

January 2003

*A bulletin of the Child Care Human Resources Round Table (CCHRRT)*

## Our Child Care Workforce



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# A new year brings a new direction

Great news! As we enter 2003, the Round Table is firmly on the road to becoming a formal sector council. This is a significant development for child care as a whole, and particularly for the human resource part of the sector.

**W**hy the big excitement? “It’s an opportunity for us to give a much stronger profile to the child care sector and its issues, and to plan and undertake more initiatives,” said CCHRRT Chair Gyda Chud. “Also important is that we will have core infrastructure funding. That means we’ll no longer be lurching from project to project but can plan with some stability. And we’ll be able to participate in and learn from other sector councils.”

#### How we got here

In September, Human Resources Partnerships (HRP) informed the Round Table’s Coordinating Group that Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) had changed the conditions and requirements for sector councils. An important development was that sector councils no longer had to become self-sufficient within six years. The self-sufficiency condition had been a key obstacle to forming a child care sector council.

As well, we learned that our Outreach and Capacity Building proposal had been approved within a sector council framework, with funding for enhanced communication, an executive director and tools for planning and evaluating our work. We were also told that the Child Care Sector Council would be able to design a structure that meets its own needs—in other words, in a way that supports the sector and the work of child care organizations.

The Round Table representatives from the four organizations (the Canadian Child Care Federation, the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, the Canadian Labour Congress and the Confédération des syndicats nationaux) strongly endorsed this new direction, and agreed to proceed to put in place a child care sector council by the end of 2003.

They felt there were a number of benefits to becoming a sector council:

- New dollars that wouldn’t otherwise be available to address child care human resource issues.
- Improved capacity to undertake human resource-related projects.
- Stable, secure funding, staffing and operating costs.
- A higher profile within the child care sector.
- Increased ability to build alliances with other sector councils and participate in sector council activities.

#### The next steps

Chud said that the task for this transitional year is clear and already underway:

- Timelines need to be developed.
- The fledgling council needs to incorporate and develop a constitution and bylaws.
- Policies and procedures on governance, structure, representation and accountability need to be developed.

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# Labour market strategy push in Manitoba

The Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) has developed nine key recommendations to government for recruiting and retaining early childhood educators. Taken together, the measures form a systematic plan based on yearly targets for the licensed child care system.

“The underlying assumption is that properly resourced, immediate actions are the only way Manitoba can meet its Five Year Action Plan for Child Care,” said Debra Mayer, the author of the MCCA’s 2001 Labour Market Strategy Project Report containing the recommendations. Mayer also represents the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada on the CCHRRT.

“We wanted strategies that would fix the problem in the long-term but also produce immediate results,” Mayer said. “We have excellent licensing standards in Manitoba that articulate high training requirements, but about 35% of programs can’t meet those standards in terms of trained staff and so operate with government exemptions.”

Mayer said there was particular interest in the report’s ap-

proach to flexible options for training that prioritize and support upgrading by untrained caregivers already working in the field. The workplace training model offered by one college allows child care staff to continue to work at their centre several days a week and go to school the remaining days, earning their ECE diploma in just two years. The Child Day Care Branch’s flexible assessment model offers prior learning assessment of the knowledge and skills of those with unrecognized credentials who are already working in the field. This has particularly interested those with credentials from other countries or other disciplines such as education.

Mayer said that government took a “pick and choose” approach to what they would work on first. “So, both the above mod-

els have been expanded on since the report’s recommendations were made public,” she said. “Some recommendations were directed to the field, some to educators, and some to government. Overall, people are encouraged. Salaries have continued to rise in most centres, and progressive employment policies that support ongoing learning are becoming more common in the field. We are miles ahead of where we were a few years ago.”

A copy of the full report or its executive summary can be obtained on [www.mccahouse.org](http://www.mccahouse.org) (English only). To find out more about the government’s Five Year Action Plan, go to (<http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/programs/cfs/fiveyearplan.html>) for English; (<http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/programs/cfs/fs0cfs04.fr.html>) for French.

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## Turning words about children into action

**W**e heard the words. We know they’re important—and now, we have to ensure the federal government lives up to the commitment it made to “quality child care” in the last Speech from the Throne.

The Round Table, the Canadian Child Care Federation, the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada and many other groups were quick off the mark with follow-up letters to the Prime Minister. They applauded the emphasis in the Throne Speech on:

- Providing children with a good start in life.
- Combating child poverty with more money in the National Child Benefit.
- Increasing federal support for early childhood programs such as

Aboriginal head-start and child care programs.

- Boosting the federal contribution to the Early Childhood Development Initiative.

The Round Table’s letter drew the connection between quality of caregivers and the quality of children’s experiences.

“Our sector believes that the building of a comprehensive and coherent child care system can best be achieved by strong federal leadership, boosting contributions to the Early Childhood Development Initiatives and establishing action plans, targets and timelines,” wrote CCHRRT Chair Gyda Chud. “Such policy and funding frameworks will in turn advance human resource issues for Canada’s child care workforce.”

# A pension plan for Québec child care workers

A groundbreaking pension achievement by child care workers in Québec means that child care centre staff will not have to face the prospect of living in poverty after they retire.

The defined benefit pension plan was negotiated between the government, the organizations representing boards of directors of child care centres, and child care unions. It arose out of the previous agreement negotiated in 1999, which called for a committee to be put in place to work on the pension issue. The plan will apply to child care workers starting April 1, 2003. It does not cover family child care providers, who were not considered employees at the time of the 1999 agreement.

Both unions and employer

groups say they are very satisfied with the pension agreement—a significant breakthrough for those who work in a traditionally low-paid sector. The pension plan will improve the economic future of more than 20,000 child care workers—mainly women—making it easier for them to view their occupation as a long-term career. The resulting increased rates of retention of qualified staff will in turn contribute to higher levels of quality child care services.

The government and employees will make equal contributions (4.9% of a staff person's salary

each) to the plan. Some details still need to be worked out, but so far, the plan will include:

- An unindexed pension based on 1.5% of the highest salary in the last five years of service, beginning at 60. Early retirement can be taken at 55 with a reduced pension.
- A guaranteed annuity for 10 years.
- Recognition of a number of years of past service, at a cost of \$4 million annually to government for 15 years. This is in addition to the \$32 million cost of the plan to government per year.

## Tackling the 3Rs

Recruitment, retention and recognition have emerged as the biggest problems in the human resource part of the child care sector—and there's every indication they're getting worse. The Round Table's Labour Market Update proposal, approved by HRDC in November 2002, will aim to provide up-to-date information on the extent of the crisis in Canada, as well as measures that should be taken to address it.

"Getting approval to do this study is really good news for the sector," said Sheila Davidson, the Round Table member who chairs the Labour Market Update Project working group. "The results will quite likely validate the recruitment and retention issue we know is out there."

Davidson said that governments don't seem to understand that qualified, trained providers are one of the key indicators of high quality child care. Attracting and keeping quality staff mean paying wages that match training and experience.

"People are entitled to a decent and adequate work-

ing wage and when we deal with the lives of young children we really need quality people," she said. "And quality people need to be paid what they're worth. They deserve it and our children deserve it."

The 18-month project will identify environmental and policy changes in the last five years since data for the sector study were collected and analyzed. The project will examine the impact and implications of these changes on the recruitment, retention and recognition of the child care workforce. To collect information for the report, the project research team will conduct a literature review, environmental scans, informant interviews and focus groups across the country.

Davidson said an important part of the project will be to make sure the study receives public exposure.

"There will definitely be media releases and we will want to give it as much exposure as we can," she said. "I'm hoping it will be another political tool we can use to influence badly needed public policy in this area."

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As well, she said accountability mechanisms must be put in place for those who will be sitting on the sector council representing child care and its various sub-sectors.

At its December meeting, the Round Table heard from several representatives from the sector council environment regarding the role of sector councils and approaches to structure and representation on boards of directors.

"We look forward to continued guidance and advice from our representatives at HRP and HRDC, as well as other sector council staff who can share their own 'growing' process with us," said Chud

Chud noted that the process for developing a child care sector council to deal with pressing human resource issues really started more than four years ago, when work began on implementing recommendations from the child care sector study, *Our Child Care Workforce*.

"This is very exciting for a sector that has always been so severely constrained because of chronic underfunding," said Chud. "It's one more step—but a significant one—on the long road to recognition of our sector's value to the economy and society."

**F**ive of 54 articles in the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* relate to child care. This international human rights treaty was signed by 191 countries. (Only the United States and Somalia have not signed it.) The child care articles range from the right of working parents to child care services and facilities to government responsibility to develop child care services. Article 3 obligates signatory governments to “ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care and protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.” ([www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org))

The outcome document of the United Nations Special Session on Children, *A World Fit for Children*, commits signatory countries to the development of a national plan of action. It also contains a number of articles on child care, including one that relates to

# Going global

Safeguarding children’s rights around the world includes access to child care and fair treatment of those who provide it, according to several international documents relating to children’s rights.

child care providers. Article 40.14 states that a target of providing basic education to children means, among other things, “[enhancing] the status, morale, training and professionalism of teachers including early childhood educators, ensuring appropriate remuneration for their work and opportunities and incentives for their development.” ([www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org))

Senator Landon Pearson has been appointed to follow up on the action plan commitment, with Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and Health

Canada as the lead ministries. We urge you to contact HRDC Minister Jane Stewart ([min.hrdc-drhc@hrdc-drhc.gc.ca](mailto:min.hrdc-drhc@hrdc-drhc.gc.ca)), Health Canada Minister Anne McLellan ([min.hrdc-drhc@hrdc-drhc.gc.ca](mailto:min.hrdc-drhc@hrdc-drhc.gc.ca)) and/or your local MP ([www.canada.gc.ca](http://www.canada.gc.ca)) to let them know that the child care sector wants to be involved in developing this plan. For more information, contact Round Table member Sandra Griffin, who was a member of the Canadian Delegation to the Special Session for the CCCF and is President of the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of

Children. She can be reached at (613) 729-5289 or by e-mail: [sgriffin@cccfcscge.ca](mailto:sgriffin@cccfcscge.ca).

The *Brussels Manifesto* came out of an April 2002 conference of about 300 child sector professionals from more than 16 French-speaking countries. The conference was organized by the Fonds Houtman and Belgium’s Birth and Childhood Office. The proposals in the manifesto are intended to guide action and thinking around the promotion of children’s dignity and well-being, and are based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Included in the proposals is a section on the training and support of those who work in areas related to children. “They all require sound initial training and ongoing professional development, for which the needs and rights of children to stable development in a variety of situations should provide the inspiration, and in which technical skill and rational qualities must be combined.” [www.one.be/Houtman](http://www.one.be/Houtman) (French only).

## Way to go, Sandra!

**S**andra Griffin received a Golden Jubilee Medal of Queen Elizabeth II on Parliament Hill in November. She is a coordinating group member and representative of the Canadian Child Care Federation on the Round Table. Sandra was nominated by Senator Landon Pearson for the medal, which recognizes “Canadians who have made a significant contribution to their fellow citizens, their community or to Canada.”

## Canada’s child care policies get an OECD review

Canada is participating in a review of its policies on early childhood education and care by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

**T**he OECD is focussing on this area because it is a “pre-requisite for women’s entry into the paid workforce.” As well, early childhood care and education helps provide a good start in life for all children and contributes to social integration.

The thematic review is cross-national, and looks at other countries’ policies, programs and provisions for children from birth to transition to primary school. This is the second round of reviews and participation is voluntary. The other participating countries are Ireland, Hungary, Korea, France, Mexico and Spain.

The OECD review team will visit Canada from September, 22 to October 3, 2003. The federal government, Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia will host the team.

“We’re very excited about the review,” said Kathleen Flanagan-Rochon, Director of PEI’s Children’s Secretariat and a CCHRRT member representing directors of child care. “Child care policy development is a central theme to our work, and we are hoping to benefit from the expertise of the international reviewers.”

## Bits bits bits bits

### We're online!

**Our new web site** will be up and running soon. It's just in test mode now, but please take a look. The site will provide information on human resource issues in child care, the CCHRRT/Child Care Sector Council's programs and activities, research, training, regulation and operating grants, as well as other features such as links to other sites. Visit us soon at: [www.cchrrt.ca](http://www.cchrrt.ca) (English); [www.trsrge.ca](http://www.trsrge.ca) (French).

### Studies and reports

**Unionization and Quality in Early Childhood Programs**, examines the influence of unionization on the factors that contribute to quality programs in centre-based child care.

The study concludes that unionization not only has a positive impact on child care workers, but also on children in unionized centres, their parents and society.

Analyzing relevant data from the *You Bet I Care!* studies, the report finds that:

- Wages and benefits are substantially better and turnover rates lower in unionized centres.
- A significantly higher proportion of unionized centres act in ways that predict

or are associated with higher levels of quality.

- Unionized centres score higher on an overall program quality measurement than non-unionized centres.

The study was sponsored by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and funded by Child Care Visions. Its principal researcher was Gillian Doherty, one of the researchers for the *You Bet I Care!* studies and a former member of the

**Quality Assurance and School Age Care** is the most comprehensive review to date of the regulations, working conditions of educators and directors, and assessment of quality issues in school-age care. It has been released by the National School-Age Research Project (1997-1999). The authors are Davina Jacobs, Davina Mill and Melissa Jennings. Also available are two related studies: **Licensing**

A children's rights package for use by early childhood educators is also available. ([www.cccf-fcsge.ca](http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca))

### Books

**Managing Early Childhood Organizations**, is a two-volume, 350-page guide for child care administrators. It includes 81 articles written by 30 experts on child care administration as well as ideas

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Round Table. The study will be available soon in English and French on the CUPE web site, [www.cupe.ca](http://www.cupe.ca).

**Diversity or Disparity? Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada (ECEC)**, is Campaign 2000's report on how well Canada as a nation is providing ECEC. The report examines indicators of service availability, affordability and quality in four provinces—British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Newfoundland. "While both child care users and staff are poorly served, their treatment varies dramatically depending on where they live," says a Campaign 2000 news release. The report is available at [www.campaign2000.ca](http://www.campaign2000.ca).

**Monitoring, and Enforcement Procedures in the Canadian School-Age Context and A Comparison of Innovative and Control Group Programs in School-Age Care Across Canada** (Concordia University). Available in English only by phone, (514) 848-2016; or by e-mail: [jacobs@vax2.concordia.ca](mailto:jacobs@vax2.concordia.ca)

### Other resources

The Canadian Child Care Federation has produced a set of resource sheets on the **World Fit for Children** document coming out of the UN Special Session on Children, and on the UN **Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

from over 200 directors in the U.S. Written by Bonnie and Roger Neugebauer. English only. ([www.childcareexchange.com](http://www.childcareexchange.com))

### Let us know

We're constantly revising our mailing lists, and we need your help. Please let us know if your address has changed, if you're getting multiple copies of the newsletter, or if we need to make a revision for any other reason. Contact us at: Child Care Human Resources Round Table  
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## How to reach us

To obtain a copy of our operational plan, or give us feedback on any of the projects you've read about in this bulletin or any other issues related to our work, contact us at:

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## Comings and goings

We say good-bye to **Maryann Bird**, Executive Director of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC). Maryann enriched the CCHRRT with a wealth of experience in advocacy and community development. She represented the CCAAC on the Round Table.

The advocacy association—one of our four organizational members—will now be represented by **Debra Mayer**. We warmly welcome Debra from Manitoba, where she has been a child care advocate for many years. She is a board member on the CCAAC and chairs its communications committee. She is also a consultant and trainer who operates the consultancy, Teachable Moments. "I believe that high quality child care means good places for staff to learn and grow too, in addition to wonderful places for children to be," Debra says. "The work of the CCHRRT to establish the Child Care Sector Council legitimizes our profession and validates our focused attention to our workforce issues . . . I'm looking forward to being able to make a contribution!"

We are very pleased to announce the formal appointment of **Judy Woodard** as our coordinator. Judy has been working for the CCHRRT for more than a year. With the advent of stable funding for the CCHRRT, we are now fortunate to be able to continue to benefit from her considerable administrative skills.