

Winter 2013

## THE FAREWELL BULLETIN OF THE CHILD CARE HUMAN RESOURCES SECTOR COUNCIL



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# Canada

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Sector Council Program.

## Message from the Sector Council Board

In 2011, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada announced changes to the Sector Council Program, including the elimination of core funding for all councils by March 2013. The announcement had significant implications for the CCHRSC, which relies on core funding, rather than membership fees to operate. In September 2012, after much discussion of various options and with great reluctance, the CCHRSC Board made the difficult decision to dissolve the organization. It was clear that the organization could not continue to exist unless there was a way to maintain the excellence and timeliness of its work—the two foundational elements that built the sector council's reputation. As a result, this is the 21st and final issue of the CCHRSC bulletin.

Ultimately, we believe the sector has been enriched and strengthened by the CCHRSC on many levels—from the development of more collaborative ways of working together, to the major research, products and resources that were developed during the past 10 years. We are proud that the council's work has contributed to increased recognition of the ECEC workforce and its critical importance to providing quality programs to children and their families. While there is much sadness that so much will be lost, we are certain that the CCHRSC's groundbreaking work will continue to be used for years to come. This legacy includes the results of our final three projects: an expansion of the *HR Toolkit* released earlier this year; an update of the *Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators* first developed in 2006; and an expansive employer-employee survey known as *You Bet We Still Care!*, all detailed in this bulletin.

Also included in this bulletin is *In Just 10 Years: A History of the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council*. The paper provides a frank depiction of the organization's journey, told from the point of view of many of the people who were most intimately involved with the CCHRSC throughout the years. The members of the board believed it was important to produce a record of the sector council's role in advancing human resource issues and bringing them into public prominence. The body of work produced by the CCHRSC is extensive, was often groundbreaking, and always of high quality and relevance to the human resource issues in the sector. We hope you enjoy the paper and continue to access our resources for years to come.



# Updated Occupational Standards now available

The CCHRSC has updated its *Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators*—the first time since the standards were developed in 2006—incorporating the latest skills, knowledge and abilities required to do the job.

“The update was undertaken in order to reflect the new expectations being placed on administrators, so it is current with trends happening in Canada,” said Karen Ohlson, Executive Director of KIDS Inc. in Winnipeg, and a member of the sector council board and steering committee for the occupational standards project. “Pedagogical leadership has more emphasis in this set of administrator standards. There have also been many shifts in the expectations from programs to meet community needs and new regulatory requirements.”

The standards provide detailed information on what the occupation entails. If the overwhelming popularity of the first set of standards is any indication, the updated version will also be used extensively.

New topics and sub-tasks for the administrative standards include:

- working with schools and managing shared space;
- managing home-based child care contracts;
- leadership skills, modelling professionalism and self-care, managing time, exhibiting ethical behaviour, participating in professional development and supporting organizational change;
- communication skills, such as writing, active listening and speaking; and
- using technology in communications (when the first standards were written many centres did not yet use the internet).

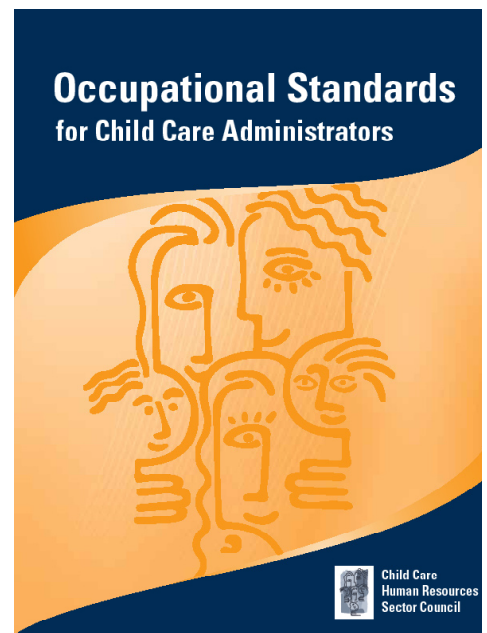
## School age and infant care

The sector council is also adding a new occupational profile on school-age care and enhancing the infant care profile developed through a 2010 pilot project. The profiles are addenda to the *Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators*. While the core knowledge required for ECEs as described in the ECE standards remains the same, the profiles provide an in-depth look at the work ECEs do with these specific age groups. The new *School-Age Profile* is especially timely now that many provinces have brought early childhood education and care under ministries of education.

“School age care requires a different approach, and the profile identifies what’s different,” said Ohlson. “There are differences for this age group in aspects such as safety, where there is more risk taking, and socializing, where friendships are supported in a different way.”

The enhanced *Infant Care Profile* confirms the original findings of the pilot project—which drew from the insight and experience of ECEs from across Canada—and adds more detail.

The updated standards and the profiles will be useful to a variety of sector stakeholders and are likely to remain current for the next eight to ten years. Employers will be able to use them in recruitment, retention and job descriptions, as well as helping board



**To download the updated standards and infant and school-age profiles, visit: [www.ccsc.cssge.ca](http://www.ccsc.cssge.ca)**

members better understand what the occupation entails. The standards will help administrators identify skills and training gaps, and provide students with information about child care administration as a career option. Educators will be able to use them as a framework and guideline for training; sector organizations for developing and evaluating certification and accreditations programs; and government as a guide for best practices when developing policy.

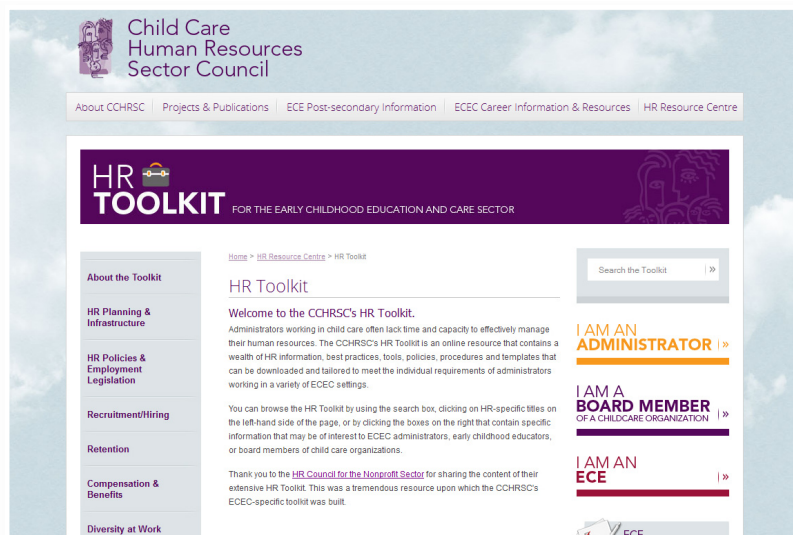
As part of the project, the sector council has also developed a workshop on how to use the standards which was delivered across the country in January.

# HR Toolkit

## New tools and information added

The sector council's *HR Toolkit*, first released in Spring 2011, has been expanded to include new information on metrics (data) and unionization, along with 15 new tools submitted by employers from across the country. The new information and tools reflect the suggestions the sector council received when it presented the toolkit across Canada after its release. Highlights include:

- a data collection spreadsheet that will give employers the ability to track typical metrics such as employee qualifications, length of employment, and leaves;
- a turnover calculator tool to help employers measure their organization's turnover rate;
- information on unionization in the workplace, including ways to promote a collaborative management-union relationship;
- fact sheets on the union certification and collective bargaining process with checklists for employers and employees; and
- tools and resources that include sample job descriptions for directors, cooks and ECEs; sample policies on bereavement, special leave and overtime; and resources on topics such as personnel files, staff development, and performance reviews, as well as an orientation checklist.



To access the HR Toolkit, visit [www.ccsc-cssge.ca](http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca)

## Accessing CCHRSC tools and resources after March 2013

Although the CCHRSC will cease to operate in March 2013, our body of work will continue to be available at [www.ccsc-cssge.ca](http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca). This is due in large part to the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU), which has agreed to take over hosting of the CCHRSC web site in order to ensure that the reports and tools produced over the past ten years continue to be widely accessible.

However, there will be some changes – the overall content of the site will be reduced, as will the number of external links and interactive tools. That's because those things require regular updating and maintenance, which is not possible without staff resources.

## TD Economics finds that ECE has widespread and long lasting benefits

In November 2012, TD Economics released a special report titled *Early Childhood Education has widespread and long lasting benefits*. A literature review of the benefits and costs associated with high-quality early childhood programs, the report suggested that while “governments are in no position to take on new spending programs at the moment, over the medium term, they might consider focussing more attention on improving the early childhood education systems.” CCHRSC's 2009 study *Understanding and Addressing Workforce Shortages: Literature Review of Socioeconomic Effects and Net Benefits* was among the reports referenced.

# You Bet We Still Care! Survey

## Results show many improvements for ECEC workforce

Statistics from an extensive pan-Canadian CCHRSC survey, *You Bet We Still Care!* (YBWSC), show that job satisfaction for the early childhood education and care workforce is high, people are working in the sector longer, and very few intend to leave it entirely. The workforce is also better paid and better qualified than 15 years ago, and a vast majority participate in professional development so that they can keep current in their jobs.

This is the first major survey of ECEC employers and employees undertaken since *You Bet I Care!* in 1998 and *Caring for a Living* in 1991. YBWSC builds on these two surveys and is one of the largest surveys of the ECEC workforce in recent years. The findings draw from surveys completed by 1,145 employers responsible for 1,824 centres, and 3,792 employees, including assistants, program staff, supervisors and centre directors. A significant shift is that close to half the respondents were from multi-site centres. “This is the most up-to-date information that we have for our sector,” said Jamie Kass, chair of the steering committee for the survey project and CCHRSC board member representing the Canadian Union of Public Employees. “It will be invaluable for planning and implementation of programs and policy directions, allowing the sector to better understand trends in individual provinces and territories as well as Canada-wide, and see what factors affect job satisfaction.”

Respondents reported high rates of job satisfaction, with a higher rate for directors (90.5%) than program staff (78.3%). The latter reported more satisfaction if they were unionized or worked in a single program rather than in centres operated by an organization or an individual holding more than one license.

### Aging workforce

A striking survey finding was the extent to which the workforce is aging. The median age for program staff is 38 years, with the percentage of staff over 45 years at 29.6%—about double the percentage 15 years ago. Work experience is also on the rise. Program staff reported working in the sector an average of 12 years. The percentage of directors working in the sector for more than 15 years (63%) has almost doubled since 1998.

“These statistics demonstrate that retention has improved,” said Kathleen Flanagan, co-lead researcher for the project with Jane Beach. “They also point to a need for ongoing recruitment and succession planning.”

### Significant wage gains

Program staff in all provinces and territories except Ontario saw real wage increases, with smaller increases for directors. In 2012, the median hourly wage for program staff was \$16.50. While still well below the overall Canada-wide average, the gap appears to be narrowing. The median wage for a director was \$22.00 and closer to the national average for all occupations. Significantly, wages for program staff and directors were higher in unionized centres, with median hourly wages at \$20.11 and \$25.55, respectively.



The range of differences in wages among provinces and territories was smaller in 2012 than in 1998. Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick showed the largest median wage gains—more than 40%.

Despite the overall encouraging news, the data has yet to be fully analysed and the findings point to some areas of concern, including lower staff access to benefits than in 1998, and significant parent fee increases everywhere except Quebec and Manitoba.

Further key survey results include:

- Eighty-six per cent of program staff respondents reported they held a **post-secondary ECE-related credential**: 63.9% had a two-year diploma (three-year DEC in Quebec) or a post-diploma certificate, 10.9% a related university degree, and 9.8% a one-year certificate.
- Close to 88% of program staff and 90.5% of directors reported participating in some form of **professional development** to keep up with changes in their field.
- Overall, a higher percentage of staff had a pension plan or RRSP



contribution than in 1998, but a lower percentage had access to most key benefits. Staff in unionized centres had much better access to additional medical coverage, sick leave, maternity top-up, life and disability insurance, and pensions or RRSPs benefits.

- **Recruitment** remains a challenge primarily due to the lack of appropriate applicants. The majority (75.9%) who said competition from the school system was a recruitment challenge were from Ontario.
- After adjusting for inflation, **fees** in 2012 were higher in all provinces than in 1998 except in Quebec and Manitoba, where they decreased for all age groups. Fees in Quebec were approximately 75% lower and in Manitoba between 18%-12% lower, depending on the age group.
- The greatest **fee increases** in both percentage and dollar terms for toddlers and preschool age care were in Newfoundland and Labrador and Alberta. Preschool age fees increased by 58.2% and \$230/month in Newfoundland and Labrador, and 39.5% and \$224/month in Alberta (in adjusted dollars)

“The survey results are encouraging with respect to increased wages and professionalization, where there have been improvements in educational attainment, experience and participation in professional development,” said Beach. “We can also draw a clear link between the improvements and policy and funding initiatives during this period in the jurisdictions where they were introduced.”

Flanagan and Beach said some key areas where further analysis is needed include:

- Whether and how multi-site and multi-service organizations make a difference.
- How to address professional development needs for directors and staff who are older and have many years of experience.
- The impact of other ECEC initiatives—such as full-day learning in Ontario, new governance models and space creation—on human resource issues.

The survey results will be housed at York University’s Institute for Social Research, where they will be made available by 2014 as a public data set. The data will likely be primarily used by researchers, and provincial/territorial child care and labour organizations for further analysis. The results are expected to be relevant and used for at least the next 10 years.

“The future challenge for the sector will be to find funding to further mine and analyze the data so we can better understand what enhances job satisfaction and supports recruiting and retaining qualified staff,” said Kass. “What we know now is the tip of the iceberg of information that could be gleaned from the data.”

#### **More results from *You Bet We Still Care!***

- The vast majority (92.5%) of program staff worked the same number of hours each week. The median number of hours worked per week was 37, and 88.5% of program staff worked five days per week.
- The median number of years program staff had worked for their current employer was four—but 25% had been there 10 years or more, and another 25% had worked for two years or less.

- The majority of program staff (59.8%) were working in the same position as when they started.
- Close to 79% of program staff received a wage increase in the last three years. However, 25% of program staff worked at a second job, with the need for additional income being the main reason.
- Centre directors were more likely (73%) than program staff (52.5%) to belong to a child care organization.
- The median length of time a centre had been in operation was 20 years. Ten per cent had been in operation for 37 years or more, and 10% for less than three years.

#### **Survey useful to employers**

The YBSC survey will be helpful to employers in their efforts to improve recruitment and retention.

“My hope would be that every organization is going to really look at the data, compare themselves to the findings, and figure out what really needs to change,” said Kim Hiscott, executive director of Andrew Fleck Child Care Services and a member of the steering committee for the YBWSC survey.

Hiscott said her organization will use the survey results to look at where it fits in terms of employee satisfaction, and compare the data with its own internal employee satisfaction surveys. “We would look at what factors contribute to employee satisfaction. Do we have them? If not, why not, and could we get them? And is there anything that really stands out or that might shift or influence our strategic plan?”

Hiscott said she also plans to share the analysis of the survey information with the

# CCHRSC Bulletin: A Look Back

The first version of this bulletin was released in December 1999 by the Child Care Human Resources Transition committee and explored the need for a Child Care Human Resources Sector Round Table that would bring a national focus to human resource issues in ECE. Twenty more bulletins followed between 2000 and 2013, each documenting the evolution of human resources in the sector and providing important updates on everything from capacity building and skills development projects to government investment in ECE to workforce trends across the country. All twenty-one bulletins are available for download at [www.ccsc-cssge.ca](http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca).



After writing the first bulletin in 1999, Bozica Costigliola continued to work on every issue produced over the next fourteen years, often writing the majority of the content. Dedicated and insightful, Bozica's unique ability to get to the heart of every story and convey complex information to readers contributed much to CCHRSC's efforts to advance human resource issues in the sector. *We couldn't have done it without you Bozica!*

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board of directors and staff, and post it for parents. "I feel we have an obligation to report back to staff and parents. Keeping the information at the management level would be a mistake."

While Andrew Fleck operates a large child care program, Hiscott said smaller centres could take a similar approach. "Recruitment and retention are always

a challenge in the sector. Take the information seriously and look at it with a critical eye to where you're at. Ask yourself: What do I have to change or improve upon to be able to compete?"

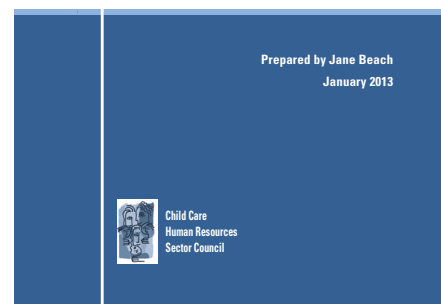
## Now available: *Overview of Child Care Wages 2000-2012*

*Overview of Child Care Wages 2000-2010* paper builds on the CCHRSC's previous paper, *Child Care Wages and a Quality Child Care System* (2005), providing updated information including:

- changes in the income and educational attainment of the child care workforce;
- changes in provincial/territorial funding allocations and types; and
- availability of regulated child care spaces.



### Overview of Child Care Wages 2000-2010



*The paper can be downloaded  
by visiting the CCHRSC web site:  
[www.ccsc-cssge.ca](http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca)*



## In Just 10 Years: A History of the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council

### Message from the board of directors

The Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC) was the first organization with a specific mandate to address human resource issues in Canada's early childhood education and care sector. The organization operated between 2003 and 2013, dissolving when Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) ended core funding and the criteria for project funding to sector councils changed. Before closing the organization's doors, the board of directors decided that a history paper should be written to reflect the CCHRSC's legacy, starting with the story of what led to the sector council's foundation, through to the many contributions it made to advancing human resource issues in the sector.

The members of the board believed it was important to produce a record of the sector council's role in advancing human resource issues and bringing them into public prominence. The board felt the early childhood education and care sector had been enriched and strengthened by the CCHRSC on many levels—from the development of more collaborative ways of working together, to the major research, products and resources that were developed during the organization's existence. The body of work produced by the CCHRSC is extensive, was often groundbreaking, and always of high quality and relevance to the human resource issues in the sector. A detailed précis of the sector council's work is included in the timeline poster in this publication.

This paper is a frank depiction of the organization's journey, told from the point of view of many of the people who were the most intimately involved with the CCHRSC throughout the years. Most of the interviews were conducted in early 2012, before the final decision was made to dissolve the organization. Nonetheless, from the time HRSDC made the announcement about funding in July 2011, it was clear that the sector council would not likely be able to survive as an operational organization in the context of the funding changes. In September 2012, after much discussion of various options and with great reluctance, the board made

the difficult decision to dissolve the CCHRSC. It was clear the organization could not continue to exist unless there was a way to maintain the excellence and timeliness of its work—the two foundational elements that built the CCHRSC's reputation.

As this history paper shows, the sector council faced many challenges leading up to and during its existence. By working through these challenges in a collaborative and inclusive way, the CCHRSC became a better, stronger organization. We have much to be grateful for. First and foremost, the CCHRSC gained a deeper understanding of the human resource issues in the sector and the needs of stakeholders. The organization also developed many good relationships and connections with the sector stakeholders involved in its projects and initiatives. Both the CCHRSC and the sector benefitted immeasurably from the significant funding and staff support provided by HRSDC's Sector Council Program for human resource development.

The sector council's work has significantly contributed to increased recognition of the ECEC workforce and its critical importance to providing quality programs to children and their families. While there is much sadness that so much will be lost, it is our belief that the CCHRSC's work will leave a lasting legacy and its work will continue to be used for years to come.

### The four organizations

Long before the founding of the CCHRSC there were many individuals and organizations that believed it was important to work together to ensure a quality early childhood education workforce. They were well aware of the longstanding and daunting challenges to collaboration stemming from different opinions, approaches, and fragmentation of the sector. Nonetheless, after a long and sometimes difficult road, what had seemed almost unattainable became a reality when in 2003 the CCHRSC was established.

How did the idea for a sectoral body for child care come about? Why was it important to have such an organization?

What did it mean to be part of the process that eventually led to the formation of the sector council? Four organizations – the Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCCF), The Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC), the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), and Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN) – were there from the beginning of the process. They were represented on the 34-member sector study steering committee and the 11-member transition committee, which formulated the structure for the Child Care Human Resources Round Table (the sector council's predecessor), as well as contributed to the board application process that ensured regional and stakeholder representation. The four organizations were also part of the round table itself and later the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council. Their representatives talk about the early days and the impact of the CCHRS.

## The early days

### Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCCF)

It was 1996, and the CCCC executive committee was meeting with the minister of Human Resources Development Canada, Lloyd Axworthy.

"We wanted to talk to him about the issues around child care and explain how it was underfunded and the workers undervalued," said Joanne Morris, former CCHRS board chair, and a member of the CCCC executive at the time. (She is currently early childhood education faculty at College of the North Atlantic.) "All of a sudden, he said, 'We need a sector study.' We didn't know what he was talking about, or what a sector study was."

In fact, a series of events had just been set in motion that would see the release of the first sector study, *Our Child Care Workforce*, within the next two years, and lead to the eventual implementation of the key recommendation to establish a child care sector council.

The CCCC had always believed there needed to be an organization dedicated to human resource issues in child care. The federation itself promoted high quality child care and felt that the people working in the sector were a key ingredient to quality assurance.

The CCCC had dealt with education, training and some other aspects of human resources, but was never able to cover the full gamut of HR issues, said Don Giesbrecht, chief executive

officer and president of the federation. Giesbrecht became a member of the CCHRS board in 2012.

"One of the CCCC's strengths has always been to be able to bring the sector together and talk about the issues that affect it, and one of those issues that always came up was retention and recruitment of the workforce. The federation tried to address these issues but eventually said they [the issues] required something more than what we could do."

### Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC)

The CCAAC thought it was a "natural partner" for any organization that would work to enhance recognition, retention and remuneration of the child care workforce, said Debra Mayer, a former CCAAC board chair and now Early Childhood Education Consultant for the Manitoba government. The association had a mandate to advocate for a universally accessible, affordable, non-profit and inclusive high quality early childhood education and care system in Canada. Implicit in this mandate was the need for respect and fair compensation for the people who work in child care.

"When the Child Care Human Resources Round Table came into being [April 2000] it created an interface between the field, the unions that represented a portion of the field, and the broader child care advocacy movement," said Mayer, who was on the round table in 2002-2003. "Many of the advocates were feminists and their interest was very much fair treatment of women and particularly of child care workers looking after the children of the advocates, who mostly came at the issues from a parent or social justice perspective."

Mayer said the CCAAC made a number of important contributions to the Child Care Human Resources Round Table and later the sector council. The CCAAC brought an understanding of how to work with the grassroots and communicate effectively, as well as policy knowledge and analysis. It brought an understanding of the influence of public policy on human resource issues and experience around organizational development, such as putting in place bylaws. The CCAAC was a "coalition of coalitions", said Mayer, "and in a way, so was the sector council."

### Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)

The labour movement has always viewed child care as an important support for unionized workers and their children.



Several unions also represent workers in regulated child care. So when Human Resources and Social Development Canada approached trade unionist Jamie Kass to be on the steering committee for the sector study, she immediately said yes.

“Labour often felt marginalized in terms of child care issues and we worked a lot with advocacy organizations,” said Kass, then education officer for Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 2204 (representing child care workers in Ottawa-Carleton) and currently child care coordinator for the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. “It was more difficult to work with some of the other parts of the sector, but we had experience with labour market information because that’s what we do.”

“I felt labour could play a positive role in terms of the knowledge we brought to the sector, our gender analysis, and our understanding about human resource issues, wages and benefits, education and training, and health and safety. It was an opportunity we couldn’t pass up.”

Kass was brought onto the steering committee as the CLC representative, became a member of the transition committee, then the round table and eventually joined the CCHRSC board.

Setting up the sector council involved some interesting debates around the role of the organizations generally and labour in particular.

“Labour took the position—and the sector council agreed—that the unions would represent the voice of early childhood educators whether unionized or not,” said Kass. “The sector council had to be organizationally based and could not be a number of individuals coming together to define key issues and directions because the organizations had knowledge, brought a constituency, and represented their sector.”

### **Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)**

The CSN was invited to join the steering committee for the first sector study because it had always represented the largest number of unionized early childhood educators in Québec. It was a transformational time for child care in the province, two years after the union had developed a comprehensive child care policy, and a year before the PQ government introduced its family policy that put in place an early learning and child care system with \$5-a-day (now \$7-a-day) child care.

“Those were really bubbling years,” said Josée Roy, executive assistant to the CSN’s executive committee, and a former sector council board member. “We were interested in becoming involved because it was the first time there would be this type of study on the workforce and it was also an opportunity for us to know the sector across Canada and gather information.”

Roy said that the union felt the 1996 sector study would not only provide a portrait of the predominantly female, low paid child care workforce, but that doing so would be “an important step in a long way to the recognition of the workforce.” The CSN publicized the study results widely among its membership and its child care working group, and used them to advance its case for the workforce.

The union continued to work with the transition committee and the round table over the next seven years, and in 2003 became a founding member of the CCHRSC.

## **What it meant**

### **Canadian Child Care Federation**

The relationship between the CCHRSC and the CCCF has been a “great partnership”, said Don Giesbrecht, who feels the research and data produced by the sector council enhanced the credibility of the entire sector.

“I’ve often used the occupational standards, for example, to talk about the complexity of the work of ECEs. It makes it concrete to say, ‘Here’s what you do in a typical day.’ And being able to talk about the workforce across the country and the retention issues from the information in the Labour Market Update study was a critical piece—to be able to speak with certainty as to what the workforce is going through and what is happening.”

Giesbrecht said that CCHRSC’s studies and tools helped move the sector forward in terms of increased knowledge, a deeper analysis and providing a consistent framework for occupational standards, credentialing and training. “They’ve been very valuable to employers and employees, policymakers, researchers and post-secondary institutions, who have used these tools to try to bring a more coherent approach to some of the major human resource issues in the sector.”

## **Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada**

“The CCHRSC moved the sector forward because having concrete data was huge, and the numbers showed how things needed to be changed,” said Debra Mayer. “The data was a very important tool for stakeholders. Having the CCAAC name attached to the research and projects brought the advocacy message to audiences who hadn’t heard it before.”

Mayer also said she feels the strength of the sector council was its inclusion of different parts of the sector. “The sector council provided the funding and the mechanism to bring leaders from all the different parts of the pan-Canadian sector together so there was a capacity building that might not have happened otherwise. At the sector council table representatives broadened their own perspectives as they learned about challenges and successes from many different points of view.”

In 2009, when the sector council released the report, *Understanding and Addressing Workforce Shortages in ECEC*, the CCAAC made the difficult decision to leave the CCHRSC board because it wanted to continue to fulfill its mandate of advocating for progressive policy. The association could not accept any restrictions on its public response to the findings of the report that could have come if the organization remained on the CCHRSC board. In addition, the CCAAC did not want to put the sector council’s own funding at risk.

“We (the CCAAC) felt we could not compromise the fundamental values and beliefs of the organization any more,” Mayer said. The sector council felt it had lost a respected and important partner but understood the rationale for this difficult decision.

## **Canadian Labour Congress**

Even though the CLC believed the move from a round table to a sector council was a positive development, there were also a number of challenges related to the parameters of the Sector Council Program, said Jamie Kass.

One involved the issues sector councils could deal with, known within sector council circles as the “tool box”: training, skills development, and occupational standards. “The Sector Council Program wanted us to look at human resource issues, but we couldn’t look at any bargaining issues such as wages, benefits and pensions that were critical to our sector not just from the perspective of fairness but also

to help address the pressing and longstanding problem of retention,” said Kass. However, she noted that in most other sectors collective bargaining issues were not as closely tied to government policy and funding as they were in the early childhood education and care sector. In addition, there were related jurisdictional issues that had to be considered.

Another parameter was that government-funded sector councils could not engage in advocacy. “We said that the workforce has such an impact on quality child care that we have to advocate. In this sector, even employers advocate. So that one’s been the hardest.”

Overall, however, Kass feels the sector council’s work has been of great benefit to many organizations promoting the important role of early childhood educators in providing high quality child care, as well as the social and economic impact of the sector itself.

“The parameters of the tool box did force us to deal with other issues and be more creative. And while all of us [on the board and in various parts of the sector] knew the sector well, as a sector council we were told by HRSDC, ‘It is not good enough to say it anecdotally, you have to demonstrate it. Sector councils have to conduct research.’ When we did the research it usually provided us and many others with more information we could use, for example, in developing strategies on recruitment and retention or putting forward the case for increased respect and recognition of the workforce.”

## **Confédération des syndicats nationaux**

Québec had many sector councils, but not one for child care, said Josée Roy.

The CSN feels that it benefited from its involvement in the sector study and the sector council, and the union made many valuable contributions to the CCHRC’s work. The union shared its experience working with women’s groups and coalitions, as well as with consensus building. It had a good analysis and knowledge of child care workforce needs around wages, benefits and working conditions (as well as strategies for making inroads in these areas); and it provided a perspective on how early childhood education and care services could be organized and delivered coherently as a social program.

When the CSN left the sector council in September 2008, the landscape had changed in both Canada and Québec. Roy said that by then the approach to child care in the rest of Canada was so different from Québec's that there was less and less mutual benefit to being involved.

The union was also devoting much of its time opposing threatened changes to the Québec child care system. "We had a lot of work to do to make sure we would not lose what we had gained. We had to decide where to put our energies so decided to put them in Québec."

### **A diverse, inclusive structure**

From its founding in 2003, the CCHRSC was dedicated to ensuring that its board reflected the rich diversity of the child care sector. The board was also committed to taking a collaborative approach to its work—not always easy given the different approaches of the various sectoral representatives at the table.

Anyone interested in being on the CCHRSC board as a director-at-large had to make an initial application. A nominating committee then carefully scrutinized and approved applications with the aim of ensuring the board would have representation from across Canada, post-secondary institutions and other parts of the sector, as well as representation stipulated by the structure outlined below.

CCHRSC Executive Director, Diana Carter, said that this commitment to diversity and a collaborative approach ensured the sector council always had a "highly functioning board of diverse and knowledgeable stakeholders who found common ground and worked by consensus."

Said Denise Gilbert, CCHRSC chair and Executive Director of Schoolhouse Playcare Centres: "There's been a common passion at the table and similar philosophical views that allowed us to work through issues in way that's respectful and understanding."

The original structure of the board comprised 18 to 20 members:

- 12 organizational directors:
  - Three representatives from the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada.
  - Three representatives from the Canadian Child Care Federation.

- Six representatives from the major labour organizations representing child care workers: two from the Canadian Union of Public Employees, two from the Confédération des syndicats nationaux and two from the National Union of Public and General Employees.

- Six to eight directors-at-large, including one ex-officio director representing the child care programs of provincial and territorial governments.

An executive committee guided the sector council's work between board meetings. Elected by the board of directors, it included equal representation from child care organizations, labour organizations and directors-at-large. An unusual board structure, it often took some getting used to for new CCHRSC board members.

"When I first came on as a director-at-large I felt that sometimes the organizational voices were stronger but over time I learned to appreciate the value those organizations brought in terms of the reach they have," said Gilbert. "When I look at it from that perspective, as a single employer I was able to reach out to my local networks but that's not as far-reaching. Both perspectives are critical."

In 2010, as a result of the change in organizational representation, a governance review was conducted that recommended a different board composition.

"Our recent shift in terms of representation was at the recommendation of the department [HRSDC] to have an even split between employers and other types of people from the sector," Carter said. The 2011-2012 board had 14 members, and half were employers.

### **Fundamentals: the sector studies**

The first sector study, *Our Child Care Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration*, was groundbreaking in at least two critical ways. It was the first sector study to focus on the people who work in early learning and child care. And it was guided by a 34-member steering committee representing all of the child care constituencies: from regulated centre-based and family home child care, to school age child care, resource centres, and informal, unregulated child care. The steering committee also included representatives from labour, post-secondary institutions and government.

The sector's diversity (often referred to as a patchwork) was also about the different ways child care was funded and delivered, as well as the language used to designate various services and providers in the jurisdictions across Canada.

"You can imagine what it was like to get everybody on board," said Jane Beach, one of the researchers for the study, who went on to do many other sector council projects. "It was the first time focusing on the workforce in this way. Because of the large steering committee and the different perspectives around the table, reaching agreement on priorities was a challenge since people and groups had different approaches and priorities."

The study was released in 1998 during the same period as another major study on funding, wages and working conditions in the sector, *You Bet I Care!*, was being undertaken. The two studies reinforced and complemented each other, and brought the child care workforce to the forefront and into the consciousness of the media and the public as never before.

*Our Child Care Workforce* highlighted the size of the sector for the first time. It became known that an estimated more than 300,000 providers working in child care, and that it was the 9<sup>th</sup> largest occupational group predominantly consisting of women.

"It was the first time looking at the broad workforce as a sector," said Beach. "We knew that issues such as an aging population, workforce shortages and gaps in skills were issues for many other occupations, but the data from the sector study demonstrated clearly just how relevant these issues were to the child care sector."

The study also marked the first time the sector began to use labour market information and language that "has helped us be more professional as an occupation," Beach said.

Its 23 recommendations were grouped into five areas: public policy, legislation and funding; infrastructure; wages, benefits and working conditions; training and education; and research. Much emphasis was placed on the need for policy leadership from governments, as well as sufficient funding to ensure "affordable, accessible quality care and the value of a well-paid, competent and stable workforce."

The study provided a new and deeper understanding of the sector, emphasized issues that had long existed but were now given more focus and backed by credible research, provided a basis for a future research agenda, and led to the implementation of a major recommendation in the study: the establishment of the sector council.

### **The second study learns from the first**

Fast forward six years later to November 2002, and a sector study update project had just received HRSDC departmental approval. By that time the 15-member Child Care Human Resources Round Table had been in existence for two and a half years and was set to become a sector council in a year.

The updated sector study, *Working for Change: Canada's Child Care Workforce*, was launched in 2004 at a national child care conference in Winnipeg, just as bilateral child care agreements were being negotiated between the federal and provincial/territorial governments. Its major – and sobering – finding was that only half of early childhood education graduates were still working in the sector after graduating. "Our report is very timely," said Joanne Morris, sector council chair at the time. "As the federal government starts to move on its commitment to a national child care program, it will be even more urgent to find ways to guarantee a skilled, sustainable workforce to provide high quality child care services."

The study proposed eight recommendations to give the sector council a basis for developing a concrete plan to ensure skilled and qualified people enter and remain in the child care workforce. The recommendations included the need for coherent public policy and adequate funding for child care, promoting increased pay and benefits for the workforce, developing a recruitment and retention strategy, improving leadership practices, and fostering partnerships with the education and research communities, government departments and related services.

"Based on the study recommendations and the additional related reports that were produced, we developed a strategy that laid out the different types of projects that needed to be undertaken," said CCHRSC executive director, Diana Carter. "Today, I think it speaks volumes that there was a long list of projects/initiatives that needed to be tackled and we accomplished it."



## Reaching consensus in diversity

The sector council always prided itself on the process of consensus that its board members used to make decisions, especially since members came from various parts of the sector and often had different perspectives. This process was so successful that board members could only remember a few times when consensus was not reached and counting votes was required.

“We’ve had a highly functioning board of diverse stakeholders who have been able to find common ground,” said Diana Carter, CCHRSC executive director.

The ability to find this common ground was a long time in the making, and much of the foundation was laid during the early days before the formation of the CCHRSC. To get the work done, the sector study steering committee (1996-1998), the transition committee (1998-2000) and the round table (2000-2003) dealt with issues that could sometimes be very contentious. These early days provided many challenges and lessons in consensus building.

The sector study steering committee was “huge”, said Joanne Morris, former CCHRSC board chair. “We did not know how a sector study was to be conducted. We didn’t work together easily and there were significant tensions.”

The tensions existed between organizations and constituencies, and around different philosophies, ways of working, and priorities. A major issue was defining the sector.

Where did caregivers in unregulated family child care fit since by nature they were difficult to reach, had no formal requirements, and were not organized? “Everyone was willing to consider regulated family child care and centre-based care, but there was a hard tension around unregulated care and the whole thing almost broke down after awhile,” said CCHRSC board member, Jamie Kass.

During this period, HRSDC funded the CCCF to do a survey of the informal sector, but the steering committee did not condone it because it felt the survey could not be representative. Eventually, the focus of the sector council’s work did not include the unregulated sector.

The chair of the steering committee, the transition committee, and later the round table was Gyda Chud, now retired Dean

of Continuing Studies at Vancouver Community College and a former instructor for 35 years in the college’s early childhood program. “The chairing role was probably one of the most challenging in my life,” she said. “I tried to bring to it the best of early childhood values and practices and that really guided me: a lot of good listening, respect, openness to diversity, thoughtfulness in response and a lot of time creating some ‘classroom rules’—how we would interact with each other in the most respectful way we could. Those ideas of collaboration and diversity were how I tried to think about my role when I was on a break or going to sleep thinking about how we could work through a specific issue.”

The need to focus on HR issues was another challenge for steering committee members. “We always tried to solve all of the issues in the sector and some of the tension was due to this,” said Morris. “People could not confine their comments. We wanted to deal with profit versus non-profit or universality, and regulated versus unregulated—many oppositional topics instead of what are some common goals and issues we can focus on.”

After the sector study was released in 1998, the transition committee was set up to explore the feasibility of establishing a sector council. (The committee eventually recommended a round table instead, since at that time a key criteria for sector councils was that they become self-sufficient within six years.) The committee was known as the Group of 11 and consisted of representatives of the CCCF, CCAAC, the CLC and the CSN, as well as other members who brought with them the perspectives of centre-based and home care, informal care, training institutions and government.

There were differing approaches between the Canadian Child Care Federation, whose focus was quality, education, staff training and bringing together provincial child care associations, and the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, which advocated for a universal child care program and public funding. Moreover, the two national organizations initially had questions about whether a sectoral body would do some of the work they were mandated to do, and worried about increased competition for funding from the same pot.

There were also different views on how central a position labour should occupy on a sectoral body.

Less controversial was the eventual discussion around including the for-profit sector on the sector council board. “The for-profit sector didn’t have an organizational or structural base to represent it [nationally],” said Chud. “So the decision we made was that we wouldn’t focus on involvement based on a board seat at the table, but would include the sector when we undertook projects because our research needed to be as inclusive as possible.”

Even though there were many difficult discussions, the people around all of these tables never completely lost their focus. They were committed and knew that if they could make it work they could make a difference for child care.

“The whole period around forming a sectoral body is a testament to the extreme professionalism and respectful attitude that all the players had,” said Flanagan. “It was not about organizations competing with each other or individual personalities but moving forward with a common goal and vision.”

And all of the hard work paid off. Chud said one of the early achievements of the round table and later the sector council was that they succeeded for the first time in bringing together the perspectives of the child care organizations to one table—labour, the Québec perspective through the CSN, the federation, and the advocacy association. “That had never happened in any formalized way so this was a huge success that has had a lasting impact.”

There was also an up side to all of the debates.

“I also think we enjoyed the discussion,” said Kass, “People always say, ‘You’re all so passionate about it.’ We took a lot of time to talk things through and it was very respectful. It could be emotional, but it wasn’t nasty.”

Kass said Chud and Morris had the ability to straddle the tensions so that eventual consensus could be reached. “In their guts, Gyda and Joanne believed in good public policy and had wonderful skills.”

Later council board members became very practised at voicing their individual views and listening to the views of others in a way that moved the discussion forward, towards a consensus position.

“I think we’ve learned to feel good about having those views all on the table and that is something we’ve worked on,” said

CCHRSC Chair, Denise Gilbert. “It can be tough and that being said our ability to work together comes from all of us having core philosophical beliefs about child care.”

The board discussions also presented a space for innovation and new ideas to surface.

“This is where creativity can happen,” said Carter. “Different opinions are very healthy. Otherwise, if we have a singular way of doing things it can become one dimensional. It has been great to see that diversity across Canada on the board, and to see how people find places in the work of the sector council that resonate for them. This is not accidental because the makeup of the sector council’s board represents different perspectives and types of organizations. It’s resulted in a rich fabric where different ideas and thinking come together and form basis of a strategy or tool.”

### **Affecting child care policy**

There are many ways the sector council made a difference, but one of the most important was its impact on provincial-territorial child care policy dating back to the time of the first sector study.

“Until the sector study, there was limited emphasis on human resource issues in the sector,” said Kathleen Flanagan, former chair of the provincial-territorial directors of early childhood education and care, and now a researcher in early learning and child and family policy. “Prior to the sector study, discussions among provinces and territories focused on cost sharing, eligibility criteria for subsidies, access, and the introduction of operating grants. There was attention to staff qualifications, but limited awareness of the importance of human resource issues – and especially the links between wages, working conditions, and quality.

This all started to change as a body of evidence emerged linking staff qualifications to quality. Early on there was *Caring for A Living* (1991), then the sector study (1998) and *You Bet I Care!* (2000).

“But it was the round table and then the sector council that kept up that constant focus—that human resource issues need to be considered.”

Flanagan was on the sector study steering committee when she was Director of the Children’s Secretariat in PEI. She later became part of the round table, and then the first

provincial-territorial director of early childhood education and care on the sector council board (she left government in 2005). (The provincial-territorial directors always had an ex officio (non-voting) position on the sector council board as well as the option of representation on every CCHRSC project steering committee.)

## Better regulations

While the sector council was not the only factor affecting the growing emphasis on human resources issues in early learning across Canada, “its work contributed to making a huge difference,” said Flanagan. “If you look across the country, every province and territory now has some type of wage grant or ways and strategies to address human resource issues, training supports, supports for professional development and investment in recruitment strategies. These policy changes were introduced following the research in the 1990s, and built on work of the sector council. More and more provinces are moving toward putting regulations in place to require everybody have some level of qualification, even if entry level.”

Flanagan said that the sector council is held in “very high regard” by the provinces and territories, and they definitely used its work. Alberta, for example, drew on the *Career Promotions and Recruitment Strategy* to help build its own recruitment policy.

The up-to-date research that the sector council produced on emerging issues will be sorely missed, said Flanagan.

“I think some provinces are already feeling a hole. Some were waiting on the curriculum project for administrators [the project will not be going ahead] in order to support the introduction of increased qualifications for directors. They are going to have to rethink how to move ahead with this, given no curriculum will be developed.”

Flanagan said the loss of the sector council will also be acutely felt “at a time when the education sector is becoming increasingly involved in taking on some responsibility for early childhood education and child care.

“There are many human resource issues around this huge change, and there will be no one to support the research around the most significant shift in the sector in a long time.”

## We couldn't have done it without you

Many people and organizations contributed to the CCHRSC's work throughout the years. We are deeply grateful to have had this wonderful opportunity to collaborate and contribute with all of you to moving human resource issues in the early childhood education and care sector forward.

We would like to thank the CCHRSC staff for their skills, expertise and unwavering commitment to the organization's mandate and to the people who work in the sector.

To all of the people from different parts of the sector who served as volunteers on the board, sharing their experience and knowledge in early childhood education and care over the past 10 years, we owe a huge debt of gratitude. Our three chairs—Gyda Chud, Joanne Morris and Denise Gilbert—were models of inclusion, determination, intelligence and compassion. Your leadership has been exemplary.

Our sincere thanks to the sector council's funder, the Government of Canada, for the very substantial core and project funding that allowed the CCHRSC to operate and produce so many invaluable research reports, tools and resources for the sector. We also owe much to the analysts at the Sector Council Program for their guidance, insights, and support for the work of the sector council.

To our research, policy, communications, translation and graphic design consultants: You helped the CCHRSC produce the best products it possibly could—products known throughout the sector for their high quality.

We are also grateful to the provincial/territorial directors of child care, for always ensuring the CCHRSC was meeting the needs of the sector, and taking into consideration jurisdictional issues.

Finally, to the sector itself, which is 100 per cent dedicated to the children and families of Canada: You have been our constant inspiration. It's been a privilege to have contributed to a sector that has such a positive and lasting impact in the lives of young children.

## CCHRSC Executive Committee - 2012/2013



*From right to left: Margot Young, Cindy Page, Stephanie Smith, Denise Gilbert, Jamie Kass, and Don Giesbrecht*

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