



# Evaluation of Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy

Evaluation Findings Report 2022

JULY 2023

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For more information on SRDC, contact

Social Research and Demonstration Corporation  
55 Murray Street, Suite 400  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5M3  
613-237-4311 | 1-866-896-7732  
info@srdc.org | www.srdc.org

*Vancouver Office*  
890 West Pender Street, Suite 440  
Vancouver, British Columbia V6C 1J9  
604-601-4070

*Remote offices:*  
Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba,  
Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario,  
Quebec, and Saskatchewan  
1-866-896-7732

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## How to read this report

The Evaluation Findings Report is divided into 10 extractable modules, in addition to a sub-module for the wage enhancement program. Each module can be identified by its subject matter and, visually, by its primary and accent colours (see the table below).

Across all modules, light grey or a lighter shade of the primary colour is used to enhance the contrast between a category of interest and its comparison category—usually, though not always, 2019 data.

To help guide the reader through the text, some key words are bolded. There is no strict rule for bolding text, other than to alleviate the burden on the reader.

| Module                             | Primary Colour | Accent colour | Neutral colour |
|------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Executive Summary                  | Purple         |               |                |
| Introduction/Methodology           | Blue           | Orange        | Grey           |
| Satisfaction with Child Care       | Pink           | Green         | Grey           |
| Perception of Child Care           | Green          | Grey          |                |
| Wages and Benefits                 | Purple         | Pink          | Grey           |
| <i>Wage Enhancement</i>            | Purple         | Orange        | Grey           |
| Education and Certification        | Orange         | Purple        | Grey           |
| Workforce Development              | Pink           | Blue          | Grey           |
| Labour Mobility                    | Green          | Grey          |                |
| KPIs                               | Blue           |               |                |
| Considerations and Recommendations | Blue           |               |                |

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## 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 (“ChildCareBC”) 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 the tactics have been expanded in various ways since 2018, the ECL R&R Strategy remains with its original intent; it seeks to meet the following three overarching long-term goals:



The then Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST, now Ministry of Post-secondary Education and Future Skills, PSFS) 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 Findings Report for 2022 includes the main project results and lessons learned to the end of 2022 plus a public opinion survey collected in early 2023. An accompanying volume, the Evaluation Technical Report contains a more complete account of the project design and activities up to 2022 as well as the full versions of tables, figures, and qualitative analyses that this findings report draws upon.

## Evaluation Strategy

The May 2019 Evaluation Strategy report 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:

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, does the ECL R&R Strategy contribute to:



- adequate supply of ECL professionals entering the workforce?
- opportunities for career growth and development in the ECL sector?
- expanded education, training, and professional development opportunities to ensure a skilled workforce?

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 ECL R&R Strategy promote

- public confidence in the professionalism and accountability of the ECL workforce?

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?

## Evaluation Framework

The evaluation framework calls for data to answer these questions using many different methods and tools. These are described briefly below and in more detail in the technical report. 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 assess the changes occurring from the ECL R&R Strategy. In various permutations, as reported here, they track progress in six broad areas where BC’s ECL workforce could potentially experience change as a result of the ECL R&R Strategy: compensation and benefits; education and certification; workforce development; labour mobility; satisfaction with work in child care; and perception of child care.

For the 2019 year, the project developed benchmarks (the benchmarking report was deliverable #9 published in July 2020) and SRDC derived benchmarks 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 up to this current report – compare the data on indicators from 2022 (and sometimes 2020 and 2021) 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

SRDC’s data collection strategy relies on three broad types of data (administrative, survey, and interview data) from a variety of different sources to provide evidence along each of the project’s KPIs.

In 2022, findings from the ECL R&R Strategy evaluation were informed by the following data types and data sources:



### Administrative Data

- Child care Workforce Contact Information Database
- Administrative Outcomes Database
- Canadian Census Microdata
- Linked Education and Tax Records



### Survey Data

- Annual Cross-sectional Survey of ECL Employers in BC
- Annual Cross-sectional Survey of ECL Professionals in BC
- Public Opinion Survey in BC



### Interview Data

- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with ECL Employers and Professionals across BC
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with representatives from selected Case Study Sites

## Results

This report includes measures of progress towards achieving outcomes and goals sought by the ECL R&R Strategy. It is the 24<sup>th</sup> deliverable of the Sector-led Evaluation of the ECL R&R Strategy in BC. 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.

### Change on Key Performance Indicators

To take stock of progress against each KPI, we have cycled through results from all relevant data sources. We compare the position of the ECL sector in 2022 relative to 2019 and earlier (and also intervening years where relevant). We draw on observations from professionals working in the sector and the general public to add meaning to these statistics.

A word of caution when interpreting KPI directional results: These summaries do not allow the reader to know how close—or how far—the sector is in reaching its long-term goals. Inevitably, many nuances of findings are lost in such high-level summary. Readers are encouraged to review the findings report for a more complete story and the full results for each indicator in the technical report.

This report highlights the pressures members of BC’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.

The evaluation will continue to cover developments in the sector’s response to the ECL R&R Strategy 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.

#### *How to Read Table 1*

The rightmost column in Table 1 presents a summary of this progress on KPIs. An arrow symbol signifies the overall trend on each indicator since the launch of the ECL R&R strategy until the end of 2022. This can be:

an improvement  a deterioration  a mixed result 

The arrows do not provide an indication of the magnitude of the change (i.e., large or small), only the direction of the change. Additionally, KPIs with **no arrow** reflect those for which no new information was collected since the last report.

A complete analysis of the evaluation’s KPIs can be found in the table [Summary of progress to 2022 on key performance indicators](#).

Table 1 Progress on Key Performance Indicators from 2019 to 2022

|       |   |   |
|-------|---|---|
| KPI1  | ECL professional satisfaction and perception of appropriateness of compensation   | ↔ |
| KPI2A | Average real wages and salaries of ECL professionals  | ↑ |
| KPI2B | Benefits of ECL Professionals   | ↑ |
| KPI3  | Integration of current Sector Occupational Competencies into education and training programs  |   |
| KPI4  | Proportion of ECL professionals with credentials relevant to provision of child care for provincial ECL needs, including regional and Indigenous ECL needs  | ↑ |
| KPI5  | Perceptions of ECL career among those making decisions with respect to their own careers  | ↑ |
| KPI6  | Proportion of ECL workforce who self-report possession of core skills and supplementary skills  | ↔ |
| KPI7  | Awareness of ECL career pathway options, how to pursue them, and expectations of their feasibility in terms of finances and availability of training opportunities                                  | ↔ |
| KPI8  | Proportion of ECL workforce who self-report participation in professional development activities  | ↑ |
| KPI9  | Hours of professional development per ECL workforce member per year   | ↑ |
| KPI10 | Employers report of the share of their ECL workforce possessing core skills and possessing supplementary skills   | ↑ |
| KPI11 | Employment stability of ECL workforce, including variances for staffing for providers, work hours, job tenure, job exits  | ↓ |
| KPI12 | Ratio of positive to negative opinions (with respect to standards of care, viability, sustainability, and value) among those already working in the sector  | ↔ |
| KPI13 | 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 | ↑ |

## Provisional early answers to evaluation questions

The evaluation framework uses progress against KPIs to answer the evaluation questions over time. We are reporting on the fourth year of the five-year evaluation project. While we are getting closer to being able to draw conclusions on timely completion of the medium-term outcomes, it is too early to make judgements against ten-year goals. However, it is possible to identify progress. Earlier data collection, in 2020 and 2021, also captured the negative effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the achievement of the Strategy's goals. For 2022, most COVID-specific measures were dropped. There are clearly places where, despite the pandemic, the needle has moved positively on the intended outcomes and goals of the Strategy, set at the project outset in 2019, and others where change has not been achieved or been negative.

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?

It is early to answer a question that anticipates a decade of change but qualifications, and to a lesser extent skills, are improving.

- The number of professionals with ECL-related qualifications appears to be increasing annually.
- However, the proportion of the workforce holding ECE or ECE specialty certification is declining.
- Staffing problems are becoming increasingly acute and persistent.
- Take up of the ECE Workforce Development Bursary increased among those not yet ECE-certified in child care centres.

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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 2022.
- While the supply is increasing, it is insufficient to meet needs given exits are also increasing.

---

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 2022.
- In general, there has been an improvement in the proportion of employers engaging in activities to promote career advancement since 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. The number of workforce development bursaries granted from Fall 2021 to Summer 2022 was the highest level yet for this 12-month period.
- Since 2019, there is a decline in the proportion of respondents who indicate facing barriers in accessing professional development activities.
- In 2022, more employers noted that their staff needed to improve on the skill of making the environment inclusive for children with special needs compared to 2019.

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

**There are conflicting trends, but mainly negative.**

- More considered child care as their chosen profession in 2022 than 2019 but more also agreed that their job is temporary. Fewer were willing to recommend child care as a profession.
- More expect to leave ECL within one year in 2022 compared to 2019. As the demand for professionals grows, these planned departures will leave an even larger shortfall. Over ten years, even a small percentage leaving annually will add up to a considerable loss of professionals.
- The proportion of employers who experienced net loss of staff in the previous 12 months – full-time and part-time – was higher in 2022 (similar to 2020 and 2021) at 43 per cent compared to the 2019 benchmark, when it stood at 34 per cent.

---

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

- Public confidence in the ECL profession had grown since 2019. Thirty-four per cent of adults in BC say they value child care professionals more than they did in 2019 (compared to only 5 per cent who value them less than in 2019). Confidence in ECL professionals has grown slightly since 2019, but half of adults are still unsure if ECL professionals are well-trained.
- ECL professionals themselves perceived public support as declining. Only 44 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement *Child care is valued by the public* in 2022, down from 51 per cent in 2019.

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

**There are conflicting trends:**

- After adjusting for inflation, 2022 wages without the enhancement dropped from 2021 and are now at similar levels than in 2019. However, taking into account the wage enhancement, average wages have increased across the sector since 2019. In effect, the positive effect of wage enhancement payments on incomes has been muted by inflation, even considering the increase introduced in September 2021 and paid out from March 2022.
- The symbolic value of wage enhancement remains high. The enhancement sent a powerful signal to ECL professionals: government recognizes the problem of their remuneration and values their work.

**More employers are offering benefits to staff and more professionals report receiving benefits in 2022 than in 2019:**

- Due to legislative changes requiring the offer of sick days, many more employers are now offering this benefit compared to 2019, though the quality of this benefit varies.
- The proportion of employers offering pensions (23-27 per cent) and extended health care (59-65 per cent) have barely moved since 2019.

---

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 appear to be increasing workforce engagement and persistence for those they reach from 2019 levels. But the extent is very modest so far.
- Regression analysis points to the important role employment benefits play. Benefits are associated with job satisfaction, finding work stimulating and challenging, and participating in professional development.
- Staff exits and anticipated departures from the ECL workforce were at their highest levels in 2022 since 2019.

## Recommendations

With an additional year of data collection, evidence coming from the evaluation is increasingly robust. This report's analysis of administrative data, cross-sectional surveys, and interviews confirmed the challenging situation of recruitment and retention in BC's ECL sector.

Most of the recommendations below related to successful tactics are very similar to those in 2021.

Despite four years of implementation of the ECL R&R Strategy's tactics, there are some areas where workforce development has not budged.

### **New approaches are required.**

Recommendations on how to innovate remain cautious, because there is limited evidence on what actually works to improve recruitment and retention. Designers of innovations also need to be wary of unhelpful interactions between policies that could exacerbate some problems. Some approaches may merely shift the locus of who is affected.

What is clear is that the ECL R&R Strategy and the kinds of tactics included within it are **making a difference**.

The situation would be worse without them.

Transforming the experiences and perceptions of an entire workforce sector sufficiently to change outcomes takes time. It remains too early to pass judgement on the overall effectiveness of the ECL R&R Strategy.

The tactics have been insufficient to move the needle in the right direction on the sought goals and

outcomes within four years. Thus, the importance of these kinds of policy responses has grown.

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 BC. New and better coordinated tactics need to be tested and evaluated, with those found successful added to the toolkit.

The evaluation indicates that the **same critical workforce development situation** that originally prompted the ECL R&R Strategy persists into 2022 and is **arguably worsening**.

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**Recommendation 1:** Renew efforts to attract and retain potential workers from diverse and new sources to the sector (updated from 2021)

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**Recommendation 2:** Continue efforts to develop and implement a wage grid (unchanged from 2021)

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**Recommendation 3:** Recruitment and retention is affected by the availability of benefits. Intervention is needed to improve compensation packages (updated from 2021)

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**Recommendation 4:** Raise the profile and sustainability of existing professionals obtaining ECE credentials as well as the incentive to upskill and acquire new credentials (updated from 2021)

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**Recommendation 5:** Implement a program that incentivizes specialty certifications (unchanged from 2021)

---

**Recommendation 6:** Systematize professional development incentives and systemic changes to ensure needed training is prioritized (updated from 2021)

---

**Recommendation 7:** Consider financial and regulatory instruments, competency frameworks and a system of digital badges/ micro-credentials to help improve education program outcomes (new in 2022)

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**Recommendation 8:** Consider new means to assess skills and competencies based on prior learning and experience (new in 2022)

---

**Recommendation 9:** Adopt a systems-approach to improve management of and support decision-making for BC's child care sector (updated from 2021)

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**Note:** Details for each of the recommendations listed above can be found in the Recommendations section of the Findings Report.

# INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Early Care and Learning  
Recruitment and Retention Strategy and its tactics



## 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 ("ChildCareBC")

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:



In 2018, the then Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST, now Ministry of Post-secondary Education and Future Skills, PSFS) 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 BC'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 to measure these direct and indirect effects of the implementation of the ECL R&R Strategy on the sector.

This evaluation findings report for 2022 includes project progress, results and lessons learned over the past four years of evaluation activity through to the end of 2022 plus a public opinion survey collected in early 2023.

There is a companion volume, the evaluation technical report for 2022, which includes the more complete analysis of evaluation data from which this report draws, as well as a more thorough description of the evaluation methodology, updates on the project management work plan, a report on Sector Steering Committee activities, and updates on implementation of data collection.

Published ECL R&R Strategy evaluation reports can be found on ECEBC's website at [www.ecebc.ca](http://www.ecebc.ca).

## ECL R&R Strategy Tactics

In 2018, the Ministry of Children and Family Development outlined eight tactics intended to improve supports for BC's child care profession, though not all were the responsibility of that Ministry. From 2022, primary responsibility for the ECL R&R Strategy rests with the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC).

From the outset, the option remained open that more tactics may be developed over the course of the project. Two additional tactics (incentives for transitions and the Provincial Nominee Program) have since been added.

In 2022, the B.C. government announced that "through the Canada-British Columbia Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (ELCC), the Government of Canada is providing a one-time \$49.2-million investment that will reduce barriers and increase access to post-secondary ECE programs and professional learning opportunities – including in under-served communities – and will support ECE graduates to transition to the workforce" and that the B.C. PNP Skills Immigration stream would prioritize ECEs in the application process to increase the number of ECEs nominated for permanent residence.

The current tactics and their associated activities are depicted in the adjacent graphic. The graphic displays these as ten segments of a circle.

Taken collectively, these tactics aim to increase targeted investments into the child care sector in order to ensure that the ECL R&R Strategy can meet its goals. They are described in more detail in the companion evaluation technical report for 2022.

Figure 1 ECE R&R Strategy Tactics, updated to 2022



# EVALUATION METHODOLOGY



## Evaluation Questions

The evaluation of the ECL R&R Strategy is guided by a set of research questions related to the strategy's longer-term goals. Each primary research question has several nested questions, which align with the strategy's medium-term outcomes.

The evaluation questions provide guidance for the selection of data sources and the development of data collection instruments. Lines of inquiry and the sources of information included in the evaluation must, in some way, help answer these evaluation questions.

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, does the ECL R&R Strategy contribute to:



- adequate supply of ECL professionals entering the workforce?
- opportunities for career growth and development in the ECL sector?
- expanded education, training, and professional development opportunities to ensure a skilled workforce?

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 ECL R&R Strategy promote

- public confidence in the professionalism and accountability of the ECL workforce?

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?

## Data Collection Strategy

SRDC's data collection strategy relies on three types of data (administrative, survey, and interview data) from a variety of different sources to provide evidence along each of the project's KPIs.

In 2022, findings from the ECL R&R evaluation were informed by the following data types and data sources:



### Administrative Data

Child care Workforce Contact Information Database  
Administrative Outcomes Database  
Canadian Census Microdata  
Linked Education and Tax Records



### Survey Data

Annual Cross-sectional Survey of ECL Employers in BC  
Annual Cross-sectional Survey of ECL Professionals in BC  
Public Opinion Survey in BC



### Interview Data

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with ECL Employers and Professionals across BC  
Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with representatives from selected Case Study Sites

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## Data Analysis Strategy

Starting in 2022, the Evaluation Report for the ECL R&R Strategy presents evaluation results along six themes:

- Satisfaction with Child Care
- Perception of Child Care
- Compensation and Benefits

- Education and Certification
- Workforce Development
- Labour Mobility

Each section groups together KPIs that touch on common themes in order to present key findings from the 2022 data collection.

## Analysis of Key Performance Indicators

The evaluation of the ECL R&R Strategy measures progress across 13 KPIs. These KPIs provide an organizing structure for the evaluation's data collection strategy, linking the strategy's tactics to its outcomes, its goals, and ultimately, to the data collection strategy.

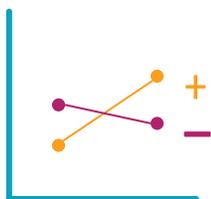
The annual evaluation report updates its assessments of the ECL R&R Strategy's progress along the 13 KPIs. This table can be found in the report section [Progress on Key Performance Indicators](#)

## Comparisons with Benchmarks

SRDC relies on benchmark measures to monitor the ECL R&R Strategy's progress for each of the 13 KPIs. Benchmarks provide a starting point against which annual data can be compared and progress can be assessed. Benchmarks were derived from data collected between 2015-2019, the period shortly before the implementation of the ECL R&R Strategy.

The comparison of annual evaluation data against benchmarks determines the degree of **change** in the KPIs.

Changes in KPIs across multiple data points signal whether the ECL R&R Strategy is succeeding or struggling to achieve its medium-term outcomes and whether it is making progress towards realizing its ten-year goals.



## Regression Analysis

Starting in 2021, SRDC uses several regression analyses to better understand the factors that influence recruitment and retention outcomes. The analysis is

applied to data from annual cross-sectional surveys of ECL employers and workforce professionals.

## Overview

Regression analysis estimates the relative effects of an **independent variable (IV)** on an **outcome**, while controlling for the effects of all other independent variables in the model.



Put simply, a regression model tells us the factors that are responsible for differences in outcomes, and to what extent.

The analysis uses three types of regression models, depending on the structure of outcomes variables:

- **Linear regression model** for continuous outcomes (e.g., monthly earnings or age);
- **Logistic regression model** (or logit) for binary outcomes (e.g., yes/no);
- **Multinomial regression models** for unordered categorical (or nominal) outcomes (e.g., yes/no/don't know).

## How Regression Results are Used

Regression analyses were added to the evaluation's analysis strategy to generate a deeper understanding of what factors might be the most important policy levers to improve outcomes.

Our analysis helps us uncover which independent variables (IVs) have a **non-zero effect** on outcomes and whether this effect is positive or negative.

In other words, is the positive or negative change we see in outcomes caused or influenced by an IV?

## Selection of Independent Variables (IVs)

IVs are factors that—at least in the short term—remain unchanged by an individual’s experiences in child care (such as their demographic characteristics or their monthly earnings).

IVs can help explain changes in outcomes; they can also exert influence on an individual’s behaviours, attitudes, and decision-making.

Some IVs are binary (Yes/No options), some are continuous (monthly earnings). Some IVs are reported on a magnitude that will allow visual comparisons with other IVs. For instance, years working in child care are measured in increments of 5 years; monthly earnings are measured in increments of \$1,000.

SRDC conducted a series of tests to select appropriate independent variables. These tests include:

- **Theoretical analysis:** Is there any evidence or any theoretical explanation that supports a **relationship**

between the IVs and the selected outcomes?

- **Correlation analysis:** Do the data in our research sample provide evidence of a relationship between selected IVs and outcomes? In other words, do IVs correlate with outcomes?
- **Collinearity between IVs:** Are some IVs strongly correlated with each other such that the influence of an IV on the outcome is not independent? For example, **wages and hours of work** exert an influence on each other. All else equal professionals working part time and not working in another job would have lower incomes than those working full time. **Their effect on outcomes is therefore not independent.** To avoid this problem, monthly income was chosen for inclusion in the model rather than wages. This is also the most complete remuneration variable.

The final models include the following IVs:

|   |  |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| <p>Private business</p>  <p>Binary variable. Indicates individuals working for a private business compared to all others.</p>                      | <p>Years working in child care</p> <p>+5</p>  <p>Continuous variable. One-unit increase represents five additional years of experience.</p> | <p>Monthly earnings</p> <p>+\$1K</p>  <p>Continuous variable. One-unit increase represents \$1,000 of additional monthly income.</p> | <p>Bachelor’s or Master’s degree</p>  <p>Binary variable. Indicates individuals with a bachelor or master’s degree.</p> | <p>Men and non-binary persons</p>  <p>Binary variable. Indicates men and NB individuals compared to women.</p>                               |
| <p>Indigenous persons</p>  <p>Binary variable. Indicates individuals who self-identify as First Nation, Métis or Inuit compared to all others.</p> | <p>Newcomers</p>  <p>Binary variable. Indicates individuals who self-identify as newcomers to Canada compared to all others.</p>            | <p>Membership in a Union</p>  <p>Binary variable. Indicates individuals who are unionized compared to those who are not.</p>         | <p>Age</p> <p>+5 AGE</p>  <p>Continuous variable. One-unit increase represents five additional years of age.</p>        | <p>Number of benefits received</p>  <p>Continuous variable. Represents the count of benefits individuals receive through their employer.</p> |

## 2022 ECL Workforce Survey description of respondents

Exactly 1,990 ECL professionals were included in our analysis of the 2022 Workforce Survey.

The characteristics of survey respondents were very similar to those in 2019. In 2022, we find the **same proportion of women** respondents compared to the 2019 workforce survey sample—96 per cent in both years.

A small proportion of respondents identified as **Indigenous** (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit: 6 per cent) but this represented an increase over 2019's 4 per cent. Only

4 per cent of respondents in 2022 reported having a **disability**, slightly higher than the 3 per cent in 2019.

Slightly fewer ECL professionals in 2022 than in 2019 (31 versus 34 per cent of the sample) were **born outside Canada**. This proportion was again higher among HCPs (38 per cent) and lower among managers and supervisors in both child care centres (26 per cent) and in before & after school programs (22 per cent).

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 3-percentage point decline (34 per cent) compared to the 2019 sample (37 per cent).



## Categorization by role and programs

Results for workforce survey respondents are divided into five categories based on their workplace and the programs they offer:

1. Child Care Centres: includes multi-age, preschool, and Seamless Day Kindergarten
2. Before-and-After School or Recreational Care
3. \$10 a day ChildCareBC Centres

4. Home Care Providers (HCPs)
5. ECL professionals not currently working in child care

Respondents who work in child care centres other than \$10 a day programs are further separated by their roles in the centre: **Managers and Supervisors (M/S)**, and **other employees** (ECL professionals or "non M/S").

HCPs are separated by whether they hold an ECE credential or not. This leaves us with eight policy-relevant categories.

For findings where certification or qualification is relevant, such as wages, we report by certificate held (ECEA, ECE one year or five year, etc.) or qualification (RA).

### Environment

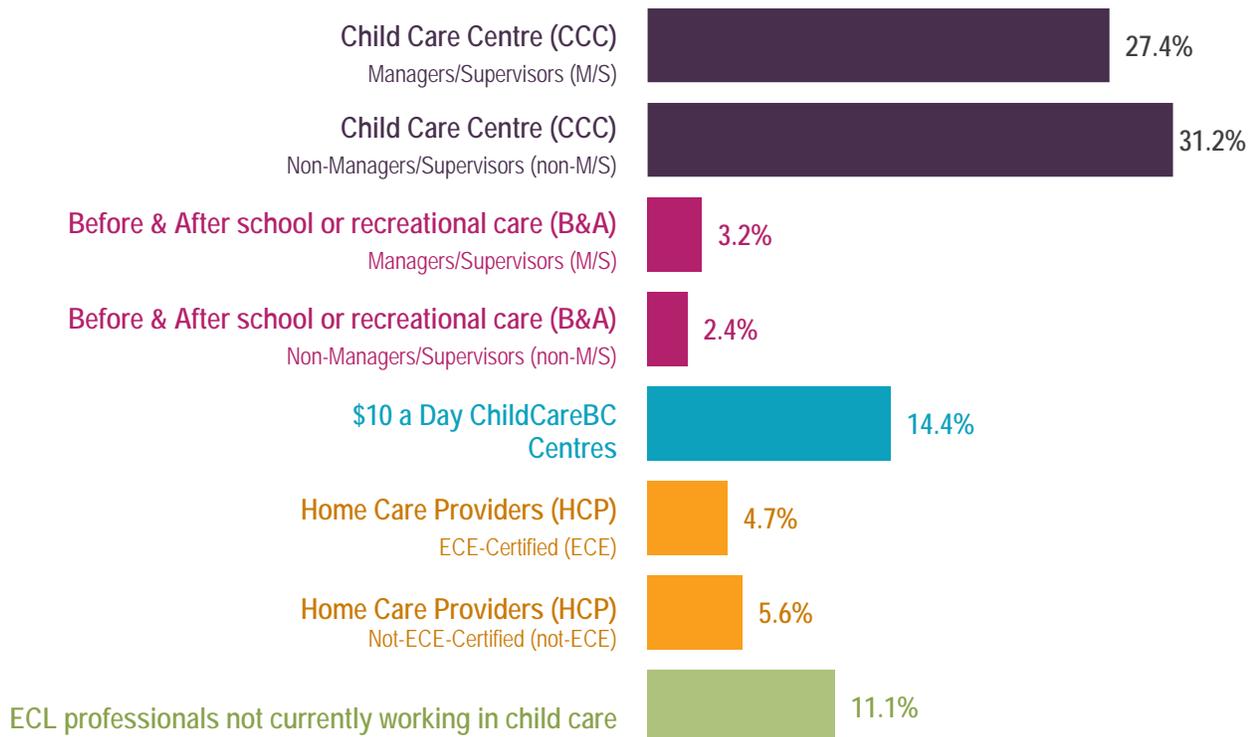
Workforce survey respondents largely worked in permanent positions, and nearly one-fifth were unionized. Similar to 2019, the majority of those currently

in licensed care work in a group care setting (58 per cent), with the largest increase being the proportion of respondents who work at a \$10 a day program, which increased from 3 per cent in 2019 to 14 per cent in 2022.

### Experience

Workforce survey respondents were generally well-experienced, with 41 per cent having 16 or more years of experience in ECL. Non-manager/supervisors in licensed child care and those working in \$10 a day programs tended to be the least experienced, while HCPs tended to be among the most experienced.

Figure 2 Proportion of ECL Workforce Survey respondents by role and program, 2022



## 2022 ECL Employers Survey description of respondents

The 2022 SRDC survey of employers in BC includes the perspectives and experiences of **820 employers** from across the province who employed more than **7,500 full-time and part-time ECL professionals** at the time of the survey.

The 2022 employer survey respondents were comparable to the 2019 respondents in terms of the type of care provided.

### Largest increase

+ 7%

Proportion of surveyed employers who provide group care for children 2.5 years to school age

### Largest decrease

- 14%

Proportion of surveyed employers who provide multi-age care

The largest increase was in group care for 2.5 years to school age children (56 per cent, up from 49 per cent in 2019). The largest decrease was in employers providing multi-age care (16 per cent, down from 30 per cent in 2019).

## ECE-required workplaces

Since 2019, SRDC has used a proxy variable to determine whether the child care centres require **at least one staff member** to hold an ECE credential by looking at the **programs** offered by child care centres.

In 2022, employers were asked directly whether their child care centre requires (or does not require) at least one ECE-certified staff. The results confirmed that the proxy variable is an accurate measure of ECE-required child care centres.

This variable is used to compare results between ECE-required and ECE not-required workplaces throughout the report.

Figure 3 Proportion of employers who exclusively operate ECE-required programs and ECE not-required programs, 2022



In 2022, just under two-thirds (64 per cent) represented ECE-required child care centres, with the remaining one-third in ECE not-required centres. This split is the same as in 2019.

## Other Workplace Characteristics

Most employers responded on behalf of a single workplace, with only a small minority (4 per cent) responding on behalf of 10 or more facilities.

About half of all employers operate a **private business**, down slightly from 57 per cent in 2019, and there was relatively little change in the amount who operate a **non-profit** (40 per cent compared to 37 per cent in 2019).

Only 9 per cent of employers in the 2022 sample operated a **\$10 a day ChildCareBC Centre**. Of those who did not, more than half indicated that they would want to if they had the chance. About 15 per cent indicated that they would not want to if eligible.

About 40 per cent of employers were unsure about whether the transfer of responsibility for managing child care from the Ministry of Children and Family Development to the newly-merged Ministry of Education and Child Care was “good news” for their programs and for the future of ECL in BC. Only a small minority (9 to 11 per cent) thought that the transition was not good news.

# SATISFACTION WITH CHILD CARE

Satisfaction with work is one of the key dimensions that can help us understand why professionals choose to stay—or leave—the ECL sector.

This section explores the factors that increase ECL professionals' satisfaction with their work and their workplaces.

The factors that increase motivation and that contribute to burnout among professionals in the workforce are also tracked.



## Satisfaction with Child Care

Job satisfaction is an important factor when considering whether ECL professionals plan to stay or leave their current employment in child care.

There are various dimensions of a person's employment that can explain their level of satisfaction<sup>1</sup>:

- the physical spaces and resources available for children to learn and play;
- the structure of work, such as the hours professionals spend at work and their overall workload;
- the social and interpersonal relationships that professionals develop and maintain with children and parents, and with other professionals; and
- opportunities available for professionals to learn, grow, and take on new responsibilities.

## ECL Professionals' Satisfaction with Work

Interpersonal relationships and the philosophy of child care continue to explain ECL professionals' satisfaction with their work in child care. But the lack of opportunities for career growth and the overall workload continue to pose a problem for many ECL professionals.

In the 2022 workforce survey, ECL professionals were *most satisfied* with the **relationships** they had built with families and with their co-workers, as well as with the **philosophy** of their workplace. They are also satisfied with the **health and safety protocols** in their workplace.

However, they are *least satisfied* by their **workload** and the **opportunities for advancement** available to them.

The overall pattern is consistent with results from the 2019 survey (not shown), though the degree of satisfaction in 2022 has decreased across most dimensions, with the biggest decrease in satisfaction found in opportunities for advancement and in professionals' overall workload.

Figure 4 Dimensions with the highest and lowest reported degree of satisfaction with work among ECL professionals



Source: 2022 SRDC workforce survey.

## Satisfaction with work by program and role

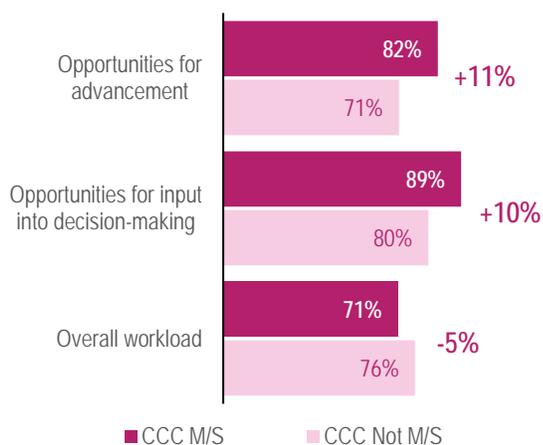
### Child care centres (CCC)

While there were similar patterns in satisfaction rates across all groups—regardless of a professional's role in the organization or the programs offered at their centre—managers and supervisors (M/S) appear to be more satisfied with their work than other ECL professionals. This result is consistent for M/S in both child care centres (CCC) and in before & after school or recreational care programs (B&A).

The biggest gap in satisfaction between managers/supervisors and other ECL professionals working in CCC are in the opportunities for advancement available (11-point difference) and opportunities for input and decision-making (10-point difference).

The only indicator where M/S in CCC are less satisfied with their work than non-M/S is in terms of their workload (5-point difference).

Figure 5 Satisfaction with work between M/S and non-M/S in CCC



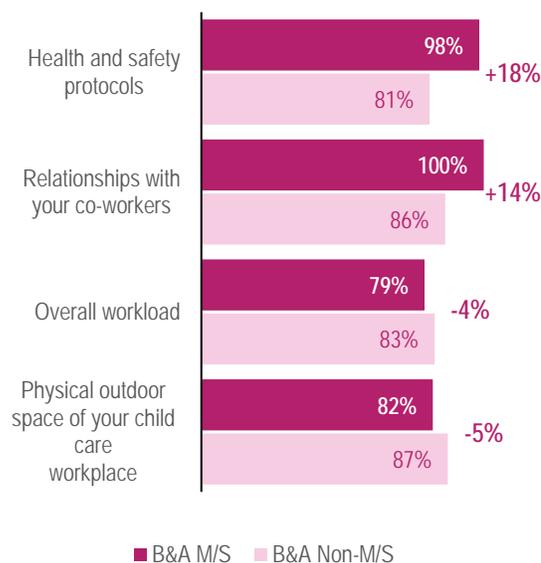
Source: 2022 SRDC workforce survey.

### Before & After school and recreational care programs (B&A)

We find a similar pattern in B&A programs, with M/S showing higher satisfaction rates with work than non-M/S professions.

The biggest differences in satisfaction between roles in B&A programs appears to be in satisfaction with health and safety protocols (18-point difference) and their relationships with co-workers (14-point difference). The only two indicators where M/S are less satisfied with work than non-M/S professionals are in their overall workload (4-point difference) and in the physical outdoor space available in their workplace (5-point difference).

Figure 6 Satisfaction with work between M/S and non-M/S in B&A programs



Source: 2022 SRDC workforce survey.

These comparisons mask a wider gap in the *intensity of satisfaction*: the difference between the proportions of respondents who reported being *very satisfied*.

The intensity gap was particularly pronounced between managers/supervisors (M/S) and non-M/S in B&A programs for satisfaction with resources or equipment for the children (25-point gap), hours of work (23-point difference), philosophy with child care centre (23-point difference), with M/S the group more likely to be very satisfied in all three cases.



*“The joy that I get is watching the development of these children and the tiny, little things that I can see.*

*“I had some sort of small, microscopic fingerprint on their development in a positive way that they – I can witness. That’s pretty, pretty awesome to witness.”*

For Profit Case Study Site

### *\$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres*

Responses from professionals working at \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres were comparable to the overall sample results related to workplace satisfaction.

Professionals were most satisfied with their relationships with families (98 per cent), with their centre’s health and safety protocols (94 per cent), and with their job security (94 per cent).

Respondents were least satisfied with their overall workload (71 per cent) and with the opportunities for advancement available to them (76 per cent).

### *Home Care Providers (HCPs)*

Compared to employees of larger facilities, HCPs were less satisfied with their **hours of work** (82 per cent) and **job security** (82 per cent).

They were the most likely to be *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with the **resources** and **physical spaces**—both indoor and outdoor spaces—available to them for their child care workplace, compared to all other groups.

However, when compared to 2019, the proportion of HCPs that were *very satisfied* with resources and physical spaces has decreased, while those who are only satisfied had increased, indicating a **decrease in the intensity of satisfaction**.

### *Highest ECL certification completed*

There is surprisingly little difference in the rates of satisfaction with work when comparing respondents according to their highest completed ECL certification.

The main differences were between Responsible adults (RA) and ECEs with specialized certifications (i.e., special needs (SN), infant toddler (IT), or both (SN+IT) certifications) across the following dimensions of satisfaction with work:

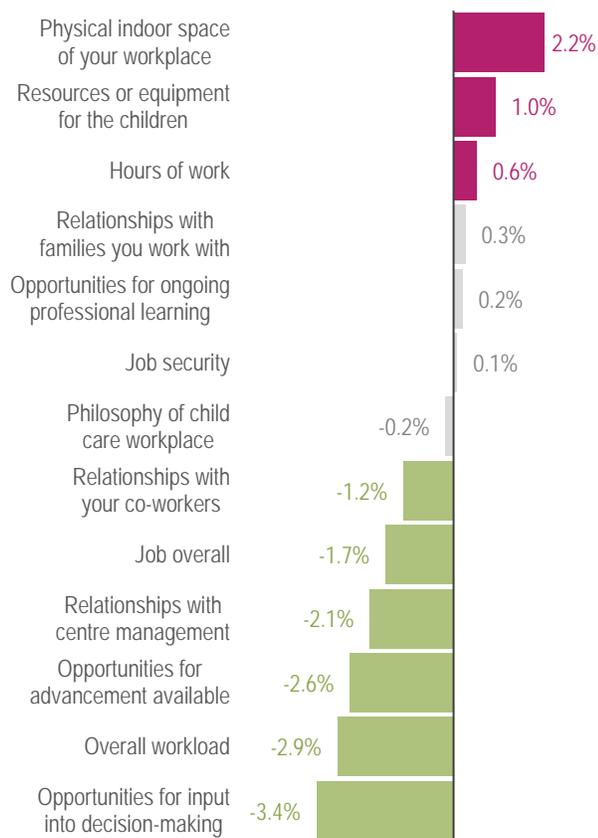
- **Work hours:** Higher for RA (91 per cent) than for ECEs with either SN or IT (85 per cent).
- **Relationship with Centre management:** Highest among RA (91 per cent) and lowest for ECEs with both SN + IT (84 per cent).
- **Opportunities for ongoing professional learning:** Lowest satisfaction among RA and ECEAs (83 and 85 per cent, respectively), and highest among ECEs with either SN or IT (91 per cent).

## Changes over time

Comparisons with 2019 benchmarks provides insights into which dimensions of ECL professionals' satisfaction with their work are increasing and which are decreasing.

The results in Figure 7 provide insights for changes across the sector. Some changes in job satisfaction since 2019 may be more pronounced for some groups compared to others. Nevertheless, this snapshot provides an important perspective into the aspects of their work that, according to ECL professionals, are improving.

Figure 7 Changes in satisfaction with work, 2019 to 2022



Source: SRDC 2019 and 2022 workforce surveys.

### Increasing levels of satisfaction

When compared to 2019 data, ECL professionals seem to be more satisfied with physical indoor spaces, resources and equipment, and their hours of work.

### Little to no changes in satisfaction

For some dimensions, we find little to no change in satisfaction across time.

In some instances, this result confirms a **consistently high degree of satisfaction across time**, such as their relationship with families, their job security, and the philosophy of their child care workplace.

Of concern is the little change in satisfaction regarding *opportunities for ongoing professional learning*, which is ranked lower on average than the top-tier dimensions of workplace satisfaction in both 2019 and 2022.

### Diminishing levels of satisfaction

There are six dimensions in which we see a decrease in work satisfaction. Most notably, we see downward trends in satisfaction with:

- Professional relationships within the workplace (colleagues and management),
- Overall workload and job overall,
- Career advancement, and
- Input into decision-making.

A source of satisfaction is the support ECL professionals receive from their organization and their colleagues.

They appreciate being able to rely on their colleagues for support and advice, but the trends from the workforce survey suggest that fewer ECL professionals are satisfied with these relationships now than in 2019.

## Factors associated with workplace satisfaction

A logistic regression analysis was conducted to better understand which factors contribute to ECL professionals' **satisfaction overall** with their job and satisfaction with their **workplace's child care philosophy**.

After controlling for other factors, we find two factors that have a significantly non-zero effect on respondents' satisfaction with their job:



### Number of benefits received

An additional employment benefit received is associated with:

**12% increase** in the odds that they will be satisfied with their **job overall**

**15% increase** in the odds that they will be satisfied with their workplace's **child care philosophy**



### Union membership

Union membership is associated with:

**70% decrease** in the odds that child care professionals will be satisfied with their **job overall**

**73% decrease** in the odds that they will be satisfied with their workplace's **child care philosophy**

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## Motivation and Burnout

Survey respondents were asked to read ten statements and rate the extent to which each described how they felt about their employment position. A factor analysis was conducted on the 2019 sample and uncovered two factors:

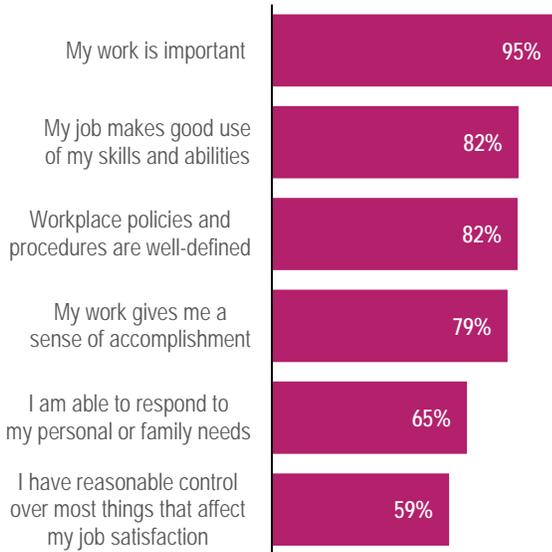
- Factors that facilitate or hinder motivation among professionals (6 items), and
- Factors that contribute to burnout (4 items).

## Motivational factors

Motivational factors are **conditions in the internal workplace environment** that facilitate or hinder staff motivation.

The six items explore the extent to which ECL professionals feel involved, engaged, and empowered by their working conditions and the work that they do.

**Figure 8** Proportion of respondents who often or always experienced motivational factors



Source: SRDC 2022 workforce survey.

The results indicate that most ECL professionals often or always experience factors that motivate them in their work.

Overwhelmingly, ECL professionals often or always feel that the work they do is important.

While over half of respondents (59 per cent) feel that they have reasonable control over most things that affect their job satisfaction, this factor is experienced least often by ECL professionals.

### Motivational factors by roles and programs

When comparing results by roles and programs, a clear pattern emerges:

**Managers/supervisors (M/S)** in all centre-based care and **home care providers (HCPs)** are **more likely** to experience motivational factors often or always.



**Non-managers/supervisors (non-M/S)** in child care centres and professionals in **\$10 a day ChildCareBC sites** are **less likely** to experience these factors often or always.

The only exception to this pattern is in the ability to respond to personal and family needs. For this item, the types of programs offered in the workplace, as well as certification, provides some insights into the degree to which this factor is experienced:

- **Non-M/S** and **M/S** offering **B&A programs** are most likely to experience this factor often or always,
- **ECE-certified HCPs** are far less likely to report being able to respond to their personal or family needs (53 per cent).

### Motivational factors by highest certification completed

In general, there was little to distinguish between groups defined by ECL certification on their experience of motivational factors. Among the small differences, we note the following patterns:

**Responsible adults (RA)** were **more likely** to experience motivating factors often or always, compared to other groups;



**ECEs with specialized certifications (SN and IT)** were **least likely** to experience motivating factors often or always.

The only exception to this pattern was found in the responses to the statement *My work is important*, where nearly all respondents (more than 94 per cent), regardless of certification, experienced this often or always.

### Trends over time

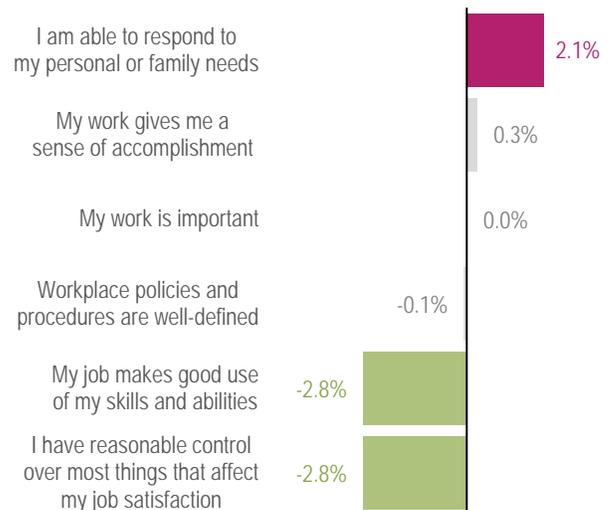
The results are somewhat mixed when looking at changes over time in the frequency with which ECL professionals experience motivating factors in the workplace.

Overall, we see **positive changes** in professionals' capacity to respond to **personal or family needs**. On average, this factor was—and continues to be—experienced often or always by some of the smallest proportions of respondents (63 per cent in 2019 and 65 per cent in 2022).

However, the trends suggest some improvement, most significantly for professionals in **\$10 a day ChildCareBC sites** (+8.4 points since 2019).

For three of the six factors, we find little to no changes. In the case of the factor **my work is important**, this is due to very high scores in both years (95 per cent in both 2019 and 2022).

**Figure 9** Change in proportions of respondents who often or always experience motivating factors at work (2019-2022)



Source: 2019 and 2022 SRDC workforce surveys.

For the other two factors that have shown little to no change (**my work gives me a sense of accomplishment** and **workplace policies and procedures are well-defined**), the results point to a lack of significant improvement in motivating factors that are experienced often or always by a moderately high proportion of respondents (79 per cent and 82 per cent, respectively).

We find **negative changes** in the proportions of respondents who often or always experience two motivating factors.

Most worrying is the decline in the proportion of respondents who feel that they **have reasonable control over most things that affect their job satisfaction**.

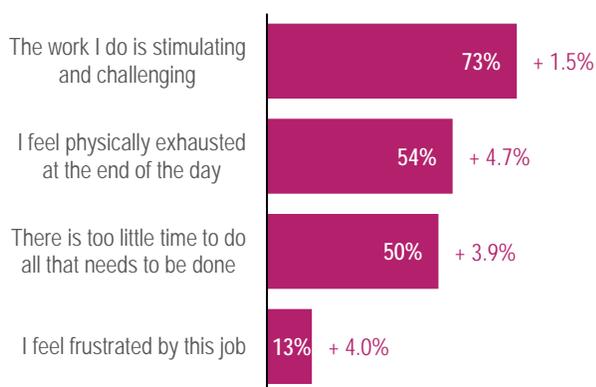
In addition to its downward trend, this factor is experienced by the fewest proportion of respondents in both 2019 (62 per cent) and 2022 (59 per cent). The decline is most pronounced for M/S (-4.9 points since 2019) and non-M/S (-2.1 points) professionals in ECE-required workplaces (child care centres).

## Burnout factors

The workforce survey measures four factors that contribute to the experience of burnout among ECL professionals.

Unlike motivating factors, burnout considers situations that contribute to discouraging feelings, such as exhaustion, frustration, and little time to complete tasks at work.

**Figure 10** Proportion of respondents who often or always experience factors that contribute to burnout (change since 2019)



Source: SRDC 2022 workforce survey.

Indicators of burn out appear to be worsening over time—overall, as well as across respondent groups. In fact, the experience of burnout was very similar across respondent groups defined by their qualification.

Responsible Adults reported **physical exhaustion** or **lack of time** (to do everything that needed to be done) less often. However, at least 40 per cent still agreed or strongly agreed that these burnout factors were present in their jobs.

While all groups were more likely to report being physically exhausted in 2022 than 2019, ECL professionals in B&A programs were *least likely* to report feeling physically exhausted at the end of day

(39 per cent for non-M/S; 44 per cent for M/S). However, both groups saw the biggest increase since 2019 along this indicator (+13.1 points and +13.8 points, respectively).

“As caregivers, we’ll push through and we’ll put the children first, but at the end of the day, our wellness, our health, and our physical body really take a toll.

“In the end, we’re not able to provide the best care. So, who does that really benefit?”

“It’s hard to stay in the field when your body is getting worn down.”

Not for profit Case Study Site

ECE-certified HCPs and non-M/S are more likely to find their work increasingly **stimulating and challenging**.

All groups except for ECE-certified HCPs were more likely to report **frustration with their job**.

Some ECEs caring for children with special needs are also expected to conduct necessary tasks outside of work hours: additional meetings with parents and specialists, preparing documentation, or letters to pediatricians. This work is often invisible and can contribute to feeling burnt out.

When considered by qualification group, the overall experience of burnout increased for every group, no matter the certification, though by varying amounts.

The only noted **decrease** in the experience of a single burnout factor between 2019 and 2022 was seen in professionals with a 1-year ECE certificate, with a modest decrease in **feeling frustrated by their job**.

## Factors associated with burnout

A logistic regression was conducted to understand the factors that contribute to burnout. After controlling for other factors, **five factors** significantly predict burnout in child care professionals.

Findings from the 2022 survey of ECL professionals suggest that **the experience of burnout is on the rise since 2019**. More professionals are often or always experiencing factors that contribute to burnout.



### Number of benefits received

An additional **employment benefit** received is associated with:

**7% increase** in the odds that they find the work they do stimulating and challenging



### Years working in child care

**Five extra years of experience** working in child care is associated with:

**20% increase** in the odds that they find the work they do stimulating and challenging



### Monthly earnings

An additional **\$1,000 dollars in monthly earnings** is associated with:

**7% increase** in the odds that they find the work they do stimulating and challenging

**31% increase** in the odds that they **do not have enough time** to get done all that needs to be done

**18% increase** in the odds that that they feel **frustrated by their job**



### Newcomers to Canada

Being a **newcomer to Canada** is associated with:

**56% decrease** in the odds that they find the work they do stimulating and challenging

**39% decrease** in the odds that they **do not have enough time** to get done all that needs to be done



### Union membership<sup>2</sup>

**Union membership** is associated with:

**148% increase** in the odds that they feel **frustrated by their job**

Source: SRDC 2022 workforce survey.

## Notes on this section

### 1 How job satisfaction was measured.

Since 2019, the cross-sectional survey of ECL professionals assesses job satisfaction through respondents' answers to 15 Likert-scale questions, with responses ranging from "Not at all satisfied" to "Very satisfied."

The four dimensions of burnout 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.

[Click here to go back to the text.](#)

### 2 Why are Union Members—who, on average, receive more benefits—also more likely to feel burnt out?

**Additional benefits** are associated with a decrease in feeling frustrated with the job. **Union members** are more likely to receive benefits. Yet in the regression results, union membership is associated with an 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 *not included in the model* is tightly associated with union membership (say, specific workplace settings) that affects burnout, then the effect attributed to union membership could be picking up the influence of that factor.

Furthermore, in 2022 the main unions involved in Community Social Services were involved in a protracted (13 month) negotiation affecting wage levels and working conditions. While this has since resulted in a historic agreement on wages and benefits, at the time of the survey (Oct/Nov 2022) unionized educators would have had little signal of progress and possibly many would have been frustrated with their employment conditions. Finally, the survey sample may not be representative of all unionized workplaces.

[Click here to go back to the text.](#)

# PERCEPTION OF CHILD CARE

How do professionals and employers within the sector perceive and value their work?

How does the public perceive the work of child care professionals?

This section uses ratios of positive-to-negative responses to survey questions to assess how the ECL workforce and the general public value the work of child care professionals.



## Perception of Child Care

### Perception of ECL work from within the sector

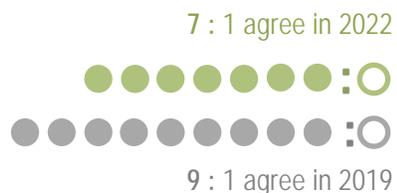
Workforce survey respondents were asked to rate their opinion on four statements regarding others' perception of their child care work. The analysis uses a ratio of positive to negative opinions across various statements that measure professionals' opinions.

In general, the ratio **agree : disagree** among ECL professionals who believe that their friends, family, and the families of the children they work with value their work in child care **remains positive** but has decreased from 2019.

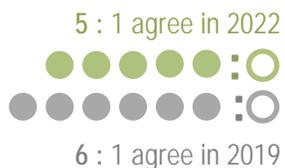
#### *My work is valued by the families of the children I work with*



#### *My work in child care is valued by my family*



#### *My work in child care is valued by my friends*



While the results show strong positive to negative ratios, the trends since 2019 suggest that fewer ECL professionals believe those closest to them value their work now.

When asked for their level of agreement with the statement *Child care is valued by the public*, the results indicate that, over time, opinions have become more negative among ECL professionals. In 2022, a smaller proportion of ECL professionals believe the public values child care at 44 per cent, compared to 51 per cent in 2019.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, professionals who are no longer working ECL were more likely to disagree with this statement (66 per cent) than any other group.

The perception that ECL is undervalued by others outside of the sector was also documented in open-ended responses to the workforce survey. ECL professionals point to several factors that contribute to the undervaluing of their profession, including:

- ECL is still perceived as “babysitting” rather than “educating.” Consequently, their work is not as valued as K-12 educators, nor is it seen as important to the child’s development.
- ECL professionals applaud recent investments by governments seeking to reduce the cost of child care for parents, but feel that there is not the same degree of urgency in implementing **sustained, equitable compensation** in a field dominated by women.

## Perception of professionals' own work in child care

The perception that ECL professionals have towards their own work is difficult to boil down to a simple positive or negative view.

In conversations, case study participants spoke of the immense pride they have in their work and their passion for their chosen career.

However, even among those who intend to remain in the sector, they speak of the compounding effects that low pay, low perceived respect from others, and high demands have on the sustainability of professionals' career prospects.

The cross-sectional survey of ECL professionals presented five statements that more directly probed respondents' current relationship with their work in ECL. Once again, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with each statement in order to calculate a ratio of **agree** : **disagree** (\***disagree** : **agree**, when negative statements are presented).

“*If you love helping children grow, creating the tools they need to go to kindergarten, and planning developmentally appropriate activities for them, engaging them with activities, and teaching them things, then yes, I would tell people to get their ECE and work at a daycare.*

*But if they need to make X amount of dollars, then it probably wouldn't be a right fit.*

For Profit Case Study Site

### *I would recommend child care as a profession*

2 : 1 agree in 2022



3 : 1 agree in 2019

### *I consider child care as my chosen profession*

14 : 1 agree in 2022



9 : 1 agree in 2019

### *I feel comfortable telling new people that I work in child care*

6 : 1 agree in 2022



9 : 1 agree in 2019

### *My current job is temporary\**

5 : 1 disagree in 2022



6 : 1 disagree in 2019

### *My current job is a stepping stone\**

3 : 1 disagree in 2022



4 : 1 disagree in 2019

These results highlight the complexities that were also documented in the evaluation's case studies.

While ECL professionals are now less likely to recommend child care as a profession and less comfortable telling new people that they work in child care, there is an increasingly greater ratio who consider child care as their chosen profession.

The contrast speaks to the **strong attachment** that many ECL professionals have towards their profession, despite **countervailing factors** that discourage new entrants from staying.

In conversations, ECL professionals noted that their passion for their work sustains their commitment to ECL, but they still recognize countervailing factors, including that:

- The work is physically and mentally demanding,
- The pay is lower than in professions that require similar training and ongoing licensing requirements, and
- There are limited opportunities for career development.

### Ratios by role and programs

There are also clear differences in perception of child care across groups of ECL professionals, notably according to their role and programs.

Managers and supervisors (M/S) in ECE-required child care centres, home care providers (HCPs), and any professional in \$10 a Day ChildCareBC sites were most likely to agree that **child care is my chosen profession** (21:1; 17:1; and 16:1, respectively).

There were also important differences among respondent groups to the item ***I feel comfortable telling new people that I work in child care***, with respondents working in B&A twice as likely as other groups to agree (14:1).

### Ratios by demographic groups

Ratios of positive to negative opinions among non-M/S centre ECL professionals regarding their child care jobs varied across demographic groups.



In 2022, respondents who identified as **Indigenous** (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) generally had comparable ratios to non-Indigenous respondents, although significantly more Indigenous respondents would recommend child care as a profession.



Respondents who were **born outside of Canada** had larger ratios for the statements *I consider child care as my chosen profession*, though the difference is not significant. A higher proportion of newcomers *would recommend child care as a profession* compared to 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.

### Ratios by highest ECL certification

When analyzed by highest certification completed, respondents with at least an ECE certification were more likely to confirm their attachment to their profession. Respondents with an **ECE or specialized certification** (SN, IT or SN+IT) were more likely:

- to agree with the statement that child care is their chosen profession, and

- to disagree with the statements that their current job is a stepping stone or that their current job is temporary.

This suggests that **professionals with higher certifications feel a stronger attachment to their profession.**

However, this attachment does not increase the likelihood that professionals with at least an ECE will recommend child care as a profession. Instead, we find similar ratios for this item across all certification groups, with the most specialized professionals (SN + IT) being the **least likely** to recommend child care as a profession.

## Perceptions from outside the sector

### Public Opinion Survey

A representative sample of adults in BC were asked about their opinions of child care work and professionals.

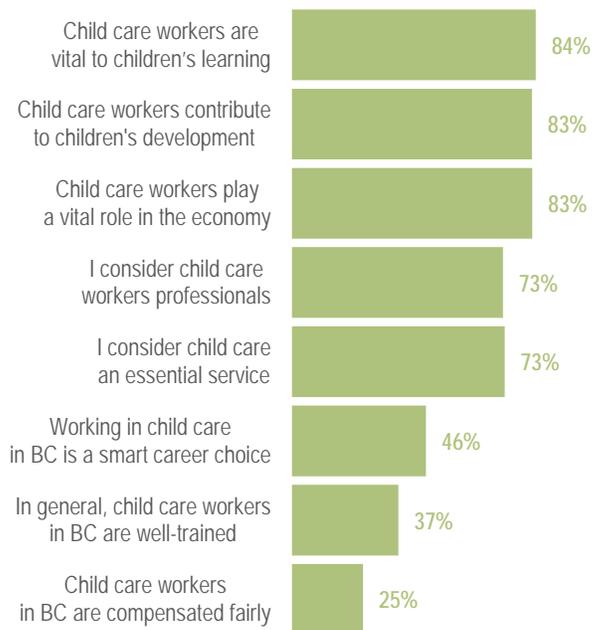
While most respondents agreed that child care professionals are vital to children's learning, development, and to the economy, many were unsure whether they are well-trained. However, more disagreed than agreed that ECL professionals are compensated fairly given their skills and training, though the proportion who disagreed dropped since 2019 (from 36 per cent to 31 per cent in 2022). Further, 40 per cent were unsure whether child care in BC is a smart career choice (little change from 43 per cent in 2019).

Like previous years, these data show that the general population of BC holds overwhelmingly positive views of child care professionals, with 86 per cent of adults valuing their work and 10 per cent unsure.

**86%**  
 Value the work  
 done by child care  
 professionals

Although value was high regardless of respondent sex or parental status, female respondents and parents were more likely than male respondents and those without children to 'strongly' value the work of child care professionals.

Figure 11 Proportion of general public who agree or strongly agree with statements, 2023



Source: 2023 public opinion survey.

Most respondents claim that their value for child care has not changed since 2019, though 34 per cent currently value child care professionals more than they did in 2019. Only 5 per cent said that they currently value child care professionals less than they did four years ago. As might be expected, parents were more likely than respondents without children to value child care professionals more than they did in 2019, with 41 per cent experiencing an increase.

# WAGES AND BENEFITS

Wages and benefits make up the compensation package that ECL professionals receive for their work.

The evaluation looks at trends over time to assess whether compensation is meeting the needs of the workforce.

This section presents self-reported wages and salaries of ECL professionals, provides an overview of the wage enhancement program—a key tactic of the ECL R&R Strategy—and documents the receipt of benefits by ECL professionals.



## Wages and Benefits

As previous evaluation reports document, professionals' wages, earnings, and benefits are often cited as primary drivers in their decision to leave their positions or, for some, the sector entirely.

The evaluation of the ECL R&R Strategy has been tracking how wages and benefits across the sector are evolving over time—by role and by certification—to uncover whether the strategy's tactics aimed at increasing compensation packages are having the desired effect. These data are tracked through several data collection points:

- **2015 census-linked tax records**, which provide a robust estimate of total earnings; but wages cannot be calculated due to the absence of hours of work (beyond full-time/part-time) and data are only updated every five years;
- **Self-reported wages** from SRDC's cross-sectional survey of workforce professionals, which also collects hours of work, allowing for estimates of monthly earnings;
- **Employer-reported staff wages** from SRDC's cross-sectional survey of employers; and
- **Long-term trends in wages** from the Child Care Operating Fund (CCOF) Provider Profile, an annual survey of professionals in licensed facilities maintained by MECC (formerly the Ministry of Children and Family Development) (these data exclude the wage enhancement).

When taken together, these data provide a portrait of wage trends in the sector, including how quickly wages are rising compared to benchmark comparisons.

These findings are supplemented by stories shared by professionals and employers regarding the sufficiency of the wages and benefits: are they enough to attract new professionals, to retain experienced professionals, and to meet the needs of the workforce?

## Wages and salaries of ECL professionals



*"ECEs have financial dreams and goals to achieve in life, too. I shouldn't have to give up my goals and dreams just because I'm in ECE."*

### Real Wages

**Real wages**—comparison of wages using the Bank of Canada's Consumer Price Index to adjust dollar values to real 2022 dollars—have fluctuated since 2005 for ECL professionals. Figure 12 presents these trends by certification groups, which do not include the effects of the wage enhancement program.

The comparison of real wages makes clear that, at the median, those with **specialized certifications** (Special Needs (SN), Infant & Toddler (IT), and combined SN + IT certifications) **earn more per hour** than professionals with a **basic ECE certification** (1-year or 5-year ECE certification), ranging from an additional \$1.11 per hour to \$1.62 more per hour in 2021-22. This differential in wages appears to have been narrowing since 2005. Though the size of the wage difference varies from year to year, more professionals with specialized certifications earn higher wages.

Another pattern shows that professionals with any certification receive a wage premium. In 2005, the difference in median hourly wages for professionals with a basic ECE compared to those with no certificate was about \$2.40 and was still \$2.39 per hour in 2022.

Recently, after a year of high inflation, real wages have dropped quite markedly, wiping out nearly a decade of gradual gains such that median wages (not including the wage enhancement) in 2021-22 had a purchasing power equivalent to median wages earned in 2012-13.

Figure 12 Median real wages for ECL professionals by certification between 2005 and 2022



Sources: British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development/MECC. Wage enhancement not included.

## Self-reported hourly wages

Every year, SRDC’s workforce survey asks ECL professionals to share information about their wages.

Several factors can influence hourly wage rates, including a person’s seniority, their years of experience, their role and responsibilities, and their certifications.

SRDC compared the average self-reported wages of professionals in non managerial or supervisory roles working in Centre-based ECL (licensed centres, preschools or before and after school/recreational programs, and \$10 a day sites).



Self-reported average wages have increased for all groups since 2019. In the 2022 survey, the average hourly wage rate across all professionals was \$24.32, a \$2.56 increase from 2019, after adjusting for inflation. Given stagnation of wages seen in other sources not including the wage enhancement, it seems likely the main reason for the increase is widespread receipt of the wage enhancement.

When we compare respondents according to their highest certification earned, we find the biggest increase in adjusted wages since 2019 among ECEs who hold both IT and SN certifications (+ \$3.37). All ECE categories report an average wage increase at or above \$2.22 compared to 2019.

The smallest average wage increases were reported by ECEAs (+\$1.01) and RAs (+\$2.17). Notably, professionals in neither group are eligible for the wage enhancement.

**Figure 13** Average self-reported adjusted wages of Centre-based non-/manager/ supervisor professionals



As expected, **roles and responsibilities** have a positive effect on wage rates in Centre-based ECL. On average, Centre-based ECL professionals in management or supervisor positions were compensated about **\$4.50 an hour more** than other professionals.

Nevertheless, increases in wages still have not reached parity with BC workers that hold equivalent postsecondary credentials. Using Labour Force Survey microdata from September through December 2022, SRDC estimates that **adults in BC with a postsecondary certificate or diploma earn an average of \$31.91 an hour**. Of course, there is variation within these credentials and factors besides education play a role, but for people considering pursuing certificates or diplomas, the returns to ECL credentials may not appear as competitive as others.

Additional analyses were conducted—when sample sizes allowed—to assess differences in average hourly wages of Centre-based ECL professionals by **union membership** and by **organization status** (i.e., ownership or *auspice*).

While wages have increased, there is a general feeling in the sector that **professionals are still underpaid** given their levels of education, ongoing training requirements, and responsibilities.



Unionized professionals have **slightly higher** average hourly wages (\$26.89) than non-unionized professionals (\$26.20).

The difference is only statistically significant for ECEAs (\$24.04 compared to \$21.80).



Professionals working for private businesses earn **significantly less** on average (\$21.72) than those working for not-for-profit, Indigenous, or publicly-run Centres (\$24.92).

The difference is also significant for ECEAs: \$19.46 for those in private businesses compared to \$21.54 for all others.

### Employer-reported hourly wages

Respondents to SRDC's 2022 ECL employer survey were asked to share wage information for all child care staff in their organizations. Weighted average hourly wage rates are then estimated by using the number of employees by type of qualification.

The employer analysis confirms the trend seen across all wage information: **average wages, taking into account the wage enhancement, are increasing across the sector**. For the first time, all weighted average wages reported by employers are higher than they were in 2019 across all certifications, roles, and workplace types.

An analysis by workplace type indicates that wages in workplaces with an ECE requirement **increased at a faster rate** than those without an ECE-requirement.



Figure 14 Hourly wage range by position in 2022

ECE-required Centre-based ECL



ECE not-required Centre-based ECL



Source: 2022 SRDC employer survey.

Note: Range runs from lower bound (not bold) to upper bound (bold).

Consistent with earlier findings, wage rates in 2022 were higher for more senior positions and (usually) for those with higher certification. An exception to this trend can be found with Responsible Adults working as managers, who earn, on average, \$2.20 more per hour than ECEAs

in non-ECE required centres, and \$7.80 more than ECEAs in ECE-required centres.

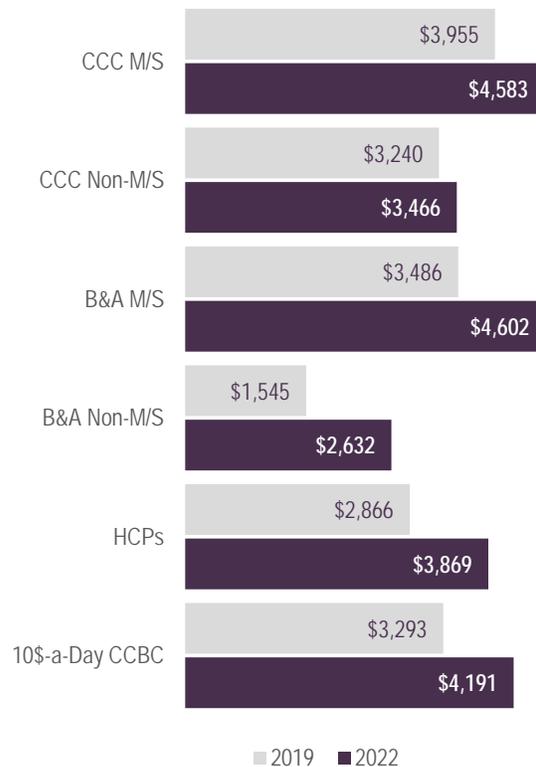
Monthly income from ECL employment

Monthly income from child care work depends on wage rates and hours worked. The average monthly income is estimated using responses to the workforce survey and is adjusted for inflation. The data can then be separated according to respondents' roles and programs.

This includes all income sources related to ECL employment including both full-time and part-time.

Average income by role and program

Figure 15 Average monthly income by role and program (2019 and 2022 adjusted for inflation)



Source: 2019 and 2022 SRDC workforce surveys.

Monthly incomes increased nominally for all respondent groups, across all roles and program types, when compared to 2019.

- On average, M/S at CCC (\$4,583) and B&A programs (\$4,602) have the **highest average monthly income**, notably higher than in 2019.
- Non-M/S professionals' average monthly income **was lower** than M/S at both types of programs (\$3,466 at CCC and \$2,632 at B&A).
- Average monthly incomes of professionals working at \$10 a Day ChildCareBC sites (\$4,191) are **higher than non-M/S**, likely reflecting the fact that M/S and non-M/S roles cannot be separated due to small sample sizes.
- Average monthly incomes of HCP professionals (\$3,869) were **higher than non-M/S professionals** in both types of centre-based care.

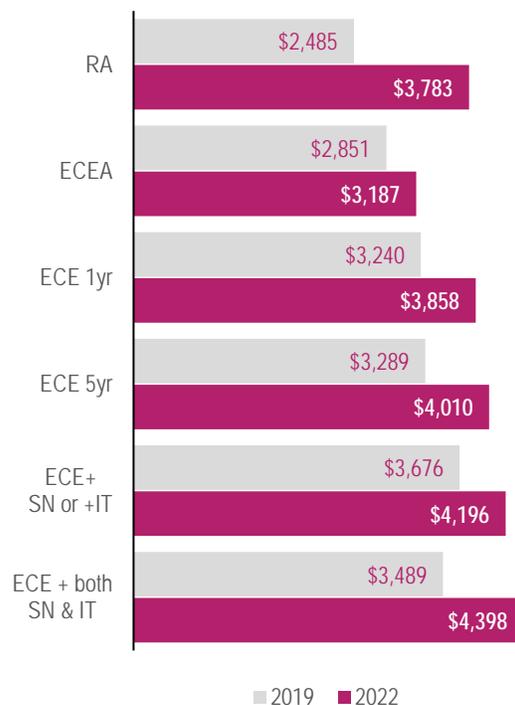
For many in the sector, **their job may be the main source of income** for their household.

The sector remains predominately female and many of those employed in the sector are lone parents, newcomers, or other women who are looking for a career that provides them with a positive and sustainable career trajectory.

### Average monthly income by qualification

The analysis of income by qualification shows that **professionals with higher credentials**—ECE or specialized credentials—earn more, on average, than other ECL professionals, and that earnings generally increase as specializations increase.

Figure 16 Average monthly income by qualification (2019 and 2022 adjusted for inflation)



Source: SRDC 2022 workforce survey.

The only outlier in this result is **Responsible Adults (RA)**. In 2022, the average monthly incomes for this group appear higher than those for ECEAs and comparable to the average monthly incomes of 1-year ECE professionals.

As shown in Figure 16 above, the average incomes reported by RAs in the 2019 and 2022 workforce surveys represent the biggest change in monthly incomes across qualification groups. The smallest increase in average monthly earnings is reported by ECEAs.

**+ \$1,298**  
 Responsible Adults  
 Biggest increase in  
 nominal monthly  
 incomes since 2019

**+ \$336**  
 ECEAs  
 Smallest increase in  
 nominal monthly  
 incomes since 2019

## Wage enhancement program

In 2019, the ECL R&R Strategy introduced a \$1 wage enhancement tactic, followed by an additional \$1 in 2020 to supplement ECE wages in eligible facilities. In April 2021, the province announced an increase to the wage enhancement to **\$4 per hour**, which came into effect on September 1, 2021, with payment implemented in March 2022.

In addition, the program provides funding for **statutory benefits** (additional costs of paying employees more) in the range of 18 to 20 per cent, adjusted annually.

Changes to eligibility criteria during 2022 have allowed **supervisors and managers**—who may spend less than half of their time working directly with children—to receive the wage enhancement.

This section looks at data from various sources to understand how the wage enhancement is affecting the sector, including:

- SRDC's 2022 cross-sectional survey data,
- **Interview data** with 2022 case study child care centre sites.

“

*“Not only does [the wage enhancement] make it easier to live, especially right now and in the way that the world is, but it also helps us feel more valued.*

*We're very, very important to children's early years. And I think that government funding is helping show that.*

For profit Case Study Site

## Eligibility and Take-up Rates

Among workforce survey respondents, **nearly three quarters** met the eligibility criteria for the wage enhancement, slightly higher than the proportion of respondents eligible in 2019 (71 per cent), possibly due to changes to the eligibility criteria.

**77%**

Eligible for the WE

**91%**

Receiving the WE among those eligible

**Nearly all eligible respondents (91 per cent)** were receiving the subsidy, with the biggest proportion working in \$10 a day ChildCareBC sites (93 per cent). This represents an important increase from 2019, when slightly more than three quarters of

eligible respondents (78 per cent) reported receiving the subsidy.

In addition, more than four out every five ECL professionals (82 per cent) are employed in an **eligible workplace**. Only a small number (5 per cent) of respondents did not know if their workplace was eligible for the wage subsidy.

**82%**

Employed in an eligible workplace

**9%**

Not receiving the WE, don't know if they are eligible

Among those who are not receiving the wage subsidy, only a small proportion (9 per cent) **do not know if they are eligible**.

This reveals a high degree of awareness and understanding of the wage enhancement's eligibility requirements, as well as the sector's willingness to take-up the subsidy.

## Wage Differentials between Wage Enhancement Recipients and Non-Recipients

To assess the effects of the wage enhancement (WE) on earnings, we conducted a series of comparisons of professionals' average hourly wages between those **eligible and in receipt of the WE** and those **eligible and not in receipt of the WE**.

In 2022, a new question was added to the cross-sectional survey of ECL professionals: *are you eligible to receive the wage enhancement?*

Those answering positively will hopefully provide a reliable identifier of eligible professionals over time, rather than SRDC deriving eligibility using other variables included in the survey.

For the analysis with 2019 data (see the Technical Report), we continue to use SRDC's derived eligibility criteria, which may not be fully accurate.

At the time of the 2022 survey, the wage enhancement provided an additional \$4 per hour addition to wages.



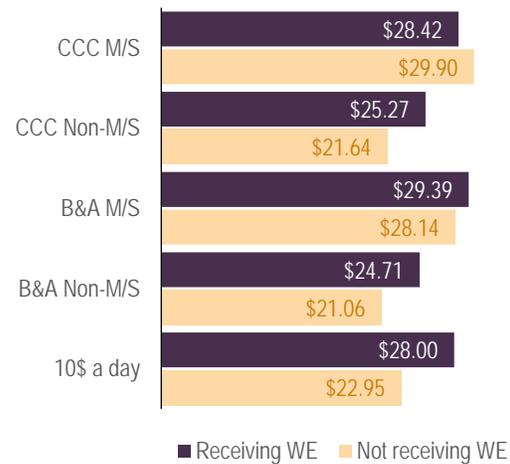
The reader should keep in mind that wage differentials are influenced by a range of factors. Pre-existing working conditions (including wages) between employers who apply for the enhancement and those who do not may differ. For example, better paid employees might be less likely to receive the enhancement.

### *Wage differentials by role and programs*

In 2022, an expansion of the eligibility criteria meant that managers and supervisors were now eligible for the WE.

In case study interviews, supervisors and managers welcomed these changes, not just for their own benefit, but for the impact they had on encouraging upward mobility. For example, ECEs are now encouraged to take on additional responsibilities without having to lose the WE.

Figure 17 Average wages of eligible respondents receiving and not receiving the WE



Source: 2022 SRDC workforce survey.

Results from the 2022 workforce survey demonstrate that:

- Professionals working in \$10 a day ChildCareBC sites receiving the WE earn, on average, **\$5.05 more** than eligible professionals not in receipt of the WE. This is the largest differential across all groups.
- Managers and supervisors in child care centres (CCC) receiving the WE earn on average **\$1.38 less** than those who are not in receipt of the WE. This is likely due to pre-existing high wage differentials in the workplaces where WE has not been taken up.



Programs such as Aboriginal Head Start receive funding to set starting wages at higher rates—including managers and supervisors. Their professionals are ineligible for the WE program—though not all ECEs in AHS sites may be aware of this distinction. These centres may also operate as \$10 a day ChildCareBC sites and not all ECEs at these sites who consider themselves eligible may be eligible to receive the WE.

### Wage differentials by ECE certification

The comparison between respondents with **at least an ECE certification** receiving the wage subsidy and respondents without an ECE certification (ECEA or RA) illustrates the differential in average hourly wages.

**Figure 18** Average hourly wages of respondents with an ECE receiving the WE and non-ECEs



Source: SRDC 2022 workforce survey.

ECEAs and RAs are not eligible for receipt of the WE. This condition is intended to encourage ECEAs to complete their ECE certification.

Case study data suggests this goal was being achieved, especially for younger ECEAs who were hired **with the expectation** they would complete their certification. Employers provided financial supports to enable them to

While they acknowledge challenges in its implementation, ECEAs in the case study sites suggested **pro-rating the WE** to recognize the fact they were in the process of completing the ECE certification.

achieve this either by using their own funds or by using the BC Employer Training Grant.

In some case study sites, the differential between ECEs and ECEAs was as high as \$6 per hour. This left some ECEAs feeling particularly underpaid, especially if they were currently enrolled in an ECE program, limiting the number of hours they can work.

### What the Workforce thinks of the WE

#### The WE alone will not address large variations in salaries and wages across the ECL sector

Case study participants were concerned by large differences in wages and salaries across the ECL sector, and questioned whether the WE alone can address this.

There was a concern about how the WE is being used by employers. Case study participants suggested that some employers may be using the WE to lower salary costs by reducing base salaries, rather than as a top-up for ECEs, increasing the wage disparity.

Some suggested that employers should only be eligible for the wage enhancement if wages fall within a certain range.

#### Uncertainty around the continuity of the WE is a concern

There is a concern about whether the wage enhancement program will continue.

When the case study sites recruit new staff, they separate the wage enhancement from the hourly rate; all case study sites who received the wage enhancement identified it as a separate line on payrolls.

Employers want to make it clear to their staff that **the WE is a government initiative, not provided by the employer**. Employers would not be able to afford a similar top up alone.

Both professionals and employers are concerned that, if the WE were ever withdrawn, they will not be able to recruit new nor retain existing staff.

Without the wage enhancement, some case study participants indicated they would leave the sector.

### Purpose and sufficiency of the WE

The WE has several objectives, including:

- Increasing wages to encourage **recruitment** of new workers to the profession;
- Increasing wages to **retain** experienced workers in the sector; and
- Encouraging ECEAs to complete their ECE credential.

Some case study participants questioned **whether the WE is sufficiently high** to meet these objectives.

While the WE may help recruit younger workers to the profession, many question whether it is sufficient to keep experienced older workers in the profession over the long-term.

Some also question whether the WE has increased enough to meet workers' needs following a period of high inflation.

“That’s why [the government] had to step in and do this because, young people who are single, with inflation and how much it costs to rent things, you just can’t live off of [ECL wages].”

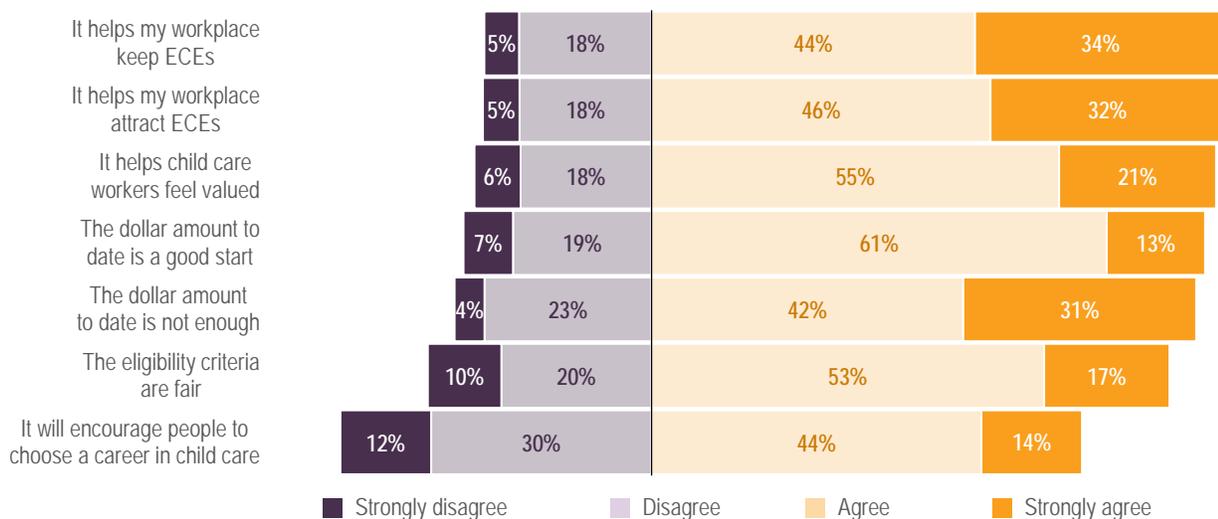
For Profit Case Study Site

Results from the 2022 survey of ECL professionals echo these findings.

Generally, survey respondents agree or strongly agree that the wage enhancement is a good start (74 per cent) and that it will help attract (78 per cent) and keep (78 per cent) ECEs in their workplace.

However, three quarters of respondents (74 per cent) believe that **the dollar amount to date is not enough**, and nearly half (42 per cent) do not believe that the **WE will encourage people to choose a career in child care**.

Figure 19 Attitudes of ECL professionals towards the wage enhancement program



Some **senior ECEs** are increasingly weary of the small difference between their wages and those of new ECEs due to the wage enhancement.

While they appreciate the increase in wages, they feel **their experience and expertise are not reflected in their salaries**, and that the wage enhancement model should be revised to recognize the skills, knowledge, and mentoring that senior ECEs contribute to the sector.

## Employer take-up rates

In the 2022 cross-sectional survey of ECL employers, 90 per cent of employers had applied for the wage enhancement, a slight increase from 2021 (87 per cent).

Employers who had not applied for the wage enhancement were asked to identify the main reasons for not applying.

**44%**

Of workplaces that had not applied were **ineligible**

**40%**

Of workplaces that had not applied said **staff were ineligible**

The main reason was that the workplace was not eligible (44 per cent), and the second most reported reason was that none of the staff at the workplace were eligible. All other respondents were unsure (16 per cent).

Of note, not a single employer reported that the information on how to apply for the WE was unclear.

## 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, working in eligible facilities*.

After controlling for other factors, we find only one factor significantly associated with receipt of the wage enhancement.



### Indigenous persons

A respondent who self-identifies as **Indigenous** is associated with:

**82%** decrease in the odds that they will receive the wage enhancement

The results of the regression analysis suggest that, all else equal, Indigenous respondents are less likely to receive the wage enhancement.

This result is potentially due to alternative funding programs that are made available to ECL professionals working in Indigenous child care programs. The **Aboriginal Head Start program**, which provides child care spaces in urban areas, provides starting wages at \$25/hour. Its professionals are ineligible for the BC Wage Enhancement program.

In addition, ECL professionals working in First Nations and other Indigenous communities can access the **First Nations Wage Enhancement (FNWE)**. Administered by the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society, the “FNWE brings the wages of certified ECEs in line with benchmarks based on the median wages of educators in First Nations” (Anderson, Sing & Haber, 2020, p. 38). For more information, please see the note (1) at the end of this section.

## Benefits received by ECL professionals

Benefits are an important component of a worker's compensation, providing financial and non-financial supports to ECL professionals.

This section looks at benefits received by ECL professionals from the perspective of professionals and employers in the sector: what's available, what's changed, and whether the compensation provided is meeting the ECL R&R Strategy's goals.



*"The RRSP started maybe five years ago now and that is awesome. You have to work for the company for five years to get that."*

*"But the only thing is that all the experienced [ECEs] who have been here for close to 20 years, it hasn't really helped us because it was too close to our retirement."*

For profit Case Study Site

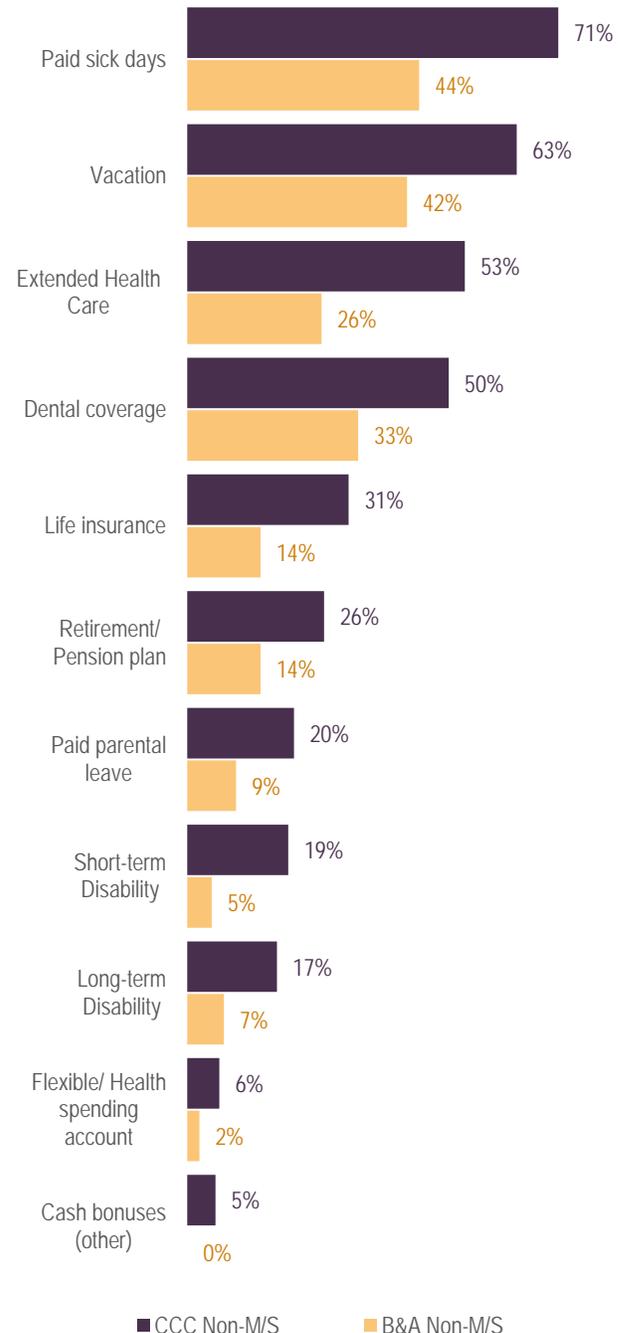
### Self-reported core benefits received

Since 2019, more ECL professionals are receiving at least one type of benefit as part of their compensation package.

In 2019, 25 per cent of ECL respondents in child care centres (CCC) and 33 per cent of ECL respondents in before and after school or recreational care programs **did not receive any core benefits**.

In 2022, the proportion of ECL professionals who are not receiving any benefits decreased to 10 per cent (CCC) and 21 per cent (B&A).

**Figure 20** Self-reported core benefits received by ECL professionals in child care centres and before & after school or recreational care programs in 2022



Source: 2022 SRDC workforce survey.

Figure 20 illustrates the proportion of ECL professionals other than managers and supervisors (non-M/S) in child care centres and in before & after school programs or recreational care programs who indicated receiving specific benefits from their employers in 2022.

In both types of centres, **paid sick leave** (71 per cent in CCC and 44 per cent in B&A) and **vacation time** (63 per cent in CCC and 42 per cent in B&A) are the two most reported benefits received by ECL professionals, followed by **extended health care** for CCC professionals (53 per cent) and **dental coverage** for B&A professionals (33 per cent).

The least cited benefits included **flexible or health spending accounts** (6 per cent in CCC and 2 per cent in B&A) and **cash bonuses** (5 per cent in CCC and 0 per cent in B&A).

The biggest increase in reported receipt of core benefits by ECL professionals since 2019 was seen in **paid sick days**, perhaps unsurprisingly given legislative changes taking effect in 2022 requiring 5 days of paid sick leave for most employees.

**+ 20%**

Receive  
**Paid Sick Leave**  
 since 2019

ECL professionals in CCC

**+ 13%**

Receive  
**Paid Sick Leave**  
 since 2019

ECL professionals in B&A  
 programs

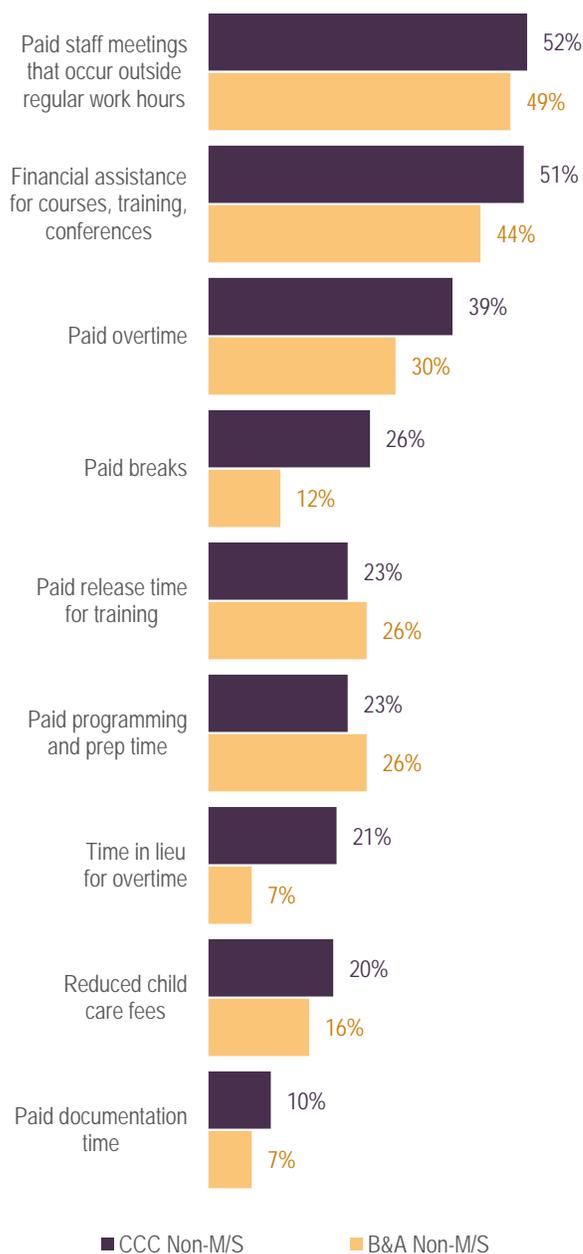
### Self-reported additional benefits received

The survey of ECL professionals also documents additional benefits provided by employers to their workforce, include paid overtime, paid release time for training, paid breaks, and financial assistance for training.

Once again, **more respondents** report receiving **at least one additional benefit** in 2022 compared to 2019: a

3-point increase for professionals in CCC and a 4-point increase for professionals in B&A programs.

**Figure 21** Self-reported additional benefits received by ECL professionals in child care centres and before & after school or recreational care programs in 2022



Source: 2022 SRDC workforce survey.

Roughly half of all non-M/S professionals in both CCC (52 per cent) and B&A (49 per cent) centres report **being paid for staff meetings that occur outside of work hours**.

A high proportion of ECL professionals also reported receiving **financial assistance for courses, training, and conferences**<sup>2</sup>: 51 per cent of ECL professionals in CCC and 44 per cent of ECL professionals in B&A programs.

Changes in reported receipt of additional benefits since 2019 are modest, and the results are mixed.

The largest changes are in B&A programs, where we see an 11-percentage point increase in the proportion of professionals receiving **paid overtime**, and a 10-percentage point decrease in the proportion of respondents **being paid for staff meetings outside of work hours**.

In CCC, we see a 5-percentage point increase in the **proportion of respondents receiving paid release time for training**, and a 2-percentage point decrease in the proportion who are paid for their time spent on documentation.

### Self-reported benefits received by auspice

Consistent with previous years, ECL professionals working for private businesses report fewer benefits than those at not-for-profits, with differences especially stark for access to a **retirement or pension plan**.



*"I would also like to see a pension plan brought into our sector, as we leave after 50 years with nothing."*

Workforce Survey Respondent

Nevertheless, there is a great deal of improvement in the offer of benefits by employers in private businesses since 2019, with the largest increase reported in the receipt of **paid sick days** (+36 points), again, potentially due to legislative changes mandating the offer of paid sick days.

Similarly, ECL professionals working in not-for-profits have also seen an increase in the receipt of **paid sick days** (+21 points), as well as in **extended health care** (+20 points) and retirement or pension plans (+19 points) since 2019.

### Self-reported benefits by union membership

In 2022, as in previous years, unionized workers are more likely to report receiving benefits compared to non-unionized workers.

The biggest difference is found in the proportions of respondents who have access to a **retirement or pension plan** (62 per cent of unionized workers; 27 per cent of non-unionized workers) and **paid breaks** (58 per cent of unionized workers; 27 per cent of non-unionized workers).

Since 2019, more non-unionized workers report having access to **paid sick days** (+32 points), while more unionized workers have access to long-term disability benefits (+14 points).

The increase in paid sick days reported across all groups may in fact be a positive legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic, as more employers reported providing these benefits in 2021 to reduce the risk of exposure. The offer of this benefit by employers appears to have persisted into late 2022.

## Benefits provided by employers

The 2022 survey of ECL employers also collected information—at an organizational level—regarding the *offer of benefits*: benefits paid by the employer and provided to their ECL professional staff.

The most important difference between data collected from employers and those from ECL professionals' is between **workplace types**.

- Non M/S ECL professionals in workplaces where **programs require at least one certified ECE** are more likely to self-report receiving core benefits.
- Employers in workplaces that **do not require a certified ECE** are more likely to offer core benefits.

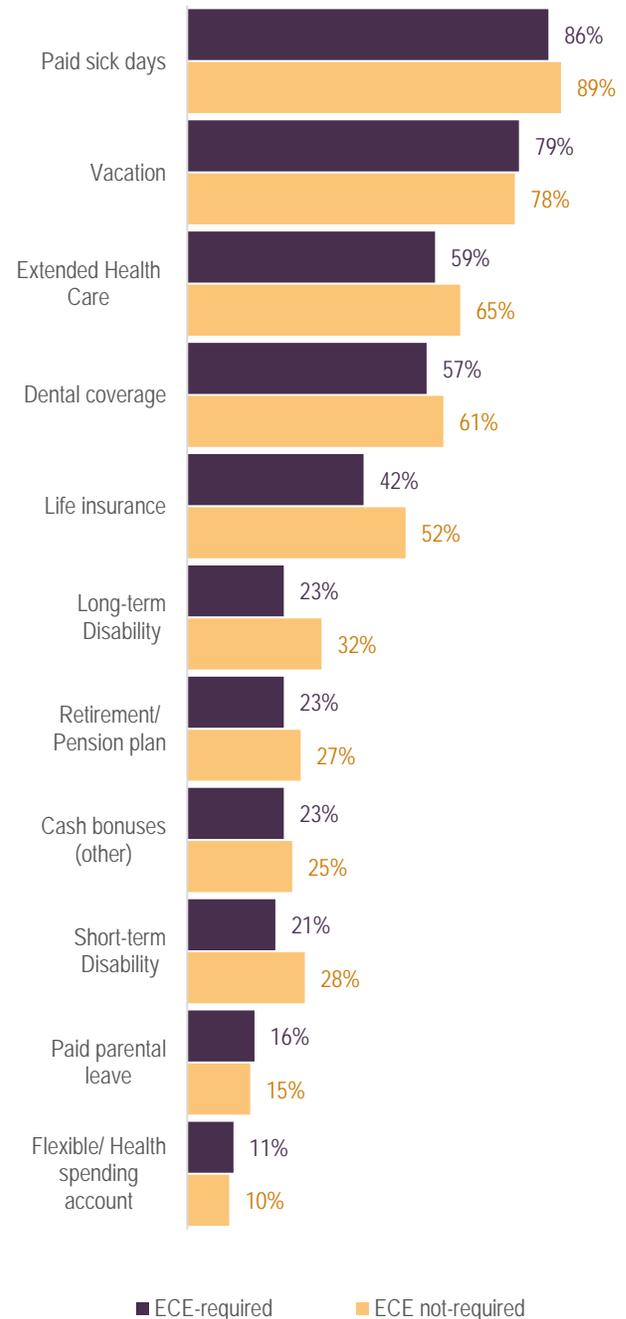
A consistent trend across all surveyed respondents is that the offer of benefits is increasing across the sector.

Since 2019, more employers report **providing benefits** to their staff and more ECL professionals report **receiving benefits** from their employers.

The biggest increase in the offer of benefits by employers since 2019 is **paid sick days** (+25 points for ECE-required workplaces; +28 points in ECE not-required workplaces). This result is consistent with the self-reported results from ECL professionals.

The difference between workplaces also appears to be less significant than those reported by ECL professionals, with the biggest difference in the **offer of life insurance** (52 per cent in ECE not-required workplaces and 42 per cent in ECE-required workplaces).

Figure 22 Benefits provided by employers by workplace type in 2022



Source: 2022 SRDC employer survey.

## Factors that contribute to satisfaction with compensation

A logistic regression analysis was conducted to better understand which factors contribute to respondents' satisfaction with their compensation (i.e., their wages and benefits).

After controlling for other factors, we find two factors that can significantly predict whether a person will be satisfied with their compensation.



### Monthly earnings<sup>3</sup>

An additional **\$1,000 dollars in monthly earnings** is associated with:

**36%** increase in the odds that they will be satisfied with their earnings and benefits



### Union membership

**Union membership** is associated with:

**46%** decrease in the odds that they will be satisfied with their earnings and benefits

---

Source: SRDC 2022 workforce survey.

The results of the logistic regression indicate that reporting higher monthly earnings will have a positive influence on a person's satisfaction with their compensation. This result is expected and makes intuitive sense.

The second result indicates a negative relationship between union membership and satisfaction with compensation. This result is surprising as unionized workers generally receive more benefits and, in 2022, slightly higher average wages than non-unionized workers.

There are a few reasons that may explain this result:

- The sample of unionized workers may not be representative of all unionized workers.
- Receiving more benefits or higher wages compared to non-unionized workers does not necessarily lead to a high degree of satisfaction. In effect, some unionized workers may feel that their compensation could be improved. In 2022, the main unions involved in Community Social Services were involved in a protracted (13 month) negotiation affecting wage levels and working conditions. While this has since resulted in a historic agreement on wages and benefits, at the time of the survey (Oct/Nov 2022) unionized educators would have had little signal of progress and possibly many would have lower satisfaction with their compensation.
- There may be other factors not included in the model that could explain the relationship between satisfaction with compensation and union membership.

## Notes on this section

### 1 Wage Enhancement programs for BC's ECL professionals working in Indigenous child care programs

Both provincial and federal governments have made considerable investments to increase wages of BC's ECL professional working in Indigenous child care programs.

The **Aboriginal Head Start program**, which provides child care spaces in urban areas, has committed to providing wages of at least \$25/hour, similar to those offered in \$10 a Day BC Child Care sites (Anderson, Sing, & Haber, 2020).

The **First Nations Wage Enhancement (FNWE)** is available to First Nations and other Indigenous communities. Administered by the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society with funding from the Government of Canada's Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Initiative, "FNWE brings the wages of certified ECEs in line with benchmarks based on the median wages of educators in First Nations" (Anderson, Sing, & Haber, 2020, p. 38).

Currently, the BC ECL R&R Strategy's evaluation instruments do not differentiate between the BC Government's ECL Wage Enhancement program and the FNWE, nor do they recognize that professionals in Aboriginal Head Start programs are ineligible for the Wage Enhancement program. Discussions are currently underway with representatives from Indigenous communities to modify the 2023 ECL workforce survey in ways that will better reflect the current funding opportunities afforded to BC's Indigenous ECL workforce.

[Click here to go back to the text.](#)

### 2 Financial assistance for courses, training, and conferences

For the 2022 evaluation report, two additional benefits were combined into a single item for reporting purposes:

- Financial assistance for courses or ECE- related training,
- Financial assistance for professional development (training, conferences, or workshops).

The decision was made following changes to the wording of these items since the administration of the 2019 survey, which may have affected how respondents interpreted and differentiated these two items.

To ensure validity in the results, the evaluation presents financial assistance provided by employers to support courses, training, conferences, or workshops.

[Click here to go back to the text.](#)

### 3 Using monthly earnings in the regression model rather than wages

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, or annual income. Earnings are then converted to monthly income for comparison.

Unfortunately, wages cannot be estimated for all respondents (such as those who are self-employed).

[Click here to go back to the text.](#)

# EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION

Credentials and education relevant to the provision of child care and that meet specific ECL needs across the province are a key component of a high-quality ECL system.

This section reviews trends in certifications and credentialization, education, and specialized skills across the province.



## Education and Certification

### Proportion of ECL professionals with ECL-relevant credentials

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, SRDC's cross-sectional surveys, case study sites, and administrative data such as the ECE Registry.

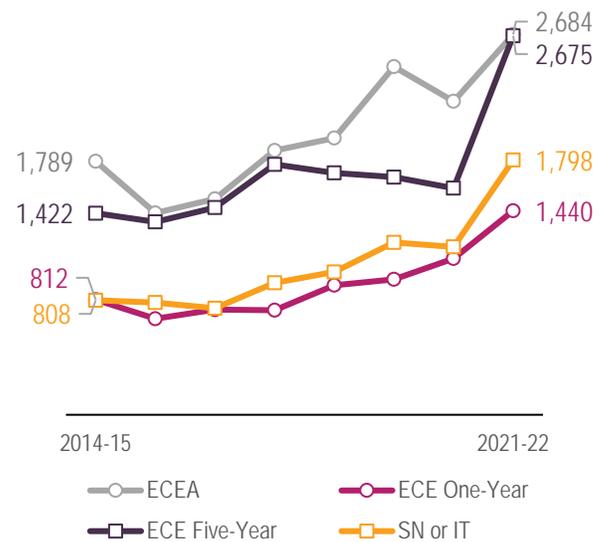
### ECL Certifications

Similar to previous years of the evaluation, employers at case study sites again reported an ongoing “crisis” when it came to hiring qualified staff. Licensing exceptions to allow non-ECE staff to occupy positions did not resolve the situation because there weren't enough professionals and more time didn't help solve the problem. Some centres decided not to expand operations due to this challenge.

However, administrative data shows that the number of certifications in the province increased more in the past year than in previous years. According to the ECE Registry, there were **more than 8,500 new ECEA or ECE certifications issued in BC in 2021-22**. While one may expect that the ECE Wage Enhancement and the Workforce Bursaries would work to encourage ECEAs to become ECEs, there is no longitudinal data available to track whether this is happening.

Despite this trend, the proportion of the ECL workforce with an ECE certification or additional specializations (IT or SN) shrank in all five health authority regions since 2019, according to the employer survey.

Figure 23 ECE Certifications, Fiscal Years 2014/15 – 2021/22



Source: ECE Registry.

This could suggest that the non-certified proportion of the workforce is growing faster than the certified portion. It could also mean that despite the increase in new certifications, more ECEs are leaving the field than are joining.

The number of **certified ECL professionals in BC** is **growing**.



But the proportion of the ECL workforce holding an ECE or ECE+ was lower in 2021-22 and 2022-23 than in 2017-18 and 2018-19.

Credentialization patterns vary according to type of workplace and position.

- More than three-quarters of workforce survey respondents in **licensed child care centres** had an ECE or ECE+ certification, as well as two-thirds of staff in **\$10 a day centres**.
- However, more than half of staff in **before-and-after school and recreational care programs** were only qualified as a Responsible Adult or did not report any ECL training.

Regardless of workplace, supervisors and managers were more likely than ECL professionals (non-M/S) and directors (management or administrative duties only) to have an ECE + specialty. **Directors were most likely to only have RA**, and this trend has increased since 2019.

The proportion of directors with an ECE or ECE+ certification has dropped dramatically since 2019, especially in Interior, Fraser, and Vancouver Island health authorities, to between 36 and 51 per cent. By comparison, between 67 and 81 per cent of managers and supervisors in all health authority regions have an ECE or ECE+ certification.

**~75%**

of supervisors and managers

Have an ECE or ECE+ certification



**" We're not going to just put a body in there.**

**You can find bodies, but to find somebody who's educated, who's really passionate, who has a high quality and standard for care [...], who's into education, sees the value in three- to five-year-olds, that's a different person."**

For profit Case Study Site

Managers at case study sites reported increasing difficulty in hiring ECEs, particularly those with IT or SN specialization. They speculated that fewer ECE professionals were taking this additional training partly because the costs and investment of time would not be reflected in higher salaries. However, the province saw more people receiving their IT/SN specialization last year than at any point under investigation (since 2014-2015).

## ECL Education

The majority of workforce survey respondents had completed post-secondary education in a program specific to ECL; those least likely to have at least a college-level education were non-ECE-certified HCPs (50 per cent) and non-manager/supervisor staff in B&A centres (46 per cent).

**ECEs and ECEAs not currently working in child care were more likely than other groups to hold a university degree in a program specific to ECL.**

Those not currently working in child care were most likely to hold a university degree or above in a program specific to ECL at 36 per cent, followed closely by non-managers and supervisors in B&A care at 34 per cent. The proportion of ECE-certified HCPs with a university degree or above has dropped by 16 percentage points since 2019 to fewer than one in five.

Among ECL professionals, **perceived barriers** to not pursuing additional education included the **high cost and high time commitment required**, as well as **unpaid practicum placements**.



## Method of Education

Some case study sites felt that ECE programs did not adequately prepare students for the profession, referring to unprepared newly-graduated employees who had not spent enough time in the field.

Relatedly, some participants highlighted concerns with online learning, suggesting it was less effective and yielded poorer acquisition of necessary skills and knowledge than in-person programs.

ECEAs



Most likely to obtain  
education  
online

ECEs or ECE+



Most likely to obtain  
education  
in-person

The 2022 workforce survey revealed that ECEAs are most likely to have completed their education online, while those with ECE or ECE+ certification are most likely to have completed their education in-person. Thus, method of education may interact with level of certification and time in the field, resulting in complex outcomes related to skills.

## Skills Relevant to Provision of Child Care

All six case study sites reported challenges adhering to their inclusive policies and philosophical approaches to child care.

The proportion of employers who report having children in their programs with special needs, speak neither English nor French at home, are new immigrants or refugees, or are Indigenous has increased since 2019, regardless of whether the workplace had an ECE requirement. Most workforce survey respondents reported working with at least one child with an identified special need.



45%

Of employers with  
children with special  
needs have **no staff**  
with ECE+SN  
certification

10%

Of employers turned  
away children because  
they didn't have staff  
with ECE+SN  
certification

Employers who reported having children with special needs were more likely to report a higher proportion of staff with special needs certification. Despite this, 45 per cent of employers with children with special needs had no staff with SN certification, up from 40 per cent in 2019.

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Ensuring that BC's ECL workforce has access to effective and affordable professional development opportunities is a key component of the ECL R&R Strategy.

This section presents the skills assessment of ECL professionals by professionals themselves and by employers in the sector.

We also present participation in professional development activities over the last 12 months, and opportunities that facilitate career growth within the sector.



## Workforce Development

A key component of the ECL R&R Strategy seeks to ensure that the ECL workforce has access to the necessary training to improve the skills of its workforce.

The evaluation has been tracking changes in ECL professionals' skills and their participation in professional development activities.

### Possession of core and supplementary skills by ECL professionals

ECL professionals are trained to provide care and support the development of children in their early years. As part of this work, there are several skills that ECL professionals can be expected to demonstrate, including:

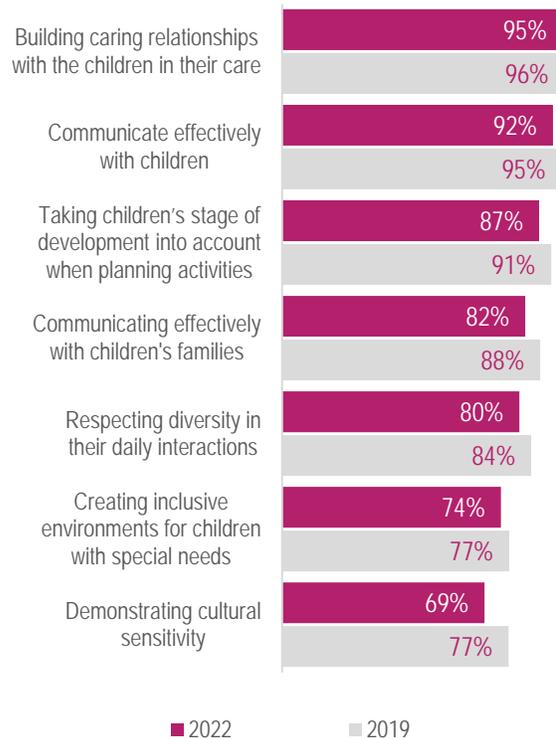
- Considering children's development stage when developing activities,
- Building caring relationships with children,
- Fostering positive communications with children in their care and their families,
- Creating culturally sensitive, respectful, and inclusive environments for all children.

### Self-assessment of ECL professionals' skills

Respondents to the ECL workforce survey were asked to assess themselves on seven relevant skills.

 ECL professionals are most confident in skills that directly concern their **interactions with children**, such as **building caring relationships** (95 per cent) and **communicating effectively with children** (92 per cent).

Figure 24 Proportion of ECL professionals who consider their skills above average or excellent in 2019 and 2022



Source: 2019 and 2022 SRDC workforce survey.

The lowest rated skills were related to **diversity and inclusion**. While most respondents still rated their skills above average or excellent, fewer ECL professionals consider their skills above average or excellent in their **ability to respect diversity** (80 per cent), to **create an inclusive environment for children with special needs** (74 per cent), and to **demonstrate cultural sensitivity** (69 per cent). 

The trend over time is somewhat worrying. Across all skills, a lower proportion of ECL professionals consider their abilities to be above average or excellent in 2022 than they did in 2019. Possibly skill levels have dropped. Alternatively, over time, professionals' interpretation of what these skills entail has changed.

### Results by highest certification completed

The analysis of skills by qualifications follows a similar pattern from the overall results, with few differences across groups. Among the few differences observed, we find that:

- More **responsible adults (RAs)** (87 per cent) believe they have above average and excellent abilities in **communicating with children’s families**, especially in comparison to 1-year ECEs (76 per cent).
- More **ECEAs** (86 per cent) believe they have above average or excellent skills in **respecting diversity in their daily interactions**, especially in comparison to 5-year ECEs (76 per cent).

- More **ECEs with SN and IT** (84 per cent) believe they have above average or excellent skills in **creating an inclusive environment for children with special needs**, especially in comparison to RAs (59 per cent).

A comparison with 2019 results suggests that ECL professionals with higher certifications feel less confident with their ECL-relevant skills in 2022. As shown in Table 2, **all ECE groups report a decline** in their skills since 2019, with the biggest drop in their ability to demonstrate cultural sensitivity.

We find a slight **increase** in self-reported skills among RAs and ECEAs along nearly all skills, as well as for ECEs with SN and IT in their ability to create inclusive environments for children with special needs.

**Table 2** Magnitude of change in self-assessment of ECL-relevant skills between 2019 and 2022 by ECL professionals according to highest certification completed

| Skills   | RA       | ECEA     | ECE 1 year | ECE 5 year | ECE+ SN or IT | ECE+ SN & IT |
|--|----------|----------|------------|------------|---------------|--------------|
| Demonstrating cultural sensitivity   |          |          | Decrease   | Decrease   | Decrease      | Decrease     |
| Respecting diversity in their daily interactions                             | Increase | Increase | Decrease   | Decrease   | Decrease      | Decrease     |
| Building caring relationships with the children in their care                | Increase | Increase | Decrease   | Decrease   | Decrease      | Decrease     |
| Communicate effectively with children  |          |          | Decrease   | Decrease   | Decrease      | Decrease     |
| Communicating effectively with children’s families                           |          | Decrease | Decrease   | Decrease   | Decrease      | Decrease     |
| Taking children’s stage of development into account when planning activities | Increase | Decrease | Decrease   | Decrease   | Decrease      | Decrease     |
| Creating inclusive environments for children with special needs              | Increase | Increase | Decrease   | Decrease   | Decrease      | Increase     |

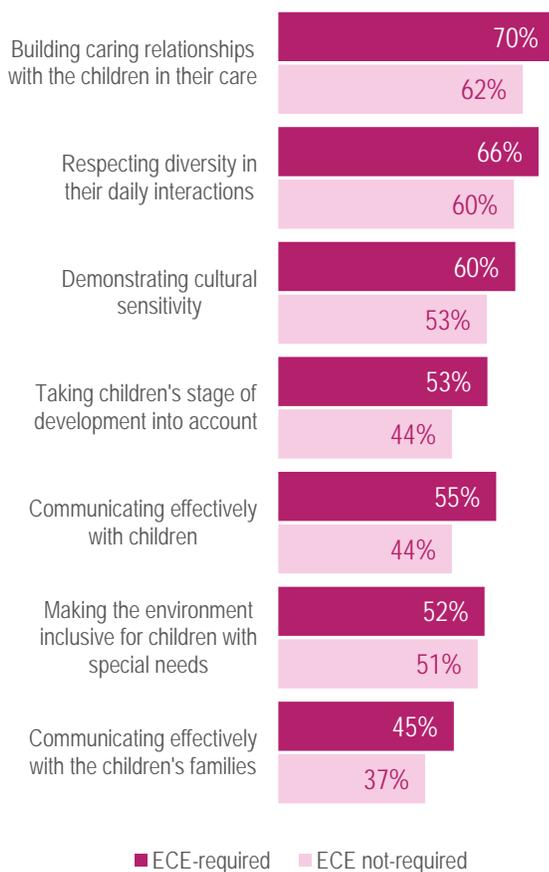
Source: 2019 and 2022 SRDC workforce surveys. For detailed proportions, please consult the 2022 Evaluation Technical Report, Table 53.

Note: A blue bar indicates a decrease, and a pink bar indicates an increase in the proportion of ECL professionals in 2022 who self-report having above average or excellent skills since 2019.

## Employer assessment of their ECL workforce's skills

Employers were asked about the proportion of their staff who needed to improve specific core skills. In Figure 25, we present the proportion of employers who indicated that **none** of their staff needed to improve their skills. With only one exception [making the environment inclusive for children with special needs at employers exclusively operating programs that require ECE certification] all core skills had improved between 2019 and 2022.

**Figure 25** Proportion of employers who indicated that none of their staff needed to improve their skills in 2022



Source: 2022 SRDC employer survey.

The results indicate that the **most highly rated skillset** by both employers and ECL professionals is—and continues to be, over time—the ability to **build caring relationships with the children in their care**.

The analysis of employers' assessment of their workforce's skills was conducted by separating ECE-required and ECE not-required workplaces.

Generally, the pattern appears the same:

- Employers in ECE-required workplaces rate their workforce's skills **slightly higher** than those in ECE not-required workplaces across all core skills.
- Other than building caring relationships, **respecting diversity in daily interactions** (66 per cent for ECE-required and 60 per cent for ECE not-required) and **demonstrating cultural sensitivity** (60 per cent for ECE-required and 53 per cent for ECE not-required) were the skills where professionals require the least improvement. These were the least rated skillsets by ECL professionals.
- The skillset that requires the most improvement is the ability to **communicate effectively with the children's families** (45 per cent of ECE-required and 37 per cent of ECE not-required do not need improvement). This is also the skillset that ECL professionals across all qualification groups report a decline in since 2019.

COVID-19 protocols may have had a detrimental effect on the ECL workforce's ability to communicate with families. The results from the 2022 survey indicate that this skillset still requires improvements.

Across case study sites, ECEs mentioned that participation in professional development (PD) activities was important to keep up with current practices, renew their ECE licence, and update their certifications (e.g., first aid). Likely this was the case for ECEAs in the same sites.

Managers and supervisors encouraged their staff to participate in training and shared details of upcoming events and activities.

All case study centres had PD days during which they closed their programming so all employees could participate in training.

These sessions allowed ECEs to complete their required 40 hours of PD to renew their license. Consequently, they did not have to seek out additional professional development beyond what was offered at their centre.

Offering PD onsite during workdays also eliminated many barriers to accessing training.

### Management Skills

In the 2022 survey of ECL professionals, SRDC added new questions to understand how managers view their skills and whether there are PD activities available to help them improve these skills.

Results compare managers across workplace types: child care centres, before & after school programs, and \$10 a day ChildCareBC sites.

Managers working in **B&A programs** are more likely to agree or strongly agree with all statements assessing their skills and their access to management-related PD activities than those in other workplaces.



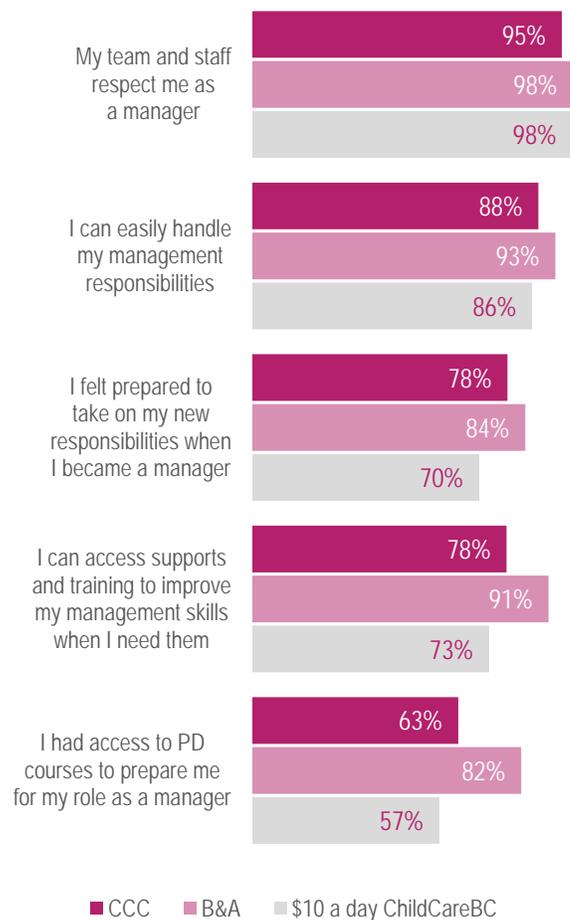
Conversely, managers working in **\$10 a day ChildCareBC sites** are less likely to agree or strongly agree with those statements.



Nearly all ECL professionals with management responsibilities across all workplace types (95 per cent to 98 per cent) agree or strongly agree that their team and staff **respect them as a manager**.

The lowest rated item was related to **access to management-related PD courses** before becoming a manager. Across all sites—but especially in \$10 a day ChildCareBC sites (57 per cent) and in CCC (63 per cent)—fewer managers had access to training courses before becoming a manager.

Figure 26 Proportion of management staff who agree or strongly agree with statements about their management skills in 2022



Source: 2022 SRDC workforce survey.

## Professional development activities

### Overall participation in PD activities

The 2022 workforce survey asked respondents to identify whether they had participated in a PD activity in the 12 months preceding the survey.

Overall, **83 per cent** of ECL professionals participated in PD activities in 2022.

Among those who participated in PD activities, respondents were asked to list the topics of the activities they completed. Figure 27 lists the six most cited topics of PD activities in 2022.

Figure 27 Most cited professional development topics by ECL professionals in 2022



Source: 2022 SRDC workforce survey.

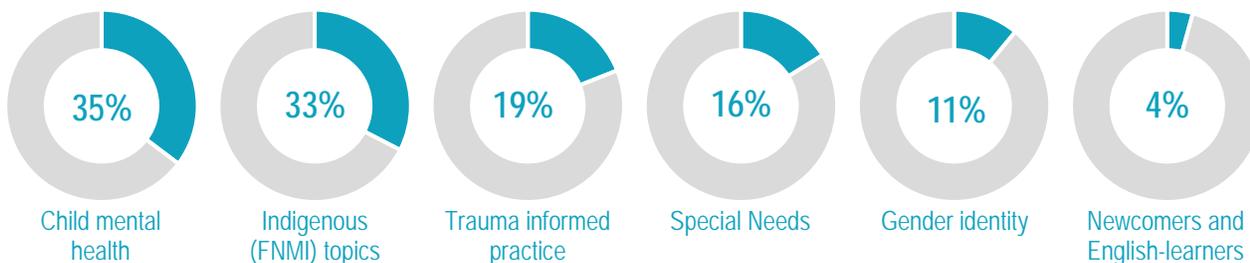
### Diversity and inclusion PD activities

As seen in previous sections, ECL professionals consistently rank skills related to **cultural sensitivity** and **working with children with special needs** lower than other skills in self-assessment questions.

This has not translated into an increase in participation in PD activities in these areas.

While child mental health was among the top choices for professional development activities, other topics related to diversity and inclusion were among the least cited, including **gender identity** (11 per cent) and topics about **newcomers** (4 per cent).

Figure 28 Proportion of ECL respondents who participated in PD activities related to diversity and inclusion in 2022



Source: 2022 SRDC workforce survey.

A positive trend since 2019 is the noticeable increase in participation in PD activities covering **Indigenous issues**. Participation in these activities increased by 14 per centage points since 2019.

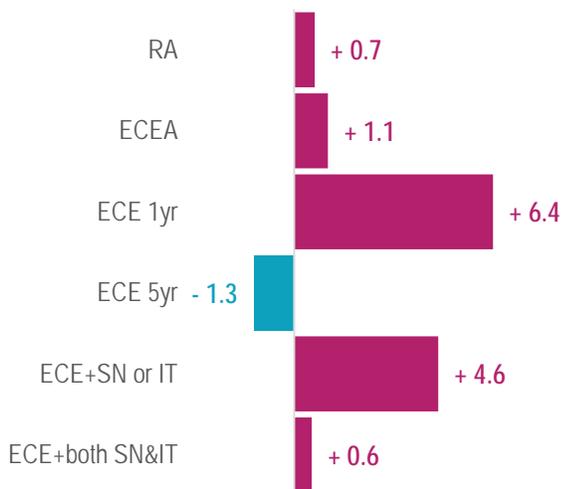
### PD participation by certification

Participation in PD activities was highest among ECEs (84 per cent for ECE 1 year and 5 year), and ECEs with SN and/or IT (90 per cent for SN or IT; 89 per cent for SN and IT). RAs were least likely to report participation in PD (60 per cent), followed by ECEAs (73 per cent).

Since 2019, participation in PD activities increased for all certification groups, except 5-year ECEs, which saw a slight decrease (-1.3 percentage points).

The biggest increase in participation rates were seen in 1-year ECEs (+6.4 percentage points) and ECEs with either SN or IT specializations (+4.6 percentage points).

Figure 29 Percentage point change in PD participation rates by highest certification between 2019 and 2022



Source: 2019 and 2022 workforce surveys.

The participation rates according to PD topics were consistent with the overall results.

- The most popular PD topic across all qualification groups was **Child growth and development**, with the highest proportions reported by RAs (63 per cent of PD-participants) to a low among ECEs with either SN or IT (44 per cent).
- The second most popular topic was **Managing child behaviour** for RAs (56 per cent), ECEAs (37 per cent), 1-year ECEs (38 per cent) and 5-year ECEs (42 per cent).
- **Child mental health** was the second most popular PD topic for ECEs with both IT and SN (40 per cent), and **Curriculum or program development** was the second most popular for ECEs with either IT or SN (39 per cent).

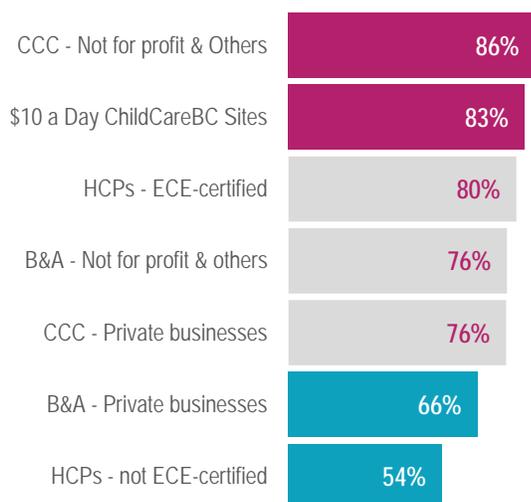
### PD participation by auspice

PD participation by auspice compares ECL professionals working in not-for-profit sites or in private businesses, in addition to the types of programs offered (Child Care Centres (CCC), before & after school or recreational care programs (B&A), \$10 a day ChildCareBC sites, and home care providers (HCPs).

Participation in PD activities was highest among professionals in **not-for-profit CCC** (90 per cent) followed by professionals working in **\$10 a day ChildCareBC sites** (87 per cent) and **HCPs who are ECE-certified** (86 per cent).

The lowest PD participation rates were among professionals working in **private businesses offering B&A programs** (54 per cent) and **HCPs without an ECE** (58 per cent).

**Figure 30** Rate of participation in professional development activities in 2022, by auspice and programs offered



Source: 2022 SRDC workforce survey.

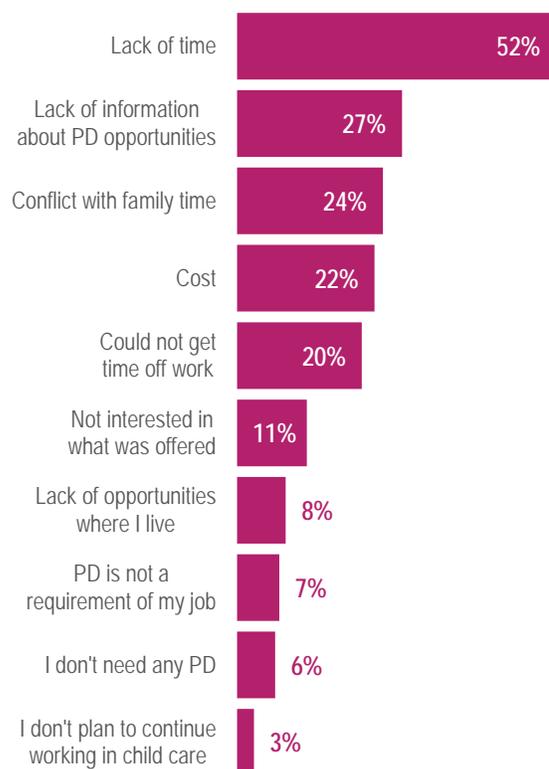
## Reasons for not participating in PD

Survey respondents **not participating in PD** were asked to list the barriers that prevented them from participating.

The most common barrier, cited by more than half of PD non-participants (52 per cent), was a **lack of time**. This was cited as the primary reason by all groups according to their role and programs, except non-M/S in B&A programs who cited the **lack of information of PD options available to them** (40 per cent).

For HCPs, the second most cited reason was either that they **could not get time off work** (47 per cent of HCPs not ECE-certified) or that PD activities **conflicted with their family time** (42 per cent, HCPs ECE-certified).

**Figure 31** Proportion of respondents by main reason for not attending PD activities in 2022



Source: 2022 SRDC workforce survey.

Since 2019, there is a decline in the proportion of respondents who cite barriers to access PD activities.

The biggest drop appears to be in the **cost of PD activities**, which dropped by 21.6 percentage points for non-M/S in B&A programs and by 18.6 percentage points for professionals in \$10 a day ChildCareBC sites.

**Lack of time available for PD activities** also decreased across all groups, with the biggest drop seen among non-M/S in B&A programs (-27.4 percentage points). However, we also see a substantial increase in 2022 compared to 2019 for M/S in B&A programs (+26.4 percentage points). Low sample sizes may explain, in part, the large shift in proportions, but the direction of the change is still indicative of the trends over time.

Case study interviews provided some insights into why some of these barriers are declining over time.

In 2022, more PD events were held in-person. Nevertheless, only a small number of ECL professionals attended in-person training outside of their centres. They regarded the time, registration costs, and travel expenses as main reasons for not attending in-person events.

Many opted for **online training** options as most of these options were free and could be completed outside of work hours and were often self-directed. This flexibility was appreciated, as was the ability to access completion certificates immediately.

Case study sites provided annual training funds for all employees with an average of \$250. **Financial supports and access to free, online training may help explain the decline in respondents citing PD costs as a barrier.**

However, some sites reported these funds were not used by employees, particularly in those centres which covered the cost of first aid training. If funds were not used by individuals, other employees could request additional help with training costs.

## 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 four factors can significantly predict attendance in professional development activities.



### Business Type

Working in a **private business** is associated with:

**51% decrease** in the odds of attending professional development activities



### Indigenous persons

A respondent who self-identifies as **Indigenous** is associated with:

**53% decrease** in the odds of attending professional development activities



### Men and non-binary persons

An individual who identifies as a **man or as gender non-binary** is associated with:

**70% decrease** in the odds of attending professional development activities



### Number of benefits received

An additional **employment benefit** received is associated with:

**8% increase** in the odds of attending professional development activities

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Source: SRDC 2022 workforce survey.

## Hours spent in professional development activities

Respondents who participated in professional development activities completed an average of **28 hours** over the 12-month period preceding the survey.

This average is up by about 1.3 hours since 2019, but lower by 7 hours from the average in 2021.

In 2022, three groups of respondents recorded above average hours of PD:

- ECEAs (37.5 hours),
- RAs (36.2 hours), and
- 1-year ECEs (32.6 hours).

**+1.3 hours**



on average spent  
in PD activities  
since 2019

However, about two in every three respondents who participated in any professional development activity completed **25 or fewer hours**, with 31 per cent completing 1 to 10 hours and 38 per cent completing 11 to 25 hours.

When considering respondents' role or programs offered, three groups recorded above average hours of PD:

- Non-ECE certified HCPs (37.6 hours),
- M/S at CCC (31.2 hours), and
- M/S in B&A programs (28 hours).

Lowest hours are registered by non-M/S professionals at B&A programs (21 hours).

## Factors associated with hours spent in professional development activities

A linear regression was also conducted to understand the factors that contribute to the number of hours spent in professional development activities.

After controlling for other factors, we find one factor – union membership – can significantly predict the number of hours spent in professional development activities. One possible reason is the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic combined with staff shortages. While these in general affected everyone, there may have been extra constraints affecting time taken off the floor for professional development in unionized settings.



### Union Membership

**Union membership** is associated with:

**an average decrease of 6.87 hours**  
spent in professional development activities

Source: 2022 Workforce survey.

## ECL Career Pathways

### Perception of career pathway options

More than **six in ten** respondents (61 per cent) currently working in the sector believed there were a **variety of opportunities for career growth and development** within the ECL sector in BC.



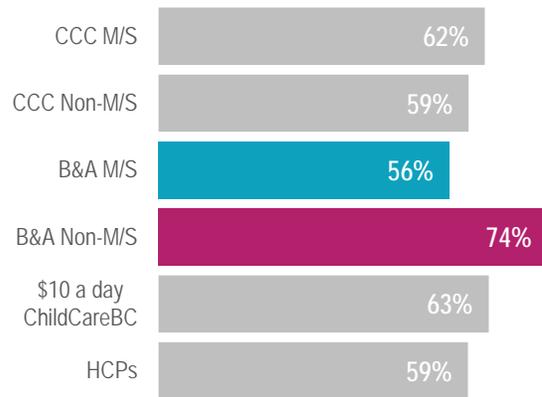
This result is similar to the 60 per cent reported in the benchmarking report in 2019.

However, among those who disagreed, some feel that upward mobility within the sector is limited. While this allows educators to gain experience and provide better care to children, there are limited options to feel challenged or to grow professionally over time.

The proportion of respondents who agree with the statement **there are a variety of opportunities for career growth within the ECL sector in BC** was similar between respondents by role and programs.

As shown in Figure 32 below, the highest proportion of agreement was among non-M/S in B&A programs (**74 per cent**, in pink) while the lowest was among M/S in B&A programs (**56 per cent**, in blue).

**Figure 32** Proportion of respondents who agree or strongly agree that there are opportunities for career growth and development in ECL in BC



Source: 2022 SRDC workforce survey.

## 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 professionals currently working in ECL to upgrade their credentials. The bursary value is up to \$5,000 per semester and is intended to assist with tuition and other expenses such as travel or loss of wages.

The 2022 survey of ECL professionals asked respondents about their awareness of the bursary and their intentions to apply for the bursary:



*“There are few management/ supervisory roles to move into and we are limited in our ability to increase our wages or to move into new and challenging roles outside of working on the floor.”*

*“This makes for well-experienced front-line workers, but little growth or challenge for the educators.”*

Workforce Survey Respondent

- Over 59 per cent of workforce survey respondents were **aware** of the ECE Workforce Development Bursary.

Among those who were aware:

- 11 per cent **had applied** to the bursary in the last year,
- 18 per cent **had not yet applied but intended to** in the future.

However, almost two-thirds of respondents (64 per cent) who were aware of the bursary had not applied and **had no intention to apply**.

When asked to share the reasons why they would not apply for the bursary in the future, nearly half (49 per cent) indicated that they **already had all the qualifications they needed**, while just under a quarter (22 per cent) of respondents did **not have the time to upgrade their credentials**.

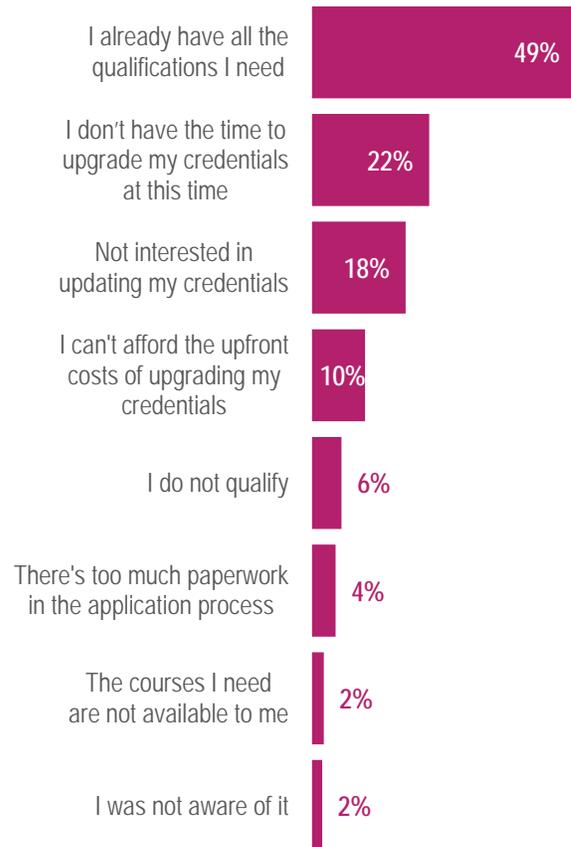
“As a person with my ECE/IT/SN working full time with 8 years of work experience, **this isn't feasible.**

*“If I stop working to go to school, I can't afford basic needs. So even with the bursary, I'd have no funds coming in for my living expenses.*

*“It's also a deterrent to go back to school to get higher education for the same job and the same pay. Whereas any other field there would be more opportunities for higher pay/positions.”*

Workforce Survey Respondent

Figure 33 Reasons why respondents do not intend to apply for the ECE Workforce Development Bursary



Source: 2022 SRDC workforce survey.

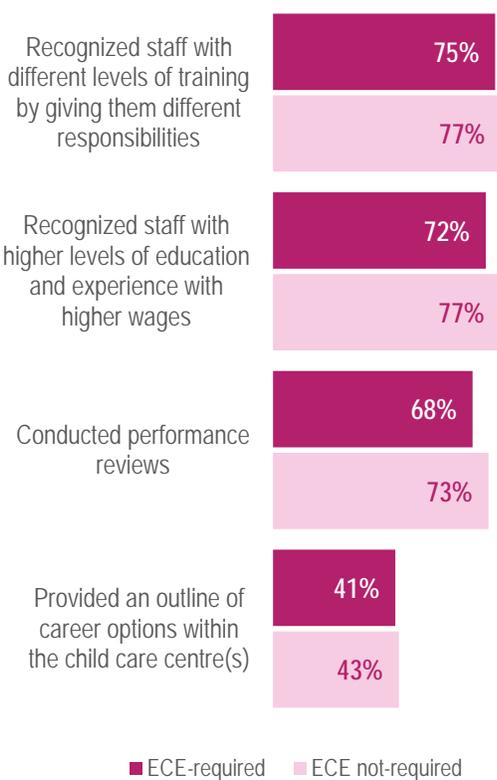
An analysis by credential group found that professionals with the most credentials were more likely to select “I already have all of the qualifications I need” as the reasons for not applying to the ECE Workforce Development Bursary (52 per cent of ECE+SN or IT; 76 per cent of ECE+SN+IT), compared to 22 per cent of RA and 17 per cent of ECEA.

An almost equivalent proportion of ECE 5 year (24 per cent) and RA (22 per cent) identified a lack of interest in updating their credentials.

## 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. Figure 34 illustrates these results by workplace type: ECE-required and ECE not required child care centres.

**Figure 34** Proportion of employers who engaged in activities that promote staff’s career advancement in the last 12 months



Source: 2022 SRDC employer survey.

The results show roughly similar results across workplaces. Employers of child care centres with programs that do *not* require ECE-certified staff tended to be **slightly more engaged** in activities that facilitate career advancement opportunities, though the differences were small.

Across three of the four career advancement activities, we found that between roughly two-thirds (68 per cent) and three-fourths (77 per cent) of employers were engaged in these activities.

The only activity in which less than half of employers across all workplace types were engaged was **offering an outline of career options within their child care centre** (41 per cent for ECE-required; 43 per cent for ECE not-required).

The results also revealed a steady improvement since 2019. Employers’ level of engagement in activities that facilitate career advancement opportunities increased by between **5 and 9 percentage points** across both types of organizations. However, for workplaces with no ECE requirement, such activities declined since last year.

“Some people are able to stay for a long time and they do advance in their careers, if they have the opportunity to become a supervisor and a manager in a leadership role.

“If that is their passion, then I think there’s definitely room for growth, in that avenue.

“But if that’s not the direction they want to go, then your opportunities are kind of limited.”

Not for Profit Case Study Site

# LABOUR MOBILITY AND WORKFORCE STABILITY

The evaluation has been tracking labour mobility to provide a better understanding of where professionals are going—inside and outside the sector—and why.

This section provides information on recruitment challenges, job shortages, new entrants to the sector, and retention issues to understand whether employers have access to the professionals they need.



## Labour Mobility and Workforce Stability

### Recruiting Professionals to ECL

#### Perception of ECL as a career option

Welcoming ECL professionals into the field is a key component of a vibrant workforce. As mentioned in earlier sections, employers still report hiring qualified staff as an ongoing “crisis”. In addition to the staffing shortages noted in Education and Certification, some employers cited extensive administration work as a barrier to securing qualified staff, such as long wait times for ECE registration or renewal. Cross-sectional survey participants mentioned issues with recruitment and the difficulty in hiring qualified staff:



*“I feel that ECEs are being left behind and the government is just making more spots for children but don't have the staff to fill the programs”*

Open-ended Survey Response

Although public opinion survey data consistently shows that ECL is highly valued among the general public, this sentiment is not always felt by those in the sector.

Case study participants cited low perceived respect from others outside the sector, in addition to substantial unpaid overtime, which they say contribute to burnout.



*“It's an exhausting job with not very high pay and you burn out so quickly. The kids are taxing, although lovely; they make it worth it.”*

*“But so many people put in so much work outside of work hours. It's not sustainable.”*

For Profit Case Study Site

### Staff shortages

Thirty-seven per cent of employers reported they **had at least one vacant position that they have been unable to fill** over the last year. Employers with vacancies reported being unable to fill between 1-6 positions, with the average being 1.6 per employer.

As a result, 345 positions were filled by individuals with lower qualifications than wanted by employers to maintain operations.

**45%**

Of employers filled a vacant position with an individual with lower qualifications than desired

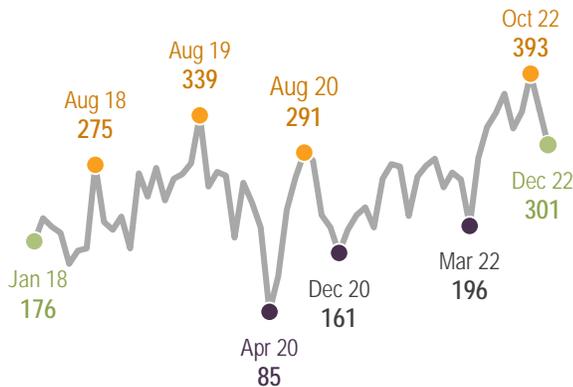
The impact of these shortages includes one third of employers in BC having to refuse children into their program in the last 12 months due to not having enough staff. More than one-quarter had to refuse children because they didn't have staff with the right qualifications to accommodate the children's needs. The most common skills required but not available were an ECE basic certificate (73 per cent), followed by ECE+IT (51 per cent) and ECE+SN (37 per cent).

## Job postings<sup>1</sup>

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.

Recent data shows higher numbers of ECE and ECEA job postings in the later part of 2022 compared to any other period since January 2018, with 301 posts in December 2022, compared to 176 in January 2018. These categories cannot be separated further.

Figure 35 Monthly job postings for Early Childhood Educators and Assistants in BC



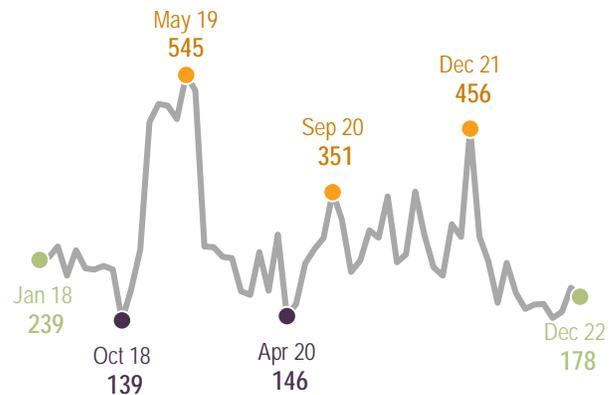
Source: Labour Market Information Council Canadian Job Trends Dashboard.

Note: The figure highlights the first and last points in the range (in green), and then local minimums (purple) and maximums (orange).

Job postings specifically for HCPs are about the same now as they were in 2018 but were much higher during the intervening period (2019-2022).

Recent data shows 178 posts in December 2022 compared to 239 five years ago.

Figure 36 Monthly job postings for Home Child Care Providers in BC



Source: Labour Market Information Council Canadian Job Trends Dashboard.

Note: The figure highlights the first and last points in the range (in green), and then local minimums (purple) and maximums (orange).

## Provincial Nominee Program

One relatively new ECL R&R Strategy tactic for attracting ECL professionals into the workforce operates through the BC Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), which newly permitted prioritizing ECEs and ECEAs (these categories cannot be separated further) for immigration to Canada. Administrative data shows the impact of this program change in the last year.

In 2021, 90 individuals applied to the skills immigration stream PNP for ECEs/ECEAs. In 2022 there were 749 new applicants. In 2022, most respondents to the employer survey were **not aware** of this program (64 per cent). Of those who were aware, 20 per cent had used it (53 employers) and 17 per cent intended to use it within one year. However, a large proportion of employers were **unsure** (34 per cent) or **do not plan to use** the PNP (32 per cent). Employers with an ECE requirement were slightly more likely to be aware of the PNP and much more likely to have used it than employers without an ECE requirement (22 per cent compared to 7 per cent).

## Labour Mobility

A new focus for the evaluation in 2022 is a deeper analysis into the factors that contribute to labour mobility.

This section describes new entrants and job changers, as well as those who expect to leave their jobs or the sector in the coming year.

We asked current ECL professionals about their intentions to remain in or leave either their current job or the child care sector, and the reasons motivating these intentions. We also asked former ECL professionals—including individuals without an ECE or ECEA certification—why they decided to leave the sector.

The information provides important insights into the underlying reasons that motivate individuals to seek employment across and outside of the sector.

## New entrants to ECL

New ECL professionals are those who satisfy two survey criteria:

- They started work in their current workplace in the **past year** and
- They reported having worked in child care for **less than 12 months**.

Just over 5 per cent (83 respondents) of survey respondents working in centre-based ECL positions met this description. New entrants were more likely to be:

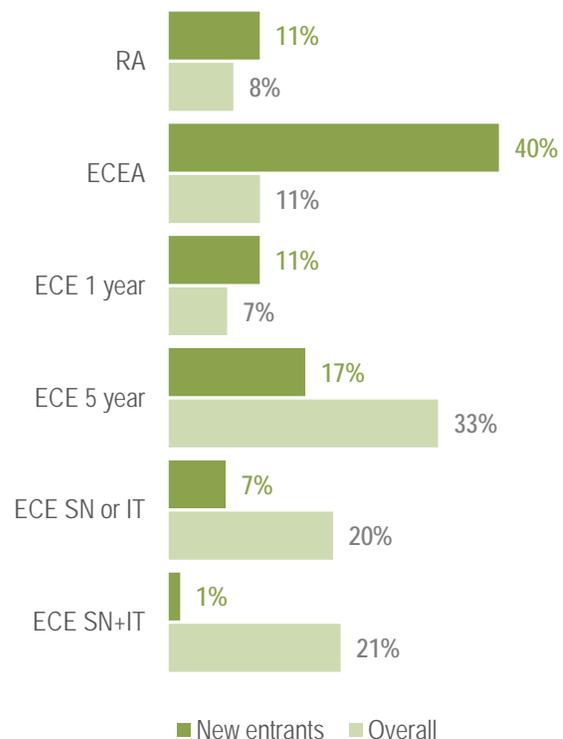
- **Younger** (59 per cent under 30 years of age compared to 12 per cent of the total sample),
- Have a **disability** (7 per cent compared to 4 per cent),
- **Indigenous** (8 per cent compared to 6 per cent), and

- Working in **\$10 a day ChildCareBC** sites (24 per cent compared to 14 per cent).

Reflecting their recent arrival in the sector, new entrants had **lower levels of qualification** than the overall sample.

As shown in Figure 37, most new entrants were **ECEAs** (40 per cent compared to 11 per cent in the overall sample), followed by **5-year ECEs** (17 per cent compared to 33 per cent of the overall sample).

Figure 37 New entrants to ECL by highest certification completed



Source: 2022 SRDC workforce survey.

## Experienced ECL professionals starting a new child care job

The workforce survey can now track the labour mobility of experienced ECL professionals 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** (2021 or 2022).

This subgroup represents 390 professionals working in centre-based ECL positions (26 per cent of survey respondents).

When compared to the full sample, experienced ECL professionals with new jobs were:

- More likely to be in their **thirties** (35 per cent compared to 24 per cent),
- Slightly more likely to be **newcomers** to Canada (34 per cent compared to 31 per cent).

Experienced ECL professionals with new jobs have the same profile as the sample overall in terms of qualifications and the proportion working in \$10 a day ChildCareBC sites.

## Former ECL professionals

In 2022, 221 former ECL professionals not currently working in child care responded to the workforce survey. Compared to the full sample, they were:

- Comparable in age, though more were in **their late twenties** (15 per cent compared to 9 per cent),
- Slightly more likely to identify as **Indigenous** persons (9 per cent compared to 6 per cent),
- Slightly less likely to have more than 16 years of experience working ECL (35 per cent compared to 41 per cent).

Respondents were asked to rank the reasons why they left ECL. Using a weighted average score, findings show that the top ranked reason for leaving was overwhelmingly **dissatisfaction with pay**.

Four other reasons were top ranked:

- Dissatisfaction with working conditions in child care
- Preference for another occupation
- Dissatisfaction with career advancement opportunities in child care
- Dissatisfaction with benefits in child care.



*"It's easy if you are able to take proper rest times and take vacations and be able to be sick and rest at home."*

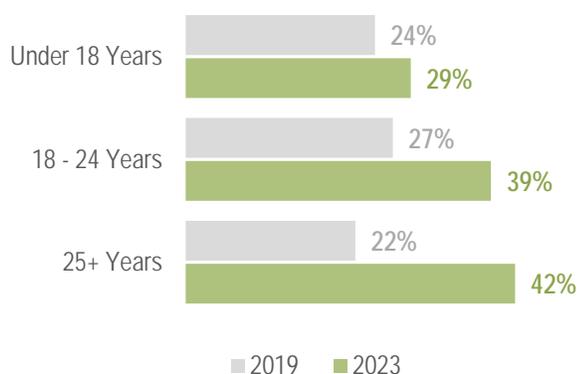
*"But that's a really tricky thing to make happen. If you have a great team and you have the flexibility of extra staff so that you and your coworkers can rest, you could easily stay in this field for years."*

For Profit Case Study Site

## Public opinion survey career interest module

Emerging adults aged 13-24 and adults aged 25 and over who are considering making a career change were asked to rate their general interest in working in child care, as well as interest based on a range of hypothetical working conditions. In general, interest in working in child care varied considerably across age groups.

**Figure 38** Career interest module respondents who agreed or strongly agreed they would be interested in a career in child care, by age group



Source: 2019 and 2023 Public Opinion Surveys.

Compared to the benchmarks collected in 2019, **interest in child care as a career increased across all three age groups**, with the biggest increase in those 25 years and up at 22 percentage points higher than 2019. Two-thirds of adults in the oldest age group believed that working in child care would be a rewarding career, up 11 points from 2019; however, only 43 per cent of the youngest age group agreed with this statement, down 11 points from 2019.



There were minimal differences across sex, but **parents** were more likely than respondents without children to indicate an interest in working in child care at 48 per cent.

In general, the youngest age group was the least likely to show interest in child care if **working conditions** such as the presence of professional development opportunities and pension plan were offered. Compared to 2019, the presence of any working conditions was associated with higher interest in a career in child care for the 18-24 and 25+ year age groups. However, only flexible work hours/days and sick pay were associated with increases for 13- to 17-year-olds.

The most important working conditions per age group were:

- Extended health benefits for 13–17-year-olds (53 per cent, down 2 points from 2019) and 18-24 year-olds (63 per cent, up 8 points from 2019).
- Flexible work hours/days for 25+ year-olds (65 per cent, up 14 points from 2019).

*“You are paid poorly for a really hard job. Many parents don’t value child care workers enough and treat them poorly.”*

*“Kids are difficult to deal with 1 on 1, 15 of them is worse. You get paid an unliveable salary.”*

Public Opinion Survey Open-Ended Response

Across all age groups, the modal minimum wage required to consider a career in child care was \$25-27 per hour. This is slightly higher than the average wage reported by workforce survey respondents in 2022 (\$24.32).

Among those **not interested in a career in child care**, preference for another type of work was the most commonly cited reason. Factors that could be influenced by ECL R&R Strategy tactics included the demanding nature of the job, low pay or benefits, and the perception of being undervalued and under-supported.

Among those who indicated an **interest in child care work**, many felt that it would be a positive and enjoyable

“

*“I think it would be enjoyable, as I love playing with kids, and rewarding since you're playing an important part in their development stage, as well as helping working parents who depend on someone reliable to watch over their children.”*

Public Opinion Survey Open-Ended Response

career. The importance of the sector to society and to the future appealed to those who were searching for a meaningful career. It also suggested that a career in child care will always be in demand.

Among those whose personal interest in a career in child care had **increased since 2019**, the aforementioned importance to society and relative job security that comes with it were commonly cited extrinsic factors.

Additionally, increasing wages and benefits as well as the public respect for child care professionals were also noted as motivating factors.

Among those whose personal interest in a career in child care had **decreased since 2019**, the demanding nature of the job and low pay/benefits were the most common extrinsic factors. Together, these results show that the ECL R&R Strategy tactics have helped in some ways but remain insufficient.

“

*“Lack of support, resources and compensation for working in child care has become more pronounced over the years and the government has made it clear that [it's] not a priority for them.”*

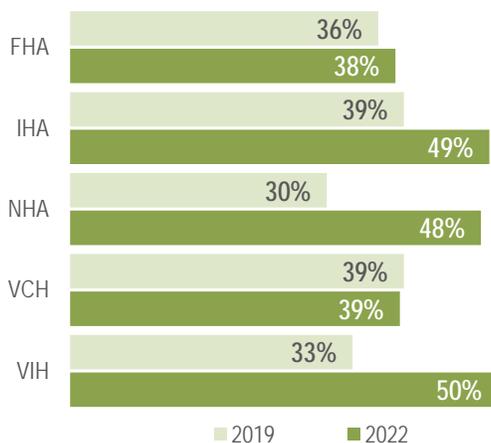
Public Opinion Survey Open-Ended Response

## Retaining Professionals in ECL

### Staff turnover

The loss of qualified ECL professionals is a well-documented issue and remains a top concern for the field in 2022. Forty-three per cent of employers experienced staff net loss—losing more staff than they gained in the last 12 months. This represented a challenge for both organizations with no ECE requirement (47 per cent of employers, up 7 percentage points since 2019) as well as those who require at least one staff have an ECE certification (40 per cent of employers, up 13 percentage points since 2019). **Staff net loss increased in four of five health authority regions compared to 2019**, with the largest increase in Northern Health Authority. The proportion experiencing net gain of staff (14 per cent) was half the level it was in 2019.

**Figure 39** Proportion of employers who experienced overall staff net loss by health authority region in 2019 and 2022



Source: 2019 and 2022 SRDC employer surveys.

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

The analysis of employer-reported net loss for each year between 2019 and 2022 can be found in the 2022 Evaluation Technical Report.

Net loss was observed for all positions (professionals, supervisors, managers, directors) in both workplace types in 2022. Loss was biggest for **professionals** compared to other roles. Even though programs without an ECE requirement were more likely to experience net loss of ECL professionals (34 per cent of employers with no requirement compared to 17 per cent), programs with an ECE requirement that did experience loss experienced a greater personnel loss in 2022 (0.7 ECL professionals compared to 0.57 in programs with no ECE requirement). In short, retaining frontline staff who work with children is a challenge across the sector.

### Job seekers

In the 2022 survey of ECL professionals, **197 ECEs or ECEAs** currently working in child care (14 per cent) said that they were looking for a new job.

The survey asked respondents to identify where they were looking for a new job. Respondents could select all options that applied to them; thus, the total exceeds 100.

ECEs and ECEAs looking for a new job are looking in:

- their **current workplace** (23 per cent),
- a **school or postsecondary institution** (34 per cent), or
- **somewhere different** entirely (65 per cent).

When asked to select all types of jobs they were looking for, three quarters (77 per cent) of job seekers were looking for another job in child care, while over half (56 per cent) were looking for a **non-child care job either elsewhere** (34 per cent) or in a **school or postsecondary institution** (22 per cent).

Few ECEs and ECEAs specified the non-ECL jobs they were looking for, but those who did mostly cited characteristics of jobs (e.g., better pay, better benefits, lower workload).

## Job leavers

Looking for a new job is different from expecting to leave one's job.

Via the workforce survey, we sought to determine whether members of the ECL workforce expected to make a change, either by leaving their current **job with their employer** or by leaving the **ECL sector**.

### *Intention to Leave Current Employer*

Workforce survey respondents were asked whether they expected to remain with their current employer for the next year. Across all types of workplaces (CCCs, before-and-after school and recreational care, \$10 a day centres, and HCPs) and positions, fewer in 2022 expected to stay with their current employer for one year than was the case in 2019.

- Proportions expecting to stay ranged from 62 per cent for non-managers and supervisors in B&A workplaces to 81 per cent for managers and supervisors in child care centres.
- Non-managers/supervisors were much less likely to expect to stay than their manager/supervisor counterparts in both CCCs (difference of 12 percentage points) and B&A school and recreational care (difference of 17 percentage points).
- Non-managers/supervisors in B&A school and recreational care programs were the least likely to expect to stay. The proportion expecting to leave doubled in three years from 7 per cent in 2019 to 14 per cent in 2022.

Only one ECL qualification group were more likely to expect to stay in 2022. Only 74 per cent of ECEAs expected to stay in 2019 but by 2022 this had grown to 80 per cent. Those least likely to expect to stay with their

current employer were those with ECE 1-Year certifications at 68 per cent (down from 79 per cent in 2019). The group most likely to expect to *leave* was Responsible Adults at 11 per cent (up from 4 per cent in 2019).

Among those who expected to leave their current employer within one year, the number one reason was **dissatisfaction with pay**, expressed by 44 per cent of respondents. The next highest was **dissatisfaction with career opportunities** at 30 per cent.

Among those actively looking for a new job, popular reasons were **interest in a child care job with more seniority** (37 per cent) or a **similar job** (25 per cent). The majority of respondents who were looking for a new job cited 'looking for higher pay' as the top reason (74 per cent).

Employers were also asked to rate their perceptions of the reasons among staff who voluntarily left their organization. **'Family move'** took the top spot for workplaces with an ECE requirement, up from 4<sup>th</sup> spot in 2019.

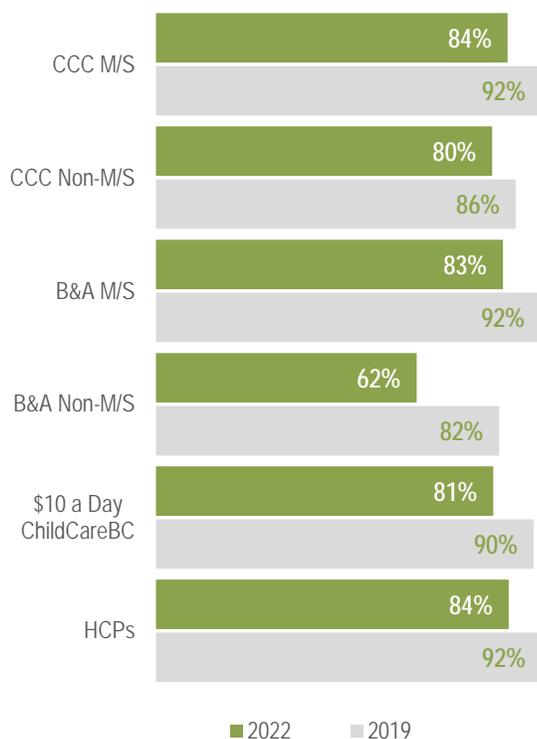
Close behind was **'another job in child care'**, which was the top-rated reason for the last three years. **'Parental leave'** appeared as a top-rated reason for the first time in 2022.

Among workplaces with no ECE requirement, there was a slightly different pattern, with **'returned to school'** being the top-rated reason once again, as in 2019. Across both types of workplaces, **dissatisfaction with salary** hasn't changed much since 2019 and remains a top reason.

### Intention to Leave ECL Sector

Most respondents expect to be working in child care in the year following the 2022 survey. However, across all workplace types and positions, fewer respondents expect to stay in the field in 2022 compared to 2019.

**Figure 40** Proportion of ECL professionals who expect to be working in the child care sector in the next year



Source: 2022 SRDC workforce survey.

When looking at responses by roles and programs, the proportions were roughly even across all groups, ranging from 80 to 84 per cent, except for non managers and supervisors in B&A programs, where only 62 per cent expected to be working in the sector the following year.

Across all roles and programs, fewer ECL professionals expect to be working in the child care sector in the next year than did in 2019.

Over a quarter of ECEAs/ECEs not working in child care nonetheless expected to be working in the child care sector within one year, potentially signaling an intent to return. Another 27 per cent were unsure.

Case study sites highlighted push and pull factors among ECL professionals.

Push factors (encouraging those to leave the field) included low wages and high demands of the job compared to professionals requiring similar levels of education:

“You kind of think: If I'm getting the same amount with that level of stress, why would I not consider moving on to that profession?”

Not-for-Profit Case Study Site

Regarding pull factors (encouraging professionals to remain in the field), participants highlighted the importance of employers providing enough support and recovery time to staff in order to reduce burnout. Examples they cited included having good communication with colleagues, having extra staff to share the workload and to cover unexpected absences, and the ability to take time off.

## Factors associated with retention

A multinomial logistic regression<sup>2</sup> analysis was conducted to better understand the factors associated with 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.
- **Uncertain**, 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. We include uncertainty as it is a warning sign that departure is possible.

### Intention to leave current job



#### Decreases with duration working in child care

Five extra years of experience working in child care is associated with **20% lower** relative risk of **leaving their current job** compared to staying in their current job



#### Uncertainty about staying decreases with age

Five extra years of age is associated with **16% lower** relative risk of feeling **uncertain about leaving their current job** compared to staying in their current job



#### Uncertainty about staying decreases with number of benefits received

An additional **employment benefit** received is associated with **5% lower** relative risk of feeling **uncertain about leaving their current job** compared to staying in their current job

### Intention to leave child care



#### Lower uncertainty in private businesses

Working in a **private business** is associated with **40% lower** relative risk of feeling **uncertain about leaving child care** compared to staying in child care



#### Uncertainty about staying decreases with age

Five extra years of age is associated with **18% lower** relative risk of feeling **uncertain about leaving child care** compared to staying in child care



#### Uncertainty about staying decreases with number of benefits received

An additional **employment benefit** received is associated with **8% lower** relative risk of feeling **uncertain about leaving child care** compared to staying in child care

Source: 2022 SRDC workforce survey.

## Notes on this section

### 1 How are job postings counted?

SRDC has used the Labour Market Information Council's Canadian Job Trends Dashboard to obtain job postings data. The Labour Market Information Council (LMIC) 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.

The LMIC Dashboard provides access to data from online job postings collected from thousands of Canadian websites and job boards by Vicinity Jobs. The dashboard is updated weekly and SRDC recorded the number of postings for each month at the midpoint of the following month, with data collected covering up to December 2022 at the time this report was prepared. These data are used to track changes in recruitment needs to the extent these are captured in advertised vacancies.

Vicinity Jobs captures online 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 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.

[Click here to go back to the text.](#)

### 2 What is a multinomial logistic regression?

The multinomial logistic regression assesses the two-way comparison of each possible category in the dependent variable 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 (i.e., no intention to leave their job or child care sector) was used as the base.

[Click here to go back to the text.](#)

# PROGRESS ON KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Since 2019, the evaluation has been tracking the ECL R&R Strategy's progress across 13 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The KPIs provide a long-term view on the ECL R&R Strategy's progress in reaching its objectives, and where greater efforts are needed.



## Progress on Key Performance Indicators

To take stock of progress against each Key Performance Indicator (KPI), we cycle through results from all relevant data sources. We compare the position of the ECL sector in 2022 relative to 2019 and earlier (and also intervening years where relevant). We draw on observations from professionals working in the sector and the general public to add meaning to these statistics.

The KPIs are listed in the first row of each table below with their corresponding number. The rightmost columns present a summary of the ECL R&R Strategy's progress on KPIs and tactics. An arrow is used to summarize the overall trend of each indicator since the launch of the ECL R&R Strategy until the end of 2022. This can be an improvement (large or small) [↑], a deterioration [↓] or a mixed result [↔]. No arrow indicates no new data related to that KPI since the last report.

A word of caution when interpreting KPI directional results: some sub-indicators may have a stronger effect on a KPI's overall progress than others. In this sense, the trends are not necessarily additive. For example, a measured improvement on a sub-indicator may have a greater effect on the overall KPI than two deteriorating results. Also, these tables do not allow the reader to know how close—or how far—the sector is in reaching its long-term goals, just the overall direction of change.

Inevitably, many nuances of findings are lost in such a high-level summary. Readers are encouraged to review the findings report for a more complete story and the technical report for the full results by KPI.

The evaluation will continue to cover developments in the sector's response to the ECL R&R Strategy 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.

Readers will notice that the report has presented findings according to themes, rather than by KPIs. The KPIs have been embedded within each theme as follows:

- Satisfaction with Child Care (KPI1)
- Perception of Child Care (KPI12, KPI13)
- Wages and Benefits (KPI2A, KPI2B)
- Education and Certification (KPI3, KPI4)
- Workforce Development (KPI6, KPI7, KPI8, KPI9, KPI10)
- Labour Mobility and Workforce Stability (KPI5, KPI11).

Figure 41 Summary of progress to 2022 on key performance indicators

| KPI1  | ECL professional satisfaction and perception of appropriateness of compensation  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Tactic: Wage enhancement both as symbol of recognition and additional compensation. |  |  |
| <b>Job Satisfaction</b>   | Levels of satisfaction with different aspects of work in ECL are generally high across the sector. But the proportions satisfied have not increased since 2019. For many aspects, 'satisfied' has become a more common response than 'very satisfied'.   |  |
| <b>Satisfaction with Benefits</b>   | Although responsible adults' satisfaction with benefits increased substantially, for all other groups defined by their qualification or program/role satisfaction with benefits in 2022 was similar to 2019. Regression results suggest that increasing benefits increases overall job satisfaction.   |  |
| <b>Satisfaction with Income</b>   | ECL professionals are least likely to report satisfaction with their income, and despite some increases from 2019 to 2021, rates in 2022 were either similar to 2019 or lower, perhaps in part due to high price inflation in 2022. As might be expected, regressions found the only factors associated with higher satisfaction with earnings and benefits were receiving higher monthly earnings or more benefits. |  |
| <b>Motivating Factors</b>   | Motivating factors remained relatively high, increasing most for those at \$10 a day ChildCareBC sites. But there was a decline in the proportions of all groups other than HCPs feeling their job made good use of their skills and abilities.  |  |
| <b>Burnout</b>  | There was an increase since 2019 in proportions feeling physically exhausted at the end of the day and who felt frustrated by their job – both indicators of burnout. Regression results suggest that earning more per month was associated with reporting these aspects of burnout.   |  |

See information about this KPI in Satisfaction with Child Care starting on page 13.

**KPI2A**      **Average real wages and salaries of ECL professionals**      

Tactic: Nine in every ten of those eligible are in receipt of wage enhancement.  
 There is no longer overlap between wage ranges of ECEs and ECEAs/RAs in any health authority regions.

**Changes in Wages and Income**      Including the enhancement, wages increased by roughly \$5 over 2019, but after adjusting for inflation the increase has been closer to \$2.50, given high price inflation in the post-pandemic period. 

After adjusting for inflation, 2022 wages without the enhancement dropped from 2021 and are now at similar levels than in 2019. The positive effect of wage enhancement payments on incomes has been muted by inflation, even considering the increase introduced in September 2021 and paid out from March 2022.

The earnings premium of basic ECEs over those with no certification has remained approximately \$2.40 per hour while the premium for IT or SN certifications has declined to between \$2.50 and \$3.00 per hour in 2021-22. Professionals considered their wages only modest recognition for their credentials and seniority.

**Wage Enhancement**      Payments of the wage enhancement started in March 2019, retroactive to September 1, 2018. As of March 2022, payment amounts for the wage enhancement are set to \$4.00 per hour, retroactive to September 2021. 

The number of claims for the wage enhancement and percentage of those eligible claiming have both increased since 2019. Survey estimates of the latter rate increased from 78 to 90 per cent. Some ECEs with considerable experience were unhappy that newly credentialed ECEs were now seemingly receiving similar wages given no differentiation in the enhancement for seniority.

Regression findings suggest Indigenous ECL professionals are less likely to receive the enhancement, all else equal (see pages 38 and 44 for more information).

See information about this KPI in Wages and Benefits starting on page 29.

## KPI2B Benefits of ECL Professionals



Tactic: No direct ECL R&R Strategy tactics in 2022.  
Little change in financial assistance for professional development up to 2022.

**Offer of Benefits** According to employers, provision of each type of benefit has remained stable with only a few adding each type of benefit relative to 2019. However, the overall result is the proportion of employers that do not provide any benefits has decreased considerably, down from 19-22 per cent in 2019 to 4-5 per cent in 2022, which is an improvement again over 2021. Thus, more employers are offering benefits to their staff.



**Receipt of Benefits** More non-manager/supervisor respondents at child care centres report receiving each type of benefit compared to 2019.

Legislative changes may have led to the measured increase in the proportion of those offering and accessing paid sick days. However, the quality of benefits received varies considerably (e.g., the receipt of sick days varies from 5 to 30 days annually).

More in before and after school care report extended health care, dental coverage, and paid sick days compared to 2019.



See information about this KPI in Wages and Benefits starting on page 39.

## KPI3 Integration of updated Sector Occupational Competencies into education and training programs

Tactic: Work is still underway on the updated Sector Occupational Competencies.

**Industry Standards** The response and uptake will be assessed once they are introduced.

**KPI4**

Proportion of ECL professionals with credentials relevant to provision of child care for provincial ECL needs, including regional and Indigenous ECL needs



**Tactic:** Increasing numbers of student bursaries issued.

1,150 new spaces in ECE programs at public post-secondary institutions and an expanded dual-credit pathway for high school students.

PNP started allowing applications for ECEs as a priority category in March 2022.

**PSE completion rates**

The number of active ECE and ECEA certifications has been increasing since 2018-19, with 2021-22 seeing 8,597 new certificates granted – a 54 per cent increase. There has been no consistent change in survey-captured proportions of ECL professionals in the workforce possessing ECL-related credentials in 2019 through 2022, however.

Just 7 per cent of professionals in \$10 a day sites and 8 per cent in other child care centres reported no training or certifications specific to ECL. The majority among professionals at ECE level (median qualification year 2010) and above (median qualification year 2012) had received their instruction in person. But for ECEAs (median qualification year 2020), the majority (56 per cent) had received training exclusively online, with another 11 per cent trained via hybrid delivery. Employers have begun to express concern about new graduates whose instruction was entirely or mostly online not having the required skills to enter the workforce.



**Possession of ECL-related credentials by professionals**

Typically, half of directors but three-quarters of managers and supervisors held an ECE certificate.

While employers who reported having children with special needs were more likely to report a higher proportion of staff with special needs certification, 45 per cent of employers with such children had no staff with SN certification, up from 40 per cent in 2021. About 10 per cent of employers in the sample felt they had to turn away children because they lacked staff with the necessary Special Needs certification to support them (though this is not a legal requirement).

While invitations for professionals to apply to migrate to Canada for ECE and ECEA positions through the PNP increased dramatically from 90 new nominees in 2021 to 749 new nominees in 2022, a declining share of credentials held among 2022 survey respondents were from non-Canadian institutions. Note that nominations for ECEA and ECE positions are combined when reported and cannot be separated.

This may change as nominated workers enter the workforce in coming years.



See information about this KPI in Education and Certification starting on page 46.

**KPI5** Perceptions of ECL career among those making decisions with respect to their own careers 

Tactic: No direct ECL R&R Strategy tactics.

**Interest in pursuing ECL as a career** Interest in pursuing a career in child care has increased since 2019 for young adults aged 18-24 and adults who are considering making a career change. Two-thirds of adults who are considering making a career change believe working in child care would be a rewarding career. 

**Workforce Exits** More workforce survey respondents in non-manager/supervisor positions expect to leave their current employer, while uncertainty about whether to stay or leave has grown for all program/roles.   
 More non-manager/supervisors working in before & after school and recreational care programs (up from 1 to 13 per cent) responded that they don't expect to be working in ECL by November 2023. Anticipated departures within a year are also slightly higher than in 2019 for all other groups.

See information about this KPI in Labour Mobility and Workforce Stability starting on page 63.

**KPI6** Proportion of ECL workforce who self-report possession of core skills and supplementary skills 

Tactic: Supports include the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network and ECE Peer Mentoring Program.

**Skills Self-Assessment** Self-assessed skills mostly dropped from 2019 to 2022, especially for ECEs. RAs were the only group to rate their skills above average or excellent more often in 2022 across the full range of skills. In 2022, 76 per cent of ECEAs felt themselves skilled at making the environment inclusive for children with special needs, up from 67 per cent in 2019. However, this skill along with demonstrating cultural sensitivity were the two lowest rated skills overall as in earlier years.   
 ECEs were increasingly likely to rate themselves low on demonstrating cultural sensitivity in 2022 compared to 2019.

**Professional Development for low-assessed skills** Professional development was sought out by members of the ECL workforce for many low-assessed skills, and there was an across the board increase in completion of training in relation to Indigenous children and in relation to trauma informed practice. 

See information about this KPI in Workforce Development starting on page 50.

**KPI7** Awareness of ECL career pathway options, how to pursue them, and expectations of their feasibility in terms of finances and availability of training opportunities. 

Tactic: Increasing numbers of workforce development bursaries issued.

**Career growth opportunities** After a dip in 2020, the proportion of the workforce believing that there were opportunities for career growth and development recovered to 2019 levels. 

**Support for career growth** Programs without a requirement for ECEs on staff were consistently slightly more likely to engage in activities to promote staff advancement than those with a ECE requirement and increasingly so since 2019.   
 Employers reported providing career development supports of various types considerably more than they did in 2019. Only nine per cent had supported a workforce development bursary application [to support upgrading of credentials] on behalf of their staff. The top reasons they gave for not doing so were because no staff had applied (48 per cent of employers) and employers were not aware (39 per cent).

See information about this KPI in Workforce Development starting on page 59.

**KPI8** Proportion of ECL workforce who self-report participation in professional development activities 

Tactic: Professional networks and PD Supports.

**Professional Development Participation Rates** Overall participation in professional development since 2019 increased for most groups defined by qualification. Some 83 per cent reported participation within the past 12 months, identical to 2021.   
 The only exception was a decline among those with a 5-year ECE certificate. Professional development participation declined at privately-run before and after school/recreational programs. Increased take up of many topics was seen, especially in professional development related to Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit) ECL and personal stress management.  
 More types of professional development experienced increases than declines in participation.

See information about this KPI in Workforce Development starting on page 54.

**KPI9** Hours of professional development per ECL workforce member per year 

Tactic: Professional networks and PD Supports.

**Hours of professional development participation** Mean hours of professional development ranged from 14.3 hours among non M/S staff at before and after school and recreational care programs to 37.6 hours among non ECE-certified HCPs. Mean hours of professional development were higher in 2022 than 2019, almost doubling for responsible adults and increasing by nearly ten hours on average for those with basic ECE 1-year certificates. For those with ECE specialty certificates and ECEAs, mean hours of professional development were slightly lower. 

Regression analysis suggested a positive association between workplace benefits and attending professional development, while men and non-binary and Indigenous ECL professionals as well as those working at a private business were less likely to attend professional development.

See information about this KPI in Workforce Development starting on page 58.

**KPI10** Employers report of the share of their ECL workforce possessing core skills and possessing supplementary skills 

Tactic: Professional networks and PD Supports.

**Overall core skills** In general, employers were more likely in 2022 to report that no staff need to improve their skills than in 2019. However, employers only operating programs that require ECE certification reported lower skill levels in 2022 in making the environment inclusive for children with special needs. 

**Skills of managers** The overwhelming majority of employers (between 82 and 93 per cent) felt that management staff were respected by their teams and could easily handle their management responsibilities [new measure in 2022].

See information about this KPI in Education and Certification on page 48 and Workforce Development starting on page 52.

**KPI11** Employment stability of ECL workforce, including variances for staffing for providers, work hours, job tenure, job exits 

Tactic: No direct ECL R&R Strategy tactics.

**Shortfalls in qualified staff** More than a third (37 per cent of) employers reported that they had at least one vacant position that they have been unable to fill. 45 per cent said they had to fill a vacant position with an individual with lower qualifications than they wanted. 32 per cent said they had to refuse children in the last 12 months due to not having enough staff while 26 per cent had to refuse due to not having staff with the right qualifications. These shortfalls in percentage terms represent a growing problem in terms of absolute numbers as the demand for professionals has been increasing. The most common qualifications required but not available were an ECE certificate (73 per cent), followed by an IT certificate (51 per cent) and SN (37 per cent). 

**Loss of staff** 47 per cent of employers in programs without an ECE requirement and 40 per cent of those with an ECE requirement reported experiencing staff net loss across all positions in the 12 months preceding the survey. Net loss increased in four of five health authority regions compared to 2019. Regression analysis found exit rates higher at centres with lower average workers' wages. 

See information about this KPI in Labour Mobility and Workforce Stability starting on page 63.

**KPI12** Ratio of positive to negative opinions (with respect to standards of care, viability, sustainability, and value) among those already working in the sector 

Tactic: No direct ECL R&R Strategy tactics.

**Ratio of positive-negative opinions of work in child care** In general, most members of the ECL workforce held positive opinions about their work in 2022. Positive views that they considered child care their chosen profession outnumbered negative ones by larger ratios than in 2019. Other positive perceptions (such as feeling comfortable telling new people that they worked in child care) were declining in frequency (albeit still in the majority). Indigenous centre-based ECL professionals tended to hold more positive perceptions than non-Indigenous professionals on most measures since 2019. However, the apparent trend for Indigenous professionals to hold increasingly more positive perceptions seemed to come to an end in 2022. 

See information about this KPI in Perceptions of Child Care starting on page 24.

**KPI13** 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 

Tactic: No direct ECL R&R Strategy tactics.

**Public opinions of work in child care** Value for child care professionals is high and has grown since 2019. The general public is unsure whether child care professionals in BC are well-trained, and more disagree than agree that they are compensated fairly. 

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See information about this KPI in Perceptions of Child Care starting on page 27 and Labour Mobility and Workforce Stability on page 63.

# CONSIDERATIONS, PROVISIONAL EARLY ANSWERS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS



# Considerations, Provisional Early Answers, and Recommendations

## Introduction

This report includes measures of progress towards achieving outcomes and goals sought by the ECL R&R Strategy. It is the 24<sup>th</sup> deliverable of the Sector-led Evaluation of the ECL R&R Strategy in BC.

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 conducted its own survey of the workforce and ECL employers in late 2022. This provided comparable data on a wide range of indicators from similar surveys since 2019. It also gave voice to the roughly 35,000 members of the ECL workforce. Respondents provided feedback on key influences on recruitment and retention. This report includes trends seen in the workforce since 2018, expanding on earlier analysis in several ways:

- 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 2022.

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

The evaluation will continue to cover developments in the sector's response to the ECL R&R Strategy through 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.

## Considerations

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 2022. Professionals 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 many examples of shortfalls and disconnects.

People who start out in the sector with low pay struggle to support themselves and are motivated to leave child care for higher-paying jobs. Established professionals who want to upskill are not guaranteed financial support.

The ECL R&R Strategy's subsidies are not transparent at the point of purchasing education. To increase the impact of student aid on enrollment, jurisdictions often seek to provide information to prospective students about the net price of education. Transparency means clarifying how much tuition students will pay out of pocket, net of bursaries and grants (Jonker & Hicks, 2016).

The message from those interviewed in the case studies and the KIIs is that policy must 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 reporting on the fourth year of the five-year evaluation project. While we are getting closer to being able to draw conclusions on timely completion of the medium-term outcomes, it is too early to make judgements against ten-year goals. However, it is possible to identify progress. There are clearly places where the needle has moved positively on the outcomes and goals below, set at the project outset in 2018, and others where change has not been achieved or been negative.

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?

It is early to answer a question that anticipates a decade of change but qualifications, and to a lesser extent skills, are improving.

**The number of professionals with ECL-related qualifications appears to be increasing annually, but the proportion of the workforce holding ECE or ECE specialty certification is declining.** There were skills shortfalls in the sense that professionals were not rating their own skills as highly in 2022 relative to 2019, but employers tended to say that in 2022 fewer of their staff were lacking key skills. It seems professionals have been taking action anyway by pursuing professional development in many of the affected areas. At the same time, some recent ECE graduates seemed to require additional support and mentoring, which could burden existing staff.

**Staffing problems are becoming increasingly acute and persistent.** 37 per cent of employers reported that they had at least one vacant position that they have been unable to fill. 32 per cent said they had to refuse children in the last 12 months due to not having enough staff. Alongside short-term instability in service, due to permanent and casual staff unavailability, providers could not meet staffing needs over the longer term either. Overall, 43 per cent of employers reported a net loss of staff in 2022, up from 34 per cent 2019. This increase occurred in four of five health authority regions.

**Take up of the ECE Workforce Development Bursary increased among those not yet ECE-certified in child care centres.** The number of student bursaries granted from Fall 2021 to Summer 2022 almost equalled its highest level seen in Fall 2018 to Summer 2019, while the number of workforce development bursaries granted Fall 2021 to Summer 2022 was the highest level yet seen for this 12-month period.

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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 2022. While the supply is increasing, it is insufficient to meet needs given exits are also increasing. The proportion expecting to leave ECL within a year has increased since 2019 for ECEAs (to reach 9 per cent) and ECEs (to 8 to 10 per cent). For RAs, the proportion doubled from 3 to 6 per cent.

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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 2022. This was the first year of the evaluation to see a year-on-year decline in the proportion of employers engaging in activities to promote career advancement (among those who operate at least one program not requiring ECE certification). About 58-69 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. Professionals spoke of the lack of incentives they saw to move from ECEA to ECE and from basic ECE to acquiring a specialty certificate.

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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 2022, more employers operating programs requiring ECE certification than in 2019 noted that their staff needed to improve on the skill of making the environment inclusive for children with special needs. This was an area where participation in professional development was down also since 2019, except among RAs, ECEAs and HCPs without ECE certification. Employees in 2022 rated their skills less well than in 2019, however.

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

There are conflicting trends, but mainly negative. 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". More in 2022 than 2019 considered child care as their chosen profession; but more agreed with statements related to their job being temporary and fewer in 2022 than 2019 signalled a willingness to recommend child care as a profession.

More among the workforce surveyed were expecting to leave ECL within one year in 2022 compared to 2019. Among non-manager/supervisors at child care centres, the increase was small from 3 to 4 per cent. Plans to leave rose from 1 to 13 per cent among non-manager/supervisors at before and after school and recreational care programs.

As the demand for professionals grows, these planned departures will leave an even larger shortfall. And the proportion of employers who report net loss of staff annually – full-time and part-time – was up from 34 per cent in 2019 to 43 per cent in 2022.

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

Public confidence in the ECL profession remains high in 2022, with increases in the proportion of adults who believe ECL professionals in BC are well-trained compared to 2019.

At the same time, there remained gaps in public understanding of how well-trained and fairly compensated ECL professionals are. ECL professionals themselves perceived public support as declining, however. Only 44 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “Child care is valued by the public” in 2022, down from 51 per cent in 2019.

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

There are conflicting trends. Wage enhancement has been working in two ways.

- Between 2018 and 2021, wages had been growing, even after adjusting for inflation. The wage differential enjoyed by ECEs over ECEAs and RAs grew a little. Differentials add to the incentive to acquire advanced credentials and seek promotion.
- After adjusting for inflation, 2022 wages without the enhancement dropped from 2021 and are now at similar levels than in 2019. However, taking into account the wage enhancement, average wages have increased across the sector since 2019.
- The positive effect of wage enhancement payments on incomes from March 2022 (due to a doubling from \$2 to \$4 per hour, introduced in September 2021) has been muted by rising prices: inflation-adjusted wages (before receipt of the enhancement) dropped from 2021 to 2022.
- However, the symbolic value of wage enhancement remains high. The enhancement sent a powerful signal to ECL professionals: government has recognized the problem of their remuneration. It values their work.

There are mixed signals with respect to improved human resources strategies as well. Employers are much more likely to report offering at least some benefits in 2022 compared to 2019. Given new legal requirements, many more employers are now offering paid sick days. But the proportions offering pensions (23-27 per cent) and extended health care (59-65 per cent) have barely budged since 2019. More non-manager/supervisor centre-based ECL professionals reported access to benefits in 2022 compared to 2019.

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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 benefits plus supports for career pathways such as promoting access to further education and professional development.

They do appear to have the effect of increasing workforce engagement and persistence for those they reach. 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, finding work stimulating and challenging, and participating in professional development. Yet staff exits and anticipated departures from the ECL workforce were at their highest levels in 2022.

Some optimism arises from increasing training of ECEs. Those still in the workforce in late 2022 report roughly similar to slightly longer durations of working in ECL as in 2019 while the age distribution is now slightly younger. However, this could again be due to shifts in the composition of the workforce survey's respondents in 2022 compared to 2019.

## Recommendations

This report's analysis of administrative data, cross-sectional surveys and interviews has reconfirmed the challenging situation of recruitment and retention in BC's ECL sector. Evidence coming from the evaluation is increasingly robust. We have added data from a fourth year out of the total of five currently planned. The same critical workforce development situation that originally prompted the ECL R&R Strategy persists into 2022 and is arguably worsening.

Most of the recommendations related to successful tactics are very similar to those in 2021. Despite four years of implementation of the ECL R&R Strategy's tactics, there are some areas where workforce development has not budged. New approaches are required. But recommendations on how to innovate remain cautious, because there is limited evidence on what actually works to improve recruitment and retention. Designers of innovations also need to be wary of unhelpful interactions between policies that could exacerbate some problems. Some approaches may merely shift the locus of who is affected.

Transforming the experiences and perceptions of an entire workforce sector sufficiently to change outcomes takes time. It remains too early to pass judgement on the overall effectiveness of the ECL R&R Strategy. What is clear is that the ECL R&R Strategy and the kinds of tactics included within it are making a difference. The situation would be worse without them, but they have been insufficient to move the needle in the right direction on the sought goals and outcomes within four years. Thus, the importance of these kinds of policy responses has grown.

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 BC. New and better coordinated tactics need to be tested and evaluated, with those found successful added to the toolkit.

**Recommendation 1: Renew efforts to attract and retain potential workers from diverse and new sources to the sector (updated from 2021)**

The government needs to renew its efforts to develop ECL R&R Strategy tactics that support employers' urgent needs to recruit, retain and develop ECL professionals.

**Sector stakeholders can work together to raise the profile of ECL work by publicizing improvements in working conditions and thereby increase the appeal of the profession to new and existing members of the workforce.**

There seems to be a pool of older adults and youth interested in working in ECL if the working conditions can be improved. Employers could look to more diverse sources to attract new staff into the profession. At the same time, sector stakeholders may need to expend **more effort to motivate existing ECL professionals to stay in the field (or return in the cases of ECEs who have left child care).**

**Recommendation 2: Continue efforts to develop and implement a wage grid (unchanged from 2021)**

**Carefully designed and targeted further wage enhancement** has sent important symbolic messages and has improved incomes while incentivizing credential recognition. Carefully constructed further increases are likely to generate yet more incremental improvements, while worries about the sustainability of this approach need to be quelled.

The Government of British Columbia announced in its 2022 budget that, in partnership with the Government of Canada, the province would develop a professional

wage grid for ECEs. 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. In advance of its release, plausibly some professionals could be motivated to remain working in the sector simply through Government publicizing its timeline for the implementation of its wage grid.

**Recommendation 3:** Recruitment and retention is affected by the availability of benefits. Intervention is needed to improve compensation packages (updated from 2021)

**Intervention from government and employers may help where ECL professionals' compensation packages are falling short.** This includes pensions, extended health care and other benefits such as paid preparation and professional development time.

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.

**Recommendation 4:** Raise the profile and sustainability of existing professionals obtaining ECE credentials as well as the incentive to upskill. (updated from 2021)

**Employers and government may need to consider how the wage structures they promote affect incentives for existing workforce members to upskill,** including acquiring additional credentials in areas of shortfall, such as transitioning from ECEA to ECE, so a well-designed and implemented “wage grid” may help in this regard.

**Agencies dispensing bursaries can apply lessons learned from recent behavioural innovations in student financial aid** to increase accessibility and

availability of bursaries. Transparent eligibility rules, simplified and streamlined application processes, and ongoing disbursement patterns can all help increase take up by those most in need. Upfront payment of financial assistance (or direct to the education provider) could be built in more often. This would seed fund employers, employees, and even education providers to incentivize upskilling.

More consistency in government provision of financial support could help ECL professionals see ECE tuition, education programs and related costs as affordable on an ongoing basis, while new regulation could protect time off for study.

**Recommendation 5:** Implement a program that incentivizes specialty certifications (unchanged from 2021)

**Incentivizing acquisition of special needs and infant and toddler certification** may be overdue given the shortfall in these specializations. One mechanism is government funding bursaries or wage enhancements that selectively reimburse or reward these certifications at a higher level.

**Recommendation 6:** Systematize professional development incentives and systemic changes to ensure needed training is prioritized (updated from 2021)

**Government promotion of a range of training incentives and nudges** could be beneficial, especially if they target the types of programs and high-priority professional development topics where evidence suggests there is relatively low take up among professionals. These topics include demonstrating cultural sensitivity and creating inclusive environments for children with special needs.

**Recommendation 7:** Consider financial and regulatory instruments, competency frameworks and a system of digital badges/ micro-credentials to help improve education program outcomes (new in 2022)

The education system comprises a wide range of education providers teaching a wide range of ECL-related skills which are then assessed in different ways before certifications are granted. It becomes difficult for students and employers to know what skills graduates are expected to have acquired. There is evidence key skills are being overlooked. **Government could adopt a range of “carrot” and “stick” tools to encourage more consistency in ECE credentials in terms of program entrance requirements, required learning outcomes and assessments** including: more transparent recognition of each skill acquired through micro-credentialing; willingness to adjust institutional eligibility for funding such as eligibility for student aid and bursaries; and enforcement of education quality assurance.

**Recommendation 8:** Consider new means to assess skills and competencies based on prior learning and experience (new in 2022)

Professionals who have worked in BC ECL for an extended period or who acquired their ECE credentials outside Canada can be discouraged from pursuing ECE certification. They may anticipate high costs in terms of fees or time required for re-training to become certified ECEs. Possibly, the **ECE Registry’s recognition procedures could be accelerated**. Research funders could support the evaluation of **pilots of different approaches that might encourage professionals to take up (additional) certification**, with one option including new means for determining existing competencies.

**Recommendation 9:** Adopt a systems-approach to improve management of and support decision-making for BC’s child care sector (updated from 2021)

Across all stakeholders, but most especially Government, a more systemic approach is required to support decision making and manage BC’s child care “system”. The ECL R&R Strategy is just one strategy within ChildCareBC but it is being implemented by multiple Ministries.

Currently, it is difficult for the sector to take stock of the Strategy’s scope, intent, component tactics and their successes and challenges, let alone to meaningfully provide input on future direction.

ECL professionals report being unaware of ECL R&R Strategy tactics, which is likely to influence negatively their take up and impact. This project has experienced a notable decline in the capacity and speed with which administrative data can be obtained. Health authorities are too stretched to fulfil reporting duties systematically (or in synch with one another). Information and data are disparately available and absent in several areas.

**The province could fund a “one stop shop” dashboard to support access to key information on tactics and indicators of progress** (such as counts of licensing variances). This could help generate support for the ECL R&R Strategy given thousands of eligible workplaces and tens of thousands of members of the workforce to reach.

While temporarily this project has been providing one avenue for the voices of professionals to feed back into policy and program design, it is due to end in early summer 2024. **A systems approach will need to build in a more permanent means for feedback and input from the workforce to decision makers.**

## References

Anderson, L., Sing, M., and Haber, R. (2020). Next Step: A Competitive, Publicly Funded Provincial Wage Grid is the Solution to BC's ECE Shortage. Published by Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC and ECEBC. Accessed online at:

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Jonker, L. & Hicks, M. (2016). Approaches to net tuition: an environmental scan. Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.

## Glossary of terms

### Career-Related

| Term  | Definition  |
|---|---|
| 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.                              |
| 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.   |
| Credentials                                 | Academic degrees, licenses or certificates awarded to individuals who successfully complete state or national requirements to enter specialized roles in the ECL workforce.   |
| 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.   |
| 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. |
| Retention (Staff)                           | Refers to the ability of programs to retain their employees over time.  |

Source: Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections* [Child Care and Early Education Glossary](#)

## Types of Child Care Programs

| Term  | Definition   | Source  |
|---|--|---|
| 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<br><a href="#">Understand the Different Types of Child Care in B.C.</a>   |
| 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 <i>Research Connections</i> <a href="#">Child Care and Early Education Glossary</a>  |
| 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.                 | Child Care & Early Education <i>Research Connections</i> <a href="#">Child Care and Early Education Glossary</a> ; BC Government <a href="#">Understand the Different Types of Child Care in B.C.</a> (see family child care) |
| 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<br><a href="#">Understand the Different Types of Child Care in B.C.</a>   |
| 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 <i>Research Connections</i> <a href="#">Child Care and Early Education Glossary</a>  |
| 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<br><a href="#">Understand the Different Types of Child Care in B.C.</a>   |

| Term                                       | Definition   | Source  |
|--|--|---|
| 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<br><a href="#">Understand the Different Types of Child Care in B.C.</a>   |
| Occasional Child Care                      | A program that provides care on an occasional or short-term basis.   | <a href="#">BC Child Care Licensing Regulation</a>  |
| 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 <i>Research Connections</i> <a href="#">Child Care and Early Education Glossary</a> ; <a href="#">BC Child Care Licensing Regulation</a> |
| 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<br><a href="#">Understand the Different Types of Child Care in B.C.</a>   |
| 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 <i>Research Connections</i> <a href="#">Child Care and Early Education Glossary</a>  |

Note: Links were updated in 2022 to correct broken links in previous reports; however, definitions are unchanged.

## Types of Providers

| Term                                      | Definition  | Source   |
|---|---|--|
| Auspice                                   | Auspice refers to the ownership of the ECL business (e.g., non-profit, public, etc.).   | Finding Quality Child Care <a href="#">Parent Guide</a>  |
| 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   |
| 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 <a href="#">Understand the Different Types of Child Care in B.C.</a>                               |
| 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 <i>Research Connections</i> <a href="#">Child Care and Early Education Glossary</a> |
| 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 MECC (formerly 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.  | <a href="#">University of BC Early Childhood Education Program</a>   |
| 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). | <a href="#">University of BC Early Childhood Education Program</a>   |
| 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   |

| Term              | Definition   | Source   |
|-------------------|--|--|
| 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. | <a href="#">BC Government Child Care Licensing Regulation Fact Sheet</a> |
| 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.  | <a href="#">Interior Health Hiring a Manager in a Licensed Facility</a>  |
| 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   |
| 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.  | <a href="#">BC Government Child Care Licensing Regulation Fact Sheet</a> |

Note: Links were updated in 2022 to correct broken links in previous reports; however, definitions are unchanged.

## Type of ECE certification

| Term                    | Definition   |
|-------------------------|--|
| 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. |
| ECE (5 year)            | Certification for early childhood educator with proof of graduation from a basic ECE program recognized in BC and 500 hours of work experience under the supervision of a Canadian-certified ECE.  |
| 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 BC with Infant and Toddler specific courses.  |
| 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 BC with Special Needs specific courses.   |

Source: BC Government Website – Education/training > [Become an Early Childhood Educator](#)

## Type of position

| Term                           | Definition  |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 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.                                     |
| 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.                           |
| 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. |
| Administrative – Director      | Refers to a person who has administrative duties only.  |

Source: Child care workforce and employer cross-sectional survey definitions.

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