



Child Care Connections  
Attracting and Keeping Qualified Staff in Child Care Project

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## **Attracting and Keeping Qualified Early Childhood Care Centre Staff**

*Child Care Connection's Retention and Recruitment of Qualified Early Childhood Care Staff in  
Early Childhood Care Centres In Nova Scotia Project,  
funded by Human Resources Development Canada*

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## Chapter 1: The Situation

In conversations with Nova Scotia early childhood care centre administrators regarding the challenges they are facing, the issue of recruitment and retention of staff is identified as a primary source of concern. The *You Bet I Care! Study*<sup>1</sup> reports the following responses from Nova Scotia directors regarding major problems related to staff:

- Finding qualified substitute early childhood care teachers (57.6%)
- Finding qualified permanent teaching staff (51%)
- Providing financial assistance or time off for staff to participate in professional development (43.6%)
- Affording qualified permanent teaching staff (41.9%)
- Finding qualified staff (24.3%), and
- Keeping qualified teaching staff (15.1%)<sup>2</sup>

There is a multitude of factors that have an impact on the shortage of qualified early childhood care staff. Some factors that have been identified are found within early childhood care.

*“Centres are facing major problems in the crucial areas of financial viability, maintaining enrollments and attracting and retaining qualified staff. At a time when there has been an explosion of knowledge emphasizing the importance of children’s experiences in the first few years of life, and an increase in the use of child care services, the situation in Canada’s child care centres is far from optimal for the provision of quality care.”<sup>3</sup>*

Other factors found within child care are:

- low wages ~ (\$17,391 for early childhood care teachers and \$21,141 for early childhood care administrators<sup>4</sup>);
- poor working conditions ~ (54% paid prep time, 45% compensation for overtime, and 51% written job description<sup>5</sup>); and
- poor benefits ~ (74% paid sick days; 38% a yearly wage increase; and 25% retirement or pension plan).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Lero, D., Doherty, G., LaGrange, A., Goelman, H., and Tougas, J. *You Bet I Care! The most pressing issues facing child care centres*, paper posted on Child & Family Canada Web Site [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), Ottawa: CCCF, 1999.

<sup>2</sup>Lero, D., Doherty, G., LaGrange, A., Goelman, H., and Tougas, J. *You Bet I Care! The most pressing issues facing child care centres*, paper posted on Child & Family Canada Web Site [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), Ottawa: CCCF, 1999.

<sup>3</sup>Lero, D., Doherty, G., LaGrange, A., Goelman, H., and Tougas, J. *You Bet I Care! The most pressing issues facing child care centres*, paper posted on Child & Family Canada Web Site [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), Ottawa: CCCF, 1999.

<sup>4</sup>Doherty, G., Lero, D., Goelman, H., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! Working Conditions, Wage and Benefits*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

<sup>5</sup>Doherty, G., Lero, D., Goelman, H., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! Working Conditions, Wage and Benefits*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

<sup>6</sup>Doherty, G., Lero, D., Goelman, H., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! Working Conditions, Wage and Benefits*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

*"Staff turnover is a major problem and replacing staff is exacerbated by the substantial proportion of people with ECCE training who leave the field for higher paying jobs in other lines of work"*<sup>7</sup>

The *You Bet I Care! Study*<sup>8</sup> reports that the turnover rate for teaching staff in Nova Scotia early childhood care centres is 22.3%. Forty-one point nine percent (41.9%) of these early childhood practitioners quit voluntarily. Reasons for leaving on a national basis were accepted another job (65.5%); maternity or parental leave (41.1%); and dissatisfied with pay (42.2 %). Other reasons were a family move, the job was too stressful, returning to school and ill health.<sup>9</sup>

Factors that are found outside of the early childhood care sector are indicated in *Our Child Care Workforce: From Remuneration to Recognition*<sup>10</sup>

*"... the prevailing approach to child care in North America is that it is a private responsibility of families, and, more specifically, the woman's responsibility within the family . Add to this the inconsistency of public policy, and meager public funding, and it becomes clearer why our society demonstrates so little respect for child care providers as working in a distinct occupation requiring substantial child development knowledge and practical skills; and why the child care force is so poorly paid."*<sup>11</sup>

And

*"But the greatest barrier to equitable compensation is the lack of a coordinated system of public funding, which places the burden of paying for child care on individual families"*<sup>12</sup>

*The Retention and Recruitment Project* is a project of Child Care Connections with funding partner, Canada Employment, with the purpose being to look at the current situation regarding attracting and keeping qualified early childhood care centre staff. The examination of the situation in Nova Scotia was conducted through a literature review; factors identification forum; development of work descriptions for teacher and director using the Federal Universal Classification Standard as a guide; recommendations development; and action plan. The literature review was of some of the broad sociological influences and contributors to the current recruitment and retention problem now facing the early childhood care sector in general, and specifically, in Nova Scotia. The factors identification forum brought together a variety of early childhood care practitioners and stakeholders to identify the factors which have an impact on retention and recruitment of qualified early childhood care staff in early childhood care centres. The Universal Classification Standard was used in developing work descriptions for teacher and administrator positions, utilizing the expertise of early childhood care teachers and administrators. The Steering Committee of the project took the information gathered and drafted recommendations. (This report is the result of these actions.) A meeting of the early childhood care organizations will take place to develop a plan to implement the recommendations in both the short and long term.

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7. Lero, D., Doherty, G., LaGrange, A., Goelman, H., and Tougas, J. *You Bet I Care! The most pressing issues facing child care centres*, paper posted on Child & Family Canada Web Site, Ottawa: CCCF, 1999.

8. Doherty, G., Lero, D., LaGrange, A., Goelman, H., and Tougas, J. *You Bet I Care! Teaching Staff turnover, reasons for leaving, and staff vacancy rates*, paper posted on Child & Family Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca) Ottawa: CCCF, 1999.

9. Doherty, G., Lero, D., LaGrange, A., Goelman, H., and Tougas, J. *You Bet I Care! Issues*, paper posted on Child & Family Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca) Ottawa: CCCF, 1999.

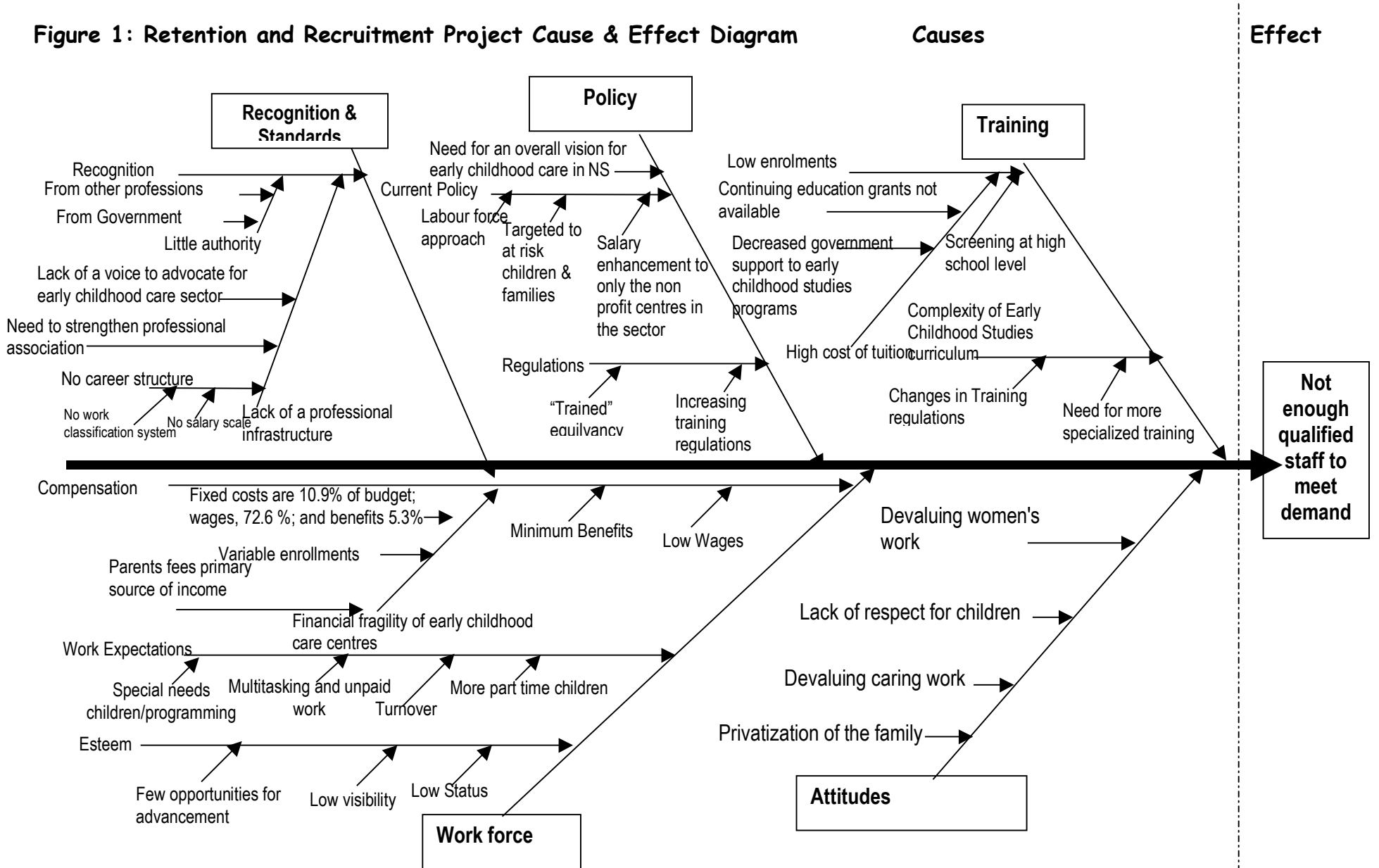
10. Beach, Jane, Child Care Sector Study Steering Committee. (1998) *Executive Summary: Our Child Care Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration: More than a Labour of Love*, Ottawa: Child Care Human Resources Steering Committee.

11. Beach, Jane, Child Care Sector Study Steering Committee. (1998) *Executive Summary: Our Child Care Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration: More than a Labour of Love*, Ottawa: Child Care Human Resources Steering Committee, p.8.

12. Beach, Jane, Child Care Sector Study Steering Committee. (1998) *Executive Summary: Our Child Care Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration: More than a Labour of Love*, Ottawa: Child Care Human Resources Steering Committee, p.5.

The challenge of attracting and keeping qualified early childhood care staff is a complex issue, caused by a multitude of factors. The *Retention and Recruitment Project* identified five broad areas of causes for the lack of qualified early childhood care staff to meet the current demand in Nova Scotia. These areas are training, policy, practice, work force, and attitudes. These areas interact with each other, affecting the effectiveness of any interventions in one area and being affected by an intervention in another area. Each of the cause areas is discussed, followed by recommendations to address the cause area. The discussion follows the factors as they are laid out in Figure 1: Retention and Recruitment Cause and Effect Diagram. The diagram gives an overview of the five cause areas and the factors within each area that contribute to the effect of “not enough qualified staff to meet the demand”. It is a visual representation of a complex problem demonstrating the interplay amongst the many causes affecting the issue of retention and recruitment in early childhood care in Nova Scotia.

**Figure 1: Retention and Recruitment Project Cause & Effect Diagram**



## **Chapter 2: Factors which have an impact on Attracting and Keeping Qualified Early Childhood Care Staff**

Actions taken in the past to address the problems associated with attracting and keeping qualified early childhood care staff have focused on one cause area without considering the other cause areas and how the action will effect them. Individuals and groups would see one cause as the key culprit and if that cause was addressed then the problems associated with it would also be addressed. For example, a salary enhancement grant to non-profit centres (policy cause) was used to address the compensation problem (work force cause). Without addressing the policy cause, the compensation solution created further inequities in the early childhood care sector in both private and nonprofit early childhood care centres. The action didn't address the work force issues in private centres, almost half of the early childhood care sector in Nova Scotia. It is important that when prioritizing actions that all causes be considered as contributing to the problem and consideration given to how an action will effect each of the causes. In doing so, the actions will be informed actions and effects more predictable.

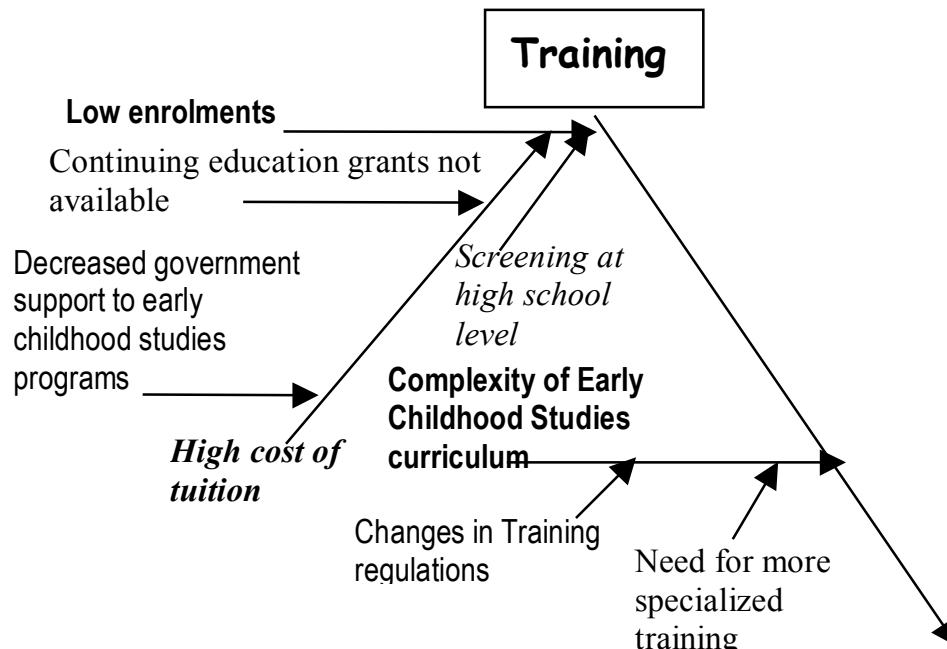
In considering the following recommendations, it is important that **any** actions taken do not jeopardize the existing early childhood care system that is in place. Spreading resources thinner will not address the current staff shortage situation and will cause a further deterioration of an already fragile system.

### ***Recommendation:***

- **Any action taken on these recommendations must enhance the existing early childhood care services system. Actions must not jeopardize those services already in place.**

## Section 2.1: Training as a cause of lack of qualified staff

Post Secondary Early Childhood Studies programs continually renew the pool of qualified early childhood care practitioners and provide continuing education experiences for them. Accessibility, affordability and understanding of the expectations for students in childhood studies programs as well as the perceived status (or lack of status) of the occupation affect the numbers of individuals who enter an early childhood studies program. Cost of and access to training, coupled with decreased government support of training institutions and the discontinuation of training grants from the Department of Community Services affects those who want to enter the early childhood care field and/or further their skill and knowledge in the field.



### Low enrollments

#### *High cost of tuition:*

The cost of obtaining early childhood studies credentials has increased beyond the means of many potential students, reducing the overall number of students entering training programs. Tuition has increased in early childhood studies programs with decreasing government support to training both at the federal and provincial level.

*"...in the past few years post secondary institutions offering ECCE training have experienced overall cuts in program financing and are expecting further cuts. This has resulted in increased student fees, a factor which reduces accessibility to training."<sup>13</sup>....*

<sup>13</sup> . Bertrand, J and Beach, J., Cleveland, G. "Our Child Care Workforce, From Recognition to Remuneration, More than a Labour of Love.", as reported in Ottawa: CCHRT Steering Committee, 1998 as reported in Goelman, H., Lero, D., Doherty, G., LaGrange, A., and Tougas, J. *You Bet I Care! Centre Teaching Staff Education and professional development*, paper posted on Child & Family Canada Web Site [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), Ottawa: CCCF, 1999.

*Continuing education grants no longer available:*

*“Government investment in and expansion of ECCE education opportunities are both essential to ensure that child care centres will have a pool of professional and well trained individuals to work with children during the most important years of their lives.”<sup>14</sup>*

Continuing education training grants from the Department of Community Services are no longer available to early childhood care practitioners who work in early childhood care centres.

*Screening at the High School Level:*

High schools are a primary source of students entering Early Childhood Studies programs. Recruitment at the high school level requires accurate and attractive information for both the student and the counselor regarding the demands and complexity of training and the positive aspects of a career in early childhood care. It has become apparent that the low status and invisibility of early childhood care as an organized profession has had, and continues to have, a negative impact on training. Students and counselors are affected by attitudes toward the respect of children, women’s work and caring work (attitude causes) and they are affected by the visibility, status and wages (work force causes) associated with the early childhood care sector.

### **Complexity of the Early Childhood Studies Curriculum:**

*Training regulations increased:*

Training institutions in this province have revised their course requirements to meet the proposed training standards of the Department of Community Services. The result has been an increased course load for students and increased costs to the programs delivering the program.

*Need for specialized training:*

There is an increased demand for specialized training in special needs skill areas such as language, physical disabilities and behavioural problems<sup>15</sup>; in infant care; supervision of student field placements<sup>16</sup>; and emerging program models.

“Most ECCE training programs are intended to ensure at least a minimum level of competency for entry-level centre staff. The nature of child care work, however, demands that professionals develop skills and knowledge beyond those taught in introductory programs. Many ECCE workers have additional supervisory and/or teaching responsibilities for which additional and more specific training is required.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> . Goelman, H., Lero, D., Doherty, G., LaGrange, A., and Tougas, J. *You Bet I Care! Centre Teaching Staff Education and professional development*, paper posted on Child & Family Canada Web Site [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), Ottawa: CCCF, 1999.

<sup>15</sup> . In the *You Bet I Care ! study*, Seventy (per cent 70%) of centres included at least one child with special needs and 12.2% included five or more children with special needs. Goelman, H., Lero, D., Doherty, G., LaGrange, A., and Tougas, J. *You Bet I Care! Centre Teaching Staff Education and Professional Development*, paper posted on Child & Family Canada Web Site [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), Ottawa: CCCF, 1999.

<sup>16</sup> . In the *You Bet I Care ! study*, 46.6% of all respondents reported responsibility for early childhood studies students. Goelman, H., Lero, D., Doherty, G., LaGrange, A., and Tougas, J. *You Bet I Care! Centre Teaching Staff Education and professional development*, paper posted on Child & Family Canada Web Site [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), Ottawa: CCCF, 1999.

<sup>17</sup> . Goelman, H., Lero, D., Doherty, G., LaGrange, A., and Tougas, J. *You Bet I Care! Centre Teaching Staff Education and professional development*, paper posted on Child & Family Canada Web Site [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), Ottawa: CCCF, 1999.

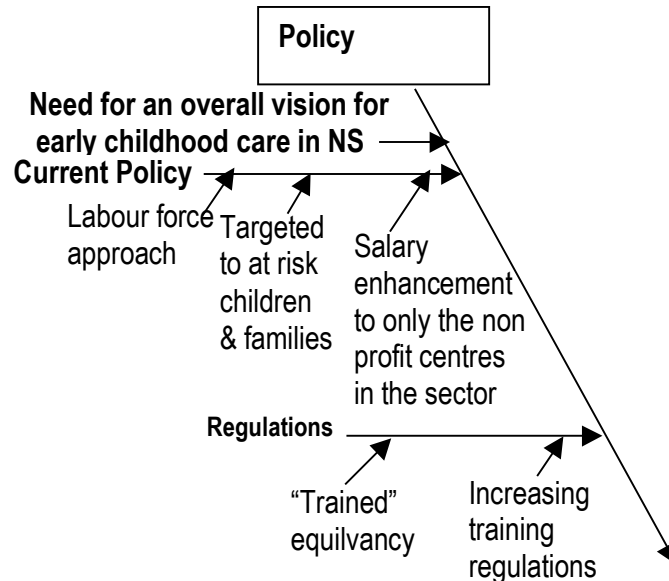
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**Recommendations:**

- Support existing community based models for training and investigate new initiatives that can provide affordable and accessible continuing education to early childhood care practitioners and to upgrade the equivalency practitioners to the certificate or diploma level in Early Childhood Studies . (Policy causes: Regulations: “Trained Equivalency”) to a certificate or diploma.
- Establish a relationship with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union to inform guidance counselors regarding the curriculum of post secondary Early Childhood Studies programs , the educational requirements for early childhood care practitioners, and the positive aspects of a career in early childhood care. Possible actions include writing articles for the NSTU newsletter, developing presentations for the guidance counselor's professional development day, and producing a brochure for use with their students.
- Implement the proposed training guidelines developed by Early Childhood Development Services for post secondary early childhood studies programs.

## Section 2.2: Policy as a cause of a lack of qualified staff

Government policies contribute to the effect of not enough qualified staff to meet demand in early childhood care in Nova Scotia. Currently, the contributing factors are:

- lack of an overall vision for early childhood care in Nova Scotia;
- policies that divide the early childhood care sector, policies geared only to at risk and unemployed families; and
- regulations that increase expectations and at the same time minimize the definition of training.



### Need for an overall vision for early childhood care in Nova Scotia:

Visibility of early childhood care needs to be enhanced and encouraged through establishing a clear vision for early childhood care in Nova Scotia emphasizing its social, health, educational and caring impact in our communities. This vision will provide a foundation for developing policies that can be supported, funded and enforced in a comprehensive and enriching manner. The lack of this foundation finds current policy fragmented and mirroring apathetic societal attitudes. In order for the issues of recruitment and retention to be satisfactorily addressed, policies must reflect the important nature of the work and the demands of the profession.

*"The future of the child care workforce depends in large measure on public policy and decisions about future investments in child care. Groups and individuals in the child care sector by themselves cannot possibly address the complex issues facing the sector. They urgently need the commitment of public policy to enhance quality child care."*<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>. Bertrand, J and Beach, J. , Cleveland, G. *Our Child Care Workforce, From Recognition to Remuneration, More than a Labour of Love.*, Ottawa: CCHRT Steering Committee, 1998, p.10.

"A commitment to affordable, accessible quality care and the value of a well paid competent and stable workforce." <sup>19</sup>

The *Child Care Workforce* report urges governments to...

"Implement an integrated policy framework- with goals, targets, timetables and follow-up - and provide sufficient funding for child care and related early childhood services." <sup>20</sup>

The Premier's *Voluntary Planning Fiscal Management Task Force* was struck in October 1999 to advise the Premier and the new government on "ways to deal with what it considered to be an immediate financial crisis and on structures and procedures to improve its fiscal management in the future" <sup>21</sup>. The *Final Report of Voluntary Planning's Fiscal Management Task Force*, was released in January 2000. Throughout their report, the Task Force recommends that this province adopt life-long learning as a fundamental and integral part of its vision. The report reads,

"When the Task Force began its work, we certainly didn't expect our report on fiscal management would end with a focus on the issue of Lifelong Learning. But the more we heard and the more we investigated, the clearer it became that education in its broadest sense is a critical lever in achieving our Vision". <sup>22</sup>

Life long learning starts at birth, continues through the preschool years and throughout a citizen's lifetime. Such understanding and commitment will assist this province in developing a Vision that includes both children and early childhood care practitioners. Such a vision will provide the underpinnings for policies that could bring the desired visibility to the profession, and effect the retention and recruitment of qualified staff.

The lack of a clear, overall vision for childcare in Nova Scotia presents a barrier to early childhood care being recognized and valued. For example, a recent publication, *The Early Years: A Strategic Policy Framework* <sup>23</sup> of a working group of the Children and Youth Action Committee completely overlooks the critical and strategic role of child care in early years services. The Children and Youth Action Committee (CAYAC) is an interdepartmental committee of the Nova Scotia Government whose members are Executive Directors or Managers from the Departments of Health, Education, Justice, Community Services and the Youth Secretariat. All of these departments provide services to children from birth to age 18 and one of the goals of the committee is to ensure coordinated policy development. Without a clear vision, the recommendations in CAYAC's *The Early Years: A Strategic Policy Framework* are fragmented, mentioning child care only in the context of subsidization of parent's fees, regulation, and work place child care, rather than as an integral and integrated part of overall policy.

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<sup>19</sup>. Bertrand, J and Beach, J., Cleveland, G. *Our Child Care Workforce, From Recognition to Remuneration, More than a Labour of Love.*, Ottawa: CCHRT Steering Committee, 1998, p.10.

<sup>20</sup>. Bertrand, J and Beach, J., Cleveland, G. *Our Child Care Workforce, From Recognition to Remuneration, More than a Labour of Love.*, Ottawa: CCHRT Steering Committee, 1998, p.10.

<sup>21</sup>. Premier's Voluntary Fiscal Management Task Force. *Final Report of Voluntary Planning's Fiscal Management Task Force*, Halifax: Nova Scotia Government, 2000, p.3.

<sup>22</sup>. Premier's Voluntary Fiscal Management Task Force. *Final Report of Voluntary Planning's Fiscal Management Task Force*, Halifax: Nova Scotia Government, 2000, p.12.

<sup>23</sup> "The Early Years: A Strategic Policy Framework." Early Years Group: Canada/ Nova Scotia Labour Market Development Agreement, May 2000.

### **Current Policy:**

It appears that current policy regarding early childhood care does little to demonstrate recognition and respect for the contribution early childhood care makes to Nova Scotia or for its potential in addressing Early Years initiatives. Licensed early childhood care centres provide services to approximately 12,000 preschool aged Nova Scotian children and their families. Commitment to the 0-5 years in policy, focuses only on children in at risk families. Current policy, by focusing on targeted at risk populations and getting social assistance recipients off of welfare does not address the necessity to optimize the growth and development of all children in every Nova Scotian family. This investment is crucial to the well being of our province. This investment is key to addressing the retention and recruitment of qualified early childhood care staff.

### *Labour force approach, and policy targeted to at risk children and families:*

In this year's provincial budget (2000-2001) substantially increased funding and infrastructure support was given to the special needs sector (+\$2.6 million) while the early childhood care sector was recognized with additional subsidized seats (targeted population) amounting to \$500,000. This action does not recognize or support the early childhood care sector in proportion to the numbers of children and families served. The message that is conveyed is that the early childhood care sector is not a priority in policy. At the policy level, there is increased discussion around the early years (five and under) as important to our country's future. Research into brain development<sup>24</sup> and proponents such as Dr. Fraser Mustard and Dr. Paul Steinhauser have affected how governments, both federal and provincial have viewed investment in the early years. While it is obvious that it is in the best interests of the province that investment be in all children in Nova Scotia, and that the early childhood care centres system is already in place, the sector is not recognized as a key player. They are not recognized as having authority in knowing how to deliver the Early Years investment effectively and to the broadest range of recipients. The early childhood sector is consulted when a vehicle is needed to deliver an Early Years intervention to an "at risk" child whose parents may be an unemployed citizen.

### *Salary Enhancement Grants going to non profit society centres only:*

Historically, support and funding early childhood care services has been influenced by eligible cost shared dollars with the federal government. This was evident in the Canada Assistance Plan, the first funding program that was specific to licensed early childhood care centres incorporated as a non profit society. This program took a welfare approach, providing assistance only to families with low incomes and/or some incapacity to care for their children. The Canada Assistance Plan is dissolved, replaced by the CHST and National Child Benefit. Nova Scotia Policy continues to fund only the early childhood care centres incorporated as a non profit society.<sup>25</sup> These centres are the only centres in the early childhood care sector in Nova Scotia that are eligible to receive salary enhancement grants for staff. The result has been much movement of staff from private centres to non-profit centres since wages and benefits are higher and more stable. Directors of privately incorporated centres report that they are a training ground for the staff

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<sup>24</sup> Mustard, J.F. and M. McCain. *Reversing the Real Brain Drain: Early Years Study*, Ontario Children's Secretariate: Toronto, 1999.

<sup>25</sup> The recent budget (2000-01) provided for the funding of 100 subsidies that will not be attached to a particular centre and can move with the child, increasing parental choice. Parents will be able to choose privately incorporated early childhood care centres.

for non-profit centres. <sup>26</sup> The fault is in the policy, not in the early childhood care sector nor the centres which do/do not receive the salary enhancement grants. To be effective, salary enhancement grants have to address low wages and benefits in the whole early childhood care system. Policy has segmented the sector, and been ineffectual in addressing the retention and recruitment issues for early childhood care practitioners in Nova Scotia through Salary Enhancement Grants.

### **Regulations:**

*Increased regulations for early childhood studies training programs:*

The increased training regulations have been discussed in the training cause section.

*“Trained” Equivalency:*

The current Day Care Act and Regulations regarding training requirements came into effect in 1984. At that time, a window of five years was given for early childhood care practitioners to meet a new regulation stating that two-thirds of staff in early childhood care centres had to have a certificate or diploma in early childhood studies. A grandparent clause was included in the regulations which defined what combination of credit and non credit education credentials and experience would qualify as equivalent to trained in order to meet the training regulation<sup>27</sup>. There was no expiry put on that clause, and sixteen years later, it still is in the regulations. The clause has effected the value of early childhood care practice, lowered the status of the practice and decreased the expectations for continuing education for untrained staff in centres.

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### **Recommendations:**

- Consult and collaborate with all stakeholders in developing a vision for early childhood care in Nova Scotia. This consultation should cross all government departments, child care and related organizations, parents, employers, training institutions, etc.
- Examine the impact of "trained" equivalency on practice. Determine the number of practitioners whose training falls under the equivalency provisions. Make recommendations on ways to increase the accessibility and affordability of continuing education to enable them to obtain their certificate/diploma.
- Develop a Prior Learning Assessment tool in consultation with early childhood studies programs and the early childhood care sector to use in assessing equivalent training. The tool should be useful in determining equivalent training requirements across programs and outside of Nova Scotia.
- Conduct research around the effectiveness of Salary Enhancement Grants including the cost/benefits of expansion to staff in all early childhood care centres.
- Develop a relationship with the Children and Youth Action Committee of the Nova Scotia government to inform and educate government departments regarding the expertise and potential of the early childhood care sector in developing early years initiatives.

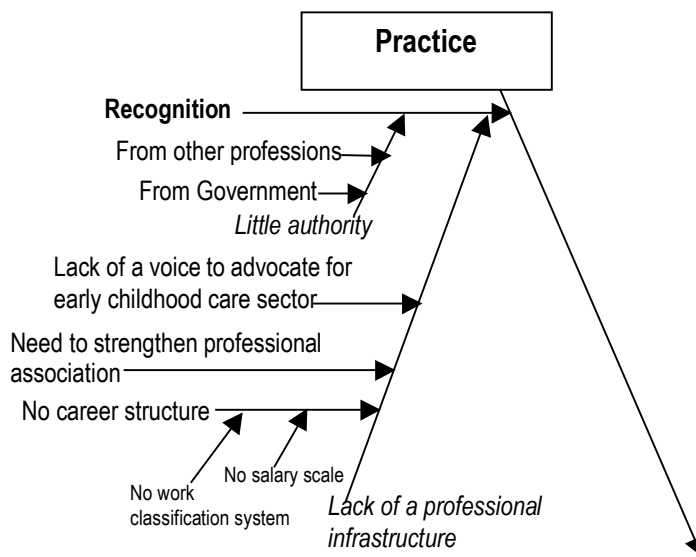
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<sup>26</sup> . Retention and Recruitment Forum Participants. *Forum on Attracting and Retaining Qualified Early Childhood Staff*, Halifax: Child Care Connections, 2000.

<sup>27</sup> . “Trained” equivalent is one full credit in Child Development or EC curriculum development, 25 hours of workshops in the area in which credit was not obtained, and two years of experience teaching in an early childhood care centre.

## Section 2.3: Practice as a cause of the lack of qualified staff

Early childhood care practice has only recently been recognized as an occupation. The sector study of the child care workforce (1999) has defined and established child care (early childhood care) as a sector at the federal level. A professional infrastructure for early childhood care does not exist in Nova Scotia, the professional association needs strengthening giving a voice and a career structure to the practice. All these factors affect attracting and keeping qualified staff.



### Recognition: Little Authority ~

Three major research studies<sup>28</sup> focusing on the Canadian early childhood care work force report that the major cause of dissatisfaction of staff in early childhood care settings is the lack of recognition and support for the importance of their work. This was also emphasized in this project's forum on retention and recruitment. With increased awareness of the importance of brain development in the pre school years, early childhood care practitioners are hopeful that the importance of their work in supporting and enhancing early child development will be recognized as an efficient and effective contributor to the realization of such visions as the National Children's Agenda.

*" Given the opportunity to develop their physical, emotional, social and spiritual capacities to their fullest, children will become tomorrow's successful and enthusiastic parents, caregivers, workers and citizens"<sup>29</sup>~ National Children's Agenda*

This realization does not seem to be the case. Developmental psychologists, health, academic, inter-government and education groups are being supported and funded to develop strategies to address this "new" awareness. Early childhood care practitioners are seldom being included in the discussions and planning. The skills, knowledge and abilities that comprise the early childhood care core of knowledge are not considered key to the development of effective interventions. At times early childhood care practitioners are included in the implementation because it is a service that enables the target populations

<sup>28</sup>. Caring for A Living,(CCCF& CCAA,1991) Our Child Care Workforce,(1998) and You Bet I Care! (2000)

<sup>29</sup> A National Children's Agenda, Developing a Vision, Ottawa: Federal-Provincial-Territorial Council of Ministers on Social Policy Renewal, 1999.

to participate. Early childhood care practice does not have authority<sup>30</sup>, the expertise is not recognized, and it is told by other professions what it should consider important, how it should do its work, and why these other professions know more about the delivery of early childhood care than early childhood care practitioners.

### **Recognition: Lack of a professional infrastructure**

*Need to strengthen the professional association:*

*Our Child Care Workforce (1998) states that ~*

*"Advocacy, unionization, and professionalization support the struggle for recognition of caregivers. Child Care Organizations need to continue to take concerted action to the issues affecting the early childhood workforce and should increase their coordination and collaboration. This effort should address the development of a professional framework for caregivers, improved wages and working conditions, public education which would make the work of caregivers more visible, and other matters of common concern."<sup>31</sup>*

The absence of the vehicles and structures necessary for professional status has affected recruitment and retention of qualified staff. The Child Care Professional Association Development Society (CCPADS) has begun the process of developing these necessary vehicles and structures including a code of ethics, ethics mentors, a career structure, nomenclature (early childhood care words and meanings) discussion, and an organizational structure. This is a huge undertaking for a small volunteer organization. Given current salaries<sup>32</sup>, supporting such an infrastructure solely on member fees would require fees that are beyond what early childhood care practitioners can afford.

*Lack of a voice to advocate for the early childhood care sector:*

Without a strong professional association, early childhood practice has little if any voice to speak out for early childhood care practitioners. There are over 20 early childhood care organizations in Nova Scotia that further fragments the messages and voice of practitioners.

*No career structure:*

A comprehensive and accessible career structure that is reflective of the needs of early childhood care practice and practitioners will help the practice address the recruitment and retention crisis it is now facing and ensure that the profession operates in an organized way. Without the career structure, there is no way to classify positions, compare positions to other occupations and develop an equitable salary scale. Without a career structure it is difficult to define and articulate what the early childhood care profession is.

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<sup>30</sup>. Ferguson, Evelyn. "The Child-Care Crisis: Realities of Women's Caring." *Women's Caring Feminist Perspectives on Social Welfare*, Carol Baines, Patricia Evans and Sheila Neysmith, eds. Toronto:McClelland & Stewart, 1991.

<sup>31</sup> Bertrand, J. and Beach, J. *Our Child Care Workforce, From Recognition to Remuneration, More than a Labour of Love.*, Ottawa: CCHRT Steering Committee, 1998, p.9.

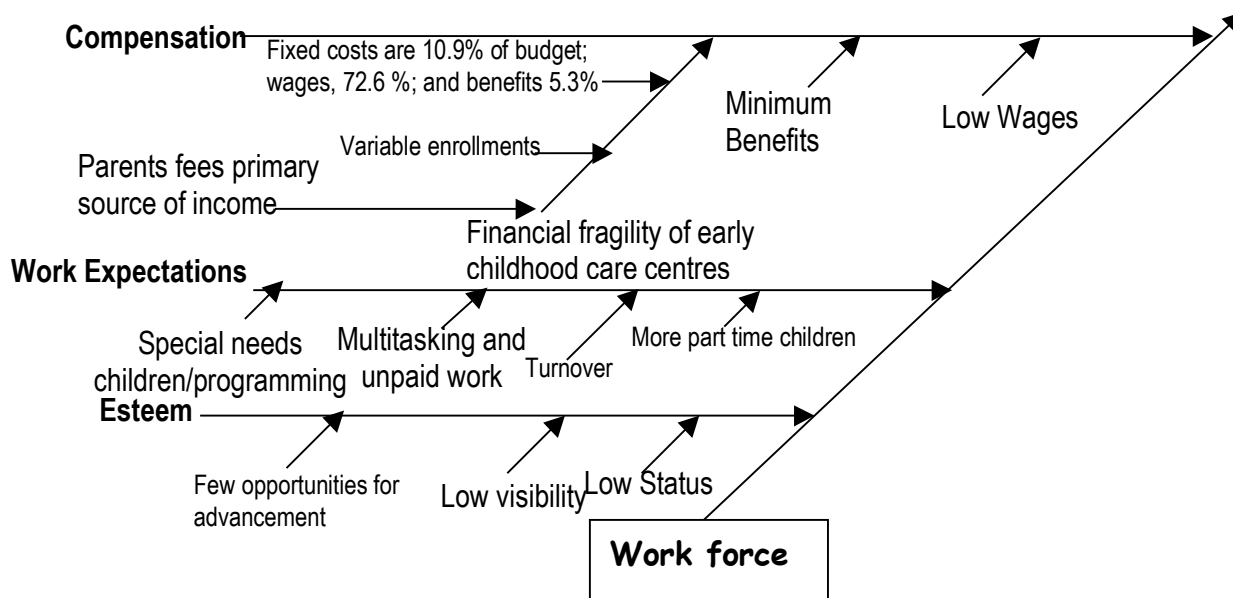
<sup>32</sup>. You bet I care! Study reports salaries of teachers as \$17,391 and directors \$21,141. Doherty, G., Lero, D., Goelman, H., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! Working Conditions, Wage and Benefits*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

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**Recommendations:**

- Do a feasibility study regarding the costs and benefits of establishing a professional association, building on the work already done by CCPADS.
- Use the Universal Classification System work done as part of the project to recommend salary scales for the positions on the career structure.
- Support the career-structure-building work of the Child Care Professional Association Development Society.
- Bring the Circle Time for Child Care organizations together to review and refine CCPADS' draft career structure. The Circle Time for Child Care organizations should carefully examine this structure with regard to its scope and applicability for early childhood care practice today and in the future.

## Section 2.4: Workforce as a cause of lack of qualified staff

When directors were asked what were the most pressing issues facing their centre in the *You Bet I Care ! Study*, they reported financial stability, staff salaries and benefits, low enrollments and more part time children as the top four issues.<sup>33</sup> These four issues are directly related to attracting and keeping qualified early childhood care centre staff. A long term strategy is necessary to address the work force issues addressed in this report. *Our Child Care Workforce* (1991), recommendation #8 recommends a worthy wage campaign and investigation of potential strategies.



### **Compensation:**

*Low wages and benefits:*

In Nova Scotia, in 1998, the wages for early childhood care teachers was \$17,391 and \$21,141 for early childhood care centre administrators. The average benefits were: 74% paid sick days; 25% retirement or pension plan; and 38% a yearly wage increase.<sup>34</sup> Low wages and minimum benefits are contributors to the difficulties in attracting and keeping qualified early childhood care centre staff.

*Financial fragility of the early childhood care centre:*

Wages and benefits make up 72.6% and 5.3% respectively of early childhood care centre budgets. Fixed costs (rent/ mortgage and utilities) make up another 10.9 % of the budgets. Combined, wages and fixed costs make up a total of 98.8% of centre expenditures<sup>35</sup>. There is little room to move to provide annual

<sup>33</sup> . Lero, D., Doherty, G., LaGrange, A., Goelman, H., and Tougas, J. *You Bet I Care! The most pressing issues facing child care centres*, paper posted on Child & Family Canada Web Site, Ottawa: CCCF, 1999.

<sup>34</sup>. Doherty, G., Lero, D., Goelman, H., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! Working Conditions, Wage and Benefits*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

<sup>35</sup>. Doherty, G., Lero, D., Goelman, H., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! Working Conditions, Wage and Benefits*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

increments to staff salaries when fixed costs increase. Parent's fees are the primary source of income, to increase staff salaries, parent fees must be increased.

*Parent fees are the primary source of income:*

Parent fees make up 72.7% of revenue in early childhood care centres, 20.5% is from government fee subsidy and 17.5% is from other government grants<sup>36</sup>. (As discussed in the Policy Section of this report, the latter two revenue sources are virtually unavailable to privately incorporated early childhood care centres.) In Nova Scotia in 1998, parents paid \$470 per month or \$5,640 per year for full day care of an infant, and \$412 per month or \$4,944 per year for toddlers and preschoolers<sup>37</sup>. The Vanier Institute of the Family report that in 1997 in Nova Scotia the average family income after tax is \$37,731<sup>38</sup>. The average family would pay approximately 13% of their income for one child.

*Variable enrollments:*

In the *You Bet I Care!* Study (1998), the average vacancy rate for Nova Scotia early childhood care centre children's spaces was 13.8%.<sup>39</sup> Since there is such a high dependence on parent fees as the primary source of income, centres are limited in how much they can charge and still maintain enrolment. In effect, this determines how much they can compensate their staff.

*"Nearly fifty percent of directors identified the cost of centre based care relative to what parents can afford as the main reason for vacant spaces".*<sup>40</sup>

### **Work Expectations:**

*"Attitude, morale, and job satisfaction have been widely reported to be associated with the quality of child care programs, staff turnover, and the consistency of care giving in early childhood settings."*<sup>41</sup>

In the *You Bet I Care!* Study, 94.6 % of respondents identified "the nature of the work"<sup>42</sup> as one of the top four choices of causes for job satisfaction. Motivation,<sup>43</sup> co-workers<sup>44</sup> and parents<sup>45</sup> were the second, third

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<sup>36</sup>. Doherty, G., Lero, D., Goelman, H., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! Working Conditions, Wage and Benefits*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

<sup>37</sup>. Doherty, G., Lero, D., Goelman, H., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! Working Conditions, Wage and Benefits*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

<sup>38</sup>. Sauve. *Current State of Canadian Family Finances*, posted on the Vanier Institute of the family web site, 1999.

<sup>39</sup>. Lero, D., Doherty, G., LaGrange, A., Goelman, H., and Tougas, J. *You Bet I Care! The most pressing issues facing child care centres*, paper posted on Child & Family Canada Web Site, Ottawa: CCCF, 1999.

<sup>40</sup>. Lero, D., Doherty, G., LaGrange, A., Goelman, H., and Tougas, J. *You Bet I Care! The most pressing issues facing child care centres*, paper posted on Child & Family Canada Web Site, Ottawa: CCCF, 1999.

<sup>41</sup>. Goelman, H., Doherty, G., Lero, D., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! ECCE Staff in Canada*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

<sup>42</sup>. "...e.g. a people oriented job, love from children, freedom to be creative, having my own group of children, a varied, stimulating job" Goelman, H., Doherty, G., Lero, D., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! ECCE Staff in Canada*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

<sup>43</sup>. "...e.g. I feel I am having an impact/helping, gives me a feeling of competence, enjoy the challenge." Goelman, H., Doherty, G., Lero, D., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! ECCE Staff in Canada*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

<sup>44</sup>. "... e.g. teamwork, working with other child care professionals, support from other staff." Goelman, H., Doherty, G., Lero, D., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! ECCE Staff in Canada*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

<sup>45</sup>. "... e.g. helping parents" Goelman, H., Doherty, G., Lero, D., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! ECCE Staff in Canada*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

and fourth. The negatives were: pay and promotion opportunities (75.5%); lack of respect (45.8%), working conditions (32.4 %); nature of the work <sup>46</sup>(25%); motivation<sup>47</sup> (20.7%); and parents<sup>48</sup> (14.8%). Motivation, nature of the work, and parents are identified as top causes of both job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. <sup>49</sup>

#### *Special Needs children/programming:*

The *You Bet I Care! Study* reported that 72.2 % of centres include at least one child with special needs and almost one in eight centres having five or more children with special needs.<sup>50</sup> Interventions with challenging behaviours, anti bias curriculum or diversity and interventions for speech and language problems, were the three most mentioned professional development workshops taken by early childhood care teaching staff. <sup>51</sup> These increased expectations for early childhood care centre teaching staff to adapt their program to include children with special needs and behavioural problems, often without a corresponding change in salary, makes keeping staff a challenge.

#### *Multitasking and Unpaid work:*

Multitasking is doing a second task while caring for children. *You Bet I Care!* reported that teaching staff spent 25.4 % of time in a typical week activity planning and preparation; 19.8% in interaction with parents; 18% in meal /snack preparation and cleanup; 14.4 % in maintenance (cleaning and repairing) and 10% supervising field practice students.<sup>52</sup>

The *Issues Identification Forum* held as part of the *Retention and Recruitment Project* looked at the issue of unpaid work to estimate the number of hours that early childhood care centre staff did in addition to their work with the children. This unpaid work included: staff meetings, preparation time, clean up, late pick up of children and parent/teacher meetings, all done outside of the work day with the children. The estimate was 25 hours per month, more than one hour a day.<sup>53</sup> This work expectation affects motivation, physical health, and a feeling of accomplishment, which in turn affects retention of qualified staff.

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<sup>46</sup> "... e.g. doing cleaning and maintenance, lack of adult contact, insufficient planning time." Goelman, H., Doherty, G., Lero, D., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! ECCE Staff in Canada*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

<sup>47</sup> "... the need to be patient, stress." Goelman, H., Doherty, G., Lero, D., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! ECCE Staff in Canada*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

<sup>48</sup> "... unsupportive parents, parents who are late." Goelman, H., Doherty, G., Lero, D., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! ECCE Staff in Canada*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

<sup>49</sup> Goelman, H., Doherty, G., Lero, D., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! ECCE Staff in Canada*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

<sup>50</sup> Goelman, H., Doherty, G., Lero, D., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! ECCE Staff in Canada*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

<sup>51</sup> Goelman, H., Lero, D., Doherty, G., LaGrange, A., and Tougas, J. *You Bet I Care! Centre Teaching Staff Education and professional development*, paper posted on Child & Family Canada Web Site [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), Ottawa: CCCF, 1999.

<sup>52</sup> Goelman, H., Doherty, G., Lero, D., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A. (1999), *You Bet I Care! ECCE Staff in Canada*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

<sup>53</sup> Retention and Recruitment Forum Participants. *Forum on Attracting and Retaining Qualified Early Childhood Staff*, Halifax: Child Care Connections, 2000.

### *Turnover:*

When a colleague leaves a teaching team, additional expectations and stress is put on those who remain- the children and the teachers. What the person leaving takes with them, establishing a new relationship with the replacement person, and accommodating substitutes (if there are any substitutes to be found) until a replacement is found , requires adjustment for children and staff. The overall turnover rate for staff in Nova Scotia is 22.3% and within centre turnover exceeds 30%<sup>54</sup>.

*“...high turnover rates undermine teamwork among staff and having to frequently recruit and train staff adds to the director’s workloads.”*<sup>55</sup>

### *More part time children attending:*

Less demand for full time spaces was the number one reason for child space vacancies given by 36.8%<sup>56</sup> of the directors responding to the *You Bet I Care! Study* questionnaire. Filling part time spaces, and maintaining the paperwork attached to those spaces is at least double the work for directors. Teaching staff double the relationship with children and their parents to develop, double the record keeping and double the individualization of programming. The children also are affected. This can add stress on staff and affect retention.

### **Esteem:**

#### *Few opportunities for advancement:*

The practitioners' value is tied to the place they work, the centre. Opportunities for advancement are within the facility, and are limited (related to a practice cause ~ the lack of a career structure). This keeps them fragmented, invisible, a part of a facility rather than an individual with early childhood care expertise.

#### *Low visibility and low status:*

Respondents in the *You Bet I Care ! Study* identified lack of respect as one of the top three primary causes of job dissatisfaction. Early Childhood care teachers reported that they felt respected by other early childhood care professionals (87.8%); their own families (78.8%); center children’s families (68.4%); and personal friends (60.6%). In contrast, only 19.9 % felt that they had respect from professionals in other fields, and 8.2% from the public at large.<sup>57</sup>

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**Recommendations:**

- Develop a long-term strategy to fully address the identified workforce issues. Recommendations contained in this report provide a foundation for the strategy.

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<sup>54</sup> . Doherty, G., Goelman,H., Lero, D., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A.(1999), *You Bet I Care! Teaching Staff Turnover, Reasons for Leaving and Staff Vacancy Rates*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

<sup>55</sup> . Doherty, G., Goelman,H., Lero, D., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A.(1999), *You Bet I Care! Teaching Staff Turnover, Reasons for Leaving and Staff Vacancy Rates*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

<sup>56</sup>. Lero, D., Doherty, G., LaGrange, A., Goelman, H., and Tougas, J. *You Bet I Care! The most pressing issues facing child care centres*, paper posted on Child & Family Canada Web Site, Ottawa: CCCF, 1999.

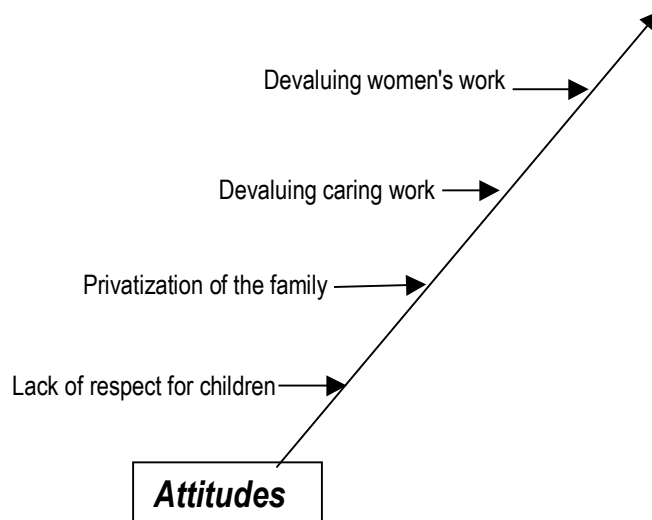
<sup>57</sup> Goelman,H., Doherty, G., Lero, D., Tougas, J., and LaGrange, A.(1999), *You Bet I Care! ECCE Staff in Canada*, posted on Family and Child Canada Web Site, [www.cfc-efc.ca](http://www.cfc-efc.ca), 1999.

*Short term strategies:*

- Explore resource materials that address the development of morale, motivation, affirmation, valuing, etc. Distribute information on the materials to early childhood care practitioners, make them available through resource libraries, workshops, and newsletter articles.
- Support and promote the Child Care Administrator Certification, recognizing the role that administrators have in the recognition, retention and recruitment of early childhood practitioners.
- Explore the implementation of a mentoring program for novices and experienced early childhood practitioners.

## Section 2.5: Attitudes as a cause of lack of qualified staff

From both the project's forum and literature review, it is apparent that the prevailing societal attitude toward women's work in general, toward early childhood care practice in particular, and toward children as a whole is that of devaluation and lack of respect. In order for early childhood care practice to overcome this perception of low status and invisibility, it must find ways to change these prevailing attitudes. To continue to affect the attitudes toward early childhood care work, it is necessary to inform and increase awareness of what child care work is, how it has an impact on women's equality and the social, health, economic, education and political well being of our province.



### *Devaluation of women's work and caring work:*

In western society there is a strong belief that caring for children is a natural, instinctive characteristic of being a woman (England, et al, 1998; Blain, 1994; Kyle, 1994; Coltrane, 1988). Equally, such studies indicate that because it is considered a "natural" thing for women to do, it requires very little skill or knowledge. Generally, it has been found that any work, such as caring, that has been socially ascribed as the domain of women has received either no, or low, recognition and/or remuneration (Teghtsoonian, 1996, 1997; Kilbourne et al, 1994; Friendly, 1995; Tuominen, 1997; Ferree & Roth, 1998; Doherty et al, 1995). The report of the Canadian Commission for the International Year of the Child (1979) argued that early childhood care practitioners and other caregivers are chronically underpaid because they replace parents, particularly mothers, who are paid nothing for their work as caregivers (Ferguson, 1991, p. 77).

### *Privatization of the Family:*

Early childhood care being perceived as a replacement for "mother care", leads to the second identified societal attitude: the assumption that raising children is a private family affair. Members of the forum reported that their experiences led them to believe that society idealizes motherhood, stating there is a perception that:

- mothers provide child care

- mothers do it best, so it follows that child care [practitioners] do it worst

This sense that early childhood care is part of the private domain is evidenced by the lack of a national policy on child care (Teghtsoonian, 1996), and the apparent resistance to the implementation of such policy. Thus, this societal attitude of private family responsibility for child care allows the low status, low recognition and low remuneration and low retention rates experienced by the practice to remain a private issue as well.

#### *Lack of Respect for Children:*

The third identified societal attitude is the lack of respect for children, especially from age 0-5. As members of the forum pointed out:

- [formalized early childhood care] is considered babysitting
- 0-5 years is seen as needing only physical care
- caring for children is not important

There are numerous statistics to backup these statements expressed by the forum participants. However, Nova Scotians really need to look no further than the information provided in *A Tall Order*, published in 1997 by the Nova Scotia Round Table on Day Care. Here we find:

- only 10% of pre-school children with working parents are in licensed child care (p.3);
- 90% of Nova Scotia's children are often in an unstable patchwork of paid and unpaid situations that are uncertain for children and worrisome for parents (p.3);
- the demand for child care spaces continues to grow, but there is not even enough affordable regular-day child care in Nova Scotia at present (p.3);
- in 1989, 15% of Nova Scotia children were living in poverty; by 1993 this figure jumped to 22% (p.4).

Of course, this lack of respect for children is further emphasized by the lack of recognition or seriousness paid to studies proving the long-term societal advantages that are associated with providing quality, stable, nurturing, social environments for young children. Once again, *A Tall Order reports:*

- quality child care helps to decrease child poverty because parents have the opportunity to train and seek work (p.4)
- all children benefit from quality child care; they demonstrate an increase in academic skills, better verbal abilities, better grasp of numerical concepts and better ability to carry out complex cognitive tasks; they also learn valuable social skills (p.4-5)

This is just a small encapsulation of studies that have crossed numerous domains of theory such as economics, social policy, sociology, and psychology. Yet our social policies around early childhood care remain relatively unchanged and continue to mirror the low value our society's attitudes ascribe to women and children. These societal attitudes have a profound effect on retention and recruitment of qualified early childhood care staff.

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## **Recommendations:**

- Establish working relationships with the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, School Boards and Labour Unions- including teacher's unions, nurses unions, etc.-to inform them on early childhood care issues and to utilize expertise in developing action plans .
- Develop a brochure that describes early childhood care to use in developing partnerships, recruiting students to early childhood studies programs, heightening awareness and developing identity.
- Increase and foster contacts with media to increase awareness of the early childhood care context and its impact on society. Develop a promotions plan to make the media more aware of the complexities and value of the child care profession, not just for the children but for the early childhood care workforce. Regular reporting of child care events, the positive results of quality child care, and features offering support to the profession are options.
- Advocate with related groups for recognition. Recognition means...
  - ... Equitable compensation
  - ... Authority in actions, initiatives, plans, policies and strategies addressing early child development
  - ... Valuing the complexity of early childhood care work
  - ... Respect for the contributions made to Nova Scotia by early childhood care practitioners and programs.

## **Chapter 3: Conclusion & Next Steps**

The challenge of retention and recruitment of qualified early childhood care staff is a complex issue caused by the interaction of a multitude of factors, each factor having an impact on other factors. What on the surface may seem a simple problem is really complicated, uncovering systemic barriers that prevent the early childhood care sector from taking its rightful place as an essential public service for Nova Scotia citizens. This project has taken us further along in our journey to recognition and hopefully has provided insight regarding what can and must be done to address the retention and recruitment problem and confront the systemic barriers that the early childhood care sector faces on a daily basis.

### **Recommendations for next steps:**

- **Using the recommendations within this report, develop a comprehensive plan to address the identified recruitment and retention causes in partnership with the Circle Time for Child Care Group(early childhood care organizations), licensed operators (owners and boards), post secondary early childhood studies programs and relevant government departments.**
- **Present this plan to the Premier and discuss commitment to necessary next steps with him.**

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**Action Plan:**

Recommendations	Research	Action			By whom?
		Support/ Develop	Inform	Advocate	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any action taken on these recommendations must enhance the existing early childhood care services system. Actions must not jeopardize those services already in place.</li> </ul>		X	X	X	All
<b>Training as a cause of lack of qualified staff:</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support existing community based models for training and investigate new initiatives that can provide affordable and accessible continuing education to early childhood care practitioners and to upgrade the equivalency practitioners to the certificate of diploma level in Early Childhood Studies . (Policy causes: Regulations: "Trained Equivalency".) to a certificate or diploma.</li> </ul>	x	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a relationship with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union to inform guidance counselors regarding the curriculum of post secondary Early Childhood Studies programs, the educational requirements for early childhood care practitioners, and the positive aspects of a career in early childhood care. Possible actions include writing articles for the NSTU newsletter, developing presentations for the guidance counselor's professional development day, and producing a brochure for use with their students.</li> </ul>			X	X	Early childhood sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the proposed training guidelines developed by Early Childhood Development Services for post secondary early childhood studies programs.</li> </ul>		X			Community Services
<b>Policy as a cause of lack of qualified staff:</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult and collaborate with all stakeholders in developing a vision for early childhood care in Nova Scotia. This consultation should cross all government departments, child care and related organizations, parents, employers, training institutions, etc.</li> </ul>	X	X	X	X	Early childhood care sector, Community Services, Other Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine the impact of "trained" equivalency on practice. Determine the number of practitioners whose training falls under the equivalency</li> </ul>	X				Early childhood care sector Community

Recommendations	Research	Action			By whom?
		Support/ Develop	Inform	Advocate	
provisions. Make recommendations on ways to increase the accessibility and affordability of continuing education to enable them to obtain their certificate/diploma.					Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Prior Learning Assessment tool in consultation with early childhood studies programs and the early childhood care sector to use in assessing equivalent training. The tool should be useful in determining equivalent training requirements across programs and outside of Nova Scotia.</li> </ul>	X	X			Early childhood studies programs Early childhood care sector Community Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct research around the effectiveness of Salary Enhancement Grants including the cost/benefits of expansion to staff in all early childhood care centres.</li> </ul>	X				Early Childhood Care Sector Community Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a relationship with the Children and Youth Action Committee of the Nova Scotia government to inform and educate government departments regarding the expertise and potential of the early childhood care sector in developing early years initiatives.</li> </ul>			x	x	Early childhood care sector
<b>Practice as a cause of lack of qualified staff:</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do a feasibility study regarding the costs and benefits of establishing a professional association, building on the work already done by CCPADS.</li> </ul>	X				Early childhood care sector Child Care Professional Association Development Society (CCPADS) Certification Council (CCECENS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the Universal Classification System work done as part of the project to recommend salary scales for the positions on the career structure.</li> </ul>	X		X		Early Childhood Care Sector CCPADS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the career-structure-building work of the Child Care Professional Association Development Society.</li> </ul>		X			Early childhood care sector

Recommendations	Research	Action			By whom?
		Support/ Develop	Inform	Advocate	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring the Circle Time for Child Care organizations together to review and refine CCPADS' draft career structure. The Circle Time for Child Care organizations should carefully examine this structure with regard to its scope and applicability for early childhood care practice today and in the future.</li> </ul>			X	X	Child Care Connections Circle Time for Child Care Group
<b>Work force as a cause of lack of qualified staff:</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a long-term strategy to fully address the identified workforce issues. Recommendations contained in this report provide a foundation for the strategy.</li> </ul>		X	X		Early Childhood Care Sector CCCNS Circle Time group
<i>Short term strategies:</i>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore resource materials that address the development of morale, motivation, affirmation, valuing, etc. Distribute information on the materials to early childhood care practitioners, make them available through resource libraries, workshops, and newsletter articles.</li> </ul>	X	X	X		Child Care Connection (CCCNS) Early Childhood Care Sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and promote the Child Care Administrator Certification, recognizing the role that administrators have in the recognition, retention and recruitment of early childhood practitioners.</li> </ul>					CCCNS CCECENS Early Childhood Care Sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the implementation of a mentoring program for novices and experienced early childhood practitioners.</li> </ul>		X	X		Partners In practice (PIP) CCCNS CCECENS
<b>Attitudes as a cause of lack of qualified staff:</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish working relationships with the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, School Boards and Labour Unions- including teacher's unions, nurses unions, etc.-to inform them on early childhood care issues and to utilize expertise in developing action plans .</li> </ul>				X	Early childhood care organizations Early Childhood care Sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a brochure that describes early childhood care to use in developing partnerships, recruiting students to early childhood studies</li> </ul>	X	x			CCCNS

Recommendations	Research	Action			By whom?
		Support/ Develop	Inform	Advocate	
programs, heightening awareness and developing identity.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase and foster contacts with media to increase awareness of the early childhood care context and its impact on society. Develop a promotions plan to make the media more aware of the complexities and value of the child care profession, not just for the children but for the early childhood care workforce. Regular reporting of child care events, the positive results of quality child care, and features offering support to the profession are options.</li> </ul>			x	x	Early childhood care organizations CCCNS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate with related groups for recognition. Recognition means... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>... Equitable compensation</li> <li>... Authority in actions, initiatives, plans, policies and strategies addressing early child development</li> <li>... Valuing the complexity of early childhood care work</li> <li>... Respect for the contributions made to Nova Scotia by early childhood care practitioners and programs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>				X	Early childhood care organizations and sector
<b>Next Steps</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using the recommendations within this report, develop a comprehensive plan to address the identified recruitment and retention causes in partnership with the Circle Time for Child Care Group(early childhood care organizations), licensed operators (owners and boards), post secondary early childhood studies programs and relevant government departments.</li> </ul>		X			Circle Time ECC organizations, Government departments, Licensed Operators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present this plan to the Premier and discuss commitment to necessary next steps with him.</li> </ul>				X	Circle Time, Early childhood care organizations