Evaluation of Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy

Evaluation Report 2021

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ECEBC | early childhood educators of BC

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INNOVATION • EXPERIMENTATION • EVALUATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2018, British Columbia launched the Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy (ECL R&R Strategy). It is part of a larger ten-year ("Childcare BC") plan, to increase the quality, affordability, and availability of child care spaces in British Columbia. Its initial $136m investment included many tactics such as the wage enhancement and supports for professional development. While they have been expanded in various ways since 2018, it remains with its original intent. It seeks to meet the following three overarching long-term goals:

- An adequate and stable workforce comprised of qualified and skilled early care and learning professionals

- Early care and learning as a viable, sustainable, and valued career

- Appropriate compensation plans and human resource strategies.

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST) simultaneously engaged the Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC) to lead an evaluation . The goal was to enable a mechanism for regular sector feedback on the overarching impacts of the ECL R&R Strategy. ECEBC selected Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) to undertake the sector-led evaluation.

This evaluation report for 2021 includes project results and lessons to the end of 2021. It includes the project management work plan and a report on Sector Steering Committee activities. It updates the implementation of the evaluation methodology. These include tentative plans for the extension of the evaluation to cover 2022 and 2023.

EVALUATION STRATEGY

The Evaluation Strategy report in May 2019 finalized the evaluation design. It derived the overarching questions to answer over the evaluation period from the ECL R&R Strategy's goals and outcomes. The questions are expressed as nested questions, relating the expected medium-year outcomes to the long-term goals, as follows:

1. Does the ECL R&R Strategy result in the long-term goal of an adequate and stable workforce, comprised of qualified and skilled early care and learning professionals?

   - Over the medium term of the evaluation, do recruitment strategies achieve the outcome of an adequate supply of ECEs and other ECL professionals entering the workforce?

- Over the medium term of the evaluation, does the implementation of career pathways provide opportunities for career growth and development in the early care and learning sector?

- Over the medium term of the evaluation, are education, training, and professional development opportunities expanded (or barriers reduced) so that the ECL workforce has the skills, knowledge, and abilities required to provide quality services to children and families?

2. Does the ECL R&R Strategy result in the long-term goal of ECL being viewed as a viable, sustainable, and valued career?

    - Over the medium term of the evaluation, does the strategy promote public confidence in the professionalism and accountability of the ECL workforce?

3. Does the ECL R&R Strategy promote the long-term goal of appropriate compensation plans and human resources strategies to be put in place?

    - Over the medium term of the evaluation, do retention strategies support the long-term engagement of ECEs and others in the workforce, to help keep them in the profession?

The evaluation framework calls for data to answer these questions using many different methods and tools. These are described in the following section. SRDC worked with the Sector Steering Committee to create an organizing structure for the collected data. They identified 13 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Collectively these KPIs (listed in Figure ES1) assess the changes occurring from the ECL R&R Strategy. In various permutations, they provide answers to specific questions. KPIs are "neutral," that is, they do not describe a positive or negative change themselves. It is the change in the KPI over time that describes the consequences and impact of the implementation tactics and the achievement of the goals.

For the 2019 year, the project developed benchmarks (the benchmarking report was deliverable #9 published in July 2020). SRDC derived benchmarks from data for the period 2015-2019. These captured the starting point for many of the changes the ECL R&R Strategy was expected to produce. Later reports – starting with the evaluation report in 2020 and this current report – compare the data on indicators from 2020, 2021 and later to the equivalent benchmarking indicators for 2015-19. The comparison determines change in the KPIs. The specific combination of changes across the KPIs can signal success or failure for the ECL R&R Strategy in achieving its medium-term outcomes and indicate progress towards realizing the ten-year goals.

Evaluation methods and tools

Theory of change consultations. The Theory of Change guides the evaluation. First, it ensures SRDC collects information that improves understanding of the outcomes achieved. Second, it points to the factors that may have led to success (or not) including unexpected and unintended effects. SRDC interviewed five developers of the ECL R&R Strategy tactics from several Ministries.[1] They helped SRDC learn the theory of change underlying the Strategy's "tactics." The initial Theory was well received and endorsed. This allowed SRDC to use it to inform other features of the evaluation framework such as the KPIs. In turn, this supported development of the methods and tools implemented in the evaluation.

Design and execution of annual employer and employee surveys. Survey design includes response incentive systems, fielding and follow up. The Sector Steering Committee and Government Working Group review survey instrument drafts. SRDC co-designed with ECEBC a system to maximize survey participation over the evaluation period. This included a staged approach for survey communications. The activities included a multi-stage round of cross-sectional surveys (in October-November 2019, 2020 and 2021). Surveys are open to all members of the child care workforce and those with ECE/ECEA certifications not in ECL. The first stage "employer" survey features collection of centre-specific information. SRDC launched the workforce survey as a separate, second stagin 2020 and 2021. It invited employers to share a link to an individual-specific survey for both themselves and their employees. It encouraged them to forward the invitations to their staff. The result was a nested survey of employees within each facility. Invitations were also sent to others. These included solo operators and survey respondents from 2019 who agreed to follow up. SRDC sought opportunities for ECL professionals to sign up online. Finally, it issued an open invitation via social media and newsletter invitations. This approach connected to people who were not reached in the first round. SRDC then sent email reminders to non-completers. SRDC staffed a helpline and email support service to fulfill requests for telephone or paper completion of the survey.

Data assessment, scan, building and maintaining data systems. SRDC intended to set up a comprehensive contact database of child care providers and their employees. It began by establishing scope. It set rules for the inclusion of licensed and unlicensed, registered and unregistered carers. SRDC performed data assessment to determine available data sources and the optimal means for keeping the database up to date. Administrative data were acquired in 2019 and updated through 2020 and 2021. SRDC will update these data using equivalent sources

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[1] The BC Ministry of Education (EDU), Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST), and the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

in 2022 and 2023 to track trends in program roll out and ECE registrations, to the extent possible.

Census, Labour Force Survey and other Statistics Canada Microdata. The evaluation began with a detailed exploration of the composition of the B.C. ECL workforce. SRDC used 2016 Census microdata (analyzed as anonymized individual records). It compared these to data from earlier years going back to Census 2001. The data included family background and other characteristics, income, earnings, credentials, location, and well-being. The Census data is the most comprehensive data source covering everyone employed in child care in the province. SRDC added more recent employment trends using Labour Force Survey Data to 2018. This report has begun analyzing ECE public post-secondary program participation and outcomes. SRDC uses data on students who enrolled in ECE programs in B.C. public institutions over the most recent five years. It models changes in numbers and composition over time. Trends are plotted relative to students' education histories (from K-12 and post-secondary records). It is also examining labour market outcomes (earnings and industry) as recorded in tax records.[2] Future analysis will explore whether any changes in patterns over time are associated with the introduction of the ECL R&R Strategy. This report also begins using Statistics Canada's Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements (SELCCA). These are annual data that permit analysis of changes in the sources of child care that parents report using.

Media and social media analysis. SRDC established appropriate media search strings, algorithms and provider scope. It reviewed desired formats for outputs. SRDC collected analytics and results from each day's B.C.-relevant child care-related posts and news articles. It gathered these data continuously to the end of 2021. It

Public opinion survey. SRDC launched surveys in 2019 and 2022 to a sample representative of all adults in B.C. aged 18+ years. It included a booster sample of 'emerging adults' aged 13 through 23 years. It included these younger respondents to gauge any changes in career aspirations. SRDC's tasks included designing and testing the survey instruments. Questions related to perceptions of child care careers and to the professionalism of the child care workforce. SRDC commissioned an external market research firm to field the survey. SRDC supports and monitors fieldwork, receives and quality checks the survey data, then undertakes the analysis. The results for 2022 are included in this report.

Key informant interviews (KIIs) for implementation research/case studies. SRDC developed a set of KII protocols and engagement strategies for the Evaluation Methods and Tools 2019

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[2]   SRDC submitted a request to Statistics Canada for permission to access and analyze these linked data from its Education and Labour Market Longitudinal Platform. These are housed in the secure environment of the Simon Fraser University Research Data Centre. The application was approved on 3 November 2021. Statistics Canada vets SRDC's analytical output, which limits detail in the permitted analysis.

report. These were amended for 2020 to include the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. SRDC's fieldwork collects in-depth accounts of the impact of the ECL R&R Strategy and its tactics. In 2019, it also supported survey instrument validation.

SRDC consulted with the Sector Steering Committee on the best approach to recruit case study sites in July 2019. It then selected six case study sites province wide for onsite fieldwork. Site visits took place in September and October 2019. "Virtual" visits took place in September through December 2020 and September through November 2021.

To date, SRDC has conducted and analyzed roughly 200 in-depth interviews over the course of the project. This work has included a diverse sample of providers and their staff. More broadly, KIIs connected to the TheOry of Change have included resource centres and advisors, government program managers.

RESULTS

This report includes measures of progress towards achieving outcomes and goals sought by the ECL R&R Strategy. It is the 19th deliverable of the Sector-led Evaluation of the ECL R&R Strategy in B.C. As such it also includes updates and developments in the evaluation work plan to the point of creating this report. In general, the evaluation has proceeded as planned. It has collected data on the employment, working conditions, education, and professional development of the ECL workforce.

- SRDC has conducted its own survey of the workforce and ECL employers in late 2021. This has provided comparable data on a wide range of indicators to those collected from similar surveys in 2019 and 2020. It also gave voice to the roughly 35,000 members of the ECL workforce. Those who responded provided feedback on key influences on recruitment and retention as they saw them. This report includes trends seen in the workforce since 2018. It expands on earlier analysis in several ways:

- We include a more in-depth analysis of the influence of the ECL R&R Strategy's tactics on everyday child care operations and workplace experiences. These data come from six case study sites and key informant interviews spanning different types of child care workplaces.

- The administrative data shed light on implementation of the different tactics that are part of the ECL R&R Strategy. They reveal trends in the experiences of ECL professionals in the labour market. While most of these data have reached SRDC in each year requested, several components were delayed or not received in 2021. This report includes new data on certification exemptions. We can describe for the first time the cohorts of students who enter ECE programs in public postsecondary institutions. All

data appear as time series where relevant and possible to show trends from before the launch of the ECL R&R Strategy.

▪ We also include final results from social media analysis. This covers trends in the topics and sentiments of public opinion voiced online between 2018 and 2021. The Public Opinion Survey provides a more representative source of public opinion. It includes the views of the general public and those considering the next steps in their career. SRDC can compare results from this survey undertaken in 2019 with early 2022. Change in opinions over time are documented for the first time in this report.

Change on Key Performance Indicators

To take stock of progress against each Key Performance Indicator (KPI), we cycle through results from all relevant data sources. These KPIs appear on the left in Figure ES1. We compare the position of the ECL sector in 2021 relative to 2019 and earlier (and also 2020 where relevant). We draw on observations from professionals working in the sector and the general public to add meaning to these statistics. The rightmost columns of Figure ES1 present a summary of this progress on KPIs and tactics. An arrow symbol signifies the overall trend on each indicator since the launch of the ECL R&R strategy until the end of 2021. This can be an improvement (large or small) [↑], a deterioration [↓] or a mixed result [↔]. Inevitably, many nuances of findings are lost in such high-level summary. Readers are encouraged to review the full results for each indicator in the main report sections. Of course, attribution of causality to the changes seen over time has been affected considerably by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is rarely possible to attribute outcomes seen in 2021 solely to the effects of the ECL R&R Strategy. We attempt to separate the effects where possible. But there is value in documenting the situation of the workforce through various recent challenges. The report still highlights the pressures members of B.C.'s ECL workforce are under. It shows how they are changing. It points to how ECL professionals have used, sought or recommended ECL R&R Strategy tactics to improve their employment situations.

Figure ES1   Summary of progress to 2021 on key performance indicators

KPI #	Progress on KPI to 2021	ECL R&R Strategy Tactics	Progress on tactics
1	ECL professional satisfaction and perception of appropriateness of compensation	Compensation (e.g., wage enhancement)	Continuing appreciation of role of wage enhancement as symbol of recognition. Still not adequately addressing compensation shortfalls.

KPI #	Progress on KPI to 2021	ECL R&R Strategy Tactics	Progress on tactics
⬌	Levels of satisfaction fell again among HCPs. This drop spanned all aspects of their jobs (thus more aspects than in 2020). It fell somewhat for professionals in child care centres who were not managers/supervisors in all areas (except physical indoor space and compensation). Satisfaction with benefits increased for all groups defined by their program/role. Regression results suggest that increasing benefits increases overall job satisfaction. Satisfaction with income increased modestly, except for non-managers/supervisors in before and after school/recreational programs and HCPs. Responsible Adults were the only group defined by qualification less satisfied with income in 2021 than 2019. Motivating factors remained relatively high. But there was a decline in the proportion feeling their job made good use of their skills and abilities. This applied for program roles other than ECE-certified HCPs. There was an increase on indicators of burnout in 2021 compared to 2019 and 2020. Significantly more also found their work stimulating and challenging. Regression results suggest that receiving more benefits decreases reports of burnout.		
2A	Average real wages and salaries of ECL professionals	Compensation (e.g., wage enhancement)	Four in every five of those eligible are in receipt of wage enhancement. 2021 saw overlap between wage ranges of ECEs those of ECEAs and RAs disappear for first time in all health authority regions.
⬆	Wages increased between roughly $2.50 and $4 over 2019, but remained relatively low, $7 below the rate paid to BC workers with equivalent postsecondary credentials. Professionals considered their wages only modest recognition for their credentials and seniority. The $4 wage enhancement announced in 2021 may start to have an impact once payments kick in from March 2022. Monthly income of those working in child care centres has nominally grown by 9 per cent since 2019.		
2B	Benefits of ECL Professionals	Compensation (e.g., wage enhancement)	No direct ECL R&R Strategy tactics in 2021. Requests for improved pension provision continued. Little change in financial assistance for PD up to 2021.
⬌	According to employers, benefit provision has remained stable with modest fluctuations relative to 2019. However, the proportion of employers that do not provide any benefits has decreased, down from 10-22 per cent in 2019 to 10-11 per cent in 2021. Stated differently: more employers are offering benefits to their staff. More non-manager/supervisor respondents at child care centres report receiving each type of benefit. More in before and after school care report extended health care, paid sick days and access to a pension.		
3	The extent to which current Sector Occupational Competencies are integrated into education and training programs	Industry Standards	Work is still underway on the updated Sector Occupational Competencies.

KPI #	Progress on KPI to 2021	ECL R&R Strategy Tactics	Progress on tactics
	The response and uptake will be assessed once they are introduced.		
4	Proportion of ECL professionals with credentials relevant to provision of child care for provincial ECL needs, including regional and Indigenous ECL needs	All[3]	Increasing proportions of student bursaries issued even allowing for post-COVID recovery.
⬆	PSE completion rates among workforce survey respondents reached 94 per cent in 2021, 7 percentage points higher than 2019. There is no change in current PSE participation rates. No consistent change in net levels of possession of ECL-related credentials among workforce from 2019 through 2021. Just 10 per cent of professionals in $10 a day sites and 6 per cent in other child care centres held only ECL credentials below college level. 27 per cent of employers reported that they had to refuse children due to not having staff with the right qualifications to accommodate the children's needs. The top qualifications missing were ECE certification (64 per cent), Infant and Toddler Certificate (42 per cent), and Special Needs Certificate (39 per cent). Yet there was a corresponding uptick in the holding of *both* specialty certifications - Infant and Toddler and Special Needs - at these centres. A growing share of credentials held in 2021 are from B.C. institutions.		
5	Perceptions of ECL career among those making decisions with respect to their own careers	All	No direct ECL R&R Strategy tactics.
⬌	Interest in working in child care has increased from 2019 to 2022. This applied to emerging adults (aged 13 to 24) and older adults in B.C. contemplating a career change, especially the latter group. When questions included how working conditions could be improved, interest increased. This applied for every age group especially those aged 25+. However, more workforce survey respondents in non-manager/supervisor positions expect to leave their current employer. Slightly more (now 5 per cent) of this group and of HCPs responded that they don't expect to be working in ECL by November 2022. The proportion of non managers/supervisors at before and after school/recreational programs expecting to leave the sector within a year has grown to 15 per cent.		
6	Proportion of ECL workforce who self-report	All	Professional networks and PD Supports were launched during 2020. An external evaluation found educators were satisfied with and held a

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[3] The eight tactics included in the ECL R&R Strategy at the time of its announcement in 2018 were: Compensation; Post-Secondary; Bursaries; Professional Networks and Supports; Professional Development; Industry Standards; Work-based education and training; and Training Supports.

KPI #	Progress on KPI to 2021	ECL R&R Strategy Tactics	Progress on tactics
	possession of core skills and supplementary skills		positive opinion of the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network.
⬄	Self-assessed skills mostly dropped from 2019 to 2021, especially for ECEAs. The only skill staff more often rated above average or excellent in 2021 was making the environment inclusive for children with special needs. However, this skill along with demonstrating cultural sensitivity were the two lowest rated skills overall in 2021. More PD was sought out by members of ECL workforce for many other low-assessed skills, although there was a decline in the proportion obtaining PD in relation to special needs.		
7	Awareness of ECL career pathway options, how to pursue them, and expectations of their feasibility in terms of finances and availability of training opportunities.	Post-Secondary (e.g., new seats); Bursaries; Professional Networks and Supports; & Professional Development	Increasing proportions of student bursaries issued even allowing for post-COVID recovery. Professional networks and PD Supports were launched during 2020. An external evaluation found educators were satisfied with and held a positive opinion of the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network.
⬄	After a dip in 2020, the proportion of the workforce believing that there were opportunities for career growth and development recovered to 2019 levels. Employers reported providing career development supports of various types slightly more often than in 2020 and considerably more than they did in 2019.		
8	Proportion of ECL workforce who self-report participation in professional development activities	Professional Networks and Supports; Professional Development; Work-based education and training; & Training Supports (e.g., Workforce Development Bursary)	Professional networks and PD Supports were launched during 2020. An external evaluation found educators were satisfied with and held a positive opinion of the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network. Awareness of the ECE Workforce Development Bursary increased, as did the number of bursaries granted. Yet, on average, only one workforce development bursary was approved for every ten student bursaries.
⬆	Overall participation in PD since 2019 increased for most groups defined by qualification. Some 83 per cent reported participation within the past 12 months. The only exceptions were those with 1-year ECE certificates and a single ECE specialty. PD participation declined at before and after school/recreational programs, especially those privately run. Increased take up of many topics was seen, especially in PD related to Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit) ECL. There were increases in most types of PD. But the proportions training in special needs and managing child behaviour dropped.		
9	Hours of professional development per ECL workforce member per year	Professional Networks and Supports, Professional Development and	Professional networks and PD Supports were launched during 2020. An external evaluation found educators were satisfied with and held a positive opinion of the Early Childhood Pedagogy

KPI #	Progress on KPI to 2021	ECL R&R Strategy Tactics	Progress on tactics
		Work-based education and training	Network. Awareness of the ECE Workforce Development Bursary increased, as did the number of bursaries granted. Yet, on average, only one workforce development bursary was approved for every ten student bursaries.
⬆	Mean hours of PD increased in 2021 for all groups after remaining fairly stable from 2019 to 2020. Regression analysis suggested a positive association between workplace benefits and hours spent in PD.		
10	Employers report of the share of their ECL workforce possessing core skills and possessing supplementary skills	All	Professional networks and PD Supports were launched during 2020. An external evaluation found educators were satisfied with and held a positive opinion of the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network. Awareness of the ECE Workforce Development Bursary increased, as did the number of bursaries granted since 2020.
⬌	Employers' assessment of their staff's core skills universally increased from 2019 to 2020. Employers only operating programs that require ECE certification reported lower skill levels in 2021. Skills especially affected were: making the environment inclusive for children with special needs and demonstrating cultural sensitivity. These dropped back to 2019 levels. Communicating effectively with the children's families, the lowest rated skill, also declined in 2021. For employers operating programs that do not all require ECE certification, skills levels continued to grow from 2019 through 2020 to 2021, albeit from a lower initial base.		
11	Employment stability of ECL workforce, including variances for staffing for providers, work hours, job tenure, job exits	Compensation; & Work-based education and training	Awareness of the ECE Workforce Development Bursary increased, as did the number of bursaries granted since 2020.
⬇	45 per cent of employers reported experiencing staff net loss across all positions in the 12 months preceding the survey. This is an 11-percentage point increase compared to 2019. Lower hiring rates were the main factor behind doubling of the rates of loss of full time ECL professionals over the two years. Regression analysis found exit rates higher at centres where senior staff lacked ECE certification.		
12	Ratio of positive to negative opinions (with respect to standards of care, viability, sustainability, and value) among those already working in the sector	Compensation; Professional Networks and Supports; Professional Development; Industry Standards; Work-based	Professional networks and PD Supports were launched during 2020. An external evaluation found educators were satisfied with and held a positive opinion of the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network. Awareness of the ECE Workforce Development Bursary increased, as did the number of bursaries granted since 2020.

KPI #	Progress on KPI to 2021	ECL R&R Strategy Tactics	Progress on tactics
		education and training; & Training Supports	
	Only 43 per cent of the workforce agreed or strongly agreed child care is valued by the public in 2021, down from 51 per cent in 2019. But in general, most members of the ECL workforce held positive opinions about their work in 2021. Positive views outnumbered negative ones by similar ratios to 2019. Increasingly positive perceptions seemed especially the case for Indigenous centre-based ECL professionals.		
13	Ratio of positive to negative opinions (with respect to standards of care, viability, sustainability, and value of ECL work) in general population, thought leaders, mass media, youth, and parents	Compensation; Post-Secondary; Bursaries; Industry Standards; & Training Supports	No direct ECL R&R Strategy tactics.
	In general, Twitter produced more ECL workforce related tweets in the first half of 2021 than earlier years. However, there were peaks in 2020 and 2018 as well. More recent tweets were likely due to the 2021 announcements of major federal and provincial supports to the ECL workforce. 2018 saw modestly more posts to which a positive or negative sentiment could be attached. These arose before and after the introduction of the ECL R&R Strategy. B.C. public opinion survey respondents in early 2022 were overwhelmingly positive about the workforce. They felt child care professionals played a vital role in the economy and in children's learning and development (85 per cent agreed to both). On a range of related questions the public rated child care professionals more highly in 2022 than they did in 2019. However, close to half were unsure about whether they were well trained or compensated fairly.		

The evaluation will continue to cover developments in the sector's response to the ECL R&R Strategy through 2022 and to at least the end of 2023. Results on KPIs will provide answers to the evaluation questions moving forward over the remainder of the evaluation.

The core messages emerging from the evidence collected are nuanced. While the ECL workforce seems to comprise extremely resilient people, the sector is increasingly fragile in 2021. They are reporting increasing risks of leaving work in child care. Strategy tactics designed to improve the sector have been welcomed. They appear to be having positive effects in some areas, but there are still examples of disconnects. Professionals who start out in the sector on low pay struggle with their PSE loan repayments. Established professionals who seek support to upskill are not guaranteed support for professional development. The ECL R&R Strategy's subsidies are not transparent at the point of purchasing education. The message from those interviewed in the

case studies and the KIIs is that policy has to become more coordinated. Changes in one area have an impact on others.

PROVISIONAL EARLY ANSWERS TO EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation framework uses progress against KPIs to answer the evaluation questions over time. We are now three-fifths of the way through the now-extended evaluation project. It is not possible to draw final conclusions on any of the medium-term outcomes or ten-year goals. However, it is possible to identify some places where the ECL R&R Strategy is on track to achieve outcomes and goals set at the project outset in 2018.

1. **Does the ECL R&R Strategy result in the long-term goal of an adequate and stable workforce, comprised of qualified and skilled early care and learning professionals? [10-year goal]**

   It is early to answer a question that anticipates a decade of change but qualifications, and to a lesser extent skills, are improving. The PSE qualifications of the current workforce appear to be increasing annually. ECL-related certification has increased also. There are skills shortfalls relative to 2019 but workforce members have been taking action by pursuing PD in many of the affected areas. Staffing problems remain both acute and persistent. Alongside short-term instability in service, due to permanent and casual staff unavailability, providers could not meet staffing needs over the longer term either. A net loss of staff was reported by 45 per cent of employers in 2021 up from 34 per cent in 2019. Awareness of the ECE Workforce Development Bursary increased. So did the number of student and workforce development bursaries granted since 2020.

   ▪ **Over the medium term of the evaluation, do recruitment strategies achieve the outcome of an adequate supply of ECEs and other ECL professionals entering the workforce? [medium-term outcome]**

      This has not happened as of 2021.

   ▪ **Over the medium term of the evaluation, does the implementation of career pathways provide opportunities for career growth and development in the early care and learning sector? [medium-term outcome]**

      There have been modest improvements since 2019, but this outcome has not been achieved as of 2021. About 59-66 per cent of those currently working in the sector believed there were a variety of opportunities for career growth and development within ECL. This was similar to the 60 per cent reported in 2019.

- **Over the medium term of the evaluation, are education, training, and professional development opportunities expanded (or barriers reduced) so that the ECL workforce has the skills, knowledge, and abilities required to provide quality services to children and families? [medium-term outcome]**

  Opportunities have expanded since the launch of the ECL R&R Strategy. Bursaries have reduced financial barriers for some. Employer- and self-assessed skills, knowledge and abilities have gone up in some areas and down in others. In 2021, there were drops in employers' assessments of their staff skills and employees' assessments of their own skills. As in 2020, employers noted a key area of declining skill: making the environment inclusive for children with special needs. This was an area where participation in PD was markedly down also. Employees in 2021 rated their skills more highly in 2021 than previously, however. Employers' perspectives and employees' self-assessments were also in agreement on other skills. More now felt they were falling short on demonstrating cultural sensitivity relative to 2020. More reportedly fell short in communicating effectively with the children's families relative to both 2020 and 2019.

2. **Does the ECL R&R Strategy result in the long-term goal of ECL being viewed as a viable, sustainable, and valued career? [10-year goal]**

   There are conflicting trends. SRDC probed ECL professionals' current relationship with their work. It sought their agreement to statements such as "I would recommend child care as a profession" and "I consider child care as my chosen profession". These found similar support in 2021 as in 2019 . But more among the workforce surveyed were planning to leave ECL within one year in 2021 compared to 2019. Among non-manager/supervisors at child care centres, the increase was small from 3 to 5 per cent. Plans to leave rose from 1 to 15 per cent among non-manager/supervisors at before and after school programs. Over ten years, even a small percentage leaving annually will add up to a considerable loss of professionals. And the rate of net loss of staff – full-time and part-time - reported by employers was higher in 2021 than 2019.

   - **Over the medium term of the evaluation, does the strategy promote public confidence in the professionalism and accountability of the ECL workforce? [medium-term outcome]**

     Public confidence in the ECL profession has grown. At the same time, there remain gaps in their understanding of how well-trained and fairly compensated they are. ECL professionals themselves perceive public support as declining, however. Only 43 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Child care is valued by the public" in 2021, down from 51 per cent in 2019.

3. **Does the ECL R&R Strategy promote the long-term goal of appropriate compensation plans and human resources strategies to be put in place? [10-year goal]**

There are conflicting trends. Wage enhancement is working in two ways. Wages are growing for those eligible. The symbolic value is high. The enhancement sent a powerful signal to ECL professionals: government has recognized the problem of their remuneration. It values their work. Furthermore, and in contrast to 2020, wage differentials between certification levels appear to be increasing. Differentials add to the incentive to acquire advanced credentials and seek promotion. There are mixed signals with respect to improved human resources strategies, however. Employers are more likely to report at least some benefits compared to 2019. But the proportion offering pension (26 per cent) and extended health care (59 per cent) remains as low as 2019. More non-manager/supervisor centre-based ECL professionals reported access to benefits. Notably, wages and incomes have been increasing.

▪ **Over the medium term of the evaluation, do retention strategies support the long-term engagement of ECEs and others in the workforce, to help keep them in the profession? [medium-term outcome]**

Retention strategies include enhancing wages and promoting access to professional development. They do appear to have the effect of increasing workforce engagement and persistence. But the extent is very modest so far. The new regression analysis in this report points to the important role employment benefits play. Benefits are associated with job satisfaction, lower burnout, hours spent in professional development and even take up of the wage enhancement. Yet staff exits and anticipated departures from the ECL workforce are at their highest levels in 2021. Some optimism arises from increasing training of ECEs. Those still in the workforce in late 2021 report similar duration work histories as in 2019 while the age distribution is slightly younger. However, this could again be due to shifts in the composition of the workforce survey's respondents in 2021 compared to 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report's analysis of administrative data, cross-sectional surveys and interviews has reconfirmed the challenging situation reported earlier. The same critical workforce development situation that originally prompted the ECL R&R Strategy persists.

Evidence coming from the evaluation is thus increasingly robust. We have added data from a third year out of the total of five currently planned. Most of the recommendations related to successful tactics are very similar to those in 2020. But we can be confident there are some areas where workforce development has not budged. This is despite three years of implementation of

the ECL R&R Strategy's tactics. New approaches seem warranted. In their absence, recommendations on how to innovate remain cautious. There is limited evidence on what actually works to improve recruitment and retention. There is also the need to avoid unhelpful interactions between policies that could exacerbate some problems. Some approaches may merely shift the locus of who is affected.

- **Renewed effort is needed to develop ECL R&R Strategy tactics that support employers' urgent needs to recruit, retain and develop ECL professionals.** Shortages of qualified ECL professionals persisted into 2021. As in previous years, about 40 per cent of employers reported they were unable to fill at least one vacant position in their centre. Employers indicated they were unable to fill 1.8 positions on average. Due to staff shortages, 45 per cent had to fill vacant positions with an individual with lower qualifications than they wanted. There seems to be a pool of older adults and youth interested in working in ECL if the working conditions can be improved. More people must be attracted into the profession from diverse sources. At the same time, more effort is needed to motivate existing ECL professionals to stay in the field.

- **Carefully designed and targeted further wage enhancement** is yielding success. Increases are likely to generate yet more incremental improvements. This appears to have been the most recognized and appreciated of the ECL R&R Strategy tactics. It does not fully solve the identified problems with compensation and benefits. But it continued to play a role in improving incomes into 2021. This has clearly been appreciated by those working in the sector. It acts as a potent symbol that the government recognizes the importance of adequate pay. Work is underway in 2022 to develop a "wage grid". These denote standard wage levels or floors for specific certification levels and other criteria. The grid could help address some challenges that wage enhancements have not, such as localized inequities.

- **Intervention is needed where ECL professionals' compensation packages are falling short.** This includes pensions and other benefits such as paid preparation and PD time. The evaluation is finding benefits to be a key part of the recruitment and retention equation. They may counter burnout and increase workplace satisfaction. Satisfaction with benefits increased slightly in 2021 and fewer employers offered none. But it remains the case that employers have not expanded provision of key benefits such as extended health care and pensions. The approach taken in the wage enhancement to support statutory benefits could be imitated. Government could provide conditional funding to improve other workplace benefits such as pensions.

- **Raise the profile and sustainability of ECE professional development as well as the incentive to upskill.** 2021 saw clearer wage differentials that better recognize the acquisition of additional credentials. This should improve incentives for existing

workforce members to upskill. The "wage grid" may also help in this regard. Increasing accessibility and availability of financial aid should be considered. The current tactic takes the form of bursaries. These have uncertain eligibility, disparate application processes and discontinuous disbursement patterns. More consistency would help ECL professionals see ECE tuition, PD courses and related costs as affordable. Regulation could protect time off for study. Disbursements of financial assistance could ne made upfront more often. This would seed fund employers and employees to incentivize upskilling.

- **A program specifically to address incentivizing specialty certification may be justified.** The evaluation first highlighted skills deficits in relation to children with special needs in 2020. These have remained acute. In 2021, 40 per cent of employers who cared for children with special needs did not have staff in any position with a Special Needs certification. About 27 per cent of employers had to refuse children due to not having staff with the right qualifications to accommodate children's needs. For 39 per cent of these (up from 25 per cent in 2020) the qualification missing was a Special Needs Certificate. More than half the employers reported at least one of their staff needed to improve skills in this area. Fully 78 per cent of professionals themselves rated their ability to make the environment inclusive for children with special needs as above average or excellent. But this ability was the second lowest skill when rated in this way. And the proportion of non-managers/supervisors in centre-based ECL who gave this self-assessment dropped 4 percentage points. Incentivizing acquisition of infant and toddler certification may be equally justified. While most of the evidence reported relates to special needs. But employers reported having to refuse children due to lack of the IT certification just as often.

- **Recruitment efforts could focus on older workers with children.** Many enrolling in ECE programs have these characteristics. Our surveys found adults more inclined than those under 18 to consider working in child care.

- **Workforce supports to provide recognition and tangibly increase benefits are needed more than ever.** 2021 brought increased net workforce departures and a higher proportion expecting to leave ECL within a year. It also saw an increase on already-high measures of burnout compared to 2019. Incentives may be needed to encourage staff with ECEs to take on more responsibility. When senior staff were ECE-certified, retention of other ECL professionals increased.

- **PD incentives and legislation requiring training could be further targeted.** Targeting could harness evidence on program areas where there is relatively low take up of PD. Private sector providers, especially of school-age care, are among those less often engaging in training in 2021. Home-based care providers who did not already hold ECEs

were in a similar position. Those working in before and after school/recreational care programs also took PD less often.

- As mentioned in the 2020 report, **a more systemic approach is required to support decision making and manage B.C.'s child care "system".** Currently it is difficult for the sector to take stock of its successes and challenges. This project has experienced a notable decline in the capacity and speed with which administrative data can be obtained. The situation may improve as provincial responsibility for child care has shifted to the Ministry of Education and Child Care. Details are scant on what this means for coordination of programming and data collection. At the moment, the ECL R&R Strategy is being implemented by multiple Ministries. Each is at varying stages of roll out on its original tactics and updating those tactics. At the same time, new related initiatives are launched by additional agencies overlapping in intent with the ECL R&R Strategy but outside it. No regional or central agency collects and disseminates information on the ECL R&R Strategy tactics. There are thousands of eligible workplaces and tens of thousands of members of the workforce to reach. Information and data are disparately available and absent in several areas. Health authorities are too stretched to fulfil reporting duties systematically (or in synch with one another). ECL professionals report being unaware of the tactics, which is likely to influence negatively take up and impact.

It remains too early to pass judgement on the overall effectiveness of the ECL R&R Strategy. The problems that ailed the sector in 2018 and 2019 are largely still present in 2021 and some have worsened. Meanwhile, the pandemic has left the sector with additional challenges. COVID19 provided new sources of instability and fragility. What is clear is that the ECL R&R Strategy and the kinds of tactics included within it have acquired even more importance as policy responses. The continuation of such supports appears vital to inform decisions of those contemplating a career in ECL. It is also likely very important to those who already have one. Systematically and coherently implemented, the ECL R&R Strategy tactics clearly hold potential. With further innovation, the approach could help combat some of the well-established challenges that affect ECL workforce development in B.C. There were small improvements in many KPIs in 2021. But the tactics implemented to date are not looking sufficient. New and better coordinated tactics are still needed in the toolkit.

INTRODUCTION

In 2018, British Columbia made an initial $136m investment in an Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy (ECL R&R Strategy) for the province's Early Care and Learning sector. The ECL R&R Strategy is part of a larger ten-year plan ("Childcare BC") to increase the quality, affordability, and availability of child care spaces in British Columbia. The ECL R&R Strategy has been expanded in various ways since 2018, but it remains with its original intent, to meet the following three overarching long-term goals:

- An adequate and stable workforce comprised of qualified and skilled early care and learning professionals

- Early care and learning as a viable, sustainable, and valued career

- Appropriate compensation plans and human resource strategies.

In 2018, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST) engaged with the Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC) to lead a Sector Labour Market Partnerships project with the goal to enable a mechanism for regular sector feedback on the overarching impacts of the ECL R&R Strategy and its many tactics (such as the wage enhancement and supports for professional development) on B.C.'s child care workforce. ECEBC in turn selected Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) as the subcontractor to produce and implement the sector-led impact assessment framework that will measure these direct and indirect effects of the implementation of the ECL R&R Strategy on the sector.

This evaluation report for 2021 includes project progress from the delivery of the evaluation report for 2020 delivered in early March 2021 through to the end of 2021, including the project management work plan report on Sector Steering Committee activities, and updates on implementation of the methodology. It includes results and lessons learned over the past three years of evaluation activity and tentative plans for the extension of the evaluation to cover 2022 and 2023.

UPDATED PROJECT MANAGEMENT WORK PLAN

PROJECT TASKS AND ACTIVITIES

The original evaluation design was based on monitoring the progress and outcomes of the ECL R&R Strategy and its tactics, as launched in 2018, to the end of 2021. SRDC drafted its original description of project tasks and activities to include in the evaluation workplan in January 2019. New initiatives and expansions of the original tactics since 2018 have enhanced provincial supports for the development of B.C.'s ECL workforce. These developments have been embraced as far as possible in updates to the evaluation work plan since 2019. The second half of the evaluated period has also been dominated by the direct and indirect effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the evaluation has included additional data collection, where feasible, to identify the influence of the pandemic on workforce outcomes as distinct from those related the ECL R&R Strategy itself.

The Ministry decided in late 2021 to support a two-year extension of the evaluation to cover the fourth and fifth years of the ECL R&R Strategy. This is the first report following the decision to extend the project and includes a preliminary plan for the updated tasks and project activities. The plan will be presented in a separate evaluation methodology report and finalized in consultation with the Sector Steering Committee in the coming weeks.

Box 1 sets out the updated tasks and project activities using a Gantt chart format, with a separate page for each remaining fiscal year. These charts illustrate the timeline for the principal tasks set out below and indicate when each type of activity was or will be most prevalent. The main categories of tasks are described below, drawing attention to changes in the planned activities, their timelines and rationale:

- **Project liaison, work plan development, coordination and consultation** including the Sector Steering Committee and the Government Working Group. SRDC and ECEBC have been collaborating in developing the workplan and scheduling the flow of evaluation activities, review of deliverables and meetings. The activities in this section include engagement with the Government Working Group and Sector Steering Committee including meetings. SRDC is responsible for coordinating its own project team, including subcontractors engaged in some of the project activities included below.

- **Data assessment, scan, building and maintaining data systems** including setting up a comprehensive contact database of child care providers and their employees. This work follows an established scope, data assessment to determine available data sources and optimal means for keeping the database up to date. Administrative data were acquired first in 2019 and are updated every year.

SRDC developed a **contact database** to form the initial sample frame for employer and workforce surveys in October 2019 and repeats this exercise every year for all later cross-sectional surveys. The workforce surveys are fielded to an updated sample frame each year adopting a strictly cross-sectional design, even though many surveys will be completed by the previous years' contacts to allow a longitudinal analysis. The aim has been to assemble the contact database in a way that also allows assessment of the changing composition of the sector each time it is updated, but inconsistencies in data provision have prevented this use to date. SRDC will continue to seek the missing data to allow it to analyze the annual databases to quantify provider entries and exits. At the same time the surveys (described below) have provided detail on who is entering and leaving the workforce.

- **News and social media analysis** tasks were part of the original evaluation framework, collecting B.C.-relevant child care-related posts and news articles throughout the course of the project for an analysis that appears later in this report. Data collection ceased in December 2021 and will not be pursued in the final two years of the evaluation. The exercise consumed considerable resources to establish media search strings, algorithms and analytical scope month by month, without yielding an equivalent benefit. The evidence stream has been discontinued to permit more effort to be diverted to other evaluation evidence streams.

- **Key informant interviews (KIIs) for implementation research/case studies** have been a consistent feature of data collection. Initially interviews collected data for the development of the ECL R&R Strategy theory of change. SRDC interviewed developers of the ECL R&R Strategy and its tactics in April and May 2019, which improved understanding of how the Strategy and its tactics were expected to bring about the anticipated improvements for the workforce. A comprehensive set of KII protocols were developed for the Evaluation Methods and Tools 2019 report alongside engagement strategies for recruiting and maintaining a set of case study sites. Following consultation with the Sector Steering Committee on the best approach, SRDC selected in July 2019 six case study sites province wide for onsite fieldwork. Site visits took place in September and October 2019. Follow up "virtual" visits have been made in each subsequent year (roughly September through December of each year). The fieldwork collects accounts of the impact of the ECL R&R Strategy and its tactics at the level of individual centres of different types, primarily through in-depth interviews.

Interview protocols were amended for 2020 (and subsequent years) to include the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. These interviews help SRDC to better understand the implementation of the ECL R&R Strategy and its tactics, especially successes and challenges in delivery. A data collection exercise each year since 2020 has traced ECL professionals interviewed in the previous year who had ceased employment at each case

study centre. Interviews probe the reasons for leaving their employment and their current employment circumstances and plans.

- **Design and execution of annual employer and employee surveys** including response incentive systems, fielding and follow up. These tasks occur annually and include Sector Steering Committee and Government Working Group review of survey instrument drafts as well as SRDC's co-design with ECEBC of a system to maximize survey response, including a staged approach for survey communications. The activities culminate in a multi-stage round of cross-sectional surveys (in October-November of each year) open to all members of the child care workforce. The first stage features the collection of centre-specific information obtained through an "employer" survey. Since 2020, the workforce survey has been launched as a second stage. SRDC contacts employers a second time with a link to an individual-specific survey for both themselves and their employees. Employers are encouraged to forward these invitations to their staff. Invitations were also sent to solo operators and survey respondents from the previous years' surveys who agreed to be invited to complete a follow up survey. The final stage of fieldwork in each year features an open invitation to capture the responses of people who were not reached in the first round or who did not respond for another reason. The tasks include email reminders in the event of non-completion, SSC promotion including social media and newsletter invitations and ECEBC website publicity. SRDC staffs a helpline and email support service to fulfill requests for telephone or paper completion of the survey.

- **Design and commissioning of public opinion survey questions.** This effort in 2019, 2022, 2023 and 2024 approaches a sample of provincial residents representative of all adults aged 18+ years for their opinions and a booster sample of 'emerging adults' aged 13 through 23 years to gauge their career aspirations. SRDC tasks include designing and testing survey instruments to include selected existing and new questions related to perceptions of child care careers and the ECL workforce questions. SRDC has commissioned an external market research firm (Maru Matchbox) to field the survey to its representative panel of British Columbians. SRDC supports and monitors fieldwork, receives and quality checks the survey data, then undertakes analysis.

- **Analysis** covers a broad range of SRDC tasks including planning for analysis, quantitative analysis of Census and linked education and labour market microdata, administrative data and the provider database, quantitative and qualitative analysis of public opinion, employer and workforce survey data and qualitative analysis of KIIs. The evaluation began with detailed exploration of the composition of the B.C. ECL workforce using the 2016 Census microdata (analyzed as anonymized individual records). SRDC used these data to create a profile of the workforce on characteristics such as family background, income, earnings, credentials, location, and well-being, reported in the 2019 evaluation benchmarking report. The exercise will be repeated (as soon as the data

become available) in late 2023 using Census 2021 data to analyze how the workforce has changed over the five years of 2016 to 2021. SRDC has also been analyzing education data linked to tax records for those enrolling in ECE programs at B.C.'s post-secondary institutions. These analyses permit reporting on education outcomes to 2019. SRDC plans to repeat the analysis in late 2023, to take stock of changes occurring in education participation during the initial years of the ECL R&R Strategy.

From 2022 onwards, there will be an increased focus on exploring the origins and destinations of those entering and leaving the ECL profession and on the reasons for such transitions.

This report includes an increased number of analyses for each KPI in an attempt to better understand the situation in the province with respect to the project's many measures of recruitment and retention outcomes, given we are now three years into the implementation of the ECL R&R Strategy. Although the data available for 2021 and earlier years remains as originally collected (described in previous reports), tables and figures now examine newly-defined groups of ECL professionals (a) defined more precisely by program and role (for example, to include those working at $10 a day sites and at before and after school programs each as a separate category) and (b) by the respondent's highest ECL certification. The original purpose of the benchmarking report (to capture baseline measures against which later report results would be compared) has been supplanted by the inclusion of these new breakdowns. However, the spirit of benchmarking lives on in that this report applies the new analytical categories to the original 2019 and 2020 data. Thus, comparisons of change over time on consistently measured outcomes can be undertaken within this report. This approach will be repeated in future evaluation reports.

Furthermore, this report uses several regression analyses to better understand the core influences on KPI recruitment and retention outcomes. Some associations seen in data can be spurious and using regression methods helps to identify the strongest underlying relationships, getting us closer to understanding what is "causing" the observed outcomes.[4]

This large expansion in report analytical content offers many more perspectives from which to understand the diverse trends underway in BC's ECL workforce, but at the cost of creating a much longer report. Furthermore, data collection efforts in 2022 and 2023 are likely to add new outcomes to the mix. We look forward to considering new ways to

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[4] Nonetheless, regression alone cannot attribute causality and is unable to account for unobserved factors – key influences that may not be measured in the data. More on the strengths and limitations of regression is included in the relevant report sections.

harness the insights coming from providing access to all the available analyses while reducing the burden for those who seek data on only a subset of specific topics.

- **Report writing and presentations including incorporation of feedback.** Activities include production of 30 project deliverables from the project management work plan to the project final report. This current report is #19. All reports to date have recapped the evaluation strategy and work plan during each project year alongside presenting results, considerations and recommendations. Moving forward from report #21, reports will only update aspects of the evaluation as they are being updated or changing. All reports are submitted for review first by ECEBC, then by the Sector Steering Committee and finally by the Government Working Group. Feedback is taken on board in the form of edited final versions of the reports. Additional presentations are prepared as required. These include, from February 2022 onwards, a PowerPoint project presentation to accompany the draft report, which is presented to the Sector Steering Committee and Government Working Group, the board of directors of ECEBC and in a public webinar. The presentation highlights the findings of each year's evaluation. Sector Steering Committee members will be encouraged each year to identify key findings from among the many released to become "communication assets". SRDC will develop four or five such assets each year in the form of infographics to appear on ECEBC's website while ECEBC will develop a video to promote the evaluation reports' key findings.

Box 1   Updated project tasks and activities by year

TASKS YEAR 2021-2022	2021 Dec	2022 Jan	2022 Feb	2022 March
Project liaison, work plan development, coordination and consultation including sector steering committee				
Collaboration on workplan development				
Project coordination	███	███	███	███
Engagement with government working group, sector steering committee	███		███	
In person meeting and virtual meetings	███		███	
Data assessment, scan, building and maintaining data systems including database of ECE providers				
Data assessment				
Data system development				
Maintaining and updating database including provider contact info				
Key informant interviews for theory of change, implementation research/case studies				
Review and modify KII protocols if necessary		███		
Engage case study sites				
Case study and KII fieldwork	███	███	███	███
Design of employer and workforce surveys, loyalty systems, fielding and follow up				
Development of survey materials and communications				
Survey Design				
Follow up reminders for non completes				
Design and commissioning of public opinion survey questions (including age 13+ for career aspirations)				
Commission Survey, support, monitor, receive data	███	███	███	
Analysis				
Plan analysis		███		
Analysis of quantitative and qualitative data		███	███	
Report writing and presentations, incorporation of feedback				
Strategy and tools				
Webinar for ECEs and ECEBC board presentation				
Evaluation report and communication assets	███	███	███	
Other report writing and presentations, incorporation of feedback	███		███	
Deliverables				
DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT 2021			22-Feb-22	
PROJECT PRESENTATION 2021			22-Feb-22	

TASKS YEAR 2022-2023

Task	2022 April	2022 May	2022 June	2022 July	2022 Aug	2022 Sep	2022 Oct	2022 Nov	2022 Dec	2023 Jan	2023 Feb	2023 March
Project liaison, work plan development, coordination and consultation including sector steering committee												
Collaboration on workplan development	▓	▓										
Project coordination	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Engagement with government working group, sector steering committee		▓						▓				▓
In person meeting and virtual meetings		▓						▓				▓
Data assessment, scan, building and maintaining data systems including database of ECE providers												
Data assessment		▓										
Data system development		▓	▓									
Maintaining and updating database including provider contact info		▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓			▓	▓	
Key informant interviews for theory of change, implementation research/case studies												
Review and modify KII protocols if necessary		▓	▓	▓	▓							
Engage case study sites					▓	▓	▓					
Case study and KII fieldwork		▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Design of employer and workforce surveys, loyalty systems, fielding and follow up												
Development of survey materials and communications		▓	▓	▓	▓							
Survey Design			▓	▓	▓	▓	▓					
Follow up reminders for non completes					▓	▓	▓					
Design and commissioning of public opinion survey questions (including age 13+ for career aspirations)												
Commission Survey, support, monitor, receive data	▓							▓	▓	▓	▓	
Analysis												
Plan analysis		▓					▓					
Analysis of quantitative and qualitative data							▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	
Report writing and presentations, incorporation of feedback												
Strategy and tools		▓										
Webinar for ECEs and ECEBC board presentation		▓	▓									
Evaluation report and communication assets	▓	▓					▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Other report writing and presentations, incorporation of feedback		▓					▓	▓		▓		
Deliverables												
EVALUATION REPORT 2021 (FINAL)		31-May-22										
EVALUATION REPORT 2021 COMMUNICATION ASSETS		31-May-22										
UPDATED EVALUATION METHODOLOGY		31-May-22										
EVALUATION TOOLS 2022					13-Aug-22							
INTERIM REPORT #4								1-Nov-22				

TASKS YEAR 2023-2024

Task	2023 April	2023 May	2023 June	2023 July	2023 Aug	2023 Sep	2023 Oct	2023 Nov	2023 Dec	2024 Jan	2024 Feb	2024 March

Project liaison, work plan development, coordination and consultation including sector steering committee

- Collaboration on workplan development
- Project coordination
- Engagement with government working group, sector steering committee
- In person meeting and virtual meetings

Data assessment, scan, building and maintaining data systems including database of ECE providers

- Data assessment
- Data system development
- Maintaining and updating database including provider contact info

Key informant interviews for theory of change, implementation research/case studies

- Review and modify KII protocols if necessary
- Engage case study sites
- Case study and KII fieldwork

Design of employer and workforce surveys, loyalty systems, fielding and follow up

- Development of survey materials and communications
- Survey Design
- Follow up reminders for non completes

Design and commissioning of public opinion survey questions (including age 13+ for career aspirations)

- Commission Survey, support, monitor, receive data

Analysis

- Plan analysis
- Analysis of quantitative and qualitative data

Report writing and presentations, incorporation of feedback

- Strategy and tools
- Webinar for ECEs and ECEBC board presentation
- Evaluation report and communication assets
- Other report writing and presentations, incorporation of feedback

Deliverables

Deliverable	Date
EVALUATION REPORT 2022 (FINAL)	13-Apr-23
EVALUATION REPORT 2022 COMMUNICATION ASSETS	13-Apr-23
EVALUATION TOOLS 2023	13-Aug-23
INTERIM REPORT #5 AND FINAL REPORT OUTLINE	9-Nov-23

TASKS YEAR 2024-2025

	2024 April	2024 May	2024 June	2024 July

Project liaison, work plan development, coordination and consultation including sector steering committee

- Collaboration on workplan development
- Project coordination
- Engagement with government working group, sector steering committee
- In person meeting and virtual meetings

Data assessment, scan, building and maintaining data systems including database of ECE providers

- Data assessment
- Data system development
- Maintaining and updating database including provider contact info

Key informant interviews for theory of change, implementation research/case studies

- Review and modify KII protocols if necessary
- Engage case study sites
- Case study and KII fieldwork

Design of employer and workforce surveys, loyalty systems, fielding and follow up

- Development of survey materials and communications
- Survey Design
- Follow up reminders for non completes

Design and commissioning of public opinion survey questions (including age 13+ for career aspirations)

- Commission Survey, support, monitor, receive data

Analysis

- Plan analysis
- Analysis of quantitative and qualitative data

Report writing and presentations, incorporation of feedback

- Strategy and tools
- Webinar for ECEs and ECEBC board presentation
- Evaluation report and communication assets
- Other report writing and presentations, incorporation of feedback

Deliverables

Deliverable	Date
EVALUATION REPORT 2023 (FINAL)	11-Apr-24
EVALUATION REPORT 2023 COMMUNICATION ASSETS	11-Apr-24
DRAFT FINAL PROJECT REPORT AND PRESENTATION	11-May-24
FINAL PROJECT REPORT AND COMMUNICATION ASSETS	17-Jun-24

SRDC STAFF RESPONSIBLE

As set out in the original Project Management Workplan, SRDC draws resources for this project from across its cadre of 60+ researchers and evaluators as required. Its staff possess a broad range of data collection and analytical skills, policy knowledge and disciplinary perspectives. The team has undergone some changes in recognition of the changing stage of the evaluation work involved, as well as due to SRDC experiencing the arrival of new suitable staff to SRDC and departures of existing team members.

The project lead is Dr. Reuben Ford who acts as the principal point of contact for project management and liaison with the project manager at ECEBC. Descriptions of the current staff and their roles in the project are included below.

Reuben Ford

Reuben Ford is a research director at SRDC and responsible for its program of work promoting access to skills development through advanced education and training. He is a Credentialed Evaluator as recognized by the Canadian Evaluation Society and has directed a wide range of evaluations. These have included determining the impacts of new grants in the form of Learning Accounts, evaluating student aid to Indigenous students and B.C.'s Northern Skills Training Program. Dr. Ford has designed and evaluated career education workshops. Shortly after joining SRDC, he designed the evaluation for the Community Employment Innovation Project community evaluation study. This evaluated the impact of 295 locally developed social employment projects across four communities over a 5-year period. He also led the final evaluation of the Self-Sufficiency Project. Prior to joining SRDC, he worked for the Policy Studies Institute in the UK where he authored several reports on the role of child care in the labour market and gave the keynote address to the UK Government Childcare Strategy conference in 1998.

Dr. Ford is the project lead at SRDC and principal point of contact for ECEBC, committee members and other stakeholders.

Barbara Dobson

Barbara Dobson is a principal research associate at SRDC. She has worked for SRDC in various capacities since 2005. She rejoined as a permanent employee in 2020 and has been engaged in qualitative data collection and analysis on the evaluation of the ECL R&R Strategy. This includes day-to-day management responsibility for work on the key informant interviews and case

studies. She has over 20 years' experience in research & evaluation and has worked on a range of program evaluations within the social policy and public health arenas. Several themes run through Dr. Dobson's career. Much of her work has involved issues around employment, health, low income, and social inequalities. In exploring these issues Dr, Dobson has worked with different groups of people including people with disabilities, seniors, those who have been unemployed for long periods of time, and families living on low incomes. Throughout her work she has tried to actively involve those who participate in her studies so that the research process is seen to be useful and interesting to all who participate in it. Barbara has designed and implemented both local and national evaluation studies, and her interest in behavioural insights lies in how to move beyond empirical findings to support positive changes in policy and practice. Dr. Dobson holds a PhD in Social Policy from the Loughborough University, UK.

Taylor Shek-wai Hui

Taylor Shek-wai Hui is SRDC's Chief Data Scientist in quantitative evaluation of social programs. His areas of interest and expertise include experimental and non-experimental methods of evaluation, human capital formation and utilization, social policies, cost-benefit analysis, as well as applied survey and statistical methodologies. Prior to SRDC, he was an Assistant Professor of Economics at the University of Winnipeg. He holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Western Ontario.

Dr. Hui is the chief advisor to other members of the team on the acquisition, development, analysis, and reporting of national and regional data sets.

Paul Lalonde

Paul Lalonde started his career with SRDC in 2008, working as a quantitative data analyst on it first child care project: the Readiness to Learn in Minority Francophone Communities Pilot Project. Since then, Mr. Lalonde has proven to be an integral part of SRDC's research team, contributing to over 50 SRDC projects of various sizes, scope, and policy areas as a skilled evaluator, data analyst, and author. He joined the Evaluation of the ECL R&R Strategy team in April 2021 to work on the design, programming and analysis of its cross-sectional surveys.

Much of Mr. Lalonde's previous work has focused on improving access to services and the effectiveness of programs that facilitate the economic and social integration of newcomers to Canada, increase the essential skills of workers in various sectors of the Canadian economy, and reduce the incidence of individuals experiencing poverty in Canada. He holds a Master's degree in Public Policy and Administration, with a specialization in Policy Analysis from Carleton University, in addition to an undergraduate degree in mathematics and second undergraduate degree in International Studies and Modern Languages, both from the University of Ottawa.

Xiaoyang Luo

Xiaoyang Luo joined SRDC in February 2019. She brings significant experience working with newcomers to B.C. and conducting and facilitating research to support their integration. Her research experience in the settlement sector supported service providers to develop and propose responsive and client-centred programs for immigrants and refugees in Metro Vancouver. She also delivered training to settlement staff to increase their research capacity and understanding of the impacts of immigration policies on their clients and their services. Outside of the settlement sector, Ms. Luo has research experience in the K-12 and higher education sectors. Her research interests include immigration and integration, supportive family policies, and intersectionality. She is passionate about improving the economic and social outcomes of individuals and communities experiencing marginalization.

Ms. Luo holds a Master of Public Policy from Simon Fraser University and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from McGill University. Ms. Luo has held different project responsibilities over time including developing initial systems for social and news media monitoring, qualitative data collection, analysis and reporting.

Jessica McQuiggan

Jessica McQuiggan joined SRDC in April 2021 as a Research Associate in the Vancouver office. In addition to a strong research background, Jessica has experience with evaluation, knowledge translation, and science policy. She is passionate about science communication and loves to explore creative ways of disseminating and implementing research findings. Jessica also has extensive volunteer and committee experience; she enjoys pursuing upstream, permanent solutions and tends to take a systems-level approach to her work.

Dr. McQuiggan has a PhD in cognitive psychology from the University of Toronto. Her research focused on how healthy adult brains process various types of speech, and the implications for broader theories of learning and memory. She has undertaken most of the survey design, coordination and analysis in this project through 2021.

Ricardo Meilman Cohn

Ricardo Meilman Cohn joined SRDC as a Research Associate in 2020. He is an economist with research interests in economics of education, labour economics, and development economics. He has prior research experience working at the World Bank, Itau Unibanco, UNDP, and SFU's Centre for Education Research and Policy. He earned a PhD in Economics from Simon Fraser University, a M.Sc. in Economic Development and Growth from Carlos III University of Madrid and Lund University, and a B.A. in Economics from Federal University of Minas Gerais.

Dr Meilman Cohn is responsible for the project's analysis of education data linked to tax records in Statistics Canada Research Data Centre at Simon Fraser University.

John Sergeant

Mr. Sergeant joined SRDC from the Education Policy Research Initiative at the University of Ottawa where he had worked since 2014. He holds a Bachelor's degree (Honours) in Political Science from the University of Waterloo. He has been engaged in social and news media content analysis and reporting as well as coordinating the 2021 administrative data collection and analysis.

UPDATED SCHEDULE FOR DELIVERABLES

The dates deliverables are first due to ECEBC are shown in Table 1:

Table 1   Remaining schedule of deliverables 2022-24

PROPOSED PROJECT DELIVERABLE/ACTIVITY TITLE	DELIVERABLE DUE DATE
19. FINAL EVALUATION REPORT (2021) AND EVALUATION REPORT (2021) COMMUNICATION ASSETS	31-May-22
20. UPDATED EVALUATION METHODOLOGY	31-May-22
21. EVALUATION TOOLS (2022)	13-Aug-22
22. INTERIM REPORT #4	01-Nov-22
23. DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT (2022) AND PROJECT PRESENTATION (2022)	20-Feb-23
24. FINAL EVALUATION REPORT (2022) AND 28. EVALUATION REPORT (2022) COMMUNICATION ASSETS	13-Apr-23
25. EVALUATION TOOLS (2023)	13-Aug-23
26. INTERIM REPORT #4 AND FINAL REPORT OUTLINE	09-Nov-23
27. DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT (2023) AND PROJECT PRESENTATION (2023)	20-Feb-24
28. FINAL EVALUATION REPORT (2023) AND EVALUATION REPORT (2023) COMMUNICATION ASSETS	11-Apr-24
29. DRAFT FINAL PROJECT REPORT AND PRESENTATION	11-May-24
30. FINAL PROJECT REPORT AND COMMUNICATION ASSETS	17-Jun-24

SECTOR STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Purpose

The Sector Steering Committee (SSC) was established in early 2019 for the purpose of guiding the sector-led evaluation of the ECL R&R Strategy undertaken by Early Childhood Educators B.C. (ECEBC) with funding from the Province of British Columbia and Government of Canada. The SSC assists the Project Manager and ECEBC in its function of governance by providing quality control of the contract deliverables, and oversight of the contractors (SRDC) engaged to complete the project. The SSC approved Terms of Reference in March 2019 that have been updated periodically, most recently on 8 March 2022, which guide their governance function. They include committee composition, roles and responsibilities, meeting frequency and confidentiality agreements.

Engagement

The SSC held its inaugural meeting on 20 February 2019 in Richmond, B.C. Twenty organizations were invited to appoint representatives to participate as members. Representatives from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Project Manager, and SRDC also attended the meeting as ex-officio members of the committee without voting rights.

Composition

The following organizations have appointed a representative to participate as a member of the Sector Steering Committee:

- Aboriginal Head Start Association of BC

- Aboriginal Supported Child Development

- BC Aboriginal Child Care Society

- BC Association of Child Development and Intervention

- BC Family Child Care Association

- BC First Nations Head Start

- British Columbia General Employees' Union

- Canadian Childcare Federation

- Child Care Resource and Referral

- Child Care Professionals of BC[5]

- City of Surrey

- Coalition of Childcare Advocates of BC

- ECE Articulation Committee

- Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC)

- Early Childhood Pedagogy Network[6]

- Métis Nation BC[7]

- Multi-Age Childcare Association of British Columbia

- Pacific Immigrant Resources Society

- Peer Mentoring for Early Childhood Educators in BC[3]

- Provincial Child Care Council

- School Age Childcare Association of BC

- Supported Child Development

- UBC Childcare

- Vancouver Coastal Health

Activities

Through September, 2022, the SSC has met twice in person (February 2019 and May 2019), two times by phone (March and November 2019) and nine times by Zoom (March, July, and December 2020; March 8th, March 30th, June 28th and November 30th 2021, March 8th and June

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[5]   Formerly the B.C. Child Care Owners Association

[6]   New member, joined in 2022.

[7]   Métis Nation BC accepted invitation to join the committee on 5 December 2019.

16th 2022). While at least one meeting each year was originally intended to be in person, all have been convened via Zoom since March 2020 to respect recommendations to avoid in-person group events during the COVID-19 pandemic. Minutes from these meetings are available upon request. The SSC last met on June 16, 2022, to approve the final version of this report.

During July and August 2021, the SSC provided feedback on the 2021 Employer Survey and BC Child Care Workforce Survey, primarily via email. The fielding of these surveys later in 2021 has provided considerable evidence for the current report. Moreover, individual members of the SSC have been extremely helpful in providing input on specific aspects of the survey by email and by phone. For example, several members supported efforts to reach out to members of the B.C. ECL workforce, during the November 2021 open invitation stage of fieldwork, to encourage them to complete the survey. In March 2022, members of the SSC provided advice on revised approaches to analysis and presentations of the findings, which are reflected in new table and chart structures in the current report. Evaluation reports for 2022 and 2023 will take on board more ambitious changes in report structure, to better meet the needs of ECL sector partners, as these are now permitted under the extension agreement signed on 18 March 2022.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION

THEORY OF CHANGE CONSULTATIONS

Purpose

Theories of Change (ToC) help implementers and evaluators of programs understand the implicit assumptions about causal pathways that lead to changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours.

Several documents set out the goals, outcomes, strategies, and tactics of the ECL R&R Strategy. According to the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) staff, these are based on Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reports and other reviews of universal early care and learning systems, across Canada and in Europe (e.g., Schleicher, 2019; Productivity Commission, 2011; Watters Consulting, 2018). In 2020, the government announced delivery of child care would be moving from MCFD into the Ministry of Education by 2023, and the move took place in April 2022. The destination Ministry is now called the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC).

The evaluation launched with three ten-year goals and five three-year outcomes.[8] The evaluation is now covering a fourth and fifth year and there have been several announcements of new government interventions to support recruitment and retention. Thus, SRDC met with Ministry of Education and Child Care staff on May 24th 2022 to confirm that the goals and outcomes remain. As they were confirmed unchanged, the evaluation now assumes the outcomes originally sought over the first three years will apply equivalently – as "medium-term outcomes" – to the first five years.

Much less information has been released about the assumptions that guided the process of developing tactics to achieve the goals and outcomes. To understand the latter, SRDC undertook

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[8]   The three-year outcomes were: Recruitment strategies will ensure an adequate supply of ECEs and other child care staff entering the workforce; Retention strategies will support the long-term engagement of ECEs and others in the workforce, to help keep them in the profession; Career pathways will provide opportunities for career growth and development within the early care and learning sector; Education, training, and professional development will be reviewed, enhanced, and expanded to ensure a competent early care and learning workforce with the skills, knowledge and abilities required to provide quality services to children and families; and Public confidence in the professionalism and accountability of early care and learning professionals from rigorous standards and oversight. These are now termed medium-term outcomes.

its initial ToC fieldwork in 2019. The theory of change included in the Interim Report #1 in 2019 was the result of key informant interviews with members of the project's government working group (GWG) and other stakeholders to capture the assumptions underlying and informing the development and implementation of the ECL R&R Strategy tactics. This information was used to confirm that the evaluation activities and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were targeted towards understanding the achievements and challenges of the ECL R&R Strategy.

While SRDC previously considered this stage completed, it anticipates resuming efforts during 2022 and 2023 to document the new government interventions that form part of the ECL R&R Strategy. Any upcoming ToC fieldwork will use a similar protocol to the one used in 2019. The latest version was included in the Evaluation Methods and Tools Report for 2020.

Methodology implementation

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) are undertaken by phone or Zoom. Potential interview participants receive emails that invite them to participate in short interviews on the theory of change behind new ECL R&R Strategy measures. The key informants are sent copies of the existing theory of change and an interview protocol with consent information prior to the call.

The key informants review the interview protocol and consent to participate in the interviews. With their permission, the interviews are recorded, and notes taken. Following the interview, the notes are transcribed and filled in with the voice recording. The recording is uploaded to a secure SRDC server. Per the consent form, all interviews will be deleted one year after the completion of the evaluation.

Information about the tactics, outcomes and goals would be used to update the theory of change, providing a rich description to confirm or modify the theory and the assumptions about potential causal pathways. No personal information is included in the graphics or theory of change descriptions.

As the theory of change is updated, it is used to guide data collection and analysis for later evaluation reports. The primary use is guiding the data collection and analysis necessary to help attribute changes occurring in KPIs to the ECL R&R Strategy tactics. As a "living document," the theory of change can be reviewed every year and adjusted as needed with increased information about the ECL R&R Strategy and related government measures.

Next steps

Several changes to the ECL R&R Strategy took place through 2021. These included new measures developed as part of the bilateral Early Learning and Child Care Agreement with the federal

government, signed in July 2021 and as announced in the April 2021 and February 2022 B.C. budgets. In its meeting with MECC staff, SRDC established the following were indeed augmented and new features of the BC ECL R&R Strategy:

Augmented existing tactics

- Postsecondary education

    o Creation of 1,150 new ECE student spaces at the provinces' public post-secondary schools.

    o An expanded dual credit program so high school students can more quickly attain their ECE certification.

    o More funds to support continuation of ECE student bursaries for the next three to four years.

    o Support for a work-integrated approach that gives ECE students the opportunity to become certified while maintaining employment as an ECL professional.

- Professional development

    o Additional funds for professional development, inclusion support and deaf/hard-of-hearing training, and peer mentoring, including bursaries to assist child care professionals in accessing affordable professional learning, funded through West Coast Child Care Resource Centre.

- Wage enhancement

    o Three increases to wage enhancements for ECEs to reach $4 an hour, with effect from September 2021, also expanding the eligible population from April 2022.

New tactics under development

- Transition supports

    o A recruitment and retention incentive program to encourage new ECEs who become certified through the ECE Registry to work in the sector, and to improve information and understanding about ECE retention

    o $750,000 to translate francophone ECE credentials or those from other countries to help certify new British Columbians to work as ECEs.

As the new tactics are developed and implemented, SRDC will engage in ToC fieldwork, through interviews with officials at the responsible government ministries to firmly establish the underlying theory and intent of the new tactics for achieving ECL R& Strategy outcomes.

CHILD CARE WORKFORCE CONTACT INFORMATION DATABASE

Purpose

A major component of the evaluation framework comprises repeat cross-sectional surveys of the ECL workforce in B.C., including annual surveys of employers combined with an annual nested survey of employees within each facility. These surveys require advance preparation of a 'sample frame' – a database including available points of contact for survey outreach and invitations. This contact database is intended to perform two roles in the evaluation: it represents the sample frame for the cross-sectional surveys, and it has the potential to support comparison of the universe of licenced operators each year to assess the changing composition of the sector, though this latter use has not been possible as, for various reasons, requested data has not been supplied.

Methodology implementation

SRDC's initial plan was to set up a comprehensive contact database of the ECL workforce, including directors and operators. The database was going to be built from public and private sources and ongoing tracing of additional entries. Due to the unavailability of data sources, SRDC was only able to include child care providers from the following sources:

- Licensed child care providers receiving the Child Care Operator Funding (CCOF) – Publicly available database

- Universal Child Care Prototype Sites – Data held by the Ministry of Children and Family Development

- Licensed child care providers not receiving CCOF – Data not covered above but held by health authorities.

Data requests for the ECE Registry were not approved due to privacy concerns with respect to sharing personal contact information without prior consent for this purpose. Not receiving access to contact data from the ECE Registry impacted the scope of the database as it presents a challenge to contacting ECEs broadly, especially those not currently working in a licensed child care centre. SRDC's data request from local B.C. Child Care Resource and Referral Centres (CCRRs) regarding Registered License-not-required (RLNR) child care centres was also not completed due to difficulties in providing these data. SRDC has continued to seek data sources that can make up for these gaps and has implemented mitigation strategies such as requesting CCRRs to distribute the survey invitations on our behalf.

The database is being updated on an ongoing basis. Requests to data suppliers such as health authorities are dispatched in the summer months of each year (from 2019 onwards), in anticipation of receiving the data for September of the same year. This approach has not been fully successful in any year. Two health authorities in each year were either very late to deliver data or did not deliver any data.

Data collection was intended to be intensive in the initial phase of the project, with updates continuous throughout the project. However, due to the delays in obtaining the data from the health authorities, the database is being updated only annually. Statistics on database contents and turnover will be released once a complete version of the database has been compiled. If this does not prove possible by the time of the final evaluation reports in 2024, SRDC will generate a database partially complete for the subset of health authorities that supplied data and use this for year over year comparisons of the 'universe' of operators, while noting shortfalls and disparities.

Notwithstanding these challenges, SRDC used all information available to build as complete a sample frame as possible for its 2021 surveys. For employers, this meant supplementing contact information from the CCOF database and Health Authorities with the list of employers assembled in 2020. In the case of duplicate entries, we prioritized the contact information contained in the CCOF database first, then from health authorities and only used 2020 contact information when no other data were available. The result was a contact list of 3,144 unique email addresses; of these, 2,995 represented valid addresses which received the email invitation (though many remain unanswered, meaning the email addresses may have been valid but inactive).

For the workforce survey, multiple contact lists were developed, including invitations to employers (to both complete and distribute the survey), licensed family care providers, and previous respondents. When duplicates emerged, SRDC ensured that only a single invitation was issued and that, if applicable, it encouraged the widest possible reach. For example, if an employer who could distribute the survey to multiple staff at their workplace was also a previous respondent, they would receive an invitation to complete and distribute the survey as an employer rather than a simple invitation to complete it as a previous respondent. The workforce survey list eventually comprised 6,793 unique email addresses, and only five invitations yielded reports of bounces. Nonetheless, we do not have accurate information on how many invitations were received through our initial distribution.

Challenges or limitations

The main limitation pertains to the scope of the database. Ideally, the database would have been exhaustive, with an equivalent number of entities as child care providers, either as individuals

(as noted in the Benchmarking Report the B.C. workforce numbers roughly 35,000) or workplaces. Such a database, kept up to date, would allow us to estimate the impact of the ECL R&R Strategy on the entirety of the sector. However, for reasons of feasibility, SRDC has had to restrict the scope of the survey sample frame to include only a subset of licensed child care providers.

Delays in obtaining data from health authorities have presented an ongoing challenge in updating the database. SRDC contacted the health authorities during the summer of 2021 to initiate the data request process. SRDC asked for data to be delivered starting September 2021 as well as accurate with respect to September 2021. But the time it took each health authority to complete SRDC's data request varied. One health authority has yet to provide any data to the project. Due to staffing turnover, another health authority that provided data in previous years retained no institutional memory of earlier requests from this project and requested that SRDC submit a Freedom of Information (FOI) request rather than directly providing the data as it had in previous years. These data were received on November 23rd; however, this was after the survey had ended. In addition, one of the three health authorities that provided data in 2021 included partial contact information, but it newly deemed email addresses to be personal data that could not be released. This means that despite SRDC's efforts, contact data sources do not represent a snapshot of the sector at the exact same point in time each year.

Furthermore, data are only ever as good as their sources. SRDC has no say in how the source databases are maintained and updated, so these contact data are only as accurate in coverage as the original providers' information. There are:

- Data inconsistencies in the way child care programs are recorded (as multiple records or same record);

- Data inconsistencies in the way child care centre names are written.

There are likely inconsistencies in the updating of datasets due to COVID-19. The pandemic increased the volume and frequency of changes in ECL providers. For example, the data on maximum centre capacity is unlikely to have captured temporary and permanent changes resulting from COVID-19 mitigation strategies, such as when more staff is hired to allow staff to take sick days or because centres close more often temporarily, and so on. Centres may be closing with minimal notice, re-opening, or re-structuring rapidly as a consequence of responses to COVID-19.

Next steps

For 2021, CCOF data was sought and obtained as in previous years. However, only three health authorities supplied data files. A best attempt to construct comparable annual databases will be

undertaken at the end of the project to support a final assessment of changes in operators through the evaluation period. Any attempt at this point to compare all collected data is likely to generate spurious estimates of change due to data shortfalls: such an analysis can only be contemplated for a subset.

ADMINISTRATIVE OUTCOMES DATABASE

Purpose

Existing administrative data provide a source of information for descriptive analysis of the pace and pattern of implementation of the ECL R&R Strategy tactics as well as enumeration of changes being brought about by the ECL R&R Strategy in the number and characteristics of child care providers.

Methodology implementation

These (mostly) publicly compiled data cover aspects of tactic delivery, education pathways and additional means to take stock of the wide variety of operators and professionals working in the sector. SRDC's work with these data began following MCFD supplying data files starting in mid-September 2021. The following data sources have been received by SRDC from different sources:

- Child Care Operating Fund Data – contact data obtained.

- Data on prototype sites – received from MCFD on September 10, 2021. These supplement CCOF data on certification for sites no longer included in CCOF.

- Child care job postings –Vicinity Jobs provided additional data with job postings from multiple job boards from May 2020–December 2020 in late May 2021, now covering a period from January 2018 to December 2020.[9] Data through December 2021 reached SRDC in February 2022. These data are used to track changes in recruitment needs to the extent these are captured in advertised vacancies.

- ECE Registry aggregate data – received from MCFD on September 20, 2021. These data help to track changes in certifications over time.

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[9]   Vicinity Jobs is a Canadian company based in Vancouver that undertakes big data analytics and internet search. Each week, data are collected from thousands of websites across Canada, yielding approximately 200,000 new, unique online job postings per month. Using a machine learning technique called natural language processing, Vicinity Jobs then extracts information about occupation, location, and work requirements (including skills) from each posting. Beginning in January 2018, Vicinity Jobs has collected online job postings daily, each uniquely identified on the day it is first observed. Every month, Vicinity Jobs cleans and structures this data, which includes removing duplications.

- ECE Bursary Program – available from ECEBC. Data have been obtained covering the period from the Fall 2018 semester to the Summer 2021 semester. Fall 2021 data were provided in April 2022. These are used to monitor implementation of this tactic.

- ECE Workforce Development Fund – available from ECEBC. Data have been obtained covering the period from the Fall 2018 semester to the Summer 2021 semester. Fall 2021 data were provided in April 2022. These are used to monitor implementation of this tactic.

- Registered License-Not-Required providers (RLNR) – SRDC received a static snapshot from MCFD of the RLNR data the Ministry held of as of April 2020. MCFD has also provided an additional table with the number of RLNR certificates in each health region as of the beginning of the fiscal year, from 2016 to 2021.

- Members of the ECL workforce qualified as Responsible Adults – in January 2021 SRDC received CCRR data on the number of participants in courses for Responsible Adult qualification that were delivered in each health authority in 2019 and 2020. Data for 2021 was received on January 17, 2022. But these courses do not cover all those receiving the qualification.

- Temporary Emergency Fund – MCFD provided data on the number of supported facilities and spaces from April through August 2020 on December 22, 2020. Temporary Emergency Funding was not continued after August 2020.

- New Spaces Fund data – This fund helps with the creation of 22,000 new child care spaces in B.C. MCFD has provided to SRDC aggregated data up to September 30, 2021. These include: application forms; number of approved and non-approved/withdrawn applications; type of organization; health authority region; spaces created for each type of organization; spaces created for each age group.

- Start-up grant data – Aggregated data have been received from MCFD up to September 30, 2021 including fiscal years 2018-19 through 2020-21 and 2021-22 year to date.

- ECE Wage Enhancement – received first from MCFD in November 2020 covering the period from April 2018 to October 2020. A new file updating these data with additional claims filed for this period and adding additional data for the period from November 2020 to October 2021, was received on December 6, 2021. These are used to monitor implementation of this tactic.

- Community Early Childhood Facilitators Program – SRDC received evaluation reports from MCFD based on a survey and interviews with stakeholders in the successor tactic: the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network.

- Freedom of Information requests – SRDC requested from health authorities annual data on the number of staff covered by staffing exemption requests from licensed child care facilities granted by the authority under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act, Section 16 covering child care operations broken down by staffing levels involved in the exemption, e.g., the number of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) replaced by ECE Assistants; the number of ECEs replaced by a Responsible Adult. Data has been received from the Vancouver Island Health Authority and Interior Health Authority. Fraser Health Authority also replied in December 2021, but due to data formatting issues the total number of exemptions for each year could not be further broken down by staffing levels. Vancouver Coastal Health Authority is finalizing its data. SRDC has yet to receive a response from Northern Health Authority.

- ECE public post-secondary program participation and outcomes - SRDC has begun analyzing data on students who enrolled in ECE programs in B.C. public institutions over the most recent five years and modelling changes in numbers and composition over time, relative to previous education history (from K-12 and post-secondary records). It is also examining labour market outcomes in terms of earnings and industry as recorded in tax records. The analysis can explore whether any changes in patterns over time are associated with the introduction of the ECL R&R strategy.[10]

- The Statistics Canada Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements (SELCCA) – these annual data are also available for analysis of changes in the sources of child care parents report using in B.C. This source holds potential to explore gaps in understanding of the prevalence of license-not-required care, which is not covered comprehensively in other data sources. SRDC sought and obtained permission from Statistics Canada for the release of B.C. specific data. So far only 2019 data is available. SELCCA 2020 data will be available in the summer of 2022, providing the first opportunity for the analysis of trends in use of different types of child care.

The following is a list of data sources not yet obtained by SRDC:

- Updated occupational competencies for training ECE and updated ECE standards of practice – to be obtained as and when they are released publicly.

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[10] SRDC submitted a request to Statistics Canada for permission to access and analyze these linked data from its Education and Labour Market Longitudinal Platform in the secure environment of the Simon Fraser University Research Data Centre. The application was approved on 3 November 2021. Statistics Canada vets SRDC's analytical output, which limits detail in the permitted analysis.

- Numbers of seats and students in ECE programs, including degree and higher credential programs, in B.C.'s public post-secondary institutions annually since 2018. Number students in these programs in receipt of funding from StudentAidBC.

- The number and types of complaints received by the ECE Registry with respect to the conduct/professionalism of ECEs and ECEAs over time.

The following are data sources that SRDC has previously sought or captured and so is no longer seeking updates:

- Aboriginal Head Start preschools [because 2021 data have already been obtained]

- Child care centres investigation reports

- Unregistered License-Not-Required providers

Challenges or limitations

The first limitation relates to the availability of data. Several data requests have not been successful due to lack of data availability, non-response, privacy reviews and technical problems that delay analysis (one example is the closure and restricted services at Statistics Canada Research Data Centres for COVID-related reasons, including staff quarantines). Furthermore, shortage of staff at MCFD during 2021 increased the time required to respond to data requests. SRDC continues to connect with the various agencies to try to secure responses from pending data requests.

A second limitation relates to quality and consistency of data. SRDC is not the primary holder of data, and as such, cannot perform checks on the quality of data released. SRDC does not control how source databases are maintained and updated by their current custodians. The quality of the data obtained relies on the quality control practices and mechanisms program managers and data custodians follow. Inconsistency in the upkeep of data sources over time especially poses challenges to SRDC's ability to track changes in KPIs. Inconsistent capture of data fields can also hamper SRDC's ability to link the different data sources by child care centre or provider. Some data can only be provided in an aggregated form, which prevents linkage reducing the utility of the information for tracking the impact of specific tactics, and the use of the data in contribution analysis related to the theory of change.

Lastly, even for publicly available data, SRDC has not always been able to receive data from the data holder in a format friendly for data cleaning and manipulation, for example, in an Excel or CSV format. SRDC writes programs to transform these data files into useable analysis files.

Next steps

SRDC has been revising and updating its database to accommodate the received data. The aim to attempt to create a common geographic and temporal framework across the datasets to allow SRDC to analyze changes in the composition of the sector through the full period covered by the evaluation for every health authority region will not be possible, but this may be feasible for one or two health authorities. As new data are received and the full range of eventual data becomes easier to define, SRDC is updating its analysis plan to use the supplied data to inform the ECL R&R Strategy KPIs. In most cases, administrative data provide estimates for KPIs where other data sources also exist, such as for wage levels, and these multiple data sources help to validate the trends in the sector over time, increasing confidence that changes since the introduction of the ECL R&R Strategy are genuine.

CHILD CARE WORKFORCE CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEY

Purpose

The cross-sectional surveys collectively represent one of the main evaluation activities. They were established to measure the success of the ECL R&R Strategy in making progress on its ten-year goals and medium-term outcomes by providing data on most of the evaluation's KPIs.[11] They also attempt to document aspects of implementation of the ECL R&R Strategy tactics. The target sample for the surveys includes operators, anyone working in child care (i.e., working directly with children or supervising staff who work directly with children), administrative staff who can provide centre staffing information, and certified ECEs/ECEAs not currently working in child care.[12] From 2022, given increased interest in labour mobility, survey eligibility will be expanded to include anyone who worked in child care at any point during the previous year, thus expanding those who have left child care beyond certified ECEs/ECEAs.

Methodology implementation

In 2019, a single survey was implemented in two stages. In the first stage, SRDC used a sample frame it developed from public data on operators' contact information to initiate a "nested" survey. It was nested in the sense that employers (child care centre directors, owners, managers, and owner/operators) were asked not only to complete the survey themselves but also to forward the survey invitation to members of their staff.[13] The survey was constructed in such a way that the responses of operators could be linked to the responses of their employees to build a comprehensive picture of the impact of the ECL R&R Strategy on each participating child care workplace in B.C. In the second stage, SRDC issued an open invitation to the survey, because: (a) not every operator would complete or forward the first stage invitation; (b) not every staff member would complete the survey forwarded in the first stage by their employer; (c) not every operator was in the database; and (d) ECEs and ECEAs not in ECL could not be reached by the first stage approach as MCFD could not release ECE registry contact information for survey purposes. The open invitation was dispatched through at least 41 communications from 11 different child care organizations using social media and newsletters as well as email invitations and website publicity.

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[11] The intended outcomes are assumed to remain the same through the evaluation's fourth and fifth years.

[12] ECEs/ECEAs not currently working in child care includes those working outside the ECL sector as well as those working with children in the school system and StrongStartBC. Starting in 2022, the surveys will include as part of the target sample those who ceased working in the sector in the preceding year.

[13] The "employer" respondent was the person or people at each child care workplace responsible for hiring and overall management of staff, the budget, setting of fees and so on.

The use of a sample frame in the survey's first stage brought advantages in that SRDC could personalize invitations, provide survey links unique to each workplace, determine the characteristics of the operators who responded and who did not, and control for nonresponse using this information. SRDC also knew to whom to send reminders. The second stage comprised an open, public call for responses to engage those eligible but not captured in Stage 1, without the advantages of a sample frame. However, the open call could have much wider circulation and was simpler to administer: it did not require customized operator-unique survey links. Thus, the second stage invitation could be posted publicly and distributed in ways that were likely to reach many more members of the province's ECL workforce.

The 2020 survey methodology resembled the approach in 2019. However, SRDC included three major changes to improve data quality, respondent experience, and increase the survey's response rate:

- The data collection was broken down even more than in 2019, into two separate surveys. First, workplace-level data, previously collected from operators, was collected through an "employer" survey. Each child care centre received an online form that could be filled out by multiple staff within their organization in relation to aggregate (not personal) data on those employed there. The form was designed to resemble reporting forms required by licensing and government programs so that centres could refer to already filled-out forms in their centres. With only one form per centre that all representatives could see, there was less scope for duplication and inconsistency. The second "workforce" survey resembled the cross-sectional workforce survey implemented with the same methodology in 2019 but with an updated survey instrument and invitation process.

- The 2020 workforce survey invitation was first sent out to all participants in the 2019 cross-sectional workforce survey who agreed to be contacted in the future: 1,803 of 2,728 gave such consent. This process was intended to improve the survey's response and allowed SRDC to conduct longitudinal analysis that measured changes year-over-year.[14] SRDC also sent the invitation to ECL professionals who volunteered their contact information online before and after an August 2020 webinar on evaluation benchmarking results. The invitation was also sent out to employers – inviting them to complete the survey and forward the invitation to their staff. Owner-operators of

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[14] Cross-sectional analysis most effectively takes the pulse of the sector as a whole in each year (while acknowledging sample exclusions). It provides a basis for considering the influence of the ECL R&R strategy on KPIs given its tactics are intended to change patterns of entry into and exit from the workforce (and thus the population from which the sample is drawn). Nonetheless, longitudinal analyses shed light on those entry and exit processes and individual's ongoing experiences. SRDC aims to include longitudinal analysis to map the experiences of repeat respondents over time in the final project report.

licenced workplaces were asked to complete the cross-sectional workforce survey (as well as the employer survey if they had employees), but only for themselves. Then finally, the open invitation was made available via project partners, sector stakeholders and social media.

- The final survey instruments included new sections of questions related to the influences of the COVID-19 pandemic and responses to the pandemic. Data from the previous year's responses were also embedded into the workforce survey when completed by the same respondents, to reduce their survey burden.

The 2020 survey methodology was repeated in 2021 with minimal changes. Due to challenges associated with tracking participants from one year to another, responses from previous years were not embedded into the workforce survey for returning respondents in 2021. Additionally, the number of questions related to the COVID-19 pandemic was reduced and the overall survey structure was simplified. The biggest change in the workforce survey related to the logic structure that determined how each respondent passed through the survey based on their unique situation. In 2020, a respondent could take one of seven different streams; in 2021 this was simplified to one of three different streams – one for individuals working in licensed child care centres, one for Home Care Providers, and one for ECEs/ECEAs not currently working in child care. The reduced number of streams reduced the risk of errors in survey logic going unnoticed in the survey implementation.

Survey design

Similar to 2020, SRDC collected feedback on the draft 2021 survey instruments from the SSC through Google Sheets. This process reduced the need to merge different documents and simplified the process for all reviewers by making all reviewer comments visible, reducing the need for them to duplicate similar comments provided by earlier reviewers.

In July and August 2021, SRDC received two rounds of feedback from the SSC. Since the SSC was highly involved in the development of the surveys in 2019 and 2020, SRDC received helpful feedback, such as:

- A recommendation to include a new category of licensed care, called recreational care;

- Suggestions to differentiate Indigenous languages and whether Indigenous children are First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, to better understand regional ECL needs;

- Refining the updated COVID-19 block of questions and clarifying the timeframe being measured in questions related to COVID-19.

The wording in these sections was altered following these suggestions from SSC members.

The 2021 employer survey was delivered using Qualtrics, while the workforce survey was delivered using Voxco. SRDC hoped that using two different platforms would help to visually differentiate the surveys while still maintaining the same "brand", as feedback from 2020 suggested confusion around the existence of two different but similar surveys. Both the employer and workforce surveys were pre-tested by SRDC staff.

Respondents were assured they could request assistance to complete the surveys via a toll-free line and/or email to SRDC. The online instruments were designed to be accessible via smartphones and/or tablets. Respondents' progress with the employer survey was saved at each point to allow them to take a break and resume later, or to share with a colleague who could help provide answers. The workforce survey allowed respondents to use a "Finish Later" function in which they would be emailed a unique link that saved their progress in the survey.

SRDC implemented a survey communication plan developed with ECEBC to increase survey engagement:

- SRDC sent three e-mails to employers (plus a reminder) about the Employer Survey and about the Workforce Survey.

- ECEBC engaged SSC members to support communications efforts for the workforce survey. For simplicity, SSC members promoted the workforce survey only; however, the workforce survey prompts eligible participants to complete the employer survey as well, so they effectively promoted participation in both surveys.

Survey invitations were similar to those used in previous years, which used best practices from behavioural insights to increase response rates. Employers did not receive an incentive for participating in the employer survey. However, the employers' organizations that participated were each entered into a draw for a $500 gift card for Wintergreen or Strong Nations.

Workforce survey participants including ECE/ECEAs not currently working in child care could choose one of four free professional development activities offered online or an ECEBC poster available for download. The survey was set up so that participants were re-directed to the registration pages for these activities upon completing the survey. Individual respondents to the workforce survey were also entered for a draw to win a $500 gift card for Wintergreen Learning Materials or Strong Nations.

Challenges or limitations

The scale of the survey inevitably presents challenges due to the large amount of activity required of those programming, implementing, and responding to it. A high volume of activity in a short time period can raise the chances that errors arise or go unnoticed. In particular, the

survey's broad target population (anyone working in the ECL sector and ECEs/ECEAs not currently working in child care) posed several challenges to the production of a common instrument. Employment characteristics to be captured across the different types of child care centres vary significantly. SRDC consulted with stakeholders and engaged multiple survey testers to ensure that the different survey pathways were appropriate for each group.

Changes over time presented a challenge for the 2021 surveys. The effect of the pandemic was expected to seem less salient as a survey topic in 2021 than in 2020, so the number of questions was reduced. Also, the ECL R&R Strategy launched in 2018 and so may not be recalled by as many in 2021, in the wake of more recent federal and provincial government announcements related to child care that have not always been associated with the ECL R&R Strategy.

The employer survey launched to 3,144 employers on September 27, 2021 and closed on November 23, 2021. Employers received a reminder email on October 13. Employers who subsequently responded to invitations to complete the workforce survey received prompts from within the workforce survey to complete the employer survey, if eligible. The number of completed responses to the employer survey was 750. The number of useable surveys was 734 and this compares to 463 completed and used responses from the 2020 employer survey.

The workforce survey email distribution went to a total of 6,793 previous respondents and employers on October 19, with social media campaigns and SSC communications beginning as of October 25. By the time of survey closure, on 23 November, 2021, 2,441 completed responses had been submitted.[15] However, there were several ineligible responses. SRDC considers 2,286 responses useable in the analysis.[16] Unlike previous years—whereby inclusion in the analysis required at least 70 per cent completion of survey questions--SRDC opted for a group-based approach when applying its inclusion/exclusion criteria. In this sense, the sample consists of respondents who reached the questions that 92 per cent or more within their group have answered.

Profile of respondents

The workforce survey results are presented in this report using a new set of sample definitions. The categories are no longer comparable to those released in previous reports, but analyses from

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[15] Emails were sent to 1,866 individual members of the workforce and 4,158 workplace contacts in the contact information data base asking the recipient to forward to employees (if any). Because the invitation was further dispatched via an open invitation using social media, a response rate cannot be estimated.

[16] As a point of reference, in 2019 the survey link was followed 4,041 times but the total number of useable responses to the combined employer and workforce survey was 2,728 by the time the survey closed on November 18, 2019.

those earlier 2019 benchmarking and 2020 evaluation reports use similarly recategorized samples in this report for year-to-year comparison.

There are now two main categorizations used to divide ECL professionals. In previous reports, one categorization predominated, which separated home-based from licenced centre-based ECL professionals and differentiated the latter only by role (owner-operators versus others) while certified *ECE/ECEAs not in ECL* formed their own category. The first of these new categorizations is used in Table 2. A glossary of terms appears as Appendix A.

Those working at licensed child care centres are now divided into three more policy relevant program categories: child care centres (including multi-age child care) and preschool; before & after school or recreational care programs and $10 a Day ChildCare BC Centres (formerly Prototype Sites). Staff within these programs are further separated by role: directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors are reported as *"Managers and Supervisors"* or *M/S* while other employees are included as *professionals or non M/S*. The sample size at $10 a Day ChildCare BC Centres to date has been too low to permit subdivision by role.

Part of the rationale for this division of programs is the very different certification requirements for child care centres/preschool compared to before & after school/recreational care programs. Given the very low participation of Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, these responses are grouped together with those of Licensed Family Child Care under the label *Home Child Care Providers (HCPs)*. In the few analyses where sample size permits, as in Table 2, we also separate HCPs by their possession of an ECE certificate.

As before Certified *ECE/ECEAs not in ECL* form their own category. In Table 2, we use information they provided in the survey on their job title to indicate the proportions currently working in a field related to early care and learning (the majority) and those not currently working in a field related to early care and learning. The sample size is not sufficient to maintain this split in analytical tables.

The second categorization was simpler, by highest ECL-related qualification, essentially capturing respondents' answers from among those below to the survey question: Which early childhood certifications do you have?

- Early Childhood Educator Assistant

- Early Childhood Educator (1 year) [17]

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[17] ECE Registry certificates are valid for 1 year and 5 years. Anyone who graduates from an approved ECE program can apply for either certificate. But the 1 year tend to be held more often by those who

- Early Childhood Educator (5 year)

- Infant and Toddler Educator

- Special Needs Educator

- I do not have certification but am qualified as a Responsible Adult

These new categorizations are used to better differentiate understanding of trends over time in ECL R&R Strategy KPIs for different groups of ECL professionals. A similar approach was taken to breakdown data from the employer survey, which is collected at the level of the workplace. This report for the first time separates results from 2019, 2020 and 2021 for licensed centres where ECE certification is a *requirement* for at least one ECL professional from those where no ECE certification is required.

- **Employers with all programming ECE-certified** includes employers who exclusively operate one or more of the following programs: group care under 3, group care 2.5yrs – school age, preschool, or multi-age programs.

- **Employers with some or all programming not requiring ECE** includes employers who operate one or more of the following programs: group care school age, occasional care, or recreational care (defined separately only in the 2021 survey).

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are recent graduates because it can be difficult for them to accumulate the required work hours to apply for the 5-year. The 1-year certificate can be renewed once only.

Table 2   Number and percentage of workforce survey respondents by program/role 2021, including equivalent survey shares for 2019 and 2020

Program/role	Workforce survey (Individual level)			
	2021		**2020**	**2019**
	No.	**%**	**%**	**%**
Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool – ECE required, not $10 a Day				
Managers or Supervisors (M/S)	680	31.7%	28.5%	27.4%
Other ECL professionals (Not M/S)	810	37.7%	30.6%	38.7%
Before & after school or recreational care program – ECE not required, not $10 a Day				
Managers or Supervisors (M/S)	65	3.0%	4.5%	3.7%
Other ECL professionals (Not M/S)	52	2.4%	3.3%	2.8%
$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres (any)	178	8.3%	5.2%	3.0%
Home Care Providers, ECE certified	85	4.0%	9.1%	6.1%
Home Care Providers, not ECE certified	84	3.9%	9.7%	10.5%
ECEs/ECEAs not in ECL	194	9.0%	9.1%	7.8%
Current position related to Early Care and Learning	121	5.6%	7.1%	5.6%
Not in a position related to Early Care and Learning	73	3.4%	2.0%	2.2%
Total (N)	**2,148**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care.

Workforce characteristics

Broadly, Table 2 illustrates that the Workforce survey sample composition in 2021 was similar to 2019. The response overall is dominated by licensed child care centres, which is not surprising given the sample frame used each year. HCPs are a much smaller proportion of the workforce survey sample than they are of the overall workforce. 2016 Census estimates published in the Benchmarking report imply HCPs make up close to half the ECL workforce in BC. The share of respondents from $10 a day sites has been steadily growing.

When interpreting results from the workforce survey, it is important to account for the above differences in respondents' workplaces compared to the likely pattern of programs for the overall workforce. To reduce the extent to which survey results may be biased towards licensed care centres, we report nearly all results by type of program. Since the objective of the evaluation is to determine how the working conditions in the sector are changing over time since the launch of ECL R&R Strategy tactics, it matters less that the overall sample is unrepresentative than that the groups for which we report change are similarly captured in each year.

A group largely missed by the workforce survey every year is license-not required home based care, especially in the child's own home, where ECE certifications are not required. It is very difficult to obtain contact information for those providing child care in this way. They are not the direct subject of ECL R&R Strategy tactics to promote recruitment and retention, except perhaps to the extent such individuals are drawn into seeking certification and into work in licensed care programs by the tactics. Although they are an important part of the workforce, they are largely outside the scope of the evaluation of the ECL R&R Strategy. One data source that indirectly helps to quantify the size of this group is the Survey of Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements, which Statistics Canada launched in 2019. SRDC has analyzed the first wave of the survey data. Since the unit of analysis is the child and the respondents are "persons most knowledgeable" about the child in the household, usually parents, the data have limited use for evaluating sector level working conditions, especially since only the first year of data are available and trends cannot yet be analyzed. In future years, its measures of the difficulty finding care, and difficulty finding quality care, may be of value. For now, we report one table (Table 3) which indicates the scale to which parents report using different child care arrangements. This signals the relatively high use of relatives as carers for at least some of the time (the survey does not permit the precise comparison of hours) and the use of family child care and care by non-relatives in the child's home. While the definitions are not aligned perfectly with licensing categories and there is likely underreporting, it is important to note that Centre-based care is by far the predominant form of care reported by parents, used by more than three in ten children under 6. So while there may be a large number of people without ECE certifications providing care outside of licensed settings, the survey suggest more children under 6 experience their care in licensed settings where ECE certification is required than non-licensed ones. These trends can be monitored over time.

Table 3   Child care arrangement used in the past 3 months, BC

Person most knowledgeable report of arrangement used in past 3 months	% of children under 6 using care arrangement
Daycare centre or preschool	32.4%
Care by a relative other than parent	20.1%
Care by a non-relative in the child's home	4.9%
Family child care home	7.4%
Before or after school program	4.4%
Other child care arrangement	1.7%
Do not use child care	42.4%
Observations (N)	**32,175**

Source: Survey of Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements (SELCCA) 2019

Looking beyond program and role, the workforce sample characteristics in 2021 (Table 4) were very similar to those in 2019. In 2021, we find a similar proportion of women respondents compared to the 2019 workforce survey sample—95 per cent versus 96 per cent in 2019. The age distribution was also the same to within two percentage points, except for the category of older professionals—50 years of age or older—where we find a 5 percentage point decline (32 per cent) compared to the 2019 sample (37 per cent).

A small proportion of respondents identified as Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit: 7 per cent) but this represented an increase over 2019's 5 per cent. Only 3 per cent of the sample in 2021 reported having a disability (similar to 2019).

Slightly fewer ECL professionals in 2021 than in 2019 (30 versus 34 per cent of the sample) were born outside Canada. This proportion was again higher among HCPs (38 per cent). The proportion of ECEAs/ECEs not in ECL born outside Canada was lower in 2021 (22 per cent, compared to 37 per cent in 2020 and 27 per cent in 2019). This is the first of several differences that arise for this group, maybe due to compositional changes in the population in scope during a disruptive year (i.e., possibly more immigrant ECEs left their work in child care during 2020) and possibly due to differences in who chose to respond to the survey.

Table 4   Demographic characteristics of the 2021 Workforce Survey sample, compared to total sample proportions from 2019

	2021									2019
	Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool		Before & after school or recreational care program		$10 a Day ChildCare BC Centres	HCPs		ECEs/ ECEAs in ECL	Total	Total
						ECE certified	Not ECE-certified			
	M/S	Not M/S	M/S	Not M/S						
Female	96%	96%	80%	95%	93%	95%	92%	97%	**95%**	**96%**
Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit)	6%	7%	10%	5%	9%	5%	4%	8%	**7%**	**4.41%**
Experience disability	3%	3%	2%	8%	10%	1%	4%	2%	**3%**	**3%**
Born outside Canada	24%	35%	22%	42%	32%	40%	36%	22%	**30%**	**33%**

	2021									2019
	Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool		Before & after school or recreational care program		$10 a Day ChildCare BC Centres	HCPs		ECEs/ ECEAs in ECL	Total	Total
						ECE certified	Not ECE-certified			
	M/S	Not M/S	M/S	Not M/S						
Age										
18 or younger	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	**0%**	**0%**
19-24	1%	7%	12%	21%	5%	1%	1%	1%	**4%**	**4%**
25-29	7%	12%	7%	15%	10%	1%	1%	9%	**9%**	**8%**
30-34	9%	11%	7%	5%	11%	7%	5%	11%	**10%**	**10%**
35-39	17%	15%	12%	8%	14%	14%	9%	11%	**15%**	**13%**
40-44	13%	14%	25%	13%	14%	20%	15%	15%	**15%**	**14%**
45-49	16%	14%	8%	10%	20%	28%	18%	16%	**16%**	**14%**
50 or older	36%	26%	30%	28%	25%	28%	50%	38%	**32%**	**37%**

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care.

When it came to contracts of employment (Table 5), 92 per cent of respondents overall reported permanent positions compared to only 2 per cent in temporary positions. We find a decline in the proportions of Child Care Centre (CCC) ECL Managers and Supervisors as well as CCC ECL staff (not supervisors or managers) who worked as casual workers since 2019 (not shown), with nearly no managers or supervisors in the workforce survey sample employed in casual positions. Casual employment was more common for those in before and after school/recreational programs. Among CCC ECL staff (not M/S), 15 per cent were unionized, with a slightly higher proportion unionized at before and after school care and recreational care programs and $10 a day sites. Respondents in 2021 were broadly similar to those in 2019 in terms of their distribution across different types of programs. For example, in 2019 37 per cent of managers and supervisors were engaged in Group care for under 3 years old, 55 per cent in Group care for 2.5 years to school age and 36 per cent for school age. In 2021 the equivalent percentages were 43, 60 and 37. These shares for 2021 are shown for CCC and before and after school/recreational programs separately in the table. The shares by type of program in 2021 (and 2019) importantly indicate many professionals work in centres offering many different program types simultaneously. Interestingly, the 2020 respondents were much less likely to report multiple different program types and the share with experience in each program type dropped. Possibly this reflected real changes in cross-program participation due to COVID-19 restrictions in 2020, or it maybe simply reflected a change in respondents' willingness to select more than one option.

Table 6 indicates duration of experience in ECL varied across the respondent groups. Managers and supervisors in CCC were the most experienced with 51 per cent reporting 16 or more years' experience working in the sector, similar to the 49 per cent who reported this level of experience in 2019. On the other hand, CCC ECL professionals (not M/S) reported a wider range of work experience than the other groups, similar to their reported experience in 2019. For instance, 36 per cent of non-M/S CCC staff in ECL and 64 per cent of those in before and after school and recreational programs reported five or fewer years of experience in the ECL sector, compared to the 25 per cent average for the ECL workforce. The experience of ECE/ECEAs not in ECL who responded to the 2021 survey was similar to 2020 but had shifted since 2019, with more – 25 per cent – holding just one to five years' experience and 32 per cent with 16 or more years. The equivalent percentages in 2019 were 15 and 40 per cent. This is another indication that the composition of those in this group responding to the survey changed over the evaluation period.

Table 5 **Selected employment characteristics of respondents who work in licensed centres, preschools, and before-and-after school care**

	Child care centre (including m**ulti**-**a**g**e** c**hild c**a**re**) or preschool		Before & after school or recreational care program		$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres	Total
	M/S	**Non M/S**	**M/S**	**Non M/S**		**Total**
Job tenure						
Permanent	97%	89%	89%	76%	92%	**92%**
Temporary	2%	2%	6%	4%	1%	**2%**
Casual or substitute	0%	6%	0%	13%	5%	**4%**
Unionized	11%	19%	15%	20%	27%	**17%**
Type of program						
Group care, under 3 years old	45%	51%	0%	0%	70%	**47%**
Group care, 2.5 years to school age	65%	53%	0%	0%	66%	**55%**
Group care, school age (before-and-after school program)	30%	21%	91%	90%	38%	**31%**
Preschool, 2.5 years to school age	37%	43%	0%	0%	35%	**37%**
Multi-age	21%	22%	0%	0%	25%	**21%**
Occasional care	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	**2%**
Recreational care	2%	2%	6%	0%	1%	**2%**
Other	2%	3%	6%	8%	4%	**3%**

Source: 2021 SRDC Workforce survey.

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care.

Table 6 **Proportion of respondents by years of experience in the early care and learning sector**

	Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool		Before & after school or recreational care program		$10 a Day Child CareBC Centres	HCPs		ECEAs/ECEs not in ECL	Total
	M/S	Non M/S	M/S	Non M/S		ECE certified	Not ECE-certified		
Less than one year	2%	8%	7%	26%	7%	0%	1%	7%	**6%**
One to three years	5%	16%	15%	28%	14%	4%	11%	7%	**11%**
Four to five years	5%	12%	7%	10%	9%	5%	5%	11%	**8%**
Six to ten years	20%	24%	20%	10%	22%	27%	17%	23%	**22%**
Eleven to fifteen years	17%	15%	16%	13%	11%	20%	19%	21%	**16%**
Sixteen years or more	51%	25%	36%	13%	36%	45%	47%	32%	**37%**

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

Purpose

SRDC developed a survey instrument to measure whether and how public opinion regarding the ECL profession changes over the duration of the evaluation period, both from the perspective of the general public, and of people making decisions regarding their own career. Specifically, the aim is to determine whether public confidence in the professionalism and accountability of ECL professionals is improving, and whether the value B.C. residents place on those engaged in ECL as a career and the viability and sustainability of the ECL workforce are increasing over time. The surveys have been fielded in 2019 and 2022 (and will be fielded again in 2023 and 2024) to capture how aware the public is of the effect of other changes in public policy with respect to the ECL workforce, such as increased participation in ECL education and professional development. Similarly, by comparing responses of successive cross-sections of emerging adults and others looking at a career change between survey waves, SRDC hopes to determine whether interest in pursuing a career in ECL is increasing over time.

Methodology implementation

The target group for the public opinion survey is a general population sample of B.C. residents aged 18 and older. SRDC also developed an accompanying survey targeted to emerging adults (under 25 years old) and to adults 25 and over who are looking for a career change.

SRDC contracted Maru/Matchbox to implement the survey and commissioned a proprietary population-representative survey of British Columbians aged 13+ years. Maru/Matchbox is responsible for all aspects of data collection, including programming the survey, and data cleaning and processing. SRDC receives quality checks on the survey data and receives anonymized data files after each wave in SPSS or CSV format.

The first survey was undertaken in May 2019 to produce benchmark measures included in the Benchmarking Report. The follow up survey was fielded in early February 2022 to capture change over three years of the ECL R&R Strategy. The far-reaching impacts of COVID-19 on public perceptions of work in ECL suggest that a mid-way survey in 2020 would have been a useful addition to the evaluation data collection. Unfortunately, there were insufficient resources for a full 2020 survey. Instead, SRDC asked Maru/Matchbox to include two questions specific to ECL work in a national survey conducted in May 2020 to provide context to the initial impact of COVID-19 on public perceptions of ECL work. Moreover, the 2020 and 2021 cross-sectional

workforce surveys also included a question that sought to measure the extent to which members of the ECL workforce believed public perception of ECL work had changed.

The pandemic and reactions to it have necessitated the addition of new questions to the 2022 public opinion survey, although the core content remained the same to enable comparison over time. There were six additional questions, three of which were designed to measure public perceptions of child care work (based on the questions included in the 2020 panel survey), and three of which were designed to measure changes in personal opinions/interest in child care work since 2019. The final instrument was included in the interim report #3 in December 2021.

As is the case with other lines of evidence in this evaluation, SRDC acknowledges that it may be difficult to differentiate the effects of the pandemic from effects of the ECL R&R Strategy. Nonetheless, the hope is that the 2020 measures will have captured the immediate and short-term impacts of COVID-19 and the 2022 survey can focus on long-term trends since 2019, both pandemic- and ECL R&R Strategy-related.

SRDC hypothesizes that public confidence regarding ECL should improve as a result of the ECL R&R Strategy tactics intended to increase the percentage of the workforce holding certifications and enhanced competencies. In other words, after three years, SRDC expects more among the general public to consider ECL as a profession that is valued, viable and sustainable. Among those considering their career options, therefore, ECL is expected to be considered an appealing career more frequently in 2022 than in 2019.

Challenges or limitations

As with any survey, there is a potential risk of selection bias, in which the sample obtained is not representative of the general population. SRDC sought to mitigate this issue by using the services of Maru/Matchbox, who hold a panel sample representative of the B.C. population.

The 13-17 year-old sample is surveyed via their parents. That is, Maru/Matchbox ask a parent who is part of the panel to pass the survey to their child aged 13-17.[18] There is a small risk that the parent will either refuse to pass the survey to their child or complete the survey on their child's behalf. In addition, since the parent may have an influence on the child's choice of career, and the child's responses will not necessarily be hidden from the parent, there is a risk of social desirability bias on the part of the child. This means the child might answer questions based on

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[18] Teenage parents are included in the survey but represent a very small proportion of all teenagers. Across B.C., 4.9 teenagers per 1,000 aged 15-19 gave birth in 2017. A representative sample of teenagers will include very few young parents and they may be more likely to live independently and thus be less likely respond to panel surveys. These factors mean meaning separate reporting for teenage parents is not possible.

what they think their parents want to hear, rather than based on their own opinions. The characteristics of respondents (reported in the final benchmarking report) appeared balanced, but ultimately such sources of bias in 2019 and 2022 responses cannot be entirely ruled out.

The COVID-19 pandemic poses an additional challenge to the original plan for measuring changes in public perceptions of ECL work. Responses to COVID-19 have generated an unusually high level of coverage for issues related to ECL, not least B.C.'s designation of members of the ECL workforce as essential in some contexts. Plausibly, the views of the public on what ECL professionals do and on the attractiveness of working in ECL has changed and it would be helpful to understand more broadly the extent to which the public considers different aspects of ECL essential. As the influence of COVID-19 responses on these perspectives was not captured by a survey in 2020, it may be difficult to tease out in 2022 any residual influence of how COVID-19 responses have shaped public opinions from the influence of government tactics to make working in the sector more attractive. If there has been any decline in interest in ECL as a career, a survey in 2020 may also have been important for informing decisions on measures that might work best to improve the situation.

SRDC is aware of the challenges imposed by the pandemic on interpretation of survey results and will take into consideration these challenges when analyzing the results of the final survey wave. This, in part, is what motivated SRDC to include new questions related to COVID-19 into the final survey.

In March 2022, Maru/Matchbox delivered "cleaned" and anonymized data files, and SRDC has been using them to generate results in aggregate form, consisting of frequency tables and/or cross-tabulations on public perceptions of child care work and interest in child care as a career among youth and those considering making a career change. In this report, the 2022 levels are compared to benchmark levels established in 2019 to understand the potential impact of the ECL R & R Strategy, accounting for potential impacts of the pandemic (that were partially assessed in 2020).

Next steps

SRDC anticipates repeating the public opinion survey in early 2023 and early 2024.

SOCIAL AND NEWS MEDIA MONITORING

Purpose

SRDC sought a mechanism to systematically collect results and analytics from a daily review of B.C.-relevant child care-related posts and compilation of news article data for content analysis. This activity has supported tracking of perceptions among thought leaders and mass media of employment in ECL as a career choice, and sentiments that ECL professionals implement high standards of care and education. In turn, these contribute to measures for a key performance indicator:

- Ratio of positive to negative opinions (with respect to standards of care, viability, sustainability, and value of ECL work) in the general population, thought leaders, mass media, youth, and parents (KPI 13).

Along with data from the cross-sectional survey of the ECL workforce and the public opinion survey, the primary goal for social and media monitoring was to answer broader evaluation questions concerning the direct and indirect effects of the implementation of the ECL R&R Strategy on public confidence in the sector and preferences among British Columbians to work in it. A secondary purpose was to help keep the evaluation team up to speed on developments and initiatives province-wide and how they are being communicated to the public. However, the methodology has not yielded the value originally hoped for and data collection ceased at the end of December 2021.

There are typically two stages to the methodology. Social monitoring is the collection of social data. Social listening is the analysis of that data to identify trends and answer questions.

Methodology implementation

SRDC developed a Boolean search phrase containing key words and variants and entered this into the Talkwalker platform. Although Talkwalker has access to 10 social networks and 150 million websites, the extracted content is still limited by privacy restrictions. Data exported from Talkwalker do not contain any Facebook or Instagram posts and are limited to posts from news media, blogs, forums, press releases, other websites, and Twitter. Because Talkwalker does not export the entirety of the posts captured, SRDC separately scrapes the URLs that were identified by Talkwalker. Once the URLs are scraped, SRDC undertakes a content and sentiment analysis.

SRDC added a second Boolean search to tag pandemic-related posts in order to identify any changes in sentiment that could be attributed to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the

indicator outcomes. This search phrase was similar to the original search phrase, but contains the additional terms shown at the base of Box 2.

The SRDC evaluation team used a Python program to copy the HTML code from each Talkwalker identified web page and extract the relevant text. The data collected from Talkwalker is available to SRDC over three years and has been updated constantly. Information collected is public, by definition, so there are no privacy or confidentiality issues to address.

From April 2018 through July 2021 Talkwalker identified 16,536 URLs that met SRDC's search criteria. Talkwalker divides these URLs into eight categories:

- Blog

- Message board

- Online news – agency

- Online news – magazine

- Online news – newspaper

- Online news – other

- Online news – press releases

- Twitter

To better facilitate analysis, several categories were aggregated together resulting in the following three groups: Online news, Twitter, and Other social media (i.e., Blog and Message board).

Additional filters were applied to Online news and Other social media to restrict the sample to sites originating in British Columbia, as identified by Talkwalker, and to eliminate URLs that could not be successfully scraped, due to connection errors or blocked sites. A manual review of the remaining URLs determined that there were too few relevant sites remaining to examine Online News, but a final sample of 57 URLs for Other social media could be used.

Due to the character limit Twitter imposes on tweets, Talkwalker was able to capture complete Twitter content, eliminating the need to filter out URLs that could not be scraped. In addition, Twitter provided detailed location information that allowed a precise article-level geographic filter for content originating in British Columbia. The result was a final sample of 4,252 tweets.

Box 2: Current Boolean search terms for social and news media posts

("BC" OR "B.C." OR "British Columbia" OR "Abbotsford" OR "Armstrong" OR "Burnaby" OR "Campbell River" OR "Castlegar" OR "Chilliwack" OR "Colwood" OR "Coquitlam" OR "Cranbrook" OR "Dawson Creek" OR "Delta" OR "Enderby" OR "Fernie" OR "Fort St. John" OR "Grand Forks" OR "Greenwood" OR "Kamloops" OR "Kelowna" OR "Langford" OR "Langley" OR "Maple Ridge" OR "Merritt" OR "Nanaimo" OR "New Westminster" OR "North Vancouver" OR "Parksville" OR "Penticton" OR "Pitt Meadows" OR "Port Alberni" OR "Port Coquitlam" OR "Port Moody" OR "Powell River" OR "Prince George" OR "Prince Rupert" OR "Quesnel" OR "Revelstoke" OR "Richmond" OR "Rossland" OR "Salmon Arm" OR "Surrey" OR "Terrace" OR "Vancouver" OR "West Kelowna" OR "White Rock" OR "Williams Lake" OR "100 Mile House" OR "Barriere" OR "Central Saanich" OR "Chetwynd" OR "Clearwater" OR "Coldstream" OR "Elkford" OR "Esquimalt" OR "Fort St. James" OR "Highlands" OR "Hudson's Hope" OR "Invermere" OR "Kitimat" OR "Lake Country" OR "Langley" OR "Lantzville" OR "Lillooet" OR "Logan Lake" OR "Metchosin" OR "New Hazelton" OR "North Cowichan" OR "North Saanich" OR "North Vancouver" OR "Northern Rockies" OR "Oak Bay" OR "Peachland" OR "Port Edward" OR "Port Hardy" OR "Saanich" OR "Sechelt" OR "Sicamous" OR "Sooke" OR "Spallumcheen" OR "Sparwood" OR "Squamish" OR "Stewart" OR "Summerland" OR "Tofino" OR "Tumbler Ridge" OR "Ucluelet" OR "Vanderhoof" OR "Wells" OR "West Vancouver" OR "Sechelt Indian Government District" OR "Bowen Island" OR "Jumbo Glacier" OR "Sun Peaks" OR "Whistler" OR "Comox" OR "Creston" OR "Gibsons" OR "Ladysmith" OR "Lake Cowichan" OR "Oliver" OR "Osoyoos" OR "Port McNeill" OR "Princeton" OR "Qualicum Beach" OR "Sidney" OR "Smithers" OR "View Royal" OR "Alert Bay" OR "Anmore" OR "Ashcroft" OR "Belcarra" OR "Burns Lake" OR "Cache Creek" OR "Canal Flats" OR "Cumberland" OR "Fraser Lake" OR "Fruitvale" OR "Gold River" OR "Granisle" OR "Harrison Hot Springs" OR "Hazelton" OR "Kaslo" OR "Keremeos" OR "Lions Bay" OR "Lumby" OR "Lytton" OR "Masset" OR "McBride" OR "Midway" OR "Montrose" OR "Nakusp" OR "New Denver" OR "Pemberton" OR "Port Alice" OR "Port Clements" OR "Pouce Coupe" OR "Queen Charlotte" OR "Radium Hot Springs" OR "Salmo" OR "Sayward" OR "Silverton" OR "Slocan" OR "Tahsis" OR "Telkwa" OR "Valemount" OR "Warfield" OR "Zeballos") AND (childcare~ OR "early care" OR "early learning" OR "early childhood" OR daycare OR dayhome OR "ECE" OR "childcare~ assistant" OR multi-age OR "license-not-required" OR "LNR" OR "before-school care" OR "before school care" OR "after school care" OR "after-school care" OR pre-school OR preschool OR "child's own home") NEAR (worker~ OR staff OR carer~ OR educator~ OR quality OR ECE OR career OR training OR provider~ OR standard~) lang:en AND sourcegeo:ca[19]

Additional COVID-19 related search adds:

AND (COVID~ OR coronavirus~ OR pandemic OR essential)[20]

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[19]   It also includes the following exclusions, word permutation selected to minimize accidental inclusion of non-ECL workforce related posts: "is survived by" OR rent OR barking OR STEM OR obituary OR "bore witness" OR "has died" OR hospice OR salmonella OR cancer OR SARS OR hypertension OR osteoarthritis OR pneumon* OR staphylococcus OR difficile OR enterococci OR fasciitis OR tuberculosis OR "development application submitted" OR hospitalization OR criminalized OR "snow day" OR "snow days" OR ("Canucks" AND "Rogers") OR fermented OR charcoal OR ("BC Lions" AND CFL) OR ("B.C. Lions" AND CFL) OR "fashion show" OR panhandl* OR "safe drinking" OR "lead-tainted" OR "digital health solution" OR appurtenances OR laminat* OR vaxxer OR "foreign court" OR "foreign courts" OR holocaust OR "targeted shooting" OR morel OR hydrocarbon OR "fracking operation" OR "fossil fuels" OR "fossil-fuel" OR "firearms" OR quarantine OR CMHC OR "Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation" OR equalization OR overdos* OR syringe* OR liquefaction OR massacre OR "opioid addiction" OR "hot car" OR morphine OR "voting age" OR "sexual violence" OR "sexual assault" OR "sexual-violence" OR "sex assault" OR pipeline*.

[20]   The exclusions are also the same as for the original search phrase in the previous footnote, but do not contain the terms "quarantine" or "hospitalization."

SRDC carried out sentiment analysis separately for the Twitter and Other social media samples using the TextIQ feature within the Qualtrics platform. The content was uploaded into Qualtrics as if each post was a verbatim response to an open-ended survey question, then TextIQ assigned an overall sentiment score to each post.[21]

The size of the Twitter sample also allowed for a further breakdown using the topics specified in KPI 12 and 13: standards of care, viability, sustainability, and value of ECL work. Keyword searches within TextIQ were used to identify tweets relevant to these topics and assign additional topic-specific sentiment scores. Viability and sustainability were combined into a single topic given the common keywords for both concepts, for a subsample of 1,283 tweets,[22] while Standards of care had 2,186 tweets,[23] and Value of ECL work had 361 tweets.[24]

Since SRDC has already captured historical data covering the full period from before the ECL R&R Strategy was implemented, it has been able to produce a baseline assessment for the sentiment and content analysis. SRDC reports on trends in these data to inform analysis of KPI 13 later in this report.

Challenges or limitations

The web scraping process has revealed limitations. Some webpages have security features that are designed to prevent the data from being automatically scraped. Other barriers include paywalls or login screens that prevent the Python code from accessing the content of posts. The initial trial of 4,348 URLs from TalkWalker-identified posts between April 2018 and February 2020 found nearly a quarter (1,018 URLs) could not be scraped due to security features. An additional 46 URLs were not scraped due to reasons including server errors, dead links, or a site being blocked by a virus scanner. Twitter's terms of service prevent tweets from being scraped, so SRDC is relying on TalkWalker's exports of tweets for this content, which captures the initial tweet or retweet but not any replies.

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[21] TextIQ uses a five-point scale for sentiment: -2 for very negative, -1 for negative, 0 for neutral/mixed, 1 for positive, and 2 for very positive.

[22] Keywords for viability and sustainability: job or future or sustain or ((career and not motherhood) and not ("between family and career")) or pay or salary or wage or sick day or benefits or space or burnout.

[23] Keywords for standards of care: quality or qualified or safe or safety or nurturing or educational or inclusive or license.

[24] Keywords for value of ECL work: important or importance or vital or essential.

Text analysis relies on key word searches but these may misidentify posts when a keyword has more than one meaning.[25] By setting some boundaries on what was coded as related text, SRDC has generated a data set that characterizes posts over time for use in this report. This analysis is not as extensive as originally envisaged, however. For example, it did not include news reporting websites. Given the many limitations on this type of analysis, SRDC has discontinued this evidence stream going forward. The completed analysis to December 2021 appears later in this report.

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[25] For example, several news articles on motorcycle accidents in British Columbia were captured by the initial Talkwalker search since ECE is an acronym for both Early Childhood Educators and the Economic Commission of Europe which has been reviewing safety certification of motorcycle helmets.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS AND CASE STUDIES

Purpose

The purpose of the **case studies** is to provide detailed understanding and rich information about experiences over time with the ECL R&R Strategy at each of six centres that agreed in 2019 to participate in this component of the evaluation. The case studies provide insight into how the ECL R&R Strategy is working within real-world settings and examines the successes and challenges related to its delivery and impact, as well as the key factors that facilitate or impede its overall effectiveness.

To achieve this, the case studies explore personal experiences and perceptions in relation to issues being tackled by, and tactics of, the ECL R&R Strategy. To account for context, the case studies take into account a detailed understanding of each child care workplace, including its operations, management, staff, and the families and community it serves. The case studies offer a highly comprehensive understanding of the impacts of the ECL R&R Strategy through the comparison and integration of data collected from multiple child care programs and multiple sources within these programs (i.e., owners/operators and managers, as well as staff members). Data collection from case studies has been conducted annually, over the three years (so far) of the evaluation, to offer a longitudinal perspective.

The purpose of the **key informant interviews** (KIIs) is to gather detailed, in-depth information about the first-hand experiences of diverse stakeholders, including those who are directly affected by the ECL R&R Strategy and those who are involved in its implementation and delivery. These interviews have been particularly important to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the implementation and effect of the ECL R&R Strategy and to understand the challenges that ECL operators and professionals experience. Interviews with stakeholders, developers and implementers of the tactics began in 2019 to support development of the theory of change, but the bulk of interviews have been with operators of child care workplaces in categories not included in the case study data collection. The KIIs with other child care centres provide a broader understanding of centre experiences with the ECL R&R Strategy in terms of implementation and consequences.

Methodology implementation

Case study visits

During 2019, six case study site visits were selected according to criteria agreed with the SSC. In-person visits were arranged and conducted with child care centres across the province. The visits

were completed over a two-day period and involved at least two members of SRDC staff. Interviews were conducted with a range of staff within each centre, including managers, supervisors, ECEs, ECEAs, and Responsible Adults. In 2020, the case study visits were held virtually to comply with the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, the third year of conducting the case studies, after discussions with the centres, SRDC continued with the 'virtual visit' approach.

SRDC worked with each centre to arrange the virtual visits, which followed a similar format to 2020. The intent for the case studies was to interview the same staff each year. SRDC liaised with each centre to identify staff to be interviewed; for staff who were no longer employed in the centre, replacement staff were recruited to participate. Staff who had left the centre were invited to participate in a separate survey to explore their reasons for leaving and their current employment status.

The dates and timings of the interviews as part of the virtual visits were arranged according to the availability of the centres. Consent forms and a copy of the questions to be asked were sent to the centres before the interviews were conducted. A quiet room was made available for the interviews where needed. Each lasted between 45 to 60 minutes.

Case Studies Evaluation Activities to Date

SRDC completed all six of the case study 'visits' – the final visit was conducted on 9th November 2021. To date, 33 interviews have been conducted with a range of staff in these centres. These interviews were recorded and have been transcribed. Approximately 12 staff have left the case study centres and SRDC has followed up with individuals for whom it had contact information, representing five participants who had left the case study sites in 2021. Five participants were surveyed [whereby the interview questions were posed via an online survey] about their reasons for leaving, experience with the ECL Recruitment & Retention Strategy, and any other insights they had about attracting and retaining early care professionals in BC.[26]

The data have been analyzed using similar themes from 2020. These include:

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[26] Four of the five participants still worked directly with children in a child care role. Two of these participants found their new positions through a job posting, while one did through word of mouth, and another through social media. The participant who was working in a non-child care role was recovering from a workplace injury.

- **Update and overview of centre and program –** What is the current operating capacity of the centre and programs? The potential capacity with qualified staff? What are the main changes that have occurred over the last year?

- **Changes made to centre and program due to consequences of COVID-19 –** How has COVID-19 (including vaccination policies) affected the operations and procedures of the centre?

- **Recruitment and hiring**. How do owners/operators and/or managers approach recruitment and hiring of ECL professionals under the ECL R&R Strategy? What are the experiences of early childhood educators when searching for, applying to, and starting a new job? Have there been changes from 2020 to 2021?

- **Compensation and benefits**. What experiences do individual ECL professionals have of obtaining a wage increase as a result of the ECL R&R Strategy? How does the wage increase affect personal job satisfaction, tenure, and career pathways? How do owner/operators and/or managers address compensation and benefits for staff under the ECL R&R Strategy? Have there been changes from 2020 to 2021?

- **Training and development**. What are the first-hand experiences of ECL professionals in pursuing credentialing, training, and/or professional development under the ECL R&R Strategy? How do owner/operators and/or managers support the training and development of their staff under the ECL R&R Strategy? Have there been changes from 2020 to 2021?

- **Qualifications, skill levels, competencies of staff**. To what extent do ECL professionals consider themselves and their colleagues to be competent and sufficiently skilled to meet the demands of the job? Has this changed from 2020 to 2021?

- **Perceptions of early childhood education as a career**. What are the personal perspectives of ECL professionals about the future of their careers under the ECL R&R Strategy? Has this changed from 2020 to 2021?

- **Job satisfaction**. What factors influence personal job satisfaction among ECL professionals under the ECL R&R Strategy? What are the views of individual early childhood educators on the positive and negative aspects of work in the child care sector? Has this changed from 2020 to 2021?

- **Retention**. To what extent do the activities and tactics of the ECL R&R Strategy influence the decision-making of individual ECL professionals about whether to remain in their jobs? Has this changed from 2020 to 2021?

- **Career pathways**. To what extent are individual ECL professionals aware of their career options and how to pursue them under the ECL R&R Strategy? To what extent do ECL professionals consider various career pathways to be feasible? Has this changed from 2020 to 2021?

- **Standards and oversight**. How do individual owner/operators and managers respond to changes made to sector standards and oversights under the ECL R&R Strategy? What has changed from 2020 to 2021?

Key informant interviews

In 2020 SRDC conducted a total of 17 interviews with key informants; these included 14 interviews with child care centre owners/managers and three additional interviews with stakeholders involved in the delivery of education/training of child care staff and licensing centres. The evaluation design calls for these individuals to be reinterviewed to better understand changes arising over time. SRDC adopted a two-stage approach to conducting these KIIs which has prioritized interviewing child care centre owners/managers (who may change positions and contact information more often). The remaining interviews with stakeholders will be conducted as emerging issues arise. If the individuals in these stakeholder positions move on, they can be more readily substituted by the new occupant of their position.

SRDC contacted the 14 child care centre owners/managers interviewed in 2020 and requested a follow-up interview. A total of two reminders were sent and 11 key informants agreed to participate in follow-up interviews. These interviews were conducted by phone in September/October 2021 and each lasted approximately 45 minutes. The interviews have been transcribed and analyzed thematically.

Semi-structured interview protocols were sent to participants in advance of an interview. Informed consent was obtained before each interview and specific questions contained within each protocol were tailored to the individual being interviewed.

Analysis of interviews

The data collected from the case studies and KIIs were analyzed using a general inductive approach, including thematic analysis with both pre-set and emergent codes (i.e., codes that are determined in advance and codes that arise from analysis of the data). SRDC used NVivo software to assist in data analysis. For 2021, the analysis is also exploring changes that have arisen in and between the sites. The case study analysis starts out with an in-case analysis and then involves across-case analysis.

High-level themes from the qualitative data collection for the evaluation during 2021 are included in this report. Direct quotes from participants are anonymous by default. Quotes by name may be used with the participant's explicit permission, but not where this would reveal the identity of other respondents.

Challenges or Limitations

The most significant challenge to the case studies and KIIs in 2021 derives from the COVID-19 pandemic, the additional staffing challenges and the uncertainty the ongoing pandemic is creating for child care centres and others involved in the sector. A significant challenge has been securing interviews with the 12 staff who have left case study centres. SRDC converted the interview questions into a qualitative survey to maximize participation.

SRDC has continued to emphasize its role as an external, arms-length evaluator throughout the process of recruitment and engagement with case study sites and key informants. SRDC has continued to assure participants that the purpose of the project is to evaluate the ECL R&R Strategy itself and not to inspect or investigate individual child care programs, managers, or staff. Case study sites and KII participants are not identified in any public forums. Maintaining confidentiality in this way facilitates participant recruitment and encourages transparency and openness during data collection.

Moving forward with the evaluation requires renewing agreements with case study sites and key informants since the original request for participation spanned three years. With at least two more years of the evaluation planned, SRDC anticipates the need to replace some of the original sites and informants with new sources, as will be discussed in the accompanying methodology report.

EVALUATION RESULTS FOR 2021

PURPOSE OF ESTIMATING CHANGE AGAINST BENCHMARKS

The overarching questions the evaluation aims to answer derive from the ECL R&R Strategy goals and outcomes. They have been expressed in previous reports as nested questions relating the expected three-year outcomes (now extended as "medium-term outcomes") and longer-term goals, as follows:

1. Does the ECL R&R Strategy result in the long-term goal of an adequate and stable workforce, comprised of qualified and skilled early care and learning professionals?

   - Over the medium term of the evaluation, do recruitment strategies achieve the outcome of an adequate supply of ECEs and other ECL professionals entering the workforce?

   - Over the medium term of the evaluation, does the implementation of career pathways provide opportunities for career growth and development in the early care and learning sector?

   - Over the medium term of the evaluation, are education, training, and professional development opportunities expanded (or barriers reduced) so that the ECL workforce has the skills, knowledge, and abilities required to provide quality services to children and families?

2. Does the ECL R&R Strategy result in the long-term goal of ECL being viewed as a viable, sustainable, and valued career?

   - Over the medium term of the evaluation, does the strategy promote public confidence in the professionalism and accountability of the ECL workforce?

3. Does the ECL R&R Strategy promote the long-term goal of appropriate compensation plans and human resources strategies to be put in place?

   - Over the medium term of the evaluation, do retention strategies support the long-term engagement of ECEs and others in the workforce, to help keep them in the profession?

The evaluation framework calls for data from the many methods and tools described in the preceding section to answer these questions. SRDC worked with the Sector Steering Committee to create an organizing structure for the data collected by identifying 13 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Collectively these assess the changes occurring from the ECL R&R Strategy and in various permutations shed light on specific questions. The permutations of KPIs are shown

against each evaluation question in the original Evaluation Framework (see Appendix B). Figure 2 presents these same KPIs alongside the ECL R&R Strategy Implementation Tactics, Medium-term Outcomes, and 10 Year Goals they will inform (Figure 1 has the codes for the tactics, outcomes, and goals in Figure 2). KPIs are "neutral," that is, they do not describe a positive or negative change themselves. It is the change in the KPI over time that describes the consequences and impact of the implementation tactics and the achievement of the goals.

For the 2019 year, the project reported benchmarks (the benchmarking report was deliverable #9 published in July 2020). Benchmarks are derived from data from the period 2015-2019 that captured the starting point for many of the changes the ECL R&R Strategy is expected to produce. Critically, later reports – starting with the evaluation report in 2020 – compare the data on indicators from 2020, 2021 and later to the benchmarking indicators reported for 2015-19. The comparison determines *change* in the KPIs. It is the specific combination of changes across the KPIs that can signal success or failure for the ECL R&R Strategy in achieving its medium-term outcomes and indicate progress towards realizing the ten-year goals.

SRDC has sub-divided the second KPI to make explicit the consideration of benefits – as distinct from wages – in fieldwork and analysis. This reflects that benefits are frequently bundled with salary and wages in consideration of employment compensation.

Figure 1   Codes for tactics, Medium-term Outcomes, and 10 Year Goals

Tactic	Code
Compensation	1
Post-Secondary	2
Bursaries	3
Professional Networks and Supports	4
Professional Development	5
Industry Standards	6
Work-based education and training	7
Training Supports	8

Medium-term Outcome	Code
Recruitment strategies will ensure an adequate supply of ECEs and other child care staff entering the workforce	I
Retention strategies will support the long-term engagement of ECEs and others in the workforce, to help keep them in the profession	II
Career pathways will provide opportunities for career growth and development within the early care and learning sector	III
Education, training, and professional development will be reviewed, enhanced, and expanded to ensure a competent early care and learning workforce with the skills, knowledge and abilities required to provide quality services to children and families	IV
Public confidence in the professionalism and accountability of early care and learning professionals from rigorous standards and oversight	V
10 Year Goal	**Code**
An adequate and stable workforce, comprised of qualified and skilled early care and learning professionals	A
Early care and learning as a viable, sustainable, and valued career	B
Appropriate compensation plans and human resources strategies	C

Figure 2   Key performance indicators

No.	KPI	Tactics	Medium-term Outcomes	10 Year Goals
		[see Figure 1]		
1	ECL professional satisfaction and perception of appropriateness of compensation	1	II	A, B, C
2A 2B	Average real wages and salaries of ECL professionals [Benefits of ECL Professionals]	1	II	A, B, C
3	The extent to which current Sector Occupational Competencies are integrated into education and training programs	6	V	A
4	Proportion of ECL professionals with credentials relevant to provision of child care for provincial ECL needs, including regional and Indigenous ECL needs	1 to 8	I-V	A, B, C
5	Perceptions of ECL career among those making decisions with respect to their own careers	1 to 8	I-V	A, B, C
6	Proportion of ECL workforce who self-report possession of core skills and supplementary skills	1 to 8	I-V	A, B, C
7	Awareness of ECL career pathway options, how to pursue them, and expectations of their feasibility in terms of finances and availability of training opportunities	2,3,4,5	I, III	A, B
8	Proportion of ECL workforce who self-report participation in professional development activities	4,5,7,8	II, III, IV	A
9	Hours of professional development per ECL workforce member per year	4,5,7	III, IV	A
10	Employers report of the share of their ECL workforce possessing core skills and possessing supplementary skills	1 to 8	I to V	A, C
11	Employment stability of ECL workforce, including variances for staffing for providers, work hours, job tenure, job exits	1,7	II	A
12	Ratio of positive to negative opinions (with respect to standards of care, viability, sustainability, and value) among those already working in the sector	1,4,5,6,7,8	II, III, IV	B, C
13	Ratio of positive to negative opinions (with respect to standards of care, viability, sustainability, and value of ECL work) in general population, thought leaders, mass media, youth, and parents	1,2,3,6,8	I, II, V	A, B, C

A NOTE ON THE PRESENTATION OF KPIS

Most KPIs draw on multiple data sources. So, as we report on each KPI in turn we cycle through different data drawn from the set of available sources. Several sources like the cross-sectional survey contribute to many KPIs. Others such as the public opinion survey feature less often. Also, for each KPI there are multiple data points per data source. [There are several ways to obtain and present information on wages, for example.]

Using multiple measures improves validity and enables some level of continuity in annual reporting in a situation where not all data sources can report in every year. For example, the Census data included in the benchmarking report provided a useful perspective on who made up the sector and how the population had been changing since 2000 through 2015, as recorded in Censuses every five years from 2001 through 2016. But there can be no report on further change in the sector documented by the Census until the 2021 Census is completed and those data are released in 2023. So, this report contains no comparable data. The public opinion survey, fielded in early 2022, was previously fielded in 2019. This report only documents change in KPIs using data received in 2021. This report must necessarily include some 2015-20 data only received in 2021 (such as from SELCCA) as well as measures for 2021 that permit calculation of *changes* in KPIs over time.

A potentially confusing factor is that data sources differ somewhat in the definitions of what is being measured. The job postings data identify members of the child care workforce somewhat differently from the cross-sectional survey, and different again from the administrative data. So, each baseline KPI with more than one data source can have a slightly different value depending on the data source. However, we compare change in KPIs over time only within the same data sources, to maximize internal validity in determining whether a change has occurred.

Sample related limitations of confidence in interpreting results

The report considers each KPI in turn and presents data from each data source on each and change in each KPI. Given the cross-sectional survey data is drawn from a sample of the workforce and employers, there is variation in estimates of means and proportions due to sampling from one set of observations to the next. It is important to note that increases or decreases in percentage estimates from 2019 to 2021 may be spurious where sampling error is large. We include measures of variation (standard deviations) and statistical tests of differences to help assess whether the changes observed are statistically significant. However, these are not included throughout to avoid over-complicating tables and figures. Consistency in repeated measures over time is one of the strongest indications of whether change over time is genuine or a consequence of sampling error. Hence, we use multiple measures where possible to estimate change over time and look forward to adding 2022 and 2023 data in later reports to increase confidence that identified trends genuinely represent increase, decrease or stability over the duration of the evaluation.

The report concludes with a set of recommendations and considerations for the future. We draw out implications for policy, based on the patterns of change reported. The foundation for drawing implications is complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic that has disrupted all aspects of life including the labour market in British Columbia since March 2020 including this project's data collection. COVID-19 thus presents a confounding influence on KPIs over and above the impacts of the ECL R&R Strategy. Where possible, we seek to partition change that can be readily attributed to the pandemic to determine the net change that may be brought about the ECL R&R Strategy. With this in mind, we begin by drawing on data from the cross-sectional survey to further aid understanding of the experiences of ECL providers in the province during 2021 related to COVID-19. In later sections, these data and others relating to the pandemic (responses provided during case study interviews, for example) provide context for understanding the KPI-related results.

CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC FROM CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEYS

Employer survey

As the province moves into the third calendar year of the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's cross-sectional survey helps shed light on the long-term and persistent issues it has brought about. Employers were again asked questions in the employer survey related to the impacts of COVID-19 on their facilities' operations during 2021. Although the initial disruption of the pandemic was captured in 2020, the 2021 wave captures the first 12-month period of operations during the pandemic, reflecting the time period from November 1, 2020 through fall 2021 (September – November, depending on when employers responded to the survey).

Out of the 734 employers who answered the questions, 10 centres (1 per cent) were not operating at the time they answered the survey (typically during October 2021) but were planning to reopen, and 5 centres (less than 1 per cent) reported they were not planning to reopen anymore.

Out of the 610 employers who provided information about COVID-19 financial support they received, 69 per cent received at least one support since November 1, 2020, a substantial drop from 96 per cent receiving support in 2020. On average, employers received support from 1.4 sources, with a range of one to six different sources of COVID-19 support.

Table 7 reports the type of COVID-19 related support received by the organizations represented in the 2021 survey. The main support from last year, the Temporary Emergency Fund, ended in August 2020. Although fewer employers received COVID-19 funding overall in 2021 than 2020, a

higher proportion reported receiving each of the supports that were still available in 2021 compared to the previous year. Forty per cent received the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy at some point since November 2020, compared to only a quarter in 2020. A new support, the BC Health and Safety Grant, was reported by 17 per cent of employers.

Table 7   COVID-19 support received by chid care centres (Did your child care program receive any of the following COVID-19 supports [since November 1, 2020]?)

	2020 N=448	2021 N=610
Temporary Emergency Funding (7 x CCOF reg payment monthly while open)	77%	N/A
Temporary Emergency Funding (2 x CCOF reg payment monthly while closed)	46%	N/A
Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy	25%	40%
Canada Emergency Business Account Funds	19%	21%
BC Health and Safety Grant	N/A	17%
Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy Funds (previously Fund for Rent Assistance)	2%	11%
COVID-19 Emergency Funding for Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care	0%	6%
Other	2%	5%
None of the Above	4%	31%

Source: SRDC employer survey.

Rates of closures appear to have nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels. Previously, about eight per cent of centres reported they closed completely (not accepting children on or off site) at some point between November 2019 and March 11, 2020; this jumped to 54 per cent for the period from March 11 – November 2020. In the current sample, about 10 per cent of employers reported closing completely at any point since November 2020. Similar to pre-pandemic levels, most closures were short-lived with more than half staying closed for four weeks or less (see Table 8). Nonetheless, 12 per cent of employers in 2021 reported closures of 18 weeks or more.

Table 8   **Proportion of workplaces that closed by length of closure**

	Nov 2019 – March 2020	March 2020 – Nov 2020	Nov 2020 – Oct 2021
	N~36	**N=241**	**N=71**
0-2 weeks	69%	11%	40%
3-4 weeks	6%	5%	15%
5-6 weeks	<1%	4%	5%
7-8 weeks	3%	9%	10%
9-10 weeks	14%	19%	6%
11-12 weeks	6%	14%	6%
13-14 weeks	<1%	6%	2%
15-16 weeks	<1%	5%	2%
17-18 weeks	<1%	2%	1%
18 or more weeks	3%	23%	12%

Source: SRDC employer survey.

Figure 3   Comparing lengths of closure by time period (cumulative total)
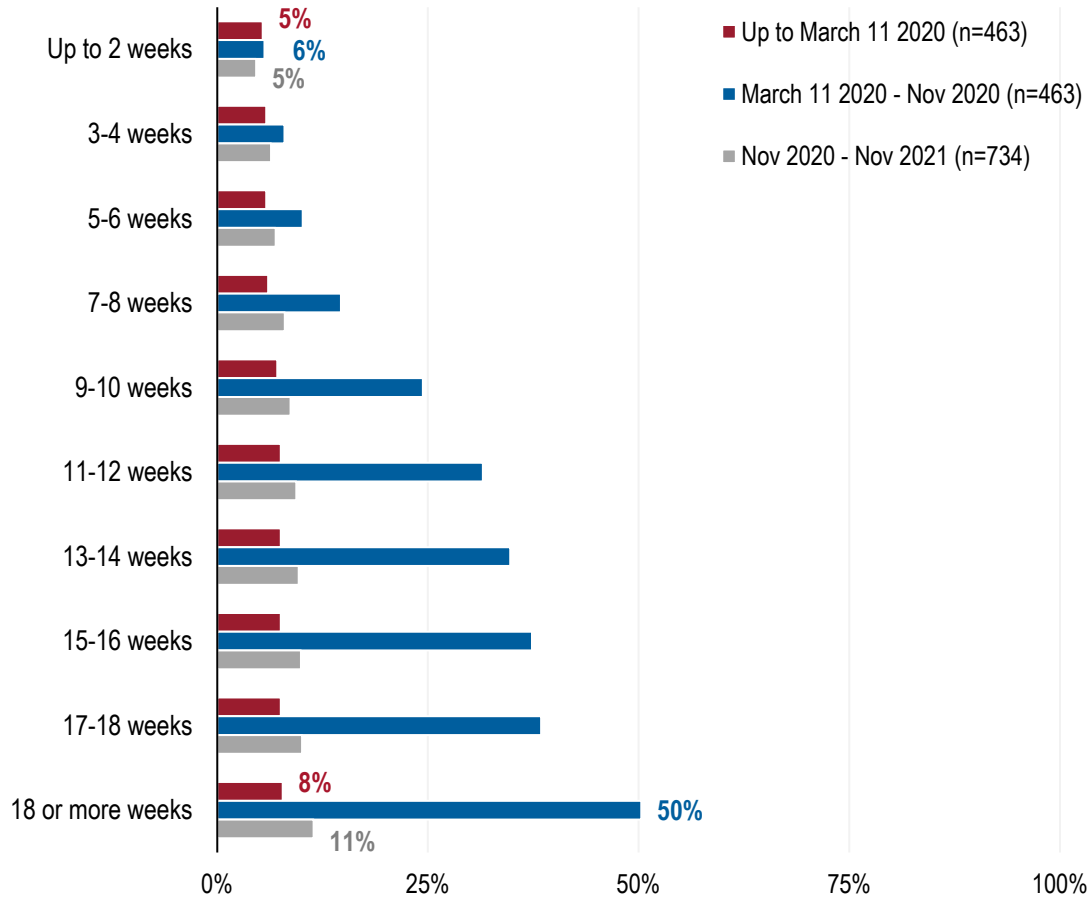
Source: SRDC employer survey.

Reasons why employers had to close their program are provided in Table 9. Like last year, major reasons included concern for the health and safety of children, family, and staff (77 per cent) as well as staffing difficulties (23 per cent). The biggest difference from 2020 was in enrollment – only seven per cent of employers listed fewer children as a reason for closing in 2021, compared to 40 per cent in the previous year.

Table 9   **Reasons why employers closed their programs during the pandemic**

	2020 N=241	2021 N=71
The health and safety of children, family, and staff	70%	77%
Staffing difficulties such as not enough staff willing and able to work	30%	23%
The building was closed	22%	23%
Lower enrollment/fewer children	40%	7%
Higher costs associated with COVID-19 health and safety requirements	10%	3%
Lack of reserve funds	5%	3%
Needed time to come up with a health plan	2%	-
Personal reasons not related to COVID-19	1%	1%
Other	6%	-

Source: SRDC employer survey.

The province initially declared a state of emergency due to COVID-19 on March 18, 2020, which remained in place through to the end of June 2021. Employers were asked about the impact of declaring the COVID-19 state of emergency on their practices: 31 per cent said their program served *only* children of essential workers at some stage since November 2020 (down from 71 per cent last year). The majority of the employers in the sample also *prioritized* care for children of essential workers (59 per cent, down from 91 per cent). During the period covered by the survey, 35 per cent of the child care centres indicated that at some point they prioritized care for children with special needs (down from 43 per cent last year).

In 2021, 13 per cent of the employers surveyed reported they had to lay off staff, either temporarily or permanently, down from 67 per cent last year. Twenty-nine per cent reported that they had staff who chose not to work due to health and safety reasons or other personal reasons, representing half the rate of the previous year (62 per cent). Employers that had staff who chose not to work were asked how many of these staff were coded with lack of work, illness, voluntary termination, or leave on their record of employment. Of the 200 centres who provided information, there were a total of 152 staff who were coded with 'Voluntary Termination', 106 staff who were coded with 'Leave', 84 staff who were coded with 'Lack of Work', and 66 staff who were coded with 'Illness' on their Record of Employment. Despite overall lower numbers than in 2020, more staff opted for a voluntary termination in 2021 compared to 2020 (152 vs 134).

Despite some signs of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, 88 per cent of employers reported at least one problem they are still currently facing (see Table 10).

Table 10   Problems employers report currently facing

	2020 N=412	2021 N=689
Staffing difficulties such as rehiring, retaining, or attracting new staff	45%	56%
Higher costs associated with COVID-19 health and safety requirements – ratios, distancing, cleaning	70%	54%
Lower enrollment/fewer children	73%	37%
Lack of reserve funds	33%	28%
Return to pre-COVID funding	42%	15%
Other	2%	2%
No current problems related to the pandemic	N/A	12%

Source: SRDC employer survey.

Employers are also adapting and finding new ways of operating and supporting their staff as the pandemic continues. When asked to describe changes made that were still being implemented at any point after November 1, 2020, 73 per cent of employers reported increased outdoor programming and increased access to personal protective equipment (PPE). More than half hired additional staff (e.g., substitute and cleaning staff) and 38 per cent increased wages. About one quarter increased paid time off and implemented flexible work hours. In total, less than 5 per cent of employers reported neither making any changes nor retaining any changes made beyond November 1, 2020.

Workforce survey

Similar to the employer survey, the workforce survey in 2020 probed the experiences of professionals working in centre-based ECL in the four-month pre-pandemic period up to March 11 and the eight-month period after the WHO declared the global pandemic. The survey in 2021 covered the period from November 2020 up to the date of survey completion (October or November 2021), to provide some comparison for changing patterns of employment.

Table 11 reveals that among Centre-based staff (child care centre, before and after school and recreational programs, other than $10 a day sites), 18-25 per cent of managers and supervisors

and 18-26 per cent of non M/S experienced some kind of employment disruption in the 12 months leading up to the 2021 survey. The proportion was 28 per cent at $10 a day sites. For between 4 and 14 per cent this took the form of a temporary layoff. The same questions were asked a year earlier about the eight months following the declaration of the global pandemic in 2020. Then, four in ten (40 per cent) experienced temporary layoffs in this period, and 2 per cent permanently.

Table 11   **Proportion of Centre ECL professionals who experienced any of the following after November 2020**

	Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool		Before & after school or recreational care program		$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres
	M/S	Non M/S	M/S	Non M/S	
Temporary layoff or furlough	5%	8%	11%	4%	14%
Permanent layoff	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%
Worked reduced hours	9%	12%	8%	10%	15%
Left employment by choice	6%	6%	9%	4%	6%
None of the above	82%	74%	75%	82%	72%

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties.

Table 12 examines how long layoffs lasted, for those Centre-based non M/S professionals who experienced them. The modal duration in 2021 was 0-2 weeks, which contrasts to 7-8 weeks in 2020. In 2021, 8 to 16 per cent of those laid off – and thus 1 per cent of all non M/S professionals were laid off 13 weeks or more (about half the rate reported in 2020).

The data from questions specifically focused on the effects of COVID-19 in 2021 and 2020 in case study interviews and surveys, imply that 2020 was a quite an exceptional year for the ECL workforce in B.C. There were more disruptions in 2021 than before the declaration of the pandemic, but the situation was improving relative to 2020, Data reported for specific KPIs below will also highlight the impact of the pandemic in different areas of operations. Given that the pandemic was still ongoing but vaccinations and more widespread testing allowed some restrictions to be lifted, it is plausible to that some aspects of working conditions might improve from 2020 to 2021. It would certainly be difficult to draw conclusions from the collected data about the effectiveness of the ECL R&R Strategy and its tactics from trends observed over 2020 to 2021. However, we can compare 2021 data to 2019 data to capture the state of workforce development since well before the pandemic. An improvement over 2019 by 2021 could be some indication that the measures implemented as part of the ECL R&R Strategy or as mitigation for the effects of the pandemic have yielded improvements for the sector.

Table 12   Centre ECL temporarily laid off: The number of weeks they were laid off after November 2020

Number of weeks	Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool	Before & after school or recreational care program	$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres
	Non M/S	Non M/S	
0-2 weeks	25%		42%
3-4 weeks	16%		13%
5-6 weeks	16%		8%
7-8 weeks	10%		13%
9-10 weeks	2%	Data supressed due to small sample sizes (<5)	8%
11-12 weeks	16%		8%
13-14 weeks	3%		0%
15-16 weeks	3%		0%
17-18 weeks	10%		8%

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties.

Regardless, of course, the pandemic has contributed to the challenges that were already being experienced by the workforce up to the end of 2019 and documented in the evaluation benchmarking report. The pandemic has become yet another factor to be considered in making policy and program decisions about how best to support recruitment and retention going forward, given that progress is still being sought on ECL R&R Strategy medium-term outcomes and 10-year goals.

KPI 1: ECL PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION AND PERCEPTION OF APPROPRIATENESS OF COMPENSATION

Cross-sectional survey

Workplace satisfaction

The cross-sectional workforce survey assessed work satisfaction through respondents' answers to questions with Likert-scale response items regarding various aspects of the respondents' employment position (Tables 13 and 15).

In general, respondents were most satisfied with the relationships they had built with families, with their co-workers and with the philosophy of their workplace. In contrast, they expressed the lowest rates of satisfaction with compensation and overall workload. Table 14 reveals that, these patterns were generally little changed from 2019 for CCC-based and before and after school/recreational program based non-M/S professionals. While there were changes in intensity of satisfaction, especially for HCPs - fewer overall were very satisfied but more were satisfied – dissatisfaction grew with respect to opportunities for input into decision-making for every group except $10 a day sites and for ongoing professional learning among HCPs and non-M/S staff at CCC and before and after school/recreational programs. Satisfaction with income (at 53 per cent) and benefits (at 64 per cent) remained low but somewhat higher in both cases than in 2019. Other than at before and after school/recreational programs, the proportions very satisfied with resources or equipment for the children had dropped by 2021.

Returning to the overall levels in Table 13, levels of satisfaction with aspects of the job varied by seniority. Satisfaction with nearly all aspects rated higher among managers and supervisors than among non M/S. This was particularly pronounced in reporting *very satisfied* with job overall, where the proportion of M/S respondents who were *very satisfied* was about 17-29 percentage points higher.

In comparison to employees of larger facilities, HCPs were less satisfied with their hours of work and job security. They were the most likely to be *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their job overall (97 per cent compared to 91 per cent across all programs/roles).

When satisfaction is considered by ECL qualification in Table 15, there is surprisingly little variation by certification held, and trends over time in satisfaction levels (Table 16) do not vary as much between groups defined by qualification. One exception is the change in satisfaction with opportunities for advancement among those with 1-year ECE certification – only 64 per

cent of whom were satisfied – a 21 percentage point drop since 2019. The same overall trends are seen in Table 16 as in Table 14 for program/role.

Table 13   Work satisfaction rates by program/role 2021

	Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool				Before & after school or recreational care program				$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres		HCPs		Total	
	M/S		Non-M/S		M/S		Non-M/S							
	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Aspect of job														
Hours of work	44%	46%	53%	37%	42%	51%	50%	36%	49%	40%	52%	21%	49%	40%
Physical indoor space of your child care workplace	41%	48%	51%	37%	37%	45%	42%	42%	64%	27%	53%	44%	48%	41%
Physical outdoor space of your child care workplace	39%	45%	45%	34%	45%	43%	43%	43%	53%	31%	43%	52%	43%	41%
Resources or equipment for the children	46%	41%	53%	27%	62%	32%	64%	32%	59%	23%	65%	28%	52%	33%
Opportunities for advancement available to you	47%	34%	52%	21%	59%	28%	39%	26%	49%	24%	60%	18%	50%	26%
Overall workload	51%	21%	55%	20%	54%	29%	68%	23%	52%	16%	64%	12%	54%	20%
Opportunities for input into decision-making	34%	56%	45%	33%	26%	62%	38%	40%	48%	30%	41%	46%	40%	43%
Opportunities for ongoing professional learning	39%	52%	48%	35%	40%	51%	45%	41%	52%	36%	59%	28%	45%	41%
Relationships with centre management	37%	56%	43%	41%	29%	68%	40%	51%	41%	40%	43%	57%	40%	48%

	Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool				Before & after school or recreational care program				$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres		HCPs		Total	
	M/S		Non-M/S		M/S		Non-M/S							
	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satis fied	Very Satis fied	Satis fied	Very Satis fied	Satis fied	Very Satis fied	Satis fied	Very Satisfied
Relationships with your co-workers	37%	60%	47%	47%	25%	75%	29%	64%	45%	52%	40%	55%	42%	54%
Relationships with families you work with	40%	57%	54%	43%	31%	69%	38%	56%	47%	51%	42%	57%	46%	52%
Philosophy of child care workplace	28%	69%	46%	46%	20%	78%	44%	51%	38%	59%	32%	67%	36%	59%
Job security	34%	59%	50%	40%	34%	56%	56%	35%	42%	51%	40%	43%	42%	48%
Job overall	41%	52%	53%	35%	37%	62%	53%	33%	51%	38%	59%	38%	48%	43%
Health and safety protocols	35%	61%	49%	41%	25%	74%	45%	43%	50%	41%	43%	50%	43%	50%
Compensation														
Income	41%	17%	35%	10%	51%	14%	36%	18%	40%	11%	51%	8%	40%	13%
Benefits	45%	23%	45%	13%	50%	17%	43%	14%	51%	16%	N/A	N/A	46%	18%

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care.

Table 14   Change in work satisfaction rates by program/role 2019-21

| Aspect of job | Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool | | | | Before & after school or recreational care program | | | | $10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres | | HCPs | | Total | |
| | M/S | | Non-M/S | | M/S | | Non-M/S | | | | | | | |
	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Hours of work	3%	1%	2%	-2%	-10%	17%	-6%	2%	10%	-7%	6%	-14%	2%	0%
Physical indoor space of your child care workplace	-2%	1%	0%	1%	2%	6%	-18%	10%	11%	-7%	18%	-19%	0%	1%
Resources or equipment for the children	-1%	-1%	3%	-5%	20%	-5%	12%	-9%	-3%	-4%	19%	-26%	3%	-4%
Opportunities for advancement available to you	-2%	1%	-4%	0%	6%	4%	-16%	3%	-2%	-1%	9%	-9%	-3%	1%
Overall workload	4%	-2%	-3%	-3%	-4%	8%	8%	-10%	1%	0%	21%	-20%	0%	-3%
Opportunities for input into decision-making	-2%	0%	-2%	-4%	-10%	5%	-14%	0%	6%	-4%	6%	-16%	-2%	-2%
Opportunities for ongoing professional learning	-1%	2%	0%	-3%	-12%	16%	-4%	0%	10%	-7%	7%	-11%	0%	-1%

Aspect of job	Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool				Before & after school or recreational care program				$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres		HCPs		Total	
	M/S		Non-M/S		M/S		Non-M/S							
	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Relationships with centre management	5%	-5%	1%	-5%	-5%	12%	0%	-2%	3%	-6%	17%	-17%	2%	-4%
Relationships with your co-workers	3%	-2%	1%	-3%	-13%	16%	-10%	4%	-7%	5%	7%	-12%	1%	-1%
Relationships with families you work with	9%	-8%	8%	-9%	-4%	5%	-12%	6%	8%	-8%	9%	-10%	6%	-6%
Philosophy of child care workplace	3%	-2%	2%	-3%	-16%	16%	1%	-1%	-7%	10%	9%	-10%	-1%	1%
Job security	2%	-2%	2%	-2%	-2%	3%	4%	-8%	-4%	-1%	-3%	-1%	0%	0%
Job overall	2%	-3%	-1%	-2%	-13%	19%	7%	-19%	-2%	2%	11%	-9%	0%	-2%
Health and safety protocols	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compensation														
Income	1%	3%	0%	2%	7%	0%	-9%	4%	7%	7%	-3%	0%	-1%	3%
Benefits	-1%	5%	2%	2%	8%	3%	0%	1%	4%	3%	N/A	N/A	2%	4%

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care

Table 15   Work satisfaction rates by ECL qualification 2021

	RA		ECEA		ECE 1yr		ECE 5yr		ECE+SP or +IT		ECE+both SP&IT		Total	
	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Aspect of job														
Hours of work	49%	38%	44%	44%	46%	34%	50%	40%	51%	40%	49%	39%	49%	40%
Physical outdoor space of your child care workplace	40%	48%	47%	42%	47%	42%	51%	40%	48%	40%	48%	39%	48%	41%
Physical indoor space of your child care workplace	44%	49%	38%	46%	35%	44%	45%	38%	43%	40%	44%	36%	43%	41%
Resources or equipment for the children	58%	36%	48%	34%	47%	32%	55%	31%	49%	34%	52%	31%	52%	33%
Opportunities for advancement available to you	53%	26%	46%	30%	41%	23%	51%	28%	52%	25%	52%	25%	50%	26%
Overall workload	57%	22%	45%	29%	50%	19%	54%	22%	56%	14%	58%	17%	54%	20%
Opportunities for input into decision-making	40%	49%	39%	43%	36%	42%	43%	42%	41%	41%	41%	41%	41%	43%
Opportunities for ongoing professional learning	50%	36%	40%	44%	43%	38%	49%	40%	49%	39%	39%	46%	46%	41%

	RA		ECEA		ECE 1yr		ECE 5yr		ECE+SP or +IT		ECE+both SP&IT		Total	
	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Relationships with centre management	38%	57%	33%	52%	39%	48%	42%	48%	41%	43%	42%	46%	41%	48%
Relationships with your co-workers	33%	62%	36%	58%	41%	50%	43%	54%	44%	52%	44%	51%	42%	54%
Relationships with families you work with	44%	52%	44%	52%	45%	50%	46%	51%	50%	47%	43%	55%	46%	51%
Philosophy of child care workplace	30%	67%	33%	60%	34%	56%	38%	59%	42%	52%	36%	60%	37%	58%
Job security	40%	48%	40%	53%	39%	47%	43%	48%	43%	48%	43%	50%	43%	48%
Job overall	50%	45%	47%	43%	47%	40%	50%	43%	50%	41%	48%	44%	49%	43%
Health and safety protocols	44%	53%	45%	47%	40%	50%	43%	52%	43%	48%	45%	48%	43%	50%
Compensation														
Income	47%	13%	40%	11%	42%	11%	39%	12%	34%	15%	40%	12%	40%	13%
Benefits	49%	21%	52%	19%	39%	16%	43%	16%	44%	21%	48%	19%	46%	18%

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Note: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE + both SP&IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both an Infant Toddler Educator certification AND a Special Needs Educator certification).

Table 16   Change in work satisfaction rates by ECL qualification 2019-2021

	RA		ECEA		ECE 1yr		ECE 5yr		ECE+SP or +IT		ECE+both SP&IT		Total	
	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Aspect of job														
Hours of work	3%	1%	-5%	6%	4%	-8%	3%	0%	2%	2%	4%	-2%	2%	0%
Physical indoor space of your child care workplace	-8%	13%	4%	-3%	-1%	-3%	2%	0%	-2%	2%	-3%	4%	-1%	2%
Resources or equipment for the children	11%	-2%	2%	-6%	-4%	-6%	7%	-6%	-2%	0%	0%	1%	2%	-3%
Opportunities for advancement available to you	0%	2%	-3%	1%	-18%	-3%	-2%	2%	-4%	3%	1%	-1%	-4%	1%
Overall workload	2%	-3%	-12%	2%	-5%	-5%	1%	-2%	1%	-6%	5%	-1%	0%	-3%
Opportunities for input into decision-making	1%	-2%	-5%	-1%	-6%	0%	-2%	-1%	-5%	-1%	3%	-6%	-2%	-1%
Opportunities for ongoing professional learning	3%	-3%	-3%	2%	-4%	-6%	2%	-1%	7%	-6%	-4%	1%	1%	-1%
Relationships with centre management	3%	1%	3%	-7%	1%	-5%	1%	-2%	-1%	-5%	7%	-6%	3%	-4%
Relationships with your co-workers	-3%	1%	-4%	2%	-1%	-3%	1%	0%	-1%	0%	4%	-3%	0%	-1%

	RA		ECEA		ECE 1yr		ECE 5yr		ECE+SP or +IT		ECE+both SP&IT		Total	
	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Relationships with families you work with	5%	-7%	1%	-2%	5%	-5%	6%	-5%	11%	-11%	8%	-7%	6%	-6%
Philosophy of child care workplace	-6%	7%	-5%	2%	-2%	-2%	0%	2%	3%	-4%	0%	3%	-1%	1%
Job security	-3%	0%	-3%	6%	-3%	0%	0%	1%	0%	-2%	5%	-6%	0%	-1%
Job overall	6%	-5%	-4%	3%	0%	-6%	4%	-4%	-2%	1%	0%	1%	1%	-2%
Health and safety protocols	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compensation														
Income	-4%	2%	4%	0%	1%	0%	0%	2%	-3%	7%	2%	3%	0%	3%
Benefits	11%	5%	7%	3%	-5%	4%	0%	3%	-4%	6%	6%	4%	2%	4%

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Note: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE + both IT& SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both an Infant Toddler Educator certification AND a Special Needs Educator certification).

Regression analysis of workplace satisfaction

This is the first of several regression analyses to explore more deeply the factors influencing key KPI outcomes. Since this is the first use of regression analysis, we include here a more detailed explanation. This type of analysis estimates the relative effects of an independent (or explanatory) variable on an outcome, while controlling for the effects of all other independent variables in the model. Put simply, a regression model tells us which factors among many are responsible for differences in outcomes, and to what extent. A strong model can predict outcomes, within a margin of error, for individuals that are similar across characteristics included in the model. This analysis is a new addition to the evaluation of the ECL R&R Strategy, undertaken to generate a deeper understanding of what factors might be the most important policy levers to consider to improve outcomes.

Independent variables include characteristics that – at least in the short term - remain unchanged by an individual's experiences in child care (such as their demographic characteristics or their workplace working conditions) but can help understand, explain or even exert influence on their behaviours, attitudes, and decision-making. Our analysis points to which independent variables have a non-zero effect on outcomes and whether this effect is positive or negative.

As part of this analysis, several tests were administered to determine which independent factors should be included in the regression model:

- A theoretical analysis to determine whether there are any theoretical or previously established relationships of cause and effect between potential explanatory factors and selected outcomes.

- Testing the "collinearity" between independent variables to ensure that they are not strongly correlated. This is to ensure that each independent variable included in the model independently is capable of being associated with the dependent variable (outcome). We could not include hours of work, wage and income in the same model simultaneously, for example, because they are too closely related. Most often, we use income.

- A correlation analysis to determine whether there are any existing relationships between independent and dependent variables in the research sample.

Due to the structure of the selected outcomes, one of three different types of regression methods was used depending on the outcome:

- a **logistic regression model** (or logit) for binary outcomes like yes/no. A logistic model estimates the *odds* of an independent variable yielding the outcome. The logistic regression coefficient β_i can be transformed into an odds ratio by taking its exponent (e^{β_i}) but either can be reported to signal the direction and strength of the relationship (relative to the coefficient/odds ratio for other independent variables).

- a **multinominal regression model** for nominal (i.e., unordered categorical variable) outcomes, like occupational categories. A multinominal model conducts a similar estimation as a logistic regression, but does it for every two-way comparison between the categories in the nominal outcome and the independent variable. The coefficients β_i can be transformed as a relative risk ratio by taking its exponent (e^{β_i}).

- A **linear regression model** for continuous variables, like wage rates. A linear model estimates how much a one-unit change in the independent variable will change the mean (average) of the outcome (dependent variable like wages).

This is a new approach with a lot of options. The analyses are not always simple to interpret and often require several iterations to produce a useful model. We anticipate learning from the SSC which uses of regression – and ways of presenting its results – are most successful and adjusting these analyses for future reports accordingly.

Regression of factors associated with workplace satisfaction

A logistic regression analysis was conducted to better understand which factors contribute to various dimensions of workplace satisfaction among ECL professionals, specifically satisfaction with their job overall, satisfaction with their workplace's child care philosophy, and satisfaction with their earnings and benefits.

After controlling for other factors, we find five factors have a significantly non-zero effect on job satisfaction. The following provides a guided interpretation of the results of the odds ratio for each significant factor:

- **Age:** Five extra years in a person's age is associated with a 16 per cent increase in the odds that child care professionals will be satisfied with their job overall and a 20 per cent increase in the odds that they will be satisfied with their workplace's child care philosophy.

- **Number of benefits received:** An additional employment benefit (either financial or non-financial) that a child care professional receives is associated with a 14 per cent increase in the odds that they will be satisfied with their job overall and a 5 per cent increase in the odds that they will be satisfied with their earnings and benefits.

- **Union membership:** Union membership is associated with a 59 per cent decrease in the odds that child care professionals will be satisfied with their job overall, although this result is subject to several caveats.[27]

- **Newcomer status:** Newcomers have 63 per cent lower odds of being satisfied with the philosophy of their child care centre than non-newcomers.

- **Monthly earnings[28]:** A $1,000 increase in monthly earnings is associated with a 15per cent increase in the odds that child care professionals will be satisfied with their earnings and benefits.

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[27] Elsewhere in this report, additional benefits and higher pay are associated with an increase in overall job satisfaction, and union members are more likely to receive higher pay and benefits. Yet in the regression results, union membership is associated with a decrease in satisfaction. It is worth recalling how regression works to identify the *independent* effect of each attribute. Thus, in this model that *already* includes the effects of higher earnings and benefits on satisfaction, what is shown as the influence of union membership is the effect of membership on satisfaction over and above any influence of the higher pay and benefits that membership may bring. That said, if a factor that is *not included in the model* is tightly associated with union membership (like, say, specific workplace settings) that affects satisfaction, then the effect attributed to union membership could be picking up the influence of that factor meaning union membership per se may not be accounting for differences in satisfaction. The survey sample may not be representative of all unionized workplaces.

[28] The monthly earnings variable was selected for inclusion in the regression model as it is the most complete variable reflecting income in the workforce survey dataset. The workforce survey allows respondents to report earnings information in three different formats, according to their preferences: hourly wages (along with the number of hours worked in an average week), monthly income, and annual income. Earnings are then converted to monthly income for comparison. Wages cannot be estimated for all respondents (such as those self-employed).

Table 17   Logistic regression results for dimensions of workplace satisfaction

	Satisfaction with Job Overall				Satisfaction with philosophy of child care				Satisfaction with earnings and benefits			
	Coeff.	Odds ratio	SE	p	Coeff.	Odds ratio	SE	p	Coeff.	Odds ratio	SE	p
Private business	0.21	1.24	0.25	0.40	0.11	1.12	0.33	0.73	0.23	1.25	0.15	0.12
Years working in Child care (+5 years)	-0.04	0.96	0.08	0.60	0.04	1.04	0.11	0.71	0.00	1.00	0.04	0.94
Monthly earnings (+ $1,000)	0.01	1.01	0.08	0.92	0.16	1.18	0.11	0.14	**0.14**	**1.15**	**0.05**	**0.00**
Bachelor or Masters Degree	-0.04	0.96	0.22	0.86	-0.23	0.79	0.28	0.41	-0.13	0.88	0.13	0.33
Women	0.30	1.34	0.57	0.60	0.81	2.24	0.59	0.17	-0.12	0.89	0.37	0.75
Indigenous persons	0.41	1.50	0.55	0.46	-0.15	0.86	0.64	0.82	0.35	1.42	0.27	0.20
Newcomers	-0.37	0.69	0.24	0.12	**-1.00**	**0.37**	**0.30**	**0.00**	-0.08	0.92	0.15	0.60
Member of a Union	**-0.90**	**0.41**	**0.28**	**0.00**	-0.58	0.56	0.36	0.11	-0.31	0.73	0.18	0.09
Age (+ 5 years)	0.15	1.16	0.07	**0.03**	0.18	1.20	0.09	**0.04**	0.05	1.05	0.04	0.18
Number of benefits received	**0.14**	**1.14**	**0.03**	**0.00**	0.08	1.09	0.04	0.05	**0.05**	**1.05**	**0.02**	**0.00**

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Notes: The odds ratio are calculated by taking the exponent of the regression coefficient (e^{β_i}). The significance of the coefficient is indicated by the columns p (i.e., p-value). An independent variable whose regression coefficient has a p-value of less than 5% (p<0.05) is considered to have an effect on the outcome that is significantly different from 0. Significant effects are highlighted in yellow in the table.

Figure 4   Logistic regression results for dimensions of job satisfaction
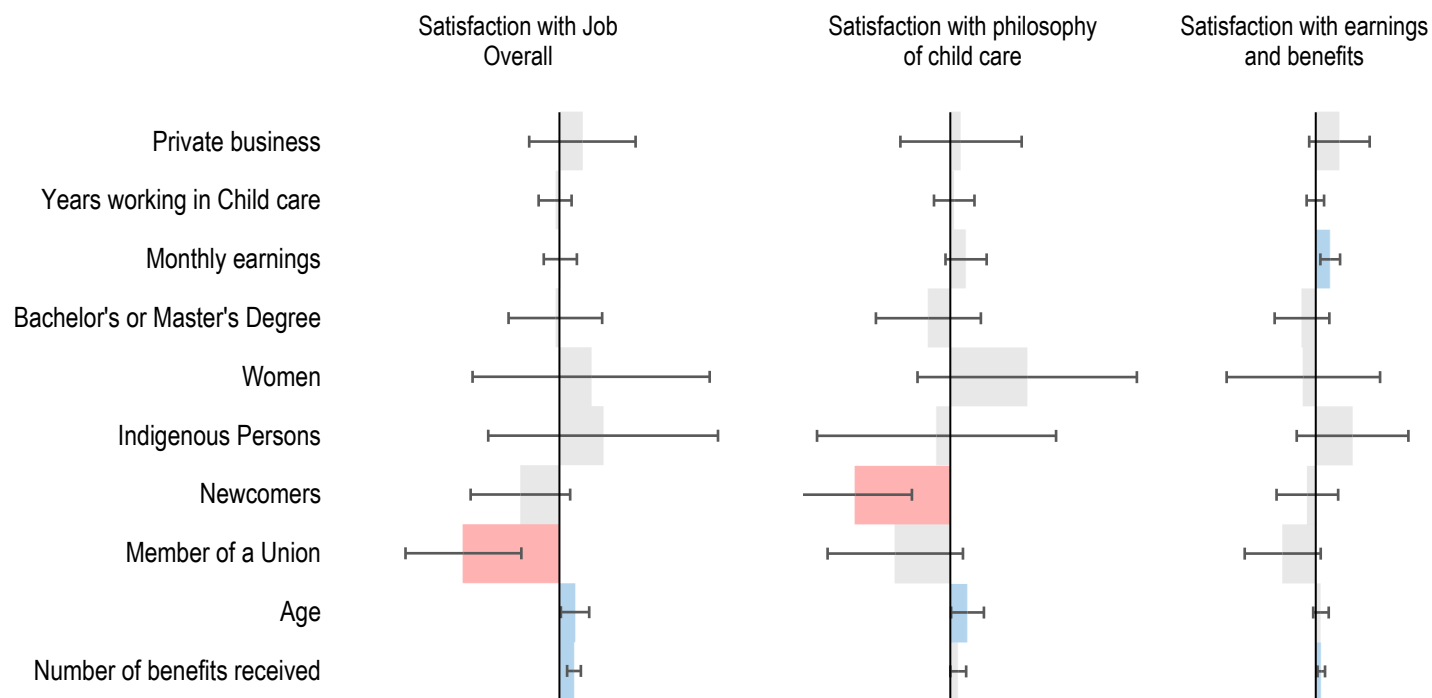
Notes: Bar graphs indicate the size of the coefficients (β) for each independent variable included in the model. Error bars indicate the 95% confidence interval for each coefficient; error bars for independent variables that have a non-zero effect on the dependent variable do not cross the 0 line. Additionally, a significantly negative effect is indicated by a red bar; a significantly positive effect is indicated by a blue bar; a non-significant effect is indicated by grey bars.

Motivational factors

Survey respondents were asked to read ten statements and rate the extent to which they felt each described how they felt about their employment position. SRDC's confirmatory factor analysis of responses to these ten questions in 2019 confirmed that there were two main components measured through these statements: motivational factors and burnout. Figures 5 through 12 reflect these groupings.

Six statements most closely measured satisfaction with motivational factors (shown in Figure 5 against program/role). Motivational factors are conditions in the internal workplace environment that facilitate or hinder staff motivation.

Although the differences were not large, typically it was staff who were not managers or supervisors at child care centres and before and after school/recreational programs and those at $10 a day sites who agreed less often than HCP and M/S groups that motivational factors were present in their work. For instance, just under half of professionals at $10 a day sites felt they had reasonable control over most things that affected their job satisfaction (46 per cent) compared to 68-74 per cent of managers and supervisors at other types of centre-based care and 80 per cent of ECE-certified HCPs. They were also somewhat less likely to *often* or *always* feel that workplace policies and procedures were well defined. Unsurprisingly, HCPs very often felt that factor was present, but were less likely to feel able to respond to personal or family needs.

In general, there was little to distinguish between groups defined by ECL qualification on their experience of motivational factors (Figure 6), although those with the Responsible Adult designation were more likely to feel they had reasonable control over most things that affected their job satisfaction, by at least 10 percentage points.

For CCC program staff as well as those at $10 a day sites, motivating factors were generally similarly prevalent in 2021 as 2019 (Figure 7). Those at before and after school/recreational programs tended to report improved motivational factors. The main exceptions were that they were less likely to say their job made good use of their skills and abilities and (for M/S) that it gave them a sense of accomplishment. In 2021, HCPs without ECE certification were less likely to agree that they felt their work was important or that they had reasonable control over most things that affected their job satisfaction than they did in 2019. HCPs with certification were the only group not more likely to feel able to meet personal or family needs in 2021.

When change in the experience of motivational factors is considered by qualification, we see increases in motivational factors almost universally (Figure 8). Responsible adults were the only group defined by their qualification to have seen declines on more than one motivational factor. It is interesting that among groups defined by qualification, estimates are predominantly increasing in moving from 2019 to 2021 while the change appears in both directions for groups

defined by program and role in Figure 7. This counterintuitive difference arises when the overall trend is an increase on average and the program/role groups experiencing declines are small (contain fewer respondents) relative to the groups experiencing increases. It can also be seen when the overall trend is a decrease on average and the program/role groups experiencing increases are small (contain fewer respondents) relative to the groups experiencing decreases.

Burnout

Burnout was captured through four statements depicted in Figure 9. On average, about one in eight respondents felt frustrated by their job. At least 20 per cent of all respondents *often* or *always* felt there was too little time to do all that needed to be done, highest among managers and supervisors at CCC (above 60 per cent) and lowest among non M/S professionals at before and after school/recreational programs (20 per cent).

The proportion of respondents who *often* or *always* felt their work was stimulating and challenging (at 66 per cent or more) was similar across different groups of professionals. Finally, only 30-43 per cent of those working at before and after school/recreational programs felt physically exhausted at the end of the day compared to 57 to 64 per cent of HCPs, $10 a day and CCC professionals.

Experience of burnout was reported at very similar levels across respondent groups defined by their qualification, except Responsible Adults who tended less often to report physical exhaustion or lack of time to do everything that needed to be done, although still at least 40 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that these burnout factors were present (Figure 10).

Figure 11 plots the change in reports of burnout factors between 2019 and 2021. For most groups defined by program/role, the situation was worsening. However, more in every group except those working in $10 a day sites reported their work stimulating and challenging in 2021. All groups were more likely to report being physically exhausted. All but managers and supervisors in before and after school/recreational programs were more likely to report frustration with their job.

When considered by qualification group, there were marked increases in the proportions of ECEAs and ECEs finding work stimulating and challenging by 2021, and increases on burnout measures such as feeling exhausted, lacking time to get everything done and job frustration (Figure 12). Only Responsible Adults appeared to experience decreases or more modest increases in burnout measures.

Figure 5   Proportion of respondents who *often* or *always* experienced different motivational factors in 2021 by program/role

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Notes: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care. CCC child care centre. B&A before and after school programs. RCP recreational care programs. Statistical significance of the chi-square test of independence is denoted by asterisks: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.10. If the p-value is less than 0.01/0.05/0.10, we have sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a statistically significant association between the program/role of a respondent and the above often/always responses they give to the questions.

Figure 6   Proportion of respondents who *often* or *always* experienced different motivational factors in 2021 by qualification group

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+SP or +IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE + both IT& SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both an Infant Toddler Educator certification AND a Special Needs Educator certification). Statistical significance of the chi-square test of independence is denoted by asterisks: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.10. If the p-value is less than 0.01/0.05/0.1, we have sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a statistically significant association between the qualification of the respondent and the above often/always responses they give to the questions.

Figure 7 **Change in proportion of respondents who *often* or *always* experienced different motivational factors 2019-21 (percentage points)**

My work is important ***
- CCC or preschool - M/S: 0.7
- CCC or preschool - Non-M/S: -1.1
- B&A or RCP - M/S: 2.5
- B&A or RCP - Non-M/S: 6.3
- $10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres: -0.9
- HCPs – ECE-certified: 0.6
- HCPs - not ECE-certified: -3.2

My job makes good use of my skills and abilities ***
- CCC or preschool - M/S: -1.6
- CCC or preschool - Non-M/S: -2.8
- B&A or RCP - M/S: -5.2
- B&A or RCP - Non-M/S: -5.0
- $10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres: -2.0
- HCPs – ECE-certified: 3.7
- HCPs - not ECE-certified: -1.9

Workplace policies and procedures are well-defined ***
- CCC or preschool - M/S: -0.4
- CCC or preschool - Non-M/S: -1.0
- B&A or RCP - M/S: 6.6
- B&A or RCP - Non-M/S: 0.5
- $10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres: 1.9
- HCPs – ECE-certified: 2.9
- HCPs - not ECE-certified: 2.8

My work gives me a sense of accomplishment ***
- CCC or preschool - M/S: -0.3
- CCC or preschool - Non-M/S: -0.2
- B&A or RCP - M/S: -2.4
- B&A or RCP - Non-M/S: 7.4
- $10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres: 1.5
- HCPs – ECE-certified: 0.3
- HCPs - not ECE-certified: -0.4

I have reasonable control over most things that affect my job satisfaction ***
- CCC or preschool - M/S: 0.2
- CCC or preschool - Non-M/S: -2.4
- B&A or RCP - M/S: 10.6
- B&A or RCP - Non-M/S: 6.6
- $10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres: 5.6
- HCPs – ECE-certified: 6.3
- HCPs - not ECE-certified: -7.7

I am able to respond to my personal or family needs
- CCC or preschool - M/S: 4.3
- CCC or preschool - Non-M/S: 3.3
- B&A or RCP - M/S: 3.0
- B&A or RCP - Non-M/S: 1.0
- $10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres: 4.0
- HCPs – ECE-certified: -0.4
- HCPs - not ECE-certified: 1.9

Legend:
- CCC or preschool - M/S
- CCC or preschool - Non-M/S
- B&A or RCP - M/S
- B&A or RCP - Non-M/S
- $10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres
- HCPs – ECE-certified
- HCPs - not ECE-certified

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Notes: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care. CCC child care centre. B&A before and after school programs. RCP recreational care programs. Statistical significance of the chi-square test of independence is denoted by asterisks: *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.10$. If the p-value is less than 0.01/0.05/0.10, we have sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a statistically significant association between the program/role of a respondent and the above often/always responses they give to the questions.

Figure 8   **Change in proportion of respondents who *often* or *always* experienced different motivational factors 2019-21 (percentage points) by qualification**

My work is important ***
- RA: 1.0
- ECEA: 6.8
- ECE 1yr: 3.9
- ECE 5yr: 9.2
- ECE+SP or +IT: 7.6
- ECE+both SP&IT: 15.0

My job makes good use of my skills and abilities ***
- RA: -1.2
- ECEA: 11.6
- ECE 1yr: -3.8
- ECE 5yr: 4.5
- ECE+SP or +IT: 3.0
- ECE+both SP&IT: 11.9

Workplace policies and procedures are well-defined ***
- RA: -0.5
- ECEA: 6.7
- ECE 1yr: 0.6
- ECE 5yr: 8.7
- ECE+SP or +IT: 1.4
- ECE+both SP&IT: 12.8

My work gives me a sense of accomplishment ***
- RA: 3.6
- ECEA: 9.7
- ECE 1yr: 5.9
- ECE 5yr: 7.3
- ECE+SP or +IT: 4.0
- ECE+both SP&IT: 10.7

I have reasonable control over most things that affect my job satisfaction ***
- RA: -0.6
- ECEA: 8.4
- ECE 1yr: 2.1
- ECE 5yr: 4.1
- ECE+SP or +IT: -0.7
- ECE+both SP&IT: 8.4

I am able to respond to my personal or family needs
- RA: 2.9
- ECEA: 9.5
- ECE 1yr: 7.6
- ECE 5yr: 9.7
- ECE+SP or +IT: 7.6
- ECE+both SP&IT: 16.0

Legend: RA · ECEA · ECE 1yr · ECE 5yr · ECE+SP or +IT · ECE+both SP&IT

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+SP or IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE + both IT& SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both an Infant Toddler Educator certification AND a Special Needs Educator certification). Statistical significance of the chi-square test of independence is denoted by asterisks: *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, *$p<0.10$. If the p-value is less than 0.01/0.05/0.1, we have sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a statistically significant association between the qualification of the respondent and the above often/always responses they give to the questions.

Figure 9   Percentage of respondents who often or always experienced different burnout measures by program/role in 2021

The work I do is stimulating and challenging ***
- 83%
- 68%
- 82%
- 66%
- 82%
- 75%
- 75%

I feel physically exhausted at the end of the day***
- 57%
- 60%
- 43%
- 30%
- 64%
- 62%
- 60%

There is too little time to do all that needs to be done ***
- 64%
- 50%
- 40%
- 20%
- 62%
- 46%
- 49%

I feel frustrated by this job
- 13%
- 16%
- 8%
- 7%
- 17%
- 13%
- 11%

Legend:
- CCC or preschool - M/S
- CCC or preschool - Non-M/S
- B&A or RCP - M/S
- B&A or RCP - Non-M/S
- $10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres
- HCPs – ECE-certified
- HCPs - not ECE-certified

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Notes: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care. CCC child care centre. B&A before and after school programs. RCP recreational care programs. Statistical significance of the chi-square test of independence is denoted by asterisks: *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, *$p<0.10$. If the p-value is less than 0.01/0.05/0.1, we have sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a statistically significant association between the program/role of a respondent and the above often/always responses they give to the questions.

Figure 10   **Percentage of respondents who often or always experienced different burnout measures by qualification in 2021**

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+SP or IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE + both IT& SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both an Infant Toddler Educator certification AND a Special Needs Educator certification). Statistical significance of the chi-square test of independence is denoted by asterisks: *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.10$. If the p-value is less than 0.01/0.05/0.10, we have sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a statistically significant association between the qualification of a respondent and the above often/always responses they give to the questions.

Figure 11   Change in percentage points of respondents who often or always experienced different burnout measures by program/role 2019-21

The work I do is stimulating and challenging ***
- 1.9
- 3.9
- 1.9
- 5.6
- -2.1
- 12.1
- 0.1

I feel physically exhausted at the end of the day
- 4.9
- 9.4
- 12.5
- 3.5
- 9.5
- 7.9
- 10.7

There is too little time to do all that needs to be done ***
- 3.6
- 8.4
- -2.9
- 1.3
- 6.1
- -1.4
- 13.9

I feel frustrated by this job
- 4.2
- 7.1
- -0.5
- 1.3
- 0.7
- 2.2
- 4.0

Legend:
- CCC or preschool - M/S
- CCC or preschool - Non-M/S
- B&A or RCP - M/S
- B&A or RCP - Non-M/S
- $10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres
- HCPs – ECE-certified
- HCPs - not ECE-certified

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Notes: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care. CCC child care centre. B&A before and after school programs. RCP recreational care programs. Statistical significance of the chi-square test of independence is denoted by asterisks: *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.10$. If the p-value is less than 0.01/0.05/0.1, we have sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a statistically significant association between the program/role of the respondent and the above often/always responses they give to the questions.

Figure 12   Change in percentage points of respondents who often or always experienced different burnout measures by qualification 2019-21

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+SP or +IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE + both IT& SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both an Infant Toddler Educator certification AND a Special Needs Educator certification). Statistical significance of the chi-square test of independence is denoted by asterisks: *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, *$p<0.10$. If the p-value is less than 0.01/0.05/0.1, we have sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a statistically significant association between the program/role of the respondent and the above often/always responses they give to the questions.

Regression of factors associated with burnout

A logistic regression analysis was conducted to better understand which factors contribute to various dimensions of burnout among child care professionals. The four dimensions ask respondents to rate their agreement with the following statements:

- The work I do is stimulating and challenging

- I feel physically exhausted at the end of the day

- There is too little time to do all that needs to be done

- I feel frustrated by this job

The dimensions were measured on a four-point scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree) in the survey, and then recoded to a binary outcome with 0 indicating disagreement and 1 indicating agreement.

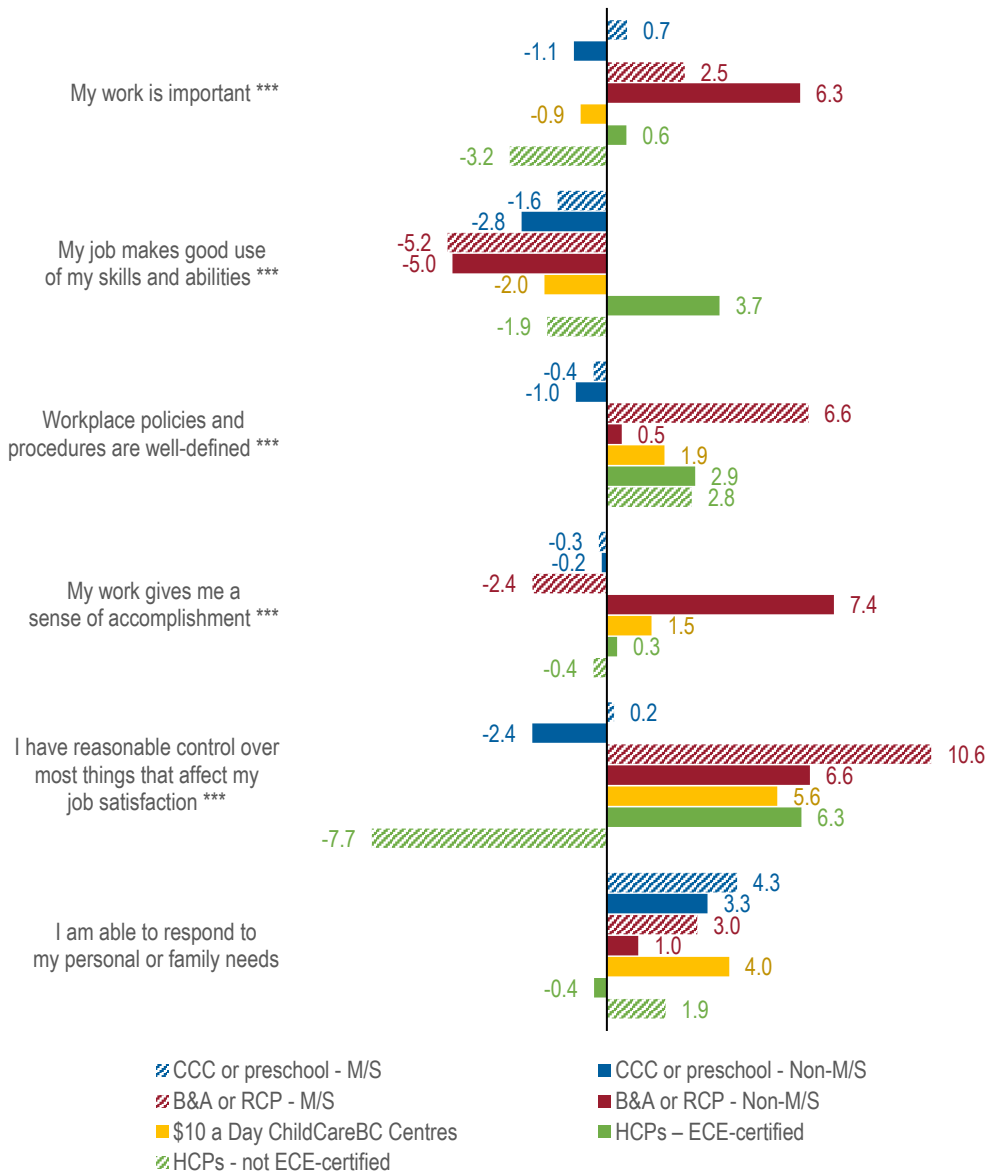After controlling for other factors, we find six factors can significantly predict burnout in child care professionals. The following provides a guided interpretation of the results of the odds ratio for each significant factor:

- **Age:** Age is significantly associated with all four dimensions of burnout. Five extra years in a person's age is associated with a 10 per cent increase in finding their work stimulating and challenging, an 8 per cent decrease in the odds of feeling physically exhausted at the end of the day, an 8 per cent decrease in the odds of feeling that there is not enough time to do all that needs to be done, and a 14 per cent decrease in the odds of feeling frustrated by their job. In essence, the older the professional, the lower the odds that they feel burnt out from their job.

- **Union membership:** Union membership is positively and significantly associated with three of the four dimensions of burnout, although again these results are subject to caveats. Being a member of a union is associated with an 88 per cent increase in the odds of feeling physically exhausted at the end of the day, a 70 per cent increase in the odds of finding that there is not enough time to get done all that needs to be done, and a 116 per cent increase in the odds that they feel frustrated by their job.[29]

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[29] Additional benefits are associated with a decrease in feeling frustrated with the job, and union members are more likely to receive benefits. Yet in the regression results, union membership is associated with a increase in burnout. It is worth recalling how regression works to identify the *independent* effect of each attribute. Thus, in this model that *already* includes the effects of benefits on burnout, what is shown as the influence of union membership is the effect of membership on satisfaction over and above any influence of the benefits (and, indeed, earnings) that membership may bring. That said, if a factor that is

- **Years working in child care:** Five extra years of experience working in child care is associated with an 11 per cent increase in the odds of finding that there is not enough time to get done all that needs to be done, and a 14 per cent increase in the odds that they feel frustrated by their job.[30]

- **Newcomers:** Newcomers are associated with a 58 per cent reduction in the odds of finding work stimulating and challenging, and a 46 per cent reduction in the odds of feeling exhausted at the end of the day, compared to non-newcomers.

- **Monthly earnings:** An additional $1,000 dollars in monthly earnings is associated with a 10 per cent increase in the odds of feeling physically exhausted at the end of the day, and a 17 per cent increase in feeling that there is too little time to do all that needs to be done.[31]

- **Number of benefits received:** An additional employment benefit (either financial or non-financial) that a child care professional receives is associated with a 5 per cent increase in feeling that the work they do is stimulating and challenging, and a 6 per cent decrease in feeling frustrated by their job.

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not included in the model is tightly associated with union membership (like, say, specific workplace settings) that affects burnout, then the effect attributed to union membership could be picking up the influence of that factor meaning union membership per se may not be accounting for differences in experiencing burnout. The survey sample may not be representative of all unionized workplaces.

[30] Note that the estimated effects of aging and years of experience are often in opposite directions. All else equal, being older reduces burnout while longer experience increases burnout. The coefficients are not the same magnitude, however, and so do not cancel each other out. Also, the model is static (measured at one point in time) and does not necessarily predict the effect on each person of every additional year. The underlying data are showing that, all else equal, people in the workforce in 2021 who were older were less likely to report burnout than those who were younger and for those at any given age, those with less work experience in ECL would be less likely to report burnout than those with more experience.

[31] In the absence of complete data on hours, it is difficult to speculate on increased reports of burnout among those earning more. There can be no definitive explanation. The result could simply capture the effects of increasing hours of work. Plausibly also, those in the most demanding jobs physically may be paid more.

Table 18   Logistic regression results of factors contributing to burnout

	The work I do is stimulating and challenging				I feel physically exhausted at the end of the day				There is too little time to do all that needs to be done				I feel frustrated by this job			
	Coeff.	OR	SE	p	Coeff.	OR	SE	p	Coeff.	OR	SE	p	Coeff.	OR	SE	p
Private business	-0.06	0.94	0.18	0.74	0.18	1.20	0.15	0.21	-0.04	0.96	0.15	0.81	-0.07	0.94	0.20	0.75
Years working in child care (+5 years)	0.03	1.03	0.05	0.59	0.01	1.01	0.04	0.83	0.10	1.11	0.04	**0.02**	0.13	1.14	0.06	**0.04**
Monthly earnings (+ $1,000)	0.07	1.07	0.06	0.24	0.10	1.10	0.05	**0.04**	0.15	1.17	0.05	**0.00**	0.05	1.05	0.06	0.41
Bachelor's or Master's Degree	0.04	1.04	0.16	0.81	0.12	1.12	0.13	0.38	0.26	1.30	0.13	0.05	0.29	1.34	0.18	0.10
Women	0.06	1.06	0.43	0.90	0.39	1.47	0.36	0.28	-0.07	0.93	0.36	0.85	-0.46	0.63	0.45	0.31
Indigenous persons	0.14	1.16	0.36	0.69	-0.02	0.98	0.27	0.96	-0.15	0.86	0.27	0.57	-0.12	0.89	0.37	0.74
Newcomer status	**-0.87**	**0.42**	**0.17**	**0.00**	**-0.45**	**0.64**	**0.15**	**0.00**	-0.22	0.81	0.15	0.15	-0.35	0.71	0.21	0.11
Member of a Union	-0.27	0.76	0.22	0.22	**0.63**	**1.88**	**0.19**	**0.00**	**0.53**	**1.70**	**0.19**	**0.01**	**0.77**	**2.16**	**0.23**	**0.00**
Age (+ 5 years)	**0.10**	**1.10**	**0.05**	**0.03**	**-0.09**	**0.92**	**0.04**	**0.02**	**-0.08**	**0.92**	**0.04**	**0.02**	**-0.15**	**0.86**	**0.06**	**0.01**
Number of benefits received	**0.05**	**1.05**	**0.02**	**0.02**	0.00	1.00	0.02	0.99	-0.03	0.97	0.02	0.08	**-0.06**	**0.94**	**0.03**	**0.02**

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Notes: The odds ratio (OR) are calculated by taking the exponent of the regression coefficient (e^{β_i}). The significance of the coefficient is indicated by the columns p (i.e., p-value). An independent variable whose regression coefficient has a p-value of less than 5% (p<0.05) is considered to have an effect on the outcome that is significantly different from 0. Significant effects are highlighted in yellow in the table.

Figure 13   Logistic regression results of factors contributing to burnout
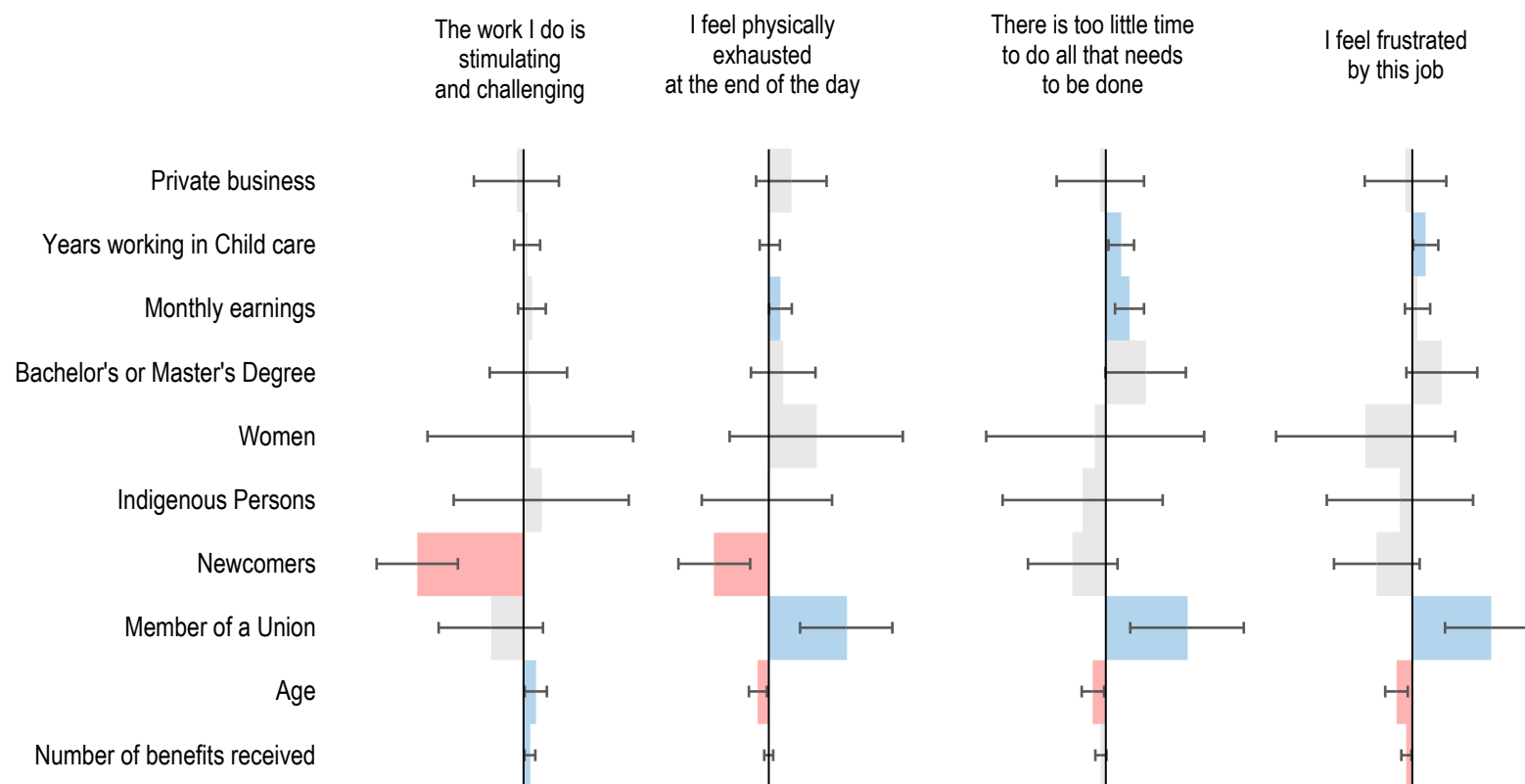
Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Notes: Bar graphs indicate the size of the coefficients (β) for each independent variable included in the model. Error bars indicate the 95% confidence interval for each coefficient; error bars for independent variables that have a non-zero effect on the dependent variable do not cross the 0 line.

Additionally, a significantly negative effect is indicated by a red bar; a significantly positive effect is indicated by a blue bar; a non-significant effect is indicated by grey bars.

Key informant interviews and case studies

The broad conclusion from case study and KII data collected in 2021 is that overall satisfaction with working in ECL remains high. The main source of satisfaction for those in the sector continues to be their passion for working with young children. Those interviewed appreciated seeing children grow and develop and were pleased to be part of that process:

> *"It's a pretty amazing thing to connect with kids and watch them grow. When they're stumbling and having some difficulties and you can actually see that you've made a change in their life, that's a pretty satisfying experience in life." (Site B: Manager, ECE IT)*

> *"I would definitely say the kids give me joy every day. If I'm having a bad day, they always bring [a smile] back to my face and they always manage to - it's always good watching them learn new things and how excited they get. (Site B: ECE)*

> *"… the children just make the world not so rough at the moment, their laughter, their honesty when we do transition a child and we're like at the beginning, we think they're never going to transition and then you see them come in bye mom, bye mom, I love you and come in happy and hugging us. … It just makes me feel like, okay, we got this and we will send them on their way and they'll be just a little bit better for the next step in life. They just make my day in the ugly world right now." (Site A: ECE IT)*

> *"Satisfaction, I think comes from, you know, just being successful with the kids, being appreciated and having, you know, being able to have those tiny little things." (KII: Not For Profit Multi Age Site)*

Similar to previous years, other factors also affected workplace satisfaction including being in a supportive workplace environment, being supported by managers and colleagues, being appreciated by parents, and wages.

> *"The appreciation from parents, I think is becoming more and more here. So it's just they appreciate so much of what we do. And, you know, so many parents are like, I just don't know how you do this job. And it's like, well, if I didn't and who would? And you wouldn't have care. And, you know, it's not just about watching your child all day long, every Monday to Friday. It's about giving them these experiences and teaching them stuff that they might not get the opportunity to do so at home." (Site B: ECE, IT)*

"I think that fair wages is what has been one of the things that definitely creates job satisfaction and staff development, but they feel like we are actually investing in them. I think those are the two things and just a good morale at centers." (KII: Not for Profit, Multi-Site)

In 2021, mentoring was also identified as adding to the satisfaction levels of staff. Catalysts for mentoring, whereby more experienced staff members mentored junior ECL professionals, included bringing in an external consultant to provide guidance on inclusion strategies and peer mentoring. We also heard about use of mentoring to facilitate leadership skills to improve support for those working in the sector.

However, the practicalities of providing ECL in a sector experiencing staff shortages and the restrictions and uncertainty related to the COVID-19 pandemic, are having negative effects on day-to-day satisfaction according to staff across all case study sites. The practicalities causing particular challenges included:

- **Changes in child drop-off and pick-up routines** – All six case studies sites and the KII sites had changed their drop-off and pick-up routines in response to COVID-19 with limits and restrictions for parents entering the centres continuing. Parents were asked to wear masks while in the centres and, while most were compliant, some had to be reminded of current policies and voiced their annoyance at staff at having to do so. There were a few incidences of ECL staff being reduced to tears by parents who objected to the mask policies. This added to the stress staff experienced, '*because you never knew*' how parents would react.

  As reported in 2020, ECL staff appreciated and enjoyed talking to parents about their children and this was a source of satisfaction. In 2021, while parents continued to receive feedback from ECL staff, ECL staff missed the informal interactions with parents which had enabled them to chat about progress and to learn how the child was doing at home as parents were no longer able to come into the centre. Centres were trying to find creative ways to maintain regular communication with parents. Some centres were using an app to support communication with parents, others posted information on entry doors, and some sent more regular newsletters or information home.

- **Additional cleaning protocols and changes in some program activities** – By the time of the case study and KII interviews, those working in the sector had become used to the additional cleaning protocols required because of COVID-19. While these had become part of the routine, they added to the overall workload. Two strategies used by centres to respond to these challenges included providing staff with additional time for cleaning and bringing in an external company to clean and manage cleaning materials.

  "We are exhausted. We are just trying to keep up with everything" (Site B: Manager, ECE IT)

However, it was not possible to clean all toys and materials, which resulted in some changes to program activities, for example, dress-up boxes had been removed and some sensory activities had been limited. When possible, centres increased outdoor activities to keep children stimulated and engaged.

"So we've created an outdoor classroom and it's been amazing. We have eight children and two teachers outside now and a maximum of sixteen children inside. So it's radically changed our ability to kind of spread out. …licensing has a hard time approving it. But we got lucky because we weren't, we weren't increasing our numbers. We were taking a licensed program and splitting it up, so there's still access to the washroom, to the nap rooms if we have children that nap. So there was no need for us to license a new space. If you try to license an outdoor space, it's almost impossible. They have a ton of barriers for licensing outdoor programs." (Unionized Site)

- **Child sickness policies** – For case study sites, the challenge relating to child sickness policies stemmed from changing public health and health authority guidance during the year and then communicating with parents about whether their child had to stay or go home. Centres posted current health guidance on websites, on notice boards and on doors and windows, but those managers and owners interviewed were frustrated by a lack of timely information. They felt the onus was on them to track down the most current advice. Having to call and tell parents their child was ill and had to go home was also a source of stress for ECL professionals because of the reactions of parents. While most parents responded positively, there were instances when parents 'pushed back' and in response, most of these calls to parents were made by managers.

"We had one of our other centres had an outbreak and dealing with contact tracing and the ever crazy world that that is, is just overwhelming because the way you think it works and how it really works is different. And then just all the new health orders that could put in child care - is never included in anything. So, we don't fall into the general public. We don't go into the school. But I think February [2021] maybe was the last update that was provided. So child care is kind of left out of the loop constantly. And we're left panicking, thinking, what do we do right now?" (Site D, Manager, ECE IT)

"I think it's frustrating that the Ministry - I mean, at least they've been consistent - we've been an afterthought from day one. Our public health guidelines, the last time they were updated was February the 12th. Like, shame on them. I think what you're fielding from families that have children in school is why is there this huge disconnect? And us you know, we just keep saying to families, we're following the guidance that's been laid out for our sector. It's not for us to judge why it hasn't been updated. They're continuing to tell us that the risk in child care is low." (KII: Unionized Site)

- **Absences and closures because of COVID-19 illness** – All centres had experienced either program or centre closures because of the pandemic. These closures increased the stress and uncertainty of staff as they did not know when they would be able to return to work and they were worried by the financial implications. Managers were aware of the provincial paid sick leave which provided three days of paid sick leave to professionals, but they were concerned about what would happen when this benefit ended in December 2021. While the majority of the centres provided paid sick leave, not all did. Sick leave was quickly exhausted if staff had to self-isolate for seven days or tested positive for COVID-19 and had to remain at home. In addition, managers pointed out that the sector was a female dominated one and many of those employed had younger or school-aged children. If these children were sent home from daycare or school, their mothers would most likely also have to stay at home. This increased staff absences which could lead to centres being short-staffed for up to two weeks. Interviewees suggested that the sector needed entitlement to sick days,

  "… they need a baseline for the field because I think there's so much inequity and there's so many vulnerable women in here, working in the field. If you really want to address recruitment and retention, you need a baseline that says, 'Hey, if you're running a child care centre, here's the expectation of how you treat your staff' and they don't have it." (KII: Unionized Site)

  All those interviewed stressed the 'impossibility' of finding substitute staff in 2021. They all described staffing as much more difficult than previous years. Being able to stay open required shuffling staff around, and success was variously "surprising", "incredibly lucky" and "miraculous".

  "It's almost a miracle that we never had to say we don't have enough staff because we moved staff around and that and it was challenging...it makes people feel not really valued when you're just having to move them all the time even though we try really hard to keep people happy. People like to be in the rooms they were hired for." (KII Prototype Site)

  To try to address this challenge of staff absences, three sites hired additional permanent full-time staff who they described as 'float' staff who fill in across the centre(s). Approximately two-thirds of KII sites followed a similar pattern although 'floats' were not always fulltime positions. In addition, managers who had their ECE designation would provide coverage for absent staff. While managers were willing to do this, it was an additional responsibility. We heard examples of managers providing cover for six weeks, which left them feeling burned out and wondering how long they could continue to do so as they also had to do their own job at the same time.

  "… you're basically on the floor all the time. And because the ratio, you just can't leave." (KII Not For Profit)

- **Additional needs of children** – Some children starting in the case study and the KII sites were observed to have additional needs because of COVID-19, leading some to refer to them as "Covid kiddos." As a result of the pandemic restrictions, some 'Covid kiddos' had not had the opportunity to participate in baby and toddler activities and had not been in group settings. This resulted in some requiring a longer gradual entry process and needing additional supports while they adjusted to being in a new setting. While staff had the expertise to respond to these needs, the number of children requiring support increased the levels of stress in staff and left some feeling they were not meeting the needs of the children.

- **Low wages** – As in the previous years, those who participated in the case study and KII interviews reported that low wages made it difficult for ECL professionals to afford to 'make ends meet'. Respondents stressed repeatedly that they were continuing to work in the sector despite the low wages. The announcement of the $4 wage enhancement was welcomed and appreciated but 'it still feels like not a lot of money for the work we do.'

> *"Like the wage is starting to get to some people … because it's not a huge wage for a lot of people." (Site B: ECE)*

The cumulative effect of these challenges was an increase in the levels of stress and burnout reported by those interviewed which reduced their day-to-day satisfaction with their job. While staff continued to report they 'loved working with young children,' the everyday challenges were 'getting in the way.'

> *"I'm tired. I guess so. I've been here a lot of years. I feel I've done what I can do here. And I just felt it was time to move on. … I'm tired and the stress has had an impact on me. COVID has really created a lot more different stress, … And the HR piece of COVID has been a struggle. As child care providers we come to work with a sniffle and we come to work, we push through which is unfortunate that we have to do that. But we haven't had that back up. We haven't had that on-call support. And so it put me in the program. It is that burnout and it's coming sooner than later. And we are not getting new staff." (Site F: Manager, ECE IT, Special Needs)*

This feeling of being overwhelmed dealing with chronic staff shortages, resulting in burnout was especially true for those working in any sort of management capacity within the case study sites. Managers, owners, and supervisors talked about the anxiety and stress they experienced everyday as they waited to try and reconcile staff and children's numbers to ensure they would be within ratio.

> *"It's just, you know, like with staff calling in sick and stuff like that, like we have to do what we have to do to make it work for shuffling children, shuffling staff around when really you shouldn't be doing that because of COVID. But we also have a [program] to run and either we close down the daycare or we make it work. So that's what they're stressing about…And I'm just tired of people calling in*

> *sick and just being short staffed every day…They're done with the field and that is a stage of burnout, right? (Site C: Manager, ECE IT)*

Often those with staffing responsibility started their workday around seven o'clock when staff would inform them of any illnesses, then it was a 'waiting game' to see how many parents called in to notify the centres that their children would be away. Those centres with multiple sites had the potential to bring staff from another centre. Float staff enabled centres to operate programs but inevitably those with ECE certification ended up in ratio. Although managers and supervisors enjoyed participating in programs, it was at the expense of their other responsibilities. To make up for this time, managers, owners, and supervisors worked evenings and weekends. All agreed stress levels were much higher than 2020 and many were questioning 'why they kept doing this role with many adding 'they're just done.' ECL staff not involved in management were aware of the increased challenges managers and supervisors experienced. Every centre had offered at least one staff member a promotion that included some management responsibilities only to have the position refused. Three centres had managers or supervisors step down from this role and return to programming which involved a reduction in pay, but all said they did so because the stress was too high, and it was reducing their job satisfaction.

> *"Pretty much everything. Yeah. It was just too much between all of the changes and all the extra additional stuff, the job itself added in and then going to school added in. It just put me over the edge, I guess." (Site D: ECE IT)*

> *"And it's hard to come to those realizations that, like, I'm not sure I can keep going at this pace." (Site E: Manager, ECE IT)*

All centres had concerns about the sustainability of the sector if staff no longer felt able to accept a management role. They described the situation in the sector as more stressful than 2020 and that this was having a negative impact on staff.

> *"we're always in a state of putting out fires … If a school has an outbreak or has something like that, the teachers and the principal don't need to figure out all that damn paperwork, it's provided to them, right down to like checklists for cleaning and policy and everything like that. We've had to recreate all that…we need to create a checklist to provide to our staff so that we make sure everything's happening. We need to provide signage and newsletters and everything like that to go out to our families. That is sucking the life out of our administrative team." (Site D: Manager, ECE IT)*

> *"There's a lot more frequency of burnout. And I find that a lot of people are getting to the edge of where they're not going to be able to do it anymore – they're kind of taking a couple of days off and then coming back and hoping everything's tickety boo. But it ends up being just a cycle where we*

take a couple of days off, feel better and then come back. And within a couple of weeks, really, we're back to our same level of stress and that kind of thing.And it's everybody it's not just the management. It's a trickle-down effect, I suppose." (Site C: Former Supervisor, ECE IT).

Staff who had already left case study sites were surveyed and given the opportunity to express additional opinions related to working in ECL in BC. One participant illustrated how the staff shortage made it difficult for professionals to take time off even when policies were in place for them to do so:

"The burnout is high and there is often not enough staff. The sickness rate is high and there often is not enough staff to cover sick staff staying home. I would love to see the Covid sickness/wellness policies stay in place as wellness policies for child care and early learning centres. These policies should be not only for the children but for the staff and management too. Somehow, I believe, there should be a monthly submitting required showing that the wellness policies are followed. I don't know what that would look like but it just doesn't [seem] to be enough to just have a policy, there needs to be something as reinforcement rather than just trusting the policies are being reinforced." (Case study leaver)

KPI 2A: AVERAGE REAL WAGES AND SALARIES OF ECL PROFESSIONALS

Highly robust estimates of total earnings for 2015 came from the Census since those data were linked to individual tax records. But wages cannot be calculated from the Census due to the absence of detailed data on hours of work (beyond full-time/part-time). Census income includes wages from other sources of employment and is available only once every five years. To examine changes in wages over time we rely instead on administrative data and surveys. Later in this section we report wage estimates from SRDC's cross-sectional survey that asked individuals and their employers for actual wage rates. First, we report long-term trend data that became available to SRDC for the first time in 2020.

Administrative data

Reported wages

Data from the Child Care Operating Fund (CCOF) Provider Profile maintained by the Ministry of Children and Family Development permit an examination of trends in wages among the workforce in licensed facilities according to their annual survey. We report in Figure 14 median wages for all child care staff including those who reported to have basic early childhood educator certification or training in Post Basic Infant/Toddler or Post Basic Special Needs, broken down by reported early childhood educator education level.[32] In accordance with the CCOF provider profile survey wording, these wage estimates exclude the wage enhancement. Wage estimates that include the wage enhancement, derived from SRDC's surveys, appear later in this evaluation report.

Figure 14 makes no allowance for wage inflation but shows the provincial minimum wage for comparison. It appears to show fairly consistent increases in wages over the period 2005-06 to 2019-21. There is barely a one-dollar-per-hour premium associated with possession of a basic ECE certification over no ECE certificate in 2016-17 and 2017-18. The premium grows quite rapidly to roughly $2 per hour by 2019-20 and 2020-21. Those with Infant and Toddler and Special Needs certification consistently earn $3 more per hour than those without ECE certification, and this increased to almost $4 for the 2020-21 year.

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[32]   The data were supplied aggregated, and breakdowns included by education level and by position but, unfortunately, not by both. Medians were provided so means cannot be shown for these data. Also, no data showing the distribution of wages (high and low bounds) were supplied. See SRDC's survey data later in the section.

Figure 14   Median wages of B.C.'s child care workforce [CCOF Provider profile]
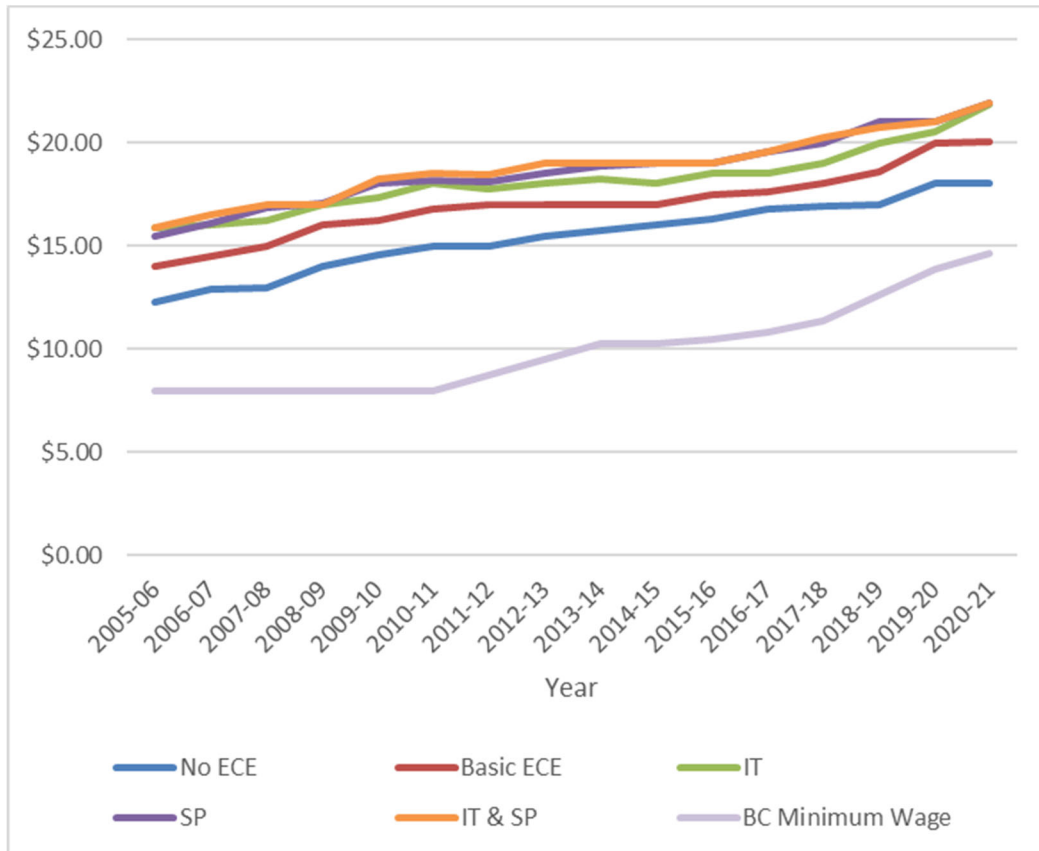
Sources: British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development; minimum wage data compiled by Employment and Social Development Canada.

Notes: ECE Early Child care Educator Certificate, IT An ECE with an Infant Toddler Educator certification, SP An ECE with a Special Needs Educator certification, IT&SP an ECE with both an Infant Toddler Educator certification AND a Special Needs Educator certification.

Figure 15 adjusts the wage rates using the Bank of Canada Consumer Price Index to real 2021 dollars. This reveals that relatively the wages of those with no ECE certification and to a lesser degree Basic ECE have risen over the period in real terms (by 14.3 and 11.5 per cent respectively). The wages of those with Infant and Toddler and Special Needs certifications have risen somewhat over this period in real terms (by 7.1 and 10.1 per cent respectively).

Figure 15 **Median wages of B.C.'s child care workforce [CCOF Provider profile] – Real 2021 dollars (adjusted for inflation)**
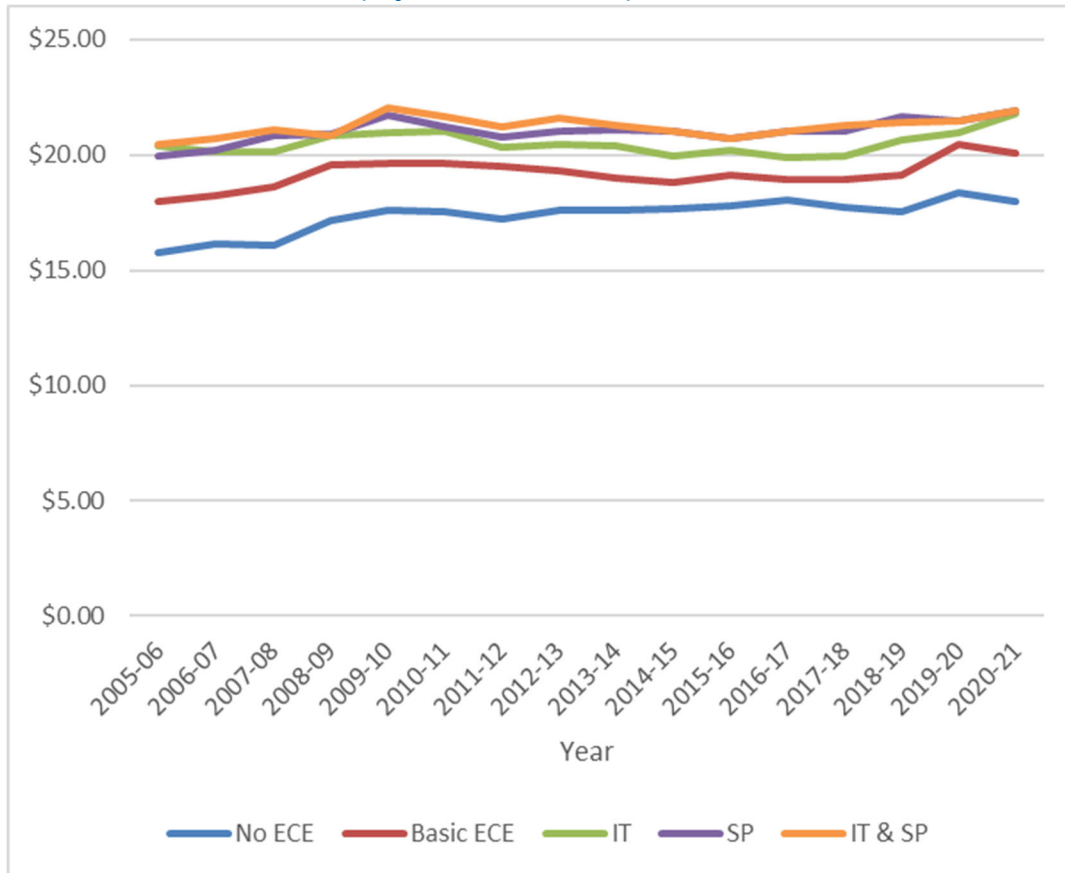
Source: British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Notes: ECE Early Child care Educator Certificate, IT An ECE with an Infant Toddler Educator certification, SP An ECE with a Special Needs Educator certification, IT&SP an ECE with both an Infant Toddler Educator certification AND a Special Needs Educator certification.

Wage enhancement

The ECL R&R Strategy wage enhancement tactic introduced a $1 enhancement in 2019 with an additional $1 included in 2020 to supplement ECE wages in eligible facilities. In addition, the program provides funding for statutory benefits (additional costs of paying employees more) at a rate of 18.37 per cent. Through the period covered by this report, the program has only been available for frontline ECEs working in licensed child care centres receiving the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative. While the April 2021 budget announced further wage enhancements to come into effect September 1, 2021, taking the enhancement to $4 per hour, these are reaching paycheques later (up to March 2022) and are not reflected in the 2021 reported data here.

The data reveal a high take up of the wage enhancement by facilities (Figure 16) and by educators (Figure 17) that suggest roughly 3 in every 4 front-line ECEs were in receipt.[33] This is roughly equivalent to the 78 per cent proportion reported among those eligible as estimated from the 2021 workforce survey in Table 26 (and 77 per cent from the equivalent survey in 2019).

The number in receipt of wage enhancement appear to be increasing very gradually over the period since introduction. However, there is some apparent decline in receipt in the summer months and again towards the end of the 2019-20 year.

From March to April 2020 there was a sudden drop in both the number of facilities and educators claiming wage enhancements across all regions, coinciding with the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 and the closing of programs. However, by September 2020 take up had returned to pre-pandemic levels, with the reopening of programs. In addition to COVID-19, this period also included implementation of the April 2020 increase in the enhancement amount to $2 per hour.

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[33] Wage enhancement claims are submitted after the end of each month, but there is no submissions deadline and historic data from previous fiscal years can also be updated. As a result, the number of wage enhancement claims presented in Figures 14 and 15 reflect the most recent data and differ slightly from the number of wage enhancements presented for the same period in previous evaluation reports.

Figure 16 **Facilities with wage enhancement claims by region by month**
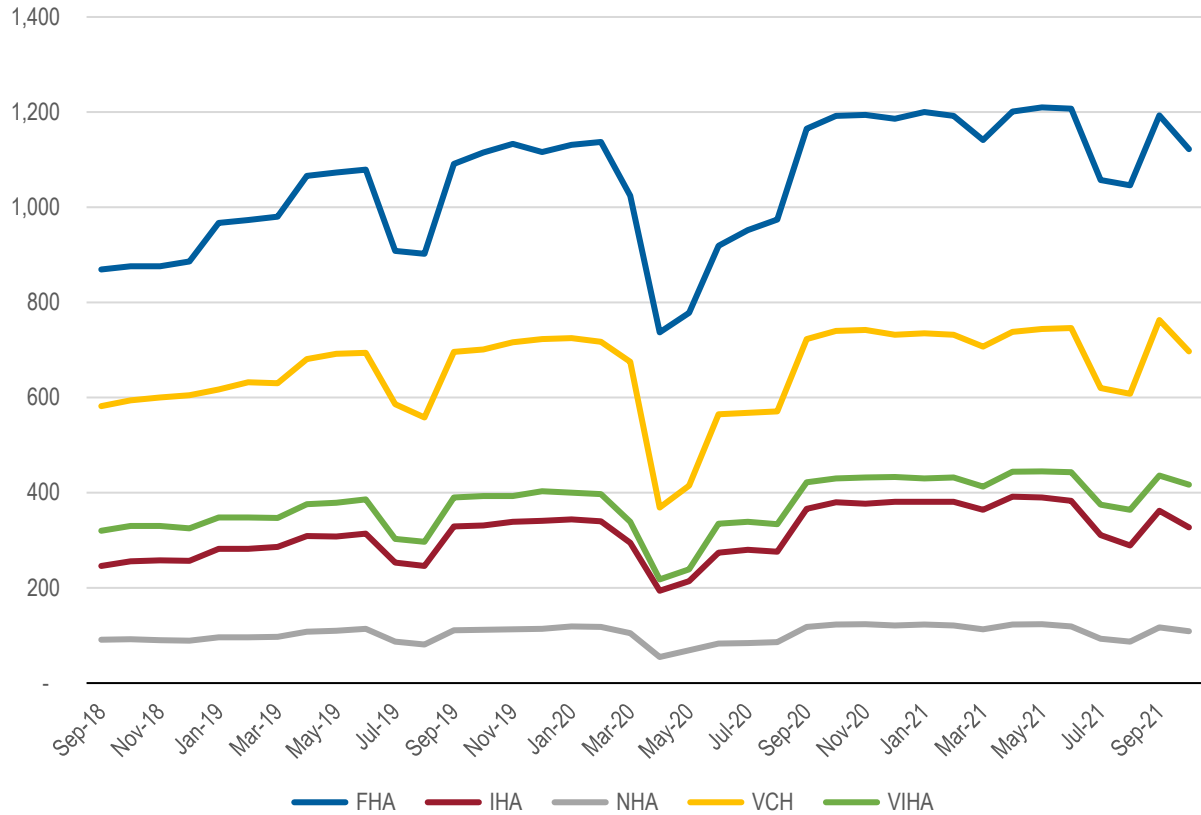
Source: British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development [FHA: Fraser Health Authority region; IHA: Interior Health Authority region; NHA: Northern Health Authority region; VCH: Vancouver Coastal Health Authority region; VIH: Vancouver Island Health Authority region].

Note: Summertime closures of preschool and out-of-school programs can account for temporary drops in receipt.

Figure 17   Early childhood educators with wage enhancement claims by region by month
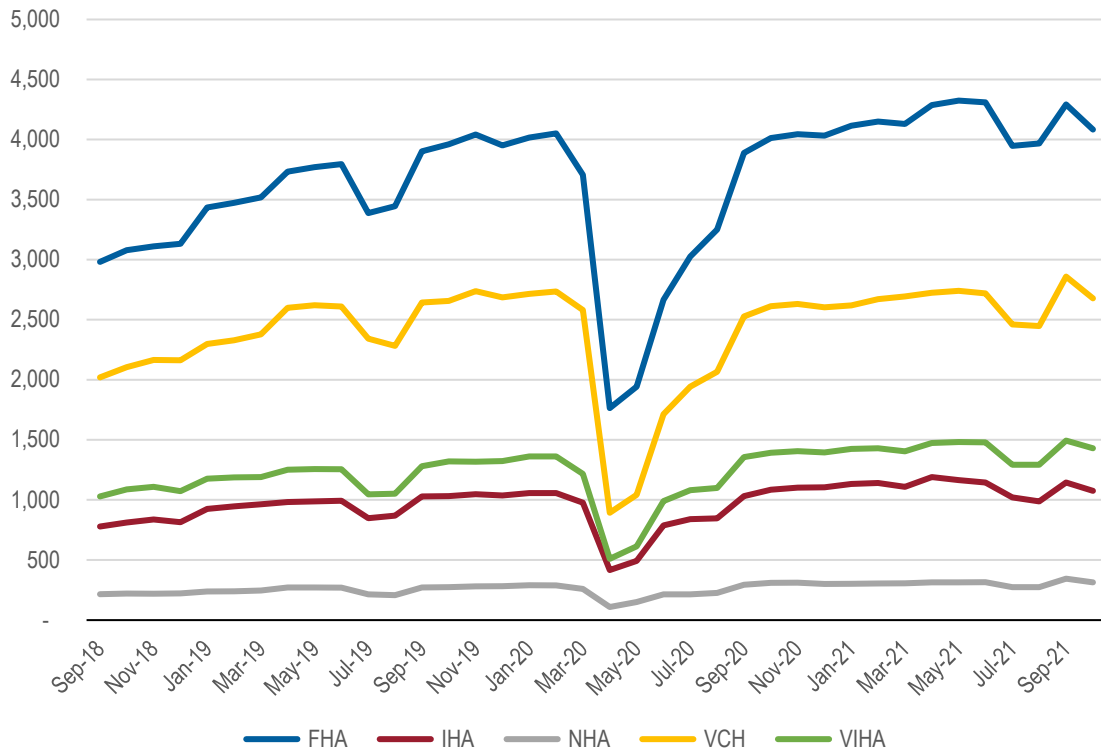
Source: British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development [FHA: Fraser Health Authority region; IHA: Interior Health Authority region; NHA: Northern Health Authority region; VCH: Vancouver Coastal Health Authority region; VIH: Vancouver Island Health Authority region].

Note: Summertime closures of preschool and out-of-school programs can account for temporary drops in receipt.

Cross-sectional survey

Self-reported hourly wages

SRDC's cross-sectional survey asked members of the ECL workforce directly about their wages. Table 19 shows the self-reported average wages for Centre-based ECL professionals (those who indicated they worked in a licensed centre, preschool or before and after school/recreational program including $10 a day sites). HCPs were not asked for hourly wage rates because they are often salaried or have irregular earnings from their businesses.

The average hourly wage rate reported in the 2021 survey was $24.09 – nearly four dollars higher than the equivalent estimate from the 2019 survey. Of course, higher wage rates per hour

do not necessarily translate to higher earnings and incomes given variations in hours worked. Income is considered in the monthly income section (following the data from the employer survey reports on wages below). Importantly, also this improved wage rate in 2022 is nonetheless seven dollars below the rate paid to BC workers with equivalent postsecondary credentials ($31.07 among those with a postsecondary certificate or diploma, SRDC calculation from Labour Force Survey microdata for September through December 2021).

Hourly wages were also estimated by type of qualification and position held. In general, Centre-based ECL professionals' wage rates increased with higher certifications and qualifications. For instance, respondents with ECE certifications had higher average hourly wage rates than those qualified as holding an ECEA certification. Respondents with speciality certification (Infant Toddler or Special Needs) typically also had higher average wages than those with ECE certification only.

Relatively high wages were paid to Responsible Adults in managers or supervisors' roles compared to non M/S in 2021. These professionals were not eligible for the wage enhancement. However, the rates paid to managers and supervisors who were Responsible Adults also became much more variable in 2021 (as indicated by larger standard deviations) suggesting that alongside lower paid RAs there were more highly paid RAs as part of the 2021 sample than there were in 2019.

As expected, hourly wage rates are higher among Centre ECL professionals in manager or supervisor positions. On average, Centre-based ECL professionals in M/S positions were compensated about $5 an hour more than those who were not managers or supervisors. In both supervisor and non-supervisor positions, wages increased by between $0.59 and a little over $6 since 2019. Some of this increase is likely due to the wage enhancement tactic.

Table 19   Self-reported hourly wage rates of ECL professionals by qualification and change since 2019

Qualification/ Certification	Hourly wage			Change from 2019	
	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std. Dev
Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool Managers or Supervisors					
Responsible Adult	13	$27.40	$5.42	+ $0.59	- $4.02
ECEA	18	$24.69	$3.96	+ $2.72	- $2.36
ECE (1 year)	20	$27.11	$5.71	+ $4.42	+ $2.40
ECE (5 year)	123	$26.23	$4.46	+ $3.85	+ $1.92
ECE + IT	65	$26.56	$4.16	+ $3.20	+ $0.95
ECE + SP	18	$28.80	$3.37	+ $5.22	+ $0.48
ECE + IT + SP	89	$27.52	$4.12	+ $3.01	+ $1.33
Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool Non Managers or Supervisors					
Responsible Adult	11	$18.58	$2.62	+ $1.11	+ $0.65
ECEA	74	$18.97	$2.41	+ $1.27	- $0.15
ECE (1 year)	51	$22.11	$2.71	+ $2.42	- $0.22
ECE (5 year)	160	$22.47	$3.00	+ $2.16	+ $0.35
ECE + IT	89	$23.72	$2.63	+ $2.42	- $0.10
ECE + SP	25	$22.78	$2.39	+ $2.48	+ $0.86
ECE + IT +SP	98	$23.88	$2.80	+ $2.99	+ $0.56
Before & after school or recreational care program Managers or Supervisors					
Responsible Adult	12	$24.28	$5.13	+ $3.48	+ $1.94
ECEA	<5				
ECE (1 year)	<5				
ECE (5 year)	9	$26.48	$3.12	+ $2.98	+ $0.62
ECE + IT	<5				
ECE + SP	<5				
ECE + IT + SP	<5				
Before & after school or recreational care program Non Managers or Supervisors					
Responsible Adult	13	$18.54	$1.69	+ $1.27	+ $0.35
ECEA	<5				
ECE (1 year)	<5				
ECE (5 year)	<5				
ECE + IT	<5				
ECE + SP	<5				
ECE + IT +SP	<5				

Qualification/ Certification	Hourly wage			Change from 2019	
	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std. Dev
$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres					
Responsible Adult	<5				
ECEA	15	$19.48	$2.23	+ $1.85	- $0.12
ECE (1 year)	9	$22.94	$2.98	+ $2.84	+ $1.94
ECE (5 year)	22	$23.11	$4.82	+ $3.25	+ $2.39
ECE + IT	21	$26.80	$4.57	+ $4.84	+ $1.40
ECE + SP	<5				
ECE + IT + SP	31	$27.86	$7.67	+ $6.33	+ $5.53

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce survey, answers include hazard pay, wage enhancement where received. Responses based on sample sizes below 5 are suppressed.

Note: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE + both IT&SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification).

The average hourly wages of Centre-based ECL professionals who were not managers or supervisors was compared by membership in a union (Table 20). While, on average, unionized professionals at CCC had higher average hourly wages than those who were not unionized ($23.26 compared to $22.28), this difference was only significantly different among those with ECEA and ECE+IT certifications. At before and after school/recreational programs, the union to non-union difference was not significant. The level of wage increases from 2019 to 2021 was equivalently high for unionized and non-unionized professionals.

The average hourly wages of CCC-based ECL professionals who were not managers or supervisors was also compared by organization status or *auspice* (Table 21). Sample sizes were too small to support this analysis for other program types. On average, Centre-based ECL professionals working for not-for-profit, Indigenous, and education-run CCC had significantly higher average hourly wages than those working for private businesses. There were some significant differences by auspice also with respect to ECEA and ECE certifications, but in general the level of wage increase from 2019 to 2021 was similar across qualifications regardless of auspice.

Table 20   **Average hourly wage rates for non-M/S ECL professionals by membership in a union and change since 2019**

	Non-unionized			Unionized		
	N	**Average**	**Change from 2019**	**N**	**Average**	**Change from 2019**
Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool						
Mean***	397	$22.28	+ $2.36	105	$23.26	+ $2.29
(Std. Dev)		3.21	+ $0.42		3.42	+ $0.35
Responsible Adult	8	$18.48	+ $0.59	<5		
ECEA ***	57	$18.70	+ $0.94	11	$20.83	+ $2.03
ECE (1 year)	35	$22.59	+ $2.53	9	$21.62	+ $1.76
ECE (5 year)	128	$22.33	+ $2.12	29	$23.28	+ $1.77
ECE+IT **	59	$23.31	+ $2.04	26	$24.63	+ $2.95
ECE+SP	21	$22.80	+ $2.47	<5		
ECE+SP+IT	71	$23.94	+ $3.09	23	$23.94	+ $2.92
Before & after school or recreational care program						
Mean	21	$19.31	+ $1.79	6	$19.75	+ $1.26
(Std. Dev)		2.38	+ $0.73		2.33	- $0.88
Responsible Adult	6	$18.76	+ $1.01	<5		
ECEA	<5			<5		
ECE (1 year)	<5			<5		
ECE (5 year)	<5			<5		
ECE+IT *	<5			<5		
*ECE+SP**	<5			<5		
ECE+SP+IT	<5			<5		
$10 a Day ChildCareBC Site						
Mean	73	$24.56	+ $3.81	32	$25.52	+ $4.71
(Std. Dev)		6.47	+ $3.34		4.65	+ $2.05
ECE (all)	55	$25.83	+ $4.24	30	$25.69	+ $4.66

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Notes: Statistical significance is denoted by asterisks: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10. They represent the test to compare means of hourly wage between unionized and non-unionized professionals for the different categories e.g., whether the hourly wage between unionized and non-unionized members are different for ECEAs, etc. RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification).

Table 21   Average hourly wage rates for non-M/S Centre ECL professionals by qualification and organization status, and change since 2019

			Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool				
	Sig.	N	Private business	Change since 2019	N	Non-profits and others	Change since 2019
Mean	***	195	$21.72	+ $2.34	296	$23.00	+ $2.83
(Std. Dev)			2.89	+ $0.35		3.38	+ $0.39
Responsible Adult		<5			7	$19.84	+ $2.27
ECEA	**	26	$18.18	+ $0.03	38	$19.73	+ $1.94
ECE (1 year)		26	$21.75	+ $2.74	21	$22.58	+ $2.65
ECE (5 year)	*	67	$22.05	+ $2.76	80	$22.86	+ $2.20
ECE+IT	**	30	$22.96	+ $2.01	57	$24.16	+ $2.55
ECE+SP		8	$22.73	+ $3.61	15	$23.03	+ $2.47
ECE+SP+IT	**	25	$23.07	+ $2.21	68	$24.35	+ $3.32

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys. 'Others' includes operated by Indigenous or public sector organization.

Note: Statistical significance is denoted by asterisks: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10. They represent the test to compare means of hourly wage between private businesses and not-for profit & others for the different categories e.g., whether the hourly wage between private business and not for profit & others are different for ECEAs, ECE (1 year), etc. RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification).

Employer reported hourly wages

Table 22 reports the weighted average hourly wage rates provided by employers at the organization-level for 2019, 2020 and 2021. The weighted average hourly rate is estimated using the number of employees by type of qualification.

The average hourly wage rates provided at the organization level are generally in line with the information collected by the workforce survey at the individual level. The 2021 hourly wage rates for ECL professionals in centre-based ECL where all programs require ECEs ranged from $17.45 an hour for those who qualify as a Responsible Adult to $23.55 for those who hold an ECE certification. Supervisors were compensated between $22.27 an hour as ECEAs to $25.80 an hour as ECE certificate holders. The hourly wage rates for managers ranged from $25.45 an hour for ECEAs to $26.99 an hour for ECE certificate holders. The hourly wage rates for ECL directors ranged from $24.77 an hour for ECEAs to $29.09 an hour for ECE certificate holders (little different from those whose highest ECL qualification was Responsible Adult).

Consistent with earlier findings, wage rates in 2021 were higher for more senior positions and (usually) for those with certificates. From 2020 to 2021, the average lowest and highest hourly rates increased for all positions. However, the highest rates for RA-qualified professionals were lower in 2020 and 2021 than those reported in 2019. ECE-certified directors saw the greatest increase over the year at $3.64 an hour.

Table 23 repeats the same analysis but for centre-based ECL workplaces where some or all programs do not require ECE. The patterns are broadly similar to other centre-based care with the exception that hourly rates for directors are substantially higher regardless of qualification held.

Figure 18 shows the employer-reported lowest and highest average hourly wages for ECL professionals by health authority region. At this level of granularity, it is not possible to further split results by type of centre. The lighter bars represent earlier data while the darkest bars present 2021 data. In general, average hourly wages continue to increase for all positions in all health authorities. However, the variation in compensation across health authorities seen in earlier years remained evident. In 2021, the lowest hourly rate for Responsible Adult ranged from $16.62 (NHA) to $18.81 (VCH), while the highest hourly rate ranged from $17.89 (NHA) to $20.31 (VCH). For ECEA-certified professionals, the lowest hourly rate ranged from $17.60 (FHA) to $19.01 (VCH), and the highest wage rates ranged from $19.31 (IHA) to $21.23 (VCH). The lowest hourly rate of staff who held an ECE-certification ranged from $20.02 (FHA) to $22.19 (VIH), and the highest hourly rate ranged from $22.62 (IHA) to $24.63 (VCH).

Table 22 **Lowest and highest weighted average wages of ECL professionals in centre-based ECL where all programs require ECEs by position and qualification 2019 through 2021**

	ECL professionals			Supervisors		
	N	Lowest	Highest	N	Lowest	Highest
RA 2019	52	$16.11	$18.12	7	$22.49	$25.91
RA 2020	32	$16.59	$17.29	<5		
RA 2021	81	$17.45	$18.10	<5		
ECEA 2019	156	$16.72	$18.04	6	$20.06	$21.92
ECEA 2020	125	$17.43	$18.90	13	$20.72	$21.11
ECEA 2021	202	$18.30	$19.84	13	$22.27	$23.75
ECE 2019	262	$18.79	$21.64	112	$21.22	$22.70
ECE 2020	207	$19.66	$22.05	87	$22.12	$23.77
ECE 2021	372	$21.45	$23.55	146	$24.74	$25.80

	Managers			Directors		
	N	Lowest	Highest	N	Lowest	Highest
RA 2019	7	$21.40	$26.31	15	$20.53	$22.57
RA 2020	<5			<5		
RA 2021	<5			14	$29.03	$29.29
ECEA 2019	20	$21.50	$22.10	6	$22.50	$23.33
ECEA 2020	14	$21.57	$23.07	11	$22.96	$25.29
ECEA 2021	16	$25.45	$26.44	14	$24.77	$26.93
ECE 2019	203	$22.86	$23.98	51	$23.11	$24.01
ECE 2020	143	$23.76	$24.51	20	$24.33	$25.45
ECE 2021	222	$26.08	$26.99	73	$27.20	$29.09

Source: SRDC employer survey. Includes employers who exclusively operate one or more of the following programs: group care under 3, group care 2.5yrs – school age, preschool, or multi-age programs.

Note: N represents the number of employers who provided wages and staffing data per category.
ECL Professional refers to "a person who has primary responsibility for a group of children. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE." Supervisor refers to "a person who has responsibility for a group of children and supervises child care workers [professionals]. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE." Manager refers to "a person with management duties (which can include hiring, payroll, performance reviews, compliance with licensing requirements, etc.). This person has administrative duties and may have child care duties." A director refers to "a person who has management or administrative duties only."

Table 23 **Lowest and highest weighted average wages of ECL professionals in centre-based ECL where some or all programs do not require ECE by position and qualification 2019 through 2021**

	ECL professionals			Supervisors		
	N	Lowest	Highest	N	Lowest	Highest
RA 2019	127	$15.85	$17.62	40	$20.20	$22.53
RA 2020	111	$16.48	$18.74	28	$21.33	$22.70
RA 2021	168	$17.62	$19.39	33	$20.99	$22.84
ECEA 2019	145	$16.46	$18.33	29	$20.55	$22.97
ECEA 2020	95	$17.28	$19.67	20	$20.41	$21.68
ECEA 2021	157	$18.03	$20.20	31	$20.78	$21.69
ECE 2019	153	$18.54	$21.32	85	$21.45	$23.76
ECE 2020	110	$19.67	$21.82	63	$22.02	$24.19
ECE 2021	171	$20.85	$23.91	88	$24.61	$26.43

	Managers			Directors		
	N	Lowest	Highest	N	Lowest	Highest
RA 2019	38	$21.10	$23.28	30	$25.33	$29.00
RA 2020	37	$22.19	$24.87	22	$26.56	$28.06
RA 2021	52	$24.26	$25.40	23	$26.97	$28.63
ECEA 2019	24	$22.04	$23.96	8	$23.02	$27.78
ECEA 2020	17	$22.10	$24.22	12	$24.10	$27.36
ECEA 2021	26	$24.19	$26.40	13	$30.02	$34.09
ECE 2019	110	$23.89	$25.80	52	$28.00	$30.73
ECE 2020	59	$23.87	$26.47	10	$28.25	$33.30
ECE 2021	111	$25.69	$27.33	43	$29.57	$32.00

Source: SRDC employer survey. Includes employers who operate one or more of the following programs: group care school age, occasional care, or recreational care (2021).

Note: N represents the number of employers who provided wages and staffing data per category.

ECL Professional refers to "a person who has primary responsibility for a group of children. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE." Supervisor refers to "a person who has responsibility for a group of children and supervises child care workers [professionals]. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE." Manager refers to "a person with management duties (which can include hiring, payroll, performance reviews, compliance with licensing requirements, etc.). This person has administrative duties and may have child care duties." A director refers to "a person who has management or administrative duties only."

Figure 18   Employer-reported lowest and highest average hourly wages for ECL professionals in centre based ECL by health authority 2019 to 2021
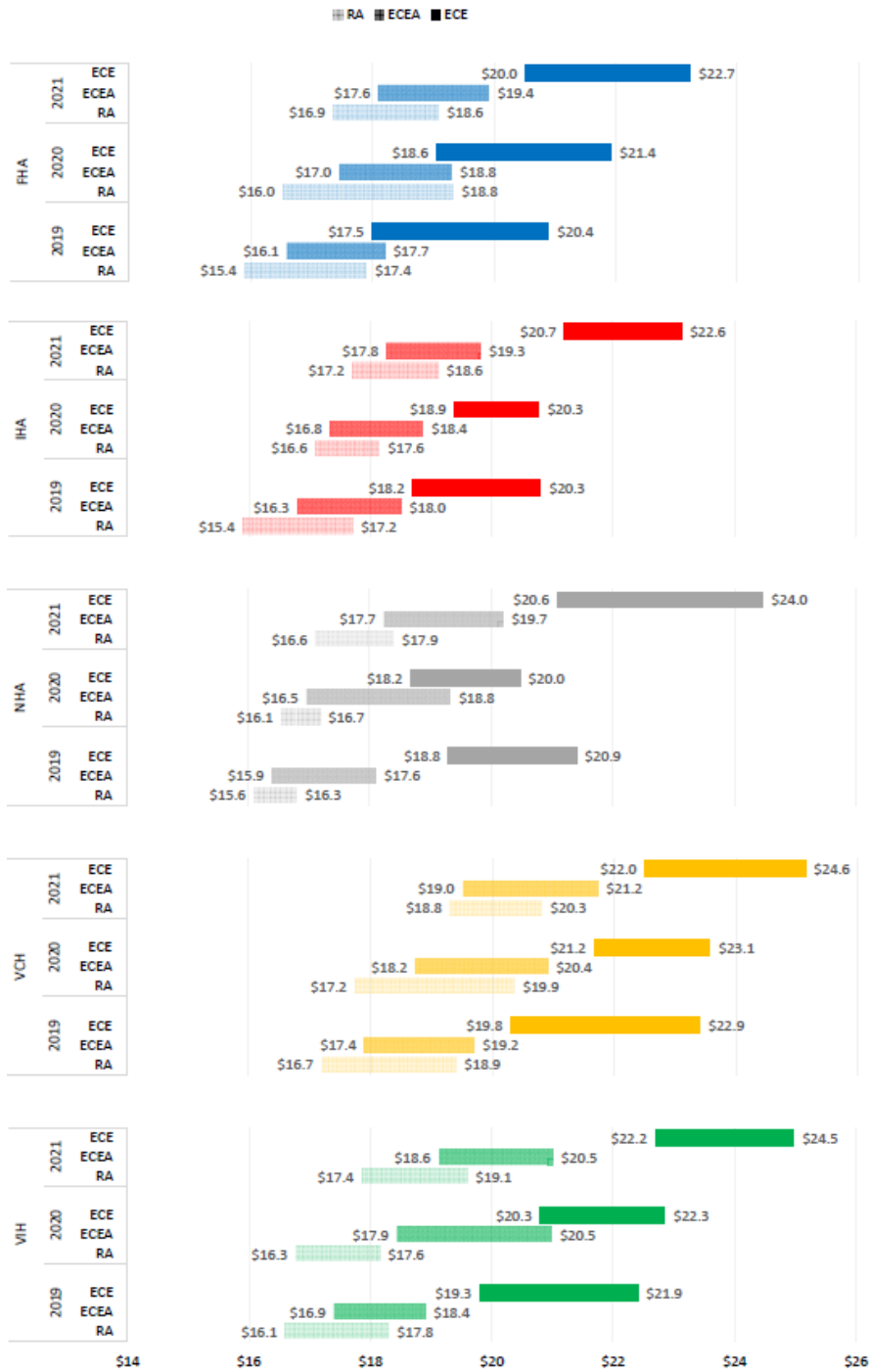
Source: SRDC employer survey

Note: FHA: Fraser Health Authority; IHA: Interior Health Authority; NHA: Northern Health Authority; VCH: Vancouver Coastal Health; VIH: Vancouver Island Health.

The lowest and highest hourly wage rates for Responsible Adults and ECE certificate holders were higher in Vancouver Coastal Health than other regions. This was the same in 2019 and 2020. The lowest hourly rates for all positions increased from 2020 to 2021 in all health authority regions. Across all health authorities, the lowest paid ECEs had a higher hourly rate than the highest paid ECEAs; for the first time, there was no overlap between the wages of these two positions, perhaps due to the wage enhancement.

Monthly income from ECL employment

Earnings and thus monthly income from child care work depend on wage rates and hours worked. Table 24 shows the average monthly income for respondents to the workforce survey by program/role. This includes all income sources related to ECL employment and includes those in full-time or part-time employment. On average, managers and supervisors at CCC and before and after school/recreational programs have the highest monthly incomes ($4,283 and $3,746 respectively), notably higher than in 2020 and 2019. Non-M/S professionals' average monthly income was lower at both types of program: $3,225 and 1,915, but increasing also since 2019. Incomes of those at $10 a day sites are higher, likely reflecting the fact that M/S and non M/S roles cannot be separated for these reports due to small sample sizes.

HCP respondents in 2021 reported similar incomes to 2020, higher in both years than in 2019, up from roughly $2,600 to $3,550, which is a large jump, reflected in many more earning in the top two income bands. It is hard to know whether this is a compositional shift in who among HCPs responded to the survey or a real increase in incomes across the HCP population, possibly related to pandemic-related shifts in parents' choices of, and ability to use different types of ECL. If lower-income HCPs ceased operations more than higher-income HCPs, this would have the effect of raising the average income levels for the remaining HCP population.

Figure 19 makes it clearer that the modal income category for all groups defined by program/role except non M/S before and after school/recreational programs was $3,000-$4,499. More than 80 per cent of non M/S at before and after school/recreational programs earned less than $3,000 per month. The only groups with more than 30 per cent earning $4,500 or more were M/S at CCC and HCPs not ECE-certified.

Monthly income is broken down further by qualification in Table 25 and Figure 20. The general trend in 2021 was for those with higher certifications to have higher incomes. Those with specialty certificates tended to average around $4,000 per month, roughly $700 more than in 2019. Those with ECE 5-year certification have seen a similar growth in their incomes. ECEAs had the lowest incomes, nearly a quarter taking home less than $1,499 per month. But it is worth recalling that salaries vary by hours worked and role played within ECL. So RAs could be earning more than ECEAs in 2020 and 2021 because they tended to average more hours, given there were few major differences in their wage rates in earlier tables.

Figure 21 presents changes in the distributions of monthly income between 2019 and 2021, revealing the relatively large upward shift in HCP incomes as well as managers and supervisors alongside changes for non-M/S that – regardless of type of program – are much smaller in magnitude.

Figure 22 does the same split by qualification. The pattern captures a declining share earning lower income levels and more earning higher incomes, consistent with fairly rapidly rising incomes over the period. The only exception here is an increase in the share of ECEAs in the lowest monthly income category, an increase equivalent to one in every ten ECEAs.

Table 24   Monthly income by program/role 2019, 2020, and 2021

| | Child care centres (including multi-age child care) or preschool | | | | | | HCPs | | |
| | M/S | | | Non M/S | | | | | |
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Mean	$3,596.30	$3,886.49	$4,283.41	$2,945.87	$3,157.28	$3,225.35	$2,606.30	$3,697.85	$3,529.29
Std. Dev	$793.23	$1,467.27	$1,484.18	$1,057.56	$1,142.16	$1,230.29	$1,254.81	$3,122.49	$1,595.92
N	106	655	515	611	718	583	173	301	86
Less than $1,499	4%	4%	4%	10%	8%	9%	17%	11%	7%
$1,500-$2,999	12%	15%	10%	36%	29%	26%	46%	23%	28%
$3,000-$4,499	73%	55%	43%	50%	55%	57%	28%	40%	37%
$4,500-$5,999	10%	21%	33%	2%	6%	6%	9%	17%	20%
$6,000 or more	0%	5%	9%	2%	2%	2%	0%	9%	8%
	Before & after school or recreational care program						$10 a Day ChildCareBC Site		
	M/S			Non M/S					
Mean	$3,169.49	$3,531.01	$3,746.17	$1,404.82	$2,171.00	$1,915.21	$2,994.49	$3,644.02	$3,760.54
Std. Dev	$1,580.71	$1,297.73	$1,448.65	$702.02	$1,587.59	$974.39	$958.57	$1,323.28	$1,668.42
N	21	108	46	39	80	37	49	118	130
Less than $1,499	14%	4%	2%	59%	34%	41%	8%	2%	12%
$1,500-$2,999	29%	32%	26%	38%	40%	41%	27%	23%	11%
$3,000-$4,499	43%	40%	48%	3%	19%	19%	63%	63%	59%
$4,500-$5,999	10%	21%	20%	0%	6%	0%	2%	7%	9%
$6,000 or more	5%	3%	4%	0%	1%	0%	0%	6%	9%

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care.

Table 25   Monthly income by ECL qualification 2019, 2020, and 2021

	RA			ECEA			ECE 1yr		
	2019	**2020**	**2021**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
Mean	$2,259.35	$3,282.89	$3,033.44	$2,592.32	$3,017.34	$2,816.11	$2,946.35	$3,398.96	$3,437.51
Std. Dev	$1,291.20	$3,210.53	$1,518.96	$970.14	$1,312.13	$1,356.93	$923.94	$1,406.82	$1,109.39
N	100	232	94	147	187	136	89	142	106
Less than $1,499	26%	16%	18%	13%	10%	23%	9%	6%	7%
$1,500-$2,999	49%	32%	30%	61%	40%	28%	33%	32%	17%
$3,000-$4,499	19%	30%	31%	22%	41%	36%	56%	44%	62%
$4,500-$5,999	5%	17%	20%	3%	7%	12%	2%	13%	13%
$6,000 or more	1%	5%	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%	5%	1%
	ECE 5yr			ECE+SP or +IT			ECE + both SP & IT		
Mean	$2,991.07	$3,486.99	$3,702.14	$3,342.67	$3,662.60	$4,049.83	$3,172.60	$3,795.99	$3,953.31
Std. Dev	$944.93	$1,437.07	$1,463.48	$1,163.38	$1,328.67	$1,433.39	$1,120.12	$1,315.55	$1,345.48
N	279	569	409	185	425	293	143	313	280
Less than $1,499	8%	5%	5%	8%	7%	5%	10%	5%	4%
$1,500-$2,999	35%	23%	22%	17%	15%	12%	22%	15%	14%
$3,000-$4,499	54%	58%	52%	64%	58%	55%	64%	58%	54%
$4,500-$5,999	3%	10%	16%	7%	15%	20%	2%	18%	23%
$6,000 or more	0%	4%	5%	4%	5%	8%	2%	4%	6%

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification).

Figure 19   Monthly income (all sources) by program/role
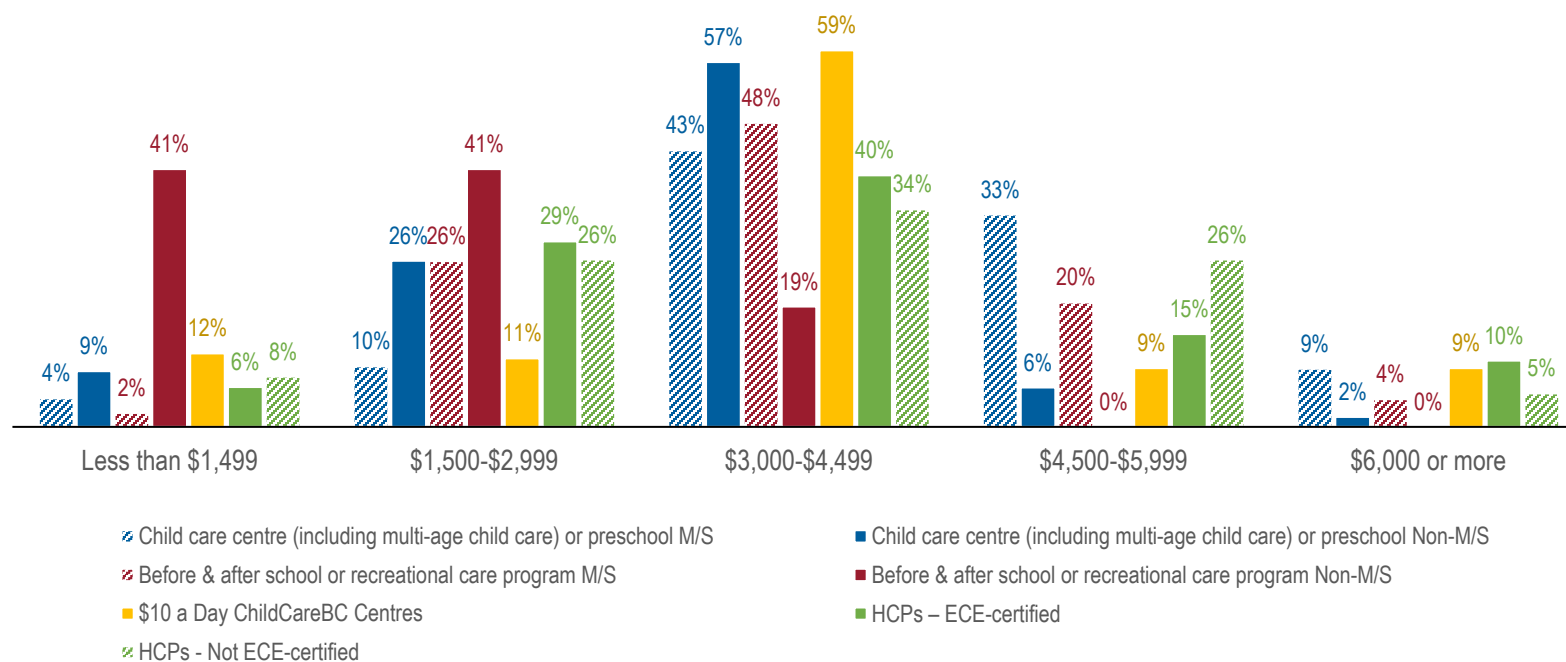
Less than $1,499 — Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool M/S: 4%; Child care centre Non-M/S: 9%; Before & after school or recreational care program M/S: 2%; Before & after school or recreational care program Non-M/S: 41%; $10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres: 12%; HCPs – ECE-certified: 6%; HCPs - Not ECE-certified: 8%

$1,500-$2,999 — 10%; 26%; 26%; 41%; 11%; 29%; 26%

$3,000-$4,499 — 43%; 57%; 48%; 19%; 59%; 40%; 34%

$4,500-$5,999 — 33%; 6%; 20%; 0%; 9%; 15%; 26%

$6,000 or more — 9%; 2%; 4%; 0%; 9%; 10%; 5%

Legend:
- Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool M/S
- Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool Non-M/S
- Before & after school or recreational care program M/S
- Before & after school or recreational care program Non-M/S
- $10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres
- HCPs – ECE-certified
- HCPs - Not ECE-certified

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care.

Figure 20   Monthly income (all sources) by qualification
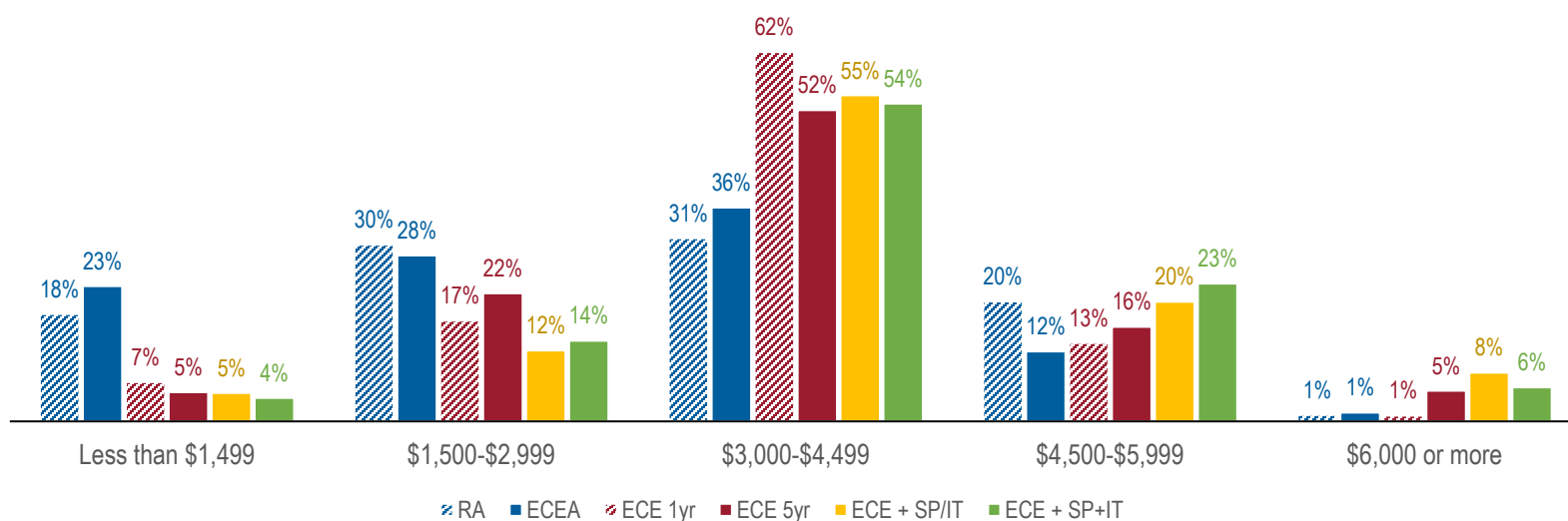
Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification).

Figure 21   Percentage point change in 2021 relative to 2019 monthly income by program/role
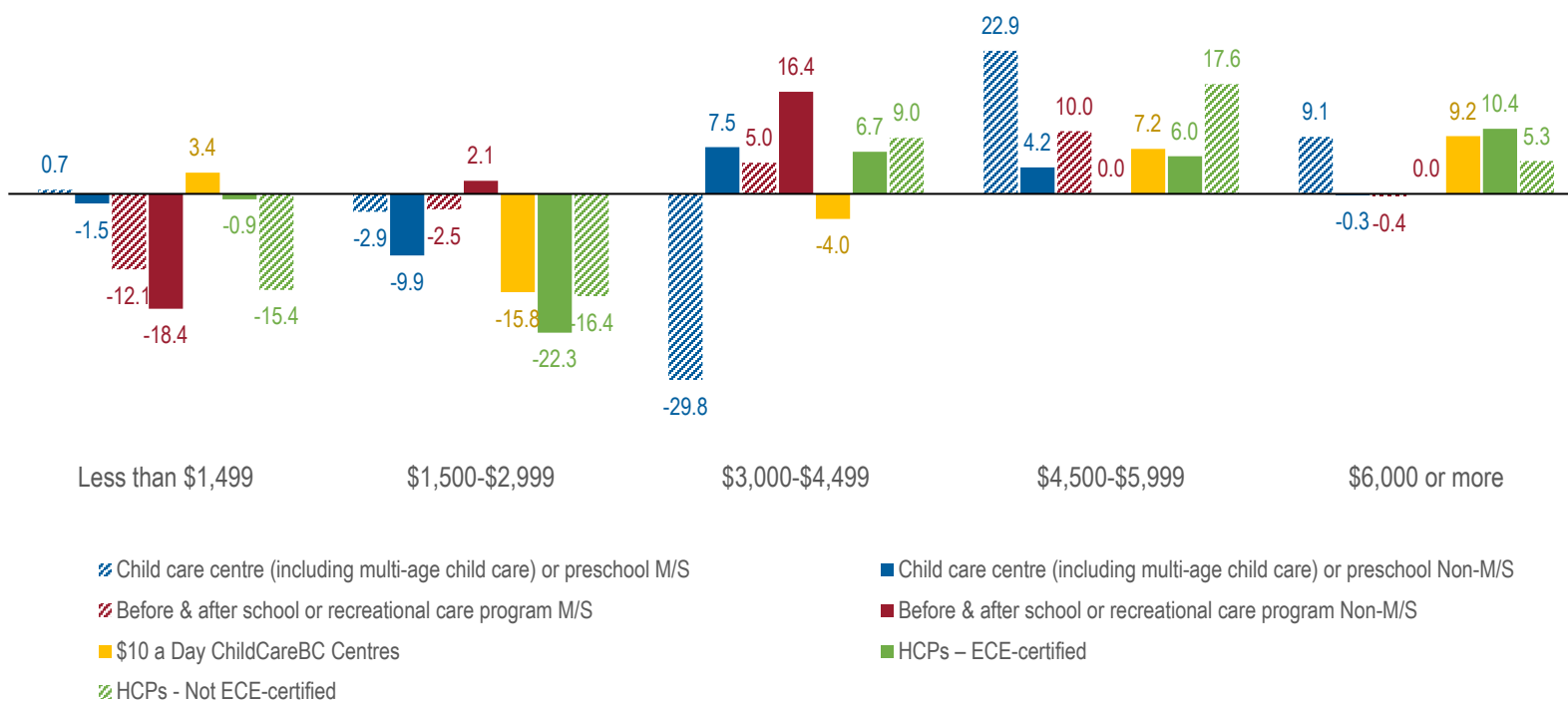
Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care..

Figure 22   Percentage point change in 2021 monthly income relative to 2019 by qualification
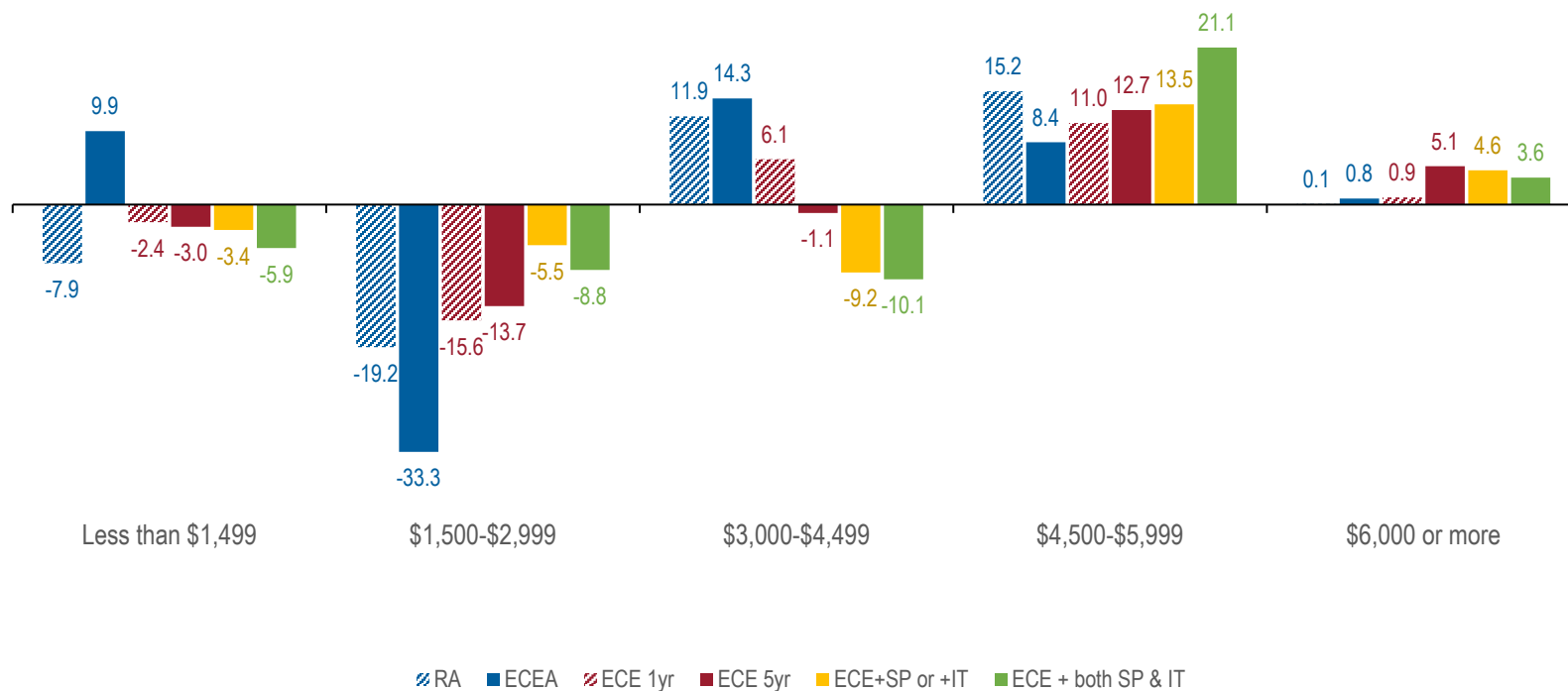
Legend: RA, ECEA, ECE 1yr, ECE 5yr, ECE+SP or +IT, ECE + both SP & IT

Categories: Less than $1,499, $1,500-$2,999, $3,000-$4,499, $4,500-$5,999, $6,000 or more

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification).

Wage enhancement

Through the period covered by this report, the wage enhancement tactic has only been available for frontline ECEs working in licensed child care centres receiving the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative. The proportion of all workforce survey respondents who were in receipt of the wage enhancement provides an underestimate of take up *among those eligible*. To increase the precision of the estimate of take up, SRDC estimated eligibility using additional answers to survey questions: on being included in the staff:child ratio; on centre licensing and programs offered; and on qualifications held. While answers to these questions do not predict eligibility precisely—there are other criteria that SRDC's surveys do not collect data on—they help to narrow the pool of respondents to those potentially eligible: somewhere between 61 and 69 per cent of those working in CCC and $10 a day sites in 2021 (top row of Table 26). The variation in eligibility was larger in 2019, when those working in $10 a day sites were much more likely to be eligible (76 per cent). Fluctuations might have been greater in 2019 because the enhancement was relatively new and different groups could have adapted to its availability at different rates. Eligibility in before and after school programs (not shown) is low since fewer with ECE certificates work in such settings, given ECE certification is not a requirement, and the facility must be approved for the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (which covers group and family care up to kindergarten age).

Table 26   Wage enhancement recipients by program/role 2019-21

| | Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool | | | | | | $10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres | | | Total | | |
| | M/S | | | Non M/S | | | | | | | | |
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
% "eligible"	65%	74%	69%	74%	70%	68%	76%	69%	61%	71%	72%	68%
% reporting receipt among those eligible:												
Yes	76%	84%	81%	80%	77%	76%	84%	86%	81%	78%	81%	79%
Don't know	2%	1%	1%	5%	4%	3%	2%	4%	6%	4%	2%	3%

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties.

Among these deemed "eligible" ECEs at CCCs and $10 a day sites, about four in every five were receiving the wage enhancement in 2021. This proportion was highest in every year at $10 a day sites. Table 26 reveals that while the proportion who don't know whether they were in receipt

has been more or less declining since 2019, this lack of awareness has been growing at $10 a day sites.

Table 27 compares the average hourly wage reported (including the wage enhancement if received) among those eligible and in receipt to the wage reported by those eligible and not in receipt. Although the wage enhancement was typically accounting for a $2 per hour addition to wages at the time of the survey in 2021, the differences in average wages were typically small. Likely the differences in wages between these groups are being influenced by a range of other differences than just receipt of wage enhancement. Pre-existing working conditions (including wages) between employers who apply for the enhancement and those who do not may differ, such that better paid employees might be less likely to receive the enhancement. Also, SRDC's estimates of whether a workplace was or was not eligible may not be fully accurate.

When employers were asked directly in the employer survey if they had applied for the wage enhancement, the proportion who reported they had was similar to 2020 (87 per cent or 594 organizations). Employers who reported they had not applied for the wage enhancement were asked to identify the main reasons for not applying. The most common answers were the workplace not being eligible (47 per cent) followed by not having staff that would qualify (36 per cent). Nine per cent of the organizations also reported that they did not apply because the process was too complicated or takes too much time. Another 7 per cent of organizations reported they did not apply because the information about how to apply was not clear. The biggest difference from 2020 is the increase in the proportion of workplaces who did not apply because they felt they were not eligible (47 per cent this year compared to only 27 per cent last year). This number is expected to increase over time as more organizations apply, leaving only those who are ineligible among those who have not applied. There was a decrease of 11 percentage points in the proportion of employers reporting not having staff who would qualify for the wage enhancement.

Table 27   Wages by receipt of enhancement by program/role 2019-21

	Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool						$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres			Total		
	M/S			Non M/S								
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Average hourly wage among those "eligible" for WE:												
Receiving WE	$23.49	$23.67	$26.83	$19.95	$21.88	$23.03	$24.80	$23.18	N/A	$24.60	$22.68	$20.63
Not receiving WE	N/A	$23.26	$26.15	N/A	$20.88	$23.09	$26.52	N/A	N/A	$24.58	$21.69	N/A

Source: 2019, 2020 ,and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties.

Regression of factors associated with receipt of wage enhancement

A logistic regression analysis was conducted to better understand which factors contribute to the receipt of the wage enhancement among respondents who met the eligibility criteria. After controlling for other factors, we find two factors can significantly predict whether a person will receive the wage enhancement.

- **Private business:** Working for a private business is associated with a 146 per cent increase in the odds of receiving the wage enhancement.

- **Number of benefits received:** An additional employment benefit (either financial or non-financial) that a child care professional receives is associated with a 7 per cent increase in the odds of receiving the wage enhancement.

Table 28   Logistic regression results of factors predicting receipt of the wage enhancement

	Wage Enhancement recipients among those eligible			
	Coeff.	Odds ratio	SE	*p*
Private business	**0.90**	**2.46**	**0.26**	**0.00**
Years working in child care (+ 5 years)	-0.08	0.92	0.07	0.29
Monthly earnings (+ $1,000)	0.02	1.02	0.08	0.79
Bachelor's or Master's Degree	-0.34	0.71	0.21	0.11
Women	0.16	1.17	0.78	0.84
Indigenous persons	-0.52	0.60	0.37	0.16
Newcomers	0.22	1.25	0.26	0.40
Member of a union	0.31	1.36	0.32	0.33
Age (+ 5 years)	0.03	1.03	0.07	0.69
Number of benefits received	**0.07**	**1.07**	**0.03**	**0.04**

Notes: The odds ratio (OR) are calculated by taking the exponent of the regression coefficient (e^{β_i}). The significance of the coefficient is indicated by the columns p (i.e., p-value). An independent variable whose regression coefficient has a p-value of less than 5% (p<0.05) is considered to have an effect on the outcome that is significantly different from 0. Significant effects are highlighted in yellow in the table.

Source: 2021 SRDC Workforce Survey.

Figure 23   Logistic regression results of factors predicting receipt of the wage enhancement
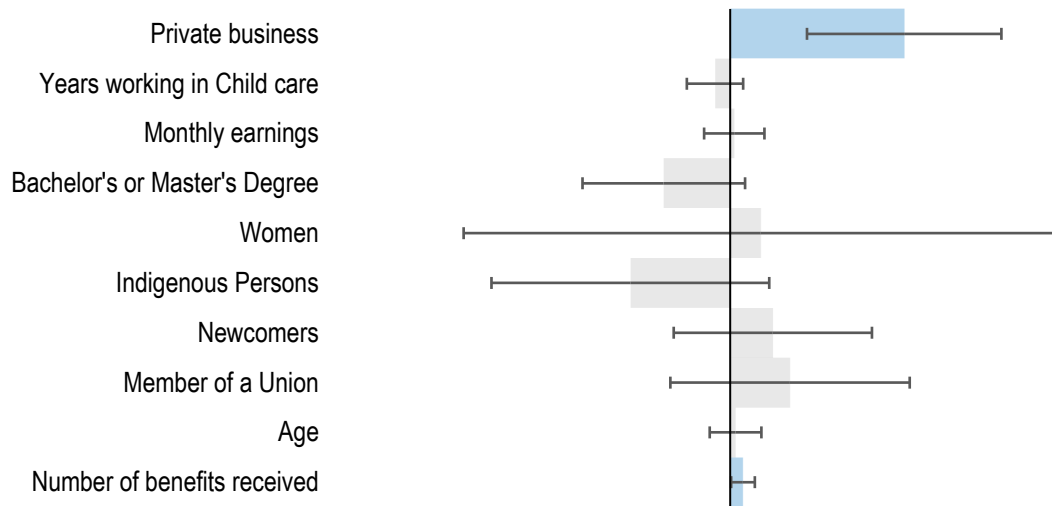
Source: 2021 SRDC Workforce Survey

Notes: Bar graphs indicate the size of the coefficients (β) for each independent variable included in the model. Error bars indicate the 95% confidence interval for each coefficient; error bars for independent variables that have a non-zero effect on the dependent variable do not cross the 0 line.

Additionally, a significantly negative effect is indicated by a red bar; a significantly positive effect is indicated by a blue bar; a non-significant effect is indicated by grey bars.

Key informant interviews and case studies

The salaries of those employed in the sector varied across the case study sites. Hourly wages for ECEs ranged from $18.50 to $23.50 plus the $2 (shortly to become $4) wage enhancement, which resulted in some ECEs earning approximately $26 or more per hour. In 2020, the unionized case study site offered the highest wages, although staff were not eligible for the wage enhancement. By 2021, the increased wage enhancement meant other centres offered higher hourly wage rates. To qualify for the wage enhancement, ECEs had to spend half their time working directly with children which meant that most managers and some supervisors were not eligible for the additional $4.[34] The wage differential between managers/supervisors and non M/S was reduced to $2 or $3 per hour resulting in some ECEs earning more than managers/supervisors after factoring in overtime. As a result, some managers/supervisors had stepped away from the managing role as they did not feel their salaries were commensurate with their responsibilities

[34]   These restrictions are being relaxed for wage enhancement receipt from 2022 onwards.

and the stress they experienced. Some managers were concerned about the unintended consequences of the wage enhancement, which they saw as increasing the wage differential across the sector:

> *"The $2 makes a difference. One hundred percent. You know, I think any time the government recognizes child care as a priority, you have to celebrate it, like fantastic. I think it's a weird way to do it, because if you had a wage grid where you said if you're employing an early childhood educator, an educator that's got this qualification, whatever the government wants to say, your certificate, your diploma, your degree, this is the minimum that you can pay because I think it makes more of a difference. [The wage enhancement] just created more of a divide. You've got people in the field that that two dollars an hour is going to bring them up to almost $30 an hour. And then you have people in the field that that $2 an hour is just on top of minimum wage. It's weird. Like I'm glad my team is getting it. We deserve it. I [as] the [employer] should be paying them more - our entry level wage is $21.76. I don't think anyone should enter the field at less than $25. But you know, my educators have been here for 18 years, that's putting them over $30 an hour, which is more than I make." (KII Unionized Site)*

Wages within the sector were still considered low given the education needed to be a certified ECE. In 2020 those interviewed reported that wages in the sector were low. While ECEs were very appreciative of the $4 wage enhancement, it still left them with relatively low wages.

> *"And the cost of everything is going up, which isn't helping. So my fridge still isn't overly full of food, but I was able to do a really nice turkey dinner and we are able to pay our bills. I don't know if I would say working poor, but not far above." (Site D: ECE IT)*

The salaries for ECEAs and Responsible Adults ranged from $16 to $18 per hour depending on level of experience. To address staff shortages, two privately-run case study sites were employing some individuals who did not have any training, while providing financial support for training. Individuals were required to meet the basic RA requirements or ECEA certification and to continue with their ECE training. One centre required employees to sign a contract agreeing to remain for one year after they completed their training. Interviewees described doing this because it was "so difficult" to find qualified staff. This strategy was not without some challenges, mainly in providing in-work support and supervision for relatively inexperienced staff, which in the short-term added to the responsibilities of more experienced staff.

> *"…, it's next to impossible to find ECEs or ECE IT. [ECE] Assistants are getting just as scarce. But we're finding that the people that we are able to hire are [from] a lot of areas and some of them will have taken the right course the weekend before they start, so no experience. But then they're being thrown into classrooms as a staff. …Sometimes it's the RA that's brand new. And we have to tell them, like, this is how you do it … this is what we do. This is how you sweep, sounds a little bit silly, but we're training on the job when we have 12 children in the room. So it's like having thirteen children between me and [coworker] because of the amount of directions that we have to give that staff, which is tough." (Site C, ECE IT)*

In some sites, salaries were negotiated on an individual basis and in one site, employees were not supposed to discuss their salary with colleagues. Some respondents speculated that this was because those individuals who had been hired more recently were receiving higher wages than existing staff.

While some managers and owners wanted to provide salary increases, they were unable to do so because of the tight margins under which they were operating. Some centres were unable to increase wages due to restrictions associated with participating in provincial early care and learning programs and they also recognized higher fees would make them uncompetitive. However, all sites had staff leave to move to other centre for higher wages. Those in the sector reported that experienced staff had been approached by other centres, either via personal contacts or through recruitment agencies and offered more money to move. The reasons people remained included, a sense of loyalty to their team, compensation package that included health benefits and attachment to the children. For others the additional salary, which could be as much as $3 per hour, was too much to resist.

The case study and KII sites provided a range of benefits and supports to employees. Those interviewed in 2021 did not report any significant changes to the range or extent of in-work benefits they received.

In 2021, the wage enhancement continued to be important to those in the sector both for the additional money it provided to eligible ECL staff but also because it indicated that the government recognized the importance of the sector and the challenges it was facing. The increase to $4 in September 2021 was seen as further evidence of the commitment of the government to support the sector.

> *"The government's promising this $4 an hour in September and the staff are just ecstatic over this … I appreciate the fact that they finally are putting this through to my staff, and I'm thrilled that my staff can have this. On the other hand, I'm very cautious about whether it's going to happen." (Site B, Manager, ECE IT)*

However, the wage enhancement may also be having some unintended consequences in some centres as supervisors or managers remain in ratio to qualify for the enhancement.

> *"We like to have the directors who are off the floor to be able to help the staff. So, they have to spend half their time on the floor to get the wage enhancement. So, that's even adding more onto their plate if they want extra $4 an hour. So, it kind of gets tricky there." (Site C, Manager, ECE IT)*

Some of those interviewed reported that in other centres the wage enhancement was being used as a substitute for pay increases, or pay increases were being deferred until employers knew whether the wage enhancement was going to continue. Those interviewed regarded this as unfair and might ultimately result in centres losing staff.

An additional challenge arises because half of the $4 amount will be paid retroactively to ECEs in 2022. Those interviewed were unsure exactly when it would be paid and speculated if it could have financial implications if it were paid in another tax year. ECEs going on maternity leave were particularly concerned if it would impact their receipt of employment insurance. In addition, employers were concerned about having to pay the lump sum to staff who had left their employment as this would require them to reopen an employee's record of employment representing additional administrative work.

Discussion regarding the eligibility of the wage enhancement continued as in previous years. Some suggested the enhancement should be available to all members of the ECL workforce and not just those with an ECE designation. Their rationale was that ECEAs and ECEs essentially did the same job and should both be entitled to the wage enhancement. They suggested that experienced ECEAs had similar responsibilities as newly qualified ECE staff, and this experience should be recognized. These respondents were concerned that the sector would lose ECEAs and RAs, who provided supports to ECE staff, which would ultimately exacerbate staff shortages. Others continued to see the wage enhancement as a recognition for the time these individuals spent in college. In 2020, respondents were unsure whether the $2 wage enhancement would encourage employees to complete their ECE certification. In 2021, those interviewed suggested that the $4 enhancement would encourage more people to complete their ECE certification.

All five participants surveyed after leaving case study sites were aware of the wage enhancement, and four participants were receiving it at their previous job. The four participants were still working in child care roles and were receiving the wage subsidy in their new role.

KPI 2B: ECL PROFESSIONALS' BENEFITS

This KPI reports on the receipt of benefits in employment, and how this differs across those working in the sector and has changed since the ECL R&R Strategy began in 2018. Receipt of benefits appears to be of importance as an explanatory factor in the outcomes reported under other KPIs, including interest in ECL as a career (KPI 5) and participation in professional development (KPI 8)

Cross-sectional survey

Self-reported benefits received

The first three columns of Table 29 include the proportion of non-M/S CCC based professionals who indicated receiving specific benefits from their employers in 2019 through 2021. In 2021, about 14 per cent of these non-M/S professionals reported not receiving any benefits. The most

common benefits received were paid sick days (61 per cent), extended health benefits (55 per cent), and dental coverage (55 per cent). On the other hand, receiving short-term disability (20 per cent), long-term disability (19 per cent), and flexible health spending accounts (5 per cent) were less common. In general, 2021 saw increases in the proportions reporting these benefits compared to 2020 and 2019 with little overall change in those who didn't know about their benefits.

Among non M/S professionals at before and after school/recreational programs, the proportions in receipt of at least some benefits changed little between 2019 when 33 per cent reported receiving none of the listed benefits and 2021 when 34 per cent received none. While smaller proportions compared to other centres in 2021 reported receipt of common benefits [extended health benefits (29 per cent), dental coverage (21 per cent), and paid sick days (45 per cent)], there was some improvement since 2019 (except for dental coverage) including as many (29 per cent) as at CCC now reporting a pension plan. Their levels of the less common benefits [short-term disability (8 per cent), long-term disability (11 per cent), and flexible health spending accounts (3 per cent)] were little different than in 2019.

Respondents were also asked to indicate whether they received any additional benefits from their employer. More than a quarter of non-M/S professionals at CCC reported receiving paid breaks, one in eight reported paid documentation time, and more than a quarter reported paid programming and preparation time. While 42 per cent received pay for overtime work, 22 per cent received time-off in lieu of overtime. However, more than half received paid time for staff meetings occurring outside work hours (55 per cent). In terms of benefits that supported professional development, just under a quarter of non-M/S professionals at CCC received financial assistance for 'courses or post-ECE training support' and a fifth reported paid release time for training. Just less than half (48 per cent) received financial assistance for 'ECE-related training'. In general, the level of additional benefits reported increased moderately over time.

Among non M/S professionals at before and after school/recreational programs, the proportions reporting themselves as in receipt of additional benefits changed less often between 2019 and 2021. While higher proportions than at other centres reported receipt of some additional benefits [paid overtime (36 per cent), paid staff meetings (67 per cent), reduced child care fees (36 per cent), paid documentation time (19 per cent), and time in lieu for overtime (22 per cent)], others were received to about the same extent.

Table 30 breaks down receipt of different benefits by auspice and union membership. ECL professionals working for private businesses report fewer benefits than those at not-for-profits, with differences especially stark for short-term and long-term disability. But it is notably also private businesses where the bulk of the improvement in receipt of benefits has been occurring since 2019. Union members are more likely to receive benefits than non-union members. While all groups generally have seen improvement over the 3 years, union members experienced more

stability. Paid sick days, paid breaks, and paid overtime have remained at their relatively high levels – received by the majority of unionized professionals in all cases, since 2019 for example. As might be expected, union members are less likely to be working in a private business.

When core benefits are considered by level of qualification (Table 31), a more consistent pattern of improvements emerges from 2019 to 2021 for all qualifications, albeit from different bases. Those with ECE certifications, other than 1 year, especially those with specialisms were very unlikely to report no benefits at all in 2021. Seventy-one per cent of those with specialisms reported extended health and dental coverage and 73-75 per cent reported paid sick days. The share of RAs, ECEAs and ECEs without specialisms in 2019 with *any* benefits was lower: 45 per cent of RAs reported none, as did 23-28 per cent of ECEAs and ECEs without specialisms. By 2021, the percentages reporting none among these groups were down to 26 per cent for RAs; 15 per cent for ECEAs and 16 per cent for 5-year ECEs. The percentage of 1-year ECEs without benefits was still high in 2021 at 26 per cent. All groups defined by qualification reported additional benefits more often in 2021 than 2019, except ECEAs whose access to paid breaks was more or less unchanged and while they less often reported paid overtime, the proportion with time off in lieu of overtime increased.

Table 29   Benefits received by ECL professionals and provided by employers by program/role 2019-21

	Workforce survey						Employers survey					
	Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool Not M/S			Before & after school or recreational care program Not M/S			Employers with all programming ECE-certified			Employers with some or all programming not requiring ECE		
Core benefits	2019	2020	**2021**	2019	2020	**2021**	2019	2020	**2021**	2019	2020	**2021**
Extended Health Care	43%	39%	**55%**	24%	23%	**29%**	55%	50%	**56%**	63%	53%	**64%**
Dental coverage	43%	41%	**55%**	24%	22%	**21%**	54%	47%	**55%**	61%	53%	**62%**
Life insurance	25%	25%	**33%**	16%	11%	**18%**	41%	35%	**38%**	50%	42%	**48%**
Short-term Disability	15%	15%	**20%**	10%	5%	**8%**	25%	19%	**20%**	27%	20%	**28%**
Long-term Disability	13%	14%	**19%**	10%	5%	**11%**	29%	20%	**21%**	30%	28%	**30%**
Paid sick days	51%	47%	**61%**	31%	24%	**45%**	61%	61%	**67%**	61%	54%	**69%**
Retirement/ Pension plan	21%	21%	**28%**	14%	13%	**29%**	22%	20%	**27%**	27%	16%	**24%**
Flexible spending account/Health spending account	4%	3%	**5%**	2%	2%	**3%**	4%	11%	**8%**	9%	11%	**6%**
Vacation	N/A	N/A	**N/A**	N/A	N/A	**N/A**	N/A	N/A	**7%**	N/A	N/A	**7%**
Other	N/A	N/A	**N/A**	N/A	N/A	**N/A**	17%	5%	**0%**	14%	7%	**1%**
None of the above	25%	15%	**14%**	33%	34%	**34%**	22%	19%	**11%**	19%	24%	**10%**
I don't know	13%	8%	**13%**	25%	10%	**16%**	1%	1%	**4%**	1%	1%	**2%**

	Workforce survey						Employers survey					
	Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool Not M/S			Before & after school or recreational care program Not M/S			Employers with all programming ECE-certified			Employers with some or all programming not requiring ECE		
Additional benefits	2019	2020	**2021**	2019	2020	**2021**	2019	2020	**2021**	2019	2020	**2021**
Paid breaks	27%	26%	**27%**	18%	14%	**17%**	45%	45%	**45%**	42%	24%	**39%**
Paid overtime	40%	35%	**42%**	20%	24%	**36%**	49%	51%	**57%**	61%	41%	**60%**
Time in lieu for overtime	21%	18%	**22%**	12%	9%	**22%**	35%	25%	**30%**	42%	22%	**31%**
Paid staff meetings that occur outside regular work hours	50%	47%	**55%**	59%	36%	**67%**	61%	63%	**63%**	80%	51%	**72%**
Financial assistance for ECE-related training	42%	41%	**48%**	24%	20%	**25%**	66%	68%	**69%**	70%	47%	**69%**
Financial assistance for courses or post-ECE training	18%	18%	**24%**	24%	11%	**22%**	34%	34%	**34%**	53%	36%	**49%**
Paid release time for training	18%	17%	**20%**	31%	15%	**31%**	38%	31%	**37%**	39%	25%	**43%**
Reduced child care fees	20%	19%	**26%**	14%	8%	**36%**	39%	43%	**41%**	61%	41%	**52%**
Paid documentation time	12%	8%	**13%**	10%	3%	**19%**	28%	23%	**23%**	35%	20%	**31%**
Paid programming and prep time	23%	19%	**27%**	31%	19%	**33%**	49%	44%	**47%**	70%	43%	**60%**
None of the above	14%	5%	**8%**	16%	9%	**6%**	12%	5%	**2%**	2%	4%	**2%**
I don't know	6%	3%	**6%**	8%	9%	**14%**	0%	1%	**2%**	0%	0%	**0%**

Note: "Employers with all programming ECE-certified" includes employers who exclusively operate one or more of the following programs: group care under 3, group care 2.5yrs – school age, preschool, or multi-age programs. "Employers with some or all programming not requiring ECE" includes employers who operate one or more of the following programs: group care school age, occasional care, or recreational care (2021). Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties.

Table 30   Benefits received by ECL professionals by auspice and union membership 2019-21

| Core benefits | Union Membership | | | | | | Business Type | | | | | |
| | Non-union member | | | Union member | | | Not-for-profit, school, other | | | Private business | | |
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Extended Health Care	37%	31%	**58%**	68%	75%	**80%**	52%	48%	**70%**	28%	22%	**47%**
Dental coverage	36%	32%	**56%**	75%	79%	**80%**	55%	51%	**70%**	24%	21%	**45%**
Life insurance	22%	21%	**39%**	44%	49%	**54%**	33%	34%	**49%**	14%	11%	**30%**
Short-term Disability	13%	12%	**23%**	31%	35%	**41%**	22%	22%	**33%**	7%	4%	**16%**
Long-term Disability	12%	13%	**23%**	29%	35%	**44%**	21%	23%	**36%**	5%	4%	**12%**
Paid sick days	43%	37%	**64%**	87%	85%	**87%**	68%	61%	**83%**	26%	17%	**44%**
Retirement/ Pension plan	16%	15%	**25%**	51%	62%	**67%**	31%	32%	**45%**	9%	3%	**11%**
Flexible spending account/Health spending account	3%	4%	**7%**	4%	6%	**12%**	5%	5%	**9%**	2%	2%	**6%**
Vacation	N/A	N/A	**N/A**	N/A	N/A	**N/A**	N/A	N/A	**N/A**	N/A	N/A	**N/A**
Other	N/A	N/A	**N/A**	N/A	N/A	**N/A**	N/A	N/A	**N/A**	N/A	N/A	**N/A**
None of the above	32%	10%	**16%**	4%	7%	**6%**	12%	8%	**7%**	47%	14%	**25%**
I don't know	12%	5%	**8%**	7%	2%	**6%**	13%	6%	**7%**	11%	5%	**10%**

	Union Membership						Business Type					
	Non-union member			Union member			Not-for-profit, school, other			Private business		
Additional benefits	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
Paid breaks	22%	16%	28%	54%	56%	53%	33%	29%	35%	22%	11%	29%
Paid overtime	34%	25%	41%	58%	50%	54%	44%	35%	44%	31%	22%	43%
Time in lieu for overtime	16%	17%	28%	47%	46%	53%	31%	30%	43%	8%	6%	16%
Paid staff meetings that occur outside regular work hours	44%	36%	57%	80%	70%	76%	66%	53%	68%	29%	24%	49%
Financial assistance for ECE-related training	38%	34%	56%	55%	56%	63%	52%	47%	64%	27%	23%	48%
Financial assistance for courses or post-ECE training	16%	18%	35%	26%	18%	19%	23%	23%	36%	13%	9%	28%
Paid release time for training	17%	15%	27%	33%	34%	40%	28%	26%	38%	10%	4%	17%
Reduced child care fees	23%	15%	37%	13%	17%	15%	19%	16%	28%	27%	15%	43%
Paid documentation time	12%	9%	20%	16%	18%	13%	16%	14%	20%	8%	4%	18%
Paid programming and prep time	23%	18%	36%	26%	32%	31%	30%	27%	38%	16%	8%	31%
None of the above	17%	3%	7%	3%	1%	2%	4%	2%	2%	26%	4%	10%
I don't know	6%	2%	4%	2%	3%	3%	5%	3%	3%	6%	2%	6%

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Table 31   Benefits received by ECL professionals by ECL qualification 2019-21

	Workforce survey											
	RA			ECEA			ECE 1yr			ECE 5yr		
Core benefits	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Extended Health Care	28%	14%	47%	34%	23%	58%	35%	17%	43%	40%	23%	54%
Dental coverage	26%	13%	45%	34%	23%	54%	31%	17%	42%	39%	25%	54%
Life insurance	19%	8%	29%	23%	13%	37%	20%	13%	28%	23%	16%	33%
Short-term Disability	9%	7%	16%	8%	8%	24%	15%	7%	23%	15%	9%	20%
Long-term Disability	8%	6%	17%	10%	7%	20%	10%	9%	21%	13%	9%	20%
Paid sick days	33%	16%	60%	44%	28%	59%	49%	22%	54%	48%	30%	66%
Retirement/ Pension plan	15%	8%	16%	18%	12%	20%	16%	7%	25%	19%	13%	26%
Flexible spending account/Health spending account	4%	1%	5%	6%	2%	5%	3%	1%	5%	3%	3%	6%
None of the above	45%	13%	26%	28%	15%	15%	23%	10%	26%	27%	8%	16%
I don't know	11%	6%	10%	18%	7%	17%	19%	4%	12%	11%	4%	8%

Workforce survey												
	RA			**ECEA**			**ECE 1yr**			**ECE 5yr**		
Additional benefits	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
Paid breaks	21%	9%	30%	21%	18%	20%	27%	14%	26%	30%	16%	32%
Paid overtime	17%	13%	32%	43%	25%	38%	26%	15%	32%	38%	18%	43%
Time in lieu for overtime	13%	9%	30%	17%	11%	26%	15%	9%	20%	18%	12%	23%
Paid staff meetings that occur outside regular work hours	39%	21%	65%	53%	36%	54%	37%	22%	47%	46%	27%	57%
Financial assistance for ECE-related training	19%	15%	37%	37%	28%	45%	31%	21%	52%	42%	25%	59%
Financial assistance for courses or post-ECE training	19%	9%	40%	28%	20%	36%	14%	7%	26%	15%	10%	30%
Paid release time for training	21%	9%	25%	14%	13%	19%	19%	9%	21%	19%	10%	25%
Reduced child care fees	19%	6%	34%	28%	16%	37%	19%	9%	22%	23%	10%	32%
Paid documentation time	8%	3%	24%	10%	3%	13%	10%	5%	16%	12%	6%	15%
Paid programming and prep time	23%	13%	39%	21%	15%	34%	23%	14%	33%	26%	13%	35%
None of the above	28%	3%	4%	12%	3%	11%	15%	3%	7%	12%	3%	3%
I don't know	8%	3%	8%	6%	2%	5%	10%	3%	13%	6%	2%	6%

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification).

Table 31 (contd.) Benefits received by ECL professionals by ECL qualification 2019-21

	Workforce survey					
	ECE+SP or +IT			ECE + both SP&IT		
Core benefits	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
Extended Health Care	55%	36%	71%	53%	38%	71%
Dental coverage	56%	36%	71%	57%	43%	71%
Life insurance	32%	22%	49%	34%	29%	54%
Short-term Disability	19%	12%	28%	26%	18%	37%
Long-term Disability	18%	13%	28%	24%	20%	36%
Paid sick days	56%	38%	73%	65%	45%	75%
Retirement/ Pension plan	25%	21%	38%	29%	24%	40%
Flexible spending account/Health spending account	4%	4%	11%	6%	4%	8%
None of the above	20%	6%	8%	18%	4%	8%
I don't know	10%	4%	7%	9%	2%	6%
Additional benefits						
Paid breaks	31%	20%	39%	31%	21%	32%
Paid overtime	46%	26%	49%	48%	28%	50%
Time in lieu for overtime	27%	20%	40%	33%	23%	42%
Paid staff meetings that occur outside regular work hours	54%	34%	65%	64%	39%	66%
Financial assistance for ECE-related training	53%	31%	65%	51%	38%	63%
Financial assistance for courses or post-ECE training	21%	15%	32%	18%	17%	34%
Paid release time for training	23%	17%	35%	23%	19%	37%
Reduced child care fees	27%	13%	35%	20%	14%	36%
Paid documentation time	13%	11%	22%	18%	10%	21%
Paid programming and prep time	22%	15%	32%	27%	16%	38%
None of the above	11%	1%	3%	8%	1%	3%
I don't know	2%	2%	3%	5%	1%	4%

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification).

Benefits information provided by employers

SRDC also collected organization-level data on benefits paid by the employer and provided to their ECL professional staff (right hand columns of Table 29). Benefits information was provided by 709 employers (or 97 per cent of the sample). There were some modest differences between employers with all programming ECE-certified and those with some or all programming not requiring ECE certification.

Employer-reported benefits information in 2021 generally matched with information reported by the workforce in 2021, though employers were slightly more likely to report that core benefits were provided. The most commonly reported core benefits were paid sick days (67-69 per cent), extended health care coverage (56-64 per cent), and dental coverage (55-62 per cent). These benefits were also the three most common benefits reported in 2019 and 2020, when the discrepancies between employer reports and individuals' own reports were much larger. The current numbers from employers are higher than 2020 but seem to represent less an increase than a return to 2019 benefits rates, which typically decreased from 2019 to 2020. This 2020 "dip" was also seen in the workforce survey reports of benefits. The dip may be related to variations in survey response related to COVID, or the experiences of the workforce in 2020 when disruptions to employment were more prevalent. The biggest change from 2019 (and 2020) was in the proportion of employers who reported offering no core benefits to staff – this dropped from 19-22 per cent in 2019 and 19-24 per cent in 2020 to 10-11 per cent in 2021. Again, this generally matches workforce survey trends.

The three additional benefits most commonly reported by employers were financial assistance for ECE-related training (69 per cent), paid staff meetings that occurred outside regular work hours (72 per cent), and paid overtime (60 per cent). The proportion of employers who provided these three additional benefits changed relatively little from 2019 to 2021, and the proportion of employers who provided other additional benefits listed in Table 29 remained relatively similar as well.

While employers tend to report providing benefits more than non-M/S staff report receiving them, it is worth remembering that these results come from surveys fielded in different ways and reflect different bases. Employers describe the benefits they provide to at least one employee (who could be a supervisor) who works with children. Respondents to the workforce survey reported what they personally had access to.

Further analysis found that 82 per cent of the employers in the sample provided at least one core benefit *and* one additional benefit to their staff (up from 75 per cent in 2020). Employers who provided benefits to their staff offered an average of eight benefits (either core or additional).

In general, employers' reports of benefit coverage have not been growing since 2019, although possibly awareness among staff has. In 2021, a similar proportion of employers reported

providing each type of benefit as the proportion of individual members of the workforce who reported receiving the same benefits. The proportion of employers providing benefits has changed relatively little since 2019, but the proportion of the workforce reporting benefits has grown considerably since 2019, indicating that the workforce may be more aware of the benefits available to them now compared to two years ago. Possibly also, with increased awareness could come selective attrition of the workforce over time. The workforce may increasingly congregate in workplaces with benefits, being less likely to continue working for employers who do not provide them.

Key informant interviews and case studies

The range and types of benefits provided by employers to their staff at case study sites did not change in 2021. All six case study and KII sites continued to provide a range of extended benefits to ECL staff with five providing extended health benefits. One site provided ECL staff with a health spending account largely because it offered flexibility to staff. All sites provided staff with paid leave although there were differences across the centres as to how this was implemented.

In 2021, the provision of paid sick leave was increasingly important to those in the sector because of the requirements to self-isolate after exposure to COVID-19. Four case study centres provided a specific number of paid sick days and one provided paid leave that was accrued and could be used to cover sickness. In one centre, only those who were part of the management team received paid sick days. For other staff, part of their salary included an amount which staff could use to cover leave, including sick days. Most of the KII sites provided some level of paid sick leave.

Paid sick leave was becoming a contentious issue because of the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and the subsequent isolation period that would prevent employees from going to work. Employees were also concerned about having to stay home to look after their own children if they had been exposed. At the time of interviewing, two centres issued staff who had to quarantine or who had contracted COVID-19 with a Record of Employment (D) to enable them to claim Employment Insurance. For other centres, employees used their paid sick leave but those interviewed were unsure what would happen when this was exhausted.

KPI 3: THE EXTENT TO WHICH CURRENT SECTOR OCCUPATIONAL COMPETENCIES ARE INTEGRATED INTO EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

Work is still underway on the updated Sector Occupational Competencies. SRDC will begin to track the integration of these competencies through key informant interviews and document review as soon as they are released.

KPI 4: PROPORTION OF ECL PROFESSIONALS WITH CREDENTIALS RELEVANT TO PROVISION OF CHILD CARE FOR PROVINCIAL ECL NEEDS, INCLUDING REGIONAL AND INDIGENOUS ECL NEEDS

An anticipated consequence of the ECL R&R Strategy is that more members of the ECL workforce would hold credentials relevant to the provision of child care and that meet specific ECL needs relevant to their position. Data on educational credentials held in the context of specific workplace roles was obtained from Child Care Operating Fund (CCOF) provider profile surveys and SRDC's cross-sectional survey.

Administrative data

Numbers of certified professionals

Data from the CCOF provider profile maintained by MCFD permit an examination of trends in certifications and training through the workforce in licensed centres in receipt of the funding, according to the annual provider survey. The ECE numbers in Table 32 count up currently paid child care staff in each reporting facility. Staff are allowed to select multiple certifications with respect to ECE but are counted only once in the ECE+ row and total staff row.

The provider survey respondents indicated the level of certficiation training for each member of their staff (including administrative staff who do not work directly with children). The questions did not ask specifically about ECEAs, so there is no way to distinguish ECEAs from RAs from administrative staff who may have taken some ECE training within these data.

While there has been an overall increase in staff over the period since 2013, numbers fluctuate by year and show virtually no change in certifications in 2021-22 relative to the 2017-18 year, before the launch of the ECL R&R Strategy, except bachelors of ECE (from a small initial base). There was a steady increase in the proportion of the workforce with ECE credentials from 2013-

14 through 2017-18 but an apparent decline since then. Between 2018-19 when the ECL R&R Strategy was launched and 2019-20 nearly all the growth has been in the number of staff with no ECE credentials or some ECE, with the exception of the tripling in the number of Bachelors of ECE credentials, a pattern of growth beginning in 2019-20.

However, SRDC has also received data on employment at $10 a day (formerly Universal Child Care Prototype) Sites. Since 2018, B.C. has converted around 2,500 licensed child care spaces into low-cost spaces at existing child care facilities. Under this program (which is set to expand again in 2022), families pay no more than $200 a month per child for full-time enrolment during regular business hours, regardless of the care type. A total of 51 prototype sites were approved in November and December 2018 and in these data are substantially subsidized by the provincial government until at least March 31, 2021. These prototype sites thus ceased to be part of CCOF funding in late 2018. They accounted for 426.8 full-time equivalent credentialed ECEs in 2019-20, affecting the data in Table 32.

Although the data only cover the early period of the ECL R&R Strategy, these trends suggest very little early effect of the ECL R&R Strategy tactics on net ECE certifications held by those *working in the sector*. Data were also received from the ECE Registry, shown in Table 33. The registry includes all people holding current ECE and ECEA certifications, not all of whom are working in child care.

Registry data suggest that new certifications have been increasing somewhat. The number of *new* ECE certifications granted increased from 5,301 in 2017-18 through to 5,582 in 2018-19 to 6,306 in 2019-20 – an increase of more than a thousand in two years – before declining slightly to 6,099 in 2020-21. These registry data suggest *active* (new plus existing valid) ECE certifications rose from 18,157 through 19,298 and 20,049 to 21,502 through the same four time periods. Given that total active certifications rose much more slowly than did total new certifications, SRDC concludes that many with certified ECEs from earlier years are not renewing. The influx of newly credentialed ECEs is offsetting these losses among those in the registry. Furthermore, the discrepancy in trends between the registry data and Table 32 may be due to a higher proportion of those with ECE credentials (and thus in the registry) not in ECL (and thus not in the CCOF provider profile data).

Table 32   **Prevalence of staff with Early Childhood Education (ECE) certification/training [data from CCOF Provider profile]**

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
No ECE	2,864	2,947	2,908	2,944	3,131	3,045	3,392	3,652	3,843
Some ECE	2,541	2,577	2,808	2,807	3,250	3,313	3,675	3,775	3,929
Basic ECE	7,792	8,140	8,329	8,483	9,309	8,733	8,357	7,184	7,552
Post-basic IT ECE	2,493	2,745	2,844	3,178	3,540	3,533	3,408	3,129	3,308
Post-basic SN ECE	1,588	1,635	1,648	1,676	1,847	1,788	1,731	1,610	1,631
Bachelors of ECE	127	153	152	210	200	177	247	708	582
Related courses	3,948	4,227	4,394	4,352	4,608	412			
Bachelor Ed	675	699	717	725	794	728			
Other University Degree[35]	2,087	2,263	2,429	2,551	3,040	2,221			
Less than ECE Certification (No, Some ECE)	**5,405**	**5,524**	**5,716**	**5,751**	**6,381**	**6,358**	**7,067**	**7,427**	**7,772**
ECE+ [Basic ECE, IT ECE, SN ECE (not Bachelors)]	**8,705**	**9,153**	**9,599**	**9,654**	**10,674**	**10,411**	**10,057**	**10,027**	**10,513**
Total staff reported	**16,215**	**14,668**	**15,279**	**15,405**	**17,024**	**16,784**	**17,124**	**17,816**	**18,430**

Source: British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Note: These figures are based on employer survey data for all staff, including administrative staff who do not work directly with children. Respondents were given the option to report more than one level of certification/training per staff member.

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[35]   In the 2018-19 Survey, entries to "Other University Degree" were affected due to the addition of other categories such as Master's degree, Bachelor of Social Sciences

Table 33   Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Certifications Fiscal Years 2014/15 to 2020/21

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
New ECE Five-Year certifications	1,422	1,361	1,462	1,767	1,707	1,677	1,599
New ECE One-Year certifications	812	678	742	738	914	956	1,103
New Special Needs or Infant/Toddler Educator certifications	808	792	752	931	1,008	1,216	1,185
New Infant/Toddler Educator certifications		459	470	606	642	768	774
New Special Needs Educator certifications		297	277	319	359	445	406
New ECE Assistant certifications	1,789	1,424	1,524	1,865	1,953	2,457	2,212
Total New Certificates Granted	**4,831**	**4,255**	**4,480**	**5,301**	**5,582**	**6,306**	**6,099**
Certifications renewed	2,168	1,862	2,452	2,912	2,807	2,988	1,862
Active Special Needs Educator certifications					3,544	3,841	4,155
Active Infant/Toddler Educator certifications					5,520	6,099	6,769
Total Active ECE+ certifications					9,064	9,940	10,924
Active ECE Assistant certifications	**6,029**	**6,163**	**6,316**	**6,765**	**7,073**	**7,920**	**9,022**
Percentage of Active certifications for ECEAs	28%	28%	27%	27%	27%	28%	30%
Total Active ECEs (Five-Year and One-Year certifications)	**15,402**	**16,085**	**16,806**	**18,157**	**19,298**	**20,049**	**21,502**
Total Active ECE and ECEA certifications	**21,431**	**22,248**	**23,122**	**24,922**	**26,371**	**27,969**	**30,524**

Source: Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Registry, Summary Report, as of 31 March 2021.

There are very few data available on those trained to become Responsible Adults. Table 34 presents data on Responsible Adult courses compiled and provided to SRDC by Child Care Resource & Referral Centres. The number of participants who completed these courses increased from 2018 to 2019 in three health authority regions and remained constant in the Vancouver Island Health authority region but dropped noticeably in the Vancouver Coastal Health authority region. In 2020, likely as a result of COVID-19, the number of participants completing a Responsible Adult course declined substantially in all regions. In 2021 the number of participants continued to decline in four health authority regions, but in the Vancouver Coastal Health authority region they increased, almost returning to the same number of participants as in 2019.

Table 34   **Participants who completed Responsible Adult courses, by Health Authority Region**

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Fraser Health Authority Region	112	151	94	63
Interior Health Authority Region	86	154	96	45
Northern Health Authority Region	68	77	62	45
Vancouver Coastal Health Authority Region	271	225	159	215
Vancouver Island Health Authority Region	39	39	19	0
TOTAL	**576**	**646**	**430**	**N/A**

Source: Child Care Resource and Referral Centres compilation.

Another indicator of the availability of certifications is the granting of exemptions by health authorities to operators to permit substitution of staff when a suitably-certified professional is not present. Such data are not published but SRDC has been seeking data through freedom of information requests and so far has results for three health authorities. SRDC's specific request (made during the summer of 2021) was for counts of the number of staff covered by staffing exemption requests from licensed child care facilities granted by the authority under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act, Section 16 and covering child care operations wholly or in part within the calendar years 2018, 2019 and 2020.[36] For each, where possible, SRDC requested a breakdown of the total by staffing levels involved in the exemption, e.g. the number of ECEs replaced by ECE Assistants; the number of ECEs replaced by a Responsible Adult, and so

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[36]   Exemption from Character and Skill requirements of the Community Care and Assisted Living Act Child Care Licensing Regulation

on. Fraser Health Authority could not provide the breakdown within a reasonable time frame and so supplied only overall exemption totals. These have been declining from 560 in 2018 to 495 in 2019 and 351 in 2020. Data from the other two authorities that have so far responded are presented in Figure 24. These authorities report increases in exemptions during the period of the ECL R&R Strategy, with the modal exemption for both in 2021 being ECEAs exempted to act as ECEs. In both authorities a small number of Responsible Adults have been exempted to occupy ECE or ECE with specialty positions.

Figure 24   Exemptions by health authority
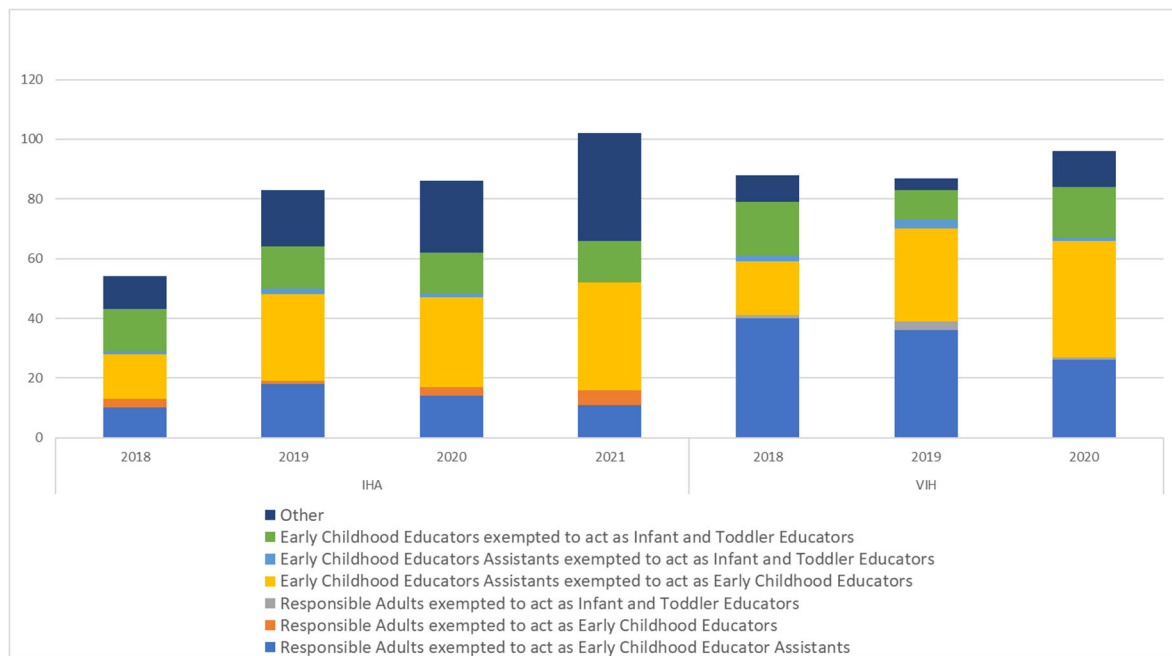
Source: SRDC freedom of information requests to BC health authorities

Note: IHA: Interior Health Authority; VIH: Vancouver Island Health.

Cross-sectional survey

Education

About 94 per cent of workforce survey respondents had completed post-secondary education, up from 87 per cent in 2019.[37] The proportion was lower among HCPs (at 79 per cent). In contrast, the highest proportions of respondents with post-secondary education were M/S and non-M/S Centre based ECL professionals (both at 95 per cent) and ECEAs/ECEs not in ECL (98 per cent). In general, education levels were slightly higher than in 2020 and 2019.

Respondents were also asked about their highest level of education completed in a program specific to child care (Figure 25). The proportion of respondents who completed a college, CEGEP, or non-university certificate or diploma in a program specific to child care was above 50 per cent) across all groups of professionals except those working in before and after school/recreational programs and non-ECE certified HCPs. ECL-related university degrees or higher were completed by about 35 per cent of those working in $10 a day sites and CCC (regardless of whether they were managers and supervisors), 21-25 per cent of those working in before and after school/recreational programs, 37 per cent of ECE-certified HCPs, and 44 per cent of ECE/As who no longer work in child care. Figure 26 reveals the changes in credentials since 2019. In general, these indicate higher levels of education, but with some increased polarization of education levels at $10 a day sites.

About 15 per cent of workforce survey respondents in 2021 reported they were currently pursuing a post-secondary education program. This was similar compared to the proportions in 2020 and 2019 (both 14 per cent). Respondents currently studying were also asked to specify the type of program they were taking. A large proportion (64 per cent, up from 61.5 per cent in 2020) were in an early childhood education program.

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[37]   Any PSE, not necessarily related to ECL.

Figure 25 **Highest level of education in a program specific to early care and learning by program/role 2021**
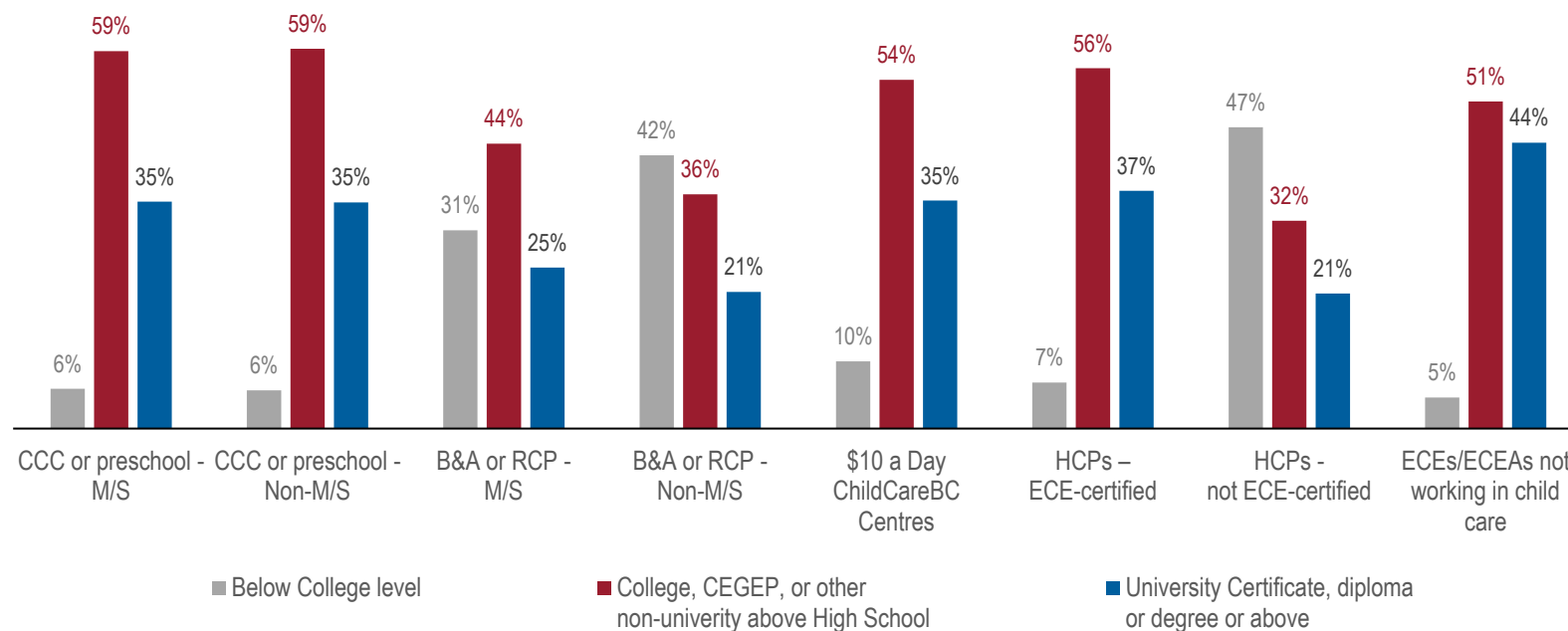
Legend:
- Below College level
- College, CEGEP, or other non-univerity above High School
- University Certificate, diploma or degree or above

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care. CCC child care centre. B&A before and after school programs. RCP recreational care programs.

Figure 26   Highest level of education in a program specific to early care and learning by program/role – change since 2019
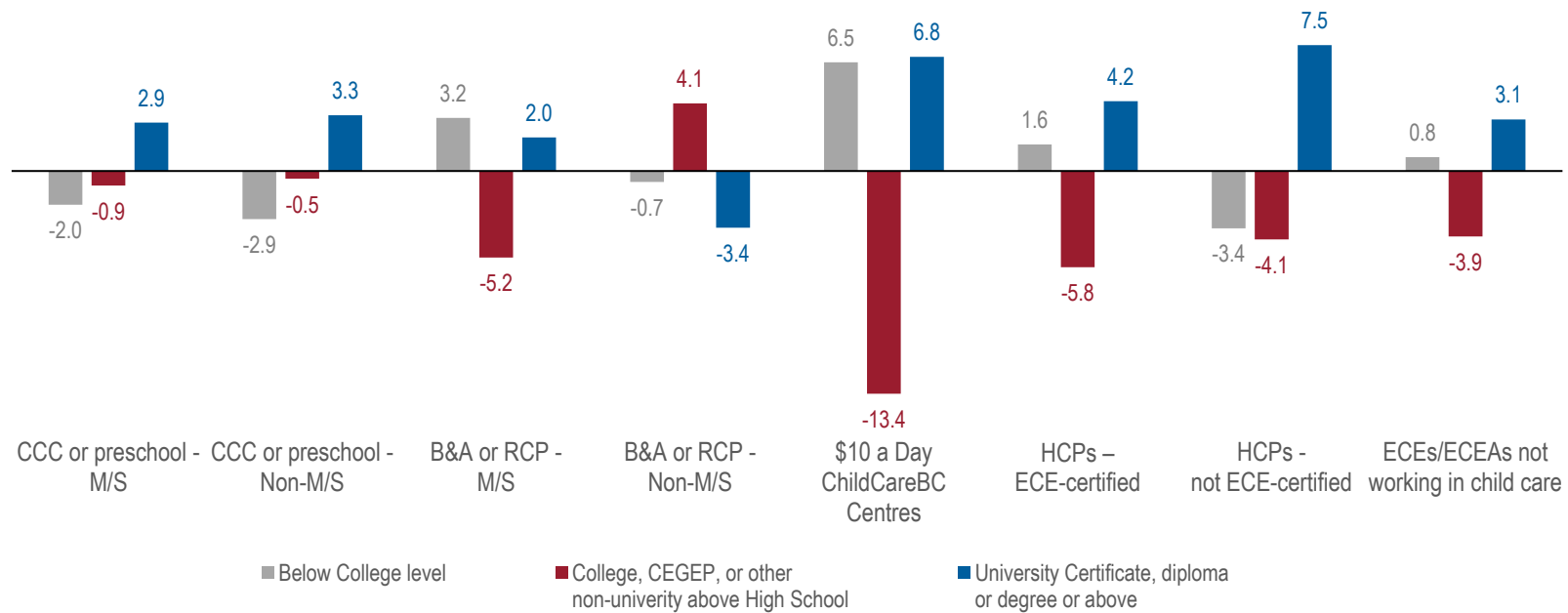
Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care. CCC child care centre. B&A before and after school programs. RCP recreational care programs.

ECL certifications

Table 35 shows the ratio of ECE-certified (ECE including specialty) to non-ECE certified (ECEA, RA and uncertified) members of each program/role group. Managers and supervisors in CCC had the highest ratio in 2021 while those working in before and after school/recreational programs had the lowest. The situation of most groups represented an improvement over 2019.

Table 35   Ratio of ECE-certified to non-ECE certified ECL professionals

	Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool		Before & after school or recreational care program		$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres	HCPs
	M/S	Not M/S	M/S	Not M/S		
2019	7 : 1	4 : 1	1 : 1	1 : 1	5 : 1	1 : 1
2020	5 : 1	3 : 1	0 : 1	0 : 1	6 : 1	1 : 1
2021	6 : 1	5 : 1	0 : 1	1 : 1	5 : 1	1 : 1

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties.

Figure 27 shows the proportion of respondents from the workforce survey with certifications or combination of certifications by Centre-based respondent group. In general, the modal category of respondents other than those working in before and after school/recreational programs was holding a ECE (5 year) certification or higher. Among those working in before and after school/recreational programs, the modal response was RA.

Not shown, over three quarters of managers and supervisors held an ECE certification or higher (79 per cent) and 42 per cent held at least one specialty certification on top of their ECE certification. Managers and supervisors included a higher proportion of respondents who had no certification (5 per cent compared to 2 per cent of non M/S professionals in centre-based ECL) and the proportion who qualified as Responsible Adults had changed little (9 per cent compared to 11 per cent in 2019).

Also not shown, ECEAs/ECEs not in ECL were more likely to have an ECE certification or higher (92 per cent up from 2019's 78 per cent) and at least one specialty certification (49 per cent). So, the respondent group with the highest level of specialty certification was the group who had

ceased working in the sector. Similar proportions in 2021 (8 per cent) as in 2019 (8 per cent) held ECEA certifications.

Figure 27 **Qualification and training by Centre-based program 2021**
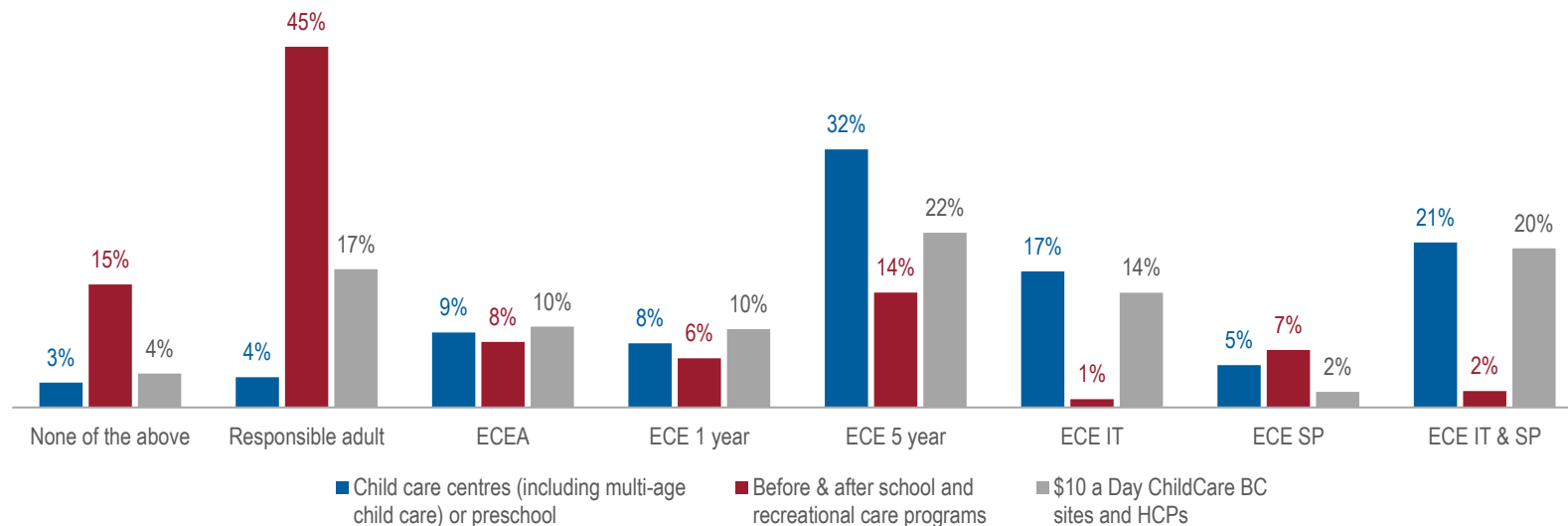
Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey

Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification).

Figure 28   **Qualification and training by Centre-based program – change in percentage points since 2019**
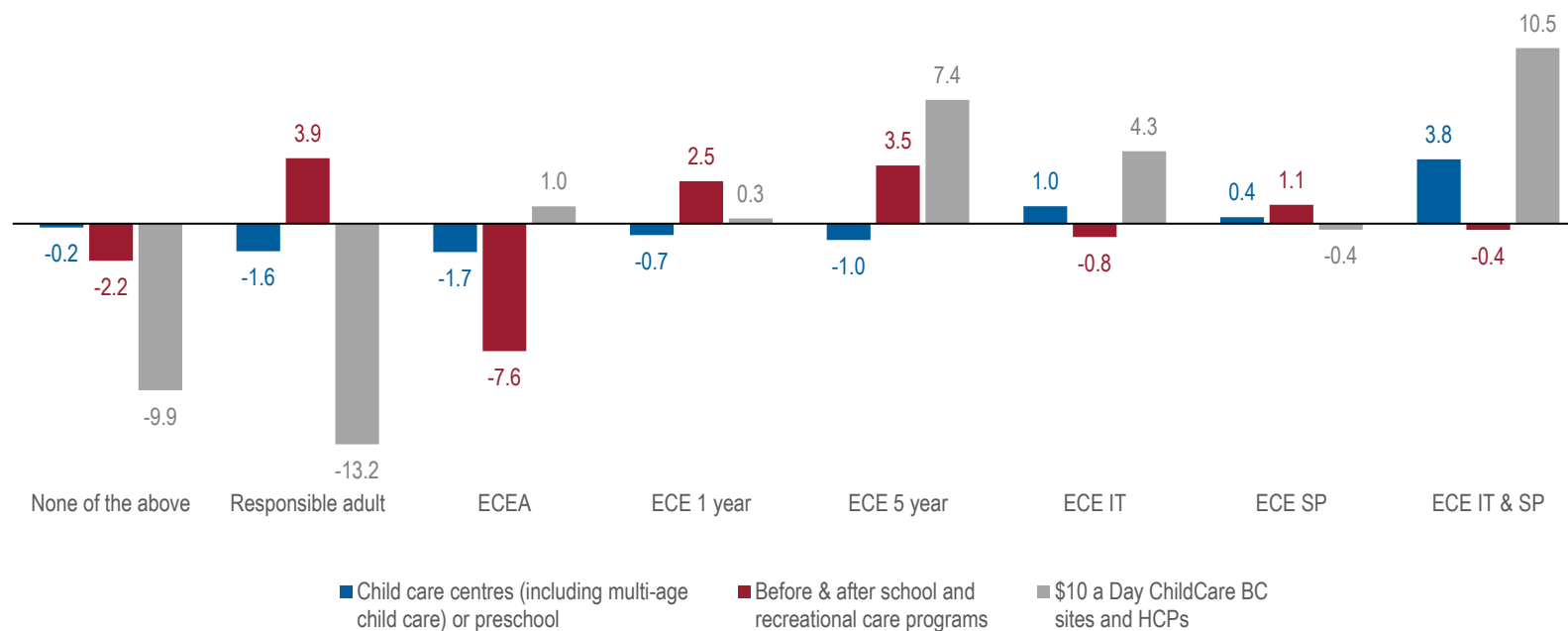
Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification).

Figure 28 plots the changes in qualifications since 2019. For the most part these are fairly small but suggest an increase in the shares with ECE certification. There is a particularly noticeable shift among those working at $10 a day sites twoards ECE certification by 2021

Respondents were asked where they completed the training requirements for their ECL qualifications. The vast majority of respondents completed their training in British Columbia (Table 36). Respondents who did not complete their training in British Columbia were likely to have completed it in Alberta or outside Canada. Even more credentials in 2021 compared to 2019 originated in BC, with a declining share from outside Canada (except ECEAs).

Table 36   Percentage of respondents by place where training was obtained for their ECL qualification 2021

	ECEA	ECE 1 year	ECE 5 year	Infant and Toddler	Special Needs
British Columbia	95.9%	91.4%	91.6%	90.1%	86.7%
(change since 2019 in percentage points +/-)	*2.53*	*0.09*	*2.12*	*0.82*	*-0.03*
Alberta	2.2%	3.9%	3.4%	3.2%	4.5%
(change since 2019 in percentage points +/-)	*-1.33*	*0.83*	*0.57*	*1.45*	*1.82*
Manitoba	0.8%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%
(change since 2019 in percentage points +/-)	*0.49*	*0*	*-0.25*	*-0.38*	*-0.15*
New Brunswick	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
(change since 2019 in percentage points +/-)	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Newfoundland and Labrador	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
(change since 2019 in percentage points +/-)	*0*	*0*	*0.02*	*0*	*0*
Northwest Territories	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
(change since 2019 in percentage points +/-)	*0*	*0*	*0.02*	*0.15*	*0.21*
Nova Scotia	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%
(change since 2019 in percentage points +/-)	*-0.26*	*0*	*-0.02*	*0.3*	*0.24*
Ontario	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
(change since 2019 in percentage points +/-)	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Prince Edward Island	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
(change since 2019 in percentage points +/-)	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Quebec	0.0%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
(change since 2019 in percentage points +/-)	*-0.26*	*0.11*	*-0.16*	*-0.38*	*-0.17*
Saskatchewan	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
(change since 2019 in percentage points +/-)	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Yukon	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
(change since 2019 in percentage points +/-)	*0*	*0*	*0.02*	*0*	*0*
Outside of Canada	0.8%	0.8%	1.0%	1.1%	1.3%
(change since 2019 in percentage points +/-)	*0.24*	*-1.18*	*-1.83*	*-2.01*	*-1.4*

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Notes: ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, Infant and Toddler (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification, Special Needs (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with a Special Needs Educator certification.

ECL qualifications by position at licensed child care centres

The employer survey collected employer level data on staff certification and qualifications for 6,347 employees working in licensed child care centres, preschools, before and after school programs, or recreational care programs (Figures 29 and 30). The results for organizations that exclusively operate programs requiring ECE certification indicate that ECL professionals are more likely to hold ECE certification or ECE with at least one of infant toddler or special needs certification than to hold ECEA or RA qualification. In organizations that operate at least one program not requiring ECE certification, RAs were more common, especially among directors, but also accounted for nearly a third of professionals not in supervisor or managerial roles.

Figure 29   Certification or training by position of ECL professionals in organizations that exclusively operate programs requiring ECE certification, 2021

Source: 2021 SRDC employer survey. Includes employers who exclusively operate one or more of the following programs: group care under 3, group care 2.5yrs – school age, preschool, or multi-age programs.

Note: Professional refers to "a person who has primary responsibility for a group of children. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE." Supervisor refers to "a person who has responsibility for a group of children and supervises child care workers [professionals]. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE." Manager refers to "a person with management duties (which can include hiring, payroll, performance reviews, compliance with licensing requirements, etc.). This person has administrative duties and may have child care duties." A director refers to "a person who has management or administrative duties only."

Figure 30   Certification or training by position of ECL professionals in organizations that operate at least one program not requiring ECE certification, 2021

Source: 2021 SRDC employer survey. Includes employers who operate one or more of the following programs: group care school age, occasional care, or recreational care (2021).

Note: Professional refers to "a person who has primary responsibility for a group of children. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE." Supervisor refers to "a person who has responsibility for a group of children and supervises child care workers [professionals]. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE." Manager refers to "a person with management duties (which can include hiring, payroll, performance reviews, compliance with licensing requirements, etc.). This person has administrative duties and may have child care duties." A director refers to "a person who has management or administrative duties only."

Figure 31 shows the percentage point change in ECL qualifications by position from 2019 to 2021 for organizations that exclusively operate programs requiring ECE certification. The trend again is towards more with ECE certificates by 2021.The proportion of supervisors with Responsible Adult as their highest ECL-related qualification decreased by 11 percentage points since 2019. The change in proportion of managers, directors and other professionals whose highest qualification was Responsible Adult was negligible, and there was little change across all positions for those with ECEA certification. The proportions of ECL professionals, directors and supervisors with Basic ECE certifications increased slightly compared to 2019, while this proportion decreased for managers. The proportion holding an ECE plus a specialty certificate (either Infant Toddler or Special Needs or both) increased for supervisors by six percentage points and for managers and directors by four percentage points, yet decreased slightly for other professionals.

In organizations that operate at least one program not requiring ECE certification, Figure 32 yields a more complex pattern. By 2021, supervisors are more likely to hold ECEs in these centres, but there is a net reduction in directors and managers holding ECEs.

Figure 31 **Change in certification or training by position of professionals in organizations that exclusively operate programs requiring ECE certification since 2019, in percentage points**

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC employer surveys. Includes employers who exclusively operate one or more of the following programs: group care under 3, group care 2.5yrs – school age, preschool, or multi-age programs.

Note: Professional refers to "a person who has primary responsibility for a group of children. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE." Supervisor refers to "a person who has responsibility for a group of children and supervises child care workers [professionals]. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE." Manager refers to "a person with management duties (which can include hiring, payroll, performance reviews, compliance with licensing requirements, etc.). This person has administrative duties and may have child care duties." A director refers to "a person who has management or administrative duties only."

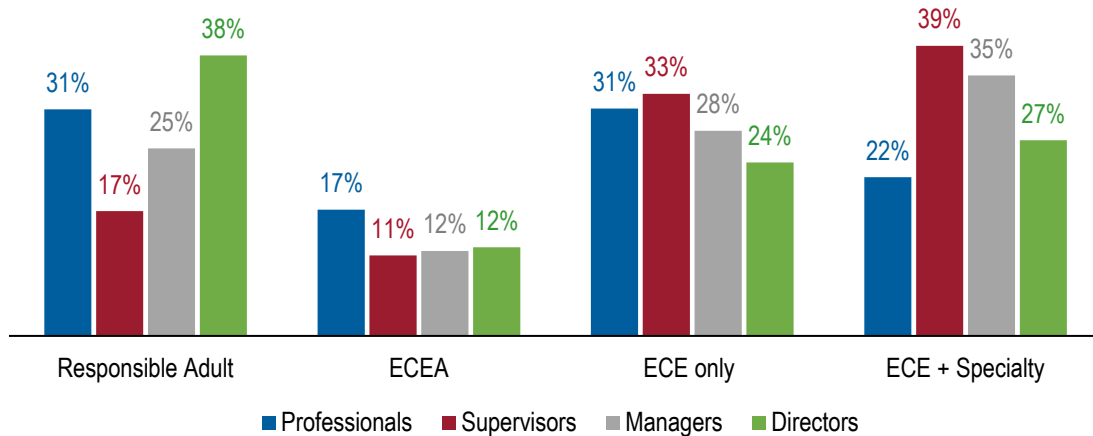**Figure 32** **Change in certification or training by position of professionals in organizations that operate at least one program not requiring ECE certification since 2019, in percentage points**

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC employer surveys. Includes employers who operate one or more of the following programs: group care school age, occasional care, or recreational care (2021).

Note: Professional refers to "a person who has primary responsibility for a group of children. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE." Supervisor refers to "a person who has responsibility for a group of children and supervises child care workers [professionals]. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE." Manager refers to "a person with management duties (which can include hiring, payroll, performance reviews, compliance with licensing requirements, etc.). This person has administrative duties and may have child care duties." A director refers to "a person who has management or administrative duties only."

ECE certification by health authority

The share of professionals in licensed child care centres, preschools, before and after school programs, or recreational care programs with ECE certifications differed across health authority regions (Figure 33). Similar to 2019, employers in VCH and FHA regions reported the highest proportions of professionals certified as an ECE (70 per cent and 69 per cent, respectively). Employers in VCH region reported the highest proportion of employees with an ECE and specialty certificate (Infant Toddler or Special Needs) relative to other regions (34 per cent), while FHA reported the highest proportion with a Basic ECE certificate (42 per cent). In contrast, employers in VIH region reported only 50 per cent of their employees had an ECE certificate, representing the lowest proportion of staff with both Basic ECE and ECE specialty certificates (28 and 22 per cent, respectively).

Figure 33   Certification of professionals in licensed child care centres, preschools before and after school programs, or recreational care programs by health authority, 2019 to 2021

■ ECE only   ■ ECE + specialty

		ECE only	ECE + specialty
FHA	2021	42%	27%
	2020	40%	23%
	2019	40%	29%
IHA	2021	33%	28%
	2020	30%	20%
	2019	32%	35%
NHA	2021	33%	23%
	2020	22%	13%
	2019	28%	29%
VCH	2021	37%	34%
	2020	35%	31%
	2019	30%	40%
VIH	2021	28%	22%
	2020	27%	26%
	2019	30%	29%
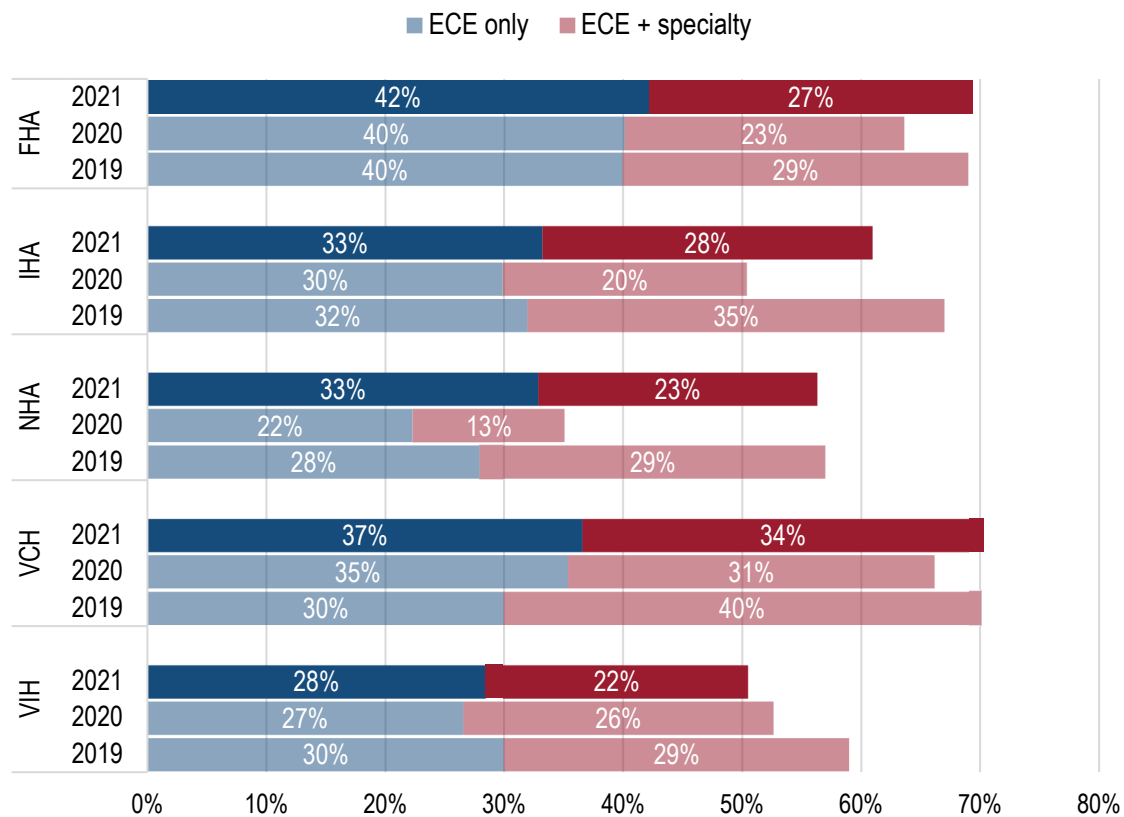
Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC employer surveys [FHA: Fraser Health Authority; IHA: Interior Health Authority; NHA: Northern Health Authority; VCH: Vancouver Coastal Health; VIH: Vancouver Island Health].

These differences across health authority regions are also evident when looking at credentials of supervisors, managers, and directors (Figure 34). In general, most senior staff across all health authorities have ECE credentials, with the highest proportion being in supervisors and the lowest in directors. Northern Health Authority had the highest proportion of supervisors and directors ECE-certified (88 and 68 per cent, respectively). Interior Health Authority had the highest proportion of managers ECE-certified (85 per cent), but the lowest proportion of directors ECE-certified at 54 per cent.

Figure 34   **Proportion of senior staff in licensed child care centres, preschools or before and after school programs with ECE certification by health authority 2021**

Source: 2021 SRDC employer survey.
Note: FHA: Fraser Health Authority; IHA: Interior Health Authority; NHA: Northern Health Authority; VCH: Vancouver Coastal Health; VIH: Vancouver Island Health. Supervisor refers to "a person who has responsibility for a group of children and supervises child care workers [professionals]. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE." Manager refers to "a person with management duties (which can include hiring, payroll, performance reviews, compliance with licensing requirements, etc.). This person has administrative duties and may have child care duties." A director refers to "a person who has management or administrative duties only."

Compared to 2019, the proportion of supervisors who were ECE-certified increased in all health authority regions, although the extent of change varied across regions, as can be seen in Figure 35. In contrast, the proportion of ECE-certified managers decreased in Fraser Health Authority and Vancouver Coastal Health; the drop was greatest in VCH (-10 percentage points). Only NHA and VCH showed an increase in proportion of directors who had completed their ECE certification.[38]

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[38]   Note that small sample sizes may exaggerate differences from year to year, which may account for some differences in the Northern Health Authority.

Figure 35   Change in proportion of senior staff in licensed child care centres, preschools or before and after school programs with ECE certification by health authority (employer survey) since 2019

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC employer surveys.

Note: FHA: Fraser Health Authority; IHA: Interior Health Authority; NHA: Northern Health Authority; VCH: Vancouver Coastal Health; VIH: Vancouver Island Health. Supervisor refers to "a person who has responsibility for a group of children and supervises child care workers [professionals]. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE." Manager refers to "a person with management duties (which can include hiring, payroll, performance reviews, compliance with licensing requirements, etc.). This person has administrative duties and may have child care duties." A director refers to "a person who has management or administrative duties only."

Administrative data

Newly available linked data make it possible to construct the education and labour market pathways people follow into and out of postsecondary ECE programs in BC. This analysis starts with SRDC's application to use restricted access Statistics Canada's Education and Labour Market Longitudinal Platform (ELMLP) administrative data that links annual information from B.C. K-12 student data with enrollment data from post-secondary education (PSE) institutions and with CRA income tax return records. The first step of the analysis was possible in early 2022: to identify the annual cohorts of B.C. students enrolling in PSE programs that aligned with becoming early childhood educators. Next, SRDC used the platform to link these students' postsecondary records with their (typically earlier) B.C. K-12 information (if any) and (typically later) income tax returns. Due to time lags in the compilation of the ELMLP, the final year of

data available for this analysis was 2018. Each year, an additional year of analysis will be possible, so the effects of the ECL R&R Strategy, introduced in 2018, will potentially be revealed in later explorations of these data.

The data, once linked longitudinally, include information on:

- the personal characteristics of students from their records in the B.C. K-12 school system including school characteristics, and any special instruction received;

- PSE program, institution, and field of study; and

- demographic, employment and income information.

The dataset also includes Grades 4 and 7 Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) scores for literacy, numeracy, and writing. In addition, Census data is matched at the neighbourhood level with students' postal code to provide a number of the socio-economic characteristics of their neighbourhood at time of study.

The sample used in this first analysis captures all PSE students in B.C. who were enrolled in programs categorized in fields of study related to earning a credential in early childhood education. It focuses on those first enrolled in an ECE program in a PSE institution between 2013 and 2018.

The programs identified as related to earning an ECE credential and career were the ones categorized with the following codes in Statistics Canada's Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP):

- 13.1015: "Education/Teaching of Individuals in Early Childhood Special Education Programs";

- 13.1207: "Montessori teacher education";

- 13.1208: "Waldorf/Steiner teacher education";

- 13.1209: "Kindergarten/preschool education and teaching";

- 13.1210: "Early Childhood Education and Teaching";

- 19.0706: "Child development";

- 19.0708: "Child Care and Support Services Management"; and

- 19.0709: "Child care".

For simplicity in this section only, we will refer to the above as "ECE programs". The full analysis – including income information - has to be vetted before it is released by Statistics Canada analysts to ensure no personally-identifying information is unintentionally released. This process is still underway, but an early tabulation of the characteristics of the cohorts of students entering ECE programs is still informative, and indicates how useful ELMLP data may become later as 2019, 2020 and even (possibly) 2021 data become available to the evaluation.

The first number to note in Tables 37, 38 and 39 is the number of students in the cohort entering the programs. This number fluctuates across the tables by data source and by outcomes due to missing data, so refer to it for caution on the interpretation of results. Table 38 shows the actual number enrolling in the ECE programs: around 1500 in each year, without much fluctuation. As the ECL R&R Strategy tactic to increase the number of seats takes effect in 2019 and later years, we expect that number to increase. Given that Tables 37 through 39 are all based on this cohort of 1500 or so, it becomes clear that in Table 37 using data from BC K-12 school records we only capture data from half to two thirds of the ECE program entrants, with more for recent than earlier entrants. Table 37 includes data covering up to 800+ students for the last three years of program entry examined. While SRDC extracted other data, there are few trends of note prior to the introduction of the ECL R&R Strategy so these are not included in Table 37. Students tended to live in urban areas: only one in five lived in a rural postal code. Eight per cent or fewer went to an independent school as part of their K-12 education.

These caveats noted, Table 37 suggests that a relatively high share of students coming into ECE programs from the BC K-12 system (with potentially some years' break in between, for simplicity not shown) who identify as Indigenous ("Aboriginal" in the terminology of the dataset). This proportion reaches 22 per cent by 2018. Not shown, the proportion of these BC K-12 cohorts residing on a First Nation reserve was between 4 and 10 per cent (9.1 per cent in 2021). Steadily a quarter of entrants to the programs from BC K-12 were at one point in their education history enrolled in a program for students considered English language learners ("ESL") and about one in six had some form of individualized education plan for special educational needs ("SEN"). Data from the Foundational Skills Assessments are problematic, due to these tests only being taken by a subset of students who eventually enrolled in an ECE program, but suggest ECE programs draw from students who score lower than the typical cross section of BC students taking these assessments as part of the same cohort of B.C. students, in Grades 4 or 7.

Table 38 provides more information on the programs included. Two-thirds to three-quarters were certificate/diploma programs, while most of the rest were Bachelors. With time, a declining share were at community colleges (from 69 per cent in 2013 to 58 per cent in 2018) and correspondingly more were at universities. As might be expected, most entrants were women. Most interestingly, the age distribution of entrants is becoming steadily younger, although even by 2018, more than half (58 per cent) were 25 years or older (down from 67 per cent in 2013). The share who are international students increases from 3 per cent in 2013 to 15 per cent by

2018 and the proportion *reported in these data* as graduating is low every year at three in ten, up to the 2016 cohort of entrants. Likely the 2017 and 2018 proportions are artificially low as they miss out on data for the most recent cohort members who might still have been finalizing the requirements of their programs in 2019, while those credits would not be captured in data whose collection window cuts off in 2018. More significantly, certificates are issued for those who have completed recognized ECE programs by the ECE registry upon application to the registry, thus Statistics Canada records will not record those certifications. Records of graduation in these data are therefore likely to underestimate considerably the percentage of entrants completing their programs.

Table 39 draws on some of the available data from tax records. Unlike education records, tax records are available for most years of the lives of adults in Canada, unless they do not file taxes. This makes them a valuable data source for learning about labour market experiences before and after a particular education experience. While the long-term aim is to report on where those who enrolled in ECE programs end up in the years that follow, it is too early to do so in this analysis that only reaches the first year of the ECL R&R Strategy. Also, tax records are limited in what they capture: only information from tax returns. Illustrative of the analysis possible, however, Table 39 includes some of the key data SRDC plans to consider in later reports. First is current (2018) marital and family status. For most this is post-study but notably a third of the 2018 cohort were in a married or common-law relationship and more than six in ten had children, suggesting those who enter ECE programs are quite likely to have established families. Also, around one in four to one in five are classified in Statistics Canada's low income category. While information on employment is limited, it is possible to categorize employers by broad category of industry. Notably then, two fifths of entrants for whom there is data in tax returns on industry were working in social services *in the year before* enrolling in the program and a fifth were working in education. This is evidence that ECE postsecondary programs attract people already holding recent labour market experience in related fields.

Table 37   Characteristics from school records by ECE program entry cohort, 2013 - 2018

ECE program entry cohort		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
BC K-12 characteristics							
Ever Aboriginal	Yes (%)	22.1	15.1	13	16.5	14.9	21.8
	Sample size	680	730	700	790	740	780
Ever French Immersion	Yes (%)	7.8	8.5	7.7	8.0	8.5	9.3
	Sample size	770	820	780	880	820	860
Ever ESL	Yes (%)	26	26.8	21.8	25	26.8	27.9
	Sample size	770	820	780	880	820	860
Ever SEN	Yes (%)	15.6	17.1	15.4	14.8	17.1	17.4
	Sample size	770	820	780	880	820	860
Grade 4 numeracy	Lowest quartile (%)	37.5	36.6	36.6	38.8	37.3	37.7
	2nd quartile (%)	28	26.8	29.3	24.5	25.5	26.4
	3rd quartile (%)	19	20	20	18	20	19
	Highest quartile (%)	9.4	9.8	7.3	8.2	7.8	5.7
	No attempt (%)	9.4	7.3	9.8	10	9.8	11
	Sample size	320	410	410	490	510	530
Grade 7 numeracy	Lowest quartile (%)	37.5	36.2	34.5	35.9	34.4	36.9
	2nd quartile (%)	27.1	27.6	27.3	28.1	26.2	27.7
	3rd quartile (%)	19	19.0	20.0	18.8	18.0	14
	Highest quartile (%)	8.3	10	11	7.8	9.8	9.2
	No attempt (%)	8.3	6.9	7.3	11	13	14
	Sample size	480	580	550	640	610	650

ECE program entry cohort		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
BC K-12 characteristics							
Grade 4 reading	Lowest quartile (%)	**34.4**	**34.1**	**29.3**	**28.6**	**31.4**	**32.1**
	2nd quartile (%)	**25**	**26.8**	**29.3**	**30.6**	**29.4**	**28.3**
	3rd quartile (%)	**19**	**20**	**20**	**20.4**	**20**	**19**
	Highest quartile (%)	**13**	**12**	**15**	**10**	**12**	**9.4**
	No attempt (%)	**9.4**	**9.8**	**9.8**	**10**	**9.8**	**11**
	Sample size	320	410	410	490	510	530
Grade 7 reading	Lowest quartile (%)	**37.5**	**32.8**	**29.1**	**31.3**	**31.1**	**32.3**
	2nd quartile (%)	**22.9**	**25.9**	**29.1**	**26.6**	**24.6**	**26.2**
	3rd quartile (%)	**19**	**20.7**	**20.0**	**18.8**	**19.7**	**18.5**
	Highest quartile (%)	**13**	**14**	**15**	**13**	**13**	**12**
	No attempt (%)	**8.3**	**6.9**	**7.3**	**11**	**13**	**12**
	Sample size	480	580	550	640	610	650

Source: Education and Labour Market Longitudinal Platform

Table 38   Characteristics from postsecondary records by ECE program entry cohort, 2013 - 2018

ECE program entry cohort		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
PSE program characteristics							
Type of program	Not PSE	2.7	3.4	2.8	2.5	2.2	4.0
	Bachelors	10.0	13.6	16.9	16.6	19.6	20.8
	Certificate/Diploma	76.00	74.15	73.24	78.34	68.8	67.1
	Other	8.00	6.1	3.5	2.5	6.5	6.71
	Post-graduate	3.3	2.7	3.5	1.3	2.2	1.3
	Sample size	1500	1470	1420	1570	1380	1490
ECE program institution	College	68.67	64.6	60.6	64.97	56.5	57.7
	University	31.3	35.4	39.4	35.0	43.5	42.3
	Sample size	1500	1470	1420	1570	1380	1490
Sex	Male (%)	3.3	2.0	3.5	2.5	2.9	3.4
	Female (%)	96.67	97.96	96.48	98.09	97.10	97.30
	Sample size	1500	1470	1420	1570	1380	1480
Age group	15 to 19 years	8.67	9.52	8.45	8.28	8.70	9.40
	20 to 24 years	24.0	28.6	31.0	29.3	34.1	32.2
	25 to 29 years	18.7	19.0	19.0	21.7	20.3	20.8
	30 to 34 years	14.7	12.9	12.7	14.0	10.9	12.1
	35 to 39 years	10.7	8.16	9.86	9.55	9.42	9.40
	40 years or over	23.3	21.1	19.0	17.8	16.7	16.1
	Sample size	1500	1470	1420	1570	1380	1490
Immigration status	Canadian citizen	88.00	89.12	83.10	80.89	76.81	76.35
	Permanent resident	8.00	5.4	7.75	8.28	9.42	9.46
	International student	3.3	5.4	9.15	10.8	13.8	14.9
	Sample size	1500	1470	1420	1570	1380	1480

ECE program entry cohort		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
PSE program characteristics							
Graduated from the ECE program?	**Yes (%)**	**28.0**	**31.3**	**26.8**	**29.9**	**23.9**	**11.4**
	Sample size	1500	1470	1420	1570	1380	1490

Source: Education and Labour Market Longitudinal Platform

Table 39   Characteristics from tax records by ECE program entry cohort, 2013 - 2018

ECE program entry cohort		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
From tax records (most recent unless otherwise stated)							
Married or in common-law relationship	Yes (%)	**40.6**	**36.6**	**36.6**	**37.8**	**34.7**	**33.6**
	Sample size	1380	1340	1310	1430	1240	1340
Low income status	Yes (%)	**24.6**	**18.7**	**19.8**	**21.7**	**18.5**	**23.1**
	Sample size	1380	1340	1310	1430	1240	1340
Has child(ren)	Yes (%)	**65.2**	**63.4**	**61.1**	**62.2**	**60.5**	**61.2**
	Sample size	1380	1340	1310	1430	1240	1340
In social services industry in the year before ECE prog enrollment	Yes (%)	**39.7**	**42.7**	**42.1**	**43.8**	**45.0**	**43.4**
	Sample size	1160	1170	1140	1210	1090	1130
In educational services industry in the year before ECE prog enrollment	Yes (%)	**19.8**	**19.7**	**18.4**	**16.5**	**16.5**	**17.7**
	Sample size	1160	1170	1140	1210	1090	1130
Non BC resident	Yes (%)	**5.8**	**6.0**	**6.9**	**6.3**	**4.8**	**3.7**
		1380	1340	1310	1430	1240	1340

Source: Education and Labour Market Longitudinal Platform

Staffing needs

Another dimension of staffing needs in workplaces was assessed through a set of questions asked in both the workforce and employer surveys. These tried to connect the match of staff skills, attributes and experience to the children served. Respondents to the workforce survey who worked directly with children were asked whether any children they worked with fell into one or more categories meant to capture children's needs and experiences (Table 40). The categories included were: identified special needs; neither English nor French spoken at home; new immigrants or refugees; and Indigenous children. Employers were asked a similar question about whether any child attending their programs fell into these categories (Tables 41 and 42).

Table 40   Proportion of workforce survey respondents reporting different children's backgrounds and needs 2021

	Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool	Before & after school and recreational care programs	$10 a Day ChildCareBC sites
Identified special needs	58%	65%	58%
Neither English nor French spoken at home	39%	18%	29%
New immigrants or refugees	30%	14%	23%
Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit) children	35%	38%	46%
None of the above	15%	11%	18%
I don't know	5%	14%	4%

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Note: Proportion includes individuals who reported working with at least one child who falls in each category.

Most respondents in the workforce (85 per cent at CCC; 89 per cent at before and after school/recreational programs and 82 per cent at $10 a day sites) and employers survey (87 per cent) reported that they have children attending their programs that fell into at least one of these categories. Compared to 2019, the results revealed an increase in proportion of employers with programs all requiring ECE who serve children that have identified special needs (a 12-percentage point increase) and children who have neither English nor French spoken at home (5 percentage point increase). Employers tended to report more children with these needs and

experiences than individual members of the workforce. This may be because they were reporting across entire organizations and not just the centres they worked within.

Table 41   Proportion of centre-based ECL with all programs requiring ECE reporting children's backgrounds and needs 2019 – 2021

	2019	2020	2021
Identified special needs	50%	57%	62%
Neither English nor French spoken at home	39%	43%	44%
New immigrants or refugees	33%	31%	36%
Indigenous, First Nations, Métis, or Inuit children	33%	33%	37%
None of the above	25%	20%	15%

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC employer surveys. Includes employers who exclusively operate one or more of the following programs: group care under 3, group care 2.5yrs – school age, preschool, or multi-age programs.
Note: Proportion includes employers who reported having at least one child in their program who falls in each category.

Table 42   Proportion of centre-based ECL with some or all programs not requiring ECE reporting children's backgrounds and needs 2019 – 2021

	2019	2020	2021
Identified special needs	76%	76%	77%
Neither English nor French spoken at home	44%	46%	39%
New immigrants or refugees	43%	39%	38%
Indigenous, First Nations, Métis, or Inuit children	54%	52%	43%
None of the above	8%	9%	9%

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC employer surveys. Includes employers who operate one or more of the following programs: group care school age, occasional care, or recreational care (2021).
Note: Proportion includes employers who reported having at least one child in their program who falls in each category.

Similar to the 2019 findings, employers who reported having children with identified special needs attending their program were significantly more likely also to report having staff with Special Needs certification (60 per cent compared to 36 per cent of employers reporting not serving children with identified special needs). However, out of the 459 employers who served children with special needs, 185 (40 per cent) did not have staff in any position with a Special Needs certification, which represents a 6 percentage-point decrease from 2020 but no change since 2019.

Employers reporting Indigenous children in their programs were asked whether the children identified as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. Nearly three quarters of employers with Indigenous children in their programs reported serving First Nations children, while one third reported Métis children in their programs. Only 2 per cent reported having Inuit children, and 21 per cent reported that they weren't sure.

Employers who exclusively operate programs requiring ECE were also asked about the languages other than English that children attending their centres spoke at home and the languages spoken by staff who worked with children (Table 43). In the 2021 sample, the most common language other than English spoken at home by at least one child was Mandarin at 40 per cent. Additionally, Cantonese, French, Spanish, and Punjabi were spoken by at least one child in nearly a third of all child care workplaces surveyed.

These employers also reported on staff ability to speak languages relative to children's languages at the organization level. In 2021, 42 per cent of organizations had at least one staff who spoke these non-English languages of children attending their programs. In general, there was a slight increase from 2019 to 2021 in the proportion of organizations with staff able to speak the most common languages children reportedly spoke at home.

Employers who operate at least one program that does not require ECE (Table 44) had very similar experiences. The most common language other than English spoken at home by at least one child was Mandarin at 42 per cent. Additionally, Cantonese, French, Spanish, and Punjabi were spoken by at least one child in a third of all child care workplaces surveyed, and Farsi in a quarter. In 2021, 32 per cent of these organizations had at least one staff who spoke the most common non-English languages of children attending their programs. In general, there was little change (other than a decline for Spanish) from 2019 to 2021 in the proportion of organizations with staff able to speak the most common languages children reportedly spoke at home.

Table 43 **Percentage of organizations that exclusively operate programs requiring ECE by children's languages spoken at home and staff language skills, other than English, 2019 to 2021**

Language	Children's languages spoken at home (other than English)			Staff's ability to speak the language of the children in centres where children speak language at home		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Mandarin	32%	44%	**40%**	57%	57%	**58%**
Cantonese	31%	35%	**33%**	50%	46%	**53%**
French	35%	31%	**29%**	47%	46%	**47%**
Spanish	25%	29%	**29%**	35%	30%	**44%**
Punjabi	23%	26%	**29%**	30%	26%	**45%**
Farsi	17%	19%	**17%**	42%	29%	**42%**
An Indigenous language*	10%	12%	**7%**	--	--	--
Korean	3%	8%	**7%**	53%	33%	**34%**
Russian	15%	6%	**5%**	Small sample sizes (s.s.s.)		
Japanese	21%	3%	**5%**	24%	S.S.S.	**35%**

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC employer surveys. Includes employers who exclusively operate one or more of the following programs: group care under 3, group care 2.5yrs – school age, preschool, or multi-age programs.

*Note: The proportion of centres with staff who speak the same Indigenous language as children could not be assessed in 2019 and 2020. This information was collected in 2021 but no single Indigenous language reached the threshold for reporting (5%) and so the data was suppressed. The numbers in the three left columns represent the proportion of centres with at least one child who speaks *any* Indigenous language.

Table 44   Percentage of organizations that operate at least one program that does not require ECE by children's languages spoken at home and staff language skills, other than English, 2019 to 2021

Language	Children's languages spoken at home (other than English)			Staff's ability to speak the language of the children in centres where children speak language at home		
	2019	2020	**2021**	2019	2020	**2021**
Mandarin	45%	40%	**42%**	41%	44%	**45%**
Cantonese	40%	34%	**31%**	40%	47%	**41%**
French	51%	37%	**34%**	62%	50%	**60%**
Spanish	35%	40%	**36%**	55%	45%	**44%**
Punjabi	32%	37%	**34%**	44%	45%	**48%**
Farsi	23%	24%	**26%**	51%	53%	**50%**
An Indigenous language*	22%	15%	**6%**	--	--	--
Korean	2%	6%	**8%**	20%	s.s.s.	**32%**
Russian	26%	4%	**4%**	Small sample sizes (s.s.s.)		
Japanese	33%	4%	**4%**	26%	s.s.s.	**45%**

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC employer surveys. Includes employers who operate one or more of the following programs: group care school age, occasional care, or recreational care (2021).

*Note: The proportion of centres with staff who speak the same Indigenous language as children could not be assessed in 2019 and 2020. This information was collected in 2021 but no single Indigenous language reached the threshold for reporting (5%) and so the data was suppressed. The numbers in the three left columns represent the proportion of centres with at least one child who speaks *any* Indigenous language.

Staff shortages

Several questions in the employer survey asked respondents to identify staff shortages experienced in the 12 months preceding the survey. Forty per cent of employers reported they were unable to fill at least one vacant position in their centres, which is 3 percentage points lower than 2019. Employers indicated they were unable to fill 1.8 positions on average, with a range of 1 to 30. Due to staff shortages, 45 per cent of employers reported that they had to fill vacant positions with an individual with lower qualifications that they wanted, representing a total of 315 positions at the organizations surveyed.

Twenty-seven per cent of employers reported that they had to refuse children due to not having staff with the right qualifications to accommodate the children's needs. Similar to last year's finding, the top qualifications missing were ECE certification (64 per cent), Infant and Toddler Certificate (42 per cent), and Special Needs Certificate (39 per cent). Other reasons cited by employers as reasons to refuse a child registration include staff not able to speak a specific language, lack of experience working with Indigenous cultures, children requiring one-on-one support, and a general lack of qualified staff.

Administrative data

Job postings

There is scant administrative data on ECL provider recruitment efforts, and virtually none on their success in hiring. However, as a proxy for labour demand, it is possible to obtain some reasonably reliable estimates of online job postings. SRDC is using data from the same source as Canada's Labour Market Information Council to gauge trends in online job postings in ECL occupations in B.C.[39] As explained in the methodology implementation section, these data are compiled by an independent vendor called Vicinity Jobs. SRDC receives data from Vicinity Jobs on job postings by quarter for the two main National Occupation Classification categories for those working in ECL:

- **Early Childhood Educator or Assistant** (National Occupational Classification 4214). This includes most people working in child care centres and agencies, including those working as ECEs and ECEAs but also as Responsible Adults, who may not hold a post-secondary credential. It includes those who plan, organize, and implement programs for children between the ages of infancy and 12 years. They are employed in – using Statistics Canada's terminology – child care centres, daycare centres, kindergartens, agencies for exceptional children and other settings where early childhood education services are provided. Supervisors of early childhood educators and early childhood educator assistants are included in this unit group.

- **Home child care providers** (National Occupational Classification 4411). This group is defined as caring for the well-being and physical and social development of children. They assist parents with child care and may assist with household duties on an ongoing or short-term basis. They provide care primarily in their own homes or in the children's

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[39] The Labour Market Information Council is a federally funded agency with the mandate to improve the timeliness, reliability and accessibility of labour market information to facilitate decision-making by employers, workers, job seekers, academics, policy makers, educators, career practitioners, students, parents and under-represented populations.

homes, where they may also reside. They are employed by private households and child care agencies, or they may be self-employed. Examples include: babysitter; child care provider (private home), live-in caregiver, nanny and parent's helper.

These data are useful for examining trends in demand for different members of the ECL workforce but do not precisely represent job vacancies. Whereas job vacancies refer to the number of available job openings that an employer wants to fill, employers may seek to fill multiple vacancies via a single job posting. Also, not all vacancies are posted online.

The patterns of Early Childhood Educator or Assistant postings in Figure 36 suggest a fairly steady increase in postings over the period in most regions of the province from the beginning of 2018 to the final quarter of 2021. Vancouver Island Health Authority and Northern Health Authority regions saw some variation across this period, but little change between the first and final numbers. The data also indicate a spike in postings for the Fraser region in the first three quarters of 2019. It is tempting to think the introduction of the ECL R&R Strategy tactics may have stimulated more postings for ECEs in 2019. Explanations could include increased demand for qualified educators due to government support in the form of start up grants for new spaces. But data in Figure 37 on home child care providers suggest the spike in Fraser region was not isolated to positions that might have been eligible to benefit from ECL R&R Strategy tactics. Fraser Health Authority, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, and Interior Health Authority regions all experienced a noticeable increase in the number of ECE and ECEA postings in each quarter of 2021.

Figure 37 indicates that online postings for home child care providers run at two to three times the rate of the ECE and ECEA postings in Figure 36. This is perhaps not surprising since the category would capture postings for care to be provided in the child's own home such as from nannies and even babysitters where there can be very high turnover. While there has been little overall increase in such home child care provider postings over the period, there was a major spike in demand in the first half of 2019 and a notable increase in the final quarter of 2021 in both Fraser Health region and, to a lesser degree, in Vancouver Coastal Health region.

Figure 36   **Job postings for Early Childhood Educators and Assistants in B.C. Health Authority Regions**
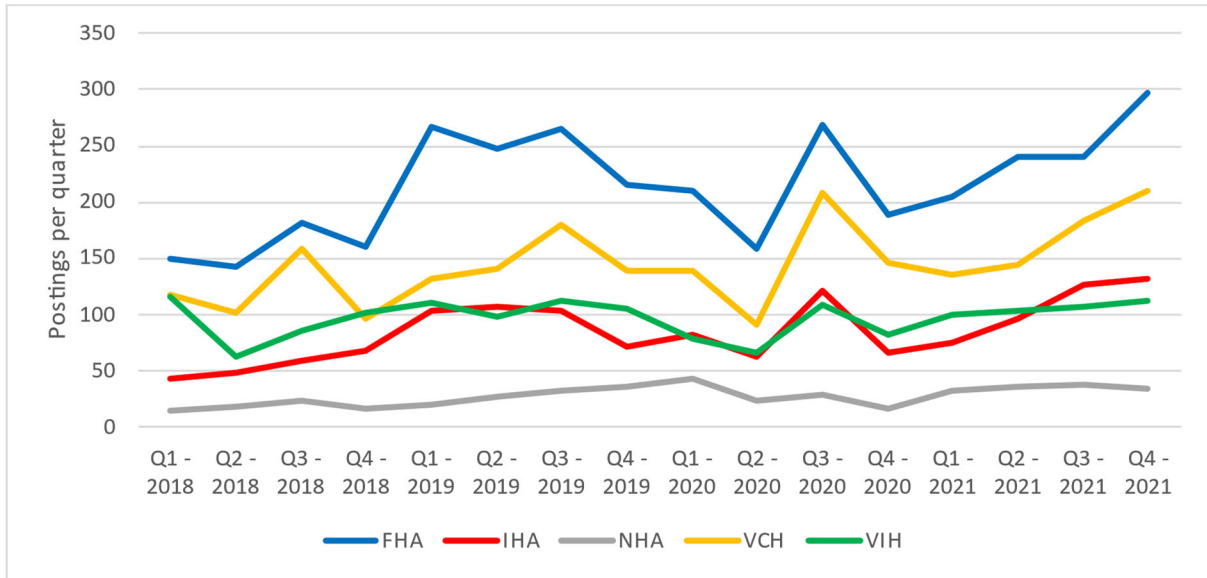
Source: Vicinity Jobs.

Note: FHA: Fraser Health Authority region; IHA: Interior Health Authority region; NHA: Northern Health Authority region; VCH: Vancouver Coastal Health Authority region; VIH: Vancouver Island Health Authority region.

Figure 37   **Job postings for Home Child Care Providers in B.C. Health Authority Regions**
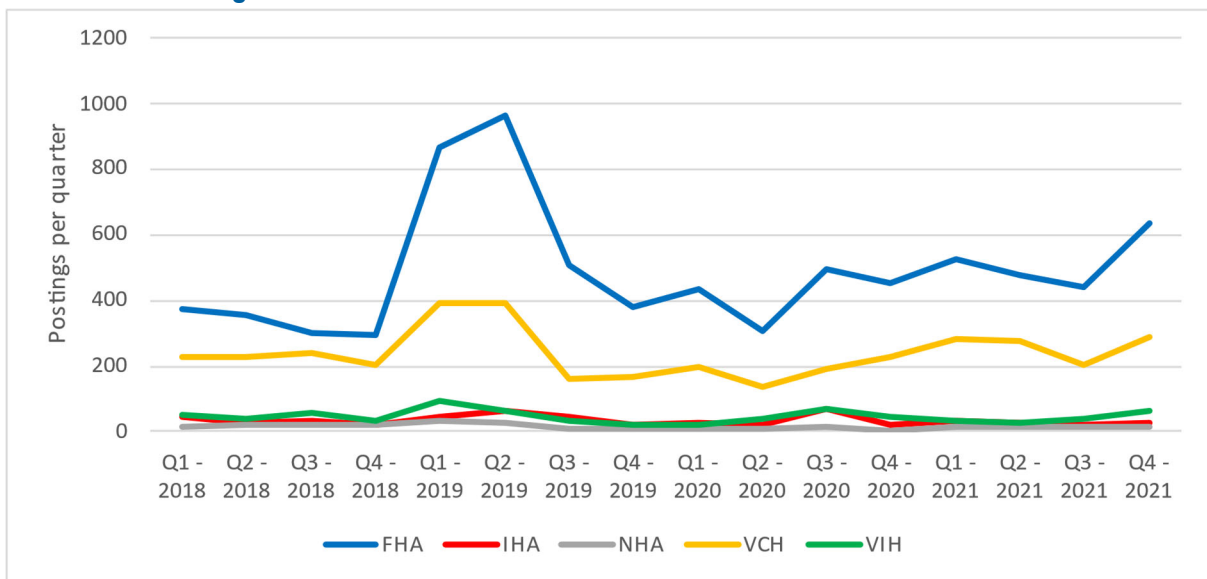
Source: Vicinity Jobs.

Note: FHA: Fraser Health Authority region; IHA: Interior Health Authority region; NHA: Northern Health Authority region; VCH: Vancouver Coastal Health Authority region; VIH: Vancouver Island Health Authority region.

Key informant interviews and case studies

As in 2020, recruitment of qualified staff continued to be extremely challenging in 2021. At least half of the case study sites and approximately a quarter of KII sites were not operating programs or opening up spaces because they did not have the staff to do so.

> *"Respondent: we have space in the 3 to 5 program and in the infant program? Nothing in the toddler program, it is full. [Not at capacity] and that's OK, because I'm not at staffing capacity either. … I'm down two staff." (Site A: Manager, ECE IT)*

> *"… we didn't fill it with children, so we have spaces, but we can't fill them because we don't have a staff. …So, you have people clamoring for spaces, but you just can't fill it up. And we've advertised everywhere. … We're getting like a lot of our RAs applying, but we can't use them. (Site C, Manager, ECE IT)*

Similar to 2020, respondents at case study and KII sites reported continuing to find it very challenging to recruit qualified staff, typically meaning staff with their ECE certification, especially those with their infant toddler or special needs certification. Respondents were unsure if it was any more difficult than last year; their experience has been that 'there is nobody out there' to hire.

> *"It's been a challenge to find ECEs or ITs…we know that we're most likely ending up hiring a responsible adult that's going to have to start their schooling. So, they're very green in the field. We've been a little bit lucky having some people move here and have applied here with their ECE certificates." (Site C, Manager ECE IT)*

When reflecting on recruitment, most respondents agreed it came down to luck, regardless of the strategies to recruit and retain staff. In 2021, the challenge for centres was that staffing ratios were very finely balanced: losing one ECE resulted in the site being short-staffed which perpetuates a vicious cycle of trying to find cover, shuffling staff between programs, managers filling in. All added to stress and burnout. Recruitment was perceived as taking longer. Senior staff described the following strategies:

- **Recruiting practicum students** – For centres, having practicum students offered the opportunity to recruit a new member of staff. The placement allowed centres to assess an individual's skill set and enabled students to determine whether they wanted to work in a particular centre. However, increasingly practicum students were being offered full-time employment during their first placement, so if the centre was not 'top of their list,' they would have to compete with their job offer to hire the student. In addition, success with hiring practicum students depended on location. Some students opted to return home after completing their training.

- **Recruiting unqualified students** – Some centres have recruited staff without any qualifications and paid for training. Two centres covered the entire cost of training to try to address recruitment challenges. They used a variety of different funding sources including the BC Employer Training Grant. Only one centre mentioned ECEBC bursaries. However, all case study sites acknowledged the difficulties employees faced studying and working full-time. This strategy did not offer a quick fix as it took time for employees to become qualified.

  > "Yeah, I do think it helps women who are interested in child care. It's kind of a good incentive for them to work in the field while doing their schooling instead of being in a classroom for two years full time and not being able to work all the time." (Site B, Manager, ECE IT)

- **Recruiting foreign nationals.** One centre continues its 2020 practice to pursue hiring foreign trained workers. Then it applies for their credentials to be recognized in BC. The centre used an external agency and had made job offers to two candidates who were still waiting to enter the country. This centre also sponsored one individual. Again, this strategy took time and incurred costs.

- **Referral and signing bonuses** – As in 2020 one centre continued to offer referral bonuses to employees who referred a new member of staff who was hired and stayed three months. This strategy generated some referrals but not enough to meet staffing needs. One KII site offered signing bonuses to new staff who remained in post for three months.

- **Recruitment agencies** – Some centres continued to use *Indeed* and other recruitment agencies although they were perceived as slightly less effective than in previous years simply because there were "not the staff out there". They were aware that some agencies approached their staff to offer them new positions. All respondents discussed staff who had been approached by recruitment agencies and asked to apply to new positions. Their perception was that 'staff poaching' had increased since 2020.

Staff at all centres described the sector as being very 'fast moving.' Senior staff explained they had a significant number of people not turn up for interviews because they had accepted other positions in the intervening period. Others with a more rigorous recruitment process lamented that by the time they completed their process, candidates had already accepted a position elsewhere. They were reluctant to change their recruitment process because they believed, in the long-run, rigorous recruitment assessment increased retention, since they hired people who were a good fit.

All sites noted that recruiting to cover maternity or sick leave was even more challenging. Individuals who were qualified wanted permanent positions. One case study site respondent contemplated closure of a program because they could not replace their staff member who was

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going on maternity leave. Sites estimated it could take up to two or three months to recruit for these positions. This meant that licensing variances were needed and appreciated, but because they were only typically granted for 30 days duration, did not recognize the reality of recruiting.

While managers and owners were appreciative of the funding for new spaces and acknowledged the importance of the seamless day program and the introduction of $10 a day daycare, they were extremely worried about how these programs would be staffed as well as their impact on the sector as a whole. With respect to staffing, one manager described it as,

> *"Peter is taking from Paul and Paul's having to close down because he's got no staff. …I mean, I see the postings all over the place and I'm hearing centers closing down because they don't have staff." (Site F, Manager ECE IT)*

In 2020, one manager described a staffing "crisis" in the sector. In 2021, we heard from more respondents who felt that the challenges of recruiting staff had reached crisis point. They were fearful it would begin to have a negative impact on the quality of programming offered.

Senior staff at all sites recognized the importance of retaining staff and they reported how hard they worked to create a positive and supportive work environment. Interviews with staff at case study sites suggested employers were doing 'what they can' to retain staff. Tactics included: offering some level of financial supports for training; trying to provide staff with flexibility; and letting them know they were appreciated. Most of those interviewed enjoyed where they worked and who they worked with, but they felt burned out. Managers, owners, and supervisors saw the day-to-day challenges described above as outside of their control.

In addition, some 2021 interviewees reported that local colleges had empty spaces for those wishing to take their ECE certification. They suggested that there needed to be a more sustained campaign and outreach to high school guidance counsellors to highlight the potential of the sector. Some respondents were also concerned that their local colleges had high numbers of international students (they estimated 90 per cent) and this concerned them as they judged these students less likely to stay in the area to add to the local pool of qualified staff in the sector.

KPI 5: PERCEPTIONS OF ECL CAREER AMONG THOSE MAKING DECISIONS WITH RESPECT TO THEIR OWN CAREERS

Public opinion survey

The public opinion survey included a career module directed to all respondents aged 24 years or younger, as well as adults considering a career change. In total, 1,047 respondents completed the

career module. Respondents included 201 teenagers aged 13 to 17, 549 youth aged 18 through 24, and 297 adults older than 24 who were considering changing careers.

The module asked respondents their opinion of child care as a career and their interest in pursuing it. Participants' responses were generally balanced between favouring and not favouring child care as a career, with many being unsure. While respondents generally agreed that working in child care would be a rewarding career (58 to 64 per cent), fewer than half wanted to work with children and many had not considered working in child care prior to completing the survey (see Figure 38).

Figure 38   Opinions on child care as a career by age group and percentage point change since 2019
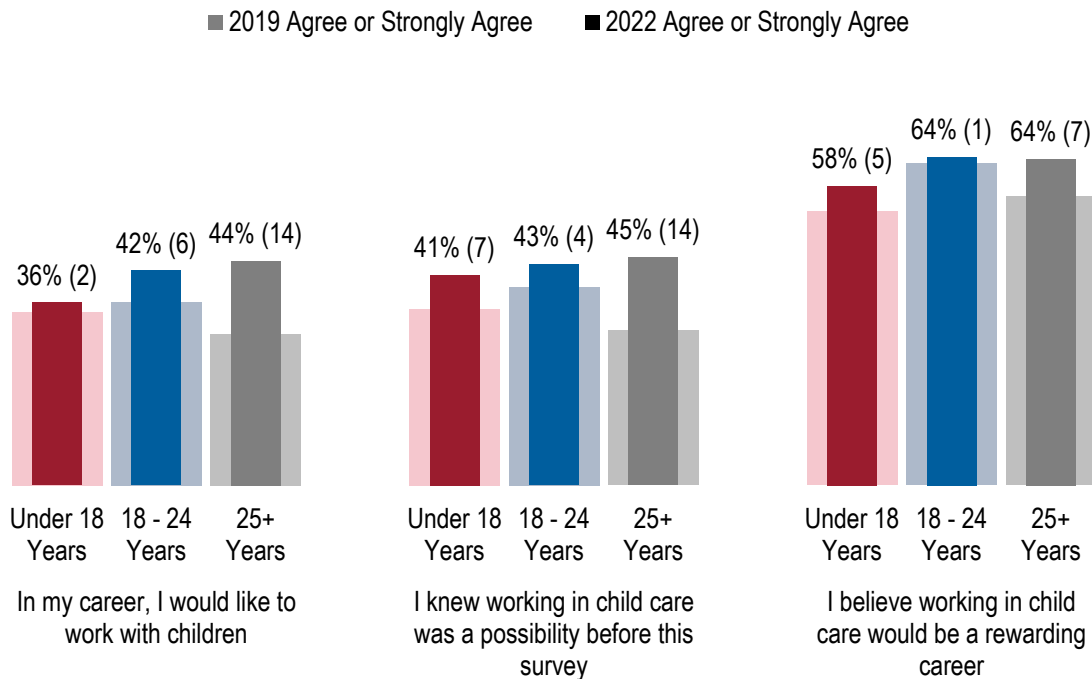
Source: Public opinion survey

Opinions of working in child care improved across all age groups since 2019, and especially among those 25 years and older, whose interest in working with children went from the lowest to the highest (30 per cent in 2019 to 44 per cent in 2022). These changes over time were largely driven by decreases in the proportion of respondents who 'strongly disagreed' that they would like to work with children in their career – the proportion who were 'not sure' (25 per cent among 18-24 year-olds to 37 per cent among those under 18 years) remained generally unchanged since 2019 (see Table 45).

Table 45   Career opinion responses by age group and change in percentage points since 2019

	Age Group	2019			2022			Change Since 2019		
		Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree
In my career, I would like to work with children	Under 18	33%	34%	34%	28%	37%	36%	-4.6	2.9	1.8
	18 - 24	36%	28%	36%	33%	25%	42%	-3.2	-2.7	6.1
	25+	41%	29%	30%	29%	27%	44%	-12.6	-1.7	14.3
	Total	37%	30%	33%	30%	29%	41%	-6.5	-1.2	7.6
I knew working in child care was a possibility before this survey	Under 18	46%	20%	34%	33%	26%	41%	-13.1	6.4	6.6
	18 - 24	44%	18%	39%	35%	22%	43%	-9.0	4.6	4.4
	25+	54%	16%	30%	34%	21%	45%	-20.1	5.8	14.3
	Total	48%	18%	35%	34%	23%	43%	-13.3	5.3	8.1
I believe working in child care would be a rewarding career	Under 18	23%	24%	53%	18%	24%	58%	-5.1	0.1	5.0
	18 - 24	15%	22%	63%	16%	20%	64%	0.3	-1.4	1.3
	25+	22%	22%	56%	14%	23%	64%	-8.0	0.6	7.3
	Total	19%	22%	59%	16%	22%	63%	-3.6	-0.4	4.0

Source: Public Opinion Survey

Note: Strongly Disagree and Disagree were collapsed into a single category for reporting, as were Strongly Agree and Agree

Depending on the age group, approximately one-third agreed or strongly agreed that they would be interested in working in child care specifically (as opposed to working with children in general), with those 18 years and older showing more interest than those under 18 years (see Figure 39). When asked about their interest conditional on changes to various working conditions, however, interest in working in child care increased across all age groups. For example, nearly two-thirds of respondents in all age groups would be interested in working in child care if it offered extended health benefits. More than half of respondents across all age groups indicated they would be interested in working in child care if *any* of the probed working conditions were present, with the exception of "having quality child care spaces for all who wanted one" among those under 18 years (which was only endorsed by 48 per cent of respondents in that age group).

While some conditions were more appealing to certain age groups, *interest in working in child care increased for every age group across every working condition compared to 2019*. The increase over time was most dramatic in the oldest age group, who went from the least likely to the most likely to be interested in working in child care in the last three years.

The presence of positive working conditions, such as flexible working hours and a pension plan, were more appealing to the oldest age group compared to the other two groups, and were associated with the biggest increases in interest since 2019. For example, in 2019 only 39 per cent of those 25 years and over were interested in working in child care if there were quality child care spaces for all who wanted one; in 2022 this had increased by 19 percentage points to 58 per cent. Those under the age of 18 were more likely than the other age groups to report increased uncertainty since 2019 about whether positive working conditions would influence their interest in child care work.

Interest in working in child care was fairly consistent across genders, and was more likely to be endorsed by parents than respondents without children (48 per cent to 32 per cent, respectively; not shown).

As shown in Table 46, although approximately two-thirds of all respondents (65 per cent) either did not want a career in child care or were not sure, this figure has dropped from nearly three-quarters (74 per cent) in 2019.

Figure 39 **Interest in working in child care by age group and percentage point change since 2019 [Source: Public Opinion Survey]**

■ 2019 Agree or Stongly Agree   ■ 2022 Agree or Strongly Agree

I would be interested in child care as a career...
- Under 18 Years: 30% (6)
- 18 - 24 Years: 36% (9)
- 25+ Years: 37% (15)

If this career offered extended health benefits
- Under 18 Years: 62% (7)
- 18 - 24 Years: 65% (11)
- 25+ Years: 67% (14)

If this career offered flexible work hours / days
- Under 18 Years: 52% (2)
- 18 - 24 Years: 63% (10)
- 25+ Years: 65% (15)

If this career offered a pension plan
- Under 18 Years: 57% (8)
- 18 - 24 Years: 58% (10)
- 25+ Years: 62% (13)

If the cost of training was affordable
- Under 18 Years: 55% (5)
- 18 - 24 Years: 59% (11)
- 25+ Years: 61% (16)

If this career offered sick pay
- Under 18 Years: 53% (3)
- 18 - 24 Years: 60% (11)
- 25+ Years: 62% (16)

If the education and training was accessible
- Under 18 Years: 56% (9)
- 18 - 24 Years: 57% (13)
- 25+ Years: 60% (15)

If there were quality child care spaces for all
- Under 18 Years: 48% (6)
- 18 - 24 Years: 58% (10)
- 25+ Years: 58% (19)

If this career offered PD/ProD
- Under 18 Years: 51% (5)
- 18 - 24 Years: 52% (8)
- 25+ Years: 59% (13)

Table 46   Career interest module by age group and change in percentage points since 2019

		2019			2022			Change Since 2019		
	Age Group	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree
I would be interested in working in child care as a career…	Under 18	49%	27%	24%	40%	30%	30%	-8.9	3.0	5.8
	18 - 24	47%	27%	27%	39%	25%	36%	-7.2	-2.0	9.2
	25+	54%	24%	22%	36%	27%	37%	-17.6	2.9	14.8
	Total	49%	26%	25%	39%	27%	35%	-10.8	0.7	10.2
...if the education and training was accessible	Under 18	36%	18%	47%	19%	25%	56%	-16.3	7.1	9.2
	18 - 24	31%	24%	44%	25%	18%	57%	-6.5	-6.2	12.6
	25+	38%	17%	45%	20%	20%	60%	-17.9	2.8	15.1
	Total	34%	20%	45%	22%	20%	58%	-12.3	-0.2	12.6
...if this career offered flexible work hours/days	Under 18	32%	18%	50%	18%	30%	52%	-13.4	11.7	1.6
	18 - 24	26%	21%	54%	20%	17%	63%	-5.8	-4.1	9.9
	25+	34%	16%	51%	22%	13%	65%	-11.3	-3.2	14.6
	Total	30%	19%	52%	20%	18%	61%	-9.2	-0.2	9.5
...if this career offered a pension plan	Under 18	33%	18%	49%	18%	25%	57%	-15.1	7.5	7.6
	18 - 24	27%	25%	48%	20%	22%	58%	-6.6	-3.4	10.1
	25+	35%	15%	50%	19%	18%	62%	-15.8	3.0	12.8
	Total	31%	20%	49%	20%	21%	59%	-11.6	1.1	10.3
...if this career offered extended health benefits	Under 18	30%	15%	55%	17%	21%	62%	-13.3	6.6	6.8
	18 - 24	26%	20%	55%	20%	15%	65%	-5.9	-4.8	10.7
	25+	34%	13%	53%	20%	13%	67%	-14.3	0.4	14.0
	Total	29%	16%	54%	19%	16%	65%	-10.2	-0.6	10.8
...if this career offered sick pay	Under 18	35%	16%	49%	22%	26%	53%	-13.4	10.1	3.2
	18 - 24	28%	24%	48%	23%	17%	60%	-4.8	-6.7	11.4
	25+	34%	19%	46%	22%	15%	62%	-12.0	-4.1	16.2
	Total	32%	20%	48%	23%	18%	59%	-9.1	-1.9	11.0

	Age Group	2019			2022			Change Since 2019		
		Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree
...if this career offered professional development	Under 18	32%	22%	46%	21%	28%	51%	-10.5	5.9	4.7
	18 - 24	27%	29%	44%	24%	25%	52%	-3.3	-4.1	7.5
	25+	34%	20%	46%	22%	20%	59%	-12.5	0.0	12.6
	Total	30%	24%	45%	23%	24%	54%	-7.9	-0.6	8.5
...if the cost of training was affordable	Under 18	37%	13%	50%	19%	26%	55%	-17.9	12.8	5.2
	18 - 24	29%	23%	48%	22%	19%	59%	-6.9	-3.9	10.8
	25+	37%	17%	46%	21%	17%	61%	-16.0	0.2	15.9
	Total	34%	19%	48%	21%	20%	59%	-12.5	1.3	11.0
...if there were quality child care spaces for all who wanted one	Under 18	34%	24%	42%	24%	28%	48%	-10.0	4.2	5.8
	18 - 24	26%	26%	47%	20%	22%	58%	-6.0	-4.5	10.4
	25+	39%	22%	39%	20%	22%	58%	-19.1	-0.3	19.4
	Total	32%	24%	43%	21%	23%	56%	-11.0	-1.1	12.1

Source: Public opinion survey

Note: Strongly Disagree and Disagree were collapsed into a single category for reporting, as were Strongly Agree and Agree.

The survey asked these respondents why they were not interested in a child care career. Qualitative analysis revealed that the majority of respondents cited reasons intrinsic to themselves rather than something specific about child care. The most common response was simply that they preferred another career or type of work, and nearly half were not interested in working with children (consistent with the findings in Figure 38). While it was noted in 2019 that many considered child care work "not skilled enough", this was expressed by only a handful of respondents in 2022. Instead, a common theme in 2022 was that respondents didn't feel they possessed the necessary skills for working in child care, highlighting the perception among the general public that child care is skilled work. For example:

> *Working in close contacts [sic] to children requires a unique set of skills, mental state, and patience that I do not believe I have."*

Building on this, a small portion of respondents expressed concern that the job was simply too hard. Some described how it required more stress than they could handle and others indicated that they did not feel comfortable guiding the younger generation:

> *"The influence over children is too much responsibility."*

A minority of respondents perceived child care as a poor career choice, particularly due to the low pay as well as being undervalued by society.

> *"Pay is far too low to meet rising costs. If child care were paid the equivalent of elementary school teachers it would be a more desirable career."*

> *"Because child care workers are treated like garbage by society, even though they are so so so so essential and hard working."*

Interestingly, very few respondents signalled that they personally did not value the work done by ECL professionals but rather tended to express their respect for ECL professionals despite not wanting it as a career for themselves. It was unclear whether the perception of ECL professionals as undervalued stemmed from a lack of support from parents, the general public, and/or government. Unlike in 2019, no respondents mentioned gender as influencing their interest in child care work.

A more encouraging view of the same data is that approximately one-third of all age groups stated they were interested in working in child care as a career, up from approximately one-quarter in 2019. This proportion was especially high among those 18 and older.

In addition to measuring changes in the population over time, SRDC also asked individuals in 2022 to report changes in their personal interest in child care work since 2019. This analysis revealed that among youth and individuals considering a career change, most have not

experienced a change in interest in child care work since 2019 (see Figure 40Figure 40). However, 18 – 24-year-olds were most likely to experience an increased interest since 2019 compared to the other two age groups (28 per cent compared to 17 per cent for those under 18 and 19 per cent for those over 24 years of age). The proportion who reported a decreased interest in working in child care since 2019 was relatively consistent across all age groups at around 17 per cent. This suggests that, overall, interest in child care work is increasing more than decreasing, and that strategies designed to make working in child care a more attractive career option would be most effectively geared towards those aged 18 – 24 compared to other age groups.

Figure 40   **Ratings of 2022 interest in working in child care compared to personal assessment of interest three years ago, among career interest module sample**
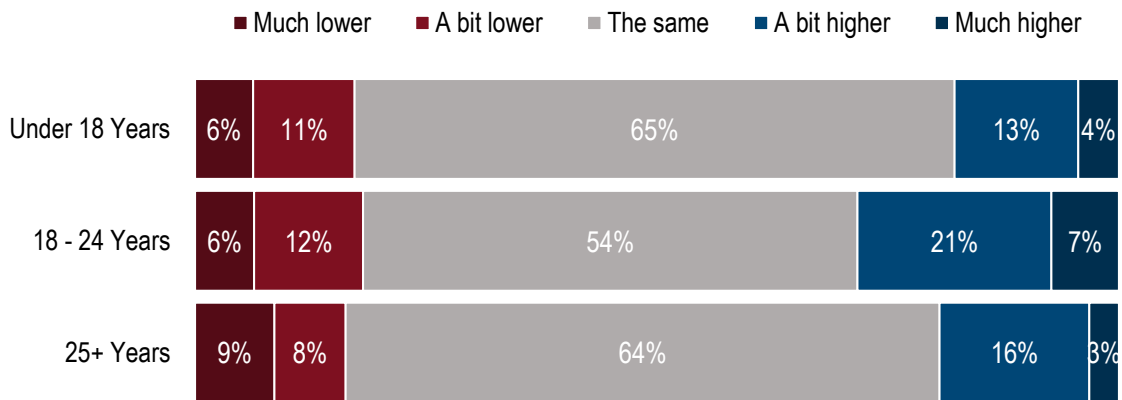
Source: Public opinion survey

When asked to describe the main reason for their change in interest (either lower or higher than their interest three years ago), respondents provided a wide range of indicators. Among those who are now less interested in child care work, reasons reflected the general lack of interest highlighted above – namely preferring another type of work, not having the skills for it, and, to a lesser extent, the low pay. Additionally, many specifically highlighted the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic deterring them from child care. For example,

> *"Mostly the pandemic -- I am clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 and therefore working in child care, where the majority of children are still not yet vaccinated plus interacting with them and their parents on a regular basis would be dangerous for me as*

> *an individual, even with adequate PPE and COVID safety measures in place. It's not a risk I can take at this point in time."*

However, the pandemic was cited not only as a deterrent to working in child care but also as a catalyst to improve working conditions. For some who experienced an increased interest in working in child care, the pandemic has made the field a more attractive career option because of the attention it has garnered, as described below:

> *"I love children and believe there are never too many child care workers to support children. I'm interested in creating a safe environment for children and supporting development. Following the pandemic the child workers work conditions have come under the spotlight for the important task they undertake and I believe better incentives will be added to their pay."*

In general, the pandemic was cited more often among those who lost rather than gained interest in child care work since 2019. Among those whose interest increased in the past three years, the most common reasons were that they enjoy working with children, consider child care work to be rewarding, and regard child care as important to society. For example,

> *"It is very rewarding and I love being around children and helping them to grow into their personalities and to learn new skills."*

> *"Watching parents struggle to return to the office after the pandemic but struggling to find child care for their kids plus the insane costs of child care made me want to be a part of the solution."*

A minority offered aspects of child care work that makes it an attractive career, such as being in demand and the ability to earn a living wage. Among those who gained new information since 2019 that increased their interest in child care work, many cited having more experience with children, such as through their families or by working with children. A small subset identified hearing about the experiences of ECL professionals, such as through the media or personally knowing someone in the field who recommended it. Finally, a handful said they took a class on child development, social work, or psychology, which lead to them seeing it as a viable career choice.

The increase in openness to working in child care over the last three years supports the idea that the ECL R&R Strategy has had some effect in making child care a more attractive career to those making decisions with respect to their careers. The ECL R&R Strategy has further potential to influence the 50-65 per cent of respondents who would consider working in child care if improvements, such as healthcare benefits and retirement plans, were addressed.

KPI 6: PROPORTION OF ECL WORKFORCE WHO SELF-REPORT POSSESSION OF CORE SKILLS AND SUPPLEMENTARY SKILLS

Cross-sectional survey

Skills self-assessment

Workforce survey respondents were asked to self-assess (as: poor, weak, average, above average or excellent) seven of their skills relevant to early childhood education (Table 47). These varied little by qualification. The skills with the highest ratings were building caring relationships with the children (96 per cent overall) and communicating effectively with children (92 per cent overall). Only 84 per cent of RAs rated themselves above average or excellent on the latter. When it came to taking children's stage of development into account when planning activities, 87 per cent overall felt they had this skill, but only 76 per cent of ECEAs. On the other hand, there was little to separate respondents by qualification on the lowest rated skills: demonstrating cultural sensitivity (70 per cent) and making the environment inclusive for children with special needs (78 per cent), with only those with Special Needs certification rating themselves more highly on the latter.

The ratings overall did not change a great deal from 2019 (Table 48). However, there was a dramatic drop in self rating of skills demonstrating cultural sensitivity and respecting diversity for all respondents except RAs. Many more than in 2019 rated themselves highly in making the environment inclusive for children with special needs, especially RAs. Possibly, skills genuinely changed or the population responding to the survey was different from the respondents of 2019. Also plausible is that ECL professionals varied in their ability or willingness to recognize some strengths or shortcomings in their skills.

Table 47   Self-assessment of core skills by ECL qualification 2021

	RA		ECEA		ECE 1 year		ECE 5 year		ECE+SP or IT		ECE+both SP&IT	
	Above average	Excellent	Above average	Excellent	Above average	Excellent	Above average	Excellent	Above average	Excellent	Above average	Excellent
Demonstrating cultural sensitivity	29%	44%	36%	34%	37%	30%	33%	37%	40%	28%	42%	31%
Respecting diversity in their daily interactions	30%	54%	33%	44%	42%	41%	36%	45%	40%	39%	42%	40%
Building caring relationships with the children in their care	24%	71%	29%	64%	19%	78%	23%	73%	26%	70%	24%	71%
Communicate effectively with children***	30%	54%	33%	56%	28%	66%	30%	64%	30%	63%	31%	64%
Communicating effectively with children's families	28%	51%	33%	42%	33%	50%	33%	50%	35%	48%	36%	48%
Taking children's stage of development into account when planning activities***	26%	55%	33%	43%	26%	59%	35%	54%	30%	59%	35%	56%
Making the environment inclusive for children with special needs**	28%	50%	37%	39%	28%	43%	38%	38%	36%	41%	39%	46%

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Note: Statistical significance is denoted by asterisks: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10. This is a chi-square test. If the p-value is less than 0.05/0.01/0.1, we have sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a statistically significant association between the category of respondent and the above average/excellent responses they give to the questions. RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification.

Table 48   Self-assessment of core skills by ECL qualification: change in proportion indicating Above Average or Excellent skills since 2019

	RA	ECEA	ECE 1 year	ECE 5 year	ECE+SP or IT	ECE+both SP&IT
Demonstrating cultural sensitivity	6%	-3%	-8%	-7%	-11%	-4%
Respecting diversity in their daily interactions	6%	-5%	-3%	-5%	-7%	-2%
Building caring relationships with the children in their care	1%	-1%	1%	0%	1%	-1%
Communicate effectively with children	-8%	-5%	0%	0%	-3%	0%
Communicating effectively with children's families	-8%	-9%	-3%	-4%	-6%	-5%
Taking children's stage of development into account when planning activities	-7%	-12%	-5%	0%	-4%	-2%
Making the environment inclusive for children with special needs	24%	9%	8%	6%	2%	3%

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Note: Statistical significance is denoted by asterisks: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10. This is a chi-square test. If the p-value is less than 0.05/0.01/0.1, we have sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a statistically significant association between the category of respondent and the above average/excellent responses they give to the questions. RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification

Professional development

The workforce survey also asked respondents to list the topics covered by the professional development activities that they completed in the 12 months preceding the survey. The list is presented later under KPI 8 in Table 50. The most common professional development topics covered were *child growth and development* (49 per cent), *outdoor play; nature as teacher* (42 per cent), *curriculum or program development* (40 per cent), *managing child behaviour* (39 per cent) and *child mental health* (38 per cent).

Figure 41 shows the proportion of respondents – among the 73 per cent who participated in any professional development activities – who took part in those associated with cultural sensitivity and working with children with special needs, two skills with low rankings in the skills self-assessment questions asked in 2019 and 2021. While child mental health was among the top choices for professional development activities, the other topics were engaged in less often by respondents. This was the same pattern seen in 2019. However, staff (except M/S at CCC) reported that their PD was related to trauma informed practice more often in 2021. PD related to supporting Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit) children was also more prevalent regardless of program/role. Thus, it seems that members of the ECL workforce recognized skills training needs and were able to take action to remedy them. However, there was a decline in the proportion obtaining PD in relation to special needs: members of the workforce were unable or unwilling to engage in PD to remedy this shortfall, since the discrepancy grew in 2021 (Figure 42).

Figure 41 **PD activities associated with cultural sensitivity and special needs completed in the past 12 months as a proportion of those taking any PD 2021**
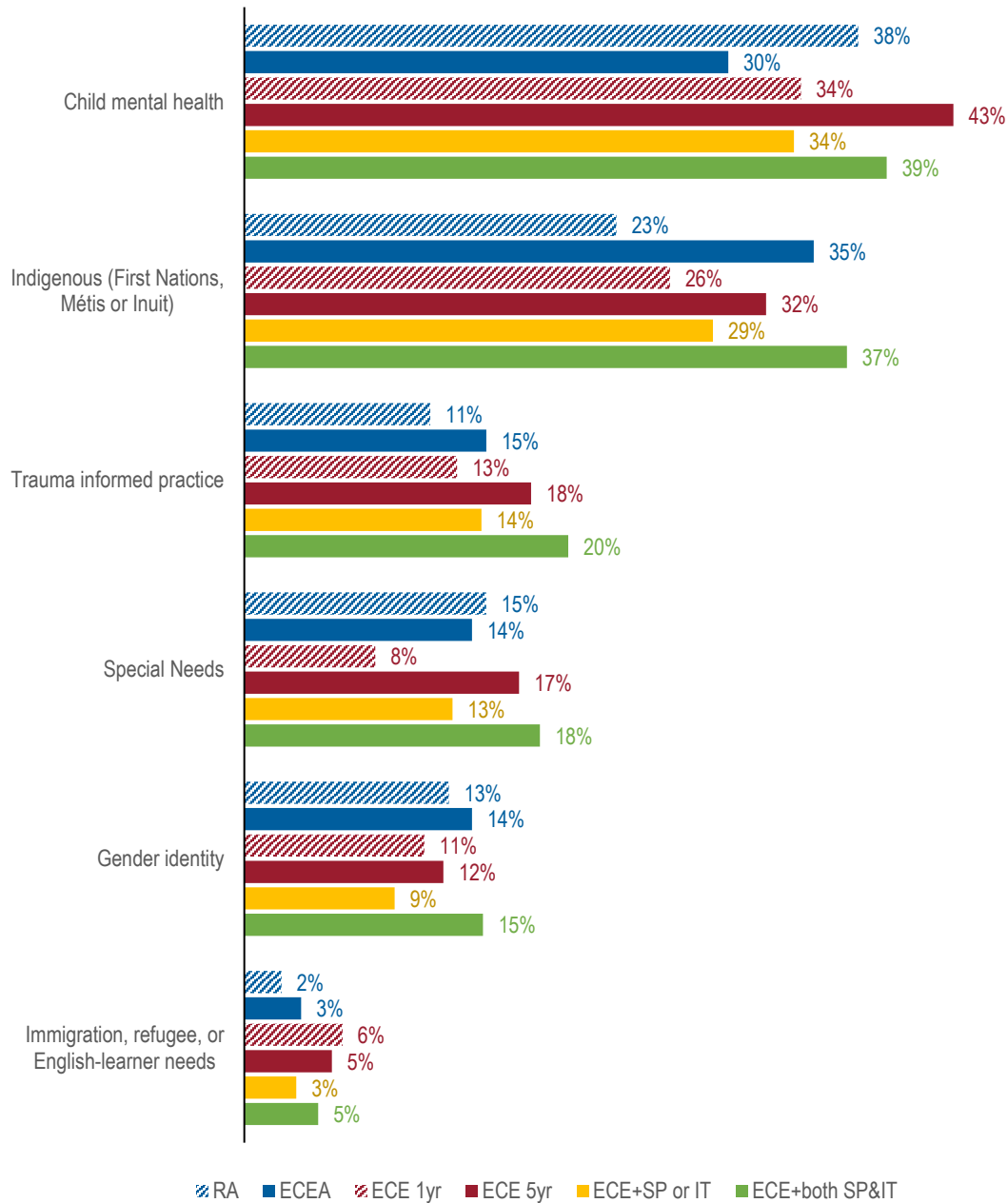
Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification.
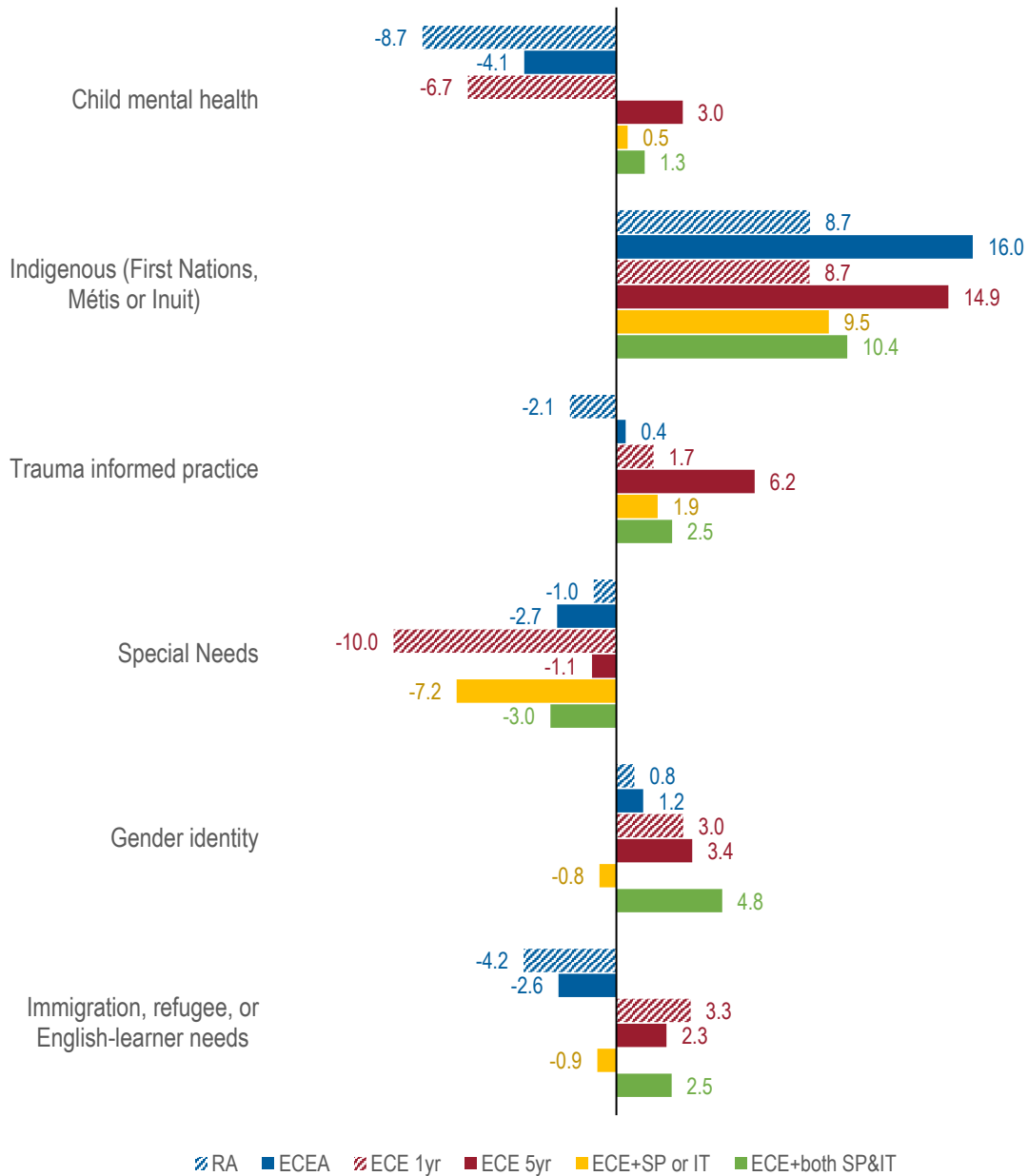
Figure 42   PD activities associated with cultural sensitivity and special needs completed in the past 12 months as a proportion of those taking any PD: change in percentage points since 2019

The Early Childhood Pedagogy Network

The method and practice of teaching is a critical skill in ECL, integral to many PD programs. The ECL R&R Strategy developed a tactic to boost skills in this area through what has become the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network (ECPN) - a successor tactic to the Community Early Childhood Facilitators Program. ECPN is the governing body contracted by MCFD to coordinate a provincial team of pedagogists (education theory and curriculum specialists) to deliver high-quality professional development opportunities to Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) across the province.

SRDC received the evaluation of ECPN towards the end of 2021 and so includes a summary of the implementation of this tactic in this report. The ECPN supports ECEs in licenced child care facilities to integrate the B.C. Early Learning Framework (ELF); design, lead, and evaluate pedagogy within their programs; and engage in reflective dialogue about pedagogy through projects and learning circles. Pedagogists work with ECEs in three different streams. In the Community stream, pedagogists work with CCRRs to engage with ECEs and child care centres, organizations, and programs. The Post-Secondary Institutions stream involves pedagogists who are teaching faculty from post-secondary institutions working alongside practicum students and mentoring ECEs within child care centres and agencies. In the Indigenous stream, the First Nations Pedagogies Network (FNPN) works in partnership with the ECPN and is hosted by the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society. The First Nations equivalent of pedagogists work with each other, Indigenous Elders, First Nations early childhood education programs, and First Nations communities to support, create and share a First Nations approaches to practice in early learning and child care.

From April 1, 2020, to July 31, 2021, ECPN pedagogists supported 311 ECE programs in the Community stream, 33 programs in the PSI stream, and 8 programs through the Indigenous/FNPN stream. The total number of educators working with pedagogists in each stream were 984, 158, and 60, respectively.

The evaluation of the program found that a majority of educators and host locations were satisfied with the ECPN and have a positive opinion of the network. A moderate majority of pedagogists viewed the overall ongoing learning and orientation support as good or excellent. However, all groups found it more difficult to function within the constraints of the COVID-19 environment.

KPI 7: AWARENESS OF ECL CAREER PATHWAY OPTIONS, HOW TO PURSUE THEM, AND EXPECTATIONS OF THEIR FEASIBILITY IN TERMS OF FINANCES AND AVAILABILITY OF TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Cross-sectional survey

Perception of career pathway options

More than six in ten respondents currently working in the sector believed there were a variety of opportunities for career growth and development within the ECL sector in B.C. (similar to the 60 per cent reported in the benchmarking report in 2019). The proportion agreeing with the statement "There are a variety of opportunities for career growth and development within the early care and learning sector in B.C." was similar between respondents with different qualifications (Figure 43). As Figure 43 shows, about 60-65 per cent of ECEs agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, as did about 72-74 per cent of ECEAs and RAs.

Figure 43   Agreement with statement "There are a variety of opportunities for career growth and development within the early care and learning sector in B.C." by ECL qualification 2021
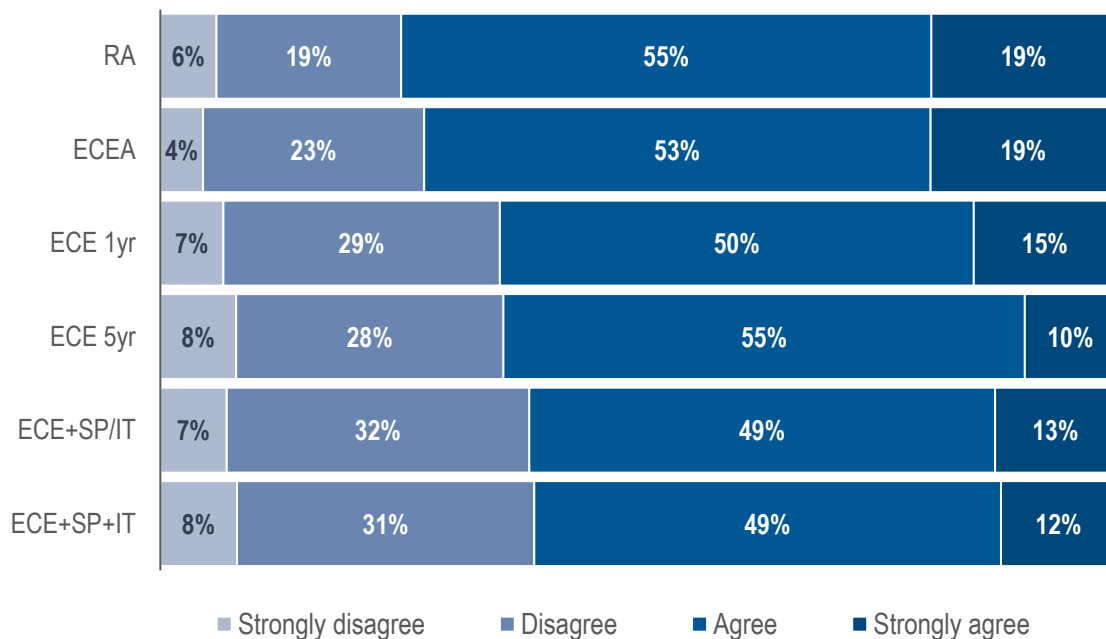
Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Note: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+SP/IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification.

ECE Workforce Development Bursary

The ECE Workforce Development Bursary, one of the tactics of the ECL R&R Strategy, is intended to support career advancement by providing financial support to members of the ECL workforce with costs associated with continuing education and training. Nearly 59 per cent of workforce survey respondents were aware of the ECE Workforce Development Bursary, greater than in 2020 (51 per cent) and 2019.

Table 49 examines participation in postsecondary education at the time of the survey and take up of the bursary. First it is worth taking stock of the consistent disparities in participation in PSE by the groups as defined. Those without ECE certification were much more likely to be participating in PSE, whether in CCC or before and after school/recreational programs [sample sizes are too small to report for $10 a day sites]. In fact, 42 per cent of those without ECEs at CCC reported participating in PSE, similar to 2019 and 2020. Take up of the bursary was concentrated among those in CCC but for similar proportions (around one in ten) of those already holding ECEs as those working towards obtaining their ECE.

Table 49   Participation in postsecondary education (PSE) by receipt of ECE workforce development bursary 2019-21

| | Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool, current ECL qualification: | | | | | | Before & after school [and recreational care] programs | | | | | |
| | ECEs (including specialties) | | | Not-ECE certified | | | ECEs (including specialties) | | | Not-ECE certified | | |
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Not participating in PSE	89%	89%	89%	61%	66%	58%		98%		74%	81%	88%
Participating in PSE	11%	11%	11%	39%	34%	42%		2%		26%	19%	12%
Received the WD bursary	13%	11%	11%	13%		8%				0%		0%
Has not received the WD bursary	87%	89%	89%	87%		92%				100%		100%

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Note: Blank cells contain estimates suppressed due to small sample sizes.

Employer facilitation of career advancement opportunities

Employers were asked if they had engaged in four activities that promote staff's career advancement in the 12 months preceding the survey (Figures 44 and 45). The results revealed steady improvement since 2019 in employers' level of facilitation of all four career advancement opportunities, both at organizations that do and do not exclusively operate programs requiring ECE certification. Similar to 2019, employers requiring ECE certification were most likely to recognize staff with different levels of training by giving them different responsibilities (71 per cent). These employers were also likely to recognize higher levels of education and experience with higher wages (72 per cent) and conduct performance reviews (67 per cent). However, only 38 per cent of the employers provided an outline of career opportunities within the child care centre. While all activities have been increasing each year, the biggest increase since 2019 was in the proportions of employers that recognized staff with higher levels of education and experience by offering higher wages and who conducted performance reviews, both of which climbed 7 percentage points.

Figure 45 considers the same trends for organizations that operate at least one program that does not require ECE certification. They had slightly higher levels of career promoting activities and generally had increased provision more since 2019, by 9-11 percentage points in all cases.

Figure 44 **Proportion of employers that exclusively operate programs requiring ECE certification that have engaged in activities that promote staff's career advancement in the last 12 months, 2021 and change since 2019**

■ 2021 ■ 2020 ■ 2019

Recognized staff with different levels of training by giving them different responsibilities
- 71%
- 69%
- 67%

Recognized staff with higher levels of education and experience with higher wages
- 72%
- 67%
- 65%

Conducted performance reviews
- 67%
- 64%
- 60%

Provided an outline of career options within the child care centre(s)
- 38%
- 34%
- 34%
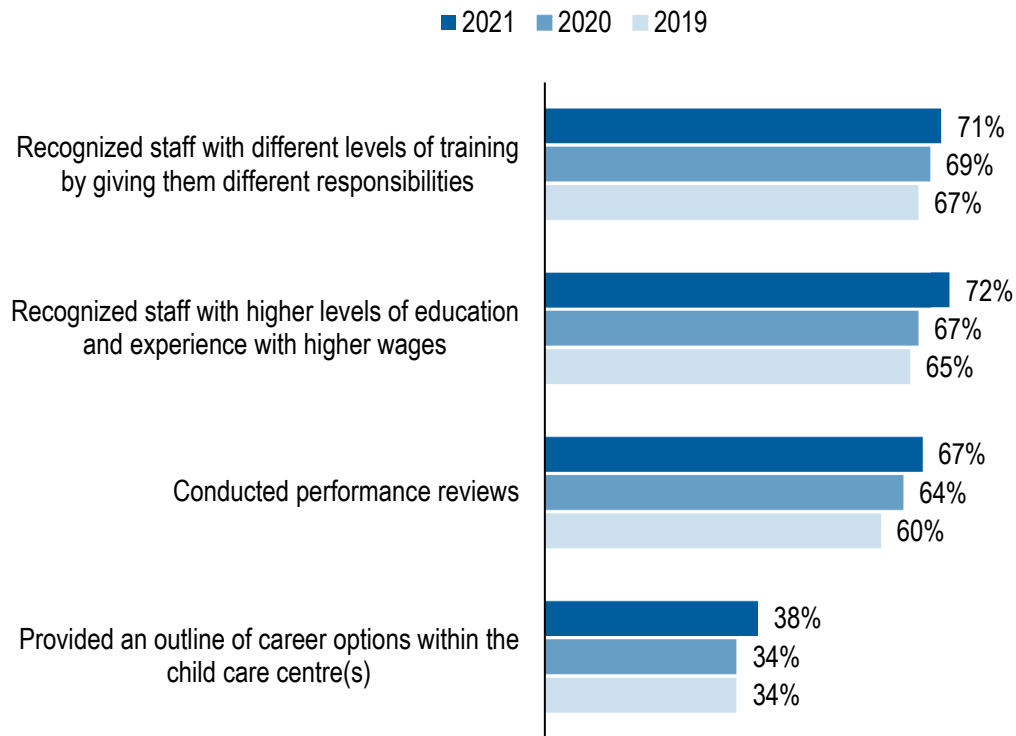
Source: SRDC employer survey. Includes employers who exclusively operate one or more of the following programs: group care under 3, group care 2.5yrs – school age, preschool, or multi-age programs.

Figure 45 **Proportion of employers that operate at least one program that does not require ECE certification that have engaged in activities that promote staff's career advancement in the last 12 months, 2021 and change since 2019**

■ 2021 ■ 2020 □ 2019
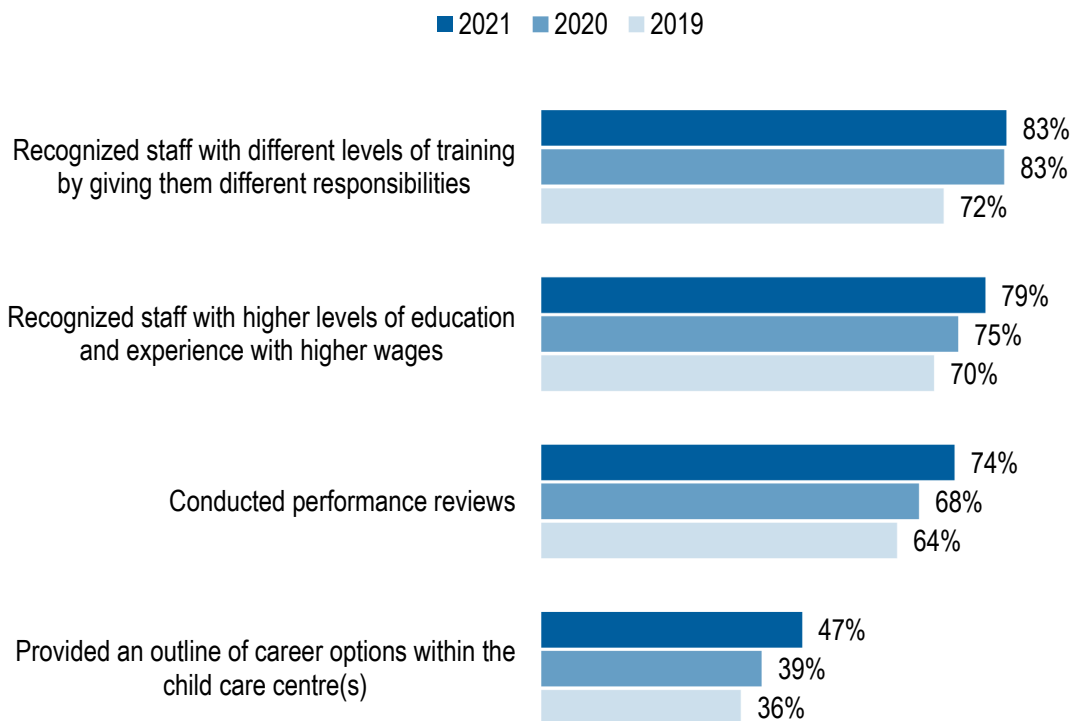
Source: SRDC employer survey. Includes employers who operate one or more of the following programs: group care school age, occasional care, or recreational care (2021).

Administrative data

Bursaries for education and professional development

Early Childhood Educators of B.C. has been administering two types of bursaries:

- A **student bursary** to support students studying in an ECE program at a recognized post-secondary institution. Eligible applicants can apply for up to $500 per course, to a maximum of 8 courses, for a total of $4,000 per semester to assist with tuition and living expenses while studying. Awarded amounts are dependent on the number of completed courses.

- A **workforce development bursary** to support ECEs, ECEAs, Responsible Adults and StrongStart BC Facilitators currently working in the ECE field to upgrade their

credentials. Applicants must demonstrate active employment within a licensed child care facility (with the exception of StrongStart BC facilitators). Awards range up to $5,000 per semester and are intended to assist with tuition and other expenses such as loss of wages or travel.

Figure 46 shows the numbers of student bursaries approved from the Fall 2018 semester to the Summer 2021 semester. The variation by region matches roughly the 2019 distribution of the ECL workforce in licensed facilities by health authority region according to SRDC's contact database (reported in the evaluation benchmarking report), although Vancouver Island is somewhat underrepresented, and the Vancouver Coastal region is somewhat overrepresented. Students in the Fraser region were more likely to receive bursaries every year, particularly in the Winter semesters. Of course, there is no overriding reason to expect a strong correlation between student numbers and workforce numbers in every region.

The trends in Figure 47 are based on the 928 workforce development bursaries that had been approved by the Summer 2021 semester across the five health authority regions. The regional patterns are somewhat similar to those for distribution of the workforce. The numbers are too small to consider the proportionality of distribution by size of region. On average, only one workforce development bursary was approved for every ten student bursaries. The small numbers mean the overall impact of workforce development bursaries on professional development in some regions – such as Northern where only seven have been approved over the two-year period – is likely to have been small.

Both Figure 46 and Figure 47 show a very sharp decline in the number of bursaries approved in the Summer 2020 semester. While this coincided with the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the decline related to the cycle of funding from government and shifting priorities for which students should receive a bursary. ECEBC can only grant bursaries while it has funds to distribute. Breaks following the exhaustion of funds resulted in ECEBC and potential students waiting to learn whether further funds would be provided. Semesters were sometimes underway before this information was made available, resulting in uncertainty for students and potentially fewer bursary applicants. As of February 2022, ECEBC received government advance funding for three years of bursary disbursements to alleviate these issues.

Figure 46   Student bursaries by health authority region 2018 to 2021
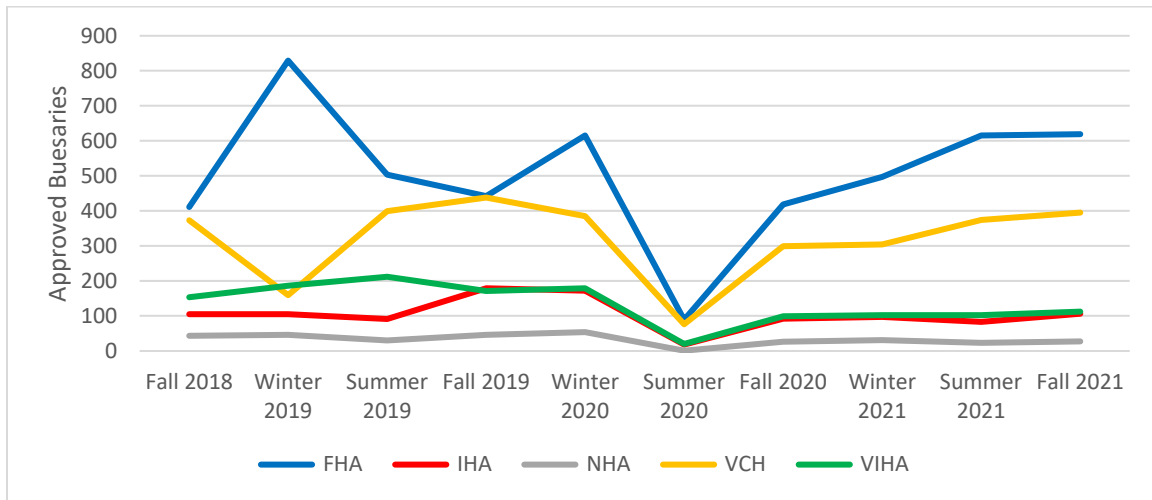
Source: Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia.

Note: FHA: Fraser Health Authority region; IHA: Interior Health Authority region; NHA: Northern Health Authority region; VCH: Vancouver Coastal Health Authority region; VIH: Vancouver Island Health Authority region.

Figure 47   Workforce development bursaries by health authority region 2018 to 2021
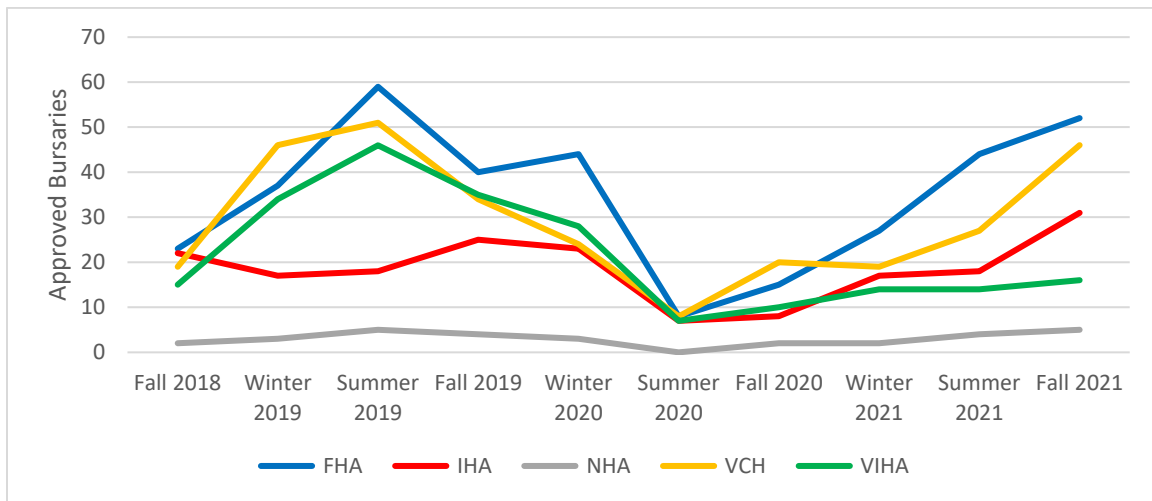
Source: Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia.

Note: FHA: Fraser Health Authority region; IHA: Interior Health Authority region; NHA: Northern Health Authority region; VCH: Vancouver Coastal Health Authority region; VIH: Vancouver Island Health Authority region.

Key informant interviews and case studies

Four participants among the five who had left case study sites were aware of initiatives to support the career development of ECL professionals such as bursaries and/or professional development opportunities. Two of the participants had experience applying for a bursary. One felt she was considered not eligible because she was not enrolled in school full-time. Full-time study was not feasible for her as she was a single parent and had to work at the same time. Yet the bursary actually covers full-time and part-time study so this barrier seems to have been one of communication rather than eligibility. Another participant said the bursary application process was difficult and time-consuming.

Those interviewed from case study sites suggested fewer people in their centres had been applying for the bursaries. The reasons they brought forward for this included a lack of time and energy and low awareness.

KPI 8: PROPORTION OF ECL WORKFORCE WHO SELF-REPORT PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Cross-sectional survey

The majority of workforce survey respondents reported participating in a professional development (PD) activity in the 12 months preceding the survey (Table 50). Those ECEs with both specialties (IT and SP) had the highest participation in PD activities (91 per cent), followed by other ECEs (85-86 per cent except those with 1-year certificates at 76 per cent), with RAs less likely to report participation in PD (67 per cent). With the exception of 1-year ECEs and those ECEs with one but not both of the specialties, PD was somewhat more often undertaken in 2021 than 2019 (Table 51).

The 2020 workforce survey introduced questions on participation in PD related to taking ECL outdoors. That year also featured COVID-19 related training but in 2021 this was rolled into child health, safety & nutrition. Relative to PD topics included in 2019, the area seeing most growth in PD was Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit) topics (Table 51) with the growth greatest among ECEAs (from 19 to 35 per cent) and 5-year ECEs (from 17 to 32 per cent).

Table 50   Participation in professional development activities in the 12 months preceding the survey 2021 (workforce survey)

	RA	ECEA	ECE 1yr	ECE 5yr	ECE+ SP or IT	ECE+ both SP&IT	Total
Participated in any professional development activity	**67%**	**77%**	**76%**	**86%**	**85%**	**91%**	**83%**
Participation by topic							
Child growth and development	52%	46%	47%	54%	46%	48%	**50%**
Outdoor play: Nature as a teacher	45%	40%	45%	47%	40%	36%	**42%**
Curriculum or program development	39%	36%	42%	39%	40%	43%	**40%**
Managing child behaviour	42%	36%	40%	47%	29%	41%	**40%**
Child mental health	38%	30%	34%	43%	34%	39%	**38%**
Child health, safety & nutrition	43%	35%	29%	36%	29%	35%	**34%**
Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit)	23%	35%	26%	32%	29%	37%	**31%**
Advocacy for children and families	17%	27%	29%	28%	31%	28%	**28%**
Child care policy	28%	24%	23%	22%	23%	22%	**23%**
Personal stress management and work-life balance	17%	17%	17%	24%	22%	26%	**22%**
Leadership	18%	17%	13%	18%	20%	24%	**19%**
Family support	11%	20%	18%	19%	19%	23%	**19%**
Administration and business	19%	21%	11%	15%	17%	19%	**17%**
Trauma informed practice	11%	15%	13%	18%	14%	20%	**16%**
Interpersonal communication	15%	17%	12%	18%	17%	16%	**17%**
Infant and Toddler care	9%	9%	11%	10%	25%	24%	**16%**
Special Needs	15%	14%	8%	17%	13%	18%	**15%**
Abuse, touching and bullying	22%	22%	18%	12%	13%	10%	**14%**
Professional ethics and practice	15%	11%	13%	13%	10%	16%	**13%**
Gender identity	13%	14%	11%	12%	9%	15%	**12%**
Immigration, refugee, or English-learner needs	2%	3%	6%	5%	3%	5%	**4%**
Other	5%	5%	6%	9%	7%	9%	**8%**

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification.

Table 51   Participation in professional development activities in the 12 months preceding the survey: percentage points change since 2019

	RA	ECEA	ECE 1yr	ECE 5yr	ECE+S P or IT	ECE+ both SP&IT	Total
Participated in any professional development activity	+ 8.6	+ 4.9	- 2.0	+ 0.2	- 0.7	+ 2.2	+ 3.2
Participation by topic							
Child growth and development	- 6.8	- 7.0	- 7.7	- 0.9	- 6.9	+ 1.1	- 3.8
Outdoor play: Nature as a teacher	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Curriculum or program development	+ 11.7	+ 4.2	- 0.7	- 3.5	- 1.4	+ 1.0	+ 0.6
Managing child behaviour	- 5.9	- 2.5	- 9.3	- 2.6	- 16.2	- 4.1	- 6.7
Child mental health	- 8.7	- 4.1	- 6.7	+ 3.0	+ 0.5	+ 1.3	- 0.4
Child health, safety & nutrition	+ 2.8	- 6.7	- 9.7	+ 3.5	- 6.8	+ 3.9	- 1.2
Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit)	+ 8.7	+ 16.0	+ 8.7	+ 14.9	+ 9.5	+ 10.4	+ 12.5
Advocacy for children and families	- 3.4	+ 5.4	+ 11.7	+ 3.5	+ 7.2	- 3.7	+ 3.6
Child care policy	+ 5.6	+ 4.5	+ 11.0	+ 7.5	+ 7.2	+ 6.3	+ 6.8
Personal stress management and work-life balance	+ 0.7	+ 1.9	- 3.0	+ 6.1	+ 4.4	+ 3.3	+ 3.9
Leadership	+ 4.1	+ 5.5	+ 1.7	+ 3.8	- 1.0	- 3.8	+ 1.9
Family support	- 5.6	+ 3.4	+ 0.7	- 0.9	- 0.8	+ 1.9	+ 0.2
Administration and business	+ 2.9	+ 11.5	+ 2.3	+ 3.8	+ 3.6	+ 2.5	+ 4.2
Trauma informed practice	- 2.1	+ 0.4	+ 1.7	+ 6.2	+ 1.9	+ 2.5	+ 3.2
Interpersonal communication	+ 0.2	+ 3.0	+ 1.3	+ 4.2	- 0.4	+ 0.4	+ 1.8
Infant and Toddler care	- 10.8	+ 3.2	+ 1.7	- 1.5	+ 1.9	+ 5.3	+ 1.1
Special Needs	- 1.0	- 2.7	- 10.0	- 1.1	- 7.2	- 3.0	- 3.4
Abuse, touching and bullying	+ 4.6	+ 2.4	+ 5.3	- 2.2	+ 2.9	- 2.8	+ 0.0
Professional ethics and practice	+ 2.5	- 0.3	+ 1.7	- 0.5	- 5.4	- 1.0	- 1.0
Gender identity	+ 0.8	+ 1.2	+ 3.0	+ 3.4	- 0.8	+ 4.8	+ 2.3
Immigration, refugee, or English-learner needs	- 4.2	- 2.6	+ 3.3	+ 2.3	- 0.9	+ 2.5	+ 0.6
Other	- 1.9	- 2.5	- 2.0	+ 2.3	- 0.5	+ 0.9	+ 0.4

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification**.**

Table 52 considers participation in PD by auspice and type of program. The highest levels of participation in PD were in not-for-profit and other CCC, followed by $10 a day sites and privately-run CCC, though the differences were not great. The tendency for those in not-for-profit programs to report PD more often was present in before and after school/recreational programs as well, albeit at lower overall levels. There are some notable similarities and notable differences in types of PD. Child growth and development was a universally common topic but Indigenous related PD was most prevalent at $10 a day sites: taken up three times more often there than by professionals at private before and after school programs.

Table 53 shows that the trend in PD since 2019 is for modest growth in take up at both private and not-for-profit CCC facilities alongside declines at before and after school/recreational programs, quite notably among privately run ones. The increasing popularity of Indigenous related PD (and child care policy and administration and business) is universal to all auspice/program categories. Some of the apparent growth for individual PD categories may arise due to small sample sizes in one or other year.

Among HCPs, those ECE-certified were more likely to report engaging in PD (Table 54). Seventy per cent of ECE-certified HCPs reported at least one PD activity: 10 percentage points fewer than in 2019. Indigenous topics, professional ethics and practice and gender identify saw the largest proportionate increases in interest for both groups of HCPs (Table 55).

Survey respondents not participating in PD were asked the top barriers to participation in PD. The most common responses (Figure 48 through Figure 51) included lack of time available to complete the activity, especially for ECE-certified HCPs and managers and supervisors at centre-based ECL. For CCC-based non-M/S, lack of information about PD opportunities and cost were also major barriers (36 and 29 per cent, respectively). Figure 51 indicates declines in most reasons, because respondents were less likely to give multiple reasons in 2021. This could be seen as a positive development in that the proportion reporting multiple barriers is decreasing – and as a result the share citing different reasons dropped. The proportion of managers and supervisors in CCC not participating in PD citing reasons related to information available increased somewhat. While those at $10 a day sites were much less likely in 2021 to cite lack of information and time as barriers, more in 2021 said they could not get time off work for PD.

When considered by qualification (Figure 49), lack of information was the predominant reason only for ECEAs (46 per cent said this was their main reason for not participating). And Figure 51 illustrates that ECEs' citing lack of information was one of the only reasons to be given markedly more often in 2021. The other was 1-year ECEs facing conflicts with time to spend with their families. Finally, it is worth noting that cost, lack of time and not being able to get time off work declined strongly for most groups defined by qualification.

Table 52   Participation in professional development activities in the 12 months preceding the survey 2021 (workforce survey)

	Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool		Before & after school [and recreational care] programs		$10 a Day ChildCare BC sites
	Private business	Not for profit & others	Private business	Not for profit & others	
Participated in any professional development activity	**82%**	**90%**	**52%**	**75%**	**84%**
Child growth and development	53%	46%	45%	50%	50%
Outdoor play: Nature as a teacher	40%	41%	36%	52%	45%
Curriculum or program development	40%	40%	36%	30%	42%
Managing child behaviour	42%	39%	36%	46%	38%
Child mental health	39%	39%	27%	50%	31%
Child health, safety & nutrition	34%	32%	64%	46%	34%
Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit)	22%	37%	18%	26%	52%
Advocacy for children and families	30%	26%	9%	17%	35%
Child care policy	23%	21%	27%	35%	28%
Personal stress management and work-life balance	21%	24%	9%	11%	27%
Leadership	22%	19%	18%	26%	26%
Family support	19%	20%	18%	20%	22%
Administration and business	19%	16%	27%	24%	20%
Trauma informed practice	15%	18%	9%	17%	16%
Interpersonal communication	16%	16%	9%	11%	25%
Infant and Toddler care	18%	13%	0%	4%	25%
Special Needs	14%	16%	18%	22%	18%
Abuse, touching and bullying	17%	12%	9%	33%	10%
Professional ethics and practice	14%	12%	9%	17%	15%
Gender identity	11%	13%	9%	15%	15%
Immigration, refugee, or English-learner needs	6%	3%	9%	7%	5%
Other	8%	7%	9%	7%	5%

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey

Table 53   **Participation in professional development activities in the 12 months preceding the survey percentage points change since 2019**

	Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool		Before & after school [and recreational care] programs		$10 a Day ChildCare BC sites
	Private business	Not for profit & others	Private business	Not for profit & others	
Participated in any professional development activity	+ 6.0	+ 3.3	- 13.7	- 1.0	+ 1.4
Participation by topic					
Child growth and development	+ 0.3	- 6.5	- 0.8	- 0.3	- 3.0
Outdoor play: Nature as a teacher					
Curriculum or program development	+ 2.1	+ 0.1	+ 2.8	- 8.2	- 8.1
Managing child behaviour	- 7.1	- 10.5	- 9.9	- 0.1	+ 1.5
Child mental health	+ 3.5	- 4.2	- 5.6	+ 11.6	- 3.4
Child health, safety & nutrition	- 2.1	- 0.6	+ 29.7	+ 12.5	+ 14.2
Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit)	+ 9.1	+ 11.0	+ 8.5	+ 3.3	+ 24.3
Advocacy for children and families	+ 6.9	- 0.1	- 12.6	- 7.3	+ 2.9
Child care policy	+ 4.4	+ 5.1	+ 9.4	+ 22.2	+ 10.0
Personal stress management and work-life balance	+ 4.3	+ 2.4	- 4.3	- 9.3	+ 11.5
Leadership	+ 5.9	+ 0.0	+ 3.3	+ 4.8	+ 4.6
Family support	- 1.1	+ 0.5	- 2.7	+ 2.4	+ 2.1
Administration and business	+ 4.5	+ 2.8	+ 13.5	+ 13.3	+ 9.6
Trauma informed practice	+ 4.8	+ 1.9	- 1.4	- 0.2	- 2.1

	Child care centre (including multi-age child care) or preschool		Before & after school [and recreational care] programs		$10 a Day ChildCare BC sites
	Private business	Not for profit & others	Private business	Not for profit & others	
Interpersonal communication	+ 4.0	- 0.5	- 4.0	- 7.4	+ 2.3
Infant and Toddler care	+ 2.1	+ 3.7	- 14.6	- 10.4	+ 6.8
Special Needs	- 3.7	- 9.2	+ 2.1	+ 2.9	- 0.4
Abuse, touching and bullying	+ 2.3	- 4.1	- 3.6	+ 19.2	+ 1.4
Professional ethics and practice	- 0.4	- 4.4	- 5.5	+ 3.7	- 2.9
Gender identity	+ 2.6	+ 1.8	+ 3.9	+ 3.1	- 0.6
Immigration, refugee, or English-learner needs	+ 1.7	- 0.6	+ 6.9	+ 3.3	+ 0.3
Other	+ 1.7	- 1.9	+ 3.9	+ 0.4	- 10.3

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Table 54 **Participation in professional development activities in the 12 months preceding the survey 2021 (workforce survey)**

	HCPs	
	ECE certified	**Not ECE-certified**
Participated in any professional development activity	**70%**	**55%**
Participation by topic		
Child growth and development	58%	63%
Outdoor play: Nature as a teacher	47%	50%
Curriculum or program development	40%	50%
Managing child behaviour	31%	28%
Child mental health	36%	40%
Child health, safety & nutrition	38%	43%
Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit)	22%	30%
Advocacy for children and families	29%	20%
Child care policy	22%	20%
Personal stress management and work-life balance	25%	20%
Leadership	9%	10%
Family support	15%	10%
Administration and business	13%	15%
Trauma informed practice	9%	15%
Interpersonal communication	9%	8%
Infant and Toddler care	20%	20%
Special Needs	7%	8%
Abuse, touching and bullying	9%	15%
Professional ethics and practice	15%	20%
Gender identity	16%	20%
Immigration, refugee, or English-learner needs	5%	8%
Other	9%	10%

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Note: Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care.

Table 55 **Participation in professional development activities in the 12 months preceding the survey percentage points change since 2019**

	HCPs	
	ECE-certified	Not ECE-certified
Participated in any professional development activity	- 10.0	+ 1.6
Participation by topic		
Child growth and development	+ 0.5	+ 4.2
Outdoor play: Nature as a teacher		
Curriculum or program development	- 4.7	+ 16.9
Managing child behaviour	- 7.3	- 14.2
Child mental health	- 1.0	+ 3.0
Child health, safety & nutrition	- 2.5	- 10.3
Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit)	+ 9.6	+ 15.8
Advocacy for children and families	+ 10.4	+ 3.5
Child care policy	+ 8.0	- 2.8
Personal stress management and work-life balance	+ 12.4	- 1.3
Leadership	+ 0.1	+ 2.9
Family support	- 4.2	- 8.1
Administration and business	+ 2.2	+ 0.8
Trauma informed practice	+ 2.6	+ 11.1
Interpersonal communication	- 0.7	- 0.4
Infant and Toddler care	- 1.1	- 0.5
Special Needs	- 3.3	- 2.7
Abuse, touching and bullying	- 0.7	+ 2.4
Professional ethics and practice	+ 6.4	+ 10.6
Gender identity	+ 9.9	+ 9.8
Immigration, refugee, or English-learner needs	+ 3.0	+ 2.8
Other	+ 0.1	+ 4.5

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Note: Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care.
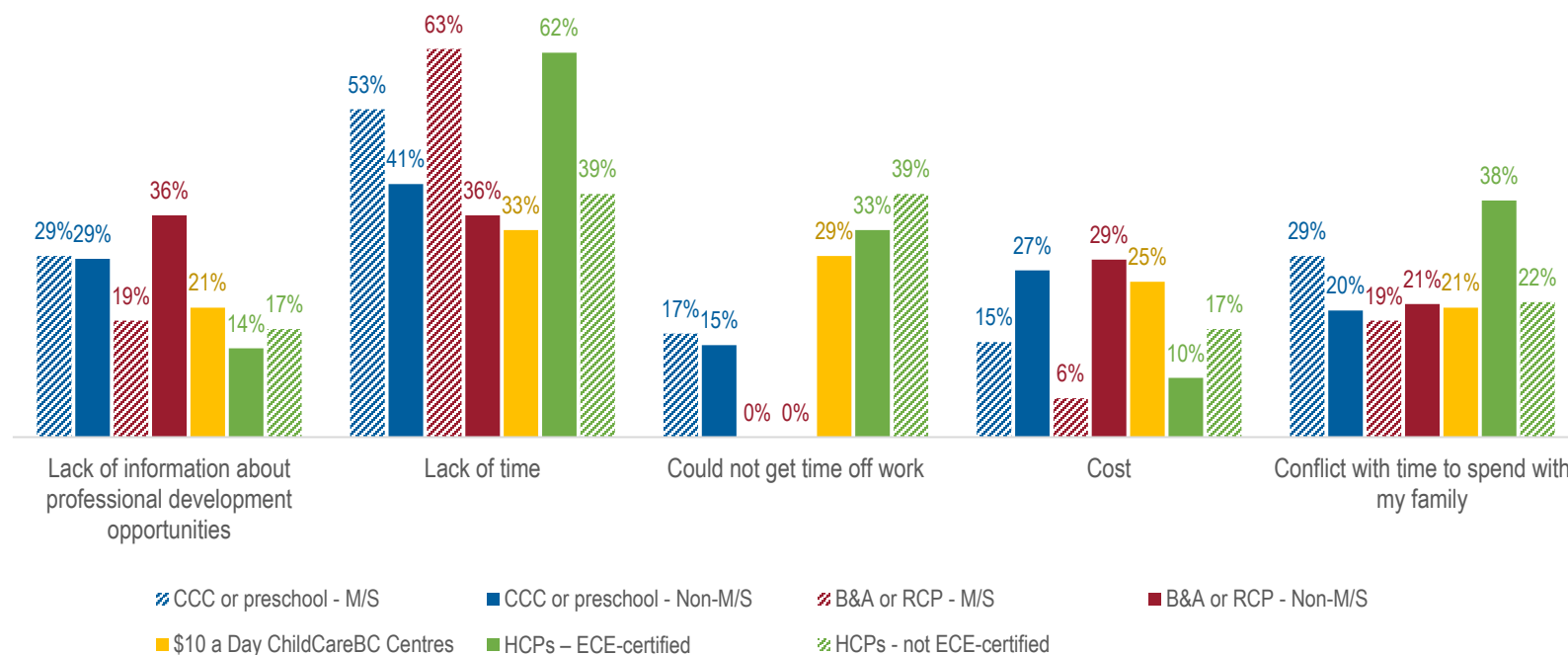
Figure 48   Main reasons for not participating in professional development activities 2021 by program/role

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care. CCC child care centre. B&A before and after school programs. RCP recreational care programs.

Figure 49   Main reasons for not participating in professional development activities 2021 by qualification
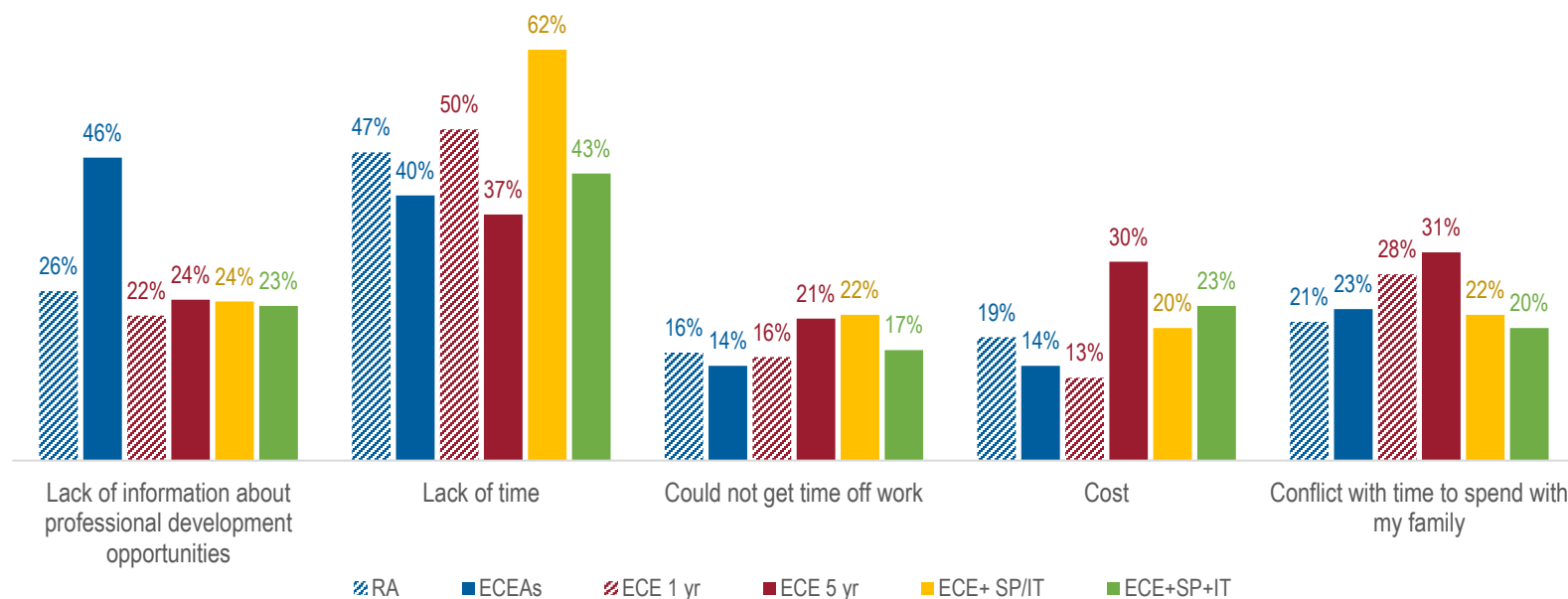
Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification)..

Figure 50   Main reasons for not participating in professional development activities: change in percentage points since 2019 by program/role

Legend:
- CCC or preschool - M/S
- CCC or preschool - Non-M/S
- B&A or RCP - M/S
- B&A or RCP - Non-M/S
- $10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres
- HCPs – ECE-certified
- HCPs - not ECE-certified

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care. CCC child care centre. B&A before and after school programs. RCP recreational care programs.
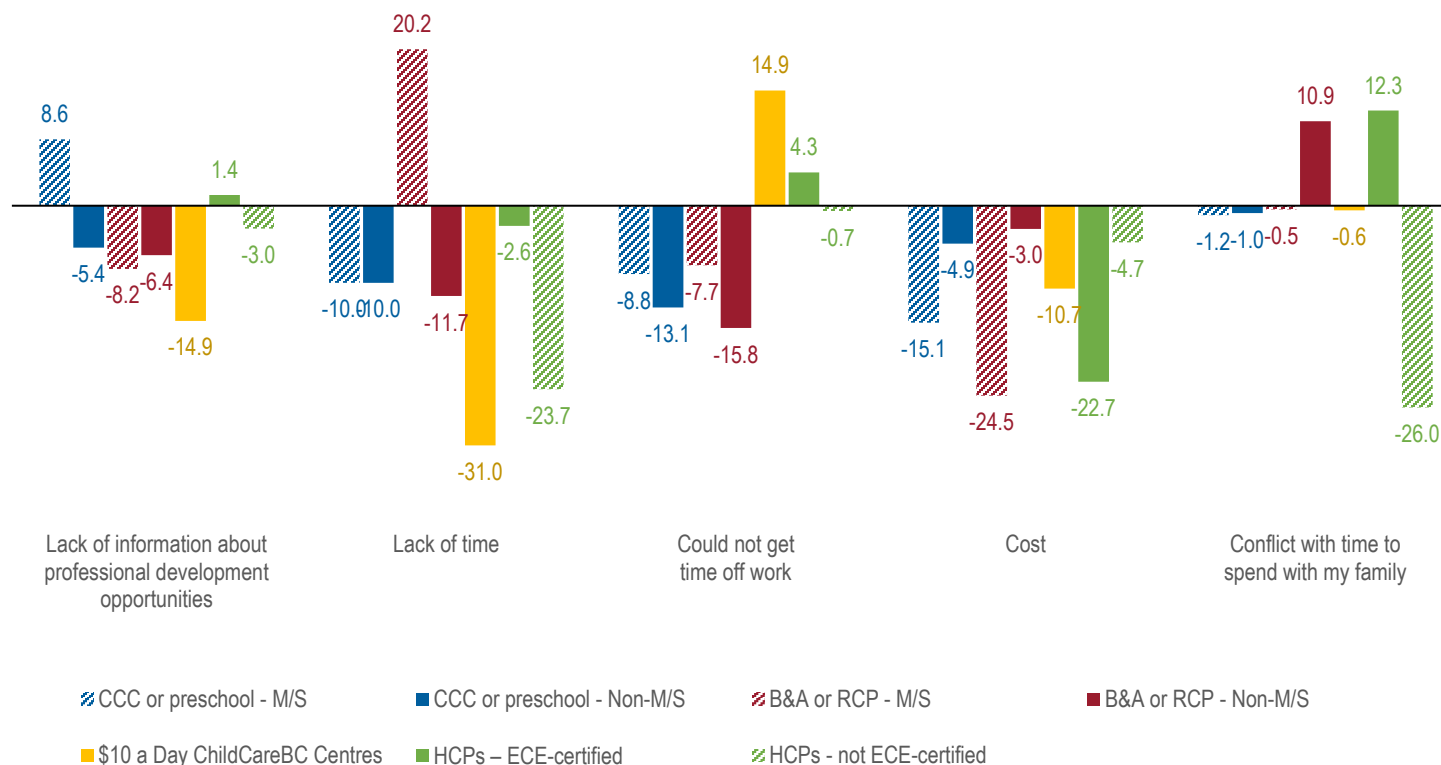
Figure 51   Main reasons for not participating in professional development activities: change in percentage points since 2019 by credential group

Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification).
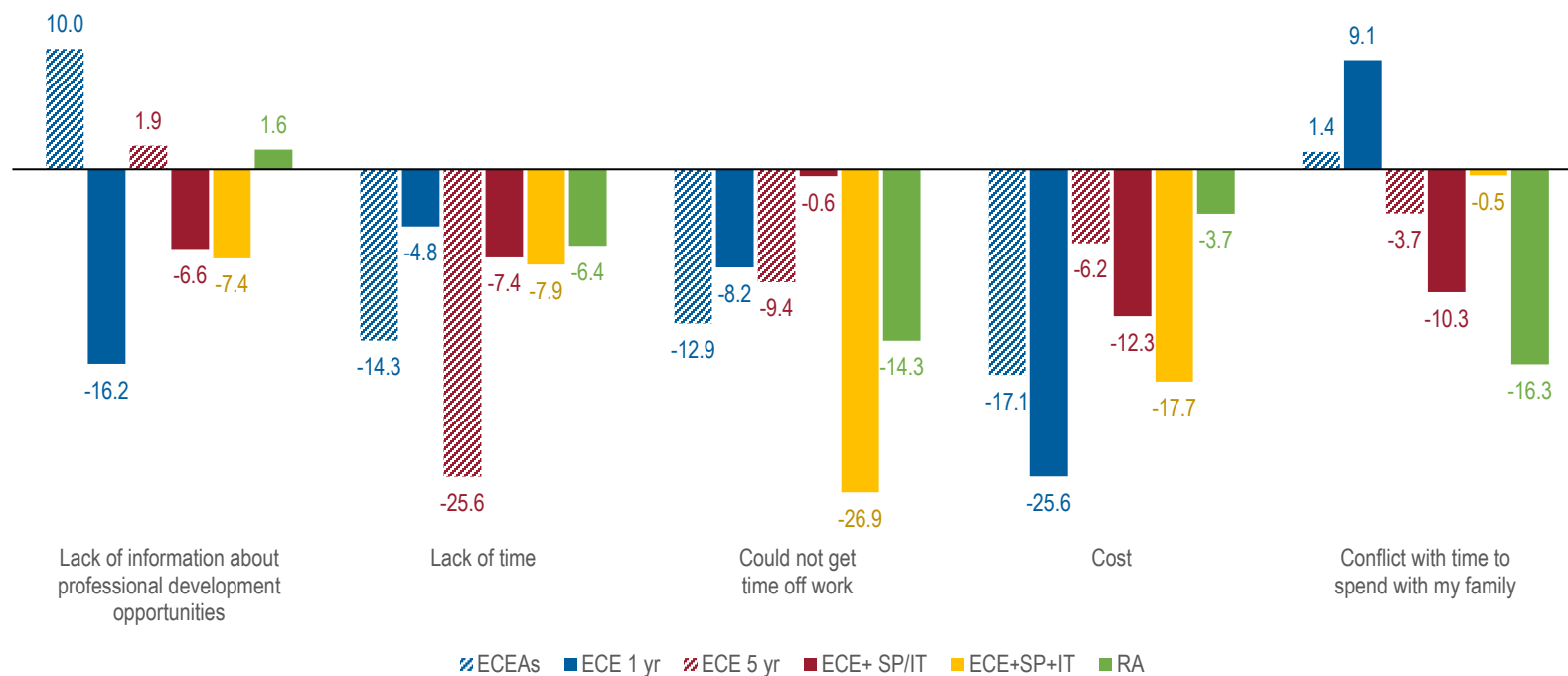
Last year we reported 2020 to have been a polarizing year in training, with more different types of PD being undertaken by the groups pursuing PD set against an overall decline in the proportion undertaking PD. At the same time fewer faced multiple barriers. The situation in 2021 seems to represent an improvement overall: the positive trends from 2020 continue and more are pursuing PD overall (except notably ECE-certified HCPs and 1-year ECE and single specialty groups posting very modest declines). Participation in Indigenous-related PD is growing. Nonetheless, to the extent that lack of time (and to a lesser degree, lack of information and cost) were cited as the dominant reasons for not participating (also, among HCPs, the ability to take time off work), these point to areas where effective policy might expect to generate increases in PD if single barriers could be overcome.

Regression analysis of factors associated with participation in professional development

A logistic regression analysis was conducted to better understand which factors contribute to attendance in professional development activities. After controlling for other factors, we find three factors can significantly predict attendance in professional development activities.

- **Business type:** Working in private businesses is associated with a 49% decrease in the odds of attending professional development activities.

- **Union membership:** Similarly, union membership is associated with a 41% decrease in the odds of attending professional development activities.

- **Number of benefits received:** An additional employment benefit (either financial or non-financial) that a child care professional receives is associated with a 7 per cent increase in the odds of attending professional development activities.

A linear regression was also conducted to understand the factors that contribute to higher hours spent in professional development activities. None of the predictive factors included in the model had a significant predictive effect on the number of hours spent in professional development activities.

Table 56   Regression results for participation in professional development activities

	Attended PD activities in the last year				Hours spent in Professional Development in the last year		
	Coeff.	Odds ratio	SE	p	Coeff.	Robust SE	P>|t|
Private business	**-0.67**	**0.51**	**0.20**	**0.00**	-4.77	4.57	0.30
Years working in child care (+5 years)	0.02	1.02	0.01	0.20	-2.68	1.43	0.06
Monthly earnings (+$1,000)	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.44	0.50	1.37	0.72
Bachelor or Masters Degree	0.06	1.07	0.19	0.73	-0.80	4.52	0.86
Gender (Women = 1)	0.08	1.08	0.51	0.88	-37.03	25.21	0.14
Indigenous person	-0.58	0.56	0.35	0.10	16.46	13.28	0.22
Newcomer status	-0.05	0.95	0.20	0.82	0.15	5.21	0.98
Member of a union	**-0.52**	**0.59**	**0.26**	**0.05**	-3.10	6.25	0.62
Age (+ 5 years)	-0.01	0.99	0.01	0.63	0.97	1.47	0.51
Number of benefits received	**0.07**	**1.07**	**0.03**	**0.01**	0.09	0.47	0.85

Notes: The odds ratio are calculated by taking the exponent of the regression coefficient (e^{β_i}). For the outcome hours spent in PD in the last year, a linear regression model was used, and odds ratio are therefore not appropriate. The significance of the coefficient is indicated by the columns p (i.e., p-value). An independent variable whose regression coefficient has a p-value of less than 5% (p<0.05) is considered to have an effect on the outcome that is significantly different from 0. Significant effects are highlighted in yellow in the table.

Source: 2021 SRDC Workforce Survey.

Figure 52 **Regression results for participation in professional development activities**
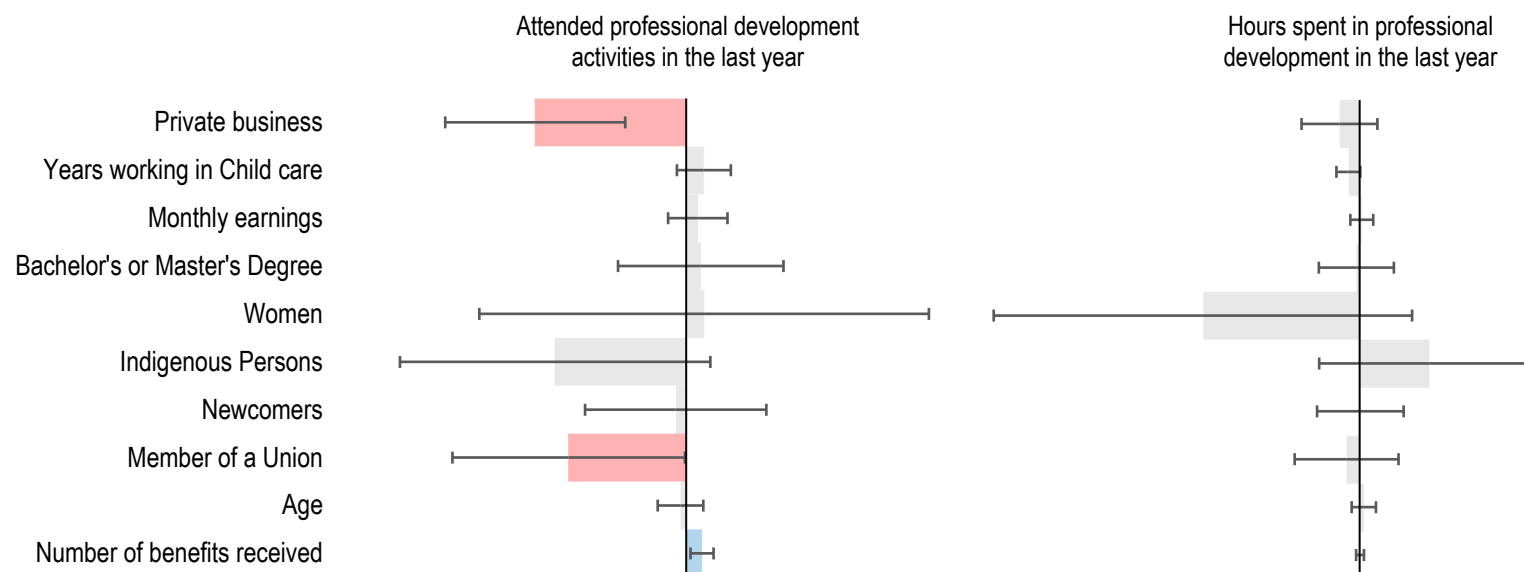
Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Notes: Bar graphs indicate the size of the coefficients (β) for each independent variable included in the model. Error bars indicate the 95% confidence interval for each coefficient; error bars for independent variables that have a non-zero effect on the dependent variable do not cross the 0 line.

Additionally, a significantly negative effect is indicated by a red bar; a significantly positive effect is indicated by a blue bar; a non-significant effect is indicated by grey bars.

Key informant interviews and case studies

All six case study sites continued to support professional development activities although the majority of these were now online. Pandemic restrictions meant that centres were unable to bring in outside speakers and staff could not attend offsite training. In 2020, the response to online training had been very positive as employees felt able to participate in training from home. However, in 2021 more respondents were unenthusiastic about online training. Respondents found it difficult to find the time and energy to complete training as they were finding work more stressful. More were suggesting they needed additional supports to help them complete courses and online training.

Three centres were using the BC Employers Training Grant to fund ECE training for their staff without their ECE certification.[40] This grant has reportedly paid between 70 to 100 per cent of training costs and since it is the employer who completes the paperwork this may remove one hurdle to getting started on the training.

> *"I use the skills training grants through the province… for someone who is an RA or an ECEA, the skills training grant will pay one hundred percent of their cost for their tuition, for their courses. So then it's a lot easier for myself and they don't have to write a bursary to wait to start the course. I'm the one who has to write the grant. I've gotten used to writing them. So if I can sit down and do them, I can do one in an hour." (KII Prototype Site)*

There were some concerns relating to the quality of online training for ECEAs and ECEs with some managers and supervisors suggesting that online ECEA and ECE courses did not provide the same depth as in-person courses.

> *"To be fully honest, I don't think it's as in depth as what I went through with the college … These girls are basically just kind of teaching themselves in a sense. And the courses don't seem as intense…. I don't really fully know what they're exactly learning. I know what their courses are kind of requiring, but then I don't know if they're just kind of zooming through it and not really taking it all in or understanding it." (Site B: Manager ECE IT)*

While there were concerns about ensuring the quality of care and education provided on a long-term basis, in the short-term sites tried to provide additional supports including mentoring, to those participating in online training. Although all acknowledged this was important, it was 'one more thing' fully qualified ECEs were being asked to do.

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40   https://www.workbc.ca/employer-resources/bc-employer-training-grant.aspx

Some concern was expressed about the value of participating in professional development when the career path was limited.

> *"There's a huge lack of upward momentum … like the pay just doesn't support the original price of getting your ECE. I'd love to see more options in the field. There's a lot of ECEs who are very driven in sort of educational stuff and that kind of thing, but they can't access those type of programs without a degree." (KII: In-home Mulitage Site)*

KPI 9: HOURS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PER ECL WORKFORCE MEMBER PER YEAR

Cross-sectional survey

Respondents who participated in professional development activities completed an average of 35 hours over the 12-month period preceding the survey. Table 57 breaks this down by qualification, showing that ECEAs and RAs tend to record above average hours of PD. However, about two in every three respondents who participated in any professional development activity completed 25 or fewer hours with nearly three-quarters of 1-year ECEs falling into this lowest hours bracket. The mean hours completed is often higher than 25 due to several respondents with very high levels of participation, which pulls the mean upwards.

When considered by program/role (Table 58), HCPs and M/S staff at before and after school/recreational programs are the groups recording above average hours. Lowest hours are registered by non M/S professionals at before and after school/recreational programs.

Both Table 57 and 58 show the situation has improved since 2019 in that more are completing PD, and more are putting in more hours. This appears to be more than just a rebound from lower levels during the height of the pandemic.

The means appear high when compared to the ECE renewal requirement for 40 hours of professional development related to the field of early childhood education completed within the last five years. It is possible the workforce are doing more than is expected of them to meet their certification requirements. It is also possible that the workforce are engaging in activities that they consider professional development but that are not eligible for certification purposes.

To understand the ongoing influence of the pandemic on PD, SRDC retained in the 2021 survey the question from 2020 on hours of PD related to COVID-19 health and safety protocols. Half (50 per cent) of those who undertook professional development in 2021 included some hours related to COVID-19 health and safety protocols, but the hours were not extensive, as shown in Tables 59 and 60.

Table 57   Professional development hours completed in the 12-month period preceding the survey in 2019, 2020, and 2021 by ECL qualification

	RA			ECEA			ECE 1yr			ECE 5yr			ECE+SP or IT			ECE+both SP&IT		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
0.1-25	82%	72%	59%	71%	67%	61%	83%	71%	73%	76%	74%	69%	70%	75%	65%	70%	72%	65%
26-50	13%	16%	24%	13%	11%	18%	13%	20%	20%	18%	20%	23%	22%	17%	24%	23%	23%	21%
51-100	4%	8%	11%	6%	13%	8%	3%	6%	2%	4%	4%	6%	5%	5%	6%	5%	4%	10%
101+	1%	5%	6%	10%	9%	12%	1%	2%	5%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	5%	2%	1%	3%
Mean	19.8	30.7	39.3	43.5	45.9	50.4	23.0	25.8	37.6	24.7	25.1	28.8	31.4	27.3	33.8	28.1	24.9	35.2
Standard Deviation	31.9	46.6	50.7	83.1	71.7	88.8	46.4	35.8	82.7	38.2	38.2	35.8	58.3	42.4	56.8	49.9	33.2	55.0

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification).

Table 58 **Professional development hours completed in the 12-month period preceding the survey in 2019, 2020, and 2021 by program/role**

	Child care centres (including multi-age child care) or preschool						Before & after school and recreational care programs						$10 a Day ChildCareBC sites			HCPs					
	M/S			Not M/S			M/S			Not M/S						ECE certified			Not ECE-certified		
	'19	'20	'21	'19	'20	'21	'19	'20	'21	'19	'20	'21	'19	'20	'21	'19	'20	'21	'19	'20	'21
0.1-25	73%	70%	63%	76%	75%	72%	80%	78%	62%	83%	78%	67%	62%	69%	59%	76%	72%	72%	81%	78%	55%
26-50	19%	23%	24%	17%	16%	18%	12%	12%	30%	15%	16%	33%	35%	19%	25%	18%	20%	17%	12%	8%	19%
51-100	6%	5%	8%	4%	5%	5%	7%	5%	0%	2%	2%	0%	0%	6%	8%	3%	5%	4%	4%	8%	19%
101+	3%	2%	5%	3%	3%	4%	2%	4%	8%	0%	4%	0%	4%	6%	7%	3%	3%	6%	3%	6%	6%
Mean	29.9	26.3	32.5	26.0	26.9	32.4	20.9	30.3	38.3	14.3	23.8	21.6	30.7	36.0	47.9	30.9	27.5	40.1	25.5	35.7	53.9
Standard Deviation	*54.9*	*35.2*	*39.8*	*44.9*	*39.9*	*61.2*	*23.2*	*57.6*	*57.0*	*13.6*	*26.9*	*14.9*	*45.8*	*61.9*	*81.7*	*72.0*	*45.8*	*84.1*	*52.2*	*66.4*	*92.7*

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care.

Table 59   PD hours related to COVID-19 health and safety protocols and guidelines 2020 and 2021 by ECL qualification

	RA		ECEA		ECE 1yr		ECE 5yr		ECE+SP or IT		ECE+both SP&IT	
	2020	**2021**	**2020**	**2021**	**2020**	**2021**	**2020**	**2021**	**2020**	**2021**	**2020**	**2021**
0	43%	41%	51%	48%	51%	49%	51%	51%	47%	53%	46%	54%
0.1-25	56%	56%	46%	48%	48%	51%	49%	49%	51%	47%	52%	44%
26-50	0%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	2%	2%
51+	1%	0%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Source: 2020 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification).

Table 60   **PD hours related to COVID-19 health and safety protocols and guidelines 2020 and 2021 by program/role**

| | Child care centres (including multi-age child care) or preschool | | | | Before & after school and recreational care programs | | | | $10 a Day ChildCareBC sites | | HCPs | | | |
| | M/S | | Not M/S | | M/S | | Not M/S | | | | ECE certified | | Not ECE-certified | |
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
0	44%	51%	53%	54%	35%	39%	42%	22%	52%	45%	45%	51%	45%	43%
0.1-25	54%	47%	46%	45%	62%	61%	58%	78%	47%	55%	52%	49%	52%	50%
26-50	2%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	2%	7%
51+	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%

Source: 2020 and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care..

KPI 10: EMPLOYERS REPORT OF THE SHARE OF THEIR ECL WORKFORCE POSSESSING CORE SKILLS AND POSSESSING SUPPLEMENTARY SKILLS

Cross-sectional survey

Employers were asked about the proportion of their staff who needed to improve specific core skills. Figure 53 shows employer responses from 2019 to 2021 for organizations that exclusively operate programs that require ECE certification. The numbers inside the parentheses indicate the percentage point change since 2019. The responses to this question serve as a proxy measure of employer's assessment of the skills of their workforce. Figure 54 shows the equivalent results for employers that operate at least one program that does not require ECE certification.
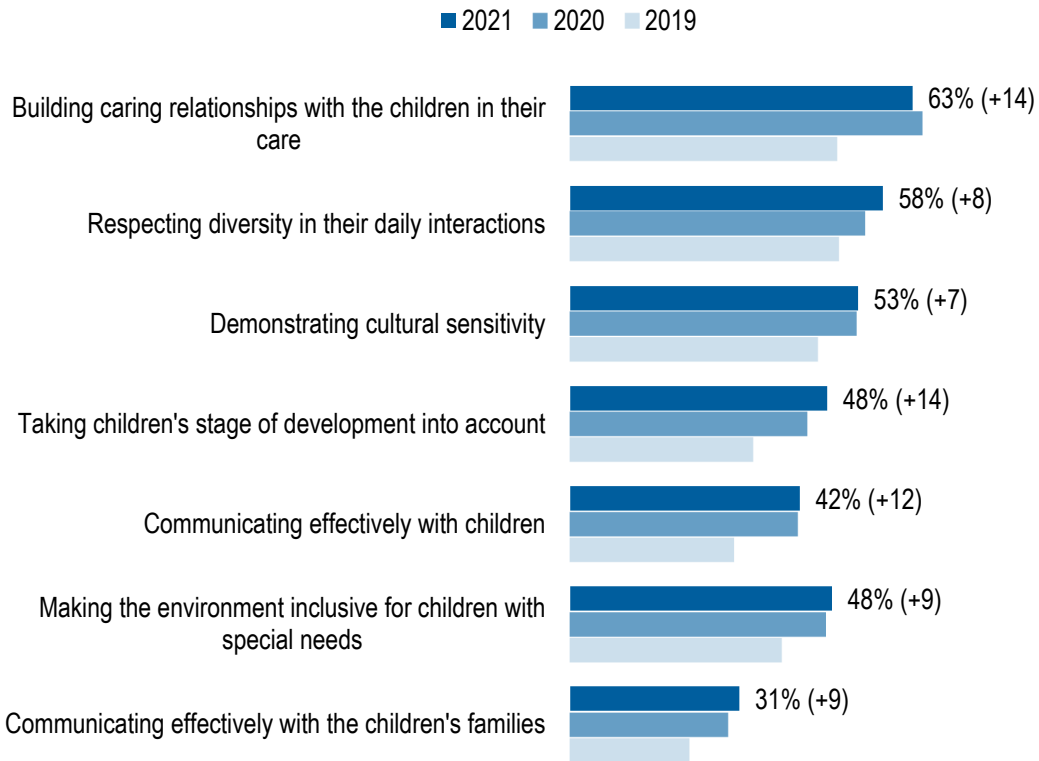
The most highly rated skills continued to be building caring relationships with the children in their care (63-73 per cent), respecting diversity in their daily interactions (58-64 per cent) and demonstrating cultural sensitivity (53-56 per cent). The skill that needed the most improvement was the ability to communicate effectively with the children's families (31-40 per cent). Similar to last year, for each of these skills only between five and seven per cent of employers reported that the majority of their staff who directly work with children needed to improve their skills. Employers' assessment of core skills generally improved from 2019 to 2020 but tended to drop in 2021 at organizations that exclusively operate programs that require ECE certification. For employers that operate at least one program that does not require ECE certification, the 2019-2020 improvement tended to continue into 2021 (Figure 54) except building caring relationships with children, although the 2021 level was still markedly higher than the 2019 level. In general, reports for 2021 still implied higher skills compared to 2019. Of course, ongoing COVID-19 protocols may have had a detrimental effect on the ECL workforce's ability to communicate with families and/or caused an additional burden as the quantity of information to be shared increased.

Figure 53 **Proportion of employers that exclusively operate programs that require ECE certification who indicated <u>none</u> of their staff needed to improve ECL core skills, 2019 to 2021**
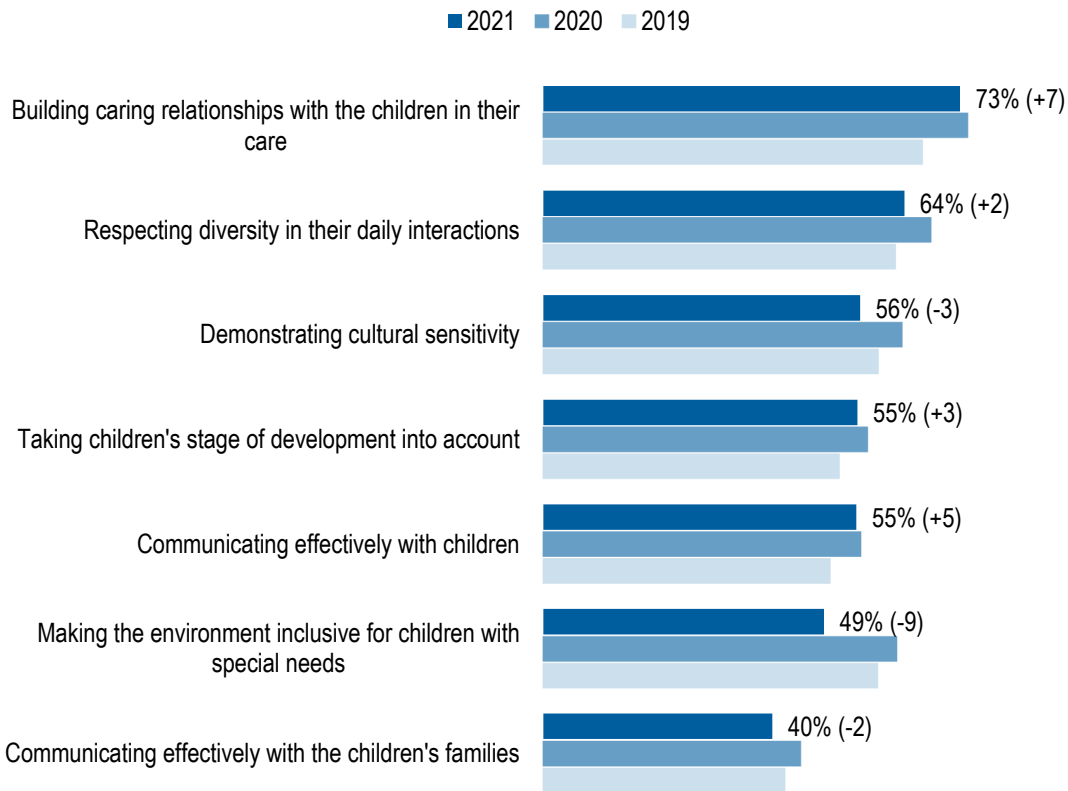
Source: SRDC employer survey. Includes employers who exclusively operate one or more of the following programs: group care under 3, group care 2.5yrs – school age, preschool, or multi-age programs.

Figure 54 **Proportion of employers that operate at least one program that does not require ECE certification who indicated <u>none</u> of their staff needed to improve ECL core skills, 2019 to 2021**

■ 2021 ■ 2020 ■ 2019

Building caring relationships with the children in their care — 63% (+14)

Respecting diversity in their daily interactions — 58% (+8)

Demonstrating cultural sensitivity — 53% (+7)

Taking children's stage of development into account — 48% (+14)

Communicating effectively with children — 42% (+12)

Making the environment inclusive for children with special needs — 48% (+9)

Communicating effectively with the children's families — 31% (+9)

Source: SRDC employer survey. Includes employers who operate one or more of the following programs: group care school age, occasional care, or recreational care (2021).

KPI 11: EMPLOYMENT STABILITY OF ECL WORKFORCE, INCLUDING VARIANCES FOR STAFFING FOR PROVIDERS, WORK HOURS, JOB TENURE, JOB EXITS

Cross-sectional survey

Job and sector retention

The workforce survey sought to determine whether members of the ECL workforce expected to be leaving their jobs soon. As seen in Table 61, most respondents in Centre-based ECL expected to be working with their current employer one year after completing the survey. Although 83 per cent of managers and supervisors expected to stay, this proportion was lower among non M/S professionals (70 per cent at CCC and 68 per cent at before and after school/recreational programs). About 5 per cent of all managers and supervisors, 8 per cent of ECL professionals at $10 a day sites and 12 per cent of non M/S professionals in CCC reported that they were expecting to leave their current employment. This proportion grew to 24 per cent among non M/S at before and after school/recreational programs. Readers may recall from Table 6 that typically non M/S professionals had worked in the sector the least time.

Respondents who were not expecting to continue in their current workplace (or were not sure) were asked if they expected to work in the ECL sector one year after completing the survey. From their responses we can estimate the proportion of professionals who were not expecting to work in the ECL sector at all in a year. Among non M/S professionals in CCC, this proportion was 5 per cent (up from 3 per cent in 2019). But at least another one in ten (10 per cent) were not sure whether they would stay working in the sector. HCPs were equivalently (un)committed to remaining working in the sector. Among non M/S professionals in before and after school/recreational programs, this proportion was 15 per cent (up from 1 per cent in 2019). And at least another 8 per cent were not sure whether they would stay working in the sector. The answers in Table 61, if borne out after 2021, could point to more turnover in this workforce in years to come.

For the first time in 2021, the second question was posed to ECEAs and ECEs not in ECL at the time of the survey. Interestingly, just under a quarter (23 per cent) expected to move back into working in ECL within a year and an equivalent proportion were not sure. Just 55 per cent expected to still be outside ECL in a year's time.

Table 62 presents the same data again but this time by qualification. Between 8 and 11 per cent of each group defined by qualification seemed certain they would not remain with their current employer, a proportion planning to depart that has grown markedly only for RAs and ECEs with a single specialty. Uncertainty over staying (don't knows) had grown over time for most groups.

When measured by certificate, expectations to work in the ECL sector presents a more complicated story. After all, those ECEs/ECEAs not currently working in the sector could simply be expecting to stay working in their same (non ECL sector) role. Still, these results indicate some 8 to 11 per cent holding each type of certificate expect not to be working in ECL in a year's time.

ECEAs/ECEs not in ECL were asked about their reasons for leaving the sector (Table 63). The most common answers were related to dissatisfaction with pay and benefits in child care (51 per cent and 31 per cent, respectively). Other common answers included dissatisfaction with work conditions (29 per cent) and career advancement opportunities (26 per cent). However, the share giving these reasons was higher in 2021 than in 2020 and closer to the responses obtained in 2019, when 57 per cent reported dissatisfaction with pay and 36 per cent were dissatisfied with work conditions. In 2020, one in eight (12 per cent) had left due to health reasons related to COVID-19 but by 2021 all health reasons combined only accounted for 4 per cent of departures.

Table 61   Job retention expectations by program/role 2021

	Child care centres (including multi-age child care) or preschool						Before & after school and recreational care programs						$10 a Day ChildCareBC sites			HCPs			ECEAs/ ECEs not in ECL
	M/S			Not M/S			M/S			Not M/S									
Expect to work with current employer after 1 year?																			
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2021
Yes	88%	86%	83%	77%	74%	70%	82%	81%	83%	73%	75%	68%	81%	82%	72%	91%	90%	N/A	N/A
Don't know	8%	10%	12%	16%	17%	18%	15%	12%	12%	20%	18%	8%	13%	12%	21%	7%	7%	N/A	N/A
No	4%	4%	5%	7%	9%	12%	3%	8%	5%	7%	8%	24%	5%	6%	8%	3%	3%	N/A	N/A
Expect to work in ECL after 1 year?																			
Yes	92%	90%	87%	86%	84%	85%	92%	85%	85%	82%	80%	77%	90%	87%	88%	92%	92%	85%	23%
Don't know	6%	9%	10%	11%	12%	10%	7%	9%	12%	17%	15%	8%	6%	9%	8%	6%	5%	10%	22%
No	2%	2%	3%	3%	4%	5%	1%	7%	3%	1%	5%	15%	4%	4%	3%	2%	2%	5%	55%

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care.

Table 62   **Job retention expectations by ECL qualification 2019-2021**

	RA			ECEA			ECE 1yr			ECE 5yr			ECE+SP or IT			ECE+both SP&IT		
Expect to work with current employer after 1 year?																		
	2019	**2020**	**2021**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
Yes	87%	84%	75%	74%	75%	73%	79%	84%	79%	80%	82%	77%	85%	81%	76%	83%	80%	76%
Don't know	8%	12%	14%	16%	19%	19%	13%	11%	12%	13%	12%	16%	11%	12%	14%	8%	14%	17%
No	4%	4%	11%	8%	6%	8%	6%	5%	8%	4%	6%	8%	3%	7%	10%	7%	6%	8%
Expect to work in ECL after 1 year?																		
Yes	89%	89%	80%	82%	86%	83%	85%	87%	84%	83%	84%	77%	86%	84%	78%	83%	81%	80%
Don't know	7%	8%	12%	15%	10%	12%	11%	7%	7%	10%	12%	12%	10%	11%	13%	8%	12%	10%
No	3%	3%	8%	4%	4%	5%	5%	6%	9%	7%	5%	11%	5%	6%	9%	8%	7%	10%

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Notes: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification).

Table 63   Main reasons why ECEs/ECEAs are not in ECL

Reasons for not working in child care	%
Dissatisfied with pay in child care	51%
Dissatisfied with benefits in child care	31%
Dissatisfied with working conditions in child care	29%
Dissatisfied with career advancement opportunities in child care	26%
Preference for other occupation	17%
Other personal reasons	11%
Taking a break to further studies	6%
Ill health / Health reasons	4%
Not able to find a job in child care	1%
Other reasons	32%

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey: survey respondents not in ECL. Respondents could cite up to three reasons.

Staff turnover

There were 705 employers who provided staff hiring and turn-over information. Net loss is presented in Table 64, with the numbers in parentheses in the percentage column representing the change in percentage points from 2019. Since the table documents net loss, an increase is less desirable than a decrease – it reflects the proportion of employers who have lost more staff than they gained in 2021 and since 2019.

Forty-five per cent of employers reported experiencing staff net loss across all positions in the 12 months preceding the survey, which is an 11-percentage point increase compared to 2019. In both full time and part time positions, employers experienced the greatest staff loss from ECL professionals (93 per cent of the losses for full time positions and 98 per cent of the losses for part time positions). The proportion of employers experiencing staff net loss either remained consistent or increased since 2019 across all types of positions. The change in staff net loss since 2019 for supervisor, manager, and director positions was around one percentage point. For ECL professionals, the net loss increased by 2 percentage points for part time workers and by 8 percentage points for full time workers.

While sample size does not permit a full breakdown by type of employer, sections B and C of Table 64 reveal how the loss of ECL professionals is greater at organizations where some or all programs do not require ECE than at organizations where all programs require ECE.

Table 64   Number and proportion of employers who experienced staff net loss 2021 and change since 2019

	Full Time		Part Time		Overall	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
ECL professional	231	33% (+9)	160	23% (+3)	302	43% (+11)
Supervisor	35	5% (0)	7	1% (0)	40	6% (0)
Manager	25	4% (+1)	5	1% (+1)	29	4% (+1)
Director	10	1% (0)	5	1% (+1)	14	2% (0)
All positions	**249**	**35% (+8)**	**164**	**23% (+2)**	**315**	**45% (+11)**
(B) Organizations where all programs require ECE (n=433)						
ECL professional	126	29% (+7)	76	18% (+1)	159	37% (+10)
(C) Organizations where some or all programs do not require ECE (n=268)						
ECL professional	105	39% (+11)	84	31% (+6)	143	53% (+14)

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC employer surveys. Section (B) includes employers who exclusively operate one or more of the following programs: group care under 3, group care 2.5yrs – school age, preschool, or multi-age programs. Section (C) includes employers who operate one or more of the following programs: group care school age, occasional care, or recreational care (2021). **Note**: Increases are shown in red as it is a negative result, indicating an increased loss of staff since 2019. ECL professional refers to "a person who has primary responsibility for a group of children. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE." Supervisor refers to "a person who has responsibility for a group of children and supervises child care workers [professionals]." Manager refers to "a person with management duties (which can include hiring, payroll, performance reviews, compliance with licensing requirements, etc.). This person has administrative duties and may have child care duties." A director refers to "a person who has management or administrative duties only."

The proportion of employers who experienced staff net loss varied by health authority region (Figure 55). Compared to the provincial average of 45 per cent, employers in Northern Health Authority and Fraser Health Authority experienced lower net loss of staff. Vancouver Island Health experienced the most net loss, with more than half of employers (53 per cent) reporting net loss in staff. Employers in FHA and NHA experienced the smallest increase relative to 2019 (+5 percentage points), and employers in VIH once again experienced the greatest increase in net loss (+26 percentage points) relative to 2019.

Figure 55 **Proportion of employers who experienced overall staff net loss by health authority region, 2021 and change since 2019**
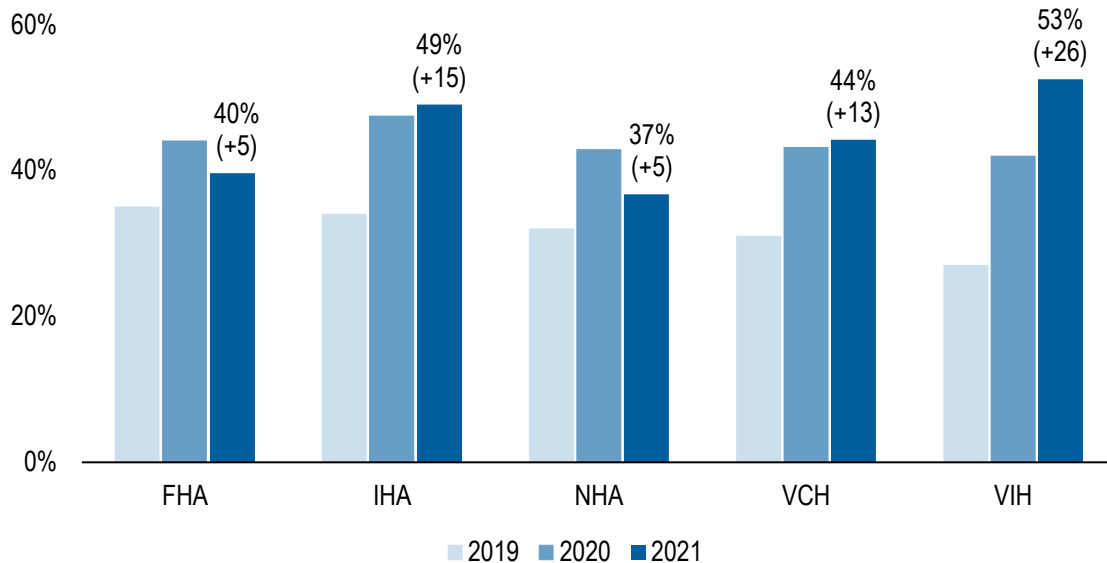
Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC employer surveys.
Note: FHA: Fraser Health Authority; IHA: Interior Health Authority; NHA: Northern Health Authority; VCH: Vancouver Coastal Health; VIH: Vancouver Island Health.

This information was also used to estimate the magnitude of staff turnover and net change (typically also net loss) within workplaces by position (Table 65). Like 2019, the number of vacant positions was more pronounced for full time staff than part time staff in 2021, and it was again among ECL professionals (compared to senior staff) that employers experienced the greatest net loss. The change in average net loss of ECL professionals from 2019 to 2021 at organizations where all programs require ECE was considerable at -0.46 positions (meaning the average loss per centre increased nearly one half of a worker) for full time workers and -0.16 for part time workers. But at organizations where some or all programs do not require ECE it was even higher at -0.54 full time and -0.42 part time. For full time ECL professionals, the net loss was largely driven by the reduction in new hires. Each organization requiring ECEs hired an average of six-tenths of a worker in 2021 while each organization where some or all programs do not require ECEs hired an average of three-quarters of a worker. Both were well short of requirements to offset voluntary departures let alone dismissals. For part time positions, the increase in net loss was also driven by the reduction in new hires.

Unlike other measures that have shown a return to 2019 levels after a "disruption" in 2020, the trend for full time staff net loss observed in 2021 represents a decline since both 2020 and 2019. This may suggest that the pandemic is still having a large impact on staff net change, or that there are persistent factors aside from the pandemic impacting ECL workforce retention.

Table 65   Centre level average staff turn-over and net change, 2021

	Full Time					Part Time				
	Dismissed	Left voluntarily	Hired	Net change	Change from 2019	Dismissed	Left voluntarily	Hired	Net change	Change from 2019
Organizations where all programs require ECE										
Professional	0.20	0.86	0.60	**-0.46**	-0.46	0.06	0.30	0.23	**-0.13**	-0.16
Supervisor	0.01	0.06	0.03	**-0.04**	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	**0.00**	0.01
Manager	0.01	0.03	0.03	**-0.02**	-0.05	0.00	0.01	0.00	**-0.01**	-0.01
Director	0.00	0.02	0.02	**0.00**	-0.03	0.00	0.01	0.00	**-0.01**	-0.02
Organizations where some or all programs do not require ECE										
Professional	0.29	1.18	0.76	**-0.71**	-0.54	0.12	1.00	0.74	**-0.38**	-0.42
Supervisor	0.02	0.08	0.09	**-0.01**	0.11	0.01	0.01	0.01	**-0.01**	-0.03
Manager	0.03	0.05	0.05	**-0.03**	0.07	0.00	0.01	0.01	**0.00**	-0.04
Director	0.00	0.01	0.01	**0.00**	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.01

Source: 2019 and 2021 SRDC employer surveys. Top section includes employers who exclusively operate one or more of the following programs: group care under 3, group care 2.5yrs – school age, preschool, or multi-age programs. Bottom section includes employers who operate one or more of the following programs: group care school age, occasional care, or recreational care (2021).
**Note**: [Net change = Hired minus Dismissed minus Left Voluntarily: all values rounded to two decimal places]. Professional refers to "a person who has primary responsibility for a group of children. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE." Supervisor refers to "a person who has responsibility for a group of children and supervises child care workers [professionals]. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE." Manager refers to "a person with management duties (which can include hiring, payroll, performance reviews, compliance with licensing requirements, etc.). This person has administrative duties and may have child care duties." A director refers to "a person who has management or administrative duties only."

Employers were also asked to provide their perspectives on the top three reasons why their employees left their centres voluntarily (Figures 56 and 57). More response options were included in the 2021 and 2020 surveys to account for COVID-19, so we expect all proportions to drop slightly relative to 2019. Therefore, the ranking of the reasons may be more telling than the overall percentage of employers who select each one. Since COVID-19 related questions were not included in the 2019 survey, some options do not have a 2019 comparison.

Consistent with 2019 findings, at organizations where all programs require ECE certification (Figure 56) accepting another job in a different child care workplace remained as the top reason

why employers thought their employees voluntarily left their organization. This was followed closely by family moves and by staff returning to school, which were both less frequent reasons in 2019 and 2020. In 2021, the fourth and fifth major reasons were dissatisfaction with salary and job too stressful. Health-related reasons moved from the second (in 2020) to the sixth most common reason. The (non-health) impact of COVID-19 seems to have lessened compared to last year.

Figure 56   **Employers' ranking of the main reasons for employees leaving their organizations where all programs require ECE, 2019 to 2021**
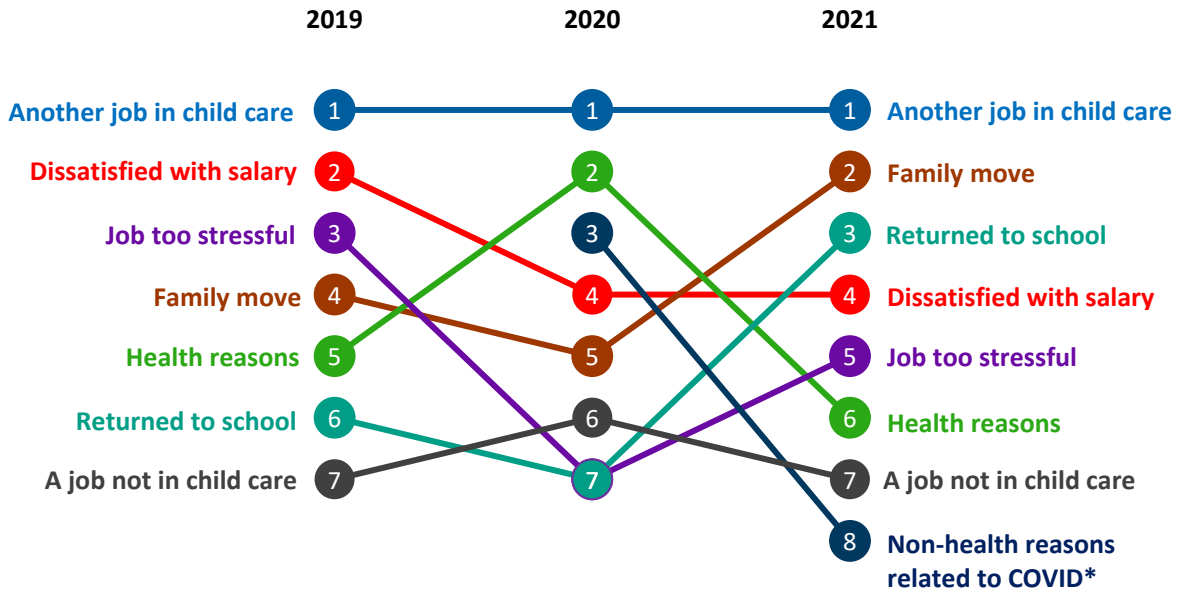
Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC employer surveys. Includes employers who exclusively operate one or more of the following programs: group care under 3, group care 2.5yrs – school age, preschool, or multi-age programs.

Note: There was a tie for seventh place in 2020 between "job too stressful" and "returned to school".

*"Non-health reasons related to COVID" was not an option in 2019.

At organizations where some or all programs do not require ECE (Figure 57), reasons varied even more over time although the top two (returned to school and leaving for another job in child care) remained the same as in 2019. Jobs not in child care were a more prominent reason for this group of employers. These organizations seemed especially affected by health related losses during the peak of COVID in 2020, as health reasons was the top rated reason for leaving then but in 2021 returned to sixth, similar to its 2019 position of seventh. Family moves were much less important for this group of organizations than those where all programs required ECEs.

Figure 57   Employers' ranking of the main reasons for employees leaving their organizations where some or all programs do not require ECE, 2019 to 2021
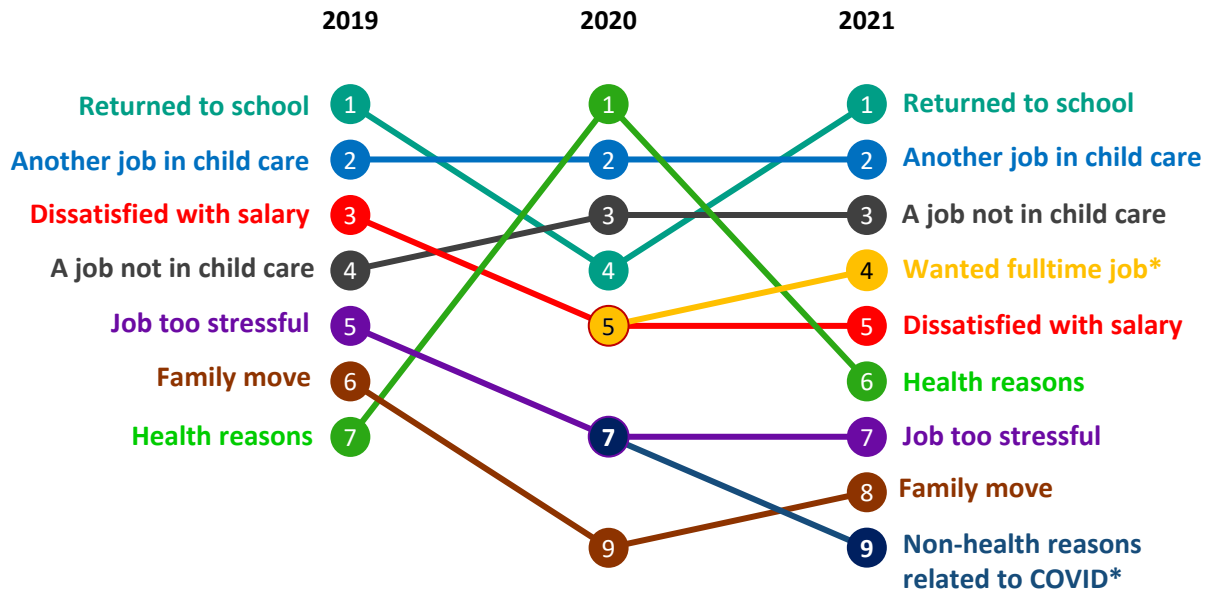
Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC employer survey. Includes employers who operate one or more of the following programs: group care school age, occasional care, or recreational care (2021).

Note: There was a tie for fifth and seventh places in 2020.

* "Wanted fulltime job" and "non-health reasons related to COVID" were not options in 2019.

Regression analysis of factors associated with intention to leave ECL

A multinominal logistic regression analysis was conducted to better understand the factors that can predict child care professionals' intentions to leave their current job or the child care sector entirely in the coming year. Both dependent variables have three possible outcomes:

- **No,** the child care professional does not intend to leave their current job (and therefore, the sector) in the coming year.

- **Yes**, the child care professional intends to leave their current job or the sector in the coming year.

- **Don't know**, the child care professional has not decided whether they will stay or leave their current job or the child care sector in the coming year.

The multinominal logistic regression assesses the two-way comparison of each possible category in the dependent variable (identified above) with each of the predictor variables (i.e., independent variables), keeping one of the options as a base category against which the others are compared. For this analysis, the "No" category was used as the base.

After controlling for other factors, we find four factors that can significantly predict whether a child care professional intends to leave their job and two that can predict uncertainty in an intention to leave their job. Additionally, we find three factors can predict whether they intend to leave the child care sector and another three can predict uncertainty in leaving the sector.

The following provides a guided interpretation of the results of the relative risk ratios (RRR) for each significant factor:

Intention to leave current job

- **Number of benefits received:** An additional employment benefit (either financial or non-financial) that a child care professional receives is associated with a 10% decrease in the relative risk of leaving their current job, and an 8% decrease in feeling uncertain about leaving their current job compared to staying in their current job.

- **Higher education:** Having a bachelor's or Master's degree is associated with an 81% increase in the relative risk of leaving their current job compared to staying in their job.

- **Gender:** Women are 79% less likely than other genders of saying that they intend to leave their current job.

- **Age:** Five extra years of age is associated with a 24% decrease in the relative risk of leaving their current job in the coming year compared to staying in their current job.

- **Union membership:** Union membership is associated with an 87% increase in the relative risk of feeling *uncertain* about whether to leave their current job compared to staying in their current job, subject to certain caveats.[41]

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[41] While statistically significant, it may be important not to make too much of this finding. Union members are not significantly more likely to report that they leave their jobs, just more likely to say they don't know how they feel. Elsewhere in this report, union members are found more likely to receive benefits and receipt of benefits is associated with a decrease in wanting to leave. Thus, it is worth recalling how regression works to identify the *independent* effect of each attribute. Thus, in this model that *already* includes the effects of benefits on wanting to leave, what is shown as the influence of union membership is the effect of membership on wanting to leave over and above any influence of the extra benefits that membership may bring. That said, if a factor that is *not included in the model* is tightly associated with union membership (like, say, specific workplace settings) that affects job indecision, then the effect attributed to union membership could be picking up the influence of that factor meaning

Intention to leave child care

- **Years working in child care:** Five extra years of experience working in child care is associated with a 43% increase in the relative risk of intending to leave the child care sector within the coming year, compared to staying in the sector.

- **Gender:** Women are 88% less likely to say that they intend to leave the child care sector.

- **Monthly earnings:** An extra $1,000 dollars of earnings per month is associated with a 15% increase in the relative risk of feeling unsure about leaving the sector in the coming year.

- **Age:** Five extra years of age is associated with a 30% decrease in the relative risk of leaving the child care sector in the coming year.[42]

- **Number of benefits received:** An additional employment benefit (either financial or non-financial) that a child care professional receives is associated with an 8% decrease in feeling uncertain about leaving sector compared to staying in the sector in the coming year.

union membership per se may not be accounting for differences in job indecision. The survey sample may not be representative of all unionized workplaces.

[42] Note that the estimated effects of aging and years of experience on expectations to leave work in child care are in opposite directions. All else equal, being older reduces expectations of leaving while longer experience increases expectations to leave. The coefficients are nearly the same magnitude and the effects do appear to cancel each other out. But it is worth recalling that the model is static (measured at one point in time) and does not necessarily predict the effect on each person's expectations of every additional year. The underlying data are showing that, all else equal, people in the workforce in 2021 who were older were less likely to expect to leave than those who were younger and for those at any given age, those with less work experience in ECL would be less likely to expect to leave than those with more experience.
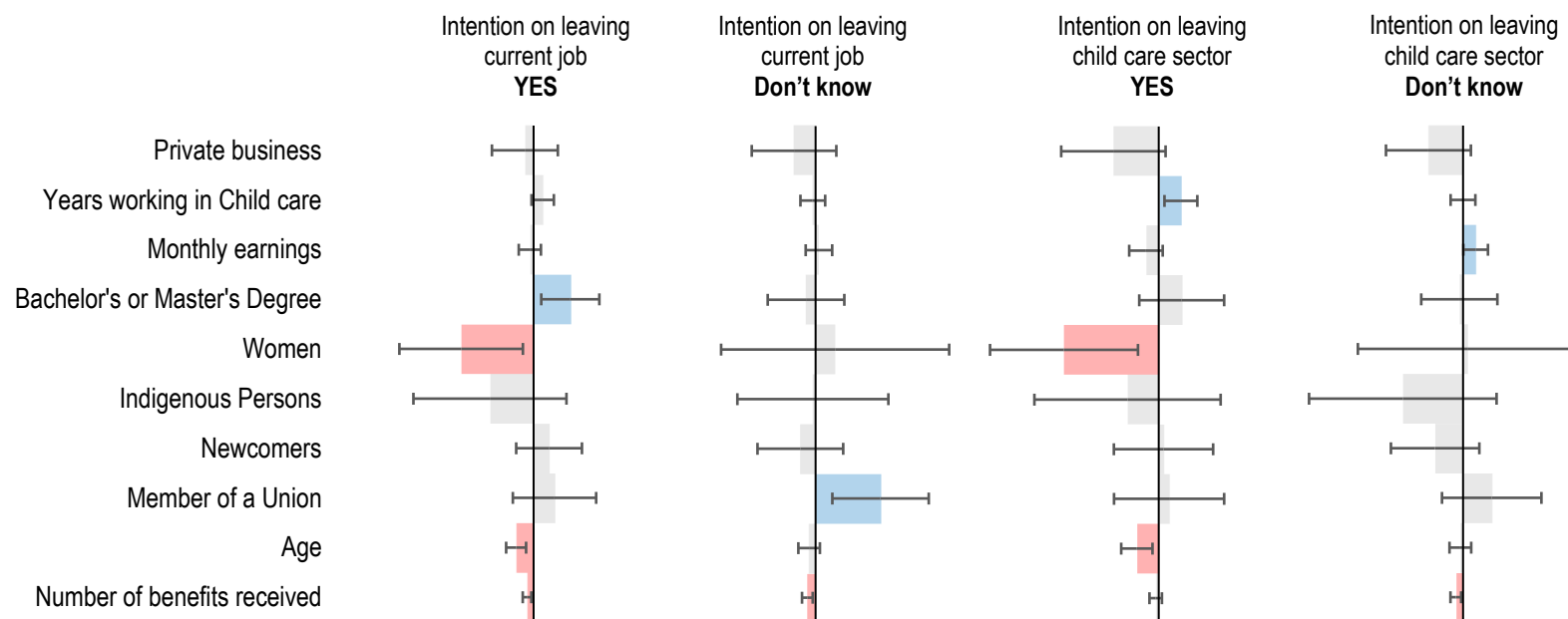
Table 66   Logistic regression results of factors contributing to leaving their current job or the child care sector

	Intention to LEAVE their current job								Intention to LEAVE child care							
	Yes				Don't know				Yes				Don't know			
	Coef	RRR	SE	p	Coef	RRR	SE	p	Coef	RRR	SE	p	Coef	RRR	SE	p
Private business	-0.14	0.87	0.27	0.61	-0.21	0.81	0.21	0.32	-0.73	0.48	0.43	0.09	-0.39	0.68	0.24	0.11
Years working in child care (+ 5 years)	0.15	1.16	0.09	0.11	-0.03	0.97	0.06	0.65	**0.36**	**1.43**	**0.13**	**0.01**	0.00	1.00	0.07	0.99
Monthly earnings (+ $1,000)	-0.06	0.94	0.09	0.52	0.03	1.03	0.06	0.63	-0.20	0.81	0.14	0.13	**0.14**	**1.15**	**0.07**	**0.05**
Bachelor's or Master's Degree	**0.59**	**1.81**	**0.24**	**0.01**	-0.09	0.91	0.19	0.62	0.37	1.45	0.35	0.29	-0.04	0.96	0.22	0.85
Women	**-1.16**	**0.31**	**0.51**	**0.02**	0.19	1.21	0.56	0.74	**-1.52**	**0.22**	**0.61**	**0.01**	0.05	1.05	0.63	0.94
Indigenous persons	-0.70	0.50	0.63	0.27	-0.03	0.97	0.37	0.94	-0.50	0.61	0.76	0.51	-0.68	0.51	0.54	0.21
Newcomers	0.25	1.28	0.27	0.36	-0.15	0.86	0.21	0.49	0.08	1.08	0.41	0.85	-0.31	0.73	0.25	0.22
Member of a union	0.34	1.40	0.34	0.32	**0.62**	**1.87**	**0.24**	**0.01**	0.17	1.18	0.45	0.71	0.32	1.38	0.28	0.26
Age (+ 5 years)	**-0.28**	**0.76**	**0.08**	**0.00**	-0.06	0.94	0.05	0.23	**-0.35**	**0.70**	**0.13**	**0.01**	-0.03	0.97	0.06	0.63
Number of benefits received	**-0.10**	**0.90**	**0.04**	**0.00**	**-0.08**	**0.92**	**0.03**	**0.00**	-0.05	0.95	0.05	0.33	**-0.08**	**0.92**	**0.03**	**0.01**

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Notes: The relative risk ratios (RRR) are calculated by taking the exponent of the regression coefficient (e^{β_i}). The significance of the coefficient is indicated by the columns p (i.e., p-value). An independent variable whose regression coefficient has a p-value of less than 5% ($p<0.05$) is considered to have an non-zero effect on the response category from the nominal outcome. Significant effects are highlighted in yellow in the table.

Figure 58 **Logistic regression results of factors contributing to leaving their current job or the child care sector**

Intention on leaving current job **YES**   Intention on leaving current job **Don't know**   Intention on leaving child care sector **YES**   Intention on leaving child care sector **Don't know**

Private business
Years working in Child care
Monthly earnings
Bachelor's or Master's Degree
Women
Indigenous Persons
Newcomers
Member of a Union
Age
Number of benefits received

Source: 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Notes: Bar graphs indicate the size of the coefficients (β) for each independent variable included in the model. Error bars indicate the 95% confidence interval for each coefficient; error bars for independent variables that have a non-zero effect on the dependent variable do not cross the 0 line.

Additionally, a significantly negative effect is indicated by a red bar; a significantly positive effect is indicated by a blue bar; a non-significant effect is indicated by grey bars.

Regression analysis of factors associated with staff turnover and other staffing difficulties

To better understand the factors associated with employment stability, SRDC conducted a regression analysis using information from the employer survey. The regression included four dependent variables per workplace:

- Net change in ECL professionals

- Number of ECL professionals hired in the last 12 months

- Number of ECL professionals who left voluntarily in the last 12 months

- Number of vacant ECL professional positions (fulltime and parttime)

For simplicity, the analysis was limited to 2021 data and to ECL professionals (as opposed to supervisors, managers, and directors) because most of the turnover/change occurs in this position.

Key factors that were investigated for their impact on the dependent variables were:

- Auspice type (private business or not-for-profit/public)

- Average ECL professional wage

- Differential between the highest and lowest hourly wage per workplace

- Whether at least one staff member at the workplace is receiving the wage enhancement

- Total number of core and additional benefits offered

- Whether all senior staff have ECE certification

- Staff with different levels of training are recognized with different responsibilities (yes or no)

- Staff with higher levels of education and experience are recognized with high wages (yes or no)

- Staff are provided with an outline of career options at the workplace (yes or no)

- Performance reviews are conducted with staff (yes or no)

Number of ECL professionals at the workplace was also included to control for effects related to workplace size. Additionally, the dependent variables were converted to proportional values by dividing each measure by the "baseline" number of ECL professionals at each workplace[43]. Collectively, these approaches allow us to compare the influences of, say, average wages on the number of ECL professionals who left voluntarily across small and large workplaces (since large workplaces will inherently have higher staff numbers).

Three of the four models did not achieve overall significance; that is, the predictor variables selected from the employer survey are not sufficiently predictive of ECL professional net change, rate of new hires, or rate of voluntarily resignations. The overall model was, however, predictive of the rate of ECL professional vacancies (R^2=0.03, $F(11, 459) = 2.32$, $p = 0.01$). This means that the cluster of predictor variables explain approximately 3 per cent of the variability in rate of vacancies per workplace. Despite low overall significance of the models, we can still test whether individual predictors emerge as key factors explaining each outcome variable.

The results of the models are shown in Table 67. Only three of the predictors had a significant impact on the outcome variables, indicating that other factors (not captured by the employer survey) are largely driving employment stability in our sample. No factors were found to be significantly predictive of net change in ECL professionals and number of ECL professionals hired in the previous year.

After controlling for other factors, all senior staff at a workplace having an ECE certificate was associated with a lower rate of ECL professionals leaving voluntarily (β=-0.05, p=0.05). Senior staff certification was the only significant predictor of ECL professional resignation. This finding has a fairly straightforward interpretation: highly qualified senior staff encourage retention, whereas senior staff without ECE qualifications may be less desirable colleagues in an ECL environment, leading to more staff leaving the workplace.

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[43]   This value was estimated by taking the total number of current ECL professionals, adding the number who were dismissed, furloughed, or left voluntarily in the last 12 months, and then subtracting the number who were hired in the last 12 months.

Table 67   Influence of key factors on staffing difficulties among ECL professionals, 2021

	Net Change			Rate of Hires in Last 12 Mos			Rate of Resignations in Last 12 Mos			Rate of Vacancies		
	Coeff	SE	p	Coeff	SE	p	Coeff	SE	p	Coeff	SE	p
Not-for-profit / public	0.00	0.03	0.94	0.00	0.04	1.00	0.00	0.03	0.89	-0.02	0.02	0.38
Average wage	0.00	0.01	0.86	0.00	0.01	0.97	0.00	0.00	0.91	0.00	0.00	0.28
Number of ECL prof.	0.01	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.72	0.00	0.00	0.17	<-0.01	0.00	0.01
Wage differential	-0.01	0.04	0.76	-0.05	0.05	0.29	-0.01	0.04	0.80	0.04	0.03	0.15
Receipt of WE	0.00	0.04	0.99	0.06	0.05	0.23	0.03	0.04	0.42	0.04	0.03	0.18
Total benefits	0.00	0.00	0.26	0.00	0.01	0.61	0.00	0.00	0.87	0.01	0.00	0.00
Senior staff have ECE	0.03	0.03	0.33	-0.03	0.04	0.40	-0.05	0.03	0.05	0.02	0.02	0.22
Staff responsibilities	-0.07	0.04	0.08	0.02	0.05	0.73	0.06	0.03	0.06	0.04	0.02	0.08
Staff wages	0.02	0.04	0.56	0.05	0.05	0.25	0.03	0.03	0.30	-0.02	0.02	0.38
Career outline	-0.01	0.03	0.75	-0.02	0.04	0.52	-0.01	0.03	0.68	0.01	0.02	0.59
Performance reviews	0.04	0.03	0.23	0.07	0.04	0.06	0.02	0.03	0.49	-0.02	0.02	0.35

Source: SRDC employer survey

Note: Coeff = coefficient (describes the impact of the independent [predictor] variables on the dependent [outcome] variables in both strength and direction); SE = standard error (indicates the variability of the estimated impact); p = estimate of statistical significance of the impact (confidence is higher when the SE is small relative to the size of the coefficient). ECL Prof. refers to "a person who has primary responsibility for a group of children. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE."

Two factors were found to be predictive of workplace vacancies among ECL professionals: total number of ECL professionals currently employed was negatively associated with vacancies (β=-0.005, p<0.05), and total benefits offered was positively associated with vacancies (β=0.01, p<0.05). The first finding suggests that workplaces with a higher number of ECL professionals have a proportionally lower rate of vacancies. While this sounds somewhat intuitive, it is noteworthy that this pattern persists even after controlling for workplace size (i.e., not simply a function of hiring more staff leading to fewer vacancies, or larger workplaces overall having more positions [both vacant and filled]). Perhaps this is simply indicative of word of mouth – having many ECL professionals employed presumably increases a workplaces' ability to fill empty positions quickly, such as through current employee networks, leading to a lower rate of vacancies.

The second finding suggests that the more benefits that are offered, the higher the rate of vacancies at a workplace. This finding is less intuitive, especially given the lack of significant findings for the other predictors in the model - for example, it's unlikely that additional benefits are offered in lieu of adequate pay, since wages were not predictive of vacancies. This could instead be a function of location or other factors that make hiring difficult – if a workplace is struggling to fill a vacancy, they may be motivated to offer additional benefits in an attempt to make employment more attractive. The potential explanations for this finding serve as an important reminder that causation cannot be determined through regression analyses. In this case, the rate of vacancies might be driving the number of benefits offered rather than the other way around.

Key informant interviews and case studies

In 2020, staffing, or specifically a lack of qualified staff, was identified by interviewees at case study sites most commonly as the 'biggest concern'. It continued to be the dominant issue in 2021. All those interviewed discussed the increased stress associated with staff shortages. These mostly arose due to covering staff absences: illness and maternity leave. Case study and KII sites reported the majority of staff had returned to pre-COVID working hours and only a small number had decided not to return for personal health reasons. Respondents across all positions, did not interpret the issue as a retention problem because employees were not leaving due to dissatisfaction with the particular centre employing them. While some employees did move to other centres for higher wages, respondents suggested most were leaving the ECL sector.

> *Respondent: "I can confidently say that everybody I went to school [name of school] with to be an ECE none of them are in child care anymore.*
>
> *Interviewer: How many people were that?*
>
> *Respondent: We were a class of 10. So 10 percent is still in the field right now." (Site C: ECE IT)*

The reasons for leaving the sector were multifaceted and included low wages, a demanding and stressful job, choosing to stay at home and affordability of child care.

In 2020 two centres had planned to expand and to open new centres. One centre was delayed mainly due to construction issues, but the other centre was unable to fully open up the new spaces because they were unable to recruit trained staff.

While the wage enhancement was very useful in helping with retention and recruitment, there were concerns about the qualification of those who were applying to work in the sector.

> *"I think I had hoped that that would bring a better quality of candidates forward just overall for all centers, not just [name of centre] but I would say from my vantage point, that hasn't been the experience. So is it wonderful for our current teachers to be seen seeing a two dollar an hour wage enhancement and a $4 an hour projected, you know, back paid in March for sure that that's helpful in terms of retention, but it doesn't seem to be helpful with the quality of people we are trying to get in the door." (Private, Multi Site)*

In addition to the challenges of recruiting new staff, case study sites all reported difficulties in appointing staff to management positions, especially those with HR responsibilities. Constantly trying to find cover for staff absences was resulting in employees declining promotion or taking a step back and returning to being in ratio rather than deal with the additional stress. Many respondents described it as 'an impossible job.' Managers, owners and supervisors were concerned for the long-term future of the sector as this reduced the career pathway for ECEs and they wondered if this would have a negative impact on the quality of care and on the work environment and could motivate some to leave the sector. Developing supports for employees in these roles was identified as vital. Two centres had restructured to try and improve this situation with one multi-centre site creating a management post that focused on staffing. However, smaller centres were unable to follow suit because of costs.

ECE shortages also made it difficult in terms of day-to-day management. Managers and supervisors reported it was sometimes difficult to manage staff as an employee could 'walk out today and have a new job tomorrow.' However, ensuring protocols were followed was very important but it was perceived to be more challenging in the current labour market, when one person leaving would add to overall stress levels and recruitment was time consuming.

In 2020, ECL professionals suggested one of the effects of COVID-19 was to increase uncertainty within the whole ECL sector as well as in their own workplace. In 2021 this uncertainty persisted and was amplified by the discussions around $10 a day child care, Seamless Day Kindergarten and the oversight of the sector moving to the Ministry of Education and Child Care. Most respondents adopted a 'wait and see' stance. Regardless of whether respondents supported any or all of these initiatives, they were concerned about the implications for staffing. The sites in the private sector were also concerned about the expansion of the $10-a-day child care and the

implications for them with owners and managers suggesting they would not open new centres until this had been resolved. Those interviewed wanted decisions affecting the sector to be viewed holistically to avoid exacerbating the challenges currently facing the sector. While most respondents were optimistic about the future of the sector, they stressed how interconnected the sector was and how changing one element had intended and unintended consequences for child care organizations, employees, children and parents. Examples included the $4 wage enhancement which was welcomed for ECE staff but those in management and supervisory positions were not eligible for it unless they spent half their time in ratio, making the position financially unattractive. Also, while creating new spaces was important, ensuring there were enough additional qualified staff was vital if these spaces were to be staffed by qualified professionals. Otherwise it became a situation in which centres poach staff from each other without any net increase in qualified staff or in the number of actual child care places available.

An additional source of uncertainty within the sector was related to COVID-19 vaccine mandates. At the time of the interviews in 2021, all adults in British Columbia and children over the age of 12 years were eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. Those aged 5 to 12 years were due to become eligible in November 2021. Only three sites had mandated vaccination for all staff and these centres did so because they were child development centres and were required to do so or they had medically vulnerable children and were part of larger organizations which had vaccine requirements. In these centres the vaccine mandate resulted in some employees refusing to be vaccinated. These centres followed provincial guidelines and set a timeline for compliance. However, the vaccine mandate created some division based on opposing views. During this time managers reported trying to support all employees, but they agreed it added to the overall stress levels in the centres. For these centres, some employees got vaccinated, and other centre staff declined to do so and left. Managers and supervisors were very worried at the prospect of losing more staff because of the difficulties in finding replacements. They also wanted to highlight that the personal decisions of the staff involved were complex, requiring them to balance the views of family members with centre mandates.

In discussing the vaccine mandate, one manager said,

> *"That staff member has chosen to become vaccinated. So she will be going today to get her first shot, which I'm very thankful and grateful for that because she is an amazing educator. And I was like, oh, man, I don't want to lose her, but as her own personal choice and right if she chooses not to. And that is the course of action we do need to follow. … If you have the qualifications, there's work out there for you, which is at this point, they're not asked to be vaccinated." (Site A: Manager, ECE IT)*

For the other sites, vaccines are not mandated, and managers and supervisors are not asking employees their vaccination status. Their perception is that most employees are choosing to get vaccinated. Within the sites, some parents are asking whether employees who are looking after their children are vaccinated. Managers, owners and supervisors remind parents of the

provincial guidelines with respect to vaccines, but for some these conversations are very stressful.

Staff who were surveyed after leaving case study sites said they left their previous roles due to the following reasons: a workplace injury that could not be accommodated in her previous role, a staff shortage that caused the participant to take on too many roles, unhealthy work environments, inconsistent work hours, unprofessional coworkers, and not feeling comfortable or appreciated. Three of the five participants cited issues related to their work environment.

In terms of factors that contributed to their job satisfaction, four of the five participants listed reasons that were related to their management team and colleagues. Factors included management who were understanding and trusted that their staff had the required skills to promote early learning and development, adequate and well-trained staff, professional and supportive management, and feeling acknowledgement and appreciation. One participant mentioned that watching children learn and grow contributed to her job satisfaction.

Similarly, the one aspect that participants would change about their previous workplace was related to increased support and competence of management and other colleagues. All participants indicated wanting more support and respect from management. One participant also expressed needing more ECEs on the floor, and another participant mentioned that their colleagues and management team lacked the necessary skills to communicate effectively with families and the rest of the team and to resolve complaints or concerns. Another participant commented that the work environment overall was not respectful, and that increased oversight was needed.

To encourage others to join the sector, three participants mentioned higher wages or compensation. Other suggestions included ensuring that professionals were not overloaded, funding for schooling, consistent hours, and to hire qualified and professional workers.

Two of the four participants who remained in the child care sector had plans to continue working or training in the sector. The other two participants had plans to work in a role related to children but outside of child care services.

KPI 12: RATIO OF POSITIVE TO NEGATIVE OPINIONS (WITH RESPECT TO STANDARDS OF CARE, VIABILITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND VALUE) AMONG THOSE ALREADY WORKING IN THE SECTOR

Cross-sectional survey

Workforce survey respondents were asked to rate their opinion on four statements regarding others' perception of their child care work. These are not reported in a table. In general, the ratio of positive to negative opinions was highest for the statement *My work is valued by the families of the children I work with* (13:1 in 2021, similar to the result of 15:1 in 2019). This ratio was high also for *My work in child care is valued by my family* (8:1) and *My work in child care is valued by my friends* (6:1). In contrast, in 2020 as in 2019 respondents were similarly likely to have positive or negative opinions about the statement *Child care is valued by the public*. Only 43 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement in 2021, down from 51 per cent in 2019.

Five statements more directly probed respondents' current relationship with their work (Table 67). The statement with the lowest ratio was *I would recommend child care as a profession* which still had two positive statements for every negative statement (2:1). In contrast, *I consider child care as my chosen profession* (10:1) and *I feel comfortable telling new people that I work in child care* had very high ratios (7:1).

Non M/S CCC professionals' ratio of positive to negative opinions was often lower than for M/S CCC for these statements. This was the case for taking the negative view more often on the statement *My current job is temporary* meaning more of them planned to leave it (4:1 compared to 10:1 for managers and supervisors) and on *My current job is a stepping stone* (3:1 compared to 5:1 for managers and supervisors and 5:1 for HCPs). Those at $10 a day sites were similarly divided as non M/S CCC professionals although they were somewhat more likely to say they would recommend child care as a profession and to feel comfortable telling new people that they worked in child care.

In general, positive opinions were slightly less often voiced in 2021 than 2020. There was a negative shift in the proportion who felt comfortable telling people that they worked in child care. But plausibly this is a temporary side effect of concerns around employment involving human contact and interactions due to COVID-19. Interestingly, HCPs were much less likely to report their jobs were temporary in 2021 than 2020 and 2019.

Ratio of positive to negative opinions among non-M/S centre ECL professionals regarding their child care jobs varied across demographic groups (Table 69). Respondents who identified as Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) generally had a higher ratio of positive to negative opinions although the difference compared to ratios for non-Indigenous respondents was not

significant. Respondents who were born outside of Canada had significantly larger ratios for the statements *I consider child care as my chosen profession*, and there were significantly more who *would recommend child care as a profession* than among those born in Canada. However, they were also significantly more likely to see their current job as a stepping stone or as a temporary job than respondents who were born in Canada.

Table 70 considers these ratios for groups defined by qualification. Even though RAs were the least likely to say child care was their chosen profession, 5 out of every 6 still agreed with this assessment. Furthermore, they were the most comfortable with their current job and portraying child care positively to others. 5-year ECEs and those with specialty certificates were the least likely to recommend child care as a profession.

Table 68   Ratio of positive to negative comments regarding ECL work 2019, 2020, and 2021

	Survey year	Child care centres (including multi-age child care) or preschool		Before & after school and recreational care programs		$10 a Day ChildCare BC sites	HCPs	Total
		M/S	Not M/S	M/S	Not M/S			
Consider child care as chosen profession [agree: disagree]	2019	11 : 1	8 : 1	7 : 1	4 : 1	6 : 1	9 : 1	9 : 1
	2020	12 : 1	10 : 1	9 : 1	4 : 1	13 : 1	12 : 1	10 : 1
	2021	15 : 1	8 : 1	9 : 1	4 : 1	8 : 1	13 : 1	10 : 1
My current job is a stepping stone [disagree: agree] [†]	2019	6 : 1	3 : 1	3 : 1	1 : 1	3 : 1	6 : 1	4 : 1
	2020	6 : 1	3 : 1	4 : 1	1 : 1	4 : 1	5 : 1	4 : 1
	2021	5 : 1	3 : 1	4 : 1	2 : 1	3 : 1	5 : 1	4 : 1
My current job is temporary [disagree: agree] [†]	2019	12 : 1	4 : 1	7 : 1	2 : 1	5 : 1	8 : 1	6 : 1
	2020	12 : 1	5 : 1	7 : 1	2 : 1	7 : 1	9 : 1	7 : 1
	2021	10 : 1	4 : 1	10 : 1	3 : 1	8 : 1	16 : 1	7 : 1
Would recommend child care as a profession [agree: disagree]	2019	3 : 1	2 : 1	4 : 1	9 : 1	1 : 1	4 : 1	3 : 1
	2020	3 : 1	2 : 1	5 : 1	6 : 1	3 : 1	3 : 1	3 : 1
	2021	3 : 1	2 : 1	3 : 1	2 : 1	3 : 1	2 : 1	2 : 1
I feel comfortable telling new people that I work in child care [agree: disagree]	2019	9 : 1	7 : 1	30 : 1	9 : 1	6 : 1	14 : 1	9 : 1
	2020	9 : 1	7 : 1	13 : 1	8 : 1	9 : 1	11 : 1	9 : 1
	2021	8 : 1	6 : 1	14 : 1	12 : 1	8 : 1	7 : 1	7 : 1

* Responses to these statements were **reversed** to estimate ratio of positive to negative opinions.

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Note: Managers or Supervisors (M/S) includes those in licensed care who identify their role as directors (including owner operators), managers and supervisors. These professionals may or may not have child care duties. Home Care providers (HCPs) includes Registered Licence not Required, Unregistered Licence not Required and in-child's-own home providers, together with Licensed Family Child Care

Table 69   Ratio of positive to negative opinions of Centre-based ECL professionals regarding their work 2019, 2020, and 2021

	Survey year	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Sig.	Born in Canada	Born outside Canada	Sig.
Consider child care as chosen profession [agree: disagree]	2019	8 : 1	6 : 1	n. s.	7 : 1	9 : 1	**
	2020	9 : 1	8 : 1	n. s.	8 : 1	14 : 1	**
	2021	8 : 1	10 : 1	n. s.	6 : 1	12 : 1	**
My current job is a stepping stone [disagree: agree] [†]	2019	3 : 1	2 : 1	*	3 : 1	2 : 1	***
	2020	3 : 1	2 : 1	n. s.	3 : 1	2 : 1	*
	2021	3 : 1	3 : 1	n. s.	4 : 1	2 : 1	***
My current job is temporary [disagree: agree] [†]	2019	4 : 1	5 : 1	n. s.	4 : 1	4 : 1	**
	2020	5 : 1	8 : 1	n. s.	5 : 1	3 : 1	**
	2021	5 : 1	6 : 1	n. s.	5 : 1	4 : 1	***
Would recommend child care as a profession [agree: disagree]	2019	2 : 1	3 : 1	n. s.	2 : 1	4 : 1	***
	2020	2 : 1	5 : 1	n. s.	2 : 1	4 : 1	***
	2021	2 : 1	3 : 1	**	2 : 1	3 : 1	***
I feel comfortable telling new people that I work in child care [agree: disagree]	2019	7 : 1	9 : 1	**	7 : 1	8 : 1	*
	2020	7 : 1	8 : 1	n. s.	7 : 1	7 : 1	n. s.
	2021	7 : 1	17 : 1	*	7 : 1	7 : 1	*

[†] Responses to these statements were **reversed** to estimate ratio of positive to negative opinions.

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC workforce surveys.

Note: Statistical significance is denoted by asterisks: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10. This is a t test. If the p-value is less than 0.01/0.05/0.10, we have sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a statistically significant association between the responses given by the two groups being compared.

Table 70   Ratio of positive to negative comments regarding ECL work by qualification 2019, 2020, and 2021

	Survey year	RA	ECEA	ECE 1yr	ECE 5yr	ECE+SP or IT	ECE+both SP&IT
Consider child care as chosen profession [agree: disagree]	2019	5 : 1	7 : 1	20 : 1	12 : 1	13 : 1	12 : 1
	2020	6 : 1	9 : 1	13 : 1	16 : 1	12 : 1	16 : 1
	2021	5 : 1	6 : 1	8 : 1	10 : 1	12 : 1	11 : 1
My current job is a stepping stone [disagree: agree] [†]	2019	3 : 1	3 : 1	5 : 1	4 : 1	4 : 1	4 : 1
	2020	3 : 1	4 : 1	4 : 1	5 : 1	4 : 1	5 : 1
	2021	3 : 1	3 : 1	5 : 1	4 : 1	3 : 1	3 : 1
My current job is temporary [disagree: agree] [†]	2019	6 : 1	4 : 1	6 : 1	6 : 1	7 : 1	7 : 1
	2020	4 : 1	7 : 1	10 : 1	8 : 1	7 : 1	7 : 1
	2021	8 : 1	4 : 1	8 : 1	7 : 1	6 : 1	6 : 1
Would recommend child care as a profession [agree: disagree]	2019	4 : 1	3 : 1	3 : 1	2 : 1	2 : 1	2 : 1
	2020	3 : 1	3 : 1	3 : 1	2 : 1	3 : 1	2 : 1
	2021	4 : 1	3 : 1	2 : 1	2 : 1	2 : 1	2 : 1
I feel comfortable telling new people that I work in child care [agree: disagree]	2019	12 : 1	7 : 1	7 : 1	9 : 1	8 : 1	7 : 1
	2020	9 : 1	8 : 1	12 : 1	7 : 1	11 : 1	6 : 1
	2021	10 : 1	8 : 1	10 : 1	7 : 1	7 : 1	6 : 1

* Responses to these statements were **reversed** to estimate ratio of positive to negative opinions.

Source: 2019, 2020, and 2021 SRDC workforce survey.

Note: RA (Responsible Adult), ECEA (Early Child care Educator Assistant), ECE 1 yr (One-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate), ECE 5 yr (Five-Year Early Child care Educator Certificate, ECE+IT or SP (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with either an Infant Toddler Educator certification or a Special Needs Educator certification), ECE+SP+IT (an ECE 1 yr or 5 yr with both a Special Needs Educator certification AND an Infant Toddler Educator certification).

Key informant interviews and case studies

In 2021, all those interviewed as part of the case studies stressed the importance of providing high quality early care and learning opportunities to children. As in 2020, across all sites, ECL professionals were confident they were providing a high level of care and education to children. They all saw their role as supporting the development of young children but there was general agreement that career progression within the sector was very limited for qualified ECE professionals who did not want to enter management.

A key issue that emerged from the 2020 interviews was the designation (or not) of ECL staff as essential workers. In 2021, this was much less of an issue. Instead, respondents were keen to highlight that their roles and responsibilities were similar to those of kindergarten teachers and educators. Respondents suggested that while teachers could teach online, the expectation was and is that ECL professionals continue to go to work and to be in close contact with young children who were (at the time) ineligible for vaccination and unable to wear masks. Providing this care placed respondents at risk of exposure to COVID-19 and many felt there was not enough recognition of the important work they did.

There were also concerns that senior staff at centres had about future sustainability of the sector and, in particular, their businesses. The introduction of the $10 a day child care plus oversight moving to the Ministry of Education left in-home and privately-run centres wondering how these changes would impact their businesses. Private sector providers reported delaying investing in new programs and centres, while licensed in-home providers said they felt marginalized. There is a risk such changes make these members of the ECL workforce feel they are being 'pushed out'. Comments like 'freaking out' were shared with respect to whether they would be forced to close. Both providers suggested their closure would result in a net reduction in overall child care spaces in the sector.

KPI 13: RATIO OF POSITIVE TO NEGATIVE OPINIONS (WITH RESPECT TO STANDARDS OF CARE, VIABILITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND VALUE OF ECL WORK) IN GENERAL POPULATION, THOUGHT LEADERS, MASS MEDIA, YOUTH, AND PARENTS

Public opinion survey

In SRDC's public opinion survey, a representative panel of BC adults (n=1905) were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements regarding ECL professionals and child care as a career. Among the adults surveyed, there was a generally favourable view of ECL professionals and their contributions to society. As shown in Table 71, 85 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that child care professionals are vital to both the economy and children's long-term learning and development, and three-quarters considered child care an essential service.

There was a high level of uncertainty regarding provincial ECL professionals' training and compensation, with 50 per cent and 45 per cent respectively indicating they were not sure whether ECL professionals were well trained or compensated. Similarly, 41 per cent of respondents were not sure whether working in child care represented a smart career choice. Figure 59 illustrates this level of uncertainty and shows the full pattern of results. As shown in this figure, the only positively-coded statement for which there was more disagreement than agreement was "Child care workers in BC are compensated fairly". This suggests that in addition to a high level of uncertainty, there is also public skepticism that ECL professionals are adequately compensated.

Figure 60 shows the change in public opinion of ECL professionals since 2019.[44] Overall there were mostly subtle changes, and in both directions. While attitudes related to ECL professionals being well-trained and fairly compensated improved, there was also greater disagreement with three negatively-coded statements. Specifically, in 2022 the public was more likely to report that working in child care requires few skills, that child care workers are less important than teachers, and that working in child care is equivalent to being a babysitter compared to 2019. Collectively, these results suggest both improvements and setbacks over the past three years regarding public perceptions of ECL professionals.
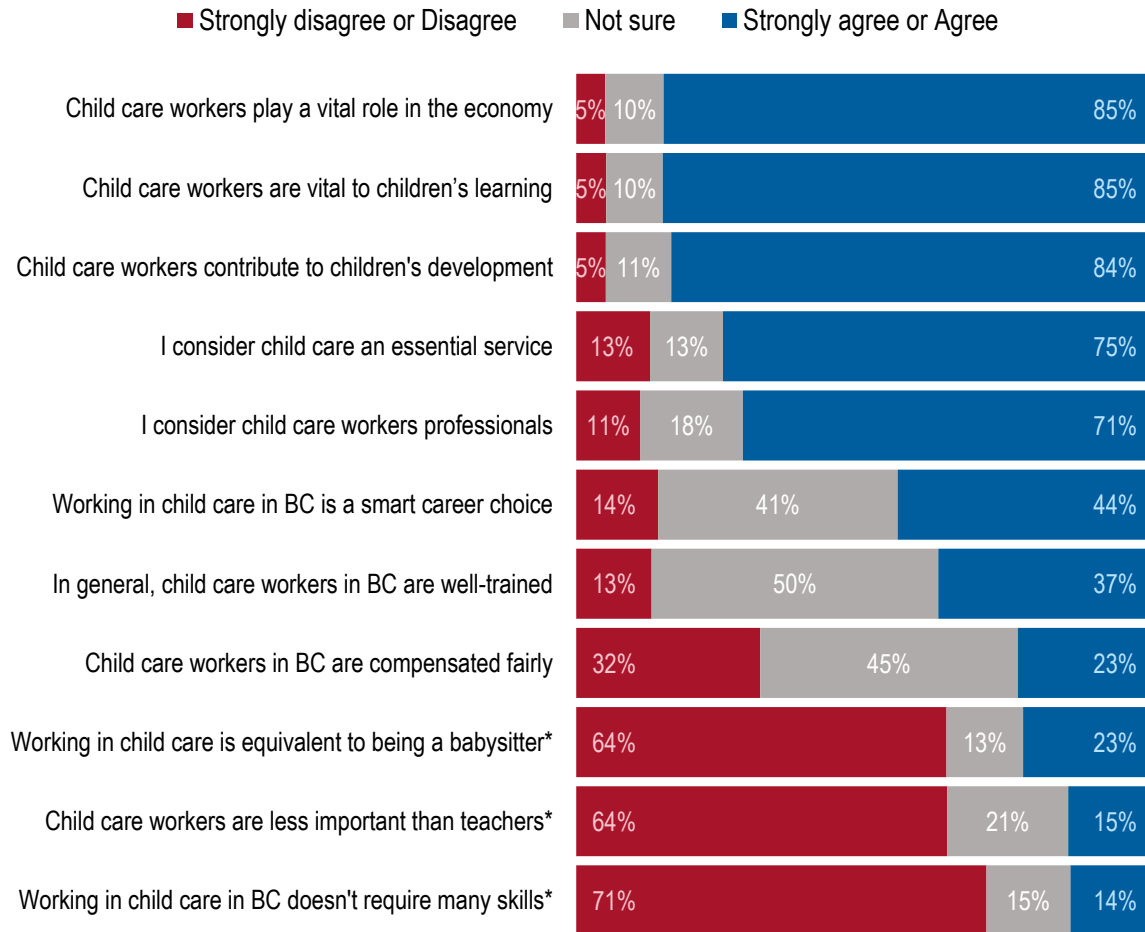
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[44]   Three statements were added in 2022 and therefore are not included in changes since 2019.

Table 71   Perceptions of ECL professionals, 2022, and percentage point change since 2019

	2019 (n=1904)			2022 (n=1905)			Change since 2019		
	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree
In general, child care workers in BC are well-trained	16%	54%	30%	13%	50%	37%	-3	-4	7
Child care workers in BC are compensated fairly given the skills and training they have	37%	43%	20%	32%	45%	23%	-5	1	4
I consider child care workers professionals	12%	17%	71%	11%	18%	71%	-1	1	0
Child care workers contribute to the long-term development of children in BC	5%	10%	85%	5%	11%	84%	0	1	-1
Working in child care is equivalent to being a babysitter*	69%	12%	19%	64%	13%	23%	-5	1	4
Working in child care in BC is a smart career choice	15%	43%	42%	14%	41%	44%	-1	-1	2
Working in child care in BC doesn't require many skills*	82%	10%	8%	71%	15%	14%	-11	5	7
Child care workers are less important to children's development than elementary school teachers*	71%	16%	12%	64%	21%	15%	-7	5	2
I consider child care an essential service	N/A	N/A	N/A	13%	13%	75%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Child care workers in BC play a vital role in the economy because they support others to work	N/A	N/A	N/A	5%	10%	85%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Child care workers play a vital role in children's learning and development	N/A	N/A	N/A	5%	10%	85%	N/A	N/A	N/A

Note: Strongly Disagree and Disagree were collapsed into a single category for reporting, as were Strongly Agree and Agree. Statements denoted with * represent reverse-coded statements, in which disagreement reflects a positive view of child care.

Figure 59   Public sentiment with respect to child care professionals, 2022

■ Strongly disagree or Disagree   ■ Not sure   ■ Strongly agree or Agree

	Strongly disagree or Disagree	Not sure	Strongly agree or Agree
Child care workers play a vital role in the economy	5%	10%	85%
Child care workers are vital to children's learning	5%	10%	85%
Child care workers contribute to children's development	5%	11%	84%
I consider child care an essential service	13%	13%	75%
I consider child care workers professionals	11%	18%	71%
Working in child care in BC is a smart career choice	14%	41%	44%
In general, child care workers in BC are well-trained	13%	50%	37%
Child care workers in BC are compensated fairly	32%	45%	23%
Working in child care is equivalent to being a babysitter*	64%	13%	23%
Child care workers are less important than teachers*	64%	21%	15%
Working in child care in BC doesn't require many skills*	71%	15%	14%

*Disagreement reflects a positive view

Source: Public Opinion Survey

Figure 60   Percentage point change in perceptions of ECL professionals since 2019

■ Strongly Disagree or Disagree   ■ Not Sure   ■ Strongly Agree or Agree
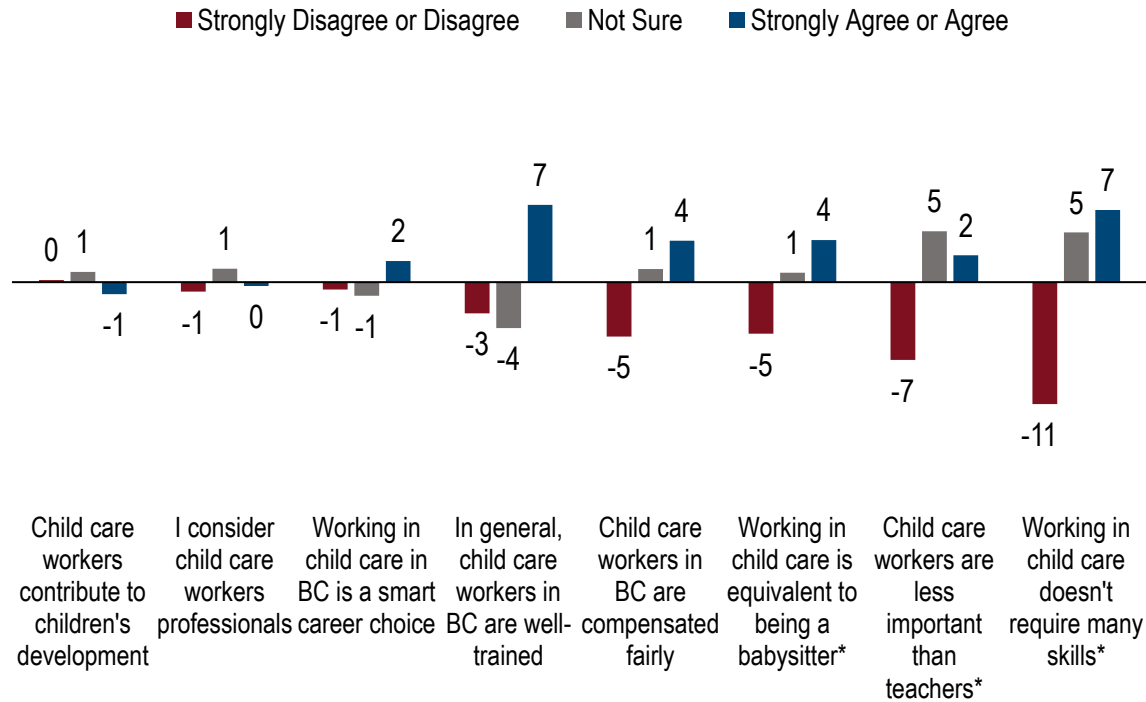
*Disagreement reflects a positive view

Source: Public Opinion Survey

The general population of BC overwhelmingly value the work done by ECL professionals (53 per cent agree and 34 per cent strongly agree), with less than 4 per cent of respondents indicating that they do not and 9 per cent reporting being unsure. Value for work done by ECL professionals remained high even among respondents without children (87 per cent agree or strongly agree) and was endorsed by both male and female respondents.

When asked to compare their current opinion of the value of ECL professionals to their opinion from 2019, most of the public indicated no change (61 per cent). Just over one third (35 per cent) reported valuing ECL professionals a bit or a lot more now than in 2019, and 4 per cent indicated they currently value the work done by child care professionals less than they did in 2019.

These findings suggest that public opinions with respect to ECL professionals remain relatively positive but have fluctuated somewhat since 2019. Importantly, many were unsure or unfavourable about the remuneration, training, and career prospects in the ECL sector. Publicity and debates around the provincial ECL R&R Strategy may have resulted in some changes with respect to standards of care, viability, sustainability, and value of ECL work, but further opportunities exist to raise public confidence in this sector.

Cross-sectional survey

While the results at the beginning of the KPI 12 section suggest many working in child care saw those around them holding positive views with respect to their work in ECL, it is worth recalling the direct question asking for their level of agreement with the statement that work in ECL was valued by the public. About half agreed and half disagreed in both 2019 and 2020, and only 43 per cent agreed in 2021, meaning a shift to more positive public perceptions was less evident to ECL professionals.

Key informant interviews and case studies

In 2020, ECL professionals reported that throughout the pandemic more of the general public appreciated them continuing to work and to provide care for the children of essential workers. This changed the perception of those in the ECL sector who were acknowledged as providing 'essential' services. However, in 2021 opinion was divided in terms of how the public and parents perceived those working in the sector and included a range of opinions.

Those interviewed who had been in the sector for a number of years welcomed the changes within the sector. The wage enhancement was a signal that the government was taking the sector seriously and this was seen as a "paradigm shift" from earlier impressions like:

> "… oh, that's just baby sitting. Isn't that a cute job to oh, my God, we need this to survive. And all political parties agree on that. Federal, provincial, municipal. So, I think that they're all seeing the importance." (KII: Not for Profit)

For others, progress had been made but further improvements were needed.

> "I would love one day for us to be considered the same as other teachers, like kindergarten teachers, Grade 1 teachers. I would love for them to think of us as teachers, because we are teachers. We're just teachers under the age of five." (Site A, ECE)

When those in the sector were asked if they would recommend ECL to a family member most said they would, but under the condition they were passionate about working with children.

> "I think it's much better now than it has been. Whether I would recommend it to my daughter, I probably caution her. But it is definitely yeah, it's not a bad time to get into it. I feel if things keep moving in the direction they're moving." (KII: Prototype Site)

> "People often say, you know, like, I'll do this till I find a real job. And this has always been my endgame because I just think it's the most magical place to be. So and, you know, the trends that have changed in the 30 plus years that I've been teaching, it is very encouraging. But that's hard to talk somebody into that is just starting out. They don't see how far we've come. They just look at it

in, you know, in context of other jobs at the moment. And they just go, yeah, this isn't great. But it actually is pretty great when you think about it over the past five to six years and beyond." (KII: Not For Profit)

Social and news media monitoring

The internet, and social media specifically, provide an immense potential source of data for examining opinions on any subject. As explained earlier in the Evaluation Framework and Methodology Implementation section, SRDC contracted Talkwalker to perform a keyword search for online content related to Early Childhood Learning in British Columbia, beginning in April 2018 (with the most recent data ending December 2021). The results of that search were further processed by SRDC, and sentiment scores were attached to each piece of relevant content using the Qualtrics platform's TextIQ feature.

These results should be interpreted with caution. As outlined in the Methodology section, various technical obstacles prevented access to the content at some of the URLs identified by Talkwalker, which was itself subject to various technical restrictions. Furthermore, views and opinions expressed on social media do not necessarily mirror opinions in broader society.

The largest share of URLs identified by Talkwalker were from Twitter, providing a sample substantial enough for fairly detailed analysis. Figure 61 presents the overall number of tweets, as well as the number of positive and negative sentiment tweets, by month across the entire period. March and April 2021 presented a substantial increase in the number of tweets related to ECL in BC, however the majority of these tweets are neutral announcements rather than positive or negative opinions. Likely, the federal budget's 19 April 2021 announcement of a Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan accounted for a proportion of these increases.

There were several earlier spikes in positive tweets in May, September, and November of 2018. These are likely associated with a string of announcements related to ChildcareBC following the signing of the B.C.-Canada Early Learning and Child Care Agreement in February 2018. September 2018 saw the launch of the ECL R&R Strategy. The largest number of negative tweets occurred in February of 2021 when health and safety guidelines for B.C. ECL settings were updated. Across the entire period there were fewer spikes in the number of negative tweets per month, and those spikes were smaller than the spikes in positive tweets.

Twitter

Figure 61   Tweets and Sentiment, by month
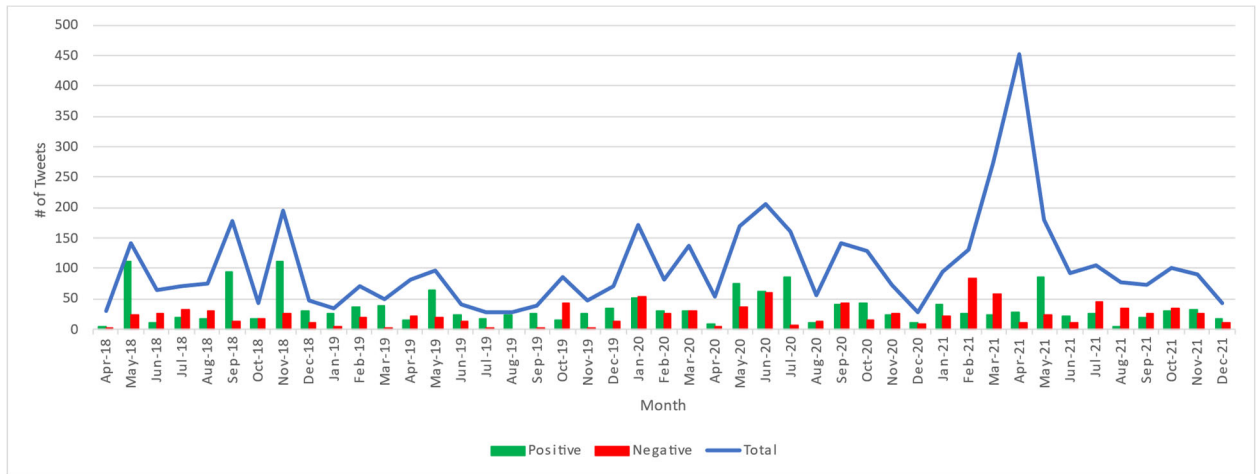
Source: Talkwalker data processed by SRDC

The Twitter sample was further subdivided in order to examine the number and sentiment related to standards of care, viability and sustainability, and the value of ECL. Figure 62 presents these data for standards of care, which also shows the largest peaks in the number of positive tweets in May, September, and November of 2018, with November also having the greatest overall number of tweets on standards of care. The greatest number of negative tweets occurred in February 2021, and March 2021. Positive tweets outnumbered negative tweets in most months and by a greater margin.

Figure 62   Tweets and Sentiment Related to Standards of Care, by month
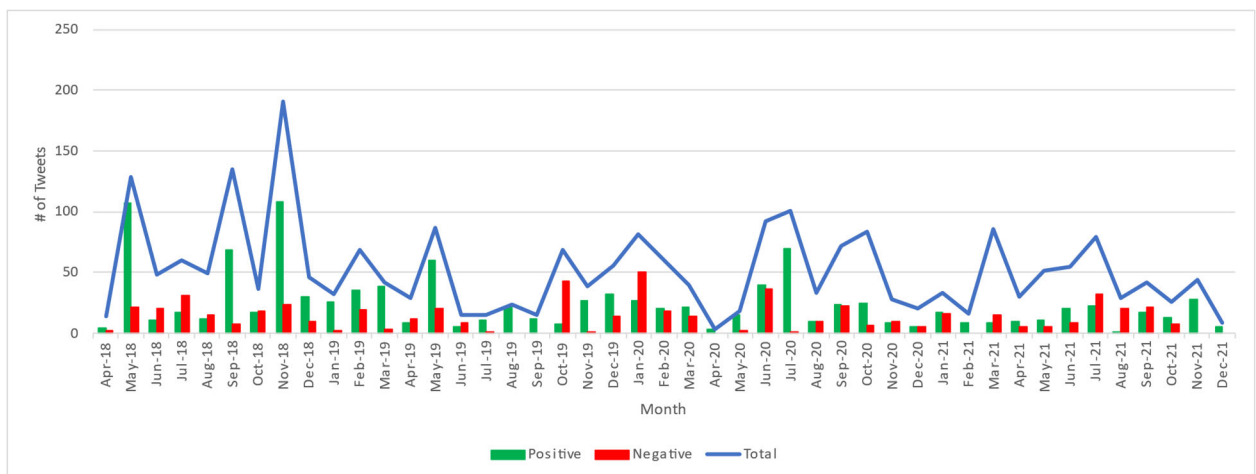
Source: Talkwalker data processed by SRDC

Due to their similarity, tweets related to viability and sustainability were aggregated into a single category for analysis, presented in Figure 63. Once again, positive tweets outnumber negative, with a substantial peak in July 2020 also representing the greatest month number of tweets. Several other spikes in monthly tweets were driven by neutral sentiment, while negative tweets were more common from June through August 2018 and June 2020.

Figure 63   Tweets and Sentiment Related to Viability and Sustainability, by month
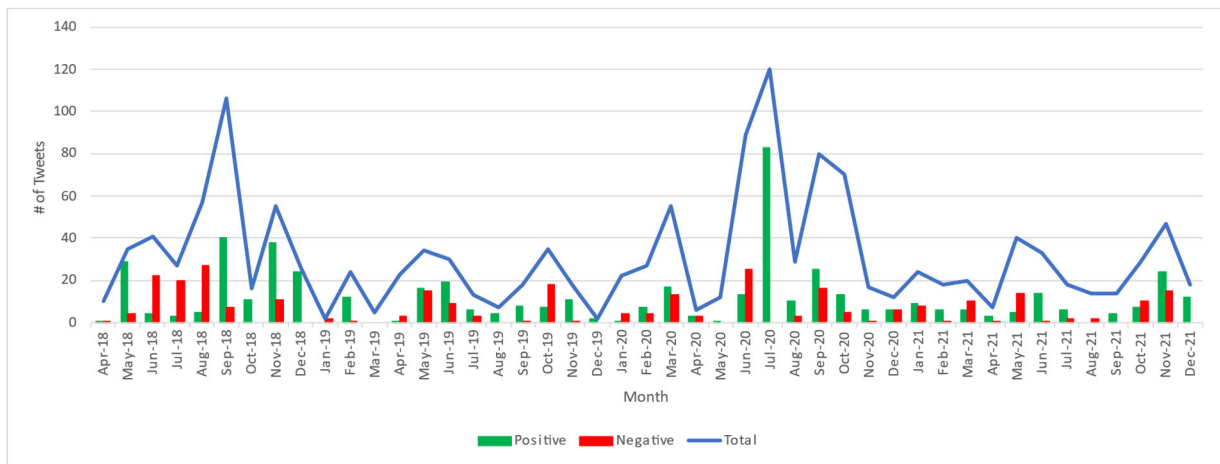
Source: Talkwalker data processed by SRDC

Fewer tweets related to the value of ECL, presented in Figure 64, were identified in the sample. Throughout 2019 the monthly number of tweets was extremely low, followed by a substantially greater number per month in much of 2020. A very large portion of tweets in June 2020 were negative, however positive tweets were more common through much of the period.

Figure 64   Tweets and Sentiment Related to the Value of ECL, by month

Source: Talkwalker data processed by SRDC
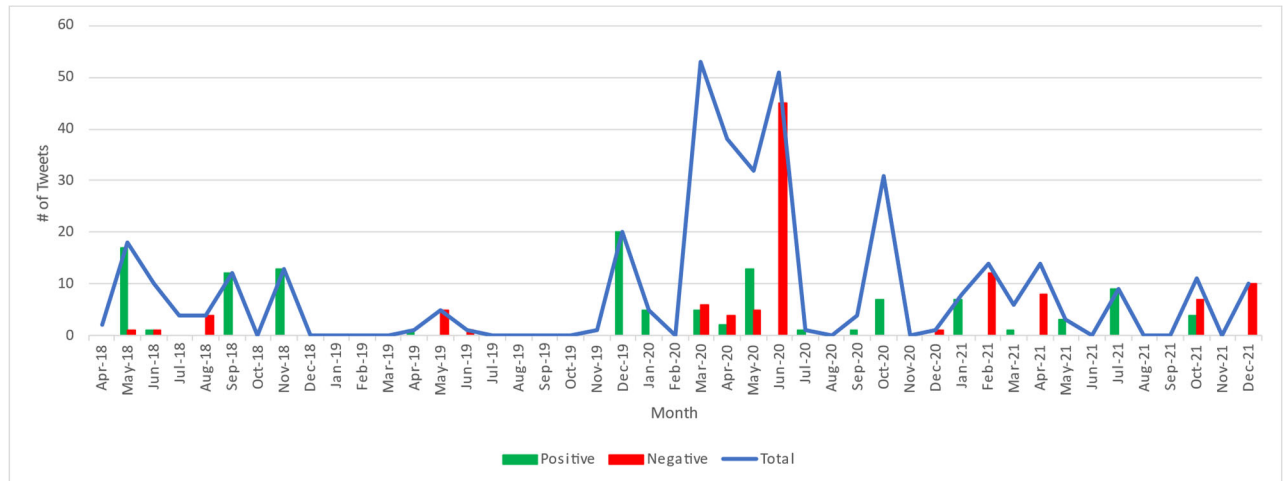
For all the reasons stated earlier, it is important not to read too much into these patterns of tweets. However, there are patterns of note. The spikes in activity around the 2018 launch of ChildcareBC were attributable to communications around standards of care, and in general tweets on these topics diminished after November 2018. Viability and sustainability peaked around the announcement of the ECL R&R Strategy and then in the first months of the pandemic when the risk of infection and protections imposed to reduce that risk made it very difficult for a number of human services to operate, including ECL operations. Tweets concerning the value of ECL peaked in March through June 2020, when debates were most prevalent on whether, in the face of COVID-19 restrictions, ECL should be considered an essential service.

Overall, it is difficult to draw a conclusion one way or the other from analysis of social media on how the ratio of positive to negative opinions (with respect to standards of care, viability, sustainability, and value of ECL work) has changed over time and with the introduction of the ECL R&R Strategy. Positive sentiment has been modestly more common on Twitter before and after the introduction of the ECL R&R Strategy. The actual prevalence of posts is, however, likely influenced by announcements and current events more than the strength of positive and negative sentiment. So the COVID-19 pandemic will have been a substantial influence on numbers of tweets, despite our efforts to separate out those concerned with the pandemic itself. In our analysis, counts of relevant posts on other social media outside Twitter are too few. The data yield an interesting story but not insightful for the evaluation, thus there will be no ongoing data collection and analysis from this evidence stream.

CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report includes measures of progress towards achieving outcomes and goals sought by the ECL R&R Strategy. It is the 19th deliverable of the Sector-led Evaluation of the ECL R&R Strategy in B.C. As such it also includes updates and developments in the evaluation work plan to the point of creating this report. In general, the evaluation has proceeded as planned. It has collected data on the employment, working conditions, education, and professional development of the ECL workforce.

- SRDC has conducted its own survey of the workforce and ECL employers in late 2021. This has provided comparable data on a wide range of indicators to those collected from similar surveys in 2019 and 2020. It also gave voice to the roughly 35,000 members of the ECL workforce. Those who responded provided feedback on key influences on recruitment and retention as they saw them. This report includes trends seen in the workforce since 2018. It expands on earlier analysis in several ways:

- We include a more in-depth analysis of the influence of the ECL R&R Strategy's tactics on everyday child care operations and workplace experiences. These data come from six case study sites and key informant interviews spanning different types of child care workplaces.

- The administrative data shed light on implementation of the different tactics that are part of the ECL R&R Strategy. They reveal trends in the experiences of ECL professionals in the labour market. While most of these data have reached SRDC in each year requested, several components were delayed or not received in 2021. This report includes new data on certification exemptions. We can describe for the first time the cohorts of students who enter ECE programs in public postsecondary institutions. All data appear as time series where relevant and possible to show trends from before the launch of the ECL R&R Strategy.

- We also include final results from social media analysis. This covers trends in the topics and sentiments of public opinion voiced online between 2018 and 2021. The Public Opinion Survey provides a more representative source of public opinion. It includes the views of the general public and those considering the next steps in their career. SRDC can compare results from this survey undertaken in 2019 with early 2022. Change in opinions over time are documented for the first time in this report.

To take stock of progress against each Key Performance Indicator (KPI), we cycle through results from all relevant data sources. These KPIs appear on the left in Figure ES1. We compare the position of the ECL sector in 2021 relative to 2019 and earlier (and also 2020 where relevant). We draw on observations from professionals working in the sector and the general public to add

meaning to these statistics. The rightmost columns of Figure 65 present a summary of this progress on KPIs and tactics. An arrow symbol signifies the overall trend on each indicator since the launch of the ECL R&R strategy until the end of 2021. This can be an improvement (large or small) [↑], a deterioration [↓] or a mixed result [↔]. Inevitably, many nuances of findings are lost in such high-level summary. Readers are encouraged to review the full results for each indicator in the main report sections. Of course, attribution of causality to the changes seen over time has been affected considerably by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is rarely possible to attribute outcomes seen in 2021 solely to the effects of the ECL R&R Strategy. We attempt to separate the effects where possible. But there is value in documenting the situation of the workforce through various recent challenges. The report still highlights the pressures members of B.C.'s ECL workforce are under. It shows how they are changing. It points to how ECL professionals have used, sought or recommended ECL R&R Strategy tactics to improve their employment situations.

Figure 65   Summary of progress to 2021 on key performance indicators

KPI #	Progress on KPI to 2021	Tactics (see Fig. 1)	Progress on tactics
1	ECL professional satisfaction and perception of appropriateness of compensation	1	Continuing appreciation of role of wage enhancement as symbol of recognition. Still not adequately addressing compensation shortfalls.
↔	Levels of satisfaction fell again among HCPs. This drop spanned all aspects of their jobs (thus more aspects than in 2020). It fell somewhat for professionals in child care centres who were not managers/supervisors in all areas (except physical indoor space and compensation). Satisfaction with benefits increased for all groups defined by their program/role. Regression results suggest that increasing benefits increases overall job satisfaction. Satisfaction with income increased modestly, except for non-managers/supervisors in before and after school/recreational programs and HCPs. Responsible Adults were the only group defined by qualification less satisfied with income in 2021 than 2019. Motivating factors remained relatively high. But there was a decline in the proportion feeling their job made good use of their skills and abilities. This applied for program roles other than ECE-certified HCPs. There was an increase on indicators of burnout in 2021 compared to 2019 and 2020. Significantly more also found their work stimulating and challenging. Regression results suggest that receiving more benefits decreases reports of burnout.		
2A	Average real wages and salaries of ECL professionals	1	Four in every five of those eligible are in receipt of wage enhancement. 2021 saw overlap between wage ranges of ECEs those of ECEAs and RAs disappear for first time in all health authority regions.

KPI #	Progress on KPI to 2021	Tactics (see Fig. 1)	Progress on tactics
⬆	Wages increased between roughly $2.50 and $4 over 2019, but remained relatively low, $7 below the rate paid to BC workers with equivalent postsecondary credentials. Professionals considered their wages only modest recognition for their credentials and seniority. The $4 wage enhancement announced in 2021 may start to have an impact once payments kick in from March 2022. Monthly income of those working in child care centres has nominally grown by 9 per cent since 2019.		
2B	Benefits of ECL Professionals	1	No direct ECL R&R Strategy tactics in 2021. Requests for improved pension provision continued. Little change in financial assistance for PD up to 2021.
⬌	According to employers, benefit provision has remained stable with modest fluctuations relative to 2019. However, the proportion of employers that do not provide any benefits has decreased, down from 10-22 per cent in 2019 to 10-11 per cent in 2021. Stated differently: more employers are offering benefits to their staff. More non-manager/supervisor respondents at child care centres report receiving each type of benefit. More in before and after school care report extended health care, paid sick days and access to a pension.		
3	The extent to which current Sector Occupational Competencies are integrated into education and training programs	6	Work is still underway on the updated Sector Occupational Competencies.
	The response and uptake will be assessed once they are introduced.		
4	Proportion of ECL professionals with credentials relevant to provision of child care for provincial ECL needs, including regional and Indigenous ECL needs	1 thru 8	Increasing proportions of student bursaries issued even allowing for post-COVID recovery.
⬆	PSE completion rates among workforce survey respondents reached 94 per cent in 2021, 7 percentage points higher than 2019. There is no change in current PSE participation rates. No consistent change in net levels of possession of ECL-related credentials among workforce from 2019 through 2021. Just 10 per cent of professionals in $10 a day sites and 6 per cent in other child care centres held only ECL credentials below college level. 27 per cent of employers reported that they had to refuse children due to not having staff with the right qualifications to accommodate the children's needs. The top qualifications missing were ECE certification (64 per cent), Infant and Toddler Certificate (42 per cent), and Special Needs Certificate (39 per cent). Yet there was a corresponding uptick in the holding of *both* specialty certifications - Infant and		

KPI #	Progress on KPI to 2021	Tactics (see Fig. 1)	Progress on tactics
	Toddler and Special Needs - at these centres. A growing share of credentials held in 2021 are from B.C. institutions.		
5	Perceptions of ECL career among those making decisions with respect to their own careers	1 thru 8	No direct ECL R&R Strategy tactics.
	Interest in working in child care has increased from 2019 to 2022. This applied to emerging adults (aged 13 to 24) and older adults in B.C. contemplating a career change, especially the latter group. When questions included how working conditions could be improved, interest increased. This applied for every age group especially those aged 25+. However, more workforce survey respondents in non-manager/supervisor positions expect to leave their current employer. Slightly more (now 5 per cent) of this group and of HCPs responded that they don't expect to be working in ECL by November 2022. The proportion of non managers/supervisors at before and after school/recreational programs expecting to leave the sector within a year has grown to 15 per cent.		
6	Proportion of ECL workforce who self-report possession of core skills and supplementary skills	1 thru 8	Professional networks and PD Supports were launched during 2020. An external evaluation found educators were satisfied with and held a positive opinion of the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network.
	Self-assessed skills mostly dropped from 2019 to 2021, especially for ECEAs. The only skill staff more often rated above average or excellent in 2021 was making the environment inclusive for children with special needs. However, this skill along with demonstrating cultural sensitivity were the two lowest rated skills overall in 2021. More PD was sought out by members of ECL workforce for many other low-assessed skills, although there was a decline in the proportion obtaining PD in relation to special needs.		
7	Awareness of ECL career pathway options, how to pursue them, and expectations of their feasibility in terms of finances and availability of training opportunities.	2 thru 5	Increasing proportions of student bursaries issued even allowing for post-COVID recovery. Professional networks and PD Supports were launched during 2020. An external evaluation found educators were satisfied with and held a positive opinion of the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network.
	After a dip in 2020, the proportion of the workforce believing that there were opportunities for career growth and development recovered to 2019 levels. Employers reported providing career development supports of various types slightly more often than in 2020 and considerably more than they did in 2019.		
8	Proportion of ECL workforce who self-report	4, 5, 7, 8	Professional networks and PD Supports were launched during 2020. An external evaluation

KPI #	Progress on KPI to 2021	Tactics (see Fig. 1)	Progress on tactics
	participation in professional development activities		found educators were satisfied with and held a positive opinion of the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network. Awareness of the ECE Workforce Development Bursary increased, as did the number of bursaries granted. Yet, on average, only one workforce development bursary was approved for every ten student bursaries.
⬆	Overall participation in PD since 2019 increased for most groups defined by qualification. Some 83 per cent reported participation within the past 12 months. The only exceptions were those with 1-year ECE certificates and a single ECE specialty. PD participation declined at before and after school/recreational programs, especially those privately run. Increased take up of many topics was seen, especially in PD related to Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit) ECL. There were increases in most types of PD. But the proportions training in special needs and managing child behaviour dropped.		
9	Hours of professional development per ECL workforce member per year	4,5,7	Professional networks and PD Supports were launched during 2020. An external evaluation found educators were satisfied with and held a positive opinion of the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network. Awareness of the ECE Workforce Development Bursary increased, as did the number of bursaries granted. Yet, on average, only one workforce development bursary was approved for every ten student bursaries.
⬆	Mean hours of PD increased in 2021 for all groups after remaining fairly stable from 2019 to 2020. Regression analysis suggested a positive association between workplace benefits and hours spent in PD.		
10	Employers report of the share of their ECL workforce possessing core skills and possessing supplementary skills	1 to 8	Professional networks and PD Supports were launched during 2020. An external evaluation found educators were satisfied with and held a positive opinion of the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network. Awareness of the ECE Workforce Development Bursary increased, as did the number of bursaries granted since 2020.
⬌	Employers' assessment of their staff's core skills universally increased from 2019 to 2020. Employers only operating programs that require ECE certification reported lower skill levels in 2021. Skills especially affected were: making the environment inclusive for children with special needs and demonstrating cultural sensitivity. These dropped back to 2019 levels. Communicating effectively with the children's families, the lowest rated skill, also declined in 2021. For employers operating programs that do not all require ECE certification, skills levels continued to grow from 2019 through 2020 to 2021, albeit from a lower initial base.		

KPI #	Progress on KPI to 2021	Tactics (see Fig. 1)	Progress on tactics
11	Employment stability of ECL workforce, including variances for staffing for providers, work hours, job tenure, job exits	1,7	Awareness of the ECE Workforce Development Bursary increased, as did the number of bursaries granted since 2020.
⬇	45 per cent of employers reported experiencing staff net loss across all positions in the 12 months preceding the survey. This is an 11-percentage point increase compared to 2019. Lower hiring rates were the main factor behind doubling of the rates of loss of full time ECL professionals over the two years. Regression analysis found exit rates higher at centres where senior staff lacked ECE certification.		
12	Ratio of positive to negative opinions (with respect to standards of care, viability, sustainability, and value) among those already working in the sector	1,4,5,6,7,8	Professional networks and PD Supports were launched during 2020. An external evaluation found educators were satisfied with and held a positive opinion of the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network. Awareness of the ECE Workforce Development Bursary increased, as did the number of bursaries granted since 2020.
↔	Only 43 per cent of the workforce agreed or strongly agreed child care is valued by the public in 2021, down from 51 per cent in 2019. But in general, most members of the ECL workforce held positive opinions about their work in 2021. Positive views outnumbered negative ones by similar ratios to 2019. Increasingly positive perceptions seemed especially the case for Indigenous centre-based ECL professionals.		
13	Ratio of positive to negative opinions (with respect to standards of care, viability, sustainability, and value of ECL work) in general population, thought leaders, mass media, youth, and parents	1,2,3,6,8	No direct ECL R&R Strategy tactics.
⬆	In general, Twitter produced more ECL workforce related tweets in the first half of 2021 than earlier years. However, there were peaks in 2020 and 2018 as well. More recent tweets were likely due to the 2021 announcements of major federal and provincial supports to the ECL workforce. 2018 saw modestly more posts to which a positive or negative sentiment could be attached. These arose before and after the introduction of the ECL R&R Strategy. B.C. public opinion survey respondents in early 2022 were overwhelmingly positive about the workforce. They felt child care professionals played a vital role in the economy and in children's learning and development (85 per cent agreed to both). On a range of related		

KPI #	Progress on KPI to 2021	Tactics (see Fig. 1)	Progress on tactics
	questions the public rated child care professionals more highly in 2022 than they did in 2019. However, close to half were unsure about whether they were well trained or compensated fairly.		

The evaluation will continue to cover developments in the sector's response to the ECL R&R Strategy through 2022 and to at least the end of 2023. Results on KPIs will provide answers to the evaluation questions moving forward over the remainder of the evaluation.

The core messages emerging from the evidence collected are nuanced. While the ECL workforce seems to comprise extremely resilient people, the sector is increasingly fragile in 2021. They are reporting increasing risks of leaving work in child care. Strategy tactics designed to improve the sector have been welcomed. They appear to be having positive effects in some areas, but there are still examples of disconnects. Professionals who start out in the sector on low pay struggle with their PSE loan repayments. Established professionals who seek support to upskill are not guaranteed support for professional development. The ECL R&R Strategy's subsidies are not transparent at the point of purchasing education. The message from those interviewed in the case studies and the KIIs is that policy has to become more coordinated. Changes in one area have an impact on others.

PROVISIONAL EARLY ANSWERS TO EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation framework uses progress against KPIs to answer the evaluation questions over time. We are now three-fifths of the way through the now-extended evaluation project. It is not possible to draw final conclusions on any of the medium-term outcomes or ten-year goals. However, it is possible to identify some places where the ECL R&R Strategy is on track to achieve outcomes and goals set at the project outset in 2018.

1. **Does the ECL R&R Strategy result in the long-term goal of an adequate and stable workforce, comprised of qualified and skilled early care and learning professionals? [10-year goal]**

   It is early to answer a question that anticipates a decade of change but qualifications, and to a lesser extent skills, are improving. The PSE qualifications of the current workforce appear to be increasing annually. ECL-related certification has increased also. There are skills shortfalls relative to 2019 but workforce members have been taking action by pursuing PD in many of the affected areas. Staffing problems remain both acute and persistent. Alongside short-term instability in service, due to permanent and casual staff unavailability, providers could not meet staffing needs over the longer term either. A net loss of staff was reported by 45 per cent of employers in 2021 up from 34 per cent in 2019. Awareness of the ECE

Workforce Development Bursary increased. So did the number of student and workforce development bursaries granted since 2020.

- **Over the medium term of the evaluation, do recruitment strategies achieve the outcome of an adequate supply of ECEs and other ECL professionals entering the workforce? [medium-term outcome]**

  This has not happened as of 2021.

- **Over the medium term of the evaluation, does the implementation of career pathways provide opportunities for career growth and development in the early care and learning sector? [medium-term outcome]**

  There have been modest improvements since 2019, but this outcome has not been achieved as of 2021. About 59-66 per cent of those currently working in the sector believed there were a variety of opportunities for career growth and development within ECL. This was similar to the 60 per cent reported in 2019.

- **Over the medium term of the evaluation, are education, training, and professional development opportunities expanded (or barriers reduced) so that the ECL workforce has the skills, knowledge, and abilities required to provide quality services to children and families? [medium-term outcome]**

  Opportunities have expanded since the launch of the ECL R&R Strategy. Bursaries have reduced financial barriers for some. Employer- and self-assessed skills, knowledge and abilities have gone up in some areas and down in others. In 2021, there were drops in employers' assessments of their staff skills and employees' assessments of their own skills. As in 2020, employers noted a key area of declining skill: making the environment inclusive for children with special needs. This was an area where participation in PD was markedly down also. Employees in 2021 rated their skills more highly in 2021 than previously, however. Employers' perspectives and employees' self-assessments were also in agreement on other skills. More now felt they were falling short on demonstrating cultural sensitivity relative to 2020. More reportedly fell short in communicating effectively with the children's families relative to both 2020 and 2019.

2. **Does the ECL R&R Strategy result in the long-term goal of ECL being viewed as a viable, sustainable, and valued career? [10-year goal]**

There are conflicting trends. SRDC probed ECL professionals' current relationship with their work. It sought their agreement to statements such as "I would recommend child care as a profession" and "I consider child care as my chosen profession". These found similar support in 2021 as in 2019 . But more among the workforce surveyed were planning to leave ECL

within one year in 2021 compared to 2019. Among non-manager/supervisors at child care centres, the increase was small from 3 to 5 per cent. Plans to leave rose from 1 to 15 per cent among non-manager/supervisors at before and after school programs. Over ten years, even a small percentage leaving annually will add up to a considerable loss of professionals. And the rate of net loss of staff – full-time and part-time - reported by employers was higher in 2021 than 2019.

- **Over the medium term of the evaluation, does the strategy promote public confidence in the professionalism and accountability of the ECL workforce? [medium-term outcome]**

  Public confidence in the ECL profession has grown. At the same time, there remain gaps in their understanding of how well-trained and fairly compensated they are. ECL professionals themselves perceive public support as declining, however. Only 43 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Child care is valued by the public" in 2021, down from 51 per cent in 2019.

3. **Does the ECL R&R Strategy promote the long-term goal of appropriate compensation plans and human resources strategies to be put in place? [10-year goal]**

There are conflicting trends. Wage enhancement is working in two ways. Wages are growing for those eligible. The symbolic value is high. The enhancement sent a powerful signal to ECL professionals: government has recognized the problem of their remuneration. It values their work. Furthermore, and in contrast to 2020, wage differentials between certification levels appear to be increasing. Differentials add to the incentive to acquire advanced credentials and seek promotion. There are mixed signals with respect to improved human resources strategies, however. Employers are more likely to report at least some benefits compared to 2019. But the proportion offering pension (26 per cent) and extended health care (59 per cent) remains as low as 2019. More non-manager/supervisor centre-based ECL professionals reported access to benefits. Notably, wages and incomes have been increasing.

- **Over the medium term of the evaluation, do retention strategies support the long-term engagement of ECEs and others in the workforce, to help keep them in the profession? [medium-term outcome]**

  Retention strategies include enhancing wages and promoting access to professional development. They do appear to have the effect of increasing workforce engagement and persistence. But the extent is very modest so far. The new regression analysis in this report points to the important role employment benefits play. Benefits are associated with job satisfaction, lower burnout, hours spent in professional development and even take up of the wage enhancement. Yet staff exits and anticipated departures from the ECL workforce are at their highest levels in 2021. Some optimism arises from increasing

training of ECEs. Those still in the workforce in late 2021 report similar duration work histories as in 2019 while the age distribution is slightly younger. However, this could again be due to shifts in the composition of the workforce survey's respondents in 2021 compared to 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report's analysis of administrative data, cross-sectional surveys and interviews has reconfirmed the challenging situation reported earlier. The same critical workforce development situation that originally prompted the ECL R&R Strategy persists.

Evidence coming from the evaluation is thus increasingly robust. We have added data from a third year out of the total of five currently planned. Most of the recommendations related to successful tactics are very similar to those in 2020. But we can be confident there are some areas where workforce development has not budged. This is despite three years of implementation of the ECL R&R Strategy's tactics. New approaches seem warranted. In their absence, recommendations on how to innovate remain cautious. There is limited evidence on what actually works to improve recruitment and retention. There is also the need to avoid unhelpful interactions between policies that could exacerbate some problems. Some approaches may merely shift the locus of who is affected.

- **Renewed effort is needed to develop ECL R&R Strategy tactics that support employers' urgent needs to recruit, retain and develop ECL professionals.** Shortages of qualified ECL professionals persisted into 2021. As in previous years, about 40 per cent of employers reported they were unable to fill at least one vacant position in their centre. Employers indicated they were unable to fill 1.8 positions on average. Due to staff shortages, 45 per cent had to fill vacant positions with an individual with lower qualifications than they wanted. There seems to be a pool of older adults and youth interested in working in ECL if the working conditions can be improved. More people must be attracted into the profession from diverse sources. At the same time, more effort is needed to motivate existing ECL professionals to stay in the field.

- **Carefully designed and targeted further wage enhancement** is yielding success. Increases are likely to generate yet more incremental improvements. This appears to have been the most recognized and appreciated of the ECL R&R Strategy tactics. It does not fully solve the identified problems with compensation and benefits. But it continued to play a role in improving incomes into 2021. This has clearly been appreciated by those working in the sector. It acts as a potent symbol that the government recognizes the importance of adequate pay. Work is underway in 2022 to develop a "wage grid". These denote standard wage levels or floors for specific certification levels and other criteria.

The grid could help address some challenges that wage enhancements have not, such as localized inequities.

- **Intervention is needed where ECL professionals' compensation packages are falling short.** This includes pensions and other benefits such as paid preparation and PD time. The evaluation is finding benefits to be a key part of the recruitment and retention equation. They may counter burnout and increase workplace satisfaction. Satisfaction with benefits increased slightly in 2021 and fewer employers offered none. But it remains the case that employers have not expanded provision of key benefits such as extended health care and pensions. The approach taken in the wage enhancement to support statutory benefits could be imitated. Government could provide conditional funding to improve other workplace benefits such as pensions.

- **Raise the profile and sustainability of ECE professional development as well as the incentive to upskill.** 2021 saw clearer wage differentials that better recognize the acquisition of additional credentials. This should improve incentives for existing workforce members to upskill. The "wage grid" may also help in this regard. Increasing accessibility and availability of financial aid should be considered. The current tactic takes the form of bursaries. These have uncertain eligibility, disparate application processes and discontinuous disbursement patterns. More consistency would help ECL professionals see ECE tuition, PD courses and related costs as affordable. Regulation could protect time off for study. Disbursements of financial assistance could ne made upfront more often. This would seed fund employers and employees to incentivize upskilling.

- **A program specifically to address incentivizing specialty certification may be justified.** The evaluation first highlighted skills deficits in relation to children with special needs in 2020. These have remained acute. In 2021, 40 per cent of employers who cared for children with special needs did not have staff in any position with a Special Needs certification. About 27 per cent of employers had to refuse children due to not having staff with the right qualifications to accommodate children's needs. For 39 per cent of these (up from 25 per cent in 2020) the qualification missing was a Special Needs Certificate. More than half the employers reported at least one of their staff needed to improve skills in this area. Fully 78 per cent of professionals themselves rated their ability to make the environment inclusive for children with special needs as above average or excellent. But this ability was the second lowest skill when rated in this way. And the proportion of non-managers/supervisors in centre-based ECL who gave this self-assessment dropped 4 percentage points. Incentivizing acquisition of infant and toddler certification may be equally justified. While most of the evidence reported relates to special needs. But employers reported having to refuse children due to lack of the IT certification just as often.

- **Recruitment efforts could focus on older workers with children.** Many enrolling in ECE programs have these characteristics. Our surveys found adults more inclined than those under 18 to consider working in child care.

- **Workforce supports to provide recognition and tangibly increase benefits are needed more than ever.** 2021 brought increased net workforce departures and a higher proportion expecting to leave ECL within a year. It also saw an increase on already-high measures of burnout compared to 2019. Incentives may be needed to encourage staff with ECEs to take on more responsibility. When senior staff were ECE-certified, retention of other ECL professionals increased.

- **PD incentives and legislation requiring training could be further targeted.** Targeting could harness evidence on program areas where there is relatively low take up of PD. Private sector providers, especially of school-age care, are among those less often engaging in training in 2021. Home-based care providers who did not already hold ECEs were in a similar position. Those working in before and after school/recreational care programs also took PD less often.

- As mentioned in the 2020 report, **a more systemic approach is required to support decision making and manage B.C.'s child care "system".** Currently it is difficult for the sector to take stock of its successes and challenges. This project has experienced a notable decline in the capacity and speed with which administrative data can be obtained. The situation may improve as provincial responsibility for child care has shifted to the Ministry of Education and Child Care. Details are scant on what this means for coordination of programming and data collection. At the moment, the ECL R&R Strategy is being implemented by multiple Ministries. Each is at varying stages of roll out on its original tactics and updating those tactics. At the same time, new related initiatives are launched by additional agencies overlapping in intent with the ECL R&R Strategy but outside it. No regional or central agency collects and disseminates information on the ECL R&R Strategy tactics. There are thousands of eligible workplaces and tens of thousands of members of the workforce to reach. Information and data are disparately available and absent in several areas. Health authorities are too stretched to fulfil reporting duties systematically (or in synch with one another). ECL professionals report being unaware of the tactics, which is likely to influence negatively take up and impact.

It remains too early to pass judgement on the overall effectiveness of the ECL R&R Strategy. The problems that ailed the sector in 2018 and 2019 are largely still present in 2021 and some have worsened. Meanwhile, the pandemic has left the sector with additional challenges. COVID19 provided new sources of instability and fragility. What is clear is that the ECL R&R Strategy and the kinds of tactics included within it have acquired even more importance as policy responses.

The continuation of such supports appears vital to inform decisions of those contemplating a career in ECL. It is also likely very important to those who already have one. Systematically and coherently implemented, the ECL R&R Strategy tactics clearly hold potential. With further innovation, the approach could help combat some of the well-established challenges that affect ECL workforce development in B.C. There were small improvements in many KPIs in 2021. But the tactics implemented to date are not looking sufficient. New and better coordinated tactics are still needed in the toolkit.

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APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Category	Term	Definition	Source
Career-Related	**Career Pathway**	A progression of educational qualifications, credentials and training that build upon one another and enable members of the ECL workforce to advance in their careers. Career pathways can be flexible, with multiple entry and exit points, to allow the ECL workforce, made up of diverse learners and non-traditional students, to acquire the necessary career-related skills and knowledge.	Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections*
Career-Related	**Certification** (Staff)	The process by which an individual or institution attests to or is shown to have met a prescribed standard or set of standards.	Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections*
Career-Related	**Credentials**	Academic degrees, licenses or certificates awarded to individuals who successfully complete state or national requirements to enter specialized roles in the ECL workforce.	Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections*
Career-Related	**ECL workforce; Members of the ECL workforce**	The broad range of individuals engaged in the care and education of young children. Members of the ECL workforce may include teachers, caregivers, and administrative staff, as well as consultants, learning specialists, and others that provide training and Technical Assistance to programs.	Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections*
Career-Related	**Professional Development** (PD)	Refers to a continuum of learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals for work with, and on behalf of, young children and their families, as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work. Professional development encompasses education, training, and Technical Assistance (TA), which leads to improvements in the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of members of the ECL workforce.	Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections*

Category	Term	Definition	Source
Career-Related	**Retention (Staff)**	Refers to the ability of programs to retain their employees over time.	Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections*
Types of Child Care Programs	**Before or After School Program**	Licensed Care provided to school age (Kindergarten and up) children in a community-based facility or centre. Also applied to programs that are educational in nature and/or less than 2 hours in duration.	BC Government Website[45]
Types of Child Care Programs	**Centre-Based Child Care**	Child care provided in non-residential group settings, such as within public or private schools, churches, preschools, day care centers, or nursery schools.	Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections*
Types of Child Care Programs	**Culturally-Based Care** (see also: Indigenous early learning, child development and child care)	At its core, the child care program honours and promotes culture and language and connections to the child's origins.	Child Care BC Report
Types of Child Care Programs	**Home-Based Child Care**	Child care provided for one or more unrelated children in a provider's home setting/personal residence – may be licensed/license-not-required, paid/unpaid, listed / unlisted. In a licensed home-based child care centre, licensee is a Responsible Adult and personally provides care, within the licensee's personal residence, to no more than 7 children.	StatsCan Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements; Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections;* BC Child Care Licensing Regulation

[45] Understand the Different Types of Child Care in B.C. – Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca)

Category	Term	Definition	Source
Types of Child Care Programs	**In-Child's-Own-Home**	Unlicensed care when parents arrange for child care within their own home (e.g., nanny, babysitter). Children from other families cannot be included in this arrangement and the care provider cannot be a relative who lives in the home. There are no legal requirements for monitoring this type of care and no specific qualifications for the care provider are required.	BC Government Website[46]
Types of Child Care Programs	**Indigenous Early Learning, Child Development and Child Care (IEL/CD/CC)**	Supporting Indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination and governance; Indigenous communities and leaders determine how to deliver ECL in a way that meets the needs of Indigenous families; Indigenous communities develop high quality, culturally respectful, spiritually enriching, community ECL services that are based in the child's culture, language and history.	BC Aboriginal Child Care Society
Types of Child Care Programs	**Informal Child Care**	A term used to describe child care provided by relatives, friends, and neighbors in the child's own home or in another home, often in unregulated settings.	Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections*
Types of Child Care Programs	**License-not-Required Child Care** (see also: Registered License-Not-Required Child Care; Unlicensed Child Care)	Providers can care for up to two children (or a sibling group) who are not related to them. Can operate legally in BC. Not registered or licensed, thus not monitored or inspected, do not have to meet standards for health and safety.	BC Government Website[47]

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[46] [Understand the Different Types of Child Care in B.C. – Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca)](gov.bc.ca)

[47] [Understand the Different Types of Child Care in B.C. – Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca)](gov.bc.ca)

Category	Term	Definition	Source
Types of Child Care Programs	**Licensed Child Care**	Child care programs operated in homes or in facilities that fall within the regulatory system and must comply with specific requirements for health and safety, staffing qualifications, record keeping, space and equipment, child-to-staff ratios, and programming. Monitored and regularly inspected by regional health authorities.	BC Government Website; StatsCan Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements
Types of Child Care Programs	**Non-traditional Hour Child Care**	Child care provided during non-traditional work hours such as over weekends or before 6am or after 7pm, Monday-Friday.	Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections*
Types of Child Care Programs	**Occasional Child Care**	A program that provides care on an occasional or short-term basis	BC Child Care Licensing Regulation
Types of Child Care Programs	**On-Site Child Care**	Child care programs that occur in facilities where parents/family members are on the premises, such as on school campuses or in employment/job settings.	Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections*
Types of Child Care Programs	**Preschool**	Licensed programs that provide early education and care to children before they enter kindergarten, typically from ages 2.5-5 years. Preschools may be publicly or privately operated and may receive public funds.	Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections; BC Child Care Licensing Regulation*
Types of Child Care Programs	**Registered License-Not-Required Child Care**	Providers do not require a license but are registered with a Child Care Resource and Referral Centre. 1 Responsible Adult per 2 children (or sibling group) who are not related to the provider. Setting is the child care provider's own home. To become licensed, operators must have completed criminal record checks, character references, home safety assessment, first aid training, child care training course or workshops.	BC Government Website

Category	Term	Definition	Source
Types of Child Care Programs	**Relative Child Care**	Child care provided by extended family members either in the child's home or at a relative's home.	Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections*
Types of Child Care Programs	**School-Based Child Care**	Child care programs that occur in school facilities.	Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections*
Types of Child Care Programs	**Unlicensed Child Care**	Child care programs that have not been licensed by the regulator. The term often refers a program that can legally operate without a license as well as a program that illegally operates without a license.	Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections*
Types of Providers	**Child Care Operator**	The person running the child care facility. In Centre-based care this role can be termed a director and, in some circumstances, (such as for-profit centres) is also the owner.	BC Government Website
Types of Providers	**Child Care Provider**	An organization or individual legally responsible for operating ECL services. The provider is the entity that applies for the licence(s) and/or funding for facilities.	Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections*
Types of Providers	**Early Childhood Educator Assistant** (ECEA)	Graduates from an approved education program can work as an Early Childhood Assistant once they receive a certificate from the ECE Registry in the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Can then work with young children in an early childhood setting under the supervision of a qualified Early Childhood Educator.	University of BC

Category	Term	Definition	Source
Types of Providers	**Early Childhood Educator** (ECE)	Often used in the literature interchangeably with employees, staff, child care workers, front-line ECEs. But to be qualified to work as an early childhood educator (ECE) in BC, you are required to complete a basic early childhood education training program from an approved training institution. Graduates from an approved training program can work as an early childhood educator or assistant once they apply to receive a certificate from the provincial government (see ECE certification below).	BC Government Website – Education/training
Types of Providers	**Licensee**	A licensee is a person, an organization, a company, or a partnership that has applied for and been granted a license to operate a community care facility in BC. A license is not transferable from one person to another or one facility to another. Any changes to a licensed facility, such as moving to a new location, changing managers, or making physical renovations, must be discussed with a licensing officer.	BC Government Fact Sheet; BC Child Care Licensing Regulation
Types of Providers	**Manager**	Delegated full authority to operate the child care centre. Licensee must examine manager's work history and copies of diplomas, certificates, other evidence of training and skills. Manager must be physically and psychologically capable of working with children.	Interior Health
Types of Providers	**Qualified Care Provider; Provider**	The legal entity running the child care facility. See also Child Care Operator above.	StatsCan Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements; Child Care BC Report
Types of Providers	**Responsible Adult**	A Responsible Adult is a person who is at least 19 years of age, has completed at least 20 hours of training, has experience working with children, and can provide care and mature guidance to children.	BC Government Fact Sheet

Category	Term	Definition	Source
Types of Providers	**Centre-based ECL professional**	A person who has primary responsibility for a group of children for child care provided in non-residential group settings, such as within public or private schools, churches, preschools, day care centers, or nursery schools. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA or ECE.	Report terminology
Types of Providers	**Home Care Provider (HCP)**	SRDC's cross-sectional survey definition of HCP, which denotes Home-Based Child Care (above). This group includes family child care providers, LNRs, RLNRs and nannies, but very few nannies responded to SRDC's survey.	Report terminology
Types of Providers	**Owner-operators**	A person who is an owner-operator, director or manager of a licensed child care centre, preschool or after school program. This person may or may not work directly with children.	Report terminology
Type of ECE certification	**ECE (1 year)**	Certification for early childhood educators without 500 hours of supervised work experience. Requires proof of graduation from a recognized basic and/or post-basic ECE program. The One-Year ECE Certificate allows a person to act in the position of a fully certified ECE while working towards their 500 hours and it can only be renewed once.	BC Government Website – Education/training
Type of ECE certification	**ECE (5 year)**	Certification for early childhood educator with proof of graduation from a basic ECE program recognized in B.C. and 500 hours of work experience under the supervision of a Canadian-certified ECE	BC Government Website – Education/training
Type of ECE certification	**Infant Toddler Educator**	Certification for early childhood educators with an ECE (5 year) certificate and proof of graduation from a recognized ECE program recognized in B.C. with Infant and Toddler specific courses.	BC Government Website – Education/training
Type of ECE certification	**Special Needs Educator**	Certification for early childhood educators with an ECE (5 year) certificate and proof of graduation from a recognized ECE program recognized in B.C. with Special Needs specific courses.	BC Government Website – Education/training

Category	Term	Definition	Source
Type of position	**Child care or ECL professional**	A person who has primary responsibility for a group of children in a centre. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA or ECE. Not a supervisor, manager, or director.	Child care workforce cross-sectional survey definition
Type of position	**Supervisor**	A person who has responsibility for a group of children and also has supervisory responsibility for child care professionals. This person can be a Responsible Adult, ECEA, or ECE.	Child care workforce cross-sectional survey definition
Type of position	**ECL professional – Manager**	A person with management duties (which can include hiring, payroll, performance reviews, compliance with licensing requirements, etc.). This person has administrative duties and may have child care duties.	Child care workforce cross-sectional survey definition
Type of position	**Administrative – Director**	Refers to a person who has administrative duties only.	Child care workforce cross-sectional survey definition

APPENDIX B: EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

SRDC developed the evaluation framework based on the Theory of Change and the potential impact pathways, which were also reviewed with the Sector Steering Committee. The evaluation framework follows careful consideration of the long-term goals of the ECL R&R Strategy with respect to BC's child care workforce development, as well as the outcomes anticipated from implementation of its many tactics.

By considering each element of each goal and outcome separately, SRDC can hypothesize changes that could be expected as a consequence of successful implementation of the ECL R&R Strategy's tactics. SRDC has further proposed lines of evidence (termed 'key performance indicators' or KPIs for short): data that can be collected systematically over time to determine whether the ECL R&R Strategy is on track to achieving each specific long-term goal as well as the expected outcomes over the medium term (originally three years, now five). Baseline measures of outcomes for the current evaluation (denoted by the term 'benchmark') serve double duty as baseline measures (benchmarks) for the evaluation of long-term (10 year) goals also.

The Evaluation Framework shows the five Key Evaluation Questions, the implementation tactics, Key Performance Indicators, and the data collection methods and time frames needed to address the Key Evaluation Questions.

The column headed Key Performance Indicators lists the actual measures that will be used to indicate change in the outcomes. Data collection instruments and later analysis generates evidence on the status of each of these indicators over time, from the outset of the evaluation to its completion. For example, the first KPI for the first Key Evaluation Question is the "Proportion of ECL professionals with credentials relevant to provision of child care for provincial ECL needs, including regional and Indigenous ECL needs" This requires data collection on the number of ECL workforce members with credentials such as ECE and ECEA as well as the overall needs for ECL professionals in the province with disaggregation by region and Indigenous communities. Proposed data collection methods require reviews of administrative databases such as the ECE registry and centre licensing, as well as a survey of operators about their employees and their unmet workforce needs. The final column describes the timing for data collection and reporting.

Key question	Implementation tactics	Key performance indicators	Data collection methods	Data collection and reporting timing
1. Over the medium term of the evaluation, do recruitment strategies achieve the outcome of an adequate supply of ECEs and other child care staff entering the workforce?	**Post-Secondary:** $7.4 million over three years to increase the number of spaces in ECE programs at public post-secondary institutions aiming to graduate 620 more ECEs **Bursaries:** Funding through the ECE Bursary Program is increased to $500 per course, 60% of which is paid upon proof of registration	▪ Proportion of ECL professionals with credentials relevant to provision of child care for provincial ECL needs, including regional and Indigenous ECL needs ▪ Perceptions of ECL career among those making decisions with respect to their own careers ▪ Proportion of ECL workforce who self-report possession of core skills and supplementary skills ▪ Awareness of ECL career pathway options, how to pursue them, and expectations of their feasibility in terms of finances and availability of training opportunities ▪ Employers report of the share of their ECL workforce possessing core skills and possessing supplementary skills ▪ Ratio of positive to negative opinions (with respect to standards of care, viability, sustainability, and value of ECL work) in general population, thought leaders, mass media, youth, and parents	Cross-Sectional Surveys	Annually
			Child Care Workforce Contact Information Database	Annually
			Key Informant Interviews and Case Studies	Ongoing throughout project
			Public Opinion Survey	Twice (2019 and 2022) Now adding 2023 & 2024
			Social and News Media Monitoring	Retroactive to 2016, then ongoing throughout project

Key question	Implementation tactics	Key performance indicators	Data collection methods	Data collection and reporting timing
2. Over the medium term of the evaluation, do retention strategies support the long-term engagement of ECEs and others in the workforce, to help keep them in the profession?	**Compensation:** At eligible facilities, a $1/hr wage enhancement starting in early 2019, retroactive to Sept 1, 2018. A second increase of $1/hr effective April 1, 2020 **Work-based Education and Training:** A pilot project to provide more options and flexibility to professionals who have considerable experience to upgrade their qualifications **Training Supports:** Funding to help ECL professionals and employers with costs associated with continuing education and training, such as travel and paid time off	▪ ECL professional satisfaction and perception of appropriateness of compensation ▪ Average real wages and salaries of ECL professionals ▪ Proportion of ECL professionals with credentials relevant to provision of child care for provincial ECL needs, including regional and Indigenous ECL needs ▪ Perceptions of ECL career among those making decisions with respect to their own careers ▪ Proportion of ECL workforce who self-report possession of core skills and supplementary skills ▪ Proportion of ECL workforce who self-report participation in professional development activities ▪ Employers report of the share of their ECL workforce possessing core skills and possessing supplementary skills	Census, Labour Force Survey and other microdata analysis	Benchmark analysis in 2019, possible analysis of LFS and 2021 Census in 2023
			Cross-Sectional Surveys	Annually
			Child Care Workforce Contact Information Database	Annually
			Key Informant Interviews and Case Studies	Ongoing throughout project
			Public Opinion Survey	Twice (2019 and 2022) Now adding 2023 & 2024

Key question	Implementation tactics	Key performance indicators	Data collection methods	Data collection and reporting timing
		▪ Employment stability of ECL workforce, including variances for staffing for providers, work hours, job tenure, job exits ▪ Ratio of positive to negative opinions (with respect to standards of care, viability, sustainability, and value) among those already working in the sector ▪ Ratio of positive to negative opinions (with respect to standards of care, viability, sustainability, and value of ECL work) in general population, thought leaders, mass media, youth, and parents	Social and News Media Monitoring	Retroactive to 2016, then ongoing throughout project
3. Over the medium term of the evaluation, does the implementation of career pathways provide opportunities for career growth and development in the	**Post-Secondary:** $7.4 million over three years to increase the number of spaces in ECE programs at public post-secondary institutions with the aim to graduate 620 more ECEs **Professional Networks and Support:** An expanded Community Early Childhood Facilitators	▪ Proportion of ECL professionals with credentials relevant to provision of child care for provincial ECL needs, including regional and Indigenous ECL needs ▪ Perceptions of ECL career among those making decisions with respect to their own careers	Public Opinion Survey	Twice (2019 and 2022) Now adding 2023 & 2024
			Cross-Sectional Surveys	Annually

Key question	Implementation tactics	Key performance indicators	Data collection methods	Data collection and reporting timing
early care and learning sector?	Program to provide ECEs with more opportunities to share best practices **Professional Development:** $6.3 million in federal funding to expand professional development offerings to the sector **Training Supports:** Funding to help ECL professionals and employers with costs associated with continuing education and training, such as travel and paid time off	▪ Proportion of ECL workforce who self-report possession of core skills and supplementary skills ▪ Awareness of ECL career pathway options, how to pursue them, and expectations of their feasibility in terms of finances and availability of training opportunities ▪ Proportion of ECL workforce who self-report participation in professional development activities ▪ Hours of formal and informal professional development per workforce member per year ▪ Employers report of the share of their ECL workforce possessing core skills and possessing supplementary skills ▪ Ratio of positive to negative opinions (with respect to standards of care, viability, sustainability, and value) among those already working in the sector	Child Care Workforce Contact Information Database	Annually
			Key Informant Interviews and Case Studies	Ongoing throughout project
			Social and News Media Monitoring	Retroactive to 2016, then ongoing throughout project

Key question	Implementation tactics	Key performance indicators	Data collection methods	Data collection and reporting timing
4. Over the medium term of the evaluation, are education, training, and professional development opportunities expanded so that the ECL workforce has the skills, knowledge, and abilities required to provide quality services to children and families?	**Post-Secondary:** $7.4 million over three years to increase the number of spaces in ECE programs at public post-secondary institutions aiming to graduate a total of 620 more ECEs **Professional Networks and Support:** An expanded Community Early Childhood Facilitators Program to provide ECEs with more opportunities to share best practices **Professional Development:** $6.3 million in federal funding to	▪ Proportion of ECL professionals with credentials relevant to provision of child care for provincial ECL needs, including regional and Indigenous ECL needs ▪ Perceptions of ECL career among those making decisions with respect to their own careers ▪ Proportion of ECL workforce who self-report possession of core skills and supplementary skills ▪ Proportion of ECL professionals who self-report participation in professional development activities ▪ Hours of professional development per ECL workforce member per year	Administrative Outcomes Database	Annually
			Cross-Sectional Surveys	Annually
			Child Care Workforce Contact Information Database	Annually

Key question	Implementation tactics	Key performance indicators	Data collection methods	Data collection and reporting timing
	expand professional development offerings to the sector **Work-based Education and Training:** A pilot project to provide more options and flexibility to professionals who have considerable experience to upgrade their qualifications **Training Supports:** Funding to help ECL professionals and employers with costs associated with continuing education and training, such as travel and paid time off	▪ Employers report of the share of their ECL workforce possessing core skills and possessing supplementary skills ▪ Ratio of positive to negative opinions (with respect to standards of care, viability, sustainability, and value) among those already working in the sector	Key Informant Interviews and Case Studies	Ongoing throughout project

Key question	Implementation tactics	Key performance indicators	Data collection methods	Data collection and reporting timing
5. Over the medium term of the evaluation, does the strategy promote public confidence in the professionalism and accountability of early care and learning professionals?	**Industry Standards:** Review and update of the Sector Occupational Competencies to ensure providers are delivering the highest standards of care	▪ The extent to which current Sector Occupational Competencies are integrated into education and training programs ▪ Proportion of ECL professionals with credentials relevant to provision of child care for provincial ECL needs, including regional and Indigenous ECL needs ▪ Perceptions of ECL career among those making decisions with respect to their own careers ▪ Proportion of ECL workforce who self-report possession of core skills and supplementary skills ▪ Employers report of the share of their ECL workforce possessing core skills and possessing supplementary skills ▪ Ratio of positive to negative opinions (with respect to standards of care, viability, sustainability, and value of ECL work) in general population, thought leaders, mass media, youth, and parents	Key Informant Interviews and Case Studies	Ongoing throughout project
			Public Opinion Survey	Twice (2019 and 2022) Now adding 2023 & 2024
			Social and News Media Monitoring	Retroactive to 2016, then ongoing throughout project

APPENDIX C: LABOUR MOBILITY SUPPLEMENT

The March 2022 amendment to the contract for the Evaluation of the ECL R&R Strategy included several new dimensions for analysis in project reports going forward. The evaluation report for 2021 is based on data collected in advance of this amendment and so does not include all these features. Moving forward, workforce and employer surveys will collect data that will allow for a thorough examination of labour mobility into, out of, and within the sector.

In the interim, this supplement brings together pertinent analyses of labour mobility using data collected in SRDC's 2021 cross-sectional surveys of employers and members of the child care workforce. In future reports, this analysis will be enhanced by a more robust set of data and will be included in the main body of the report.

FINDINGS RELATED TO LABOUR MOBILITY

CURRENTLY WORKING OUTSIDE THE ECL SECTOR

Those holding ECE or ECEA certifications but not currently working in child care have been included in the workforce survey every year. There were 185 people in this group in 2021. Their demographic characteristics (from the main report) are repeated in Table 72.

This group had a somewhat older age profile than others still working in ECL and were less likely to be immigrants. Despite the older age profile, they were less likely to have extensive experience of working in ECL than the main survey sample, even though nearly a third had worked in ECL for at least 16 years.

Survey questions targeted on this group have focused on their reasons for not working in ECL and their intention to return to work in the sector. The nature of their current employment has not been probed thoroughly in past surveys. Although one question asks for their current job title, it does not include the requisite follow-up questions to determine occupation and industry with any accuracy. SRDC has attempted to code the job title reported by line of work or occupation in 2021 to the extent possible. The results for 2021 are shown in Table 73. These answers suggest most have not moved too far from work in early childhood development, with many working as ECL consultants, instructors, licensing officers and so on. One in five was not currently in employment.

Table 72 Demographic characteristics of ECEs/ECEAs not in ECL in the compared to the total 2021 Workforce Survey sample

	2021	
	ECEs/ECEAs not in ECL	All survey respondents
Female	97%	**95%**
Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit)	8%	**7%**
Experience disability	2%	**3%**
Born outside Canada	22%	**30%**
Age		
20-24	1%	**4%**
25-29	9%	**9%**
30-34	11%	**10%**
35-39	11%	**15%**
40-44	15%	**15%**
45-49	16%	**16%**
50 or older	38%	**32%**
Years of experience in ECL		
Less than one year	7%	**6%**
One to three years	7%	**11%**
Four to five years	11%	**8%**
Six to ten years	23%	**22%**
Eleven to fifteen years	21%	**16%**
Sixteen years or more	32%	**37%**

Table 73   ECEs/ECEAs not in ECL: categorization of answers to "What is your current job title?"

Current job title [SRDC categorization]	2021	
	N	%
Aboriginal Supported Child Development	5	3%
Child Care Resource and Referral	8	4%
College ECE instructors/Pedagogists	14	8%
ECE not in child care (e.g., in school)	12	6%
Family Navigator/Parent Outreach	5	3%
Infant Development Consultant	6	3%
Early Years Coordinator, Consultant, Support Worker	19	10%
Licensing Officer	6	3%
Program Director or Manager	7	4%
Strong Start Educator/Facilitator	27	15%
Supported Child Development (Consultant, Coordinator, Supervisor)	6	3%
Teacher or Teaching Assistant	9	5%
Other positions unrelated to child development	8	4%
Unknown	1	1%
Not Currently Employed	35	19%
Prefer not to answer	17	9%
Total	**185**	**100%**

Given this group already possesses ECEA or ECE certification, they represent an important source of potential ECL professionals in the future. Fully 23 per cent answered "yes" when asked if they expected to be working in ECL in a year's time and another 22 per cent were unsure. At the time of the survey, 11 per cent reported actively looking for work. Half of these said they were looking for a job in ECL while roughly 3 per cent were looking for another job outside child care, often in a school or PSE institution.

ECEAs/ECEs not in ECL were asked about their reasons for leaving the sector (Table 74). The most common answers were related to dissatisfaction with pay and benefits in child care (51 per cent and 31 per cent, respectively). Other common answers included dissatisfaction with work conditions (29 per cent) and career advancement opportunities (26 per cent). However, the share of respondents citing these reasons in the 2021 survey was higher than in 2020 and closer to the responses obtained in 2019, when 57 per cent reported dissatisfaction with pay and 36 per cent were dissatisfied with work conditions. In 2020, one in eight (12 per cent) had left due to health reasons related to COVID-19 but by 2021, all health reasons combined only accounted for 4 per cent of departures.

Table 74   Main reasons why ECEs/ECEAs are not in ECL

Reasons for not working in child care	%
Dissatisfied with pay in child care	51%
Dissatisfied with benefits in child care	31%
Dissatisfied with working conditions in child care	29%
Dissatisfied with career advancement opportunities in child care	26%
Preference for another occupation	17%
Other personal reasons	11%
Taking a break to further studies	6%
Ill health / Health reasons	4%
Not able to find a job in child care	1%
Other reasons	32%

Source: SRDC workforce survey: survey respondents not in ECL. Respondents could cite up to three reasons.

CURRENTLY WORKING IN THE ECL SECTOR

In the 2021 workforce survey, there were 219 respondents who were currently working in child care and looking for a new job. The survey asked respondents to specify whether they were looking in their current workplace, elsewhere in a school or PSE institution, or somewhere different entirely. Respondents could answer with more than one of these three types of job destination but 73 per cent chose only one of the three types of destination, with 14 per cent looking for a job in their current workplace and 30 per cent looking for a job in a school or PSE institution. Seven in every ten (71 per cent) were looking for a job somewhere other than their current workplace of a school or PSE institution and two thirds of these (69 per cent) were looking for non-child care jobs.

Nearly all of the 219 respondents (181) held an ECEA or an ECE credential. Nearly three quarters (72 per cent) of these were looking for a job in child care, while 45 per cent were looking for a non-child care job. These groups overlap because people could give more than one answer, as shown in Table 75.

Table 75   Jobs sought by ECEs/ECEAs working in child care and looking for a new job

What type of job are you looking for? [multiple answers possible]	2021	
	N	%
A similar job	53	31
A child care job with higher seniority	52	29
I plan to open my own child care workplace	15	8
A non-child care job in a school or postsecondary institution	30	17
A non-child care job elsewhere	51	28
Other (please specify)	28	15
I don't know	11	6
Prefer not to answer	3	2
Total	**181**	**100**

Looking for a new job is different from expecting to leave one's job. The workforce survey sought to determine whether members of the ECL workforce *expected* to be leaving their jobs soon. Most respondents in Centre-based ECL expected to be working with their current employer one

year after completing the survey. Managers and supervisors were more likely to say that they expected to stay with their current employer (86 per cent) compared to non-managers/supervisor Centre ECL professionals (71 per cent). About 5 per cent of all managers and supervisors and 12 per cent of non-managers/supervisor Centre-based professionals reported that they were expecting to leave their current employment.

Respondents who were not expecting to continue in their current workplace or were not sure were asked if they expected to work in the ECL *sector* one year after completing the survey. From their responses, we can estimate the proportion of professionals leaving the ECL sector in a year. Among non-managers/supervisor Centre ECL professionals , this proportion was 5 per cent. But at least another one in ten (10 per cent) were not sure whether they would continue working in the sector. Among managers/supervisors, only 3 per cent did not expect to work in ECL after one year while one in nine (11 per cent) were not sure whether they would stay working in the sector. An analysis of HCPs with intentions to leave the sector indicated equivalent levels of commitment (5 and 10 per cent).

Across all workplace types, the proportions expecting to leave imminently have grown since 2019. If these expectations in 2021 are borne out, there will be more turnover in the workforce in years to come.

"New entrants" and "experienced in ECL with new jobs"

The workforce survey did not explicitly seek out new entrants to ECL work in BC. However, it is possible to identify new ECL professionals by looking at those who satisfy two survey criteria:

- They started work in their current workplace in the past year (2020 or 2021) and

- They reported having worked in child care for less than 12 months.

Nearly 7 per cent (127 people) of survey respondents working in Centre-based ECL positions meet this description.

The survey can also identify a larger group of experienced professionals who started a new job within the sector by looking at those who:

- Have been working in child care for more than a year and

- Started work in their current workplace in the past year (2020 or 2021).

This subgroup represents 354 professionals (17 per cent of the survey sample).

We describe the characteristics of these "new entrants" to ECL and of experienced ECL professionals who changed jobs in the last year in this section (Tables 76, 77 and 78). They are profiled on current demographic, credential, and workplace characteristics.

In general, the demographic characteristics of *new entrants to ECL* and *job changers with longer-term ECL experience* were similar (Table 76). New entrants were much more likely to be immigrants (43 versus 30 per cent) and had a younger age profile. Fully 47 per cent were under 30 years of age compared to 18 per cent of the experienced job changers. In general, those moving jobs trended younger than the ECL workforce overall. For comparison, across all respondents to the workforce survey, 13 per cent were under 30 and 32 per cent were 50 years or older.

Table 76 **Demographic characteristics of new entrants to ECL and those experienced in ECL moving to a new position**

	ECL workforce survey respondents who are…	
Demographic characteristics	**New to ECL (%)**	**Experienced in ECL, in new job (%)**
Women	92	94
Indigenous	7	8
Born outside of Canada	43	30
Have a disability	3	3
Age (years)		
19-24	30	6
25-29	17	12
30-34	13	13
35-39	12	21
40-44	12	16
45-49	11	13
50 and +	6	18
Total	**127**	**354**

Reflecting their recent arrival in the sector, new entrants had lower levels of qualification than more experienced job changers (Table 77). Three times as many (17 versus 5 per cent) were Responsible Adults while twice as many (25 versus 12 per cent) were ECEAs and twice as many held the 1-year ECE certificate.

About twice as many of the new entrants to ECL were in a workplace offering a universal child care prototype program compared to those with more experience in ECL who changed jobs (13 versus 6 per cent) and disproportionately more worked in preschools (43 versus 31 per cent). When it came to auspice, there was a fairly even split in moves into privately run businesses compared to not-for-profit providers, with perhaps a surprisingly high proportion of those new to ECL unable or unwilling to report the auspice of their employer.

Table 77   Qualification of new entrants to ECL and those experienced in ECL moving to a new position

	ECL workforce survey respondents who are…	
Qualification	New to ECL (%)	Experienced in ECL, in new job (%)
ECEA	25	12
ECE 1 year	19	8
ECE 5 year	12	27
ECE IT	2	15
ECE SP	2	4
ECE SP+IT	8	23
Responsible Adult	17	5
Total	**127**	**354**

Table 78 **Workplace characteristics of new entrants to ECL and those experienced in ECL moving to a new position**

Type of child care workplace	ECL workforce survey respondents who are…	
	New to ECL (%)	Experienced in ECL, in new job (%)
A private business	37	43
A not-for-profit	34	36
Other	14	14
Not known	15	7
Programs offered at workplace		
Group care, under 3 years old	41	51
Group care, 2.5 years to school age	44	53
Group care, school age (before-and-after school program)	35	28
Preschool, 2.5 years old to school age	43	31
Multi-age	20	19
Other	6	7
Is a Universal Child Care Prototype Site	13	6
Total	**127**	**354**

CONCLUSIONS

This appendix provides the first focused examination of labour mobility using data from the Evaluation of the ECL R&R Strategy's cross-sectional surveys, reporting level of actual and intended mobility. ECEs and ECEAs who left the sector most commonly said they had done so because of dissatisfactions with pay, benefits, opportunities for career advancement or working conditions more generally. A surprising proportion – close to a quarter – were expecting to return to work in ECL within a year. Reasons for staying in the sector among those who remained, or for entering work in ECL among new entrants, were not directly asked in any of the cross-sectional surveys but will be considered for inclusion moving forward.

In preparation for future reports, starting with Evaluation Report 2022, SRDC will modify its cross-sectional workforce and employer surveys to better reflect the views of professionals who have recently left ECL. New questions will be asked of all survey respondents on the factors that motivated their intentions to enter, exit, or remain working in the sector. Additional efforts will be made to target professionals who have recently left ECL. These enhancements to the evaluation's data collection strategy will allow for a more nuanced analysis to support program and policy decision making from 2023 onwards.