

Caring for Our Future

**Working Together to Address Recruitment
and Retention in Alberta Child Care**



**Alberta Resource Centre
FOR QUALITY ENHANCEMENT**
...for early learning and care services

Caring for Our Future

Working Together to Address Recruitment and Retention in Alberta Child Care

**Prepared by:
Carole Massing, Ph.D.
Learnscapes Inc.**

**Prepared for:
The Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement**

March 2008

Not to be reproduced without permission from ARCQE



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the 2261 survey respondents who took the time not only to complete the survey questionnaire but to add extensive and thoughtful comments. We hope you will find that your experiences and opinions are well represented in this report.

Thank you to the individuals, centres and agencies who assisted with the development of the survey questionnaires. Without your help, the survey information would have been much less useful.

Sincere appreciation is extended to the staff at ARCQE for facilitating the research work and to each of the individuals who worked on assembling the survey packages and recording the written comments.

A number of other individuals provided very helpful and much appreciated advice and assistance:

- Rebecca Gokiert, Early Childhood Measurement and Evaluation Resource Centre
- Sherrill Brown, Grant MacEwan College
- Barbara Heather, Principal Investigator, MIRFY study
- Leann Wagner, Alberta Children's Services
- Dan Precht, Test Scoring and Questionnaire Services, University of Alberta
- Corine Ferguson, Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement

Finally, we would like to thank the Alberta Ministry of Children's Services for providing the funding for this project.

Please note that the opinions and interpretations in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Alberta.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recruiting and retraining well-trained and effective caregivers to nurture a future generation is not a new problem, nor is it exclusive to Alberta. However, issues of recruitment and retention in Alberta child care occur against the particular backdrop of a booming economy; one that is marked by labour shortages in many sectors and particularly in the human services.

This research was designed to yield descriptive data about centre-based caregivers, family child care home visitors and providers, and second-year early childhood students in Alberta. It was also intended to answer questions about the rates of staff turnover; about the reasons caregivers stay in, or leave, their child care positions; and about their professional development activities.

In the past five years, the Alberta Ministry of Children's Services has instituted a number of initiatives to enhance quality and ease the child care staffing crisis in the province. While it is too early to see the full effect of these initiatives, it is hoped that the data from this study will yield beginning information as to the effectiveness of these strategies and, in the process, suggest future courses of action.

This survey polled all preschool and school-aged centre-based caregivers and operator/directors; family child care providers, home visitors, and operator/directors; and second year students at public colleges in Alberta.

The large scale survey drew a good return from most sectors and yielded a great deal of data, both quantitative and qualitative.

The data confirms that staffing issues are indeed a serious concern in Alberta child care. However, when viewed against the backdrop of the Alberta economy and in comparison with the larger human service sector, the fact that the field seems to be holding its own or improving slightly in some areas is promising. The data pointed to some hopeful signs. It also uncovered some tensions and questions that lie at the heart of decisions in and about child care and have particular relevance for recruitment and retention. These are discussed under the following headings:

- Paying the costs of child care
- Caring in a multicultural society
- Recognizing the importance of children's early experiences
- Affirming the value of caring as a human quality
- Weighing the costs of providing quality care

-
- Maintaining the integrity of child care training

The research findings lay the foundation for community consultations and partnerships to develop and implement specific strategies for addressing recruitment and retention issues in child care. The survey produced vast amounts of data which has potential for further analysis and would be useful as a baseline measure for follow up research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART ONE: OVERVIEW	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	2
1.3 METHODOLOGY	5
1.3.1 Purpose of the Study	5
1.3.2 The Population	6
1.3.3 Developing the Surveys	6
1.3.4 Ethics Reviews	6
1.3.5 Distributing the Surveys	6
1.3.6 Data Analysis	7
1.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	8
1.5 TERMINOLOGY	9
1.5.1 Caregiver	9
1.5.2 For-profit	9
1.5.3 Not-for-profit	9
1.5.4 School-aged care	9
1.5.5 Preschool-aged care	10
1.5.6 Status of family child care providers	10
1.5.7 Acronyms	10
1.6 RATE OF RETURN	11
1.7 ABOUT THIS REPORT	12
PART TWO: CENTRE-BASED CARE	13
2.1 THE CAREGIVER SURVEY	13
2.1.1 Centre Characteristics	13
2.1.2 Caregiver Profile	15
2.1.3 Work History	17
2.1.4 Education and Certification	20
2.1.5 Working Conditions	25
2.1.6 Job Satisfaction	29
2.1.7 Wages	40
2.1.8 Benefits	49
2.1.9 Recognition and Appreciation	52
2.1.10 Professional Development	53

2.1.11	Looking to the Future	62
2.2	THE CENTRE-BASED OPERATOR/DIRECTOR SURVEY	66
2.2.1	Centre Characteristics	66
2.2.2	Staffing in Centre-Based Care	68
2.2.3.	Strategies to Find and Keep Staff	72
2.2.4	The Effect of Accreditation	73
2.2.5	Working Conditions	75
2.3	OTHER ISSUES IN CENTRE-BASED CARE	76
2.3.1	A Sense of Urgency	76
2.3.2	The Status of School-Aged Care	77
2.3.3	Training Standards and Transfer Issues	79
2.3.4	Return to Work Bonuses	81
2.3.5	Promoting Professionalism	82
2.3.6	Paying the Costs of Child Care	82
	PART THREE: FAMILY CHILD CARE	85
3.1	THE HOME VISITOR SURVEY	86
3.1.1	Agency Characteristics	86
3.1.2	Home Visitor Profile	88
3.1.3	Work History.	88
3.1.4	Education and Certification	89
3.1.5	Working Conditions	93
3.1.7	Wages	100
3.1.8	Benefits	104
3.1.9	Appreciation and Recognition	105
3.1.11	Looking to the Future	108
3.2	THE PROVIDER SURVEY.	111
3.2.1	Agency Characteristics	111
3.2.2	Provider Characteristics	113
3.2.3	Work History.	113
3.2.4	Education and Certification	117
3.2.5	Working Conditions	121
3.2.6	Job Satisfaction	126
3.2.7	Income	129
3.2.8	Benefits	132
3.2.9	Recognition and Appreciation	133
3.2.10	Professional Development	135
3.2.11	Looking to the Future	138

3.3	THE FAMILY CHILD CARE OPERATOR-DIRECTOR SURVEY.	141
3.3.1	Agency Characteristics	141
3.3.2	Home Visitation Staffing	143
3.3.3	Strategies to Find and Keep Home Visitors	144
3.3.4	Provider Turnover.	147
3.3.5	Finding and Keeping Providers	149
3.4	OTHER ISSUES IN FAMILY CHILD CARE.	151
3.4.1	Transfer Issues.	151
3.4.2	Wage Enhancement and Back-to-Work Bonuses	151
3.4.3	Improving Childcare	152
PART FOUR: EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDENTS		153
4.1	THE STUDENT SURVEY.	153
4.1.1	Regional Distribution	153
4.1.2	Student Profile	154
4.1.3	Reasons for Choosing to Study Early Childhood	154
4.1.4	Employment History and Status.	155
4.1.5	Certification	155
4.1.6	Future Plans.	156
4.1.7	Wages and Working Conditions.	157
4.1.8	Effect of Accreditation.	158
PART FIVE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS		161
5.1	PROMISING SIGNS.	161
5.2	DATA TO INFORM RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT	163
5.2.1	Who are the caregivers?	163
5.2.2	What keeps caregivers in the workforce?	163
5.2.3	What factors might cause caregivers to leave the childcare workforce?	163
5.2.4	What are other trends and issues?	164
5.2.5	What data is there to inform decisions about training?	164
5.3	QUESTIONS AND TENSIONS	165
5.3.1	Paying the Cost of Child Care	165
5.3.2	Caring in a Multicultural Society.	166
5.3.3	Recognizing the Importance of Children’s Early Experiences	166
5.3.4	Affirming the Value of Caring	167
5.3.5	The Cost of Quality	167
5.3.6	Maintaining the Integrity of Training	168
5.4	NEXT STEPS.	169

5.5 FURTHER RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES	169
PART SIX: REFERENCES	170
PART SEVEN: APPENDICES	173
7.1 SURVEY INSTRUMENTS	173
7.2 LETTERS TO ACCOMPANY QUESTIONNAIRES	201

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Centre-based caregiver response by region	13
Table 2: Centre-based caregiver response by type of centre	14
Table 3: Centre-based caregiver response by location	14
Table 4: Centre-based caregiver responses by auspice	15
Table 5: Age of centre-based caregivers	15
Table 6: Reasons centre-based caregivers decided to work in child care	17
Table 7: Length of time centre-based caregivers have worked with their present employer	18
Table 8: Centre-based caregivers' experience before coming to present employer	19
Table 9: Education levels of centre-based caregivers	20
Table 10: Education level by auspice	21
Table 11: Certification levels of centre-based caregivers	22
Table 12: Certification levels of preschool caregivers: 1998 and present	23
Table 13: Where centre-based caregivers received their training	24
Table 14: Extent to which centre-based caregivers felt prepared by their training	24
Table 15: Areas in which centre-based caregivers felt less prepared	25
Table 16: Centre-based caregivers' hours of work	26
Table 17: Centre-based caregivers' opinions about adequacy of staffing	27
Table 18: Centre-based caregivers' opinions about quality of staff at their centre	27
Table 19: Amount of time spent in tasks other than child care	29
Table 20: Centre-based caregivers' level of satisfaction with their employment	30
Table 21: Reasons centre-based caregivers moved to their present place of work	31
Table 22: What keeps centre-based caregivers at their place of work	33
Table 23: Changes that would improve centre-based caregivers' job satisfaction	34
Table 24: Centre-based caregivers' opinions about opportunity for advancement	40
Table 25: Centre-based caregivers' hourly wages	41
Table 26: Centre-based caregivers' hourly wages by auspice	42
Table 27: Centre-based caregivers' monthly wages	43
Table 28: Centre-based caregivers' employment outside child care	48
Table 29: Benefits centre-based caregivers receive	49
Table 30: Benefits by auspice	50
Table 31: Percentage of benefits paid by centre-based caregivers	51
Table 32: Extent to which caregivers felt appreciated	52
Table 33: Percentage of professional development grant used	54
Table 34: Centre-based caregivers' reasons for not using the professional development grant	56
Table 35: Likelihood that centre-based caregivers will be at their current place of work	62
Table 36: Likelihood that centre-based caregivers will be working in child care in two years	63

Table 37: Reasons centre-based caregivers would leave the profession	64
Table 38: Reasons centre-based caregivers would leave the profession by program type	65
Table 39: Number of full-time caregivers in centres	67
Table 40: Number of part-time caregivers in centres	67
Table 41: Number of full-time children in centres	68
Table 42: Number of part-time children in centres	68
Table 43: Reasons centres are not operating at capacity	69
Table 44: Numbers of caregivers who have left centres in the past 18 months	70
Table 45: Reasons centre-based caregivers gave for leaving	71
Table 46: Strategies used by centre-based operator/directors to attract staff	73
Table 47: Family child care response by region	85
Table 48: Home visitor response by region	86
Table 49: Home visitor response by location	87
Table 50: Home visitor response by auspice	87
Table 51: Ages of home visitors	88
Table 52: Length of time home visitors have worked with their agency	89
Table 53: Education levels of home visitors	90
Table 54: Educational background of home visitors	90
Table 55: Certification level of home visitors	91
Table 56: Where home visitors received their training	91
Table 57: Extent to which home visitors felt prepared by their training	92
Table 58: Areas in which home visitors felt less prepared	93
Table 59: Number of hours worked by home visitors	94
Table 60: Home visitors' opinions about adequacy of staffing	94
Table 61: Home visitors' opinions about the quality of home visitors working for their agency .	95
Table 62: Home visitors' opinions about the quality of providers contracting with their agency .	95
Table 63: Home visitors' level of satisfaction with their employment	96
Table 64: Reasons home visitors moved to their present agency	97
Table 65: Reasons home visitors stay at their present place of work	98
Table 66: Changes that would improve home visitors' job satisfaction	99
Table 67: Home visitors' opinions about opportunity for advancement	100
Table 68: Home visitors' hourly wages	101
Table 69: Home visitors' monthly wages	102
Table 70: Home visitors' employment outside child care	103
Table 71: Benefits received by home visitors	104
Table 72: Extent to which home visitors felt appreciated by others in their profession	105
Table 73: Extent to which home visitors felt appreciated by the families with whom they work	105
Table 74: Extent to which home visitors felt appreciated by the larger community	106

Table 75: Reasons home visitors gave for not using the professional development grant. . . .	107
Table 76: Reasons home visitors would leave the child care profession	109
Table 77: Provider response by region.	111
Table 78: Provider response by location.	112
Table 79: Provider response by auspice.	112
Table 80: Age of providers	113
Table 81: Reasons for choosing to work as a provider.	114
Table 82: Length of time providers have been with their agency	115
Table 83: Providers' child care experience prior to coming to the agency	116
Table 84: Education levels of providers	117
Table 85: Certification levels of providers.	118
Table 86: Where providers received their training	118
Table 87: Extent to which providers felt prepared by their training.	119
Table 88: Areas in which providers felt less prepared	120
Table 89: Providers' hours of work	121
Table 90: Providers' employment outside of child care	122
Table 91: Providers' opinions about the quality of the home visitation staff	123
Table 92: Providers' opinions about the quality of their agency's providers	123
Table 93: Job satisfaction of providers	126
Table 94: Reasons providers moved to their present agency	127
Table 95: Changes that would improve providers' job satisfaction	128
Table 96: Providers' opinions about opportunity for advancement.	129
Table 97: Providers' hourly income.	130
Table 98: Providers' monthly income	131
Table 99: Extent to which providers felt appreciated by their agency.	133
Table 100: Extent to which providers felt appreciated by the parents of the children.	134
Table 101: Extent to which providers felt appreciated by the larger community.	134
Table 102: Reasons for not pursuing Level 2 certification	136
Table 103: Reasons for not pursuing Level 3 certification	137
Table 104: Reasons to stop working as a provider.	139
Table 105: Location of agencies (operator/director responses)	141
Table 106: Number of providers	142
Table 107: Number of children being served by agencies	143
Table 108: Reasons home visitors gave for leaving the agency	144
Table 109: Strategies used to attract home visitors	145
Table 110: Responsibilities and level of training of home visitors.	146
Table 111: Providers added in the past year.	147
Table 112: Number of providers leaving in the past year	147

Table 113: Reasons providers gave for leaving the agency	148
Table 114: Strategies used to attract providers	149
Table 115: Student response by region	153
Table 116: Age of students	154
Table 117: Reasons for choosing to study early childhood.	155
Table 118: Changes that would keep students in the profession	156
Table 119: Students' familiarity with accreditation	158
Table 120: Influence of accreditation	159

PART ONE: OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Recruiting and retraining well-trained and effective caregivers to nurture a future generation is not a new problem, nor is it exclusive to Alberta. However, issues of recruitment and retention in Alberta child care occur against the particular backdrop of a booming economy that is marked by labour shortages in many sectors. Service and other industries are increasing wages dramatically in order to attract workers. Recruitment and retention has become a problem throughout the human services as employees move to more lucrative, and often less stressful, jobs.

Within the past five years, the Alberta Ministry of Children's Services has instituted a number of initiatives to enhance quality and ease the staffing crisis in Alberta. It supported a child care accreditation process for day care centres and family child care agencies and offers program grants and staff wage enhancements that are linked to accreditation status. Professional development grants, back-to-work bonuses and bursaries have been made available to staff independently of accreditation.

While it is too early to see the full effect of these initiatives, it was hoped that the data from this study would yield beginning information as to the effectiveness of these strategies and, in the process, suggest future courses of action.

This survey was designed to yield descriptive data about centre-based caregivers, family child care home visitors and providers, and second-year early childhood students in Alberta. It was also intended to answer questions about the rates of staff turnover; about the reasons caregivers stay in, or leave, their child care positions; and about their professional development activities.

The information was gathered through approximately 11,500 surveys that were sent to all caregivers and operator/directors in child care centres in Alberta; to family child care providers, home visitors and operator/directors; and to second-year early childhood students in public colleges throughout the province.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Research suggests that lack of qualified child care staff has implications for quality of care, the wellbeing of families and the labour market. The research also suggest possible reasons for problems with recruitment and retention in the child care sector.

The quality and stability of the child care workforce is commonly recognized as a measure of quality care (Goelman *et al.* 2006; Peisner-Feinberg *et.al.* 1999; Rolfe, 2005) However, the shortage of qualified child care staff is of concern throughout Canada and in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia (Rolfe, 2005; Stavsy, 2002; Ungerer & Sanson, 2002; Wise, Miller & Ferguson, 2003).

The quality of child care has been found to be closely related to such factors as the number of staff in a room, their level of education, and the stability of the workforce. In a recent large-scale Canadian study, Goelman, Forer, Kershaw, Doherty, Lero & LaGrange (2006) found that wages, education level, number of staff, staff satisfaction, and whether the program received free or subsidized rent were direct predictors of quality in preschool classrooms. The indirect predictors were auspice, the adult:child ratio and parent fees. In infant/toddler rooms the direct predictors of quality were the number of adults in the room and the education level of the staff while the indirect predictors were parent fees, adult:child ratio, and use of the centre as a student practicum site. The researchers point out that the factors are interrelated, making the job of the child care director a delicate balancing act.

Rolfe (2005) noted that stability of employment and the skills developed through training and experience are key factors in child care quality. In their 1999 research, Peisner-Feinberg *et al.* find that caregiver education, experience and wages, adult:child ratio and group size are significant in quality of care.

In discussing the impact of staff turnover, Stavsky (2002) explained that children need time to form secure attachments to caregivers. She cited a 1997 study by McCartney *et al.* which finds that infants and toddlers require nine months of stable care to establish secure relationships with their caregivers. She also noted several other studies which show that being in unstable arrangements during the first two years of life may impact negatively on attachment, adjustment to child care, behaviour, language and social development.

There is evidence that difficulties with recruiting and retaining child care staff directly affect workplace productivity. Larson, Artz, Heglund, Kuku and Otto (2005), commenting on their analysis of the economic role of child care in Iowa, mention that parents who are coping with unsatisfactory child care situations or are busy making new arrangements are less likely to be productive in the workplace and “less effective at fostering a home environment that encourages a quality workforce in the future” (p. vii). They point out that child care generates direct jobs

in child care and additional job in industries that supply child care businesses. Rolfe (2005) notes that child care assists other sectors in meeting their staffing needs. In Alberta, child care operators participating in a 2006 consultation with the Ministry indicated that they were unable to run at full capacity because they could not hire qualified staff. (Government of Alberta, 2005) At the same time, many child care centres in Alberta were reporting waiting lists of two years or longer.

Concern with the recruitment and retention of child care staff is reflected in the number of initiatives directed at studying and addressing the problem. In 2002, the Attracting and Keeping Qualified Staff in Child Care Project (2002) initiated by Child Care Connections brought together work on recruitment and retention being done across Canada. Rolfe's (2005) work is intended to inform the UK Government's child care strategy by identifying effective approaches to the recruitment and retention of child care workers. A Government of Saskatchewan (2006) sector study provided data on areas including retention, wages, hours of work, centre size and location employee satisfaction, the current state of staff retention, and staff training needs while a 2007 report examined recruitment and retention issues in the child care workforce in Newfoundland and Labrador. (Gallant, 2007)

Four key challenges are consistently identified in the child care field: recruitment, retention, remuneration and recognition (Chud, 2001). Remuneration appears to be a key factor in the recruitment and retention of child care staff in Alberta (Government of Alberta 2006a). The Government of Saskatchewan sector study found that wages and benefits and training were the two largest areas of dissatisfaction among licensed child care staff. (2006) Beach, Bertrand, Forer, Michal, Tougas (2004) note that wages, working conditions and the organization of work in child care settings are key factors in staff retention. Goelman *et al.*'s (2006) findings echo those of his earlier study with Guo (1998) which suggest that better paid staff members are likely to feel more appreciated, better supported and have higher levels of commitment to the centre.

The perception that caregiving is "women's work" may have significant impact on remuneration and recognition. When women's work in caring for children is seen as an extension of the unpaid work they do in families and as an expression of natural instincts, it becomes possible to believe that they do not need to be educated or well-paid for it. This also contributes to gender isolation in the child care workforce (Miller and Ferguson, 2003; Maschka, 2003). Enhancing a sense of professionalism and promoting the value of child care work may be important aspects in staff recruitment and retention (Beach et al., 2004).

Child care workers are isolated not only by gender but by training. Miller and Ferguson (2003) pointed out that there are very few opportunities for advancement within the child care field and that early childhood training lacks transferability to other fields.

Dougherty (2002) noted that the stress of working in child care is a major factor in retaining and recruiting staff. She links higher levels of stress in child care to factors such as the increased inclusion of children with special needs, increased numbers of immigrant children whose mother tongue is neither English or French, and higher family stress from balancing work and family and coping with change in the workplace.

The retention and recruitment of qualified child care staff is a key issue in Alberta; one which has implications for children, families, programs and the work force—and ultimately or society. The current staff shortages occur within a particular economic and social context that limits the usefulness of data from other locales. Planning to address problems of recruitment and retention requires accurate information about the rate and patterns of movement among child care staff, the reasons they choose to move, and factors that influence them to stay in child care and to upgrade their educational qualifications.

There are several pieces of research that are particularly useful because they provide relevant comparative and contextual data. These include a companion study by the MacEwan Institute for Research on Family and Youth (MIRFY) that explores recruitment and retention within the broader human service sector in Edmonton; the 1998 *You Bet I Care* study which provides relevant provincial and national data at that point in time; and the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2007) report, *People, Programs and Practices: A Training Strategy for the Early Childhood Education and Care Sector in Canada*.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to gather data about employment patterns in child care; and about the experiences and perceptions of child care staff, family child care providers and students.

This study is one of two pieces of research exploring issues of recruitment and retention. The second part of the research, conducted by the MacEwan Institute for Research on Family and Youth (MIRFY), was developed to complement this survey by identifying issues and establishing common trends and demographics related to recruitment and retention among a broader sector of human service organizations in Edmonton. These agencies offer a variety of services including social work, health, family therapy, recreation, counseling and service for youth.

This part of the research was designed to yield descriptive data about centre-based caregivers, home visitors and family child care providers in Alberta and to answer the following questions:

- What are the rates of turnover for caregivers, home visitors and family child care providers in child care in Alberta?
- What keeps caregivers, providers and home visitors working in the field?
- Why do caregivers, home visitors and providers leave the field?
- What incentives or changes would help to keep caregivers, home visitors and providers in the field?
- How are patterns of retention related to training, location (region), gender and program type?
- Do caregivers, home visitors and providers feel that the training they have received has prepared them adequately for the demands of the job?
- To what extent are child care staff and providers taking advantage of the training supports associated with accreditation? If they are not, what are the reasons for their non-participation?
- If caregivers and providers with Level 1 are not working toward Level 2, or those with Level 2 are not working toward Level 3, what are the reasons?
- What are the plans of students about to graduate from early childhood training programs and what are the reasons for their choices?
- How are the benefits associated with accreditation affecting recruitment and retention in child care?

1.3.2 The Population

Surveys were sent to all front-line practitioners and operators of child care centres, family child care agencies and out-of-school centres in Alberta and to all second-year students in early childhood programs at Alberta public colleges. This 100% sample ensured that each of these stakeholders would have an opportunity to describe their situation and express their views. Over 11,500 surveys were mailed.

1.3.3 Developing the Surveys

Separate survey forms were designed for each of six groups: preschool and school aged centre-based child care operators/directors, preschool and school-aged centre-based child caregivers, family child care operators/directors, family child care home visitors, family child care providers, and early childhood students. The decision was made to use the same form for preschool and school-aged centres because some staff work in both kinds of programs within their centres.

The survey questions were developed in consultation with Advisory Committee members from the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families, MacEwan Institute for Research on Family and Youth, a representative from the Child and Family Services Authorities, and the Test Scoring and Questionnaire Services (TSQS) at the University of Alberta. Questions were formulated with specific response options to facilitate coding and data analysis but with provision for written comments where necessary.

The completed forms were piloted with individuals and agencies from each of the constituent groups. TSQS at the University of Alberta formatted and printed the computer-scored questionnaires.

Information letters were developed to accompany the surveys. Respondents were assured that the survey was voluntary and that submission of the completed survey would indicate informed consent. They were assured that their responses would remain completely anonymous and confidential.

1.3.4 Ethics Reviews

Ethics approval was obtained from the eight Alberta public colleges that required an ethics review.

1.3.5 Distributing the Surveys

Lists of child care programs, family day home agencies and licensed out-of-school care programs were obtained from Alberta Children's Services. College programs were contacted through the Early Childhood College Coordinator's group.

Alberta Children's Services was able to supply information about the number of front-line staff employed at each day care centre. Family child care and out-of-school care agencies were contacted by phone to ask about staff numbers. Where repeated attempts failed to elicit a phone response, centres were sent an arbitrary number of surveys. All programs were advised that they could make copies of the questionnaire if necessary.

Packages of questionnaires were sent to 516 centre-based (day-care) programs, 115 family child care programs (about 10% of these are individually licensed operators) and 522 licensed school-aged programs. The packages for centre-based programs included an operator/director survey, a stamped reply envelope, and a survey, letter of explanation and envelope for each caregiver. Caregivers were asked to return their completed questionnaires to the operator or designate in a sealed envelope to preserve confidentiality. The packages sent to family child care agencies and college programs included stamped reply envelopes for individual replies. Operator/directors were asked to distribute the survey to paid staff members working with children for more than 10 hours a week.

The survey packages were mailed in October and November of 2007.

1.3.6 Data Analysis

The completed surveys were returned to the ARCQE office and research assistants recorded the written comments. The surveys were then taken to TSQS for analysis. The data was run according to region. The centre-based responses were then broken down according to whether the caregiver worked in preschool care, school-aged care or a centre that offered both. Cross-tabulations were also performed according to the certification level of centre based caregivers (relevant only for preschool) and auspice (for-profit or not-for-profit).

The number of responses to individual questions varied because questions were omitted or answers incorrectly marked. In the case of cross-tabulations, the number of usable responses depended on the number of replies to each of the questions involved.

In this report, basic demographic data is presented according to the total number of possible responses while other questions are reported as proportions of actual responses. This made it possible to include basic data for surveys received after the computer analysis. The basis for reporting is clearly shown for each question.

A thematic analysis was performed on the written responses. Much of this qualitative data was integrated with the relevant quantitative data. Some themes emerged that did not relate directly to the statistical data. These have been presented separately. Relevant research, particularly from the 1998 *You Bet I Care* study, the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council report (2007) and the MIRFY companion study (2007) provide a context for the findings.

1.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although there was commitment to allowing all caregivers an equal voice in the project, the written format may have discouraged caregivers whose English literacy skills were limited.

Respondents in centre-based care were asked to return their surveys with others from their centre. Although the individual surveys were to be put in sealed envelopes, three caregivers called to ask for mailing information because they were reluctant to return their questionnaires through their operators or directors.

Some family child care operators felt that the wording of the survey could be considered as implying an employer-employee relationship with their employees. As explained below, this led to a lower return rate from the family child care sector.

1.5 TERMINOLOGY

Considerable thought was given to the terminology that would be used in the study.

1.5.1 Caregiver

There has been discussion in Canada in recent years about the need for an appropriate name to describe persons who provide care and education for young children. Having an easily recognizable and broadly accepted name for the profession is seen as important to conveying a professional identity with its associated knowledge, skills and attitudes. (Ferguson, 2004) Names that have been put forward are “early childhood practitioner,” “early childhood learning and care practitioner” “early childhood educator” and others. That none of these names has been widely adopted is reflected in this comment by one of the respondents in this survey:

We do not even have a “name” across Canada. When you hear “nurse” it is a universal work. Here there is pre-school teacher, daycare worker, child care giver etc. Who are we?

The term “caregiver” was used in this study because it was felt to be a name that would be recognized by all respondents and one that would include family child care providers as well as centre-based child care staff. However, the term “caregiver” is not intended as a substitute for an appropriate professional title.

1.5.2 For-profit

The term “for-profit” was used to describe child care centres and family child care agencies that are private businesses operated by an individual, a partnership or a corporation. In responding to this choice of terminology, one respondent wrote that “for-profit” is a misnomer because there is little if any profit in child care. Another suggested the term “private” would be more appropriate.

1.5.3 Not-for-profit

Not-for-profit centres are operated by a board of directors or a not-for-profit organization such as the YMCA or a church. The term “non-profit” is also used for these centres.

1.5.4 School-aged care

The term “school-aged care” refers to centres and caregivers who provide care to school-aged. In the caregiver comments, school-aged care is also referred to as out-of-school care, OSC or OOSC.

1.5.5 Preschool-aged care

“Preschool-aged care” is used throughout the report to distinguish care for preschool-aged children from care for school-aged children. This level of care is commonly referred to as day care.

1.5.6 Status of family child care providers

Efforts were made to convey the contractual status of family child care providers. Unfortunately, phrases such as “child care employer” proved to be problematic and resulted in a lower return rate because family child care operator/directors feared difficulties with Canada Revenue should they and their providers complete the surveys.

1.5.7 Acronyms

Several acronyms are used frequently in this report. They are used in full in their first instance in the text but are listed here for easy reference:

AELCS	Alberta Association for the Accreditation of Early Learning and Care Services
ARCQE	Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement
CCHRSC	Child Care Human Resources Sector Council
MIRFY	MacEwan Institute for Research on Family and Youth
The Ministry	Alberta Ministry of Children’s Services
TSQS	Test Scoring and Questionnaire Services
YBIC!	<i>You Bet I Care!</i>

1.6 RATE OF RETURN

2661 surveys were received from the following respondents:

Centre-based operators/directors	269
Centre-based caregivers	1948
Family child care operators/directors	21
Family child care home visitors	48
Family child care providers	248
Early childhood students	127

It is impossible to calculate precisely the rate of return because, even though attempts were made to contact all agencies and centres to find out numbers of staff and providers, invariably there were those that could not be reached and were sent an arbitrary number of questionnaires. Staff listings were available for child care centres but these were not exact because of overlaps with school-aged care programs.

However, minimum rates of return can be calculated for several sectors. Overall, approximately 11,500 surveys were distributed. Some centres returned extra copies, other had extras but did not return them, and 22 were returned as duplicated copies because insufficient forms were received. Since 2661 surveys were returned, the overall rate of return would be at least 23%.

Packages were sent to 1038 centre-based programs giving a rate of return for center-based operators/directors of 26%. The return rate for operators/directors of the 115 family child care programs is significantly lower at 17%. 2006 statistics show 1750 family day home providers and 157 home visitors working in Alberta. These numbers produce a return rate of 14.2% for providers and 30.6% for home visitors.

220 surveys were sent to early childhood programs in public colleges in Alberta and 127 of these were returned, for a minimum response rate of 57.7%.

1.7 ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report includes both quantitative and qualitative data. The qualitative data; that is, the comments that respondents added to the questionnaire, helped to illuminate problem areas or present dissenting views. When reading the report, it is important to consider both kinds of data because the comments alone may leave impressions that are not consistent with the overall response.

PART TWO: CENTRE-BASED CARE

2.1 THE CAREGIVER SURVEY

1948 caregivers working in centres offering preschool-aged care (day care), school-aged care or a combination of the two responded to the survey. The decision was made to use the same survey for preschool-aged and school-aged care because of the relatively large number of centres offering care for both age groups and the possibility that staff might work in both groups. However, recognizing the distinctive characteristics and situations of each kind of care, the data is presented both together and, where possible, separately.

This section provides information about the centres where the respondents are employed and about the characteristics, experiences and opinions of the caregivers. The number of responses provided varied for individual questions because questions were omitted or answers incorrectly marked. In the data that follows, most responses are given as a percentage of the total responses received for that question.

2.1.1 Centre Characteristics

The caregivers who responded to the survey come from all regions of Alberta.

The total number of responses received from centre-based caregivers was as follows:

Region	Responses
1	111
2	75
3	623
4	61
5	81
6	804
7	84
8	62
9	25
Unknown	21
Total	1947

Table 1: Centre-based caregiver response by region

1917 of the 1947 surveys were received in time to be incorporated in the computerized analysis.

Some work in preschool child care, others in school-aged care, and others in centres that provide care to both age groups.

The distribution of caregivers according to type of centre was as follows:

Type of Centre	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Preschool child care	1348	69.2
School age child care	276	14.2
Combined preschool and school-age	302	15.5
No response	26	1.3
Total	1947	100.0

Table 2: Centre-based caregiver response by type of centre

There was representation from rural areas and from urban centres of various sizes.

Respondents reported the population of the centre in which they work as follows:

Location	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Rural area	244	12.5
Urban centre under 10,000 people	196	10.1
Urban centre with population of 10,000 to 100,000	441	22.6
Urban centre with population of 100,000 to 500,000	98	5.0
Urban centre with population over 500,000	736	37.8
No response	232	11.9
Total	1947	100.0

Table 3: Centre-based caregiver response by location

The caregivers work in for-profit and not-for-profit centres.

There were slightly more caregivers from not-for-profit than from for-profit centres:

Auspice	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
For profit	790	40.6
Not-for-profit	946	48.6
Other	27	1.4
No response	184	9.5
Total	1947	100.0

Table 4: Centre-based caregiver responses by auspice

The “other” responses appeared to be from municipally operated or workplace centres.

In comparison, the MIRFY data reported 56.8% of respondents working in the public sector and 43.2% in the private sector.

2.1.2 Caregiver Profile

The age of caregivers ranged from 25 years and under to over 55 years.

The age distribution varies somewhat between out-of-school and school-aged programs, with school aged staff tending to be somewhat younger than child care staff. Over all of the regions, the age breakdown, by percentage, is as follows:

Age Level	Preschool (% of 1309 responses)	School-aged (% of 275 responses)	Both (% of 295 responses)	Total (% of 1879 responses)
25 and under	24.6	36.7	26.4	26.7
26-35	23.6	26.9	26.1	24.5
36-45	21.0	13.8	15.3	19.1
46-55	17.2	14.2	21.4	17.4
Over 55	12.4	8.0	9.2	11.2
Prefer not to answer	1.2	.4	1.7	1.2

Table 5: Age of centre-based caregivers

To put this information in context, the *You Bet I Care* (1998) study shows a slightly different national distribution with 42.4% of preschool child care workers between the ages of 25 and 34 and 6.6% 50 years of age or older.

MIRFY (2007) reports that the 159 participants who responded to questions about age ranged from 26 to 55 years, which would suggest that child care may draw more workers from the 25 and under age category than human services generally.

The CCHRSC (2007) discusses the implications of an aging workforce in which workers are retiring earlier and fewer young people are entering the labour force. With 11.2% of caregivers over the age of 55, this could be a significant factor in Alberta.

The large proportion of caregivers were female.

Child care staff, particularly in preschool child care, are overwhelmingly female. Only 1% of the 1257 respondents working in preschool centres and 1.7% in the 287 centres that serve both preschool and school-aged children were male. Of 267 respondents from school-aged care centres, 10.5% were male.

These findings are consistent with the 1998 *You Bet I Care* data which found that 98.3% of day care workers in Canada were women. The MIRFY (2007) research also found a majority of females in the human service professions although the discrepancy was smaller at 83.1% female and 16.9% male. Women now make up the majority of full-time undergraduate students, CCHRSC (2007) notes, which may serve to further deplete the child care workforce if women choose a wider range of careers. On the other hand, early childhood education and care could become an attractive option if the educational requirements and salaries increase.

The caregivers speak many different languages.

The questionnaire asked caregivers which language they spoke at home, listing a number of different languages and providing a space for “other.” Many respondents specified more than one language which made the scoring inaccurate. It was clear, however, that a large number of caregivers speak languages or dialects in addition to English. Over 50 languages other than English were mentioned, among them Hindi, Bengali, Persian, Chinese, Polish, Spanish, Punjabi, Urdu, French, Tagalog, Arabic, Malayam, Blackfoot, Nepalese, Sinhales, Chipewan, Japanese, Persian, Twi/Akan, Vietnamese, Kmer, Armenian, Turkish, Dutch, Portuguese, Visayan, Afrikaans, Farsi and Czechoslovakian.

While speaking a language other than English at home does not necessarily indicate that the caregiver is an immigrant, certainly many of these respondents can be assumed to have come to Canada from another country. The CCHRSC (2007) cites census data showing that almost 70% of the total growth in the labour force over the past decade resulted from immigration and

that, by 2011, all labour force growth may stem from immigration. It appears that immigration plays an important role in bolstering the child care workforce. One of the survey participants noted a need to provide extra support to immigrant caregivers, while a number of caregivers expressed frustration that their international credentials were not appropriately recognized in Alberta.

2.1.3 Work History

The caregivers reported a number of reasons for deciding to work in child care.

Respondents were asked why they first decided to work in child care. Multiple responses were given:

Reasons	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
I wanted to work with children	1668	47.6
It is a step toward my career goal	874	25.0
It was the best position available at the time	506	14.4
I was able to be with my own children at the centre	266	7.6
Other	126	3.6
My family or I own a child care or out-of-school care centre	63	1.8
Total	3503	100.0

Table 6: Reasons centre-based caregivers decided to work in child care.

Respondents who replied “other” explained that:

- they had been teachers previously (retired or in another country)
- they liked the flexible hours or the fact that the working hours were compatible with their family schedule
- they wanted to contribute to the community
- that they wanted to become better mothers
- they had worked as nannies and needed more adult interaction
- they had been family day home providers previously

The largest group of caregivers has worked for their current employer for 1 to 2 years.

Of the 1869 respondents, the largest group has worked with their current employer for 1 to 2 years while the next largest group has worked for less than 6 months. These percentages were consistent across auspice. (Please note that, due to a typing error, the categories were not consecutive. It is assumed that the caregivers chose the closest answer; for example, that if they had worked for two years and four months that they would have chosen 2 years.)

Length of Time	Preschool (% of 1303 responses)	School-aged (% of 273 responses)	Both (% of 293 responses)	Total (% of 1869 responses)
Less than 6 months	18.3	26.4	18.1	19.4
6 months to 1 year	15.3	12.5	13.7	14.7
1 to 2 years	24.1	21.6	18.8	22.9
3 to 4 years	11.5	14.3	14.0	12.3
5 to 6 years	7.8	7.7	8.9	7.9
7 to 10 years	9.0	6.6	9.2	8.7
More than 10 years	14.0	11.0	17.4	14.1

Table 7: Length of time centre-based caregivers have worked with their present employer

Cross tabulations with certification level showed that 62.4% of the preschool caregivers with Level 1 exempt status had worked with their current employer for less than 6 months. 23.3% of the Level 2s, 16.0% of the Level 3 exempts and 19.8% of the Level 3s had worked for their current employer for more than 10 years.

In 1998, when the *You Bet I Care* study asked day care staff in Alberta how long they had been with their current employers the results were fairly similar except for the smaller proportion in the “over 10 years” category:

Under 1 year	31.2%
1 to 3 years	31%
3 to 5 years	16.2%
5 to 10 years	16.5%
Over 10 years	5.2%

Across the three categories, 61.6% of the caregivers had worked in child care before coming to their current employer. This number is comprised of 63.8% of preschool caregivers, 50.2% of the school aged group and 62.4% of respondents in combined settings.

In comparison, half of those who responded to the MIRFY study had worked at their place of employment less than two years.

Many caregivers had considerable experience in child care before coming to their present employer.

Many caregivers brought considerable experience to their current position from their earlier work in child care. As shown below, almost one-third (30.9%) had more than 6 years of previous experience in child care.

Length of Time	Preschool (% of 864 responses)	School-aged (% of 147 responses)	Both (% of 191 responses)	Total (% of 1202 responses)
None	5.4	6.1	7.3	5.8
Less than 6 months	9.4	7.5	7.9	8.9
6 months to 1 year	14.2	17.0	14.1	14.6
1 to 2 years	16.1	19.7	13.6	16.1
3 to 4 years	15.7	21.1	14.1	16.1
5 to 6 years	7.2	3.4	12.6	7.6
More than 6 years	31.9	25.2	30.4	30.9

Table 8: Centre-based caregivers' experience before coming to present employer

Only 5.4% of preschool staff and 5.8% the total group had no prior experience in child care. 67.4% of the caregivers with the Level 1 exempt certification fell into this category. All of the other certification categories showed more persons with prior experience than without. For example, 38.9% of caregivers with Level 3 certification brought more than 6 years of prior child care experience to their present employer.

The YBIC! report shows that in Alberta in 1998, 15.5% of child care staff had come to child care from an unrelated field, presumably without child care experience. (1998)

2.1.4 Education and Certification

Levels of education ranged from less than high school to postgraduate degrees.

The largest numbers of caregivers fell into the high school graduate or 2 year diploma graduate categories.

Education Level	Preschool (% of 1255 responses)	School-aged (% of 272 responses)	Both (% of 288 responses)	Total (% of 1815 responses)
Less than high school	4.8	3.3	9.4	5.3
High school graduate	23.9	29.4	24.3	24.8
1 year certificate	14.4	11.8	11.8	13.6
2 year diploma	31.1	18.8	26.0	28.4
University degree	16.1	22.4	18.8	17.5
Postgraduate degree	4.1	2.9	3.8	3.9
Other	5.7	11.4	5.9	6.6

Table 9: Education levels of centre-based caregivers

According to the *You Bet I Care* study, in 1998 preschool-aged caregivers in Alberta had quite similar educational levels:

Less than high school	9.6%
High school graduate	18.9%
1 year certificate	20.1%
2 year diploma	28.8%
3 year college credential	3.4%
Post-diploma credential	2.2%
B.A. or higher degree	17.0%

There were slight variations between for-profit and not-for-profit centres.

Education Level	For profit (% of 734 responses)	Not-for-profit (% of 906 responses)	Other (% of 27 responses))	Total (% of 1667 responses)
Less than high school	6.7	3.8	11.1	5.2
High school graduate	29.2	19.4	11.1	23.6
1 year certificate	13.6	13.5	14.8	13.6
2 year diploma	23.6	35.1	33.3	30.0
University degree	17.3	18.0	18.5	17.7
Postgraduate degree	4.4	3.3	.0	3.7
Other	5.3	7.0	11.1	6.3

Table 10: Education level by auspice

Many respondents noted training in other countries including Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Romania and the Philippines.

“Other” responses indicated a wide range of training. Respondents mentioned technical school, trade school, art school and secretarial college. They had studied or completed certification in hairdressing, massage therapy, midwifery, home economics, journalism, rehabilitation, fine arts, nursing or Petroleum Land Administration. Some had trained as nursing aides or educational assistants.

In the group were caregivers with Master’s degrees in English, education, music or anthropology. Some respondents were attending university while working in child care.

Of the 158 participants who reported their level of education in the MIRFY study, 38.6% have a diploma or certificate, 25.6% held an undergraduate degree and 17.7% had a Master’s degree. Presumably many of the remaining 18.1 % would fall into the “less than high school” or “high school graduate” category. This shows a level of training in the human services overall that is slightly higher than that of these survey respondents.

The largest groups of caregivers held Level 1 or Level 3 certification.

All caregivers were asked about their certification despite the fact that school-age staff are not certified in the same way as preschool caregivers. The school-aged responses may reflect a

number of school-aged staff who do have the Level 1, 2 or 3 certification. These respondents may have previously worked in a preschool setting or may have re-interpreted the certification used in their municipality in terms of the preschool levels.

Patterns across auspices showed the for-profit centres with higher percentages of Level 1s (62.6% compared with 35.1% in not-for-profits) and lower percentages of Level 3s (29.3% compared with 69.7% in not-for-profits).

Certification	Preschool (% of 1281 responses)	School-aged (% of 131 responses)	Both (% of 287 responses)	Total (% of 1699 responses)
Level 1 exempt	7.3	16	8.0	8.1
Level 1	36.5	31.3	34.5	35.7
Level 2 exempt	7.5	3.8	6.6	7.1
Level 2	12.5	19.1	15.3	13.5
Level 3 exempt	4.0	6.9	3.8	4.2
Level 3	32.2	22.9	31.7	31.4

Table 11: Certification levels of centre-based caregivers

Cross-tabulations with age of caregivers showed that 47.3% of the Level 1 exempt caregivers were under the age of 25. 11.2% of the Level 3s were over the age of 55, so presumably may be intending to retire within the next few years.

Comparing certification status with educational level shows that 2.2% of Level 1 exempt caregivers have postgraduate degrees, along with 4.3% of Level 1s, 4.3% of Level 2 exempts, 5.5% of Level 2s, 8.2% of Level 3 exempts and 3.5% of Level 3s.

The *YBIC!* study showed 1998 levels of certification for preschool caregivers. In the table below, these are shown with comparable data from this study.

Training Level	% of Caregivers	Comparable Level	% of Caregivers
No ECCE training	9.2	Level 1 exempt	7.3
ECCE course of less than 1 year	26.2	Level 1 and Level 2 exempt	44
One year ECCE credential	20.2	Level 2 and Level 3 exempt	20
Two year ECCE credential Three year ECCE credential Post-diploma ECCE credential ECCE related B.A. or higher degree	44.3	Level 3 or probable Level 3	32.2

Table 12: Certification levels of preschool caregivers: 1998 and present

This comparison shows an overall decrease in level of training over the past 9 years, with more staff at Level 1 and fewer at Level 3.

The majority of caregivers received their early childhood training at a public college.

While the largest number of caregivers in all three groups have received their training at a public college, more school-aged than preschool caregivers are university-trained. This may reflect a tendency to hire university students in school-aged care because working hours can be compatible with their course work.

	Preschool (% of 1230 responses)	School-aged (% of 198 responses)	Both (% of 275 responses)	Total (% of 1703 responses)
University	7.5	25.8	12.7	10.5
Public college	73.6	48.0	70.9	70.2
Private college	9.3	4.5	6.5	8.3
Other	9.7	21.7	9.8	11.1

Table 13: Where centre-based caregivers received their training

Those who replied “other” mentioned life experiences/parenting, high school, distance learning, work place, and the Early Education Academy.

The majority of respondents said that they felt “quite” or “very” prepared for their work in child care.

Respondents were asked to what extent they felt that their training and education had adequately prepared them for their work in child care. School-aged caregivers reported feeling slightly less prepared for their work than did preschool caregivers, which may reflect an absence of training programs specifically geared to that age group.

	Preschool (% of 1270 responses)	School-aged (% of 236 responses)	Both (% of 287 responses)	Total (% of 1793 responses)
Very prepared	36.9	35.2	32.1	35.9
Quite well prepared	41.4	33.1	47.0	41.2
Somewhat prepared	16.7	24.2	15.7	17.5
Slightly prepared	4.3	5.9	4.9	4.6
Not prepared	.7	1.7	.3	.8

Table 14: Extent to which centre-based caregivers felt prepared by their training

Level 1 caregivers indicated that they felt slightly less prepared than did Level 3s, 70.5% responded that they felt “very” or “quite” well prepared as compared with 88.3% of Level 3s.

The 96 respondents who reported feeling “slightly prepared” or “not prepared” tended to cite more than one area:

	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Child guidance/discipline	151	18.9
Programming	139	17.4
Knowing the expectations of the job	127	15.9
Working with families	122	15.3
Working with special needs	121	15.2
Managing routines	111	13.9
Other	26	3.3
Total	797	100.0

Table 15: Areas in which centre-based caregivers felt less prepared

“Other” responses included working with 6+ aged children, communication and interpersonal relationship skills

The CCHRSC reports a general consensus among ECE students and faculty, early childhood educators, child care employers, licensing officials and experts that early childhood post-secondary education gives graduates the skills and knowledge they need to work in child care.

2.1.5 Working Conditions

The survey explored various factors related to the working environment of caregivers, including the length of their work week, their perceptions as to the adequacy of staffing, and the amount of time they spend in tasks other than direct child care.

67.7 % of the caregivers work more than 36 hours a week.

The number of hours that centre-based staff work each day is shown as a percentage based on the total number of respondents in the group. Caregivers in school age care are much more likely to work fewer hours each day, while work hours for preschool caregivers tend to fall in the 37 to 45 hour range.

	Preschool (% of 1310 respondents)	School-Age (% of 273 respondents)	Both (% of 295 respondents)	Total (% of 1878 respondents)
Less than 10 hours	3.6	8.4	1.7	4.0
10-16 hours	1.6	19.8	4.4	4.7
17-26 hours	5.0	21.6	7.5	7.8
27-36 hours	15.0	20.9	14.6	15.8
37-45 hours	70.6	27.1	63.7	63.2
More than 45 hours	4.2	2.2	8.1	4.5

Table 16: Centre-based caregivers’ hours of work

Hours of work tend to be longer in for-profit centres, with 6.8% of staff working more than 45 hours as compared with 3.1% in the not-for profits and 69% as opposed to 58% working 37 to 45 hours.

56.6% of the respondents in the MIRFY study stated that they worked more than 36 hours a week as compared with 67.7% in the child care sector.

57.8% of the caregivers agreed that the staffing at their centre was adequate.

When the respondents were asked if they think that the number of staff in their program is adequate, 57.8% agreed or strongly agreed. In contrast, in the MIRFY study 40.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that staffing levels were adequate for the accomplishment of tasks.

Adequate Staffing	Preschool (% of 1250 responses)	School-aged (% of 269 responses)	Both (% of 283 responses)	Total (% of 1802 responses)
Strongly agree	19.4	23.4	16.3	19.5
Agree	39.5	34.2	37.1	38.3
Neither agree nor disagree	16.6	10.4	18.7	16.0
Disagree	19.3	22.7	19.8	19.9
Strongly disagree	5.2	9.3	8.1	6.3

Table 17: Centre-based caregivers' opinions about adequacy of staffing

The difficulty of finding substitute staff was often mentioned as a problem. Respondents commented on the “Lack of casual workers to cover if you call in sick” and “Having to work when you're sick because there is no one to cover you.”

The majority of caregivers believe that their centre is at least somewhat successful in attracting well-qualified and effective caregivers.

The respondents were asked about the extent to which they think that their organization attracts well-qualified and effective child care workers. School-aged caregivers seemed slightly less confident as to the quality of their co-workers than do preschool staff:

Success with Attracting Caregivers	Preschool (1234 responses)	School-aged (268 responses)	Both (277 responses)	Total (1779 responses)
Very well	20.0	12.3	16.6	18.3
Fairly well	45.7	39.6	43.3	44.4
Not bad	22.2	29.5	26.7	24.0
Poor	9.1	12.7	9.0	9.6
Very poor	3.0	6.0	4.3	3.7

Table 18: Centre-based caregivers' opinions about quality of staff at their centre

Some caregivers expressed concern about the quality of staff:

Need more child care staff that are trained and well qualified, not fresh from high school and quit 6 months later. Since I started working here there was always a shortage of staff and unqualified staff.

[We need] More English speaking staff.

I've noticed that daycare centres within major centres such as Calgary are beginning to hire people just on the basis that they are breathing

I feel that people need to be more selective in the quality of staff that is being hired.

I've been an in-ratio director for 6 years. I think I've had 2 qualified staff during that time. Sure puts a lot of pressure on me.

{I would like} more help from responsible staff.

Level one is for anyone who can grunt and nod and write some English... is [considered] qualified to work with children.

[There needs to be an] Improved work ethic with staff at centres.

42.1% of the caregivers spend less than 1 hour a day on tasks other than direct child care.

The CCHRSC (2007) reported that “Many ECEs felt that they could not practice early childhood education, and that a good part of their day was taken up with custodial/janitorial tasks” (2007, p. 25). Asked how much of their work day is spent doing tasks other than the direct care of children (for example, working in the office, cleaning, planning cooking creating displays, washing toys, making snacks) these caregivers responded as follows:

Time Spent on Other tasks	Preschool (% of 1248 responses)	School-aged (% of 269 responses)	Both (% of 287 responses)	Total (% of 1804 responses)
Less than 1 hour	43.8	41.6	35.2	42.1
1 to less than 2 hours daily	36.7	30.9	34.1	35.4
2 to 3 hours daily	10.7	14.9	20.2	12.8
More than 3 hours daily	8.9	12.6	10.5	9.7

Table 19: Amount of time spent in tasks other than child care

2.1.6 Job Satisfaction

Almost three-quarters of the caregivers reported feeling ‘quite’ or ‘very’ satisfied with their job.

The CCHRS Council found that job satisfaction plays an important role in staff turnover. The majority of caregivers in each of the settings is “very satisfied” or “quite satisfied” with their employment, with similar levels of satisfaction in preschool and school-aged care.

Satisfaction Level	Preschool (% of 1267 responses)	School-aged (% of 271 responses)	Both (% of 287 responses)	Total (% of 1825 responses)
Very satisfied	23.9	25.1	24.4	24.2
Quite satisfied	50.7	51.3	47.4	50.3
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	15.2	19.2	16.7	16.0
Somewhat dissatisfied	8.1	4.1	9.4	7.7
Very dissatisfied	2.1	.4	2.1	1.8

Table 20: Centre-based caregivers’ level of satisfaction with their employment

Child care work can be fun and rewarding, as these caregivers remind us:

I enjoy working at this centre, and I really enjoy working with the children. I think I have the funniest job in the world.

The pay sucks and the hours are long but the job is very rewarding if staff take the time to remember what a child has done with your help.

The group expressing the highest level of dissatisfaction were the caregivers with Level 2 certification. 14.9% of these respondents indicated that they were “somewhat” or “very” dissatisfied. The Level 3 caregivers expressed the lowest levels of dissatisfaction at 7.4%.

The equivalent question in the MIRFY question yielded slightly lower scores for staff satisfaction. 61.7% of the MIRFY respondents rated their job satisfaction in the two top categories as compared with 74.5% of the caregivers. 9.5% of the caregivers and 12.3% of the MIRFY respondents scored in the lower two categories.

Caregivers were asked about the reasons they moved to their present place of work, the factors that keep them at their current place of work, their level of satisfaction with their employment and ways that their job satisfaction could be improved.

An improved work environment was the reason that caregivers most frequently cited for moving to their present place of work.

When asked about their reasons for moving to their present employer, caregivers tended to give multiple responses:

Reasons for Moving	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Improved working environment	759	17.8
Moved from a different geographical location	593	13.9
Higher salary	557	13.1
More flexible/better hours	533	12.5
More responsibility	528	12.4
More possibilities for advancement	530	12.4
Better benefits	391	9.2
Less responsibility	109	2.6
Other	258	6.1
Total	4258	100.0

Table 21: Reasons centre-based caregivers moved to their present place of work

The most frequent “other” responses were:

- the day care at which they had been working was closed or sold
- the location of the centre was more desirable. An operator/director in a large urban centre wrote, “The location of the centre seems to be a deciding factor in keeping and employing people as most of our staff live extremely close to the centre.

Other reasons caregivers gave for coming to their present employer included:

- having come to the centre as a practicum student
- having had their own children in the centre
- the job was available and they were asked to work there

-
- desire for a more professional work environment. One respondent noted that she had [previously] been “working in a private daycare that ran with no regard to Licensing or Labour Laws.”

Respondents in the MIRFY study also listed a number of factors as being important in their decision to accept their current position (again, multiple responses were given):

- Working conditions 96.6%
- Atmosphere 95.3%
- Use of education and experience 94%
- Ability to balance family and work 89.9%
- Supervisor knowledge 87.8%
- Supervisor support 85.9%
- Wages 84.3%
- Opportunity for promotion 59.1%
- Fewer responsibilities 20%

The factor most likely to keep caregivers at their present place of work is their enjoyment of the children and families.

Caregivers were asked to indicate factors that keep them at their present place of work and then to identify the one most important factor. The multiple response question yielded the following:

Reasons for Staying	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Enjoy the children and families	1676	21.4
Enjoy my co-workers	1431	18.2
Quality of working environment	1127	14.4
Feel recognized and appreciated for the work I do	906	11.5
Have access to training and/or education	847	10.8
Quality of supervision	840	10.7
Wages and benefits	527	6.7
Able to be with my own children while working	274	3.5
No other work available	131	1.7
Other	88	
Total	7847	100.0

Table 22: What keeps centre-based caregivers at their place of work

When asked to identify the single most important factor keeping them at their present place of work, almost half of the caregivers (47.8%) indicated “enjoy the children and families.” This rating was highest for the school-aged caregivers (52.2%) and somewhat lower for the preschool caregivers (46.6%).

Location was an important “other” factor as well as shift flexibility. Dedication to the children was a major factor. One caregiver noted, “I don’t want to leave my group of kids with the other staff in my centre.”

A respondent with teaching credentials from another country mentioned that teaching positions were not available to her because her foreign education was not recognized.

When caregivers were asked what changes would improve their job satisfaction, they cited increased wages and/or benefits along with more recognition and appreciation.

The caregivers noted a number of changes that would improve their job satisfaction. Of these, wages and/or benefits and recognition and appreciation are the most frequently noted and were often mentioned in comments as well. (Respondents were able to indicate multiple responses.)

Changes to Improve Job Satisfaction	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Increase in wages and/or benefits	1633	29.6
More recognition and appreciation	1378	25.0
Improved quality of staff	856	15.5
Access to more training and/or education	754	13.7
Change in working environment	328	5.9
Change in job responsibilities	276	5.0
Change in management	203	3.7
Other	94	1.7
Total	5522	100.0

Table 23: Changes that would improve centre-based caregivers' job satisfaction

Although caregivers agreed that increased wages and benefits, along with more recognition and appreciation, would be the most important factors in increasing their job satisfaction, respondents suggested that competent management, supportive relationships with other staff, sufficient and good quality staff, appropriate staff/child ratios, shorter work days (particularly for directors), better access to resources, increased support for children with behavioural needs, and a better physical environment were all important to increasing job satisfaction and preventing burnout.

Reporting on the national child care picture, the *YBIC!* study (1998) reports that:

In 1991 and 1998 staff and directors cited “providing a better salary” as the most important thing needed to make child care a more satisfying work environment.
(p. xv)

The CCHRSC's 2003 Labour Market Update Study found that

...job satisfaction was the lowest among those working in regulated full-day child care centres. In addition to the poor wages and benefits, reasons for low job satisfaction included the lack of leadership in the curriculum, pedagogy and human resources, resulting in less than desirable quality programs for children and working environments for staff; the lack of access to training and professional development; and spending too much of the working day on custodial activities rather than on early childhood activities and practices for which they have been trained. (p. 19)

Caregivers stressed the importance of competent management.

There were many comments on the importance of competent management:

It is very hard when they [centre]) are owned and run by different people. Even though they are all licensed by the same rules some are just not good places and that gives staff a bad view of daycare or burns them out because of what they have to deal with.

Good management is highly important because kids can sense high stress levels and in turn make them stressed and then everyone gets worn out and bitchy.

Gossip/manipulation of management and by other staff [is a problem, as is] management who don't do things unless licensing asks them.

[We need} Mental support from management/owner and appreciation.

[We have] No leadership from management.

To keep staff, the director must first stick to their word, paying raises when they are promised especially.

A director who trust and appreciates staff is vital. I don't have that. I have no say or power regardless of education and experience.

Not only [should] the childcare workers be evaluated with their job performances but also the director be evaluated. I think that it's important that the director be held accountable if their own behaviour as a boss is inappropriate. I've been working in the childcare field for 23 years and only in 3 centres during that time. The director I work for now is the second boss I've had that uses manipulation and intimidation with many of the staff to [get them to] act their way! This can become unjust.

In child care, the needs of the staff are just as important as the needs of the children. Staff that are not able to properly teach and care for the children if their own well being is not taken into consideration. Employers need to look after their staff.

The CCHRSC (2007) report mentions that the shortage of trained early childhood educators means that new graduates are often thrust into supervisory positions shortly after graduation. This could be one of many factors in the difficulties caregivers experience with management.

Supportive relationships with coworkers are important to caregivers.

A positive relationship with co-workers is very important as well. Many caregivers stressed the need for an environment that is physically and emotionally healthy for both children and staff. They described this as an environment that is pleasant, respectful and supportive, in which there is open communication and freedom from abuse. Some respondents appeared to enjoy such working conditions:

I work with a terrific partner for 3 ½ years.

I really like when we have our potluck suppers. It brings everyone together and we have a good time. You get treated very good here by all staff and parents. I have never had any job where we would do things together as a group.

Others reported less pleasant experiences:

Staff get very frustrated and stressed when they don't get the proper support from other staff and owners.

Staff [need to be] working more as a team. Less competition.

Staff should not be allowed to have their children work at the same centre or room as it causes problems i.e. preferential treatment for staff children by parent and other staff or management.

Some staff are not professional with lack of respect for others and are not properly trained to work with kids

[I came here] To save my sanity. Was totally degraded at previous centre.”.

Caregivers feel that child staff ratios should be changed or at least followed.

Many caregivers noted the need for improved staff/child ratios and some said that ratios aren't being followed:

Staff-child ratios should be smaller/especially toddler age. Double groups are too large i.e. a group of 12 toddlers in one room.

Ratios should change—some children can't handle being in groups.

Ratios for 2, 3, and 4 [years] are too high. You can't give enough attention to each child to help out and learn.

[Centres should be] Following guidelines to ratio (not just when licensing is here)

I have been in centres that lied about ratios to staff and that was the number one reason I left my last job.

As suggested in the comment above, several caregivers expressed a need for more careful monitoring:

Management who don't do things unless licensing asks them [contribute to a poor work environment]

[We need] More owners who are qualified in child care and monitored more

...licensing officers need to drop in more and monitor more. They bend the rules to suit the family owned business, no wonder people get frustrated and leave the profession.

Caregivers would like more access to resources and materials.

Some respondents suggested a need for better access to materials and resources. One said that increased financial support for daycare centres could be used for supplies, toys, equipment, repairs, workshops etc.

Caregivers believe there should more support for children who have behavioural needs.

Respondents feel there needs to be increased support to help them work with children who have behavioural needs:

[It is] Difficult to obtain resources to help children with behaviour problems. It seems that sometimes the choice is either take them or kick them out where they have no help and nowhere to go but we have so little experience, resources or staff that it is hard to take them on. We need more centers that can take on behaviorally challenged children. It's hard for the average daycare to cope.

More support staff needs to be available i.e. relief staff and aids or coaches for behavioural children.

[There is] Poor support for high needs and behavioral children... Group sizes are based on typically developing children, but classrooms now are made up of $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of children who have speech/language, behavioural, emotional and other developmental issues (with no support staff)

[There are] Way too many children who need assistants and can't get them due to young age

How are we supposed to help other children improve any skills when all day you're redirecting and spending all your time with the behaviour problem children?

Some caregivers mention needs related to the physical environment.

The physical environment concerns some respondents:

I would like you to know that in order to keep and attract child care staff, we want to have a staff room in our day care to eat and rest during our break. We want to have a toilet for staff only.

A few caregivers complained that the need to meet licensing requirements increases stress.

Caregivers mentioned that:

Regulations increase stress and friction between staff and operator.

Licensing needs to back off and get more realistic about this job...puts too much pressure on workers regarding ratio, programming :the more stickier they get the more difficult to retain daycare workers.

It would be nice if the government raises our wages and not to be so hard with the staff of the day care centre when they come to supervise us.

Caregivers mentioned several other changes that would improve their job satisfaction, including professional development days and more planning time.

Other factors that were mentioned as improving job satisfaction were:

- professional development days
- more planning time
- regular job evaluation
- decreased pressure of licensing regulations
- more opportunity for job advancement
- access to Montessori training programs
- priority given to quality care

The company I work for does not follow labor laws unless forced.

It seems like finances, politics and self interest often take priority over quality care.

- the opportunity to bring their own children to the centre at which they work

It would be great if we could bring our own children to work with us. We take time or other children but our own children suffer by not having them with us. It's too ironic."

A respondent makes the point that the turnover of children moving to older classes each month is stressful to staff. Others complain of having no breaks, of often working through lunch and of being expected to do more than their own job.

The caregivers tended to see limited opportunities for advancement in their place of work.

Most of the caregivers did not see these opportunities arising frequently in their place of work.

Opportunities for Advancement	Preschool (1208 responses)	School-aged (263 responses)	Both (274 responses)	Total (1745 responses)
Frequently	7.9	5.7	8.4	7.7
Often	14.7	11.0	16.8	14.5
Quite often	14.0	8.4	12.8	13.0
Sometimes	26.4	25.5	22.3	25.6
Not often	21.4	32.3	25.5	23.7
Not at all	15.6	17.1	14.2	15.6

Table 24: Centre-based caregivers' opinions about opportunity for advancement

2.1.7 Wages

Caregivers were asked to report their earnings exclusive of the wage enhancement provided by the Alberta government. Wage enhancement adds an additional hourly amount ranging from \$.90 for Level 1 staff in pre-accredited centres to \$4.14 for Level 3 staff in accredited centres.

70.7 % of centre-based caregivers who are paid on an hourly basis earn less than \$13.00 an hour.

75.6% of the staff who responded to a question about the basis for their pay indicated that they are paid on an hourly basis, while the remaining 24.4% are paid monthly or bimonthly. 88.3% of for-profit respondents were paid hourly compared with 63.4% in not-for-profits. 89% of Level 1 exempt and 83.2% of Level 1 staff are paid hourly as compared with 56.8% of Level 3s.

Those staff being paid on an hourly basis were asked to report on their rate of pay exclusive of staff support enhancement. Their responses are shown as percentages based on the total number of respondents. As the graph shows, the large majority of respondents from preschool centres (92.2%) earn between \$7.00 and \$15.00 an hour, with .2% (2 respondents reporting that they earn less than the \$7.00 minimum wage. School-age care has a lower percentage of caregivers earning between \$7.00 and \$9.00 an hour. Well over half (61.2%) earn between \$10.00 and \$12.00 an hour while 83.7% earn between \$10.00 and \$15.00 an hour.

The 2209 recorded responses to the salary questions exceeds the number of surveys submitted by centre-based caregivers by 671, suggesting that a number of respondents submitted both hourly and monthly figures.

Hourly wage	Preschool (% of 1062 responses)	School-Age (% of 227 responses)	Both (% of 249 responses)	Total (% of 1538 responses)
Less than \$7	.2	0	.4	.2
Between \$7 and \$9	25.9	7.5	22.5	22.6
Between \$10 and \$12	46.4	61.2	41.8	47.9
Between \$13 and \$15	19.9	22.5	26.1	21.3
Between \$16 and \$18	5.3	7.0	6.0	5.7
Between \$19 and \$21	.8	.9	.4	.7
Between 22 and \$25	.5	.5	.4	.4
Prefer not to say	1.1	1.1	.4	2.4

Table 25: Centre-based caregivers' hourly wages

Responses indicated that hourly wages tend to be slightly higher in not-for-profit centres, with 78.5% of staff earning \$12.00 an hour or less as compared with 59.5% in not-for-profits.

Hourly wage	For profit (% of 708 responses)	Not-for-profit (% of 656 responses)	Other (% of 25 responses)	Total (% of 1389 responses)
Less than \$7	.1	.0	.0	.1
Between \$7 and \$9	31.1	13.0	20.0	22.3
Between \$10 and \$12	47.3	46.5	32.0	46.7
Between \$13 and \$15	15.5	29.6	28.0	22.4
Between \$16 and \$18	3.7	8.1	20.0	6.0
Between \$19 and \$21	.1	1.5	.0	.8
Between 22 and \$25	.1	.9	.0	.5
Prefer not to say	2.0	.5	.0	1.2

Table 26: Centre-based caregivers' hourly wages by auspice

Cross-tabulations with certification level showed that 58% of Level 1 exempt caregivers in preschool child care earned between \$7.00 and \$9.00 while the highest percentages of Level 1 (50.8%), Level 2 exempt (51.8%), Level 2 (61.2%) and Level 3 exempt (59%) earned between \$10.00 and \$12.00 42.6% of Level 3s earned between \$13.00 and \$15.00, 15.6% earned between \$16.00 and \$18.00 and 4.9% earned \$19.00 and hour or more.

In comparison, the 1998 *You Bet I Care* study reports an average hourly wage for caregivers of \$8.36.

69.3 % of centre-based caregivers who are paid on a monthly basis earn less than \$2000. a month.

Staff who are paid on a monthly basis reported their income as follows A comparable hourly rate has been calculated based on an average work week of 35 hours. These figures do not include staff support enhancement

Monthly Wage	Comparable Hourly Rate	Preschool (% of 490 responses)	School-Age (% of 81 responses)	Both (% of 100 responses)	Total (% of 671 responses)
Under \$1000	Under \$6.59	7.1	21	8	8.9
Between \$1000 and \$1499	\$6.59 - \$9.88	33.9	21	31	31.9
Between \$1500 and \$1999	\$9.89- \$13.18	31.4	18.5	22	28.5
Between \$2000 and \$2499	\$13.19 \$16.48	15.5	19.8	20	16.7
Between \$2500 and \$2999	\$16.48 - \$19.77	5.5	6.2	7	5.8
Between \$3000 and \$3999	\$19.78 - \$26.37	1.8	7.4	4	2.8
Between \$4000 and \$4999	\$26.37 - \$32.96	.2	1.2	0	.3
\$5000 or more	\$32.97 or more	.4	.0	1	.4
Prefer not to say		4.1	4.9	7	4.6

Table 27: Centre-based caregivers' monthly wages

As with the hourly rates, monthly incomes tended to be somewhat lower in the for-profit sector, with 56.8% of caregivers earning less than \$1500.00 a month compared with 29.2% in the not-for-profit centres. However, 2 respondents from for-profit centres reported monthly incomes of \$5000.00 or more while only 1 not-for-profit respondent showed earnings at that level.

The monthly incomes increased by certification level, with 85.1% of Level 1 exempt preschool caregivers earning under \$1500.00 and 12.8% of Level 3s earning \$2500.00 or more.

Low wages were by far the most frequently cited barrier to recruitment and retention in child care. 90.8% of the centre-based caregivers who are paid on an hourly basis earn \$15.00 an hour or less while 81% of those on a monthly salary earn under \$2500.00 This suggests that centre-based caregivers may be among the lowest paid of human service workers, given that only 61.1% of respondents in the MIRFY study earned under \$2500.00 a month.

Many caregivers and operator directors find it hard to understand why the important and demanding work they do is so underpaid.

The caregivers understand the importance of the work they do with children and feel that their low wages are, in one caregiver's words, "a 'slap in the face' pay for all you do each day":

Child care staff are not paid enough for the hard work and extra time and energy it takes to take care of children. Child care is a demanding job, emotionally and physically. It takes training and a certain personality to do well in this field. Child care practitioners need to be paid more so this field can be taken more seriously and considered to some as a career.

I think it is important to realize the work that child care professionals really do, and the high stress environment that we put ourselves into every day. Wages should reflect the importance of our jobs and the big role we play for the future of our children.

As a teacher I was paid well for less work. In day care you are way under paid when we see our children 2X as much and teach them important language skills, fine motor, and basic life skills.

The wages are the most crippling thing about childcare. I owe \$18,000. in loans to achieve a level 3 in ECD. The wages do not reflect the importance of our job. Children need to be valued and appreciated and we need trained qualified professionals to ensure this.

It doesn't make sense that our job is so important but we don't get paid accordingly. My husband works at a computer all day—it's not stressful

or all that important. We deal with children and how we respond to them can affect them for a lifetime!

People need to live and the work is hard and real.

Caregivers find it difficult to survive on the wages they are earning.

Even the most dedicated of caregivers seemed discouraged by their inability to earn enough money to live even somewhat comfortably:

The pay needs to be raised. I feel that I work extremely hard with no future. I enjoy the work but to go to school for years and come out into the work field starving, I feel it was almost not worth it.

We can't afford to have our own children attend day care on the wages we make.

The cost of living has soared, however, our wages have not. It is not fair that we provide quality child care for other families but due to lack of compensation in wages and no benefits our own families suffer

...both my wife and I have worked with children in the past 10 years. Some people, including myself, have a calling a passion to care for, love, encourage and meet the needs of children [but we] would find it impossible to raise a family and own our own house if I were to do this F/T.

It's NOT a career—CANNOT survive on these wages

“You spend two years in college and basically get minimum wage. You can't afford to buy groceries some months.

I see wonderful, enthusiastic women ...who are making a career in childcare but who are on the poverty line...I have seen the number of GMC [Grant MacEwan College] students in the program dwindle over the years to the point where hiring a Level 3 staff is almost impossible

—an operator/director

Student loans have left some caregivers with a burden of debt.

Many respondents mention struggles to pay off student loans on a child care salary.

student loans for the courses to become a child care worker cost a lot and take a long time to pay off. When working in child care, though it's great because you love the kids, the pay is not enough to cover rent, loan and living expenses not to mention trying to have something in savings. If the pay is low so too should be the cost for schooling in that career.

sadly if I could talk to myself back when I was thinking about college and taking the courses, it would be an unhappy talk about the great love of the kids but the inability to pay bills, living on tight budgets, and a struggle to make ends meet, and I would try to talk myself out of the course for a different career that might make some money and allow for a higher quality of life than just trying to make ends meet.

Caregivers could earn more working at fast food restaurants.

Many respondents expressed disbelief that they are being paid less for the important work they do than they would be paid at fast food restaurants or retail:

The biggest issue for our centre is competing with other employers regarding wages... McDonalds \$12.50/hr. Child care (without wage enhancement) \$10.00.-\$1.002. What are people's priorities—Children vs. Hamburger flipping. Disgusting!"

*I am losing great staff to go and work as a person answering phones at a sports store for \$5.00 more an hour than they made working in child care.
(an operator/director)*

It is a bit depressing to know that you could go to Wendy's and make \$13.00/hr and you work in a daycare, caring for people's children, which is a huge responsibility, and people are making \$8.50 an hour. Seem fair?

I went to school for 5 years. I have level 3 and my salary is very poor. I have 24 years of experience in childcare and I feel that is not right my wages. I have only \$15.61/hr and I am senior worker in the room for a few years. In Tim Horton's the starting wage is \$15.00/hr.

Everything is about money. Staff that are well qualified and educated aren't well paid, their wages are too low. They have a possibility of

finding a peaceful, quiet job where they have a higher wage and less stress.

Caregivers would like to have regular pay increases.

Respondents ask for a fair wage scale with regular salary increases:

I now make \$6.00 an hour more than when I started working in childcare 25 years ago.

"I am 40. Been working with kids since I was 16 and got a raise 2 years ago from minimum wage.

I only get paid \$1.00 more/hr than a level 3 who started yesterday and I've worked there 11 years.

Staff wages need to be increased on a regular basis such as every 6 months or 1 year. When your wages stay the same even after working for the same company for an extended period of time, motivation for this line of work can diminish.

Some caregivers are expected to volunteer the time they spend for staff meetings, planning etc.

Several respondents indicated that they would like to be paid for planning time and staff meetings. "If they require us there, then we should be paid for it"

Slightly over a quarter of the caregivers had additional employment outside of their child care jobs.

Caregivers were asked whether they had paid employment outside their child care position and, if so, how many hours they work. Responses showed that staff working in school age care were somewhat more likely than staff in preschool child care to have paid employment other than their child care position. Results are shown as a percentage of total responses.

Outside Employment Status	Preschool (% of 1085 responses)	School-aged (% of 247 responses)	Both (% of 262 responses)	Total (% of 1594 responses)
Not employed	78.0	59.1	72.5	74.2
Less than 5 hours a week	5.1	4.0	6.9	5.2
5 to 10 hours a week	7.6	13.8	10.3	9.0
11 to 19 hours a week	5.3	7.3	5.7	5.6
20 or more hours a week	4.1	15.8	4.6	6.0

Table 28: Centre-based caregivers’ employment outside child care

30.1% of respondents from not- for-profit centres were employed outside of their child care position compared to 21.7% of caregivers from for-profit centres. Some of the staff who have paid employment to supplement a part-time child care wage. Others simply cannot afford to live on a child care salary:

I have a part time job working evenings Sun-Thursday but... even with a level 3 and a class A in A.S.C. [after school care], I don't make enough to be able to work just one job.

In 1998, the YBIC! study reported that, nationally, 17.8% of full time child care staff had additional paid work and 81.1% said they did this to supplement their income. This compares with 22.1% of the preschool caregivers who reported they have additional jobs. However, it is possible that some of these caregivers were employed part time in their child care position.

The CCHRSC (2007) mentions that early childhood educators with post-secondary credentials now have many more employment opportunities.

Some of the caregivers who are reporting other employment may be contracting as mentors with the Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement (ARCQE) or as validators or moderators with the Alberta Association for the Accreditation of Early Learning and Care Services (AELCS). These are recently established career-related opportunities that might help to keep well-trained, experienced child care staff in the field.

2.1.8 Benefits

43.2% of the caregivers receive medical benefits through their employer and 20.4% receive pension or RRSP contributions.

Caregivers were asked to indicate which benefits they receive from their employers. The chart below shows the frequencies (in percentages) with which the respondents mentioned each type of benefit. For example, 70.9% of the respondents mentioned the most frequently received benefit, “a paid vacation of two or more weeks a year.”

Type of Benefit	Preschool	School-Age	Both	Overall
Paid vacation of two or more weeks a year	74.9	51.4	68.8	70.9
Paid closure days	71.2	48.1	71.4	68.5
Pay for overtime work	59.2	76.6	58.7	60.9
Medical coverage	45.8	30.8	41.6	43.2
Dental coverage	44.9	30.3	39.4	42.2
Maternity/paternity leave	43.7	34.6	39.0	41.7
Paid professional development days	33.1	42.8	26.4	33.5
Paid sick leave of more than 6 days a year	30.7	16.3	23.0	27.6
Paid sick leave of up to 6 days a year	25.1	23.6	17.5	23.8
Pension or RRSP contributions	22.0	12.5	19.7	20.4
Paid stress relief days	14.0	10.1	10.8	13.0
Other benefits	3.7	9.6	5.2	4.6

Table 29: Benefits centre-based caregivers receive

Other benefits included full or partial life insurance, long term disability insurance, free gym membership at the YMCA, membership to Costco, birthdays off with pay, dinner at staff meetings, potential for bonuses, days off for Christmas and Spring concerts, a half hour a day

of prep time, a health spending account, pay for some statutory holidays, full or partial tuition costs.

National data from the 1998 *You Bet I Care* study is broken down for “assistant teacher” and “teacher.” It shows that 55% and 58%, respectively, had extended health care, 54% and 57% had dental coverage, 69% and 74% had paid sick days and 21% and 25% had a retirement or pension plan.

There were significant differences in the benefits available in not-for-profit and for-profit centres. Two caregivers noted that it is difficult for private daycare to accommodate such needs.

Type of Benefit	For-profit (% of 684 responses)	Not-for- profit (% of 831 responses)	Other (% of 25 responses)	Overall (% of 1540 responses)
Paid vacation of two or more weeks a year	66.8	76.8	60.0	70.9
Paid closure days	63.3	72.3	72.0	68.5
Pay for overtime work	49.0	72.6	56.0	60.9
Medical coverage	24.6	60.6	36.0	43.2
Dental coverage	24.4	58.8	40.0	42.2
Maternity/paternity leave	30.0	52.9	56.0	41.7
Paid professional development days	21.6	44.6	36.0	33.5
Paid sick leave of more than 6 days a year	4.7	49.1	28.0	27.6
Paid sick leave of up to 6 days a year	9.2	36.7	24.0	23.8
Pension or RRSP contributions	11.7	27.4	36.0	20.4
Paid stress relief days	3.4	21.4	8.0	13.0
Other benefits	4.1	5.2	16.0	4.6

Table 30: Benefits by auspice

Employees with benefit plans paid varying percentages toward benefits, with school-age caregivers contributing slightly more to their benefit plan than preschool caregivers:

Employee Contribution	Preschool (% of 475 responses)	School-Age (50 responses)	Both (104 responses)	Total (629 responses)
1-25%	46.7	76.0	38.5	48.3
26-50%	40.4	20.0	49.0	40.2
51-75%	4.4	.0	6.7	4.5
76-100%	7.6	4.0	5.8	7.0

Table 31: Percentage of benefits paid by centre-based caregivers

Caregivers emphasized the need for sick pay.

Respondents particularly emphasized the need for sick days, pointing out they can't work effectively when they are ill and that they risk transmitting their illness to the children:

Who can afford to be sick with no pay?

Staff MUST have sick pay and medical benefits. When kids get sick and we get sick we force ourselves to come to work with no job performance.

How can you live a life when your check goes to bills and mortgage— heaven forbid you need anything medical or dental—there's nothing left for that... There's no sick or stress paid days. I firmly know this is an issue—it's a daycare. Tons of kids, stress and sickness come hand in hand. At least 1 day per month would be a godsend.

A pension plan would make it more feasible for caregivers to plan for a long term career in child care.

Lack of a pension plan is a serious deterrent to caregivers who would like to make a career in child care:

Thank you for the wage enhancement and professional development. What would make a big difference to keep staff is a provincial pension plan. This is my biggest concern as a childcare provider for a long term career.

I am currently seeking employment with pension/better benefits.

I have worked in daycare for 23 years now and when I retire I won't have any benefits or pension plan.

Holiday pay doesn't necessarily mean that caregivers can take vacations.

Most staff are single parents that can't afford to take holidays with pay as they rely on their paid holiday pay on each cheque.

2.1.9 Recognition and Appreciation

Caregivers felt at least somewhat appreciated by others in their program or profession but less appreciated in the larger society.

When asked if they felt their work was appreciated by others in their program or profession, the caregivers responded as follows:

Feelings of Appreciation	Preschool (% of 1236 responses)	School-aged (% of 266 responses)	Both (% of 285 responses)	Total (% of 1787 responses)
Very appreciated	19.5	18.0	19.6	19.3
Usually appreciated	36.7	40.2	34.7	36.9
Sometimes appreciated	30.6	28.9	31.2	30.4
Seldom appreciated	10.0	10.9	11.6	10.4
Unappreciated	3.2	1.9	2.8	3.0

Table 32: Extent to which caregivers felt appreciated

While the statistical data show that 86.6% of caregivers felt at least sometimes appreciated by others in their program and profession, their comments indicated that they did not feel equally valued in the broader society; for example,

The child care profession as a whole is seen by a lot of society as not much more than Babysitting, The public needs to be aware of the quality programs that are being offered at day care centres and how much work goes into them.

The families we care for appreciate us, but society at large still views us as just babysitters.

*[We need] recognition of the importance of this career in the community
[In the] recent civic elections, no mention of childcare improvements or development*

Parents think we have a minimal education. It's difficult for a certified teacher to stay in this industry

Caregivers see lack of recognition reflected in poor salaries and working conditions.

Lack of recognition as to the importance and nature of child care work is seen as directly tied to poor salaries and working conditions.

I believe that society does not realize how important daycare educators really are. We have to have post secondary education to work in this field and you can walk down the street to MacDonaldis and get paid more for having no education.

In 15 years not much has changed in childcare. The profession continues to be unrecognized, underpaid and unappreciated.

Childcare is not seem as a serious profession like teaching. More word needs to get out that our staff are educated, trained and should be respected. In turn their wage should reflect such.

Child care has such a high turnover because no one respects it, especially not the government. Hence we who raise up the next generation get paid \$8-12 an hr. while engineers get thousands thrown to them.

Until the field is viewed as a vital, valuable industry and the employees are treated as such, staff will be low paid, uneducated and dissatisfied. I think a re-evaluation of priorities is needed.

2.1.10 Professional Development

Caregivers in day care programs are eligible for a \$1000. professional development funding grant from the Alberta government. This grant can be spent on post-secondary course work, first-aid training, resources and books to a maximum of \$250.00 a year, relevant conferences and workshops.

Slightly less than a third of the caregivers with Level 1 or Level 2 certification are studying toward their next level.

Caregivers with Level 1 certification were asked if they were currently studying to attain Level 2. Presumably this would include caregivers with Level 1 and Level 2 exempt. 92.9% of the Level 2 exempt caregivers were studying to attain Level 2 but only 18.9% of those with Level 1.

Similarly, caregivers with Level 2 certification or Level 3 exempt were asked if they were study to attain Level 3. 90.5% of the Level 3 exempt caregivers reported that they were working toward Level 3, along with 16.4% of the Level 2s.

Some caregivers were unaware that they are eligible for a professional development grant.

When asked if they were aware of their eligibility for the \$1000. professional development grant, 82.5% of preschool respondents and 77.2% from the combined centres responded affirmatively. Of the preschool caregivers, the persons most likely to say that they were unaware of the grant were those with Level 1 or Level 1 exempt certification (39.8% and 25.1% respectively). Caregivers in school-aged centres are not eligible for this grant.

Slightly over half of the preschool caregivers had used some or all of their professional development grant.

Caregivers in school-aged programs are excluded from the table below because they are not eligible for the grant. The lower level or usage in centres that provide both preschool and school-aged care probably reflects the fact that some of the caregivers would be eligible for the grant and others not.

Grant Usage	Preschool (1173 responses)	Both (261 responses)
All or over half of the grant	26.3	16.9
Less than half of the grant	26.1	27.2
Not spent any of the grant	47.6	55.9

Table 33: Percentage of professional development grant used

88.6% of the Level 1 exempt preschool caregivers and 61.6% of those with Level 1 had not spent any of their grant. As might be expected, the Level 2 exempt and Level 3 exempt preschool caregivers were the most likely to have spent all or over half of their grant.

In comparison, the *You Bet I Care* study (1998) found that, nationally, 23.8% of preschool caregivers had not participated in any staff development in the prior year.

Several respondents expressed appreciation for the professional development grant:

As long as the government continues to enhance wages and assist with funds for education, I won't be going anywhere—I love my job!

I love my job. Always have since I started in 1995, but it's time that things change for the better. The professional development grant money is a great first step

The caregivers cited a number of reasons for not using their professional development grant.

The caregivers were asked about their reasons for not using the grant. Many cited multiple reasons. In the table below, the responses from school-aged caregivers are included even though they are not eligible for the grant. Not surprisingly, 76.8% of school-aged staff indicated that they did not know about the grant. For the preschool-aged caregivers who responded, the reason most frequently cited was “I don't have time.” Almost a quarter of the preschool caregivers said that they didn't know about the grant.

Reasons for Not Using Grant	Preschool (% of 712)	School- Aged (% of 211)	Both (% of 185)	Total (% of 1108)
I don't have time to take courses or go to training sessions	47.5	19.4	44.3	41.6
I didn't know about the grant	24.0	76.8	27.6	34.7
Courses are not available at times convenient to me	34.7	18.5	31.9	31.1
I don't receive information about training opportunities	23.5	31.8	20.0	24.5
I don't plan to continue working in child care	14.0	11.4	14.1	13.5
I am unable to access the training I want	15.4	6.6	10.8	13.0
The courses are not interesting to me	10.5	8.1	13.0	10.5
I don't have the pre-requisite skills	7.2	3.8	7.0	6.5
Other	17.6	11.8	21.6	17.1

Table 34: Centre-based caregivers' reasons for not using the professional development grant

A number of respondents mentioned that they were not taking courses because they will be retiring soon. Some who do not plan to continue working in child care already have degrees in Education and are hoping to move into the school system shortly. Others are working on Education or other degrees.

Lack of time was the reason the caregivers most frequently gave for not using the professional development grant.

“I don’t have the time” was the reason most often given for not using the professional development grant. Child care work is demanding and courses are frequently offered at night. As well, over 25% of the caregivers had employment in addition to their work at their centre:

You take courses in the evening after working all day; don't get home until 11:00.

Our job is so demanding. By the end of the day I am too exhausted to go to school

I have many jobs outside of the job = no time

Working 2 or 3 jobs detracts from a workers ability to be focused and enthusiastic. Schooling is out of the question under these circumstances

Several respondents pointed out that taking courses would take valuable time away from their own family or would be difficult because they were single parents.

Why take time away from my family for more training when it will not affect my wage?

Working a full time and part time job plus single parent, no time.

Some caregivers mentioned that they don't have the money to pay for courses “up-front” or to pay for child care while they take courses.

There is no doubt that the professional development grant is a great boon to many caregivers. However, many mention that they have to wait for reimbursement and don’t have the money “up-front” to pay for courses.

I can't afford to pay for the course up front and then wait for months to be reimbursed.

Others find the cost of child care while attending classes prohibitive.

Many caregivers felt that there would be little return for the time and effort they spent taking courses.

Many respondents felt that it was not worth their while to attend courses when there would be little change in their salary.

For the small amount more in accreditation money per hour it is hardly worth it to continue training in ECD.

Why on earth would I waste good money to obtain a level 3 and make no money in the long run?

I have been in early childhood for over 21 years. I make \$11.50 an hour and decided to finish Level III and will be done in a few months. Probably get another \$.50 an hour. WOW!"

To make as much money as I do to go to school makes no sense.

It's a waste of time to be paid only \$1.00 an hour more.

As one caregiver mentioned, the expense of effort of training might better go into a more lucrative career than child care:

I am pursuing a teaching career, pays more.

Some caregivers had difficulty accessing the grant.

Some respondents noted problems with accessing the grant, for example:

My bosses have not taken the time to qualify me for the grant.

There are too many conditions attached to any funds received from the government.

Don't understand how to get it or use it.

There are too many conditions applied to grants/funds i.e. what course we can take, what books we can buy.

Some caregivers felt they lacked the English skills to be successful in courses.

Several respondents mentioned that they don't have the English skills they would need to take courses.

I don't have enough vocabulary to finish Level 3.

A shortage of relief staff makes it impossible to take part in professional development activities during work hours.

Caregivers reported that there are no relief staff to fill in for them when they want to take part in professional development activities offered during the day.

Some caregivers emphasized the link between training and professionalism and between training and quality care.

Several respondents endorsed the value of training, mentioning the shortage of early childhood trained staff and value of training:

Until you make child care a professional job, where people have to get professional training the general public will continue to think of us as babysitters.

Children are wonderful, enlightened beings. They should be taken care of by well-trained caregivers.

Others felt training was not useful, or not useful to them.

Some respondents felt training was not useful, or not useful to them. For some, this had to do with the quality of courses. Others felt that they had learned through experience or had taken enough courses already.

Being a child care worker is deep in their hearts not what they gain from going to school.

If you have children of your own you can understand children's needs

Not interested. Very happy at level one.

I have taken lots of courses. I don't need anymore at my age

Recognize [my] years of "on the job" training

Level is a joke course if you ask me—anyone can work with kids and this class won't teach you much.

Don't think I need it because I've worked with children for 18 years

Level one class is absolutely ridiculous and stuff required for level 2 is a bit much.

Some caregivers offered suggestions for making training more accessible.

The respondents offered suggestions about the delivery of training:

It would be better to bring in sub staff and give us a paid working day to take courses and pay the sub with some of the grant money and pay the course. Also, run courses on reg. Mon-Fri because evening and weekends are too busy.

Courses should be offered Saturdays rather than be downtown at 10 pm—that's totally safe—NOT!!!

I have no time to get from work to classes downtown that start at 6 pm. I work most days till 5 or 5:30.

[We] Need more regional workshops delivered online or personally to a centre. New staff mentoring from professionals that are retired or working part-time.

Caregivers, particularly those who already have a Level 3, expressed a need for more training options.

Respondents expressed a need for more training options. They felt that there was little available for persons who already have Level 3

It's hard for a Level 3 to use the Professional Development Grant as there are few courses or workshops out there we have not taken or that have interested us

Provide more opportunities for graduated ECD diploma students to have a better chance to further any other training, to upgrade any new research/studies finding.

Respondents commented on the need for more course options generally, for training opportunities for rural areas, and for centre-based offerings. One suggested an apprenticeship program, another requested more recognition and training for Montessori programs and still another mentioned being able to challenge levels

Some respondents felt it would be useful to expand the scope of the professional development funding.

A number of respondents made alternative suggestions for the use of the professional development funds:

Use professional development grants for in-house staff training and staff meetings

I am not happy with the grant money which is being dictated [as to] how we spend it. There is \$250.00 for book resources. I don't need any more books! |And I don't want to take any more courses at this stage of my life. If I could buy games, poster, learning material that are things children can use.

We would like to see our professional development money used on our criminal record checks as you need this to work in a quality child care program and it is quite a lot of money to get updated every year.

There should be an allocated amount of money from the \$1000. professional development grant that can be used for traveling to and accommodations for going to training and conferences.

The \$1000.00 enhancement money does little for us because it only pays the workshop fee, not hotel, meal, accommodation. Staff do not make enough to pay for all that.

Offer more than \$1000.00 toward school because it only covers 1 course per year and I don't make enough to pay for the rest of them in a year. At this rate it will still take me 4 more years to get my level 2.

Better use of accred. money (spend the money how you want, not only on books). There should be special needs training in the school program, benefits, PD days, entire centre closes, child care conventions like teacher conventions, learn new ideas, exposed to new things, meet other people, mingle recognition that we are teaching the youth and doing a good job, incentives, bonus, classroom money to buy new "up to date" stuff.

I would appreciate my grant money helping me pay off my (student) debt so I am not forced to leave this field and so I can quit working 45-70 hours a week between my 2 jobs to pay my loans back and make ends meet.

Help level 3 staff repay student loans.

Make it so that if one staff knows they are not gonna need it let someone taking classes use towards their schooling. The \$1000. grant should be transferable to other staff that choose to do courses...

...the accreditation supplement for staff should be higher for Level 1s as a lot of staff can't do courses because of the English barrier.

The people I know are using this grant to help themselves get out of their daycare job.

The \$1000.00 Professional Development grant however is a good start but I think it is good only for employees who are academically qualified and want to advance in the field.

2.1.11 Looking to the Future

The caregivers were asked about their own plans for the future and about their views of child care as a career choice.

Almost half of the respondents felt that they would likely be working in their present centre in two years.

“How likely is it that you will be at your present place of work two years from now?” respondents were asked. While 46.6% of the respondents felt that it was “quite” or “very” likely that they would be in their place of work in two years, 24.6% said that it was “unlikely” or “very unlikely” that they would be. The response to this question was fairly consistent across certification levels.

Likelihood of Staying	Preschool (% of 1263) respondents)	School-Age (% of 270 respondents)	Both (% of 284 respondents)	Total (% of 1817 respondents)
Very likely	22.6	15.6	19.7	21.1
Quite likely	26.2	22.6	25.4	25.5
Somewhat likely	29.0	27.4	28.9	28.7
Unlikely	12.3	17.8	13.0	13.2
Very unlikely	9.9	16.7	13.0	11.4

Table 35: Likelihood that centre-based caregivers will be at their current place of work in two years.

Well over half of the caregivers (63.4%) felt it was likely they would be working in some aspect of child care in two years.

When asked about the likelihood that they would be working in any aspect of child care two years from now, respondents replied somewhat more positively, with 63.4% saying that it was “very likely” or “quite likely” and 12.2% giving an “unlikely” or “very unlikely” response. This response was also quite consistent across certification levels.

Likelihood of Staying	Preschool (1247 respondents)	School-Age (268 respondents)	Both (285 respondents)	Total (1800 respondents)
Very likely	34.3	36.2	36.1	34.9
Quite likely	29.7	22.4	29.1	28.5
Somewhat likely	23.8	26.5	24.6	24.3
Unlikely	7.2	9.3	6.7	7.4
Very unlikely	5.0	5.6	3.5	4.8

Table 36: Likelihood that centre-based caregivers will be working in child care in two years

A caregiver writes:

I cannot afford to work here for an extended period of time. I wouldn't be able to live on what I make as a single woman.

The *You Bet I Care* study asked participants if they expected to be working in child care in 3 years, rather than the 2 years specified in this survey, so direct comparisons are difficult. However, it is interesting that 42.6% of Alberta caregivers responded affirmatively in that 1998 study as compared with 63.4% in this research.

Caregivers identified low wages as by far their most important reason for leaving the profession.

“If you were to leave the child care profession,” respondents were asked, “what would be the reasons?” This question asked, first, for multiple answers and then for the single most important reason. The multiple response question produced the following results:

Reason for Not Staying	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Low wages	1397	25.9
Little recognition for child care as a profession	904	16.8
Lack of benefits	902	16.8
Little opportunity for job advancement	642	11.9
Poor working environment	532	9.9
Poor management	458	8.5
Job responsibilities don't fit training	303	5.6
Other	246	4.6
Total	5384	100.0

Table 37: Reasons centre-based caregivers would leave the profession

Wages were identified as by far the most important reason for leaving the child care profession. The results of this single response question are shown according to program type:

Reason for Not Staying	Preschool (% of 1170 respondents)	School-Age (% of 2745 respondents)	Both (% of 269 respondents)	Total (% of 1684 respondents)
Low wages	61.4	51.0	61.7	59.9
Little recognition for child care as a profession	8.5	7.3	7.1	8.1
Poor management	6.3	4.5	6.3	6.1
Poor working environment	6.9	11.0	6.3	7.4
Lack of benefits	4.7	8.2	5.2	5.3
Little opportunity for job advancement	3.1	8.6	2.6	3.8
Job responsibilities don't fit training	1.6	4.1	2.6	2.1
Other	7.5	5.3	8.2	7.3

Table 38: Reasons centre-based caregivers would leave the profession by program type

The *YBIC!* research found that the most frequently cited negative aspects of working in child care were:

- Pay and promotions 75.5%
- Lack of respect 45.8%
- Working conditions 32.4%

Over half (58.2%) of the respondents would recommend child care to someone who is making a career choice.

Staff in school age centres were slightly more likely (65.7%) to recommend child care than those in preschool or combined centres (57.4% and 54.8%) The highest percentage of affirmative responses was from caregivers with Level 1 certification (70.3%) and the lowest from Level 2s (46.1%). 42% of the caregivers would not recommend child care as a career choice, citing low

wages, little recognition and appreciation for child care as a profession and lack of benefits as the most important reasons:

- low wages (30.4%),
- little recognition and appreciation for child care as a profession (22.4%)
- lack of benefits (19.9%)
- poor working environments (6.2%)
- training is not easily available 3.6%)
- other (2.1%)

The “other” comments included:

Pay and working conditions are not equal across the board.

Not [having] enough trained staff makes the job difficult.

[There is] high staff turnover.

Only in another province because the wage in Alberta is so low.

Only if you want to deal with stupid rules and stress.

Some respondents felt that the opportunity to work with children outweighed other considerations:

*If anyone likes to work with children its worth [it] all the way!
Regardless of the pay!*

2.2 THE CENTRE-BASED OPERATOR/DIRECTOR SURVEY

Operators and/or directors from 269 centres responded to the survey. They represent preschool child care centres (day cares), school-aged centres and centres that provide care to both age groups.

2.2.1 Centre Characteristics

Because the operator/director questionnaires were returned with the caregiver surveys, the distribution of the centres by region, location, auspice and accreditation status was very similar to that of the caregivers.

Slightly over half of the operator/directors reported that they or their centre belong to a professional association.

144 (53.5%) of the centre-based operator/directors reported that they or their centre were members of a professional association. Responses ranged from 42.9% of centres in Region 7 to 91.7% in Region 5. Respondents from preschool centres were slightly more likely to belong to a professional organization (64.8%) than those from school-aged (50.0%) or combined (52.3%) centres. Not-for-profit centres were considerably more likely to belong to professional organizations (72.4% of centres compared with 39.8%)

The operator/directors reported on the number of full time and part time paid child care staff in their program.

The majority of the centres employ part-time as well as full-time child care staff. School-aged centres are the most likely to employ fewer than 5 full-time staff.

Number of Full-time Staff	Preschool	School-aged	Both	Other	Total
Less than 5	13	44	3	1	61
5-9	42	3	20	1	66
10-15	36	0	16	0	52
More than 15	15	0	24	0	39
Total	106	47	63	2	218

Table 39: Number of full-time caregivers in centres

Number of Part-time Staff	Preschool	School-aged	Both	Other	Total
Less than 5	54	49	27	2	132
5-9	8	10	7	0	25
10-15	1	2	0	0	3
More than 15	4	2	4	0	10
Total	67	63	38	2	170

Table 40: Number of part-time caregivers in centres

They also reported on the number of children attending their centres either full- and part-time.

Number of Full-time Children	Preschool	School-aged	Both	Other	Total
Less than 10	6	7	0	0	13
11-20	16	11	3	0	30
21-30	15	26	5	1	47
31-50	36	15	17	0	68
51-70	31	3	13	0	47
More than 70	7	6	27	0	40
Total	111	68	65	1	245

Table 41: Number of full-time children in centres

Number of Part-time Children	Preschool	School-aged	Both	Other	Total number of programs
Less than 10	49	34	24	0	107
11-20	13	12	8	1	34
21-30	6	5	7	0	18
31-50	4	5	5	0	14
51-70	1	2	0	0	3
More than 70	1	1	0	1	2
Total	74	59	44	2	178

Table 42: Number of part-time children in centres

2.2.2 Staffing in Centre-Based Care

50.8% of the centres are not filled to their licensed capacity.

Just over half (50.8%) of the operator/directors reported that their centres were serving fewer children than the number for which they were licensed. This was fairly consistent across the regions (from 41.7% in Region 5 to 66.7% in Region 2) with the exception of Region 9 in which

all three reporting centres were operating below capacity. At 51.8% preschool care centres were slightly more likely than school-aged care centres (43.1%) to be operating below capacity.

Some programs choose to operate below capacity because they believe that a lower child-staff ratio enables them to provide better service. However, the inability to find suitable staff is most frequently indicated as a factor in failing to operate at capacity. As a Region 8 operator/director wrote, “Attracting staff has become a difficult problem for the childcare community. We have a waiting list of 180 children and this is due to lack of spaces in childcare centres that can’t find staff.”

The inability to find suitable staff was the most frequently cited reason for centres to operate under capacity.

The 132 operator/directors who indicated they were not at capacity cited the following reasons (some gave more than one reason):

Reason	Number
Unable to find suitable staff	100
Choose to operate under ratio	41
Not enough families applying for care	38
Other	15

Table 43: Reasons centres are not operating at capacity

Other reasons cited for running under capacity included drawing from a restricted population (e.g. only francophone children or only one school).

The staff turnover rate over the past 18 months was approximately 46%.

Operator/directors were asked to report on the number of child care staff who had left their employment since June 1, 2006, a period of approximately 18 months. The 257 operator/directors who responded to this question reported as follows:

Number of Staff who have Left	Preschool	School-age	Both	Total
None	7	11	1	19
1-3	47	25	16	88
4-6	31	14	14	59
7-10	17	8	18	43
More than 10	10	13	14	37
Total	112	71	63	257

Table 44: Numbers of caregivers who have left centres in the past 18 months

Assigning mean values to each of the categories for full and part time staff and for staff that have left shows a turnover rate of roughly 46% over the 18 month period.

92% of the centres had staff leave during the 18 month period. The 1998 *YBIC!* study showed that 64.7% of centres Canada wide had teaching staff leave in the prior 12 months. The *YBIC!* research also showed that in 1998, Alberta had the highest rate of staff turnover of all the province, at 44.8% over a one year period. The current turnover rate, while still very high, compares favourably at 46% over 18 months.

In the MIRFY study, 45 directors/supervisors/managers reported on staff turnover over the past 12 months. 15.5% had had more than 10 staff leave during this time period. This compares with 14.4% of the operator/directors in centre-based care who reported a turnover of more than 10 staff in the past 18 months.

The reason most often cited for leaving was to accept a position in a different occupation or profession.

Operator/directors were asked about the reasons caregivers most frequently gave for leaving their employment (multiple responses were possible). For caregivers in preschool and combined centres, the most frequently cited reason for leaving was to accept a position in a different occupation or profession. School-aged caregivers were most likely to leave to pursue further education.

Reason for Leaving	Preschool (% of 109)	School-age (% of 65)	Both (% of 64)
To accept a position in a different occupation or profession	67.9	30.8	81.3
Family circumstances	61.5	36.9	54.7
To pursue further education	41.3	75.4	42.2
Terminated by employer	35.8	21.5	46.9
To accept a position in another centre-based child care, family child care or school-aged care	35.8	30.8	29.7
To accept an early childhood position other than the above	12.8	13.8	15.6
Retirement	7.3	16.9	12.5
None given	5.5	4.6	3.1
Other	15.6	15.4	7.8

Table 45: Reasons centre-based caregivers gave for leaving

The operator/directors explained that many staff left because they could make more money working in another field, that they left because of burn-out or because they had been offered teaching positions. They also commented on the difficulty with finding suitable staff and staff who would like to work in child care for the long term:

Many staff now available have problems with reliability and punctuality.

[They have] no intention to work long term.

Many of our staff are education students looking for experience working with children.

The 1998 *YBIC!* research showed that, nation-wide, 38.1% of directors had one or more staff leave to go to a position outside child care as compared with 67.9% in this study.

2.2.3. Strategies to Find and Keep Staff

The operator/directors had tried various ways to advertise staff positions.

44.8% of the operator/directors who responded to a question about hiring reported that word of mouth is the most effective way to find staff while 24.9% found the best results with online advertising and 21% with newspaper advertisements. The remaining 9.4 % mentioned signs, a college job bank, university e-mail, University hire-a-student, networking, community newsletter, practicum students, radio (although very expensive).

One out-of-school operator/director suggested using school staff who are already working during the day and needing a few extra hours of employment. Another respondent noted, “Where we partnered with the city to develop and deliver “Play leadership” for youth, those youth have come back to become staff when they are 18 years of age.” Several respondents noted that, currently, nothing seems to work.

It is difficult to attract quality staff to daycares and out-of-school, some operator/directors note. A number of reasons were given including:

- burnout
- lack of training
- lack of initiative
- low wages
- rural location

One respondent commented, “In September I had 3 positions. I have spent 25 hours interviewing to get 2 people.” Others mentioned the difficulty with finding qualified staff who want to work only part time.

Comparisons were made with child care work in other provinces:

Our staff speak French. The trouble seems to be keeping qualified French workers as most come from Quebec where the wages are much higher...”

There was also a concern that demands for training make it more difficult to find staff:

Stop putting education demands on out of school care staff—they only work part time. It is hard enough to find staff in rural Alberta.

They had tried various strategies to attract and keep staff.

Operators/directors reported using a number of strategies to attract and keep staff (percentages relate to the total number of cases as many centres have implemented more than one strategy):

Strategy	Percentage
Increased wages	93.8%
Increased benefits	49.4%
More flexible work hours	60.7%
Reduced hours of operation	12.1%
Other	10.1%

Table 46: Strategies used by centre-based operator/directors to attract staff

Other strategies that were mentioned included:

- recognition awards
- bonuses for staff who work hard
- bonuses for staff who recruit new staff
- low staff/child ratios
- job sharing
- discounts on childcare or free childcare
- promoting the availability of free education
- closing for the summer and paying staff for the 6 weeks off to ensure they return in the fall.

2.2.4 The Effect of Accreditation

Over half of the centres reported that accreditation had an effect on their centre's ability to hire and keep staff. In some cases the impact was positive; in others, negative.

Operator/directors were asked whether accreditation has had any effect on their centre's ability to hire and keep child care staff. There were affirmative responses from 55.9% of preschool centres, 24.5% of school-aged centres and 46.8% of combined centres. This response could indicate either a positive or a negative impact. For example, in centres that are not accredited, including school-aged centres, accreditation might make it more difficult to hire staff.

The majority of survey respondents were associated with centres that were already accredited or working toward accreditation. Respondents noted a number of advantages to accreditation, including access to wage enhancement and professional funding:

The accreditation funding has immensely helped us to improve resources for the staff and children

Unaccredited centres don't pay enough to live on

Operator/directors tended to see accreditation as advantageous in attracting staff and lack of accreditation as a disadvantage:

Most staff want to work for a quality centre offering great care to the children and families and a good working environment.

People see our centre as a respectable one—a good place to work (partly because of accreditation status).

We are not accredited. Staff accept positions that are higher paid.

Three operator/directors noted that when applicants respond to an ad they never ask about accreditation while another mentioned that it is the first question potential employees ask. “Wages are expected to be higher,” a respondent commented. |

The accreditation process is demanding, and one operator/director noted that “the process scares staff away.”

The fact that wage enhancement is tied to accreditation provoked this comment:

I find it sad that people in child care are having to “prove” they are “worthy” of a wage increase e.g. the accreditation process.

The accreditation process was seen as valuable apart from the increased funding it provides.

There have been advantages to accreditation beyond increased funding:

{The} accreditation process was very useful for me and it helped me with my work with children and families.

[The] accreditation process helped me to get better organized and to get a deeper understanding of my role as caregiver and teacher.

Parents and staff understand quality care better as a result of surveys, discussions and communication regarding accreditation.

[Accreditation] expanded my knowledge as a director and made me more organized and systematic

Accreditation may not be sufficient to resolve issues of recruitment and retention.

Accreditation alone was not seen as resolving the staff crisis in child care:

Even though we are accredited, staff is looking into other fields for work e.g. retail, fast food because the money is better.

Even though pre-accreditation helps, most staff leave to go into other fields that pay better and [involve] less stress. E.g. Tim Hortons in downtown Calgary pays \$17./hr with benefits

Accreditation has been a positive force in the industry, however the hiring crisis has had such a negative effect that 2 ½ years ago before we were accredited, recruitment was much easier.

2.2.5 Working Conditions

Some operator/directors work for all or much of the day with the children in addition to their administrative and other tasks.

Directors, particularly, described long hours of work and a heavy workload:

As owner/director, I work directly with children all day. Then I do admin after hours, laundry, groceries, shopping, payroll, book keeping, cleaning etc.”

I am expected to do my job as Director, be in ratio a lot of the day. Train people with no qualifications. Do housekeeping chores; get the work done for accreditation. Do the accounting, payroll, meet parents, and enroll children. Go to meetings on my own time and be available from 6:30 am to 6 pm each day when staff are away. I looked up this position as a challenge, trying to get the centre organized, but I am in ratio a lot of the time.

According to the 1998 YBIC! report, directors throughout Canada worked an average of 9.8 hours of unpaid, centre-related work each week.

2.3 OTHER ISSUES IN CENTRE-BASED CARE

2.3.1 A Sense of Urgency

The responses from centre-based caregivers and operator/directors convey a sense of urgency with regard to the future of child care:

*We are in a crisis with regard to our profession. Whether we are accredited or not, if there is no one applying we cannot fill the positions.
(an operator/director)*

Many centres are unable to operate at capacity because they cannot find suitable staff. Even the most dedicated caregivers question the feasibility of working in a profession that pays them less than they could make in other, less demanding work; that offers few benefits; and that the public perceives as little more than unskilled labour.

The Alberta government has made positive steps to improve conditions in the sector; however, respondents believe that they may be insufficient to bring about the change that is needed.

The Alberta government has taken positive steps to support preschool-aged childcare by providing professional development funding and the wage enhancements associated with accreditation. However, many respondents commented that the changes have been insufficient to bring and keep caregivers into the field:

Alberta needs to provide more wage enhancement funding! The rate of pay is keeping the child care industry in a crisis. The children of this province are suffering. Many are receiving inadequate care that will have a long last effect on the. Mothers are not working because they can't find care and the lack of employees in many industries is horrible. Many centres are hiring inappropriate staff because they need them for ration. The future of Alberta would be enhanced by children 0-6 receiving top quality childcare.

In order to keep people in this field something must be done quickly or we will be losing everyone who cares about children and their families. At this rate the quality of caregiving will simply go down.

Changes (in childcare) are positive (but) the whole process is moving far too slow to effect any real motivating reasons to encourage new and exciting people to become care givers.

It is the government's responsibility to take more action to prevent a struggling industry from falling through the cracks... Action must be taken now or "our children" will suffer.

There are no qualified (Level 1 or higher) to apply for childcare positions. We have also come across many new to the field people who will not do light housekeeping duties and/or diaper changes. We are in a crisis!! This affects the quality of care.

Thanks to the ...funding, staff are getting \$1.34 to \$4.14; however, we all know that this has not been much of an incentive for people to come back to the field, so a lot more needs to be done for that to happen.

[The wage supplement] has brought more people to daycare settings. But if it was a bigger increase it would definitely make a bigger difference e.g. \$2.50/hr. on Level 1.

Child care isn't easy. It takes a lot of dedication and hard work. People are frustrated about money and not feeling like anyone cares

2.3.2 The Status of School-Aged Care

Caregivers and operator/directors in school-aged care feel disadvantaged because they are not eligible for benefits that caregivers in preschool-aged centres receive, as this comment shows:

"It's completely unfair that we (OSC) have been left out." (a caregiver)

The situation in school-aged care and for school-aged caregivers is, in many ways, different enough from that in preschool care (daycare) that it would have been advantageous to survey the groups separately. The two were not easily separated, though, because many centres operate both types of programs.

School-aged child care in Alberta became provincially regulated for the first time in 2004. Guidelines have been introduced with regard to staff qualifications and staff-child ratio. However, out-of-school care centres can not access the staff development monies available to child care staff or the wage subsidies associated with accreditation. A few municipalities provide grants to out-of-school care and fewer yet offer subsidies to parents. In the majority of municipalities, out-of-school care is funded entirely by parents.

School-aged caregivers and operator/directors feel that they are at a disadvantage with attracting and keeping staff because they are unable to offer the “perks” available to preschool centres.

Caregivers and operator/directors of school-aged care centres feel very disadvantaged compared with their counterparts in preschool-aged care. Because they are not eligible for wage enhancement and signing bonuses, they see qualified staff moving into preschool-aged care, making it even more difficult for them to provide good care.

...the school age care field has been put in jeopardy by the provincial government for the past several years with failing to offer wage enhancement, failing to recognize school age qualifications, failure to offer any hope of ever leveling the playing field.

We [Out-of-School Care]) do not get wage enhancement or the \$5,000.00 bonus for coming back to the centre. We received none of the “goodies” daycare staff got. Many of us are University trained, have been working for over 25 years and we were ignored. You will notice on my survey that I would never recommend anyone go into this field even if you love kids because the wages are so restrictive. The quality of staff will keep going down and that is too bad as that affects the kids!

Funding needs to go to OOSC and daycare, not just daycare, or you will lose qualified OOSC professionals to daycare.

Accreditation and wage enhancement dollars make it difficult for school age programs to hire and retain staff.

After school programs would like, NEED, the same benefits allowed to day care providers. Our services are vital to many families and we need to be able to attract professionals.

Would like to see SAC [school-aged care] eligible for accreditation funding, wage enhancements, grants and other benefits that are currently available in Daycare settings. The qualifications standards [should be] changed to reflect the inclusion of school age care professionals.

In the past all grants, benefits, government subsidies have gone to pre-school day care programs—out-of-school programs have consistently been ignored by both federal and provincial governments. They have treated school-age programs as if they don't exist except for licensing regulations.

The split shifts associated with school-aged care can make staffing even more problematic, although some operator/directors find the shifts and the work are uniquely suited to university students who are looking for job experience. Respondents noted:

Working a split shift and still working only part-time is not very convenient. It does not allow for making enough money to support one self. (caregiver)

[It is] difficult to find people to work odd split shifts. (operator/director)

2.3.3 Training Standards and Transfer Issues

The feedback on training touched upon training standards and transfer issues.

Several respondents made connections between training standards and the status of the profession:

There needs to be change in the attitude of people entering the field—this profession should be taken seriously—can't be done without education and interest in the field

Some respondents commented that the standards of training for child care should be higher.

Several respondents mentioned concerns about standards for child care training in the province:

Have all child care workers take the 2 year diploma program. I just moved here from Ontario and I believe that child care in Alberta is lacking the knowledge and preparation required for this demanding field.

I just think the caliber of people who receive their level one are still not qualified. Anyone can enter the field. Everyone is desperate for good workers and they will put up with the crap making the other workers suffer and pick up the slack.

Continued mandatory training other than the first aid/CPR would help staff that have been in child care get rejuvenated or LEAVE cause bad/cranky staff isn't good for anyone especially the children.

Major problems with training, both at Level 3 and Level 1. Many are unaware of their responsibilities as caregiver and too many lack the most basic skills.

Colleges need to be more choosy about who can go into the field, so it is taken seriously.

One caregiver suggested that an orientation for new workers would be helpful.

Respondents described difficulty with the transfer of credentials.

Respondents noted difficulties in transferring credentials from other countries and from other programs within Canada.

I studied this level in my country; I don't need to study it again.

I have education from my original country but [it is] not recognized here.

You should recognize university degrees from foreign countries.

I moved and some of the courses I had taken would not transfer to the college closer to me.

We should be looking at schooling that is transferable within Canada. The training I got is not recognized anywhere else and in order for me to go for Level 3 I have to redo 7 courses of Level 2 to qualify just to start Level 3 in Alberta.

I have a 4 year B.Ed elementary and only qualify for Level 2.

Relax the criteria so that more people with child care related education can become Level 3 e.g. Ed degrees

Giving teachers with university degrees only level 1 is a huge mistake from government of Canada and a big loss for families and children. They are losing very good teachers!!

It was suggested that students with have worked in the field for many years should receive credit for the field placement portion of their training.

One person suggested that students with years of experience in the field should not be required to do a field placement as part of their training.

Field placements cost almost \$800 each. I understand that work experience is important for new people entering the field but they should waive them for employees [who have worked in the field for many years]

2.3.4 Return to Work Bonuses

The Government has instituted a Staff Attraction Incentive Allowance for day care workers who return to the field. Their programs receive \$2500 after the employee has worked for 12 continuous months to a maximum of \$5000 over two years. Many long-term staff feel that the bonus is misplaced:

Bonuses should be for people who stay in the field, not for people who come back.

Long term caregivers feel that it is unfair that staff are being rewarded for returning to the field when persons who have never left have not been rewarded for their commitment.

The fact that staff returning to the field will receive a \$2500.00 bonus for returning to child care was very upsetting to many long term staff:

I would like the money they have offered to people to come back to work to be given to people who have loans because they were at the school taking ECD." For example, I still owe \$10,000.00 of my loan. I am 60 years old and I have worked for 20 years and I think it is time to receive extra money for keeping myself at child work.

"What about staff who have stayed in daycare? Where's our bonus?"

People who come back will get all the training dollars and wage enhancement I do, but they also get an extra \$2500.00 a year for 2 years. I deserve that for not leaving... I'm dedicated to this profession, where is my recognition?"

I have worked at my current job for 10+ years , so I should leave and come back to get some recognition?"

Offer incentives for staff to stay in the field 5,10,15,20 years—some long term staff are a little upset about the sign up bonus offered but nothing offered to recognize them.

Long term child care staff need to be recognized and valued as much as attracting child care professionals for leaving the field

Offer financial incentives i.e. \$500 per year if [they] stay 2 years.

[There should be an] Incentive allowance for those who stay in daycare.

Recognize financially long term staff in field e.g. \$1000,00 for every five years have worked in field.

The state wants to recall staff that left centres with a huge bonus—what an insult to the dedicated staff.

Finally, a word from a caregiver who took advantage of the bonus:

I came back after being gone for 6 months because of the staff attraction allowance. I feel burnt out because there is no money and little advancement.

2.3.5 Promoting Professionalism

Caregivers would like to be recognized as professionals and need to convey a professional image.

There is widespread perception that persons working with young children are not recognized as professionals. Higher training standards are seen as one way to accomplish this, as is establishing a professional identity through a common name. Some respondents spoke about the importance of conveying a professional image:

Childcare staff need to be recognized as professionals. It seems as though every time the media show a clip of a centre...the staff look very unprofessional. It's too bad "we all" share that stereotype.

2.3.6 Paying the Costs of Child Care

The respondents all agree that caregivers need and deserve higher salaries, more benefits and better working conditions. They tend to believe that parents are unable or unwilling to pay the higher fees needed to change conditions in child care and that some kind of government intervention and/or systemic change is necessary. Several respondents mentioned the usefulness of a union or of strike action in drawing attention to salary needs.

Operator/directors are particularly aware that higher staff wages will mean an increase in parent fees.

Increased wages meant a \$70.00 jump in fees for parents.

In order to pay my caregivers the wages they desire I would need to raise parent fees to a point that would put the daycare in a position of disaster.

Many respondents believe that more government intervention is required at the provincial level.

Many respondents saw the need for government intervention in the form of regular wage subsidies, increased subsidies to families, professional development funds and so on. Some suggested a still more extensive role:

Have all daycares run and owned by the government. Build them to specifications that fit young children... Place good, qualified people in them and pay them well with a good government plan.

Government involvement is crucial. If Quebec can do it, so can we.

It is the government's responsibility to take more action to prevent a struggling industry from falling through the cracks. Non-profit accredited centres should be the primary focus to enhance wages, benefits and pension plans. The centres cannot keep upping fees to parents in order to give staff a lousy raise. Qualified staff need to be paid for what they are worth and why is it at the expense of "our children" that it is acceptable to keep us in the predicament.

A number commented that they believe child care is best delivered in the non-profit sector.

The respondent quoted above is just one of several who felt strongly that profit does not have a place in child care, though at least one owner/operator pointed out that there is, in fact, very little profit to be made in child care.

Having worked in the child care profession for 27 years in Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta, I have strong feelings about the funding and quality of child care in this province. In my experience non-profit centres run by a quality board of director provide the best quality of care for children and employment satisfaction for staff. I personally feel it is wrong for the gov't to subsidize private enterprise on the backs of the staff and children in their care.

Some suggested that child care be affiliated with or run like the school system.

Several respondents suggested that the child care system should fall under, or be considered in the same light as, the school system, with caregivers having a status similar to that of teachers.

Child care should fall under the same recognition and guidelines as the school board. To be affiliated [with] or part of the school system and recognized as that on a federal, provincial and municipal level.

Daycares should be run more like schools. Require staff to have 2 years of education but provide them with a decent salary and benefits. If this were the case it would seem more like a profession and less like a low-end service job.

Child care should be looked at as “Early Childhood Education” and treated as such. I feel the childcare profession would gain respect and recognition

Others suggest a more national focus.

Some respondents saw value in a more national focus. Several mentioned the need for a national child care plan while another suggested a cross-Canada standard for licensing.

PART THREE: FAMILY CHILD CARE

Survey packages were distributed to all family child care agencies in Alberta and included questionnaires for the operator/directors, home visitors and providers. Operator/directors were asked to distribute the questionnaires to their home visitors and providers, who were given individual stamped and addressed envelopes for their return. As mentioned previously, some agencies did not distribute the questionnaire because they felt that the wording suggested an employee/employer relationship with providers. However, there was sufficient return to provide useful data.

Who are the Agencies?

Surveys were received from 21 (of a possible 115) family child care operator/directors, 48 home visitors and 248 providers. Based on 2006 staffing figures, this represents an approximate return of 17% for operator/directors, 31% for home visitors and 14% for providers. Because of the low return for providers, the provider responses, though useful, may not be representative. Similarly, the regions are not represented proportionately; for example, there was a much higher return from Region 6 than from Region 3, despite similar numbers of agencies.

By region, the family child care response was as follows:

Region	Operator/Director	Home Visitor	Provider
1	0	0	9
2	3	5	16
3	3	6	27
4	2	2	11
5	1	2	1
6	7	19	129
7	1	6	29
8	0	6	13
9	0	2	1
Region unavailable	4		12
Total	115	48	248

Table 47: Family child care response by region

3.1 THE HOME VISITOR SURVEY

Home visitors (also known as consultants) had a response rate of about 31% which makes the data they have provided particularly useful.

As with the centre-based data, the number of responses provided varied for individual questions because questions were omitted or answers incorrectly marked. Because the number of home visitors responses is relatively small, most responses have been given numerically and as a percentage of the total responses given for that question.

3.1.1 Agency Characteristics

There were home visitor responses from most of the regions of Alberta.

By region, the total number of responses received from home visitors was as follows:

Region	Responses
1	0
2	5
3	6
4	2
5	2
6	19
7	6
8	6
9	0
Unknown	2
Total	48

Table 48: Home visitor response by region

There was representation from rural areas and from urban centres of various sizes.

The agencies with which the home visitors work are in the following kinds of locations:

Location	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Possible Responses
Rural area	11	23.4
Urban centre under 10,000 people	7	14.9
Urban centre with population of 10,000 to 100,000	12	25.5
Urban centre with population of 100,000 to 500,000	1	2.1
Urban centre with population over 500,000	16	34.0
No response	1	2.1
Total	48	100.0

Table 49: Home visitor response by location

The home visitor responses represent both the profit and not-for-profit sector.

Slightly more of the home visitors who responded work in not-for-profit agencies:

Auspice	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Possible Responses
For profit	20	41.7
Not-for-profit	26	54.2
No response	2	4.2
Total	48	100.0

Table 50: Home visitor response by auspice

3.1.2 Home Visitor Profile

38.4% of the home visitors were over 45 years of age and all were female.

The largest age group represented by the home visitors was 36 to 45 years, with 38.4% over 45 years of age. Only 1 person of the 47 who responded was under 25 (2.1%) as compared with 26.7% of centre-based caregivers.

Age Level	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Under 25	1	2.1
26-35	12	25.5
36-45	16	34
46-55	12	25.5
Over 55	6	12.8
Total	47	100.0

Table 51: Ages of home visitors

All of the home visitors were female.

Almost all of home visitors speak English at home.

One home visitor reported that she speaks Spanish at home while another speaks another unspecified, language. The remaining 46 responded that they speak English at home.

3.1.3 Work History

28.9% of the home visitors have worked for their agency 1 to 2 years while 26.7% have worked there for over 10 years.

Of 45 respondents, the largest groups have worked with their current agency for 1 to 2 years or for over 10 years.

Time with Agency	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Less than 6 months	3	6.7
6 months to 1 year	3	6.7
1 to 2 years	13	28.9
3 to 4 years	5	11.1
5 to 6 years	3	6.7
7 to 10 years	6	13.3
More than 10 years	12	26.7
Total	45	100.0

Table 52: Length of time home visitors have worked with their agency

The large majority had worked in child care before coming to their current employer.

88.6% of the home visitors who responded had worked in child care before coming to their current employer, 61% for more than 6 years. This, along with the older ages of home visitation staff, suggests that home visitation represents a career ladder for some child care staff.

3.1.4 Education and Certification

The largest group of home visitors (54.5%) has a 2 year diploma.

Levels of education ranged from less than high school to a postgraduate degree.

Education Level	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Less than high school	0	.0
High school graduate	4	9.1
1 year certificate	7	15.9
2 year diploma	24	54.5
University degree	3	6.8
Postgraduate degree	4	9.1
Other	2	4.5
Total	44	100.0

Table 53: Education levels of home visitors

The majority of home visitors (76.2%) are trained in early childhood education.

92.9% of the home visitors have early childhood education or education backgrounds.

Educational Background	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Early childhood	32	76.2
Education	7	16.7
Social Work	1	2.4
Other	2	4.8
Total	42	100.0

Table 54: Educational background of home visitors

The “other” responses include a three year Bible school diploma.

60.5% have a Level 3 certificate.

The certification status of the home visitors is as follows:

Certification	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Level 1	9	20.9
Level 2	6	14.0
Level 3	26	60.5
Not applicable	2	4.7
Total	43	100.0

Table 55: Certification level of home visitors

One respondent wrote, “[I] currently do not have a certification level at all although I have taught level 1.”

76.7% of the home visitors received their training at a public college.

While the largest number of home visitors have received their training at a public college, some have university or other training.

Educational Institution	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
University	6	14.0
Public college	33	76.7
Private college	2	4.7
Not applicable	1	2.3
Other	1	2.3
Total	43	100.0

Table 56: Where home visitors received their training

77.8% felt “quite” or “very” well prepared by their training.

Respondents were asked to what extent they felt that their training and education had adequately prepared them for their work as home visitors. The pattern of responses to this question was very similar to that of the centre-based caregivers.

Perceptions of Preparation	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Very prepared	17	37.8
Quite well prepared	18	40.0
Somewhat prepared	8	17.8
Slightly prepared	1	2.2
Not prepared	1	2.2
Total	45	100.0

Table 57: Extent to which home visitors felt prepared by their training

The 2 respondents who reported feeling “slightly prepared” or “not prepared” were asked to specify areas in which they felt least prepared. There were 16 responses in all, suggesting that some other respondents may have replied to this question as well:

Perceptions of Lack of Preparation	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Consulting on special needs	4	25.0
Consulting on child guidance/discipline	3	18.8
Consulting on programming	3	18.8
Working with families	3	18.8
Consulting on routines	2	12.5
Knowing the expectations of the job	1	6.3
Total	16	100.0

Table 58: Areas in which home visitors felt less prepared

The home visitors were asked about their preparation to consult in the various areas while the focus for centre-based caregivers was on direct practice. The pattern of responses for the areas was quite similar between the two, given that the small number of home visitors responding to this question makes close comparisons impossible.

3.1.5 Working Conditions

The home visitors were asked about their hours of work. They were also asked how they felt about the numbers and quality of home visitors at their agency and about the quality of providers that it attracts.

29.2% of the home visitors work less than 27 hours a week.

Not all of the respondents work full-time as home visitors, as shown in the chart below.

Hours Worked	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Less than 10 hours	3	6.3
10-16 hours	4	8.3
17-26 hours	7	14.6
27-36 hours	16	33.3
37-45 hours	18	37.5
More than 45 hours	0	0
Total	48	100.0

Table 59: Number of hours worked by home visitors

63.6% of the home visitors agreed or strongly agreed that their agency had adequate staff.

The respondents were asked if they think that the number of staff in their program is adequate:

Adequate Staffing	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Strongly agree	6	13.6
Agree	22	50.0
Neither agree nor disagree	7	15.9
Disagree	9	20.1
Strongly disagree	0	.0
Total	44	100.0

Table 60: Home visitors' opinions about adequacy of staffing

81.4% felt that their agency did “very well” or “fairly well” in attracting well-qualified and effective home visitors.

When the respondents were asked about the extent to which they think that their organization attracts well-qualified and effective home visitors, they responded as follows:

Attracts Well-Qualified Staff	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Very well	20	44.4
Fairly well	17	37.0
Not bad	7	15.2
Poor	2	4.3
Total	46	100.0

Table 61: Home visitors' opinions about the quality of home visitors working for their agency

63.8% felt their agency did “very well” or “fairly well” in attracting well-qualified and effective providers.

The home visitors were also asked about the extent to which they think that their organization attracts well-qualified and effective providers. Approval ratings were slightly lower in response to this question.

Attracts Well-Qualified Providers	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Very well	11	23.4
Fairly well	19	40.4
Not bad	15	31.9
Poor	2	4.3
Total	47	100.0

Table 62: Home visitors' opinions about the quality of providers contracting with their agency

Home visitors mentioned some needs as well:

[I need] access to more resources to take out on visitations.

[I need] a way to work through a provider having English as a second language.

3.1.6 Job Satisfaction

Most home visitors are very or quite satisfied with their employment.

The majority of home visitors (88.9%) reported being “very satisfied” or “quite satisfied” with their employment.

Satisfaction with Employment	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Very satisfied	15	33.3
Quite satisfied	25	55.6
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	4	8.9
Somewhat dissatisfied	1	2.2
Very dissatisfied	0	.0
Total	45	100.0

Table 63: Home visitors' level of satisfaction with their employment

“Every day is different!” wrote one home visitor. “I meet wonderful people.” Another mentioned that she values the flexibility of being able to work part time.

More flexible and or better hours was the most frequently cited reason for moving to their present agency.

Asked their reasons for moving to their present agency, home visitors typically provided more than one response:

Reasons for Moving	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
More flexible/better hours	29	19.5
More responsibility	24	16.1
Improved working environment	21	14.1
More possibilities for advancement	21	14.1
Higher salary	20	13.4
Moved from a different geographical location	12	8.1
Better benefits	12	8.1
Less responsibility	1	.7
Other	9	6.0
Total	149	100.0

Table 64: Reasons home visitors moved to their present agency

More flexible or better work hours were the most frequently cited reason for home visitors to move to their present agency although other factors seemed to be important as well. There was a sizeable “other” response to this question. One respondent noted that, having just moved to the community, working as a home visitor provided her with an opportunity to get out of the house and meet people in the community. Another mentioned that the agency hired her back to help with accreditation. “I was ready for more challenge than as day care staff,” notes another.

The home visitors mentioned “Enjoy working with the providers and families” most frequently as the factor keeping them at their present place of work.

Home visitors were asked to indicate factors that keep them at their present place of work and then to identify the single most important factor. The largest group (31%) indicated “Enjoy working with the providers and families” as the most important factor. “Enjoy my co-workers” was second at 20%.

Reasons for Staying	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Enjoy working with the providers and families	43	16.0
Enjoy my co-workers	39	14.5
Have access to training and/or education	33	12.3
Quality of working environment	32	11.9
Quality of management	29	10.8
Feel recognized and appreciated for the work I do	28	10.4
Quality of supervision	23	8.6
Wages	23	8.6
Benefits	10	3.7
No other work available	2	.7
Other	7	2.6
Total	269	100.0

Table 65: Reasons home visitors stay at their present place of work

“More recognition and appreciation” and “increase in wages and/or benefits” were the factors most frequently cited by home visitors as ways of increasing their job satisfaction.

The home visitors noted a number of changes that would improve their job satisfaction. As with centre-based caregivers, the most frequently noted responses where “more recognition and appreciation” and “increase in wages and/or benefits”:

Changes to Improve Satisfaction	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
More recognition and appreciation	37	22.3
Increase in wages and/or benefits	36	21.7
Improved quality of providers	23	13.9
Access to more training and/or education	19	11.4
Lighter caseload	14	8.4
Change in working environment	11	6.7
Improved quality of staff	9	5.4
Change in job responsibilities	8	4.8
Change in management	5	3.0
Other	4	2.4
Total	166	100.0

Table 66: Changes that would improve home visitors' job satisfaction

Home visitors tended to see few opportunities for advancement in their current place of work.

Asked about the extent to which they have opportunities for advancement in their current place of work, home visitors responded as follows:

Opportunities for Advancement	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Frequently	1	2.2
Often	11	24.4
Quite often	2	4.4
Sometimes	12	26.7
Not often	11	24.4
Not at all	8	17.8
Total	45	100.0

Table 67: Home visitors' opinions about opportunity for advancement

One home visitor noted, "There is little opportunity for advancement unless you go to a government job and then you aren't working with children anymore—it becomes easy to lose sight of the reality of child and family needs and become focused on theory.

3.1.7 Wages

44% of the home visitors earn between \$13.00 and \$15.00 an hour.

Most home visitors are agency employees, although some work on a contract basis. 44.5% of the 45 home visitors who responded to a question about the basis for their pay indicated that they are paid on an hourly basis, while the remaining 55.6% are paid monthly or bimonthly.

Those respondents being paid on an hourly basis were asked to report on their rate of pay, exclusive of staff support enhancement. As the chart shows, the majority of home visitors (56%) earn between \$13.00 and \$18.00 an hour. Overall, hourly salaries were higher than those of centre-based caregivers where the largest group (47.9%) reported a salary range of \$10.00 to \$12.00 an hour.

Hourly Wages	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Less than \$7	0	.0
Between \$7 and \$9	0	.0
Between \$10 and \$12	3	12.0
Between \$13 and \$15	11	44.0
Between \$16 and \$18	8	32.0
Between \$19 and \$21	0	.0
Between 22 and \$25	2	8.0
Over \$25.	1	4.0
Total	25	100.0

Table 68: Home visitors' hourly wages

Of home visitors paid at a monthly rate, the largest group (40.7%) earn between \$2000.00 and \$2499.00 a month.

Home visitors who are paid on a monthly basis reported their income as shown below. A comparable hourly rate has been calculated based on an average work week of 35 hours. These figures do not include staff support enhancement

Monthly Wages	Comparable Hourly Rate	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Under \$1000.	Under \$6.59	1	3.7
Between \$1000 & \$1499	\$6.59 - \$9.88	1	3.7
Between \$1500 and \$1999	\$9.89 - \$13.18	3	11.1
Between \$2000 and \$2499	\$13.19 - \$16.48	11	40.7
Between \$2500 and \$2999	\$16.48 - \$19.77	6	22.2
Between \$3000 and \$3999	\$19.78 - \$26.37	3	11.1
Prefer not to say		2	7.4
Total		27	100.0

Table 69: Home visitors' monthly wages

Again, the salary was higher than that of centre-based caregivers where the largest group (31.9%) earn between \$1000.00 and \$1499.00 a month and the next largest (28.5%) earn between \$1500.00 and \$1999.00 monthly.

Wages are terrible. I have 2 roommates because I can't afford to live on my own. The governments locally, provincially and federally don't care about childcare. We are caring for the most valuable resource in Alberta, children...not oil. (home visitor)

61.1% of the home visitors have paid employment in addition to their home visitation work.

Home visitors were asked whether they had paid employment outside their child care position and, if so, how many hours they work. More than half (61.1%) reported having some paid employment in addition to their home visitation work.

Outside Employment Status	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Not employed	14	38.9
Less than 5 hours a week	2	5.6
5 to 10 hours a week	4	11.1
11 to 19 hours a week	7	19.4
20 or more hours a week	9	25.0
	36	100.0

Table 70: Home visitors' employment outside child care

3.1.8 Benefits

A paid vacation and pay for overtime work were the two most frequently mentioned benefits.

Home visitors were asked to indicate which benefits they receive from their employers.

Type of Benefit	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Paid vacation of two or more weeks a year	34	18.4
Pay for overtime work	32	17.3
Paid professional development days	30	16.2
Medical coverage	15	8.1
Paid sick leave of more than 6 days a year	14	7.6
Dental coverage	14	7.6
Maternity/paternity leave	12	6.5
Paid sick leave of up to 6 days a year	11	5.9
Paid stress relief days	9	4.9
Pension or RRSP contributions	9	4.9
Other benefits	5	2.7
Total	185	100.0

Table 71: Benefits received by home visitors

Some home visitors noted that they work on contract so have no benefit plans. One mentioned the possibility of an annual bonus. Of the 13 respondents who have benefit plans, 4 (30.8%) pay from 1 to 15% of the premium, 8 (61.5%) pay 26 to 50%, and 1 (7.7%) pays (51-75%).

3.1.9 Appreciation and Recognition

86.9% of the home visitors felt appreciated by others in their agency and profession.

The large majority of the home visitors (86.9%) responded that they felt their work was “very” or “usually” appreciated by others in their agency or profession:

Feeling of Appreciation	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Very appreciated	22	47.8
Usually appreciated	18	39.1
Sometimes appreciated	5	10.9
Seldom appreciated	1	2.2
Unappreciated	0	.0
Total	46	100.0

Table 72: Extent to which home visitors felt appreciated by others in their agency and profession

56.5% felt noticed and appreciated by the families with whom they work.

A smaller percentage felt their work was noticed and appreciated by all or most of the families they worked with:

Feeling of Appreciation	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Appreciated by all	2	4.3
Appreciated by most	24	52.2
Appreciated by some	20	43.5
Unappreciated	0	.0
Total	46	100.0

Table 73: Extent to which home visitors felt appreciated by the families with whom they work

Only 23.9% felt appreciated by all or most in the larger community.

Home visitors felt less appreciated in the community at large:

	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Appreciated by all	1	2.2
Appreciated by most	10	21.7
Appreciated by some	28	60.9
Unappreciated	7	15.2
Total	46	100.0

Table 74: Extent to which home visitors felt appreciated by the larger community

3.1.10 Professional Development

Approximately half of the home visitors with Level 1 or Level 2 certification were working toward the next level.

Home visitors with Level 1 certification were asked if they were currently studying to attain Level 2. Similarly, home visitors with Level 2 certification were asked if they were study to attain Level 3.

5 of the 11 home visitors who responded to the former question were studying for their Level 2 certification, while 4 of 9 were studying toward their Level 3.

Home visitors are eligible for a \$1000 professional development grant from the Alberta government. When asked if there were aware of their eligibility, 42 of the 46 respondents (93.1%) replied affirmatively. 16 persons (35.6%) had used all or over half of the grant, 12 (26.7%) had used less than half of the grant and 17 (37.8%) had not spent any of the grant.

The reasons given for not spending any of the grant were:

Reasons for Not Using Grant	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
I don't have time to take courses or go to training sessions	16	50.0
I don't receive information about training opportunities	4	12.5
I don't plan to continue working in child care	1	3.1
I believe that my English skills are not adequate	0	.0
I am unable to access the training I want	5	15.6
I didn't know about the grant	5	15.6
Other	1	3.1
Total	32	100.0

Table 75: Reasons home visitors gave for not using the professional development grant

Home visitors write:

After 25 years it is hard to do a final practicum. Not Fair!

I believe that mature staff should be given credit for their experience in the field and be "grandfathered in" when it comes to being considered

for equivalencies in education. There is a lot of redtape involved in getting Day Care Qualifications to recognize anything! I just need to do a practicum to qualify for a level 2. There is NO incentive for me to go onto a Level 3 with GMCC courses on a part-time bases, since by the time I will have completed it—I'll be ready for retirement! I will be 60 years old in 2 weeks time! I have been in this job 21 years now!

Some home visitors were unable to find courses or programs that were appropriate or interesting for them:

I already have level 3, the only other is the degree in child development.

Need appropriate workshops/professional development choices.

3.1.11 Looking to the Future

The home visitors were asked about their own plans for the future and about their views of child care as a career choice.

Low wages were the reason home visitors most frequently cited for leaving the child care profession, but retirement was also an important factor.

“If you were to leave the child care profession,” the home visitors were asked, “what would be the reasons?” Wages, retirement, benefits and recognition appeared as the most important factors:

Reasons for Leaving	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Low wages	31	18.9
Retirement	26	15.0
Lack of benefits	22	13.4
Little recognition and appreciation for child care as a profession	20	12.2
Little opportunity for job advancement	19	11.6
Poor working environment	16	9.8
Poor management	15	9.1
Job responsibilities don't fit with my training	12	7.3
Other	3	1.8
Total	164	100.0

Table 76: Reasons home visitors would leave the child care profession

“How likely is it that you will be at your present place of work two years from now?” respondents were asked. 70.2% of the respondents felt that it was “quite” or “very” likely that they would be in their place of work in two years while 14.9% said that it was “unlikely” or “very unlikely” that they would be. In comparison, only 46.6% of centre-based caregivers reported that it was “very” or “quite” likely they would still be in their place of work in two years.

When asked about the likelihood that they would be working in any aspect of child care two years from now, 85% of the respondents replied that it was “quite” or “very” likely that they would be while only 8.6% said that it was “unlikely” or “very unlikely”. This compares with 63.4% of centre-based caregivers who felt it “very” or “quite” likely they would be working in child care in two years.

Almost two-thirds of the home visitors would recommend child care to someone making a career choice.

31 (66%) of the respondents would recommend child care to someone who is making a career choice. This level of affirmative response is very similar to that of caregivers in centre-based care. The reasons most often given for not recommending a child care career were wages (31.9%), little recognition and appreciation for child care as a profession (23.4%) and lack of benefits (23.4%).

3.2 THE PROVIDER SURVEY

Family child care providers are self-employed contractors rather than employees of family child care agencies. The return rate from providers was relatively low at about 14%. Fortunately, since this represents 248 providers, the data can still provide a useful picture of the working conditions and concerns of these providers. However, some aspects of the data may not be generalizable throughout the regions.

The number of responses provided varied for individual questions because questions were omitted or answers incorrectly marked. In the data that follows, most responses are given numerically and as a percentage of the total responses given for that question.

3.2.1 Agency Characteristics

Responses were received from providers in all regions of the province.

By region, the total number of responses received from the providers was as follows:

Region	Responses
1	9
2	16
3	27
4	11
5	1
6	129
7	29
8	13
9	1
Unknown region	12
Total	248

Table 77: Provider response by region

Their agencies are located in rural areas and urban centres of various sizes.

The agencies with which the providers contract are in the following kinds of locations:

Location	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Possible Responses
Rural area	32	12.9
Urban centre under 10,000 people	31	12.5
Urban centre with population of 10,000 to 100,000	71	28.6
Urban centre with population of 100,000 to 500,000	16	6.5
Urban centre with population over 500,000	69	27.8
No response	29	11.7
Total	248	100.0

Table 78: Provider response by location

More of the providers were associated with for-profit than with not-for-profit agencies.

Auspice	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Possible Responses
For profit	117	42.7
Not-for-profit	71	28.6
Other	12	4.8
No response	57	23.0
Total	248	100.0

Table 79: Provider response by auspice

3.2.2 Provider Characteristics

The largest group of providers was between 26 and 35 years of age and all were female.

Only 4.7% of the providers were under 25 years of age, as compared with 26.7% of centre-based caregivers.

Age Level	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Under 25	11	4.7
26-35	90	38.3
36-45	68	28.9
46-55	48	20.4
Over 55	16	6.8
Prefer not to answer	2	.9
Total	235	100.0

Table 80: Age of providers

The 224 providers who responded to the question about gender were all female.

The providers speak many different languages in addition to English.

The providers speak a number of languages and dialects other than English including Urdu, Arabic, Polish, French, Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog, Italian, German, Cree, Amharic, Bengali, Czech, Gujerati, Farsi, Hindi, Maori, Serbian, Somali and Tegnena.

3.2.3 Work History

Most frequently, providers have chosen their work because it enables them to work at home with their own children.

For many providers, the decision to work in child care arose from a desire to be with their own children. This is consistent with 1998 statistics showing that, nationally, 87 % of

providers had children at home and 58% have children under the age of 6. (Beach and Cleveland, 1998)

Over 60 percent of regulated family childcare providers are less than 40 years old; 89 percent are married or live with a spouse, 87 percent of regulated providers have children at home, and more than 58 percent have children younger than six years of age.

However, there were other important reasons, and often more than one reason, as shown below:

Reasons for Working as Provider	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
It allowed me to be with my own children while working	178	33.2
I wanted to work from home	131	24.4
I wanted to provide a home environment for children	121	22.6
I wanted to be self-employed	67	12.5
It is a step toward my career goal	28	5.2
Other	11	2.1%
Total	536	100.0

Table 81: Reasons for choosing to work as a provider

One respondent mentioned that her husband was in the military, they moved often, and there was a need for quality care all over Canada. Another wrote, "I am a grandmother looking after 4 grand kids-ages 6 to 2. I'll always be in childcare with them—till I die! Once they are all in school I will no longer be with an agency."

The largest groups of providers have been with their agency for 1 to 2 years or for over 10 years.

Providers were asked how long they have worked (contracted) with their present agency. The two largest groups have been with their agencies either 1 to 2 years (21.1%) or over 10 years (20.7%)

Length of Time with Agency	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Less than 6 months	34	14.7
6 months to 1 year	25	10.8
1 to 2 years	49	21.1
3 to 4 years	29	12.5
5 to 6 years	22	9.5
7 to 10 years	25	10.8
More than 10 years	48	20.7
Total	232	100.0

Table 82: Length of time providers have been with their agency

44.5% of the providers had worked in centre-based child care or with another agency before coming to their current agency.

101 (44.5%) of the providers who responded to a question about previous child care employment had worked in child care before coming to their current agency, 66 (29.1%) in centre-based programs and 35 (15.4%) with another family child care agency. This groups included all of the providers with Level 3 or Level 3 exempt certification.

As shown below, many had worked in child care for a number of years. 53.3% of the providers with Level 3 certification had worked in child care for more than 8 years before coming to their current agency.

Previous Experience	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Less than 3 months	3	2.8
Less than 6 months	4	3.7
6 months to 1 year	14	13.1
1 to 2 years	26	24.3
3 to 4 years	28	26.2
5 to 6 years	11	10.3
More than 6 years	21	19.6
Total	107	100.0

Table 83: Providers' child care experience prior to coming to the agency

3.2.4 Education and Certification

The levels of education of providers varied widely.

Levels of education ranged from less than high school to a postgraduate degree. All of the providers with postgraduate degrees have a Level 1 exempt or Level 1 certification, implying that their degrees are in fields unrelated to child care.

Education Level	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Less than high school	20	9.0
High school graduate	87	39.0
1 year certificate	28	12.6
2 year diploma	33	14.8
University degree	31	13.9
Postgraduate degree	9	4.0
Other	15	6.7
Total	223	100.0

Table 84: Education levels of providers

One provider mentioned that she is working on a Masters in counseling psychology. Another notes that she has an ECD diploma, a Human Services diploma and 1 year of an Education degree.

68.3% of the providers have Level 1 certification.

The certification status reported by the providers was as follows, with the largest number having a Level 1 certificate:

Certification	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Level 1 exempt	35	17.6
Level 1	136	68.3
Level 2 exempt	1	.5
Level 2	11	5.5
Level 3 exempt	1	.5
Level 3	15	7.5
Total	199	100.0

Table 85: Certification levels of providers

The providers had received their child care training from a variety of institutions and programs.

Providers were asked where they obtained their child care training.

Educational Institution	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
University	15	7.5
Public college	65	32.3
Private college	9	4.5
Other	112	55.7
Total	201	100.0

Table 86: Where providers received their training

“Other” responses included the Step Ahead program, their agency, in another country, Watch Me Grow program, I.C.S, Correspondence School, YREC, working in a daycare, and life experiences.

79.8% of the providers reported that they felt “very” or “quite” well prepared for the work they were doing.

Respondents were asked to what extent they felt that their training and education had adequately prepared them for their work as family child care providers.

Feelings of Preparation	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Very prepared	85	39.0
Quite well prepared	89	40.8
Somewhat prepared	29	13.3
Slightly prepared	10	4.6
Not prepared	5	2.3
Total	218	100.0

Table 87: Extent to which providers felt prepared by their training

The providers who felt inadequately prepared were most likely to note “working with special needs” as an area in which they needed more training.

The 15 respondents who reported feeling “slightly prepared” or “not prepared” were asked to specify areas in which they felt least prepared. There were 64 responses in all, suggesting that there were several areas of concern for each respondent or that some other respondents replied to this question as well:

Areas Where Less Prepared	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Working with special needs	14	21.9
Knowing the expectations of the job	11	17.2
Child guidance/discipline	9	14.1
Managing routines	9	14.1
Working with families	9	14.1
Programming	8	12.5
Other	4	6.3
Total	64	100.0

Table 88: Areas in which providers felt less prepared

Access to training was a concern for providers as well as for home visitors. Providers, for example, find it difficult to take time off to complete practicum. There were a number of suggestions about how training courses could be organized to facilitate access:

Offer levels 2 and 3 through home school. Daycare workers should be able to do practicum in their home.

More feasible or appropriate training options [are needed] for providers to complete Level 2 and Level 3.

Some providers expressed their views about the importance of training:

Having been in the field for 20 yrs. I have seen many cycles. We are currently in an upswing which is positive! I think one of my biggest

struggles in working in the field is lack of training requirements to be a fdh provider. To deliver quality care more than level 1 is required. When it is not there are large gaps in the delivery of care. I believe in quality for all children and really struggle with mediocre care.

I feel that the level of care needs to increase in family childcare and wonder if a pioneer mentoring program would be an idea? My families are forced to choose less quality child care for their children due to my closure (due to injury) and it is a very difficult choice to be forced to make.

Lack of time was frequently cited as a barrier to training. When asked if she was studying to improve her credentials, a provider responded, “Maybe later. I work a 50 hr. week as it is.” Another said,

I am a single mom and cannot afford to take time off to do a practicum.

3.2.5 Working Conditions

The providers were asked about their hours of work and their perception of their agency’s ability to attract well-qualified and effective home visitors and providers.

Slightly over half of the providers reported working more than 45 hours a week.

Overall, providers work longer hours than centre-based caregivers, with 51.1% reporting more than 45 hours a week.

Hours of Work	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Less than 10 hours	9	3.9
10-16 hours	10	4.3
17-26 hours	10	4.3
27-36 hours	21	9.1
37-45 hours	63	27.3
More than 45 hours	118	51.1
Total	231	100.0

Table 89: Providers’ hours of work

1998 national statistics showed that providers work an average of 56 hours a week. 47 of those hours are devoted to child care and the remaining nine to preparing children’s activities and meals. (Beach & Cleveland, 1998)

Few of the providers had paid employment besides their family child care work.

Only 19% of the providers reported having some paid employment in addition to their family child care work.

Employment Status	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Not employed	179	81.0
Less than 5 hours a week	10	4.5
5 to 10 hours a week	12	5.4
11 to 19 hours a week	12	5.4
20 or more hours a week	8	3.6
Total	221	100.0

Table 90: Providers’ employment outside of child care

84.4% of the providers felt that their agency was “very” or “fairly” able to attract well-qualified and effective home visitors.

When the respondents were asked about the extent to which they think that their organization attracts well-qualified and effective home visitors, their responses were largely positive:

Perception of Quality of Visitors	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Very well	90	40.0
Fairly well	100	44.4
Not bad	17	7.6
Poor	5	2.2
Very poor	0	.0
Don't know	13	5.8
Total	225	100.0

Table 91: Providers' opinions about the quality of the home visitation staff

76.8% felt that their agency was “very” or “fairly” able to attract well-qualified and effective providers.

The providers were also asked about the extent to which they think that their organization attracts well-qualified and effective providers. Approval ratings were slightly lower in response to this question. The providers with Level 3 certification were the least likely to respond with a “very well” or “fairly well” rating.

Perception of Quality of Providers	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Very well	63	28.6
Fairly well	106	48.2
Not bad	22	10.0
Poor	8	3.6
Very poor	2	.9
Don't know	19	8.6
Total	220	100.0

Table 92: Providers' opinions about the quality of their agency's providers

Providers described some of the stresses they find in working alone.

Belleau (2002) reported that working conditions for family child care providers are characterized by long hours without contact with other adults, lack of outside support and absence of breaks.

Some of the providers who responded to the survey mentioned the difficulties and stresses of working alone:

It is a very hard job to be a good home. There are no breaks, no overtime, no benefits, no adult stimulation.

{I need} More connection with other providers.

[We] Need drop in centres for people to come together to meet and play.

As hard as one works and keeps things safe, things can still go wrong and parents can be unforgiving. One thing can go wrong and all the good you've done would be lost.

The stress of the job—dealing with behavior and demands of the job—children's safety.

[We] Need support for personal appointments to dentist, dr. etc.

Some providers are impatient with the requirements for paperwork and training.

Others express frustration with paperwork and training expectations:

We are expected to jump through hoops with regards to paperwork and training, .giving up our personal family time... I work 10 hrs. per day with no coffee/lunch break, then to give up time on weekends and evenings to attend training sessions etc. We are constantly being told to make time for ourselves so we don't burn out, but that is next to impossible when so much is expected and there is not even paid vacations.... I make an effort to provide quality care with activities and limited TV. This gets harder and harder with added expectations for training and paperwork.

If you (the gov't) didn't keep adding so many different rules, regulations you wouldn't lose so many providers...I think the focus the gov't needs to start doing its looking into the private sitters that have no training, no first aid and no monitoring. These are the children that are not getting the proper care.

Some providers are very happy with the support they receive from their agencies; others are less satisfied.

Some providers find that their agencies offer excellent support while others would like better support.

Even though child care is not my chosen profession, I find that with great support and training from the agency, this has been a rewarding and satisfying choice of employment. I truly believe that because of the support and concern (care) shown to me from the agency I would not be providing child care for others. In other words, the agency has made my choice to provide care for children worthwhile.

My agency member is really very nice. They are always ready to solve my problems and my home visitor is such a nice lady. She always gives me wonderful ideas about how to run a day home, how to prepare the house etc.

The family child care agency I'm working with is great. They appreciate everyone that is involved.

There is no agency available here. I am registered. I have in the past been through agencies and prefer being registered without agency expected support (they were unable to live up to the things they promised to do for support.)

[We need] Better support from agencies.

I feel agencies are overpaid in most cases they do little more than collect and disperse fees

Agency does not stand behind workers—parents are always right.

The contractual nature of the relationship agencies have with providers limits the support agencies are able to provide to them. For example, agencies would risk violating this status if they required providers to participate in training, set fees for child care, or loaned toys or equipment without charging a fee. Agencies negotiate the child care contract; however, in keeping with their contractual status, the provider is able to set her own fees and must assume the risk in cases of non-payment. (Cox, 2005)

3.2.6 Job Satisfaction

79.7% of the providers felt satisfied with the work they have chosen.

The majority of providers (79.7%) reported being “very satisfied” or “quite satisfied” with the work they have chosen:

Satisfaction Level	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Very satisfied	69	29.9
Quite satisfied	115	49.8
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	31	13.4
Somewhat dissatisfied	14	6.1
Very dissatisfied	2	.9
Total	231	100.0

Table 93: Job satisfaction of providers

The providers mentioned that they enjoy working with children in a home environment, that their work gives them the opportunity to stay home with their own children and that there were “less politics than with adults all day.” “It is a good career for a woman with children in school because the hours are flexible,” a home visitor noted, and most providers would appear to agree:

This is a great option for myself and my family. I get to stay home and have a houseful of kids at the same time. I love what I do and see myself doing this for a very long time.

I am very happy, very comfortable with this occupation. Because I stay home with my own family, can relating very much.

When asked about their reasons for moving to their present agency, the largest group of providers cited a move from a different geographical location.

Asked their reasons for moving to their present agency, providers typically offered more than one response:

Reasons for Coming to Agency	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Moved from a different geographical location	27	26
Increased income	21	20.2
More support from home visitors/agency	20	19.2
More opportunities for training	13	12.5
More flexible hours	10	9.6
Other	13	12.5
Total		

Table 94: Reasons providers moved to their present agency

Two respondents mentioned that they had worked privately in their home but that accreditation provided government support. Another said that her previous agency didn't find her clients.

Like the centre-based caregivers and home visitors, the providers report that “more income” and “more recognition” would be important to increasing their job satisfaction.

The providers noted a number of changes that would improve their job satisfaction. As with the other groups, the most frequent responses were “more income” and “more recognition and appreciation for child care as a profession.” (Multiple responses were possible.)

Changes to Improve Satisfaction	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Increased income	195	41.0
More recognition and appreciation	151	31.7
Access to more training and/or education	71	14.9
More support from home visitors/agency	36	7.6
Change in management	10	2.1
Other	13	2.7
Total	476	100.0

Table 95: Changes that would improve providers' job satisfaction

Other comments suggestions included:

- putting a cap on how long per day children can be in care
- being able to receive levels 2 and 3 through home schooling
- assessment and support for high needs children
- Benefits
- bimonthly payments
- the ability to get subsidy without working through an agency
- having more adults in the home for support, creative ideas and adult interaction.

38.9% of the providers said they had no opportunities for advancement or that such opportunities did not arise often.

Asked about the extent to which they have opportunities for advancement in their current place of work, the providers responded as follows:

Opportunities for Advancement	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Frequently	22	10.4
Often	40	19.0
Quite often	35	16.6
Sometimes	32	15.2
Not often	31	14.7
Not at all	51	24.2
Total	211	100.0

Table 96: Providers' opinions about opportunity for advancement

For some, working as a family child care provider is a career choice. For others, it is a temporary source of income that allows them to be at home with their own children:

The reason I am taking a break from my out of house career is to stay home with my children while they are young and have a little extra income while off. I feel the pay is too low to make this a serious career.

3.2.7 Income

As independent contractors, family child care providers are paid per child and are responsible for the expenses of food, extra insurance, equipment and supplies. However, they are able to claim the tax exemptions available to home-based businesses.

Of providers who are paid monthly or bimonthly, the largest group earn between \$1500 and \$1999 a month.

194 providers (87.8%) reported that they are paid monthly or bimonthly, while the remaining 12.2% are paid on an hourly basis. The 25 respondents being paid on an hourly basis reported their rate of pay as follows:

Hourly Income	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Less than \$7	31	54.4
Between \$7 and \$9	6	10.5
Between \$10 and \$12	5	8.8
Between \$13 and \$15	4	7.0
Between \$16 and \$18	3	5.3
Prefer not to say	8	14.0
Total	25	100.0

Table 97: Providers' hourly income

210 providers reported their monthly income as follows:

Monthly Income	Comparable Hourly Rate	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Under \$1000	Under \$6.59	34	16.2
Between \$1000 & \$1499	\$6.59 - \$9.88	44	21.0
Between \$1500 and \$1999	\$9.89 - \$13.18	56	26.7
Between \$2000 and \$2499	\$13.19 - \$16.48	38	18.1
Between \$2500 and \$2999	\$16.48 - \$19.77	20	9.5
Between \$3000 and \$3999	\$19.78 - \$26.37	7	3.3
Prefer not to say		11	5.2
Total		210	100.0

Table 98: Providers' monthly income

The comparable hourly rate has been calculated based on a 35 hour work week. However, the work day for most providers would be considerably longer than 7 hours.

Providers pointed out that their expenses are high and the hours long so that their income is actually even less than it might appear:

For the police checks, we have to pay over \$20.00 for now for each person in the home over 16 years of age. ..We should be reimbursed for it because we're spending more money than we are taking in.

It is very hard to have a day home full time when you aren't making any money. By the time we pay for groceries and supplies etc. there isn't much left.

We are expected to be open 10 hours a day everyday and are not getting paid enough to make it worthwhile.

The nature of family child care is such that income may not be stable:

The agency...that I work for is great. The only thing with this career choice that I find challenging is maintaining a steady income. So many changes occur with families. However, I realize this may be just a challenge of this area of work, and often times maternity leave and moving are needed to be worked around.

Childcare workers need more stable conditions. Parents can walk away from contracts with no repercussions, especially if they're subsidized. Even after 16 yrs. With my agency and they know my work habits and ethics, they will grill me if a parent leaves and won't pay their fees. (provider)

Several providers suggested that the province needs to allow more children in each home so that providers can increase their income:

The cost of everything is going up so should the pay rate and number of children in our care.

Another saw increased tax exemptions as a possibility:

Should have more tax exemptions like foster care then the parents wouldn't have to pay more for child care.

To put providers' income in context, Beach and Cleveland, in 1998, calculated that regulated family childcare providers working 48 weeks or more a year, earned an average gross income before deduction of childcare expenses of \$15,600, for an average work week of 56 hours. After deduction of expenses were deducted, this amount decreased to \$8,400.

3.2.8 Benefits

As independent contractors, providers are not eligible for benefits. Many mention this as a disadvantage of the work. One provider expresses a dilemma that providers could face:

I am in a situation that is forcing me to leave the profession due to a work related injury. Because of choosing this field I am left with no benefits, no income and no compensation from an injury directly related to family child care. I love what I do and would like to continue but I wonder if it is worth my personal health and family livelihood to reopen at the risk of re-injuring myself and receiving no compensation.

Providers suggested ways that benefits might be offered:

Perhaps more benefits from the Day Home Providers Agency for its day home providers like retirement plans or RRSP sharing, assistance to upgrade to the next level by getting education thru on-line or self-study programs. (provider)

Need benefits (medical etc.) available to providers, even if they were purchased.

Many providers mentioned the need for back up care to accommodate illness, appointments or vacations.

3.2.9 Recognition and Appreciation

Most providers feel that their contracting agency notices and appreciates their work.

The large majority of the providers (86.8%) responded that they felt their work was “very” or “usually” noticed and appreciated by their contracting agency:

Feelings of Appreciation	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Very appreciated	115	50.4
Usually appreciated	83	36.4
Sometimes appreciated	20	8.8
Seldom appreciated	6	2.6
Unappreciated	4	1.8
Total	228	100.0

Table 99: Extent to which providers felt appreciated by their agency

Over three-quarters feel appreciated by the parents of the children they care for.

A slightly smaller percentage (78.1%) felt their work was noticed and appreciated by all or most of the parents of the children they worked with:

Feelings of Appreciation	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Very appreciated	92	39.7
Usually appreciated	89	38.4
Sometimes appreciated	38	16.4
Seldom appreciated	12	5.2
Unappreciated	1	.4
Total	232	100.0

Table 100: Extent to which providers felt appreciated by the parents of the children with whom they work

The providers feel the larger community has less appreciation for the work they do.

Well over half of the providers (63.3%) reported that they felt “sometimes appreciated,” “seldom appreciated” or “unappreciated” in the broader community. 53.3% of the providers with Level 3 certification said that they seldom felt appreciated by the larger community.

Feelings of Appreciation	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Very appreciated	37	16.5
Usually appreciated	45	20.1
Sometimes appreciated	74	33.0
Seldom appreciated	48	21.4
Unappreciated	20	8.9
Total	224	100.0

Table 101: Extent to which providers felt appreciated by the larger community

The undervaluing of child care is reflected in these provider’s comments:

Most parents think nothing of paying \$500.00 on a car payment, but do not think child care is worth \$500.00 a month. A provider writes:

Society needs to value what we do more, unfortunately this is demonstrated through \$. Rig workers with less than high school make much more than those of us minding our country's future.

3.2.10 Professional Development

Family child care providers with Level 1 certification were asked if they were currently studying to attain Level 2. Similarly, providers with Level 2 certification were asked if they were study to attain Level 3.

Fewer than 20% of the caregivers were studying toward their next level of certification.

29 (18%) of the 161 providers who responded to the former question were studying for their Level 2 certification, while 7 of 43 (16.3%) were studying toward their Level 3.

Various reasons were given for not pursuing further certification, with “courses not available at times convenient to me” cited by the largest number of respondents with respect to both Level 2 and Level 3. One provider explained that she needed to do practicum but could not because she was working full time at home. Another mentioned that the courses she had taken “didn’t get me what I expected.” “Taking human services gave me many more skills than ECD alone,” a provider commented. Finances were a concern for several; for example, a single mom mentioned that she couldn’t afford child care.

Reasons for not Pursuing Level 2 Certification	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
I don't have time	64	22.9
Courses are not available at times convenient to me	42	15.1
Courses are not available at locations convenient to me	33	11.8
There is no advantage to me in pursuing further training	31	11.1
I don't receive information about training opportunities	31	11.1
I worry that the courses might be too difficult	18	6.5
I don't plan to continue working with children	17	6.1
I don't have the pre-requisite skills	12	4.3
Other	31	11.1
Total	279	100.0

Table 102: Reasons for not pursuing Level 2 certification

Reasons for not Pursuing Level 3 Certification	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Courses are not available at times convenient to me	9	17.6
I don't have time	8	15.7
I worry that the courses might be too difficult	7	13.7
Courses are not available at locations convenient to me	6	11.8
I don't have the pre-requisite skills	5	9.8
There is no advantage to me in pursuing further training	4	7.8
I don't receive information about training opportunities	3	5.9
I don't plan to continue working with children	2	3.9
Other	7	13.7
Total	51	100.0

Table 103: Reasons for not pursuing Level 3 certification

Operator directors suggested ways to facilitate access to training for providers.

The operator/director survey produced these two suggestions for making training more accessible to providers:

Combinations of on-line/home study /some full Saturday working groups. Applied assignments, supervision/observation from College instructor or field placement supervisor. Providers tell us that they need to be able to continue operating their day homes while they go to school. Very few have the option of temporary closure.

Course work offered in 3 hour blocks (9-12 or 1-4) once/week. Some providers may be able to find backup for 3-4 hours and continue to operate their dayhome. Create a separate cohort for this kind of stream.

3.2.11 Looking to the Future

Family reasons, along with low income, were the most important reasons to stop working as a provider.

“If you were to stop working as a family child care provider,” respondents were asked, “what would be the reasons?” Low income and lack of benefits were factors for this group as with the others, but family reasons also scored highly. When asked to identify the single most important factor for leaving, respondents cited family reasons the most highly (36.4%) with low income second at 35.5%. One provider mentioned bad experiences with families and discipline.

Reasons to Stop Working as a Provider	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Low income	139	20.9
Family reasons	137	20.6
Lack of benefits	127	19.1
Little recognition and appreciation for child care as a profession	83	12.5
Little opportunity for job advancement	62	9.3
Poor management	33	5.0
Lack of support from home visitors/ agency	33	5.0
Job responsibilities don't fit with my training	24	3.6
Other	27	4.1
Total	665	100.0

Table 104: Reasons to stop working as a provider

Almost two-thirds of the providers felt they would be doing the same kind of work two years from now.

“How likely is it that you will be at your present place of work two years from now?” respondents were asked. 65.4% of the respondents felt that it was “quite” or “very” likely that they would be in their place of work in two years while 13% said that it was “unlikely” or “very unlikely” that they

would be. The providers with Level 3 training were the least likely to respond that it was “very” or “quite” likely that they would be a provider in two years time (40%). Some of the reasons noted were:

- too much paperwork
- time to return to my true profession
- retirement
- illness
- my child goes to school
- too much hassle from agency

In comparison, only 46.6% of the centre-based respondents felt that it was “quite” or “very” likely that they would be in their current place of work in two years.

70.2% felt that they would be working in some aspect of child care two years from now.

When asked about the likelihood that they would be working in any aspect of child care two years from now, 70.2% of the respondents replied that it was “quite” or “very” likely that they would be working in child care in two years while only 10.9% said that it was “unlikely” or “very unlikely.” This compares with 63.4% of centre-based caregivers. Of the providers with a Level 3 certificate, only 6.7% responded that it would be “unlikely” or “very unlikely.”

The reasons the providers gave in “other” were similar to those above:

- age
- too much paperwork
- the stress of the job
- to go to school
- government influences
- to try a different job

70.9% of the providers would recommend child care to someone making a career choice.

Of the 230 respondents, 163 (70.9%) would recommend child care to someone who is making a career choice. One provider writes:

*If you have patience and a love for children it's a fantastic career choice.
It's satisfying and can be a great money making opportunity.*

The reasons most often given for not recommending a child care career were low wages (27.5%), lack of benefits (23.7%) and little recognition and appreciation for child care as a profession (19.5%). Other reasons noted were the long hours and “parents not always putting children’s health and wellbeing first.”

3.3 THE FAMILY CHILD CARE OPERATOR-DIRECTOR SURVEY

3.3.1 Agency Characteristics

The operator/directors provided information on the location, auspice, accreditation status of their agencies and about affiliation with professional organizations. They reported on the number of full time and part time home visitors in their program, the number of providers contracting with the agency, and the number of children enrolled with the agency.

The operator/directors represented agencies from rural areas and urban centres of various sizes.

Operator/directors described the location of their agency by population size:

Location	Number of Responses
Rural area	7
Urban centre under 10,000 people	1
Urban centre with population of 10,000 to 100,000	8
Urban centre with population of 100,000 to 500,000	0
Urban centre with population over 500,000	3
No response	2
Total	21

Table 105: Location of agencies (operator/director responses)

Slightly over half of the agencies were not-for-profit.

20 operator/directors responded to the question about auspice. Of them, 9 (45%) are from for-profit and 11 (55%) from not-for-profit.

The majority of the agencies were accredited or in the process of accreditation.

14 (70%) of the operator/directors reported that their agencies are accredited, 5 (25%) that they are in the process of becoming accredited and 2 (10%) that they are not accredited.

Almost all of the agencies or the operator/directors were affiliated with a professional association.

All but one of the 19 operator/directors who responded to a question asking if they or their agency belongs to a professional association responded in the affirmative.

The operator/directors reported on their numbers of full- and part-time staff.

12 operator/directors responded a question about the number of full- and part-time home visitors in their program. Of these, 11 had fewer than 5 full-time staff and 10 had fewer than 5 part-time staff.

Some agencies had fewer than 10 providers while others had more than 50.

The number of providers contracting with the agencies was shown as follows:

Number of Providers	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Responses
Fewer than 10	6	29.0
10-29	9	42.9
30-50	3	14.3
More than 50	3	14.3
Total	21	100.0

Table 106: Number of providers

All of the agencies contracting with more than 50 providers were in Region 6.

The number of children served ranged from fewer than 10 to more than 100.

Asked about the number of children currently being served by their agency, the operator/directors responded as follows:

Number of Children	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Responses
Fewer than 10	3	14.3
11-20	0	.0
21-30	2	9.5
31-69	2	9.5
70-100	8	38.0
More than 100	6	28.6
Total	21	100.0

Table 107: Number of children being served by agencies

3.3.2 Home Visitation Staffing

83.3% of the agencies had not had any home visitors leave in the last 18 months.

Operator/directors were asked to report on the number of home visitors who had left their employment since June 1, 2006, a period of approximately 18 months. 15 of the 18 who responded (83.3%) had not had any home visitors leave their agency in that time. The remaining 3 respondents reported 1 to 3 home visitors each leaving during that time.

The most common reason for leaving was to accept a position in a different occupation or profession.

When operator/directors were asked about the reasons home visitors gave for leaving their employment, they reported as follows:

Reasons Given for Leaving Agency	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
To accept a position in a different occupation or profession	3	33.3
Family circumstances	2	22.2
To pursue further education	1	11.1
To accept a position in centre-based child care, another family child care or school-aged care	1	11.1
To accept an early childhood position other than the above	0	.0
Retirement	0	.0
Terminated by employer	0	.0
None given	2	22.2
Other	0	.0
Total	9	100.0

Table 108: Reasons home visitors gave for leaving the agency

3.3.3 Strategies to Find and Keep Home Visitors

Agencies used a number of means to find home visitors to hire.

Operator/directors were asked what they found to be the most effective way to find home visitors to hire. Of the 19 who responded, 5 (26.3%) mentioned newspaper advertisements, 7 (36.8%) preferred word of mouth, and 7 replied “other.” “Other” responses included hiring and mentoring long standing providers, training FCSS staff, and using yellow page ads and the government website.

44.8% of the operator/directors who responded to a question about hiring reported that word of mouth is the most effective way to find home visitors while 24.9% found the best results with online advertising and 21% with newspaper advertisements

Offering more flexible work hours was a common strategy to attract and keep home visitation staff.

Operators/directors report using a number of strategies to attract and keep home visitation staff:

Strategies	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
More flexible work hours	15	33.3
Increased income	14	31.1
Increased benefits	5	11.1
Reduced caseload size	4	8.9
Increased fees to provide more resources for staff	3	6.7
Reduced hours of operation	2	4.4
Other	2	4.4
Total	45	100.0

Table 109: Strategies used to attract home visitors

A respondent mentioned offering more social opportunities for staff plus more relief time for training opportunities.

41.6% of the operator/directors said that in their agencies, home visitors with different levels of training were “often” or “always” given different responsibilities.

Operator/directors were asked whether, in their program, home visitation staff with different levels of training were given different responsibilities.

Extent to Which Responsibilities are Differentiated	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Always	4	21.1
Often	2	10.5
Sometimes	4	21.1
Seldom	2	10.5
Never	7	36.8
Total	19	100.0

Table 110: Responsibilities and level of training of home visitors

The majority of operator/directors said that accreditation did not have an effect on their ability to hire and keep home visitors

4 operator/directors (27.8% of the 18 who responded) said that accreditation had an effect on their ability to hire and keep home visitors. The remaining 72.2% did not find that accreditation had a significant impact in that area. One respondent wrote, “My staff would not have been happy if we did not get accredited. They were concerned that we didn’t get started earlier. My agency is very stable when it comes to staff.

3.3.4 Provider Turnover

Operator/directors were asked how many new providers they have added in the past year:

Providers Added	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Fewer than 5	7	41.2
5 to 9	6	35.3
10 to 15	2	11.8
16 to 24	1	5.9
25 to 40	1	5.9
Total	17	100.0

Table 111: Providers added in the past year

All 17 operator/directors said they would employ more providers if they were able to find suitable people.

76.5% of the agencies had up to 9 providers leave in the past year.

Operator/directors were asked to report on the number of providers who had left their employment in the past year.

Providers Who Have Left	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Fewer than 5	6	35.3
5 to 9	7	41.2
10 to 15	2	11.8
16 to 24	1	5.9
25 to 40	1	5.9
Total	7	100.0

Table 112: Number of providers leaving in the past year

Family circumstances were the most common reason for leaving, followed by accepting a career in a different occupation or profession.

When operator/directors were asked about the reasons providers gave for leaving their agency, they reported as follows:

Reason for Leaving	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Family circumstances	17	29.8
To accept a position in a different occupation or profession	14	24.6
Terminated by contracting agency	8	14.0
Retirement	4	7.0
To accept an early childhood position other than the above	3	5.3
To pursue further education	3	5.3
To accept a position in centre-based child care, another family child care or school-aged care	2	3.5
None given	1	1.8
Other	5	8.8
Total	57	100.0

Table 113: Reasons providers gave for leaving the agency

Comments showed that a number of providers left the agency to offer care privately.

One operator/director noted,

This last year has been the most challenging for maintaining our numbers. We have had more providers start and leave because there are higher paying opportunities outside of the home. Providers are also challenged by the many rules and regulations especially the 2 under 2. It limits how quickly homes can be filled and how income can be maintained.

3.3.5 Finding and Keeping Providers

Increased income and more training opportunities were the most common strategies to attract providers.

Operators/directors report using a number of strategies to attract and keep family child care providers:

Strategies	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Increased income	15	30.6
More training opportunities	13	26.5
Increased fees to provide more resources	8	16.3
More flexible work hours	4	8.2
Startup grants	3	6.1
Waiving agency fees	3	6.1
Other	3	6.1
Total	49	100.0

Table 114: Strategies used to attract providers

An operator/director mentions offering agency training grants. Another says the key to keeping providers is “Support, Support, Support!” Providers and home visitors also offered suggestions about recruitment:

- job fairs to recruit mothers who want to be able to be at home with their children.
- advertising about the income possible and the benefits of staying home.
- Subsidize startup costs for new providers
- Advertise family child care services with a sticker on the window of each approved home

Accreditation had both positive and negative effects with respect to hiring and keeping providers.

10 operator/directors (62.5% of the 16 who responded) said that accreditation had an effect on their ability to hire and keep providers. The question did not specify whether the effect was

positive or negative, however. In fact, one operator/director mentioned that her agency lost 6 providers as soon as it started the accreditation process. “They felt with working and training all these years they had had enough of being told there is more things to accomplish.” Another respondent mentioned the advantages of enhanced funding, recognition of training and the demand of families looking for regulated/accredited care.

[Providers] want to be affiliated with accreditation so they can be deemed a quality child care setting.

Additional support funding is incentive for providers to join an accredited agency.

There were suggestions that the benefits of accreditation should be extended and that they could be an incentive for private providers to join agencies.

Need the same advantages and wage incentive in licensed day homes that accredited day homes get. Without us child care would not be provided in smaller areas. (provider)

Need more information sent to “private” dayhome providers on the benefits available from being approved. (provider)

3.4 OTHER ISSUES IN FAMILY CHILD CARE

3.4.1 Transfer Issues

Family child care providers, like the centre-based caregivers, expressed concern about the credentialing process, noting transfer issues or a need for “grandfathering” mature staff:

I believe that mature staff should be given credit for their experience in the field and be “grandfathered in” when it comes to being considered for equivalencies in education. There is a lot of redtape involved in getting Day Care Qualifications to recognize anything!...I just need to do a practicum to qualify for a level 2. There is NO incentive for me to go onto a Level 3 with GMCC courses on a part-time basis, since by the time I will have completed it—I’ll be ready for retirement! I will be 60 years old in 2 weeks time! I have been in this job 21 years now!

I got credit for Level 1 from my postgraduate degree.

3.4.2 Wage Enhancement and Back-to-Work Bonuses

Home visitors and providers agree on the value of the wage enhancement bonus but, like the centre-based caregivers, are unhappy that back-to-work grants do not recognize the efforts of long-term caregivers.

Both home visitors and providers commented on the value of the wage enhancement support:

The accreditation support enhancement money is a really good incentive to stay in this field. (home visitor)

Please do not stop the grant that the government is providing us because it is very helpful to us. (provider)

Like the centre-based caregivers, however, they expressed resentment that the “return to work” bonus does not recognize the dedication of long term providers.

\$5000.00 incentive for people to come back is wrong. What about those that never left? (provider)

I have been made aware that child care providers that have left child care for 6 months have been asked to come back into child care and if they choose to stay for a year will receive a bonus of \$2500.00. I feel something should definitely be put into place for those that have been

in child care for many years through an agency. It does not give us any desire to continue if there is not an incentive to us but there is to a returning child care worker. I see the intention to get workers back but don't forget about the committed child care workers. (provider)

3.4.3 Improving Childcare

The providers made innovative suggestions for ensuring quality services for children and families.

A provider offered suggestions for supporting parents in providing good quality care for their children:

I think parents should be trained and paid for taking training to help them be able to stay home and look after their own children until they are at least 3 yrs old and possibly 5 years old. If they are getting paid, they should also get support and home checks to ensure they are doing a good job.

Another expressed concern about the relationship between the Parent Link centre in her area and a local day care, suggesting the Parent Link Centres should not be run by local agencies.

The politics of it all sometimes aren't good—especially in the smaller centres. Our Parent Link-Resource Centre is run out of a local day care here. The professionalism of this centre is SUBPAR. I have had staff and parents that refuse to access the programs at the Resource Centre due to their negative experiences with the day care centre it is affiliated with. I also wonder if government is certain that resources that are to be used for the Resource Centre aren't being used to benefit the day care centre. This centre offers a low quality of childcare but it knows how to look good on the outside. In some cases its poor reputation hinders that of the Resource Centre. I think the Parent Link Resource Centre should be run by CFSA or Alberta Children's Services (not local agencies). This would ensure quality programs and positive reputations.

PART FOUR: EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDENTS

A total of 220 survey packages were sent to Alberta Public Colleges for distribution to early childhood students in their second year of study. 127 students replied, for a response rate of at least 58%.

4.1 THE STUDENT SURVEY

4.1.1 Regional Distribution

Responses were received from students in all regions of the province.

By region, the distribution of responses from students was as follows:

Region	Responses	Percentage of Total
1	9	7.1
2	12	9.4
3	9	7.1
4	10	7.9
5	11	8.7
6	53	41.7
7	1	.8
8	4	3.1
9	4	3.1
Region unavailable	14	11.0
Total	127	100.0

Table 115: Student response by region

4.1.2 Student Profile

Most of the students expected to graduate in the spring and were attending College full time.

116 of 125 of the students (92.8%) indicated that they expected to graduate with an early childhood diploma in the spring of 2008 and 109 of 120 (90.8%) were attending College full-time (3 or more courses per term).

The majority of the students were under 25 years of age:

Age Group	Number	Percentage of Responses
Under 25	102	81.6
26-35	15	12.0
36-45	6	4.8
46-55	2	1.6
Total	125	100.0

Table 116: Age of students

All of the students were female and the majority were under 25 years of age. They spoke several languages in addition to English.

All of the 126 students who responded to a question about gender were female.

The students spoke several languages and dialects in addition to English, including Blackfoot, Vietnamese, Arabic, Japanese, Korean, Pushto, Tagalog, Arabic and Chipweyan.

4.1.3 Reasons for Choosing to Study Early Childhood

The students believe that working with children is important.

When asked to indicate their two most important reasons for choosing to study early childhood education, the students responded as follows:

Reason	Number	Percentage of Responses
I believe that working with children is important	112	38.4
I enjoy spending time with children	96	32.9
It is a step toward my career goal	73	25.0
My family or I own a child care or out-of-school care centre	5	1.7
Other	6	2.1
Total	125	100.0

Table 117: Reasons for choosing to study early childhood

“I believe each individual child is important and of great worth,” one student explained.

4.1.4 Employment History and Status

Less than half of the students had prior experience in child care before they began their program.

76 of the students (60.3%) had not worked in a child care centre, family day home or out-of-school centre before they began their College program.

Almost half of the students (46.4%) were employed for more than 10 hours a week while in College. Of these, 29.6% were employed in a child care centre, 22.2% with children but in another capacity and 48.1% in a retail, service or other job not pertaining to child care.

4.1.5 Certification

45.9% of the students had applied for certification.

4.1.6 Future Plans

Almost three-quarters of the students plan to work in centre-based, school-aged or family child care upon graduation.

When asked about their plans for the future, 92 of the students (73.0%) said that they planned to work in centre-based, school-aged or family child care when they graduated. Other plans included:

- studying in another program (47.2%),
- working in another capacity within the early childhood profession (30.2%)
- working outside the early childhood profession (7.5%)
- being at home with family (3.8%) and “other” (11.3%). (There were 53 responses to this question although only 34 persons had indicated they did not plan to work in centre-based or family child care). “I plan to pursue a degree in special needs or human services,” one student explained, while another mentioned a B.Ed. in elementary education.

Like the other respondents, the students felt that increased salary, benefits and recognition were the changes that would keep them in the field.

Persons not planning to work in the early childhood profession after they graduated were asked to indicate the two factors most likely to influence them to change their mind. Again, the number of responses exceeded the 68 that would be expected:

Changes to Keep Students in Field	Number	Percentage of Responses
Increased salary	53	37.1
Improved benefits	30	21.0
Increased recognition as to the importance of working with young children.	26	18.2
More opportunities for advancement within the profession	24	16.8
Better working conditions	10	7.0
Total	143	100.0

Table 118: Changes that would keep students in the profession

4.1.7 Wages and Working Conditions

Some students believe that child care is under-funded. They are concerned about working conditions and the level of professionalism in the field.

The students are concerned about low salaries, not only for themselves but as a reflection of under-funding of the child care system.

I would like to work w/preschool children in an early learning and care environment when I graduate. However, the salaries will not allow me to support myself as a single woman. I also strongly believe that the under funding of all aspects of early learning and care is having a detrimental effect on children and families. Those who are working in the field have great difficulty in providing high-quality care to children that supports them in reaching their potential

Income needs to be more than minimum wage. Holiday pay and having a decent amount of time off would be helpful in keeping child care staff. Make sure to value child care staff as much as looking after the children. Accreditation within the centre is vital.

We need more funding for all aspects of our child care system

Working conditions were also important to students:

Increasing wages would attract more staff but also providing better working conditions such as staff working together, vacation, less hours, more staff and promoting early educators as being important people (not babysitters)

More funding to enable lunch relief staff

The students were concerned about the quality of service; for example:

Level ones should be phased out because of skill that 2s and 3s get and have.

There's a need to have dedication from workers.

To keep "quality" centres, increase standards for accreditation.

Have staff who hold the same values in working with children, that they are there for children and not for money.

4.1.8 Effect of Accreditation

31.8% of the students felt "very" or "quite" familiar with accreditation.

When respondents were asked how familiar they were with the Alberta child care accreditation program they responded as follows:

Familiarity with Accreditation	Number	Percentage of Responses
Very familiar	17	13.5
Quite familiar	23	18.3
Somewhat familiar	55	43.7
Know very little about it	29	23.0
Have never heard of it	2	1.6
Total	143	100.0

Table 119: Students' familiarity with accreditation

One student noted that First Nation Reserves cannot be accredited but that it is needed on reserves.

Over half of the students said that accreditation had influenced their career plans in some way.

Respondents were asked if child care accreditation had influenced their career plans in any way and directed to mark as many responses as applicable. Almost 60% said that accreditation had influenced their decision.

Influence of Accreditation	Number	Percentage of Responses
No, it hasn't influenced me at all	41	40.2
Yes, accreditation has helped influence me to work in centre-based care, or family child care after I graduate.	37	36.3
Yes, accreditation was one reason that I enrolled in the early childhood program	22	21.6
Other	2	2.0
Total	102	100.0

Table 120: Influence of accreditation

PART FIVE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The news from Alberta child care is grounds for cautious optimism. The recruitment and retention of caregivers is a major problem, but seen against the backdrop of a booming economy with labour shortages in almost every sector, the fact that the field seems to be holding its own or improving slightly in many areas is promising. The data uncovered some hopeful signs and provided useful information for further initiatives to inform planning for further improvement.

In the discussion that follows, the term “caregivers,” unless otherwise specified, encompasses centre-based caregivers, home visitors and family child care providers.

5.1 PROMISING SIGNS

Hopeful signs include a committed workforce comprised largely of caregivers who feel well prepared for the work they do and find considerable satisfaction in their work. As well, comparisons with past statistics and the broader human service sector provide some indication that the government initiatives, though recently implemented, may be beginning to have a positive impact.

- Staff turnover, while high, has decreased slightly since 1998 and is the same or slightly less than in the broader human service sector.
- Most Alberta caregivers are in the field because they want to be. They are there by choice rather than because it is their only option. They enjoy working with children and families or, in the case of home visitors, with providers and families.
- There is a relatively large body of experienced caregivers who have worked in the field and often with their current employers for many years.
- Most caregivers feel that their training and education has prepared them quite well for the work they are doing.
- The proportion of caregivers who believe that staffing is inadequate in their centres and agencies exceeds that found in the human service sector as a whole.
- The majority of caregivers believe that their centre or agency is able to attract qualified and effective caregivers.
- Wages in preschool-aged care have increased since 1998, particularly with the introduction of the wage enhancement.
- The large proportion of caregivers are “quite” or “very” satisfied with their job.
- Almost half of the centre-based respondents and two-thirds of the providers felt that they would likely be working with their present centre or agency in two years time.

-
- Almost two-thirds of the centre-based caregivers and over two-thirds of the providers felt it was likely they would be working in some aspect of child care in two years time.
 - Slightly over half of the operator/directors reported that they or their centre belong to a professional association.
 - Over half of the caregivers would recommend child care to someone choosing a career. This approval was highest among the providers (70.9%) and lowest from caregivers working in combined preschool and school-aged care centres (54.8%).
 - Most early childhood students report that they chose their field of study because they believe child care is important and enjoy working with children.
 - Almost three-quarters of the students plan to work in centre-based, school-aged or family child care when they graduate.

5.2 DATA TO INFORM RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

Wages, benefits, recognition and working conditions were identified as the most important factors in recruitment and retention. They, along with training, are seen as interconnected; for example, the respondents believe that higher levels of training will lead to increased recognition which will promote better wages and working conditions. The data provides demographic information about caregivers that suggests future trends as well as populations that might be targeted in recruitment attempts. It gives indications as to the reasons caregivers stay in the field as well as the reasons that they leave and points to the future plans of caregivers and students. Finally, it offers information to inform training.

5.2.1 Who are the caregivers?

- The childcare workforce is almost exclusively female.
- The child care workforce includes a relatively large segment of older workers.
- The centre-based sector has a fairly large proportion of caregivers who are under the age of 25.
- The work force seems to be attracting a number of immigrant caregivers.

5.2.2 What keeps caregivers in the workforce?

- The factor most likely to keep caregivers at their present place of work is their enjoyment of the children and families.
- Family child care providers are more likely than other caregivers to be motivated by family reasons in their work decisions. Many are in the field because it allows them to be at home with their own children. They are also more likely to cite “family reasons” as reason for leaving that work in the future.
- More flexible/better hours can be an important motivation in job choices. This is particularly evident among home visitors who tend to be somewhat older overall.
- Operator/directors report that accreditation has generally been advantageous in attracting staff. Over half of the early childhood students said that accreditation had influenced them to enter and/or remain in the field.

5.2.3 What factors might cause caregivers to leave the childcare workforce?

As mentioned above, many of the caregivers who have left the workforce have done so to work outside of the field. Presumably this is, at least in part, a reflection of the job opportunities and salaries that are available to them because of the current labour shortage. The data indicates factors that would precipitate a decision to leave the field.

-
- Wages, benefits, recognition and working conditions are the most significant factors in recruitment and retention. Caregivers identified low wages as by far their most important reason for leaving the profession
 - The caregivers tended to see limited opportunities for advancement in their place of work.
 - Working conditions for centre-based caregivers are impacted by the lack of qualified staff and casual workers.

5.2.4 What are other trends and issues?

- 50.8% of the centres are not filled to their licensed capacity and the most frequently cited reason is lack of suitable staff.
- The majority of caregivers (67.9%) who left their jobs in the past 18 months did so to move into a position outside of child care. This is compared with a national rate of 38.1% in 1998.
- School-aged caregivers and operator/directors state that they are at a disadvantage with attracting and keeping staff because they are unable to offer the benefits available to accredited preschool centres.
- There are noticeable discrepancies between for-profit and not-for profit centres with regard to levels of certification and hours worked.
- Long term caregivers believe that it is unfair that caregivers are being rewarded for returning to the field when persons who have never left have not been rewarded for their commitment.
- Respondents have found that government initiatives have been helpful but fear they may be insufficient to resolve issues of recruitment and retention.

5.2.5 What data is there to inform decisions about training?

- The proportion of caregivers having Level 3 certification has decreased since 1998 while the proportion of Level 1s has increased. Well over half of home visitors, however, have Level 3.
- The professional development funding has been used by about half of the caregivers. A significant number of centre-based caregivers, however, were unaware of the grants, had difficulty accessing them, or didn't receive information about the training. Most home visitors, on the other hand, knew about the professional development grant and a slightly larger proportion had used them.
- Many caregivers said that they didn't have the time or energy to participate in training or that they lacked access to courses.

-
- The costs of child care or transportation, or the need to pay for courses before receiving the training grant, were barriers to using the professional development grants.
 - Student loans have left some caregivers with a burden of debt that is difficult to repay on their salaries.
 - Some caregivers who have been educated in other countries or provinces report that their qualifications are not recognized in Alberta.
 - Caregivers who already have a Level 3 certificate express a need for more training options

5.3 QUESTIONS AND TENSIONS

The survey data points to a number of tensions and dilemmas to be weighed if not resolved in addressing recruitment and retention in child care.

5.3.1 Paying the Cost of Child Care

Whose responsibility is it to pay for child care? Is it, as some believe, up to the parents? Should government intervene? Should employers pay a bigger role?

Child care workers are sympathetic to the needs of families and usually feel it would be difficult for families to pay higher fees. However, they sometimes complain that they are subsidizing the families through their low salaries and that they feel it is unfair that they and their families live poorly in order to do so; as one caregiver comments, “I couldn’t afford to put my children in my day care.”

Families are not necessarily benefiting financially from the Alberta boom but do face increased housing and other costs. Many are already stretched to pay child care and the majority would find it difficult to pay the full cost of a competitive wage for caregivers.

Society benefits in the short-term from child care because it enables parents to be part of the workforce. Their participation helps to alleviate labour shortages and results in increased tax revenue. When parents are assured that their children are well cared-for in their absence, they are able to be more productive at work. From a long-term perspective, the economic and other advantages of quality child care to society are well-documented.

Workplaces benefit when employees have stable child care arrangements. However, few businesses have taken advantage of the recent federal initiative to promote workplace child care.

Child care operators and staff believe that families are unable or unwilling to pay the level of day care fees that would be necessary to improve salaries and working conditions. They see government intervention as the only other option:

It is the government's responsibility to take more action to prevent a struggling industry from falling through the cracks. (a caregiver)

5.3.2 Caring in a Multicultural Society

That the child care workforce in Alberta already includes many immigrant caregivers is suggested by the number of languages that caregivers speak. It is likely that immigration will continue to bolster the child care workforce; as the CCHRSC (2007) notes, if immigration rates continue to grow at their current rate, immigrants could account for all the growth in the Canadian labour force by 2011.

Immigrant caregivers can enrich the landscape of child care by introducing children, parents and other staff to diverse lifestyles and perspectives. In family child care particularly, cultural diversity among providers gives parents a broader array of options when choosing child care.

Finding out how to live interculturally is a part of the Canadian challenge, and it is no less so in child care. Hopefully immigrant caregivers can feel that they come to child care willingly, rather than because their professional credentials from their homeland are not recognized in Canada. Because intercultural relationships can be difficult, careful attention will need to be given to facilitating effective working relationships. Immigrant workers may still be learning about life in Canada and specifically about expectations and practices in Canadian child care, so might need extra support. They may be shut off from further training by their lack of proficiency in English. Without intervention, this could, in time, create a “ghetto” of lower paid, less qualified immigrant workers in child care.

Child care will be serving an increasingly diverse population of families which has implications for the content of child care training programs. Consideration will need to be given to defining and developing the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to work effectively with children and families in a diverse society. At the same time, training programs may need to consider the extent to which they can serve students whose English skills are limited without compromising the quality of the program.

5.3.3 Recognizing the Importance of Children's Early Experiences

There has long been a high level of awareness within the profession as to the vital importance of children's early experiences and this has been heightened in recent years with the advent of new brain research. Many parents also are very aware that their children's early years are developmentally significant. These parents recognize the importance of good quality care and

are distressed that they are unable to access it because of long waiting lists. At the same time, early childhood practitioners are frustrated because they are unable to provide the quality of care they know is optimal because of the incidence of children with special needs (particularly behavioural needs), staffing shortages and what they feel are unrealistic child-staff ratios.

If caregivers are to achieve the working conditions and recognition they deserve, policy makers and the general public will need to pay attention to research on early development and on the positive differences associated with quality care.

5.3.4 Affirming the Value of Caring

Some theorists consider that the low salaries and poor working conditions in child care stem at least partly from the fact that caring for children and others is traditionally seen as “women’s work.” Women are considered to be natural caregivers, which implies that training is not necessary and also that the job must not be difficult for women. Caregiving is seen as intrinsically rewarding to women which suggests that there is less need for monetary rewards. Furthermore, in this traditional view, women are able to rely on men to support them so they don’t need to earn a living wage.

The survey data confirms that child care in Alberta is a female profession; there are very few male caregivers represented in the survey and most of them work with older children. Several respondents mention that they could not afford to work in child care if it were not for their husband’s wages and benefits. One of the few male caregivers regrets that he and his wife cannot afford to both work full-time in child care. Caregivers who are single parents write about the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of living on the income from their child care job.

For child care to be honoured as the difficult and valuable work that it is, and to be compensated accordingly, there may need to be a genuine and deep recognition that caring is a positive quality to be embraced and nurtured by both females and males.

5.3.5 The Cost of Quality

There is a severe staff shortage in centre-based care. Many operator/directors are running their centres below capacity because of their inability to find suitable staff. Often this represents a financial sacrifice because they still have to meet the fixed costs of their operation but with less income. At the same time, many centres have long waiting lists of parents needing child care.

Operator/directors work long days and often do not have the time to orient new staff. Faced with renewing accreditation, some operator/directors worry that they will be unable to meet the standards given their current staffing situation. Caregivers complain about the quality of the staff who are hired and mention the negative impact on the work environment and the quality of care.

Well-trained early childhood practitioners worry that their profession is being undermined by poor quality staff.

If operator/directors have applicants for available positions, they may have to decide whether to hire an applicant who is less than suitable in order to fill a vacant space or to operate at less than capacity in an effort to maintain quality.

5.3.6 Maintaining the Integrity of Training

When child care programs are unable to model best practice because of staff and budget shortages, students in early childhood programs are unable to see the best practice that they are being taught in their college courses and come to view it as unrealistic and unattainable. This contributes to a further deterioration in standards once these students are working in the field.

When the need for caregivers is so great, colleges are faced with finding ways to maintain the integrity of their programs training while better meeting needs in the field. This may include decisions about transfer credit, alternative offerings and field placements in the place of work.

5.4 NEXT STEPS

The survey data shows clearly that improving the recruitment and retention of caregivers in Alberta is tied to improving wages and working conditions in the sector and to enhancing the status of child care practitioners. There are a number of community partners who can and should be involved in formulating strategies to address this goal including the Childcare Network, the Alberta public colleges, ARCQE, AELCS, schools and school boards, the Alberta Child Care Network, and the Ministry. Each has specific resources and capabilities that could contribute to a strong united effort.

The information from the survey provides a solid foundation for consultations with these stakeholders toward the development of an integrated plan that draws upon the capabilities of each of the partners and supports their collaborative efforts.

5.5 FURTHER RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

This survey has produced a great deal of data. There are topics and relationships that could be explored through further analysis. The study could also serve to provide base line data. If it were replicated, wholly or in part, in several years, it would provide a very useful measure of change in the field.

PART SIX: REFERENCES

Beach, J., Bertrand, J., Forer, B., Michal, D., and Tougas, J. (2004). *Working for change: Canada's child care workforce: Main report*. Child Care Human Resource Sector Council. Retrieved October 6, 2006 from www.ccsc.cssge.ca

Beach, J. & Bertrand, J. (1998). Our child care workforce: From recognition to remuneration: More than a labour of love. A human resource study of child care in Canada. *Innovative training programs in early childhood education: Selection of case studies*. Ottawa: Canadian Child Care Federation.

Beach, J. & Cleveland, G. (1998). Our child care workforce: From recognition to remuneration: More than a labour of love. *A human resource study of child care in Canada: Main report*. Ottawa: Canadian Child Care Federation.

Belleau, J. (2002). *Un travail en quête de conditions équitables, des stratégies politiques pour améliorer les conditions de travail des responsables de services de garde en milieu familial*. Ottawa, Canadian Child Care Advocacy Association. Unpublished.

Canadian Child Care Federation (1998).. *Providing Home Child Care for a Living: A Survey of Providers Working in the Regulated Sector*. Ottawa: Canadian Child Care Federation.

Child Care Connections (2002). *Developing an environmental scan on attracting and keeping qualified staff in Canadian child care*. Retrieved October 5, 2006 from www.ccnns.org/ret/RR/RRhome.html

Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2007). *People, programs and practices: A training strategy for the early childhood education and care sector in Canada*. Ottawa: Child Care Human Resources Sector Council.

Childcare Resource and Research Unit (2004). *Early childhood education and care in Canada*. Retrieved October 30, 2006 from www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2004/pub_pdf/ECEC_2004_AB.pdf

Child Care Workforce Industrial Adjustment Services Committee (2007, June). *Examination of Recruitment and retention issues for the child care workforce in Newfoundland and Labrador*. Final report.

Chud, G. (2001) Human resource issues in child care. *Interaction*, 15(3), 21.

Cleland, J. (2002) *Supporting day care professionals: Issues and options*. Alberta Children's Services. Retrieved September 28, 2006 from www.child.gov.ab.ca/whatwedo/childcare/initiatives/pdf/Final_Report_March_11_02.pdf

Cox, R. (2005). *Making family child care work: Strategies for improving the working conditions of family child care providers*: Status of Women Canada. Retrieved February 23, 2008 from www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/pubspr/0662381041/index_e.html

Doherty, G. (2002) *Workplace and workforce causes in the recruitment and retention of qualified child care staff*. Retrieved October 6, 2006 from www.cccns.org/fet/RR/DP/A.pdf

Doherty, G., Lero, D., Goelman, H., LaGrange, A., & Tougas, J. (2000). *You bet I care!* University of Guelph, Ontario: Centre for Families, Work and Well-Being.

Ferguson, E. (2004). *The role of social attitudes in recruitment and retention*. Retrieved September 29, 2006 from www.ccsc-cssge.ca/english/pdf/research/2004/CCHRSC_social.pdf

Ferguson, E. (2002) Babysitters or Professionals? The role of social attitudes in the recruitment and retention of child care workers. In E. Ferguson (ed) *Reflection on attracting and keeping qualified staff in childcare*. Halifax, N.S. Child Care Connections Nova Scotia.

Goelman, H., Forer, B., Kershaw, P., Doherty, G., Lero, D., & LaGrange, A. (2006). Towards a predictive model of quality in Canadian child care centers. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 21 (3), 280-295.

Goelman, H. & Guo, H. (1998) What we know and what we don't know about burnout among early childhood care providers. *Child and Youth Care Forum* 27(3), 175-197.

Government of Alberta. (2006a) *Child care consultation results delivered to federal government*. News release, September 27, 2006.

Government of Alberta (2006b) *What we heard: Alberta's consultation on the creation of child care spaces*. Retrieved September 28, 2006 from www.child.gov.ab.ca/childcareconsultation2006

Government of Alberta (2005). *Early childhood development and child care consultation report*. Retrieved September 29, 2006 from www.child.gov.ab.ca/whatwedo/childcare/pdf/4thdraft_consultation_report.pdf

Government of Saskatchewan (2006). *ELCC Sector Study*. Retrieved September 29, 2006 from www.aee.gov.sk.ca

Larson, K., Artz, G., Heglund, S., Kuku, Y., & Otto, D. (2005). *Child care, parents and work: The economic role of child care in Iowa*. University of Iowa: Centre for Family Policy.

Maschka, K. (2003). *Making mothers count: The fiscal value of nurturing*. USA Today. Retrieved October 1, 2006 from www.usatodaymagazine.net/searchfield.php?fid=3&sid=5&mt=American%20Thought

McCartney, K., Scarr, S., Rocheleau, A., Phillips, D., Abbot-Shim, M., Eisenberg, M., Keefe, N., Rosenthal, S., and Ruh, J. (1997). Teacher-child interaction and child care auspices as predictors of social outcomes. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 43(3):426-250.

Miller, C. & Ferguson, E. (2003). *Attracting and keeping qualified staff in Canadian Child Care: The national environmental scan*. Retrieved September 27, 2006 from <http://www.cccns.org/ref/RR/DP/Nat.pdf>

Peisner-Feinberg, E., Burchinal, M., Clifford, R., Culkin, M, Howes, C & Kagan, K. (1999) *The children of the cost, quality and outcomes study go to school*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina. Retrieved October 5, 2006 from www.fpg.unc.edu/nced

Rolfe, H. (2005). Building a stable workforce: recruitment and retention in the child care and early years sector. *Children and Society* 19(1), pp. 54-65. Retrieved September 27, 2006 from Academic Search Premier database.

Stavsky, S. (2002). *Child care workforce recruitment and retention: A challenge for quality and supply*. Retrieved October 5, 2006 from <http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/newpartners/publications/turnover.htm>

Whitebrook, M. & Sakai, L. (2003). Turnover begets turnover: An examination of job and occupational instability among child care centre staff. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 18, 273-293.

Wise, S., Ungerer, J & Sanson, A. (2002). Childcare policy to promote child wellbeing. *Australian Economic Review*, 35 (2), p180

PART SEVEN: APPENDICES

7.1 SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

12. Which of the following benefits do you receive from your child care employer/contracting agency?

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Paid sick leave of up to 6 days a year | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Paid sick leave of more than 6 days a year | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Pay at regular rate or above, or time in lieu, for overtime work (e.g., staff meetings, cleaning bees) | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Paid vacation of two or more weeks a year | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Paid professional development days | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Paid closure days in addition to regular holidays (e.g., at Easter and Christmas) | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Medical coverage | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Dental coverage | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Maternity/paternity leave | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Paid stress relief days | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Pension or RRSP contributions | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Other <input type="radio"/> (please explain) | | |
-
-
-

13. If you have a benefit plan, what percentage do you pay as an employee?

- 1-25% 26-50% 51-75% 76-100%

14. Please tell us how many hours a week (if any) you work for paid employment outside of your child care position?

- Not employed 5 to 10 hours a week 20 or more hours a week
fewer than 5 hours a week 11 to 19 hours a week

This section asks about your education and certification:

15. What level of education do you have?

- Less than high school Post secondary 1 year certificate University degree
High school graduation Post secondary 2 year diploma Postgraduate degree or training
Other (please explain) _____

16. What is your current certification status?

- Level 1 exempt Level 2 exempt Level 3 exempt
Level 1 Level 2 Level 3

17. Where did you obtain your child care training?

- At a university At a private college
At a public college Other (please explain) _____

18. To what extent do you feel that your training and education has adequately prepared you for the work you are doing in child care?

- Very prepared Somewhat prepared Not prepared
Quite well prepared Slightly prepared

19. If you answered "slightly" or "not prepared", what were the areas in which you felt least prepared?

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Knowing the expectations of the job | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Child guidance/discipline | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Programming | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Working with special needs | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Managing routines | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Working with families | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Other <input type="radio"/> (please explain) | | |
-

This section asks about your working conditions and job satisfaction:

30. How would you rate your job satisfaction?
Very satisfied Quite satisfied Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied Somewhat dissatisfied Very dissatisfied

31. Approximately how much of your work day is spent doing tasks other than the direct care of children (e.g., working in the office, cleaning, planning, cooking, creating displays, washing toys, making snacks):

Less than 1 hour over the course of the day 1 to less than 2 hours daily 2 to 3 hours daily More than 3 hours

32. Do you think that the number of staff in your program is adequate?

Strongly Agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

33. What changes might most improve your job satisfaction?

Change in management	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Change in working environment	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Increase in wages and/or benefits	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Improved quality of staff	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Change in job responsibilities	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Access to more training and/or education	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
More recognition and appreciation for child care as a profession	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Other <input type="radio"/> (please explain)		

34. To what extent do you feel that your work is noticed and appreciated by others in your program or profession?

Very appreciated Usually appreciated Sometimes appreciated Seldom appreciated Unappreciated

35. What keeps you in your present place of work?

Quality of supervision	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Quality of working environment	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Wages and benefits	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Enjoy my co-workers	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Enjoy the children and families	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Have access to training and/or education	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Feel recognized and appreciated for the work I do	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Able to be with my own children while working	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
No other work available	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Other <input type="radio"/> (please explain)		

36. What is the **one** most important factor in keeping you at your present place of work? (Please mark only **one**)

Quality of supervision	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of working environment	<input type="radio"/>
Wages and benefits	<input type="radio"/>
Enjoy my co-workers	<input type="radio"/>
Enjoy the children and families	<input type="radio"/>
Have access to training and/or education	<input type="radio"/>
Feel recognized and appreciated for the work I do	<input type="radio"/>
Able to be with my own children while working	<input type="radio"/>
No other work available	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please explain)	<input type="radio"/>

37. To what extent do you think that your organization attracts well-qualified and effective child care workers?

Very well Fairly well Not bad Poor Very poor



This section asks about your future plans:

38. If you were to leave the child care profession, what would be the reasons?

- Poor management Yes No
- Poor working environment Yes No
- Low wages Yes No
- Lack of benefits Yes No
- Job responsibilities don't fit with my training Yes No
- Little opportunity for job advancement Yes No
- Little recognition and appreciation for child care as a profession Yes No
- Other (please explain)

39. If you were to leave the child care profession, what would be the **one** most important reason? (Please mark **only one**)

- Poor management
- Poor working environment
- Low wages
- Lack of benefits
- Job responsibilities don't it with my training
- Little opportunity for job advancement
- Little recognition and appreciation for child care as a profession
- Other (please explain)

This section asks about how you feel about child care as a career:

40. To what extent do you have opportunities for advancement in your current place of work?

- Frequently Often Quite often Sometimes Not often Not at all

41. How likely is it that you will be at your present place of work two years from now?

- Very likely Quite likely Somewhat likely Unlikely Very unlikely

42. How likely is it that you will be working in any aspect of child care two years from now?

- Very likely Quite likely Somewhat likely Unlikely Very unlikely

43. Would you recommend child care to someone who is making a career choice?

- Yes No

44. If you responded "no" to question 43, what would be your reasons?

- Poor working environment Yes No
- Low wages Yes No
- Lack of benefits Yes No
- Little opportunity for job advancement Yes No
- Little recognition and appreciation for child care as a profession Yes No
- Training not easily available Yes No
- Other (please explain)

45. If you responded "no" to question 43, what would be your **one** most important reason? (Please mark **only one**)

- Poor working environment
- Low wages
- Lack of benefits
- Little opportunity for job advancement
- Little recognition and appreciation for child care as a profession
- Training not easily available
- Other (please explain)



This section asks about your education and certification:

12. What level of education do you have?

- Less than high school Post secondary 1 year certificate University degree
High school graduation Post secondary 2 year diploma Postgraduate degree or training
Other (please explain) _____

13. What is your current certification status?

- Level 1 exempt Level 2 exempt Level 3 exempt
Level 1 Level 2 Level 3

14. Where did you obtain your child care training?

- At a university At a private college
At a public college Other (please explain) _____

15. To what extent do you feel that your training and education has adequately prepared you for the work you are doing with children and families?

- Very prepared Somewhat prepared Not prepared
Quite well prepared Slightly prepared

16. If you answered "slightly" or "not prepared", what were the areas in which you felt least prepared?

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Knowing the expectations of the job | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Child guidance/discipline | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Programming | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Working with special needs | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Managing routines | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Working with families | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Other <input type="radio"/> (please explain) | | |

17. If you have Level 1 certification, are you currently studying to attain Level 2? Yes No

18. If you answered "no" above, what are your reasons?

- | | | |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| I don't have time | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| I don't receive information about training opportunities | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| I don't plan to continue working with children | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| Courses are not available at times convenient to me | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| Course are not available at locations convenient to me | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| I don't have the pre-requisite skills (e.g., high school, ESL) | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| I worry that the courses might be too difficult | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| There is no advantage to me in pursuing further training | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| Other <input type="radio"/> (please explain) | | |

19. If you have Level 2 certification, are you currently studying to attain Level 3? Yes No

20. If you answered "no" above, what are your reasons?

- | | | |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| I don't have time | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| I don't receive information about training opportunities | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| I don't plan to continue working with children | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| Courses are not available at times convenient to me | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| Course are not available at locations convenient to me | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| I don't have the pre-requisite skills (e.g., high school, ESL) | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| I worry that the courses might be too difficult | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| There is no advantage to me in pursuing further training | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| Other <input type="radio"/> (please explain) | | |



Please tell us about your employment history in child care:

21. Why did you first decide to work in child care? (Please indicate the **two** most important reasons)

- It allowed me to be with my own children while working most important less important/false
- I wanted to be self-employed most important less important/false
- It is a step toward my career goal most important less important/false
- I wanted to work from home most important less important/false
- I wanted to provide a home environment for children most important less important/false
- Other (please explain)

22. How long have you worked with your current family child care agency?

- less than 6 months 1 to 2 years 5 to 6 years more than 10 years
- 6 months to 1 year 3 to 4 years 7 to 10 years

23. Did you work in child care before coming to your current employer?

- Yes, in a centre-based program (day care or out-of-school care)
- Yes, for another family care agency
- No

24. If you answered "yes" above, for how long did you work for (an) other child care employer(s)?

- less than 3 months 6 months to 1 year 3 to 4 years more than 6 years
- less than 6 months 1 to 2 years 5 to 6 years

25. If you moved from another family child care agency to your current one, what were your reasons?

- Moved to a different geographical location True False
- Increased income True False
- More support from home visitors and/or agency True False
- More opportunities for training True False
- More flexible hours True False
- Other (please explain)

This section asks about your working conditions and job satisfaction:

27. How would you rate your job satisfaction?

- Very satisfied Quite satisfied Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied Somewhat dissatisfied Very dissatisfied

28. What changes might most improve your job satisfaction?

- Change in management Yes No
- Increased income Yes No
- More support from home visitors/agency Yes No
- Access to more training and/or education Yes No
- More recognition and appreciation for child care as a profession Yes No
- Other (please explain)

29. To what extent do you feel that your work is noticed and appreciated by the agency?

- Very appreciated Usually appreciated Sometimes appreciated Seldom appreciated Unappreciated

30. To what extent do you feel that your work is noticed and appreciated by the parents of the children you work with?

- Very appreciated Usually appreciated Sometimes appreciated Seldom appreciated Unappreciated

31. To what extent do you feel that your work is noticed and appreciated by the broader community?

- Very appreciated Usually appreciated Sometimes appreciated Seldom appreciated Unappreciated





32. What keeps you with your present agency?

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Quality of management | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Quality of support from home visitors/agency | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Level of income | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| It is the only agency in our area | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Enjoy the children and families | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Have access to training and/or education | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Feel recognized and appreciated for the work I do | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Other <input type="radio"/> (please explain) | | |
-

33. What is the **one** most important factor in keeping you at your present place of work? (Please mark only **one**)

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Quality of management | <input type="radio"/> |
| Quality of support from home visitors/agency | <input type="radio"/> |
| Level of income | <input type="radio"/> |
| It is the only agency in our area | <input type="radio"/> |
| Enjoy the children and families | <input type="radio"/> |
| Have access to training and/or education | <input type="radio"/> |
| Feel recognized and appreciated for the work I do | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other <input type="radio"/> (please explain) | <input type="radio"/> |
-

34. To what extent do you think that your organization attracts well-qualified and effective home visitors?

- Very well Fairly well Not bad Poor Very poor Don't know

35. To what extent do you think that your organization attracts well-qualified and effective providers?

- Very well Fairly well Not bad Poor Very poor Don't know

This section asks about your future plans:

36. If you were to stop working as a family child care provider, what would be the reasons?

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Poor management | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Lack of support from home visitors/agency | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Family reasons | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Low income | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Lack of benefits | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Job responsibilities don't fit with my training | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Little opportunity for job advancement | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Little recognition and appreciation for child care as a profession | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Other <input type="radio"/> (please explain) | | |
-

37. If you were to leave the child care profession, what would be the **one** most important reason? (Please mark only **one**)

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Poor management | <input type="radio"/> |
| Lack of support from home visitors/agency | <input type="radio"/> |
| Family reasons | <input type="radio"/> |
| Low income | <input type="radio"/> |
| Lack of benefits | <input type="radio"/> |
| Job responsibilities don't fit with my training | <input type="radio"/> |
| Little opportunity for job advancement | <input type="radio"/> |
| Little recognition and appreciation for child care as a profession | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other <input type="radio"/> (please explain) | <input type="radio"/> |
-



RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN CHILD CARE OPERATOR/DIRECTOR SURVEY

○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

We hope you will take the time to complete this important survey. The information you provide will help to shape child care policy and programs in Alberta. **Please note that if you operate a family child care (day home) program as well, you will be receiving questionnaires for that program in a separate package. Please complete both to give as much useful information as possible.**

You are asked to distribute survey questionnaires to each paid staff member who works with children for more than 10 hours a week.

Please read the questions below and, with an HB pencil, fill in the appropriate circle for your answer. If you need more space for written responses, please use additional paper.

Please tell us about your centre:

1. Do you operate or direct
 a child care centre (day care)
 a school-aged care centre (out-of-school centre)
 both of the above
 other Please explain _____

2. Is your centre
 in a rural area
 in an urban centre of under 10,000 people
 in an urban centre with a population of 10,000 to 100,000
 in an urban centre with a population of 100,000 to 500,000
 in an urban centre with a population of over 500,000

3. Is your centre for profit not-for-profit (non-profit) other Please explain _____

4. Is your centre accredited? Yes No No, but in process

5. Does your centre (or do you) belong to a professional organization? Yes No

6. What is the total number of paid child care staff in your program?
 -- Full-time (37.5 or more hours a week) less than 5 5 - 9 10 - 15 more than 15
 -- Part-time (less than 37.5 hours a week) less than 5 5 - 9 10 - 15 more than 15

7. How many children are attending your centre at this time?
 -- Full-time (paying the full fee) less than 10 11 - 20 21 - 30 31 - 50 51 - 70 more than 70
 -- Part-time (paying a reduced fee) less than 10 11 - 20 21 - 30 31 - 50 51 - 70 more than 70

8. Is your program operating at full capacity at this time? Yes No

9. If your program is not operating at full capacity, what is the reason(s)
 Choose to operate under ratio True False
 Unable to find suitable staff True False
 Not enough families applying for care True False
 Other (please explain)

Tell us about your experiences with attracting and keeping child care staff:

10. In your program, are child care staff with different levels of training given different responsibilities?
 Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

11. What do you find is the most effective way to find child care staff to hire?
 Newspaper advertisements Word of mouth (e.g., through friends, relatives, other staff)
 Online advertisements Other (please explain) _____



12. Have you noticed that accreditation has had any effect on your ability to hire and keep child care staff?

Yes No

Please explain your answer:

13. What strategies have you tried over the past year to attract and keep child care staff?

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| increased wages | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| increased benefits (e.g., sick leave, paid staff meetings, paid holidays, medical, dental, maternity/paternity leave) | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| more flexible work hours | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| reduced hours of operation | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| reduced caseload size | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| increased fees in order to provide more resources for staff | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Other <input type="radio"/> (please explain) | | |

Please tell us about the child care staff who have left your agency:

14. How many child care staff have left your employment over the past year (since June 1, 2006)?

None 1 - 3 4 - 6 7 - 10 More than 10

15. What are the most common reasons that these staff gave for leaving your centre?

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| to accept a position in another centre-based child care, family child care or school-aged care | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| to accept a position in an early childhood position other than the above (e.g., Parent Link, early intervention) | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| to accept a position in a different occupation or profession | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| to pursue further education | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| family circumstances (e.g., spouse or partner being transferred, pregnancy, illness in family) | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| retirement | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| terminated by employer | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| none | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| other <input type="radio"/> (please explain) | | |

16. From this list, which reason was most often given? (mark **one**)

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| to accept a position in another centre-based child care, family child care or school-aged care | <input type="radio"/> |
| to accept a position in an early childhood position other than the above (e.g., Parent Link, early intervention) | <input type="radio"/> |
| to accept a position in a different occupation or profession | <input type="radio"/> |
| to pursue further education | <input type="radio"/> |
| family circumstances (e.g., spouse or partner being transferred, pregnancy, illness in family) | <input type="radio"/> |
| retirement | <input type="radio"/> |
| terminated by employer | <input type="radio"/> |
| none | <input type="radio"/> |
| other | <input type="radio"/> |

17. Is there anything more that you would like us to know about attracting and keeping child care staff?

Thank you so much for your help.



This section asks about your working conditions and job satisfaction:

31. How would you rate your job satisfaction?
 Very satisfied Quite satisfied Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied Somewhat dissatisfied Very dissatisfied

32. Do you think that the number of staff in your program is adequate?
 Strongly Agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

33. What changes might most improve your job satisfaction?

Change in management	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Change in working environment	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Increase in wages and/or benefits	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Improved quality of staff	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Improved quality of providers	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Change in job responsibilities	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Lighter caseload	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Access to more training and/or education	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
More recognition and appreciation for child care as a profession	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Other <input type="radio"/> (please explain)		

34. To what extent do you feel that your work is noticed and appreciated by others in your agency or profession?
 Very appreciated Usually appreciated Sometimes appreciated Seldom appreciated Unappreciated

35. To what extent do you feel that your work is noticed and appreciated by the families you work with?
 Appreciated by all Appreciated by most Appreciated by some Unappreciated

36. To what extent do you feel that your work is noticed and appreciated by the broader community?
 Appreciated by all Appreciated by most Appreciated by some Unappreciated

37. What keeps you in your present place of work?

Quality of supervision	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Quality of management	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Quality of working environment	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Wages	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Benefits	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Enjoy my co-workers	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Enjoy working with the providers and families	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Have access to training and/or education	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Feel recognized and appreciated for the work I do	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
No other work available	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Other <input type="radio"/> (please explain)		

38. What is the **one** most important factor in keeping you at your present place of work? (Please mark only **one**)

Quality of supervision

Quality of management

Quality of working environment

Wages

Benefits

Enjoy my co-workers

Enjoy working with the providers and families

Have access to training and/or education

Feel recognized and appreciated for the work I do

No other work available

Other

48. If you responded "no" to question 46, what would be your **one** most important reason? (Please mark only **one**)

- Poor working environment
- Low wages
- Lack of benefits
- Little opportunity for job advancement
- Little recognition and appreciation for child care as a profession
- Training not easily available
- Other

49. Are you aware that you are eligible for a \$1000 professional development grant? Yes No

50. Have you used your \$1000 professional development grant in the past year?

- I have spent all or over half of the grant I have spent less than half of the grant I have not spent any of the grant

51. If you have not spent any of your grant, what are your reasons for not using the professional development grant?

- I don't have time to take courses or go to training sessions True False
 - I don't receive information about training opportunities True False
 - I don't plan to continue working in child care True False
 - I believe that my English skills are not adequate True False
 - I am unable to access the training I want True False
- (if you marked true, please explain)

-
- I didn't know about the grant True False
- Other (please explain)
-

52. If you have not spent any of your grant, what would be the **one** most important reason for not using the professional development grant? (Please mark only **one**)

- I don't have time to take courses or go to training sessions
- I don't receive information about training opportunities
- I don't plan to continue working in child care
- Courses are not available at times convenient to me
- I am unable to access the training I want
- The courses are not interesting to me
- I don't have the pre-requisite skills (e.g., high school, ESL)
- I didn't know about the grant
- Other

53. Please add any other information about attracting and keeping home visitation staff or providers that you would like us to know:

Thank you so much for your help.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN CHILD CARE OPERATOR SURVEY FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE PROGRAM



We hope you will take the time to complete this important survey. The information you provide will help to shape child care policy and programs in Alberta.

Please note that, if you operate a child care centre and/or out-of-school centre as well as your family child care program, you will be receiving the centre-based questionnaire in a separate package. Please complete both to give as much useful information as possible.

You are asked to distribute survey questionnaires to each home visitor who works for your agency and to every provider with whom you are currently contracting.

Please read the questions below and, with an HB pencil, fill in the appropriate circle for your answer. If you need more space for written responses, please use additional paper.

Please tell us about your family child care agency:

1. Is your agency
 - in a rural area
 - in an urban centre with a population of 100,000 to 500,000
 - in an urban centre of under 10,000 people
 - in an urban centre with a population of over 500,000
 - in an urban centre with a population of 10,000 to 100,000

2. Is your agency
 - for profit
 - not-for-profit (non-profit)
 - other Please explain _____

3. Is your agency accredited?
 - Yes
 - No
 - No, but in process
4. Does your agency (or do you) belong to a professional organization?
 - Yes
 - No
5. What is the total number of permanent home visitors in your program?
 - Full-time (37.5 or more hours a week)
 - less than 5
 - 5 - 9
 - 10 - 15
 - more than 15
 - Part-time (less than 37.5 hours a week)
 - less than 5
 - 5 - 9
 - 10 - 15
 - more than 15
6. How many providers work with your agency?
 - fewer than 10
 - 10 - 29
 - 30 - 50
 - more than 50
7. How many children are being served by your agency at this time?
 - fewer than 10
 - 11 - 20
 - 21 - 30
 - 31 - 69
 - 70 - 100
 - more than 100

Tell us about your experiences with attracting and keeping home visitors:

8. In your program, are home visitors with different levels of training given different responsibilities?
 - Always
 - Often
 - Sometimes
 - Seldom
 - Never

9. What do you find is the most effective way to find home visitors to hire?
 - Newspaper advertisements
 - Online advertisements
 - Word of mouth (e.g., through friends, relatives, other staff)
 - Other (please explain) _____

10. Have you noticed that accreditation has had any effect on your ability to hire and keep home visitors?
 - Yes
 - No

Please explain your answer:

11. What strategies have you tried over the past year to attract and keep home visitation staff?

increased income	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
increased benefits (e.g., sick leave, paid staff meetings, paid holidays, medical, dental)	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
more flexible work hours	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
reduced hours of operation	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
reduced caseload size	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
increased fees in order to provide more resources for staff	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Other <input type="radio"/> (please explain)		

Please tell us about the home visitors who have left your agency:

12. How many home visitors have left your employment over the past year (since September 1, 2006)?

- None 1 - 3 4 - 6 7 - 10 More than 10

13. What are the common reasons given by home visitors for leaving the agency?

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| to accept a position in centre-based child care, another family child care agency or school-aged care | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| to accept a position in an early childhood position other than the above (e.g., Parent Link, early intervention) | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| to accept a position in a different occupation or profession | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| to pursue further education | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| family circumstances (e.g., spouse or partner being transferred, pregnancy, illness in family) | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| retirement | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| terminated by contracting agency | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| none | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| other <input type="radio"/> (please explain) | | |

14. Which reason was most frequently given by home visitors for leaving the agency? (mark **one**)

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| to accept a position in centre-based child care, another family child care agency or school-aged care | <input type="radio"/> |
| to accept a position in an early childhood position other than the above (e.g., Parent Link, early intervention) | <input type="radio"/> |
| to accept a position in a different occupation or profession | <input type="radio"/> |
| to pursue further education | <input type="radio"/> |
| family circumstances (e.g., spouse or partner being transferred, pregnancy, illness in family) | <input type="radio"/> |
| retirement | <input type="radio"/> |
| terminated by contracting agency | <input type="radio"/> |
| none | <input type="radio"/> |
| other | <input type="radio"/> |

Tell us about your experiences with attracting and keeping providers:

15. How many new providers have you added in the past year (since September 1, 2006)?

- Fewer than 5 5 - 9 10 - 15 16 - 24 25 - 40 More than 40

16. What strategies have you tried over the past year to attract and keep providers?

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| increased income | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| more flexible work hours | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| startup grants | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| waiving agency fees | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| increased fees in order to provide more resources for staff | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| more training opportunities | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Other <input type="radio"/> (please explain) | | |

17. Would you employ more providers if you were able to find suitable people? Yes No

18. Have you noticed that accreditation has had any effect on your ability to hire and keep providers?

- Yes No Please explain your answer:



Please tell us about the providers who have left your agency:

19. How many providers have left your employment over the past year (since September 1, 2006)?

- Fewer than 5
- 5 - 9
- 10 - 15
- 16 - 24
- 25 - 40
- More than 40

20. What are the reasons providers give for leaving the agency?

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| to accept a position in centre-based child care, another family child care agency or school-aged care | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| to accept a position in an early childhood position other than the above (e.g., Parent Link, early intervention) | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| to accept a position in a different occupation or profession | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| to pursue further education | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| family circumstances (e.g., spouse or partner being transferred, pregnancy, illness in family) | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| retirement | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| terminated by contracting agency | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| none | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| other <input type="radio"/> (please explain) | | |

21. Which reason was most frequently given by providers for leaving the agency? (mark **one**)

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| to accept a position in centre-based child care, another family child care agency or school-aged care | <input type="radio"/> |
| to accept a position in an early childhood position other than the above (e.g., Parent Link, early intervention) | <input type="radio"/> |
| to accept a position in a different occupation or profession | <input type="radio"/> |
| to pursue further education | <input type="radio"/> |
| family circumstances (e.g., spouse or partner being transferred, pregnancy, illness in family) | <input type="radio"/> |
| retirement | <input type="radio"/> |
| terminated by contracting agency | <input type="radio"/> |
| none | <input type="radio"/> |
| other | <input type="radio"/> |

22. Is there anything more that you would like us to know about attracting and keeping family child care providers or home visitors?

Thank you so much for your help.



13. If you do **not** plan to work in the early childhood profession when you graduate, which of the following would be most likely to influence you to change your mind? (please indicate the **two** most important factors)
- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Increased recognition as to the importance of working with children | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Increased salary | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Improved benefits (e.g., sick leave, vacation, medical and dental) | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| More opportunities for advancement within the profession | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Better working conditions (please explain below) | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Other <input type="radio"/> (please explain) | | |
-

14. How familiar are you with the Alberta child care accreditation program?
- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Very familiar <input type="radio"/> | Somewhat familiar <input type="radio"/> | Have never heard of it <input type="radio"/> |
| Quite familiar <input type="radio"/> | Know very little about it <input type="radio"/> | |

15. Has child care accreditation influenced your career plans in any way?
- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| No, it hasn't influenced me at all | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Yes, accreditation was one reason that I enrolled in the early childhood program | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Yes, accreditation has helped influence me to work in centre-based care, out-of-school care or family child care after I graduate | Yes <input type="radio"/> | No <input type="radio"/> |
| Other <input type="radio"/> (please explain) | | |
-

16. Please add any other information that you would like us to know about attracting and keeping child care staff?

Thank you so much for your help.

7.2 LETTERS TO ACCOMPANY QUESTIONNAIRES

Child Care Operator Letter

Dear Child Care Operator,

Alberta Children's Services has contracted with the Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement (ARCQE) to gather information for developing strategies to build a stable, well-qualified child care workforce. We are asking for your assistance in creating an accurate picture of the staffing situation in Alberta child care. This package contains survey forms for you and for each of your childcare staff. (Please feel free to photocopy if you need additional forms.) You and your staff are under no obligation to complete these surveys but doing so will provide valuable information and will be much appreciated.

The procedure for distributing and collecting the surveys is as follows:

- Distribute (or ask a staff member to distribute) a "Centre-Based Caregiver Survey," a letter of explanation and an envelope to each paid staff member who works with children 10 or more hours a week.
- Complete the "Operator/Director Survey," seal it in the envelope provided and put it in the large stamped return envelope. This will probably take you 10 to 15 minutes. Please note that the questionnaire will be machine scored so it should not be folded and must be completed in pencil. You may stop at any point or, if you prefer not to answer a question, feel free to skip it and go on to other questions. If you submit your questionnaire and later decide that you want your responses omitted, you may arrange this by contacting us and telling us the number of your survey. By completing and sending the survey, you are consenting to our use of the information you provide.
- Collect the survey envelopes from the staff members who choose to participate, add them to the return envelope and send to the envelope to ARCQE. The responses will need to be received at ARCQE by November 16, 2007, in order to be included in the data.

We will take every possible measure to ensure that the information you and your staff provide remains anonymous and confidential.

The survey forms will become the property of ARCQE and will be securely stored for three years then destroyed. The results of the study will be made available to Alberta Children's Services and will be posted on the ARCQE website at www.arcqe.ca.

For more information about the research, please go to the ARCQE website at www.arcqe.ca. If you have any questions about this survey or the research project, please feel free to contact me at 780-438-2345 (phone) or cmassing@telusplanet.net (e-mail). If you have any concerns about

how the research is being conducted or the data handled, please contact Eileen Hogan, Chair of the Institutional Ethics Review Board at Grant MacEwan College, at 780-497-5422 or hogane@macewan.ca.

This is your opportunity to have a voice in a process for enhancing working conditions and services for child care in Alberta. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Carole Massing, Ph.D.
Project Coordinator

Centre-Based Caregiver Letter

Dear Caregiver,

Alberta Children's Services has contracted with the Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement (ARCQE) to gather information for developing strategies to build a stable, well-qualified child care workforce. We would appreciate your help in creating an accurate picture of the staffing situation in Alberta child care.

Here is some information about your participation in the survey and how we will handle the information you give us:

You will have been given a survey form, this information letter, and an envelope. Once you have completed your questionnaire, please seal it in the envelope and return it to the person at your centre who has been designated to collect the completed questionnaires.

The questionnaires will be machine scored so you must use pencil to complete them. It will take you 20 to 30 minutes to complete the survey. To be included in the data, survey responses must be received by November 16, 2007.

Your response will remain completely anonymous and confidential. The surveys are numbered so there will be no way to link your name to your responses. No one connected with your agency or centre should influence your answers in any way.

Please understand that your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You will not be penalized in any manner if you do not reply. You may stop at any point or, if you prefer not to answer a question, feel free to skip it and go on to other questions. If you submit your questionnaire and later decide that you want your responses omitted, you may arrange this by contacting us and telling us the number of your survey. By completing and sending the survey, you are consenting to our use of the information you provide.

The survey forms will become the property of ARCQE and will be securely stored for three years then destroyed. The results of the study will be made available to Alberta Children's Services and will be posted on the ARCQE website at www.arcqe.ca.

For more information about the research, please go to the ARCQE website at www.arcqe.ca. If you have any questions about this survey or the research project, please feel free to contact me at 780-438-2345 (phone) or cmassing@telusplanet.net (e-mail). If you have any concerns about how the research is being conducted or the data handled, please contact Eileen Hogan, Chair of the Institutional Ethics Review Board at Grant MacEwan College, at 780-497-5422 or hogane@macewan.ca.

This is your opportunity to have a voice in a process for enhancing working conditions and services for child care in Alberta. Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Carole Massing, Ph.D.
Project Coordinator

Family Child Care Operator Letter

Dear Family Child Care Operator,

Alberta Children's Services has contracted with the Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement (ARCQE) to gather information for developing strategies to build a stable, well-qualified child care workforce. We would appreciate your help in creating an accurate picture of the staffing situation in Alberta family child care. This package contains survey forms for you, your home visitors/consultants and your providers. (Please feel free to photocopy the forms if you need more.) Your agency is under no obligation to complete these surveys but doing so will provide valuable information and will be much appreciated.

The procedure for distributing and collecting the surveys is as follows:

- Distribute the "Home Visitor Survey," a letter of explanation and a stamped envelope to each home visitor/consultant who works for your agency for 10 or more hours a week.
- Give each home visitor enough copies of the "Family Child Care Provider Survey," letters of explanation and stamped envelopes to give one to each of the providers on their caseload. Alternatively, you may choose to distribute the surveys at a meeting with your providers.
- Complete the "Operator/Director Survey," and return it in the stamped envelope by November 16, 2007. It will probably take you 10 to 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Please note that it will be machine scored so should not be folded and must be completed in pencil. You may stop at any point or, if you prefer not to answer a question, feel free to skip it and go on to other questions. If you submit your questionnaire and later decide that you want your responses omitted, you may arrange this by contacting us and telling us the number of your survey. By completing and sending the survey, you are consenting to our use of the information you provide.

We will take every possible measure to ensure that all of the information provided remains anonymous and confidential.

The survey forms will become the property of ARCQE and will be securely stored for three years then destroyed. The results of the study will be made available to Alberta Children's Services and will be posted on the ARCQE website at www.arcqe.ca.

For more information about the research, please go to the ARCQE website at www.arcqe.ca. If you have any questions about this survey or the research project, please feel free to contact me at 780-438-2345 (phone) or cmassing@telusplanet.net (e-mail). If you have any concerns about how the research is being conducted or the data handled, please contact Eileen Hogan, Chair of the Institutional Ethics Review Board at Grant MacEwan College, at 780-497-5422 or hogane@macewan.ca.

This is your opportunity to have a voice in a process for enhancing working conditions and services for child care in Alberta. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Carole Massing, Ph.D.
Project Coordinator

Home Visitor Letter

Dear Family Child Care Visitor/Consultant,

Alberta Children's Services has contracted with the Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement (ARCQE) to gather information for developing strategies to build a stable, well-qualified child care workforce. We are asking for your assistance in creating an accurate picture of the staffing situation in family child care in Alberta.

Here is some information about your participation in the survey and how we will handle the information you give us:

You will have been given a questionnaire, this information letter, and a stamped, addressed envelope that you could use to send your questionnaire to us. The questionnaires will be machine scored so you must use pencil to complete them. It will take you about 20 minutes to complete the survey. To be included in the data, survey responses must be received by November 29, 2007.

Your response will remain completely anonymous and confidential. The surveys are numbered so there will be no way to link your name to your responses. No one connected with your agency or centre should influence your answers in any way.

Please understand that your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You will not be penalized in any manner if you do not reply. You may stop at any point or, if you prefer not to answer a question, feel free to skip it and go on to other questions. If you submit your questionnaire and later decide that you want your responses omitted, you may arrange this by contacting us and telling us the number of your survey. By completing and sending the survey, you are consenting to our use of the information you provide.

You may also be asked by your agency to distribute survey forms to the providers with whom you work. Please reassure them that their responses are confidential and that any information they provide will be useful.

The survey forms will become the property of ARCQE and will be securely stored for three years and then destroyed. The results of the study will be made available to Alberta Children's Services and will be posted on the ARCQE website at www.arcqe.ca.

For more information about the research, please go to the ARCQE website at www.arcqe.ca. If you have any questions about this survey or the research project, please feel free to contact me at 780-438-2345 (phone) or cmassing@telusplanet.net (e-mail). If you have any concerns about how the research is being conducted or the data handled, please contact Eileen Hogan, Chair of the Institutional Ethics Review Board at Grant MacEwan College, at 780-497-5422 or hogane@macewan.ca.

Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Carole Massing, Ph.D.
Project Coordinator

Provider Letter

Dear Family Child Care Provider,

Alberta Children's Services has contracted with the Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement (ARCQE) to gather information for developing strategies to build a stable, well-qualified child care workforce in Alberta. We are asking for your help in creating an accurate picture of work conditions from the perspective of a family child care provider.

Here is some information about your participation in the survey and how we will handle the information you give us:

You will have been given a questionnaire, this information letter, and a stamped, addressed envelope that you could use to send your questionnaire to us. The questionnaires will be machine scored so you must use pencil to complete them and they should not be folded. To be included in the data, survey responses must be received by November 27, 2007.

Your response will remain completely anonymous and confidential. The surveys are numbered so there will be no way to link your name to your responses. No one connected with your agency or centre should influence your answers in any way.

It will take you 20 to 30 minutes to complete the survey. Please understand that your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You will not be penalized in any manner if you do not reply. You may stop at any point or, if you prefer not to answer a question, feel free to skip it and go on to other questions. If you submit your questionnaire and later decide that you want your responses omitted, you may arrange this by contacting us and telling us the number of your survey. By completing and sending the survey, you are consenting to our use of the information you provide.

The survey forms will become the property of ARCQE and will be securely stored for three years and then destroyed. The results of the study will be made available to Alberta Children's Services and will be posted on the ARCQE website at www.arcqe.ca.

For more information about the research, please go to the ARCQE website at www.arcqe.ca. If you have any questions about this survey or the research project, please feel free to contact me at 780-438-2345 (phone) or cmassing@telusplanet.net (e-mail). If you have any concerns about how the research is being conducted or the data handled, please contact Eileen Hogan, Chair of the Institutional Ethics Review Board at Grant MacEwan College, at 780-497-5422 or hogane@macewan.ca.

This is your opportunity to have a voice in a process for enhancing working conditions and services for child care in Alberta. Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Carole Massing, Ph.D.
Project Coordinator

Student Letter

Dear Early Childhood Student,

Alberta Children's Services has contracted with the Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement (ARCQE) to gather information for developing strategies to build a stable, well-qualified child care workforce. In addition to graduating students at Alberta colleges, we are surveying staff and operators at child care centres, family child care agencies and out-of-school centres throughout Alberta.

We would appreciate your help in creating an accurate picture of the staffing situation in Alberta child care. As a student who will graduate this year from an early childhood program, you are in a unique position to comment on the field as you see it and to tell about the decisions you have made for your own future.

Here is some information about your participation in the survey and how we will handle the information you give us:

You will have been given a survey form, this information letter, and a stamped, addressed envelope for you to use to send your completed survey to us. Because the surveys will be machine scored, they need to be completed in pencil and not folded. It will take you approximately 15 minutes to complete the survey. To be included in the data, survey responses must be received by November 16, 2007.

Your response will remain completely anonymous and confidential. The surveys are numbered so there will be no way to link your name to your answers. Please understand that your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You will not be penalized in any manner if you do not reply. You may stop at any point or, if you prefer not to answer a question, feel free to skip it and go on to other questions. If you submit your questionnaire and later decide that you want your responses omitted, you may arrange this by contacting us and telling us the number of your survey. By completing and sending the survey, you are consenting to our use of the information you provide.

The survey forms will become the property of ARCQE and will be securely stored for three years and then destroyed. The results of the study will be made available to Alberta Children's Services and will be posted on the ARCQE website at www.arcqe.ca.

For more information about the research, please go to the ARCQE website at www.arcqe.ca. If you have any questions about this survey or the research project, please feel free to contact me at 780-438-2345 (phone) or cmassing@telusplanet.net (e-mail). This research has received ethics approval from your college. If you have any concerns about how the research is being

conducted or the data handled, please contact Eileen Hogan, Chair of the Institutional Ethics Review Board at Grant MacEwan College, at 780-497-5422 or hogane@macewan.ca.

This is your opportunity to have a voice in a process for enhancing working conditions and services for child care in Alberta. Thanks very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Carole Massing, Ph.D.
Project Coordinator

