – 17 months old
 - 18 – 35 months old
 - 3, 4 and 5 year olds
- A – 7: In a typical work week:
- How many hours are you regularly scheduled to work?
 - How many hours of unpaid overtime, if any, do you work at your centre?
 - How many hours of unpaid overtime, if any, do you work at another location (e.g. preparing work-related materials at home)?
- A – 8: How often does your centre have scheduled meetings of all teaching staff?
- A – 11: Which best describes your current job? ¹²
- Assistant teacher
 - Teacher
 - Supervisor
- A – 12: In years and months, how long have you worked at this centre?
- A – 13: In years and months, how long have you held your current position?
- A – 15: How many years in total have you worked in the child care field? (Working is defined as 10 hours or more per week. Include the time working in your current centre but exclude time spent as a student on field placement).
- Less than one year
 - One to three years
 - Over three years, up to five years
 - Over ten years, up to 15 years
 - Over 15 years
- A – 16: How many centres have you worked in over the past five years?

¹² Definitions for each position were provided in the questionnaire.

Section B: Wages, benefits and working conditions

- B – 1 – 4: Used to calculate before tax gross hourly wage
- B – 5: Asked if over the past year person had worked full-time (30 hours or more a week) or part-time (less than 30 hours a week)
- B – 8: In the past two years has your annual salary:
- Remained the same
 - Increased
 - Decreased
- B – 9: Which of the following are available at your centre for all teaching staff?
- Written job description
 - Written job contract
 - Written salary schedule
 - A staff manual outlining staff policies
 - Regular written job performance appraisal
 - A formal grievance procedure
 - A room that is set aside for staff use only
 - A resource room or staff library (include any collection of child care journals and/or books available for staff use)
 - None of the above
- B – 11: Are you represented by a union? If yes, what is the union's name?

Section C: Other paid work

- C – 1: Do you presently do any other paid work in addition to your job at the child care centre?

Section D: Feelings about the child care field

- D – 3: Have you ever resigned from a position in the child care field?
- D – 5: Do you think you will be promoted in this centre?
- D – 6: Do you think you could earn more money or achieve a higher status position if you moved to another centre?
- D – 7: Do you think you would have to leave the child care field in order to earn more money or achieve a higher status position?
- D – 9: Which of the following groups generally respect you as a child care professional?
- Own family
 - Families of children in the centre
 - Other people working in the child care field
 - Professionals in other fields
 - Your friends
 - The public at large
 - Other groups, please specify
 - No groups
 - Sum of the number of groups identified as generally respecting the individual as a child care professional

D – 11: If you were choosing a career now, would you choose child care?

Section E: Feelings about your centre

E – 1: Indicate all of the following that describe your relationship with most of your co-workers most of the time.

- My colleagues support and encourage me
- I enjoy the company of my colleagues
- My colleagues are hard to know
- My colleagues share personal concerns with me
- My colleagues are critical of my performance
- I feel I can't trust my colleagues
- My colleagues are not very helpful
- My colleagues share ideas and resources

- Total co-worker satisfaction score (sum of the total of positive responses)

E – 2: Indicate all of the following which describe your relationship with the person who supervises you. My supervisor:

- Encourages me to try new ideas
- Supervises me too closely
- Provides support and helpful feedback
- Sets high but realistic standards
- Makes me feel inadequate
- Trusts my judgment
- Is unavailable
- Appreciates the difficulties of balancing work and family responsibilities
- Is hard to please

- Total supervisor satisfaction score (sum of the total of positive responses)

E – 3: Indicate all of the following that describe how you feel about your working environment

- The centre is a bright and attractive place to be in
- I always know where to find the things I need
- I need some new equipment and materials to do my job well
- We need a separate room where staff can relax during breaks
- I can't find a place to carry on a private conversation
- It is too noisy
- The conditions meet my standards of cleanliness
- Teachers have a place to store personal belongings
- Total working environment satisfaction score (sum of the total positive responses)

- E – 4: Indicate all of the following that describe how you feel about your pay, benefits and promotion opportunities
- My pay is fair considering my background and skills
 - My pay is fair compared to what other centres pay
 - My salary does not adequately reflect the work I do
 - I have enough time off for vacations
 - My benefits are inadequate
 - I am not progressing in my job as rapidly as I would like
 - Chances for promotion are good
 - Total pay, benefits and promotion score (sum of the total positive responses).
- E – 5: Which of the following: 1) never or not at all, 2) rarely/to a minor degree, 3) occasionally, 4) a good part of the time, and 5) usually/feel strongly, best reflects how each statement describes your feelings about your work situation most of the time.
- The work I do is stimulating and challenging
 - I feel physically exhausted at the end of the work day
 - My work gives me a sense of accomplishment
 - There is too little time to do all that needs to be done
 - I feeling emotionally drained at the end of the day
 - I make a positive difference in the children's lives
 - Centre policies and practices are well defined
 - I feel frustrated by this job
 - I have reasonable control over most things that affect my satisfaction with my job
 - I feel my job makes good use of my skills and abilities
 - I take pride in my centre
 - I know the centre could be providing a better service, but there is nothing I can do about it
 - My centre provides a well-rounded program for the children who attend
 - My centre really supports the families of the children who attend
- E – 6: Indicate all of the following that apply to how decisions are made at your centre most of the time.
- People are encouraged to be self-sufficient in making decisions
 - The director likes to make most of the decisions
 - People don't feel free to express their opinions
 - Everyone provides input on the content of staff meetings
 - People provide input but the decisions have already been made
 - Teachers make decisions about matters that directly affect them
 - Teachers are seldom asked their opinion on issues
 - The director values everyone's input for major decisions

E – 7: Listed below are some common organizational decisions and actions. How much influence do you currently have in each of these areas on a scale of 1 (very little) to 3 (considerable)?¹³

- Ordering materials and supplies
- Interviewing/hiring new staff
- Determining program objectives
- Orientation of new teachers
- Planning the daily schedule of activities
- Developing or changing policies
- Influencing how procedures are developed or determined

E – 8: How much influence would you like to have on a scale of 1 (very little) to 3 (considerable)?

- Ordering materials and supplies
- Interviewing/hiring new staff
- Determining program objectives
- Orientation of new teachers
- Planning the daily schedule of activities
- Developing or changing policies
- Influencing how procedures are developed or determined

E – 9: On a scale of 1 to 5, how secure do you feel your current job is?

- 1 (not secure at all)
- 2 (not secure)
- 3 (somewhat secure)
- 4 (moderately secure)
- 5 (very secure)

Section F: Educational background

F – 1: What is the highest level of education that you have completed in any subject area?

- Some high school
- High school diploma
- One-year college credential
- Two-year college credential
- Three year college credential
- Post-diploma certificate
- B.A. or higher degree

¹³ For the purpose of the analyses in the current study, each of the options in E – 8 and E – 9 was used to calculate a score for the discrepancy between the respondents estimate of their currently influence and the influence they would like to have.

F – 2: What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed that was specifically related to child care provision, early childhood education, or child development? (Please exclude first aid and CPR).

- None
- A course lasting less than one year
- One-year ECCE credential
- Two-year ECCE credential
- Three-year ECCE credential
- Post-diploma ECCE credential
- ECCE-related B.A. or higher degree

F – 3: Are you currently enrolled in a formal education program?

Section G: Professional development

G – 1: Have you participated in any professional development activities during the past twelve months, for example, a conference, workshop or course? (Do not include activities where you were a presenter or workshop leader).

Section H: Personal background

H – 2: What was your age on your last birthday?

- Under 20
- 20-24
- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45-49
- 50 or older

H – 3: What is your marital status?

- Married or living with a partner
- Single (includes separated, divorced or widowed)

H – 4: How long have you lived in your present town or city?

- Under one year
- One to two years
- Three to five years
- Over five years

H – 9: Approximately what percent of the total cost of maintaining your household is covered by your salary?

- 80% - 100%
- over 50% but less than 80%
- over 25% but less than 50%
- 25% or less

Director questionnaire

Section A: Child care experience

A – 1: In your position as director, do you also have direct teaching/care responsibilities?

A – 3: In years and months, how long have you worked at this centre?

A – 8: In a typical work month, approximately what percentage of your time is spent in each activity listed below?

- Directly caring for children
- Activity planning and preparation (e.g. assembling materials for an activity)
- Strategic planning and goal setting for the program as a whole
- Interaction with parents (e.g. conversation, phone call)
- Staff supervision (e.g. staff allocation, performance appraisals)
- Meeting with staff individually or in groups to provide assistance in program development or for problem-solving
- Meeting with people other than parents or staff
- Supervising practicum students (students on placement)
- Administration (e.g. ordering supplies, book-keeping)
- Maintenance (e.g. cleaning, repairing)
- Other, please specify

A – 9: In a typical work week:

- How many hours are you regularly scheduled to work?
- How many hours of unpaid overtime, if any, do you work at your centre? (e.g. attending parent meetings)
- How many hours of unpaid overtime, if any, do you work at another location (e.g. your home) on tasks related to the centre?

Section D: Feelings about my centre

D – 1: Indicate all of the following that describe your relationship with the person or group to whom you report or that has any supervisory responsibility for your performance. If you are the owner-director, skip to D – 2.

The person/group to whom I am directly responsible:

- Encourages me to try new ideas
- Gets too involved in daily administrative issues that should be left to me to handle
- Does not really understand my priorities for the children
- Seeks my input in policy development
- Trusts my judgment
- Is often unresponsive to my requests for direction
- Is hard to please
- Is supportive

D – 2: Which of the following: 1) never or not at all, 2) rarely/to a minor degree, 3) occasionally, 4) a good part of the time, and 5) usually/feel strongly, best reflects how each statement describes your feelings about your work situation most of the time?

- The work I do is stimulating and challenging
- I feel physically exhausted at the end of the work day
- My work gives me a sense of accomplishment
- There is too little time to do all that needs to be done
- My staff and I work well together as a team
- My job makes an important difference in the lives of the children who attend the centre
- I feel emotionally drained at the end of the day
- I have reasonable control over important decisions that affect my program or staff
- Because of job demands, I have difficulty finding time for self-rejuvenation
- I feel frustrated by this job
- I feel my job makes good use of my skills and abilities

D – 3: Which of the following: 1) never or not at all, 2) rarely/to a minor degree, 3) occasionally, 4) a good part of the time, and 5) usually/feel strongly, best reflects how each statement describes your feelings about your centre most of the time?

- I take pride in my centre
- I know the centre could be providing a better service, but there is nothing I can do about it
- My centre provides a well-rounded program for the children who attend
- My centre really supports the families of the children who are attending it
- I don't care what happens to this place after I leave
- My centre is a very pleasant place in which to work
- It is hard to feel committed to this place

D – 6: Do you think you will still be working at this centre one year from now?

Centre questionnaire

Section C: Centre organization

C – 3: Please indicate the number of staff by position who currently work full-time (30 hours or more) and the number who work part-time (less than 30 hours a week) in each of the following positions: assistant teacher, teacher and supervisor.

C – 13: Is your centre:

- Municipal, that is, directly operated by a municipality?
- Commercial, that is, a private business?
- Non-profit?

Section D: Changes in policies and practices

D – 1: Changes in the centre’s organization over the past three years

- Change in auspice
- Shift to or from operating in more than one building
- Change in age groups served
- Change in distribution of ages served, e.g. now serve fewer infants
- Change in program components, e.g. now also have a Head Start program

D – 2: Changes in the centre’s staffing patterns over the past three years

- Change in use of part-time teaching staff
- Change in use of time-limited contracts for teaching staff
- Change in use of centre as a practicum setting for ECCE students
- Change in use of volunteers (exclude ECCE students)

- Sum of the changes in centre’s staffing patterns over the past three years

Section F: Staff turnover

F – 2: How many teaching staff have left over the past 12 months? (When combined with the responses to C – 3, this question enabled calculation of the centre’s turnover rate).

Section G: Benefits and working conditions

G – 1: Which of the following are provided to full- and part-time staff?

- Paid coffee breaks
- Paid lunch time
- Paid preparation/planning time
- Compensation for attendance at board of directors meetings
- Compensation for attendance at staff meetings after working hours
- Compensation for attendance at parent meetings after hours
- Compensation for on-site in-service training
- Compensation for overtime child care provision
- Paid release time to attend off-site training and workshops
- Financial assistance to cover workshops, conferences, etc
- Payment of child care association memberships
- Yearly cost of living increase in wages
- Yearly wage increase
- Periodic merit increases in wages
- Subsidization of child care fees for parent employees
- Unpaid, job-protected maternity/parental leave
- Employer top-up of E.I. maternity/parental leave
- Working conditions (sum of the total number of benefits listed above)

- G – 2: Please indicate if the premiums for each staff benefit are fully, partly or not by paid the centre.
- Dental coverage
 - Extended health care
 - Employee assistance plan (e.g. counseling for personal problems)
 - Short-term disability (payment during the first 17 weeks when individual ill or off because of an accident)
 - Long-term disability (payment after 17 weeks when an individual is ill or off because of an accident)
 - Life insurance
 - Retirement/pension plan
 - Number of above benefits where premium is partly or fully covered by the centre

- G – 3: Please indicate all of the following that are available at your centre
- Written job descriptions
 - Written job contracts
 - A written salary schedule
 - A staff manual outlining staff policies
 - Regular written staff job performance appraisal
 - A formal grievance procedure for staff
 - A room which is set aside for staff use only
 - A separate staff washroom
 - A resource room or staff library (include any collection of child care journals and/or books available for staff use)
 - None of the above
 - Sum of the total number of above items indicated as being available

Section H: Issues and opinions

- H – 1: Over the past 12 months, how significant on a scale of 'not a problem,' 'a minor problem' and 'a major problem' were the following?
- Finding qualified permanent teaching staff
 - Affording qualified permanent teaching staff
 - Keeping qualified permanent teaching staff
 - Finding qualified substitute teaching staff
 - Providing financial assistance or paid time off to assist staff to undertake professional development

Lists of centres from which participants were selected were provided by the province/territory in which the centre operates.

Original list of potential predictors for:

- **Turnover.**
- **Keeping qualified permanent teaching staff is a major problem.**
- **Finding qualified permanent teaching staff is a major problem.**

Staff questionnaire**Section A: Child care experience**

A – 7: In a typical work week:

- How many hours are you regularly scheduled to work?
- How many hours of unpaid overtime, if any, do you work at your centre?
- How many hours of unpaid overtime, if any, do you work at another location (e.g. preparing work-related materials at home)?

A – 12: In years and months, how long have you worked at this centre?

A – 13: In years and months, how long have you held your current position?

A – 15: How many years in total have you worked in the child care field? (Working is defined as 10 hours or more per week. Include the time working in your current centre but exclude time spent as a student on field placement).

- Less than one year
- One to three years
- Over three years, up to five years
- Over ten years, up to 15 years
- Over 15 years

A – 16: How many centres have you worked in over the past five years?

Section B: Wages, benefits and working conditions

B – 1 – 4: Used to calculate before tax gross hourly wage

B – 8: In the past two years has your annual salary:

- Remained the same
- Increased
- Decreased

B – 9: Which of the following are available at your centre for all teaching staff?

- Written job description
- Written job contract
- Written salary schedule
- A staff manual outlining staff policies
- Regular written job performance appraisal
- A formal grievance procedure
- A room that is set aside for staff use only
- A resource room or staff library (include any collection of child care journals and/or books available for staff use)
- None of the above

Section C: Other paid work

C – 1: Do you presently do any other paid work in addition to your job at the child care centre?

Section D: Feelings about the child care field

D – 3: Have you ever resigned from a position in the child care field?

D – 5: Do you think you will be promoted in this centre?

D – 6: Do you think you could earn more money or achieve a higher status position if you moved to another centre?

D – 7: Do you think you would have to leave the child care field in order to earn more money or achieve a higher status position?

D – 9: Which of the following groups generally respect you as a child care professional?

- Own family
- Families of children in the centre
- Other people working in the child care field
- Professionals in other fields
- Your friends
- The public at large
- Other groups, please specify
- No groups
- Sum of the number of groups identified as generally respecting the individual as a child care professional

D – 11: If you were choosing a career now, would you choose child care?

Section E: Feelings about your centre

E – 1: Total co-worker satisfaction score (sum of the total of positive responses)

E – 2: Total supervisor satisfaction score (sum of the total of positive responses)

E – 3: Total working environment satisfaction score (sum of the total positive responses)

E – 4: Total pay, benefits and promotion satisfaction score (sum of the total positive responses).

E – 5: Which of the following: 1) never or not at all, 2) rarely/to a minor degree, 3) occasionally, 4) a good part of the time, and 5) usually/feel strongly, best reflects how each statement describes your feelings about your work situation most of the time.

- The work I do is stimulating and challenging
- I feel physically exhausted at the end of the work day
- My work gives me a sense of accomplishment
- There is too little time to do all that needs to be done
- I feel emotionally drained at the end of the day
- I make a positive difference in the children's lives
- Centre policies and practices are well defined
- I feel frustrated by this job
- I have reasonable control over most things that affect my satisfaction with my job
- I feel my job makes good use of my skills and abilities
- I take pride in my centre
- I know the centre could be providing a better service, but there is nothing I can do about it
- My centre provides a well-rounded program for the children who attend
- My centre really supports the families of the children who attend

E – 6: Indicate all of the following that apply to how decisions are made at your centre most of the time.

- People are encouraged to be self-sufficient in making decisions
- The director likes to make most of the decisions
- People don't feel free to express their opinions
- Everyone provides input on the content of staff meetings
- People provide input but the decisions have already been made
- Teachers make decisions about matters that directly affect them
- Teachers are seldom asked their opinion on issues
- The director values everyone's input for major decisions

E – 9: On a scale of 1 to 5, how secure do you feel your current job is?

- 1 (not secure at all)
- 2 (not secure)
- 3 (somewhat secure)
- 4 (moderately secure)
- 5 (very secure)

Section F: Educational background

F – 2: What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed that was specifically related to child care provision, early childhood education, or child development? (Please exclude first aid and CPR).

- None
- A course lasting less than one year
- One-year ECCE credential
- Two-year ECCE credential
- Three-year ECCE credential
- Post-diploma ECCE credential
- ECCE-related B.A. or higher degree

F – 3: Are you currently enrolled in a formal education program?

Section G: Professional development

G – 1: Have you participated in any professional development activities during the past twelve months, for example, a conference, workshop or course? (Do not include activities where you were a presenter or workshop leader).

Section H: Personal background

H – 2: What was your age on your last birthday?

- Under 20
- 20-24
- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45-49
- 50 or older

H – 3: What is your marital status?

- Married or living with a partner
- Single (includes separated, divorced or widowed)

H – 4: How long have you lived in your present town or city?

- Under one year
- One to two years
- Three to five years
- Over five years

H – 9: Approximately what percentage of the total cost of maintaining your household is covered by your salary?

- 80% - 100%
- over 50% but less than 80%
- over 25% but less than 50%
- 25% or less

Director questionnaire

Section A: Child care experience

- A – 1: In your position as director, do you also have direct teaching/care responsibilities?
- A – 3: In years and months, how long have you worked at this centre?
- A – 4: In years and months, how long have you held your current position?
- A – 7: How many years in total have you worked in the child care field? (Working is defined as 10 hours or more per week. Include time working in your current centre but exclude time spent as a student on field placement).
- A – 8: In a typical work month, approximately what percentage of your time is spent in each activity listed below?
- Directly caring for children
 - Activity planning and preparation (e.g. assembling materials for an activity)
 - Strategic planning and goal setting for the program as a whole
 - Interaction with parents (e.g. conversation, phone call)
 - Staff supervision (e.g. staff allocation, performance appraisals)
 - Meeting with staff individually or in groups to provide assistance in program development or for problem-solving
 - Meeting with people other than parents or staff
 - Supervising practicum students (students on placement)
 - Administration (e.g. ordering supplies, book-keeping)
 - Maintenance (e.g. cleaning, repairing)
 - Other, please specify
- A – 9: In a typical work week:
- How many hours are you regularly scheduled to work?
 - How many hours of unpaid overtime, if any, do you work at your centre? (e.g. attending parent meetings)
 - How many hours of unpaid overtime, if any, do you work at another location (e.g. your home) on tasks related to the centre?
- A – 10: What was your starting position in this centre?

Section B: Other paid work

- B – 1: Do you presently do any other paid work in addition to your work at the centre?

Section C: Feelings about the child care field

- C – 5: Do you see any possibilities for advancement for yourself in the child care field within the next five years?

C – 9: In your opinion, which of the following groups generally respect you as a child care professional?

- Your own family.
- The families of the children in your centre
- Other people working in the child care field
- Professionals in other fields
- Your friends
- The public at large
- Other groups, please specify
- No groups

C – 10: Do you expect to be working in the field of child care three years from now?

C – 11: If you were choosing a career now, would you choose child care?

Section D: Feelings about my centre

D – 1: Indicate all of the following that describe your relationship with the person or group to whom you report or that has any supervisory responsibility for your performance. If you are the owner-director, skip to D – 2.

The person/group to whom I am directly responsible:

- Encourages me to try new ideas
- Gets too involved in daily administrative issues that should be left to me to handle
- Does not really understand my priorities for the children
- Seeks my input in policy development
- Trusts my judgment
- Is often unresponsive to my requests for direction
- Is hard to please
- Is supportive

D – 2: Which of the following : 1) never or not at all, 2) rarely/to a minor degree, 3) occasionally, 4) a good part of the time, and 5) usually/feel strongly, best reflects how each statement describes your feelings about your work situation most of the time?

- The work I do is stimulating and challenging
- I feel physically exhausted at the end of the work day
- My work gives me a sense of accomplishment
- There is too little time to do all that needs to be done
- My staff and I work well together as a team
- My job makes an important difference in the lives of the children who attend the centre
- I feel emotionally drained at the end of the day
- I have reasonable control over important decisions that affect my program or staff
- Because of job demands, I have difficulty finding time for self-rejuvenation
- I feel frustrated by this job
- I feel my job makes good use of my skills and abilities

D – 3: Which of the following: 1) never or not at all, 2) rarely/to a minor degree, 3) occasionally, 4) a good part of the time, and 5) usually/feel strongly, best reflects how each statement describes your feelings about your centre most of the time?

- I take pride in my centre
- I know the centre could be providing a better service, but there is nothing I can do about it
- My centre provides a well-rounded program for the children who attend
- My centre really supports the families of the children who are attending it

- I don't care what happens to this place after I leave
- My centre is a very pleasant place in which to work
- It is hard to feel committed to this place

D – 5: On a scale of 1 to 5, how secure do you feel your current job is?

- 1 (not secure at all)
- 2 (not secure)
- 3 (somewhat secure)
- 4 (moderately secure)
- 5 (very secure)

D – 6: Do you think you will still be working at this centre one year from now?

Section E: Educational background

E – 2: What is the highest level of formal education you have completed that was specifically related to child care provision, early childhood education, or child development?

- Do not have any formal education directly related to child care provision, early childhood education or child development
- Highest level, please specify

E – 3: Do you have a certificate, diploma or degree in business administration or the management of early childhood programs?

- No
- Yes, which of these do you have?

Section G: Personal background

G – 2: What was your age on your last birthday?

- 20-24
- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45-49
- 50 or older

G – 3: What is your marital status?

- Married or living with a partner
- Single (includes separated, divorced or widowed)

G – 4: How long have you lived in your present town or city?

- Under one year
- One to two years
- Three to five years
- Over five years

Centre questionnaire

Section A: Children at your centre

- A – 7: How many children with special needs, if any, are currently attending your centre? (NOTE: For the purpose of this question, the term “special needs” refers to children with a physical or intellectual disability identified by a professional such as a physician or a speech therapist. Include children diagnosed as medically fragile as well as children with significant emotional difficulties)
- A – 8: Has your centre been unable to accept the application of any child(ren) with special needs within the past three years?
- A – 9: Within the past three years, has your centre provided in-service training, brought in a consultant to provide training, or paid a teacher to take a course in any of the following topics?
- Anti-bias curriculum or cultural diversity in child care settings
 - Caring for children with physical disabilities or who are medically fragile
 - Use of alternate communication systems, e.g. signing
 - Programming for children with developmental delays
 - Responding to challenging behaviour
 - None of the above

Section B: Financial organization

- B – 1: What is the monthly fee at your centre for children whose parents pay the full-fee? Question asks about both full-time and part-time participation by children.
- 0 – 17 months
 - 18 months – 3 years
 - Over 3 years to 5 years, 11 months
 - School-age children
- B – 2: How many children in your centre have fees paid fully or in part through government fee subsidy?
- B – 5: Approximately what percentage of the centre’s annual cash revenue comes from each of the following sources?
- Parent fees
 - Government subsidies for low-income parents
 - Government grant to increase staff wages
 - Government grant for training or for hiring
 - Government operating/equipment grant
 - Corporate sponsors
 - Own fund-raising
 - Other, please specify
- B – 6: What type of regular in-kind donations does your centre receive? Please indicate each type available to you.
- Subsidized rent or rent-free space
 - Free or subsidized heat, light, water, and/or gas
 - Free or subsidized janitorial/maintenance services
 - Free or subsidized administrative services, e.g. book-keeping
 - Toys or equipment
 - Supplies
 - Food
 - Consultation or advice from university or college faculty
 - Other, please specify
 - None

- B – 7: Have there been any significant increases or decreases in the cash revenue and/or the in-kind donations received by your centre in the past three years?
- B – 9: Please indicate approximately what percentage of your centre's annual budget goes towards the following items. (NOTE: We do not expect your responses to add up to 100% since not all possible types of expenditures are included)
- Staff wages. Include yourself and all teaching and non-teaching staff
 - Staff benefits. Include yourself and all teaching and non-teaching staff
 - Rent or mortgage payments
 - Utilities (heat, light, water, gas)

Section C: Centre organization

- C – 1: What are the regular hours of operation at your centre? (Please indicate the hours of operation for each day that the centre is open, e.g. 7:00 am to 7:00 pm. Write in "closed" beside the days that the centre does not operate)
- C – 3: Please indicate the number of staff by position who currently work full-time (30 hours or more) and the number who work part-time (less than 30 hours a week) in each of the following positions: assistant teacher, teacher and supervisor.
- C – 4: How many of your teaching staff currently have a time-limited contract rather than a permanent position? (Please write a number or "0" beside each of the three positions. Include both full-time (30 hours or more a week) and part-time teaching staff).
- Assistant teachers
 - Teachers
 - Supervisors
- C – 7: Has your your centre had any Early Childhood Education (ECCE) or child care practicum students on placement I the past year?
- No
 - Yes, how many?
- C – 11: How many teachers have at least a two-year post-secondary diploma or certificate in early childhood education? (Please include both full-time and part-time staff).
- C – 13: Is your centre:
- Municipal, that is, directly operated by a municipality?
 - Commercial, that is, a private business?
 - Non-profit?

Section D: Changes in policies and practices

- D – 1: Changes in the centre's organization over the past three years
- Change in auspice
 - Shift to or from operating in more than one building
 - Change in age groups served
 - Change in distribution of ages served, e.g. now serve fewer infants
 - Change in program components, e.g. now also have a Head Start program
 - Sum of the changes in the centre's organization over the past three years

- D – 2: Changes in the centre’s staffing patterns over the past three years
- Change in use of part-time teaching staff
 - Change in use of time-limited contract for teaching staff
 - Change in use of centre as a practicum setting for ECCE students
 - Change in use of volunteers (exclude ECCE students)
 - Sum of the changes in the centre’s staffing patterns over the past three years

Section E: Salaries

- E – 1: Do all full-time staff within each position receive the same starting (not probationary) salary regardless of education and experience?
- E – 8: Are any staff in your centre represented by a union? If yes, what is the union’s name?

Section F: Staff turnover

- F – 2: How many teaching staff have left over the past 12 months? When combined with the responses to C – 3, this question enabled calculation of the centre’s turnover rate).

Section G: Benefits and working conditions

G – 1: Which of the following are provided to full- and part-time staff?

- Paid coffee breaks
- Paid lunch time
- Paid preparation/planning time
- Compensation for attendance at board of directors meetings
- Compensation for attendance at staff meetings after working hours
- Compensation for attendance at parent meetings after hours
- Compensation for on-site in-service training
- Compensation for overtime child care provision
- Paid release time to attend off-site training and workshops
- Financial assistance to cover workshops, conferences, etc
- Payment of child care association memberships
- Yearly cost of living increase in wages
- Yearly wage increase
- Periodic merit increases in wages
- Subsidization of child care fees for parent employees
- Unpaid, job-protected maternity/parental leave
- Employer top-up of E.I. maternity/parental leave
- Working conditions (sum of the total number of benefits listed above)

G – 2: Please indicate if the premiums for each staff benefit are fully, partly or not by paid the centre.

- Dental coverage
- Extended health care
- Employee assistance plan (e.g. counseling for personal problems)
- Short-term disability (payment during the first 17 weeks when an individual ill or off because of an accident)
- Long-term disability (payment after 17 weeks when an individual is ill or off because of an accident)
- Life insurance
- Retirement/pension plan
- Number of above benefits where premium is partly or fully covered by the centre

G – 3: Please indicate all of the following that are available at your centre

- Written job descriptions
- Written job contracts
- A written salary schedule
- A staff manual outlining staff policies
- Regular written staff job performance appraisal
- A formal grievance procedure for staff
- A room which is set aside for staff use only
- A separate staff washroom
- A resource room or staff library (include any collection of child care journals and/or books available for staff use)
- None of the above
- Sum of the total number of above items indicated as being available

List of potential predictors at the individual staff level with a correlation of .1 or higher with expectation of no longer working in:

- The child care field within three years.
- The centre within one year.

Staff questionnaire	Do you expect to be still working in the field of child care three years from now?	Do you think you will still be working at this centre one year from now?
A – 12 Time worked at current centre	.104	.207
A – 13 Time in current position		.175
A – 15 Time worked in the child care field	.112	.180
A – 16 Number of centres worked in over past five years		-.104
B – 1 to 4 Before tax gross hourly wage	.129	.120
B – 8 Salary has remained the same for past two years		-.106
C – 1 Do you presently do any other paid work in addition to your job at the child care centre?		-.102
D – 5 Do you think you will be promoted at this centre?	.121	.102
D – 6 Do you think you could earn more money or achieve a higher status position at another centre?		-.158
D – 7 Do you think you would need to leave the child care field in order to earn more money or achieve a higher status position?	-.219	
D – 9 Which of the following groups generally respect you as a child care professional?		
• Own family	.133	
• Other people working in child care	.104	
• Friends	.107	
• No groups	-.120	
Sum of the number of groups perceived as generally respecting the individual as a child care professional	.150	.114
D – 11 If choosing a career now, would you choose child care?	.271	.127
E – 1 Indicate all of the following that describe your relationship with most of your co-workers most of the time:		
• My colleagues support and encourage me	.118	.188
• I enjoy the company of my colleagues		.117
• My colleagues are not very helpful		-.104
• My colleagues share ideas and resources		.101
Total co-worker satisfaction score	.127	.155

Staff questionnaire continued	Do you expect to be still working in the <i>field</i> of child care three years from now?	Do you think you will still be working at this <i>centre</i> one year from now?
<p>E – 2 Indicate all of the following that describe your relationship with the person who supervises you. My supervisor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages me to try new ideas • Provides support and helpful feedback • Makes me feel inadequate • Trusts my judgment • Is unavailable • Appreciates the difficulties of balancing work and family responsibilities • Is hard to please <p>Total supervisor satisfaction score</p>	<p>.112 .112 -.122 .109 .100 -.128 .156</p>	<p>.144 .173 -.177 .136 -.103 .143 -.163 .221</p>
<p>E – 3 Indicate all of the following that describe how you feel about your working environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The centre is a bright and attractive place to be in • I always know where to find the things I need • I need more equipment and materials to do my job well • It is too noisy <p>Total work environment satisfaction score</p>	<p>.117 -.116 .143</p>	<p>.152 .141 -.107 .176</p>
<p>E – 4 Indicate all of the following that describe how you feel about your pay, benefits and promotion opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My pay is fair considering my background and skills • I have enough time for vacations • My benefits are inadequate • I am not progressing in my job as rapidly as I would like <p>Total pay, benefits and promotion satisfaction score</p>	<p>.109 .169</p>	<p>.133 .138 -.124 -.144 .212</p>

Staff questionnaire continued	Do you expect to be still working in the <i>field</i> of child care three years from now?	Do you think you will still be working at this <i>centre</i> one year from now?
<p>E – 5 On a scale from 1 to 5, how does each statement describe your feelings about your work situation most of the time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work I do is stimulating and challenging .198 • I feel physically exhausted at the end of the work day -.151 • My work gives me a sense of accomplishment .266 • I feel emotionally drained at the end of the day -.185 • Centre policies and procedures are well defined .136 • I feel frustrated by this job -.300 • I have reasonable control over most things that affect my satisfaction with my job .210 • I feel my job makes good use of my skills and abilities .246 • I take pride in my centre .235 • I know the centre could be providing a better service, but there is nothing I can do about it -.149 • My centre provides a well-rounded program for the children who attend .146 • My centre really supports the families of the children who attend .121 		
<p>E – 6 Indicate all of the following that apply to how decisions are made at your centre most of the time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are encouraged to be self-sufficient in making decisions .110 • The director likes to make all the decisions -.115 • People don't feel free to express their opinions -.143 • Everyone provides input on the content of staff meetings .120 • People provide input, but the decisions have already been made -.113 • Teachers are seldom asked their opinion on issues -.119 • The director values everyone's input for major decisions .105 		
<p>E – 7 & 8 Discrepancy between perceived current and desired influence on making organizational decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordering materials and supplies .143 • Determining program objective .112 • Developing or changing policies .140 • Influencing how procedures are developed or determined .136 		

Staff questionnaire continued	Do you expect to be still working in the field of child care three years from now?	Do you think you will still be working at this centre one year from now?
E – 9 On a scale of 1 to 5, how secure do you feel your current job is?	.116	.291
H – 2 What was your age on your last birthday?	.122	.185
H – 3 What is your marital status? Married or living with a partner? Single (separated, divorced or widowed)?		-.100

Centre questionnaire	Do you expect to be still working in the field of child care three years from now?	Do you think you will still be working at this centre one year from now?
C – 13 Centre auspice		.101
F – 2 & 3 Actual teaching staff turnover rate in the previous 12 months		-.134
G – 1 Which of the following are provided to full- and part-time staff: • Paid sick days (in this case the variable is the number of days above the median)		.107
Total of the number of listed benefits		.109
H – 1 Keeping qualified permanent teaching staff was a major problem over the past 12 months	-.129	-.129

Note: All the correlations listed are significant at the 0.01 level.

List of potential predictors at the centre level with a correlation of .1 or higher with expectation of no longer working in:

- The field in three years.
- The centre in one year.

Staff questionnaire	Do you expect to be still working in the field of child care three years from now?	Do you think you will still be working at this centre one year from now?
A – 12 Time worked at current centre	-.157	-.263
A – 13 Time in current position	-.134	-.240
A – 15 Time worked in the child care field		
• Less than one year		.112
• One to three years		.150
• Over ten years, up to 15 years		-.177
• Over 10 years	-.143	-.226
• Over 15 years	-.155	-.133
A – 16 Number of centres worked in over past five years		.101
B – 1 to 4 Before tax gross hourly wage	-.141	-.157
B – 9 Sum of the items available, e.g. written job description, staff manual, regular performance appraisal, room set aside for staff only		-.138
D – 3 Have you ever resigned from a position in the child care field?	.128	
D – 5 Do you think you will be promoted at this centre?	-.114	
D – 6 Do you think you could earn more money or achieve a higher status position if you moved to another centre?		.178
D – 7 Do you think you would need to leave the child care field in order to earn more money or achieve a higher status position?	.251	.105
D – 9 Sum of the groups perceived as generally respecting the individual as a child care professional	-.248	-.196
D – 11 If you were choosing a career now, would you choose child care?	.444	.185
E – 1 Total co-worker satisfaction score	-.176	-.172
E – 2 Total supervisor score	-.166	-.261
E – 3 Total work environment satisfaction score	-.163	-.206
E – 4 Total pay, benefits and promotion satisfaction score	-.185	-.231

Staff questionnaire continued	Do you expect to be still working in the <i>field</i> of child care three years from now?	Do you think you will still be working at this <i>centre</i> one year from now?
<p>E – 5 Which of the following best describes your feelings about your work situation most of the time?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work I do is stimulating and challenging • I feel physically exhausted by the end of the day • My work gives me a sense of accomplishment • I feel emotionally drained at the end of the day • Centre policies and procedures are well defined • I feel frustrated by this job • I have reasonable control over most things that affect my satisfaction with the job • I feel my job makes good use of my skills and abilities • I take pride in my centre • I know the centre could be providing a better service, but there is nothing I can do about it • My centre provides a well-rounded program for the children who attend • My centre really supports the families of the children who attend 	<p style="text-align: center;">- .222 .177 - .266 .159 - .160 .303 - .193 - .256 - .252 .161 - .183 - .158</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">- .155 .134 - .297 .181 - .211 .374 - .272 - .300 - .307 .312 - .264 - .182</p>
<p>E – 6 Indicate all of the following that apply to how decisions are made at your centre most of the time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are encouraged to be self-sufficient in making decisions • The director likes to make most of the decisions • People don't feel free to express their opinions • Everyone provides input on the content of staff meetings • People provide input but the decisions have already been made • Teachers make decisions about things that directly affect them • Teachers are seldom asked their opinion on issues • The director values everyone's input for major decisions 	<p style="text-align: center;">- .106 .101 - .137</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">- .153 .197 .189 - .159 .137 - .140 .172 - .182</p>

Staff questionnaire continued	Do you expect to be still working in the field of child care three years from now?	Do you think you will still be working at this centre one year from now?
E – 9 How secure do you feel your current job is?		
• Not secure at all	.144	.266
• Not secure		.177
• Combined number of response of not secure at all and not secure	.131	.305
G – 1 Have you participated in professional development during the past 12 months?	-.100	-.120
H – 2 What was your age on your last birthday?		.204
H – 3 What is your marital status? Married or living with a partner? Single (separated, divorced or widowed)?		.141

Centre questionnaire	Do you expect to be still working in the field of child care three years from now?	Do you think you will still be working at this centre one year from now?
A – 7 Number of children with special needs enrolled in the centre		-.100
A – 9 Over the past three years, the centre has not provided any in-service training, brought in a consultant to provide training, or paid a teacher to take a course or workshop connected with anti-bias curriculum, caring for children with special needs or responding to challenging behaviour	.106	
B – 6 The centre does not receive any regular in-kind donations, e.g. subsidized rent		-.100
B – 9 Percent of the centre's annual budget going to staff wages and benefits		-.123
C – 11 Proportion of staff with at least a two-year ECCE credential	-.126	-.129
C – 13 Auspice of centre	.218	.176
G – 1 Total number of working conditions benefits available, e.g. paid coffee break, paid preparation time, compensation for overtime child care		-.162

Director questionnaire	Do you expect to be still working in the <i>field</i> of child care three years from now?	Do you think you will still be working at this <i>centre</i> one year from now?
A – 1 Director has direct teaching/care responsibilities		.105
A – 3 Length of time worked at centre		-.115
A – 8 In a typical work month, time spent in:		
• Directly caring for children		.121
• Interacting with parents		.136
• Maintenance, e.g. cleaning, repairing		.121
A – 9 Amount of unpaid overtime at centre in a typical work week		.114
C – 11 If you were choosing a career now, would you choose child care?	-.139	
D – 1 Total supervisor satisfaction score	-.113	-.172
D – 2 Which of the following statements reflects your feelings about your work most of the time:		
• The work I do is stimulating and challenging		-.119
• My staff and I work well together as a team	-.105	
• I have reasonable control over important decisions that affect my program or my staff		-.125
• Because of job demands, I have difficulty finding time for self-rejuvenation	.100	
• I feel frustrated by this job	.147	.157
• I feel my job makes good use of my skills and abilities	-.103	-.144
D – 3 Which of the following statements reflects your feelings about your centre most of the time:		
• I know the centre could be providing a better service, but there is nothing I can do about it	.119	.112
• My centre is a very pleasant place in which to work	-.122	-.162
• Its hard to feel committed to this place		.104
D – 6 Do you expect to be working at the centre in one year?	-.159	-.141

Note: All the correlations listed are significant at the 0.01 level.

List of potential predictors with a correlation of .1 or higher with:

- Turnover.
- Keeping qualified permanent teaching staff is a major problem.
- Finding qualified permanent teaching staff is a major problem.

Staff questionnaire	Turnover	Finding qualified permanent teaching staff is a major problem	Keeping qualified permanent teaching staff is a major problem
A – 12 Time worked at current centre	-.321	-.226	-.321
A – 13 Time in current position	-.298	-.253	-.295
A – 15 Time worked in the child care field			
• Less than one year	.190	.194	.224
• One to three years	.119	.148	.186
• Less than three years	.207	.234	.283
• Over ten years, up to 15 years	-.115		-.154
• Over 10 years	-.203	-.149	-.218
• Over 15 years	-.171	-.123	-.150
A – 16 Number of centres worked in over past five years	.141		
B – 1 to 4 Before tax gross hourly wage	-.248	-.336	-.321
B – 9 Sum of the items available, e.g. written job description, staff manual, regular performance appraisal, room set aside for staff only	-.170	-.178	-.231
D – 3 Have you ever resigned from a position in the child care field?	.119		
D – 5 Do you think you will be promoted at this centre?	.128		
D – 6 Do you think you could earn more money or achieve a higher status position if you moved to another centre?	.125		
D – 9 Sum of the groups perceived as generally respecting the individual as a child care professional			-.102
E – 3 Total work environment satisfaction score			-.151
E – 4 Total pay, benefits and promotion satisfaction score	-.155		-.142

Staff questionnaire continued	Turnover	Keeping qualified permanent staff is a major problem	Finding qualified permanent staff is a major problem
E – 5 On a scale from 1 to 5, how does each statement describe your feelings about your work situation most of the time:			
• The work I do is stimulating and challenging	-.126		-.174
• My work gives me a sense of accomplishment	-.125	-.157	-.190
• I make a positive difference in the children’s lives			-.127
• Centre policies and procedures are well defined	-.139	-.112	-.109
• I feel frustrated by this job			.110
• I feel my job makes good use of my skills and abilities	-.172	-.144	-.202
• I take pride in my centre	-.160	-.124	-.216
• I know the centre could be providing a better service, but there is nothing I can do about it	.108		.161
• My centre provides a well-rounded program for the children who attend	-.171	-.171	-.217
• My centre really supports the families of the children who attend	-.116	-.139	-.112
E – 9 How secure do you feel your current job is?			
• Not secure	.128		
• Sum of responses ‘Not secure at all’ and ‘Not secure’	.152		
F – 2 What is the highest level of formal education you have completed that was specifically related to child care provision, early childhood education or child development? (Please exclude first aid and CPR certificates).			
• None		.158	.128
• A provincial government course lasting less than one year	.210	.229	.221
F – 3 Are you currently enrolled in a formal education program?	.125		
G – 1 Have you participated in any professional development activities during the past 12 months?	-.166	-.107	-.164
H – 2 What was your age on your last birthday?	.204	.213	.239
H – 4 How long have you lived in your present town or city?			
• Under one year	.170	.183	.148
• One to two years			.106
• Under two years (combination of above two responses)	.131	.153	.173

Centre questionnaire	Turnover	Keeping qualified permanent teaching staff is a major problem	Finding qualified permanent teaching staff is a major problem
A – 9 subsection 6 The centre has not provided in-service education, brought in a consultant to provide training, or paid a teacher to take a course or workshop related to diversity or special needs	.114	.121	.121
B – 1 Amount of full-time fee for children 3 – 5 years, 11 months		-.180	-.137
B – 2 Percent of the centre's annual budget going to staff wages and benefits	-.122	-.135	-.166
C – 1 Centre is open extended hours and/or on the weekend	.134	.131	.112
C – 7 Centre had ECCE or child care practicum students on placement during the previous year	-.123	-.142	-.131
C – 11 Proportion of staff with a two-year ECCE credential	-.151	-.311	-.268
C – 13 Centre auspice	-.147		
E – 1 Do full-time staff in each position receive the same starting salary regardless of education and experience?		-.151	-.138
E – 8 Are any staff unionized?		-.147	-.102
G – 1 Total number of benefits available, e.g. paid coffee break, compensation for overtime child care provision	-.185	-.151	-.191
G – 2 Total number of benefits, e.g. extended health, where the premium is paid partly or fully by the centre	-.173	-.126	-.154
G – 3 Number of other benefits available, e.g. written job description, staff manual	-.118	-.101	-.152

Director questionnaire	Turnover	Finding qualified teaching staff is a major problem	Keeping qualified teaching staff is a major problem
A – 1 Director also has direct teaching/care responsibilities			.114
A – 3 Length of time working at the centre	-.176	-.125	-.158
A – 4 Length of time in current position	-.145		
A – 7 Total number of years working in the field	-.135	-.112	-.121
C – 9 Sum of number of groups perceived as generally respecting person as a child care professional		-.126	
C – 10 Do you expect to be working in the field three years from now?	-.100		
C – 11 If you were choosing a career now, would you choose child care?		-.104	

Director questionnaire continued	Turnover	Keeping qualified permanent teaching staff is a major problem	Finding qualified permanent teaching staff is a major problem
D – 1 Total supervisor satisfaction score	-.146	-.137	-.178
D – 2 On a scale of 1 to 5, indicate how each statement describes your feelings about your work situation most of the time			
• I feel physically exhausted at the end of the work day		.156	.183
• My work gives me a sense of accomplishment		-.159	-.152
• There is too little time to do all that needs to be done		.180	
• My staff and I work well together as a team		-.177	-.156
• I feel emotionally drained at the end of the day		.151	.153
• I have reasonable control over important decisions that affect my program or my staff	-.125		-.153
• Because of job demands, I have difficulty finding time for self-rejuvenation		.215	.168
• I feel frustrated by this job	.105	.195	.206
• I feel my job makes good use of my skills and abilities	-.126	-.124	-.113
D – 3 On a scale of 1 to 5, indicate how each statement describes your feelings about your centre most of the time			
• I take pride in my centre		-.139	-.150
• I know the centre could be providing a better service, but there is nothing I can do about it	.139	.171	.261
• My centre provides a well-rounded program for the children who attend	-.112	-.164	-.121
• My centre really supports the families of the children who attend		-.154	-.104
• I don't care what happens to this place after I leave		.132	.177
• My centre is a very pleasant place in which to work		-.156	-.154
• Its hard to feel committed to this place		.145	.218
D – 6 Do you think you will still be working at this centre in one year?	-.174		-.139
G – 2 Age on last birthday	-.101	-.114	
G – 4 Length of time living in present town or city	-.113		

Note: All the correlations listed are significant at the 0.01 level.

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GLOSSARY

Assistant teacher: A person who works with children under the direction of a teacher, a supervisor, or the centre director. See definition for teacher.

Average: A measure of the most likely score for a variable. It is calculated by taking the sum of all the scores and dividing it by the total number of subjects. Also known as the mean.

Burnout: A situation in which a person feels physically and emotionally exhausted and finds it difficult to be enthusiastic about their work.

Correlation: The extent to which two variables are associated with each other at a better than chance level, for example, staff who support children's attempts to communicate verbally and the children's language skills.

Goodness-of-fit: The extent to which a group of predictors explains the scores on an outcome variable, for example, the extent to which they explain the differences between a centre with low staff turnover and one with high turnover.

Importance score: The relative strength of each predictor included in a model. The importance scores for all predictors always add to 100.

Job clarity: The extent to which workplace policies, procedures and responsibilities are explicitly defined and communication is clear and consistent.

Mean: Another term for average.

Model: As used in this paper, the term model refers to the set of predictors which, when combined, explain the outcome in question, for example, the set of predictors that best explains an individual's intent to leave the field. See definition for predictor.

Predictor: A variable used to explain an outcome. For example, staff wages and promotion possibilities are two potential predictors of the proportion of child care staff who intend to leave the field.

Regression analyses: A set of statistical techniques for prediction.

Staff: The adults in a child care centre who work directly with children. The term excludes the director even though in some centres directors do work directly with children.

Significant: A statistical term that identifies the extent to which the relationship between two items, for example, between average salary level in a centre and difficulties recruiting new staff, is likely to have occurred by chance. If the relationship is found to be significant at the .05 level, the probability of the relationship having occurred by chance is 5 in 100.

Teacher: A person who has primary responsibility for a group of children in a centre. A teacher may also be responsible for supervising an assistant teacher.

