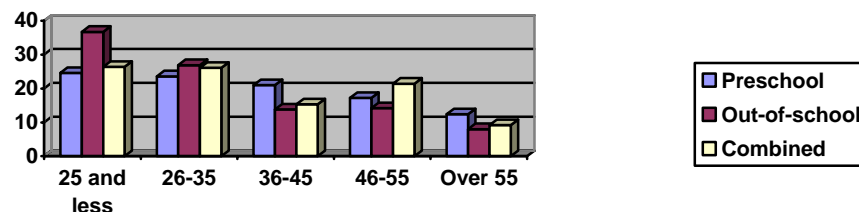


Caring for Our Future: Centre-Based Caregivers

In the fall of 2007, the **Caring for Our Future** study surveyed centre-based caregivers in preschool and school-aged child care settings throughout Alberta. 1948 of you replied and this is what **YOU** told us:

About YOU: Preschool child care is staffed almost exclusively by women, but 10.5% of caregivers in out-of-school are male. As a group, you speak many different languages and represent a broad span of ages. Many of you brought considerable experience in child care to your present place of work.

Ages of Centre-Based Caregivers

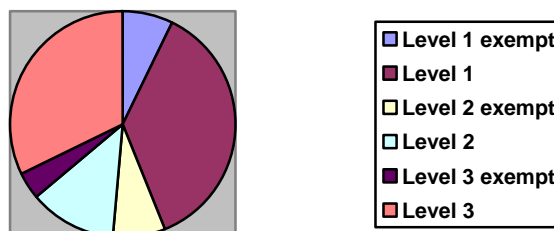


YOU like your work! You are working with children because you want to, and most of you are 'quite' or 'very' satisfied with your job. Your primary reason for staying with your present centre is your enjoyment of the children, the families, and your co-workers. Your work environment is an important consideration in your choice of employer.

YOU feel confident about your skills: Most of you feel 'quite' or 'very' prepared for your work in child care, although there are areas, such as child guidance, where you would like to feel more knowledgeable.

YOU have varying levels of education and certification: Your education ranges from high school to a postgraduate degree and the majority of you received your training at a public college. Most of you have either Level 1 or Level 3 certification.

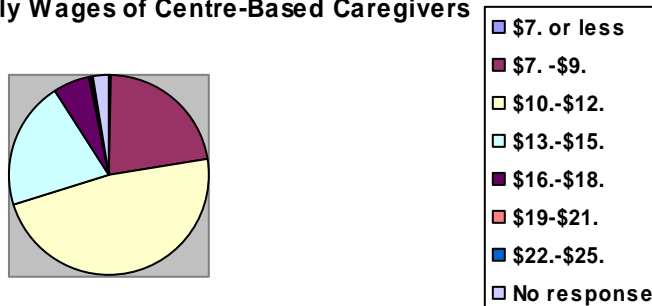
Certification Levels of Centre-Based Caregivers



You are concerned about...

- **Wages:** Almost half of you earn between \$10 and \$12. an hour (before wage enhancement). When asked what would cause you to leave the child care field, most of you said low wages.

Hourly Wages of Centre-Based Caregivers



- **Benefits:** The majority of you do not have medical or dental coverage, paid sick leave, pension, maternity/paternity leave, paid professional development days or paid stress relief days through your employer. A number of you mention that lack of a pension plan makes it difficult for you to have a long-term career in child care.
- **Lack of recognition:** Although you may feel valued by your co-workers and families, you believe that society as a whole doesn't recognize the importance of your work, its demands, and the training and skills required for it.
- **Training standards:** A number of you believe that higher training standards would improve working conditions, quality of care and the status of the profession.
- **Transfer of credentials:** Some of you noted difficulties in transferring credentials from other countries and from other programs within Canada.

Many of you are life-long learners: About half of you have taken advantage of the professional development grant to improve your education and skills.

Most of you plan to be working in child care in two years: Only 12% of preschool caregivers and 15% of school-aged caregivers felt it was "unlikely" or 'very unlikely' that they would be working in child care in two years.

Many of you feel child care is a good career choice: Almost two-thirds of school age staff and slightly fewer preschool staff would recommend child care to someone who is making a career choice.

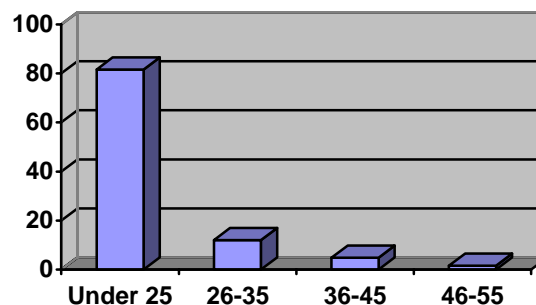
The complete **Caring for Our Future** report is available in PDF format from the ARCQE website at <http://www.arcqe.ca>

Caring for Our Future: Early Childhood Students

In the fall of 2007, the **Caring for Our Future** study surveyed second year early childhood students at all of the public colleges in Alberta. 127 of you replied and this is what **YOU** told us:

About YOU: All of you are women and, as a group, you speak a number of languages in addition to English. Most of you are under 25 years of age.

Ages of Early Childhood Students



YOU care about, and enjoy, children: You believe that working with children is important and you like to spend time with children.

Some of YOU have prior experience in child care: About 40% of you had worked in a child care centre, family day home or out-of-school centre before you began your college program.

Many of YOU work while studying: 46% of you were employed for more than 10 hours a week while you were in College. Of those who were working, 30% were employed in a child care centre, 22% with children but in another capacity and 48% in retail, service or another job not related to child care.

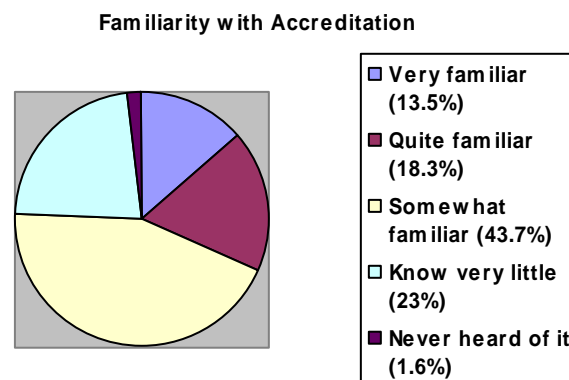
The majority of YOU plan to work in child care: 73% of you said that you plan to work in centre-based, school-aged or family child care when you graduate. Of those who have other plans, 47% will be studying in another program and 30% hope to work in another capacity within the early childhood profession.

YOU would like to see...

- **Increased wages:** Many of you said that higher salaries would help to keep you in the early childhood profession. Some of you see low wages as a reflection of the undervaluing of child care and worry about how this affects the quality of care that can be provided to children.
- **Improved benefits:** Benefits were another important consideration in your decision to stay in child care. You mention the importance of vacations and holiday pay.
- **Increased recognition:** You would like the larger society to recognize the importance of working with young children.
- **Opportunities for advancement:** You would like to have more opportunities for advancement within the profession.
- **Better working conditions:** Some of you expressed concern about the level of professionalism in the field. You would like to see increased training requirements, higher accreditation standards, and greater dedication on the part of child care workers. You mentioned the importance of a cooperative working environment and the need for shorter hours and more staff.

Accreditation may have influenced YOUR career choice:

As shown below, the majority of you were at least somewhat familiar with accreditation:



Almost 60% of you said that accreditation had influenced your career plans in some way.

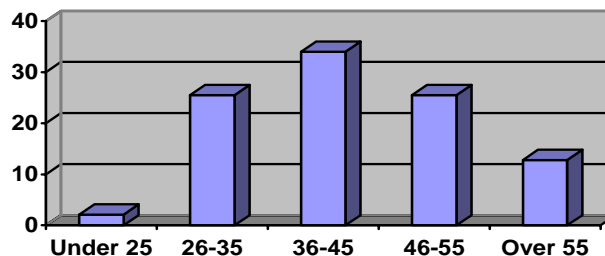
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Caring for Our Future: Family Child Care Home Visitors

In the fall of 2007, the **Caring for Our Future** study surveyed family child care home visitors (consultants) throughout the province of Alberta. 48 of you replied and this is what **YOU** told us:

About YOU: You are all women and all but two of you speak English at home. Most of you are 26 or older. Many of you work only part-time as home visitors and over half have other jobs as well.

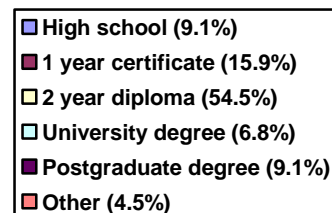
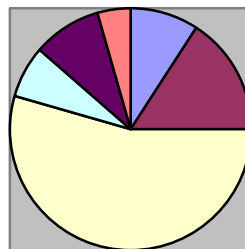
Ages of Home Visitors



YOU like your job! Most of you are “very” or “quite” satisfied with your work as a home visitor. You like working with the providers and families and you enjoy your co-workers. You feel your agency does a good job of finding effective, well-qualified home visitors and a fairly good job of finding competent providers.

YOU bring expertise to your work: 27% of you have been with your agency for over 10 years and 40% for over 7 years. 89% of you have worked in child care before coming to your current employer. 93% of you have early childhood education or education backgrounds. 61% of you have Level 3 certification.

Educational Levels of Home Visitors



By and large, YOU feel prepared for your job: 78% of you feel 'quite' or 'very' prepared for your work as home visitors, although there are areas, such as consulting on special needs, where you would like to feel more knowledgeable

YOU are concerned about...

- **Recognition:** While 87% of you felt appreciated by others in your agency or in the early childhood profession, only 57% felt noticed and appreciated by the families and 24% felt appreciated by all or most in the broader community. When you were asked what changes could be made to improve your job satisfaction, more recognition and appreciation topped your list.
- **Wages and Benefits:** Increased wages and improved benefits came a close second in your list of changes that would increase your job satisfaction. Of the 25 home visitors who reported hourly wages, 44% earned between \$13. and \$15. an hour while 32% earned between \$16. and \$18. 27 of you reported monthly wages, with 41% earning between \$2000. and \$2400. and 22% between \$2500. and \$2999.

The most commonly provided benefits were a paid vacation of two or more weeks a year (18%), pay for overtime work (17%) and paid professional development days (16%). Very few of you receive medical or dental coverage, paid sick leave, maternity leave, paid stress relief days or pension contributions.

Many of YOU are lifelong learners: Over 60% of you had used some or all of your professional development grant. A number of you have used the grant to take courses toward your next level of certification.

YOU plan to be working in child care in two years: 70% of you said that it was 'quite' or 'very' likely that you would be working with the same agency in two years, while 85% of you felt you would be working in same aspect of child care at that time. Retirement was mentioned as one reason for leaving the child care profession.

Many of YOU feel child care is a good career choice: 88% of you would recommend child care to someone making a career choice.

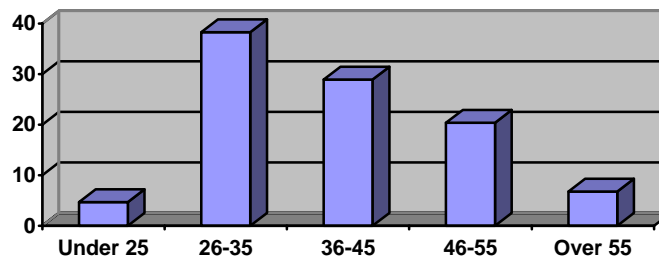
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Caring for Our Future: Family Child Care Providers

In the fall of 2007, the **Caring for Our Future** study surveyed family child care providers throughout the province of Alberta. 248 of you replied and this is what **YOU** told us:

About YOU: You are all women and, as a group, you speak a number of languages in addition to English. Most of you are between the ages of 26 and 55.

Ages of Family Child Care Providers



YOU are happy with the work you have chosen: Most of you are “very” or “quite” satisfied with the work you are doing. You enjoy the children and families and you find that working from home fits with your own family priorities. It allows you to be with your own children while you are working, to be at home yourself, and to provide a home environment for children.

YOU feel confident about the work you do: 80% of you said that you feel ‘very’ or ‘quite’ well prepared for your work with children. Some of you noted areas where you would like more training, such as working with children who have special needs.

As a group, YOU bring varied combinations of training and experience to your work: 29% of you have worked in centre-based programs before you came to your current agency and 15% have contracted with another family child care agency. Your formal education ranges from high school to a post-graduate degree. The majority of you have Level 1 certification.

Certification Levels of Providers



YOU appreciate your contracting agency: Almost all of you felt that your contracting agency was able to attract well-qualified, effective home visitors and a number of you mentioned that you were very happy with the support you receive from your agencies.

YOU are concerned about...

- **Income:** As an independent contractor, you are paid per child and are responsible for the expenses of food, extra insurance, equipment and supplies. You do not receive benefits. However, you are able to claim the tax exemptions available to home-based businesses. 210 of you reported your monthly income as follows:

Monthly Income of Family Child Care Providers



- **Recognition:** Most of you feel that your contracting agency notices and appreciates your work, and you tend to feel valued, as well, by the parents of the children with whom you work. You believe, however, that the broader community has less understanding and appreciation for the importance of the work you do.

- **Long hours and job stress:** 51% of you work more than 45 hours a week, while another 27% work 37 to 45 hours weekly. Some of you mentioned that it can be stressful and difficult to work alone, without breaks, overtime, and adult stimulation.

Some of YOU are students as well as providers: Just under 20% of you are studying toward your next level of certification. Lack of time, courses not being available at convenient times and locations and lack of information were cited as barriers to further study. Some of you noted that there was no advantage to you in pursuing further training.

The majority of YOU plan to be working in child care in two years: 65% of you expect to be doing the same kind of work in two years, while 70% expect to be working in some aspect of child care at that time. Family reasons, low income and lack of benefits were the main reasons that you would stop working as a family child care provider.

Many of YOU feel child care is a good career choice: 71% of you would recommend child care to someone who is making a career choice.

Caring for Our Future: Centre-Based Operator/Directors

In the fall of 2007, the **Caring for Our Future** study surveyed operator/directors in preschool and school-aged child care centres throughout the province of Alberta. 269 of you replied and this is what **YOU** told us:

Belonging to a professional association is important to many of YOU: 54% of you reported that you or your centre were members of a professional association.

Just over half of YOU reported that your centre was not filled to capacity: 52% of preschool aged centres and 43% of school-aged care centres were not filled to their licensed capacity. Some programs chose to operate below capacity because they believed that a lower child-staff ratio enabled them to provide better service. However, inability to find suitable staff was most frequently cited as the reason for failing to operate at capacity.

You were concerned about...

- **Recruitment and retention of staff:** 92% of your centres had caregivers leave within the 18 month period prior to reporting, for a turnover rate of about 46%. Most frequently, caregivers left to accept a position in a different field of work.
- **The status of school-aged care:** Operator/directors of school-aged care centres felt their programs were at a disadvantage in not being eligible for the benefits associated with accreditation. This made attracting and keeping staff particularly difficult for them.
- **The workload:** Some operator/directors have a very heavy workload, spending all or much of the day with the children in addition to their administrative and other tasks.

YOU had tried many strategies to attract and keep staff: 94% of you had increased wages in an effort to find and retain staff. Other strategies included more flexible work hours, improved benefits, shorter hours of operation, low staff-child ratios, recognition awards, bonuses to staff who work hard, job sharing, bonuses to staff who recruit new staff, discounts on childcare or free childcare, promoting the availability of free education and closing for the summer and paying staff for the 6 weeks off to ensure they stay in the fall.

Many of YOU have found that accreditation has been helpful in attracting staff: You mentioned that accreditation has a number of advantages, including access to wage enhancement and professional funding. You felt that an accredited centre was better able to attract staff because it was seen as a good place to work and was able to pay higher wages.

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