Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force
Minutes, 16 Oct 2026

10am-11:00 am via Zoom

- **Welcome and Land Acknowledgement**



We acknowledge that our work across Grey and Bruce counties takes place within the traditional territory of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, comprised of Saugeen First Nation and the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation at Neyaashiinigmiing.

We honour their enduring relationships with these lands and waters, and the generations who have cared for them. We recognize their rights, knowledge and continuing leadership, and acknowledge the First Nations, Métis and Inuit people who make this region their home.

Today's discussion on affordable childcare invites us to reflect on what children and families need to thrive: safety, belonging, connection to culture, and the resources to live with dignity. We recognize the lasting harms of residential schools and colonial policies that separated Indigenous children from their families, languages and communities. We honour Survivors and affirm the importance of Indigenous leadership in services that support their children and families.

Accessible, affordable and culturally safe childcare supports children's development and enables parents and caregivers to pursue employment, education and greater income security. It is an essential part of our shared work to reduce poverty.

As the Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force, we commit to listening, strengthening respectful relationships and challenging barriers to equitable access. May today's conversation helps us move from acknowledgement to practical action, so that every child and family has the opportunity to thrive.

Key Takeaways

- The federal and provincial governments signed an agreement on September 29th to extend the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELC) program until March 31, 2031, maintaining parent fee caps at a maximum of $22/day until at least June 30, 2027.
- Both Grey and Bruce Counties face a freeze on licensed childcare space expansion due to funding constraints, despite significant waitlists (approximately 2,400 children in Grey County alone).
- A new provincial workforce recruitment website, BeginHere.ca, was launched to promote ECE careers and provide pathways, funding information, and local job boards.
- The current RECE wage floor is $25.86/hour in 2026, but wage equity for non-registered staff remains an ongoing advocacy issue.

- Childcare fee subsidy income thresholds have not been updated since 2007, leaving many families ineligible despite financial hardship.
- Child poverty in Canada has risen for the third consecutive year, with nearly 1.4 million children (18.3%) living in poverty.
- Municipal election candidate education on poverty was held in September, with 63 candidates attending a two-hour Poverty 101 session.

Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELC) System Overview

Tara Cockerill and Cindy Tanner provided a comprehensive overview of the CWELC program, its current status, and recent federal-provincial agreement extension. CWELC is a multi-billion dollar federal-provincial partnership that lowers licensed childcare costs to an average of $19/day, capped at $22/day, for children under age 6 enrolled in participating programs. The program also focuses on expanding licensed spaces and increasing compensation for Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) between 2022 and 2026. On September 29th, the federal and provincial governments agreed to extend the CWELC program until March 31, 2031, maintaining current parent fee levels until at least June 30, 2027. The local service system managers have not yet received 2027 operational guidelines or budgets.

Conclusion: 1) The extension is a positive development for families and operators, preventing a sudden fee increase from $22 to $60+/day as of January and 2) further details on the new agreement are still forthcoming.

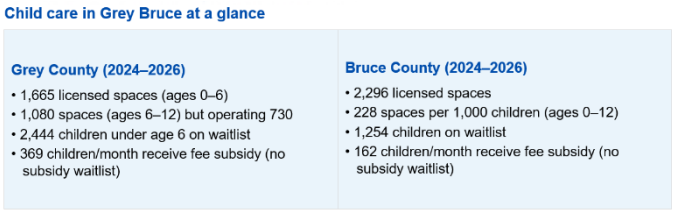
Cost-Based Funding Model and Operational Pressures

Tara Cockerill and Cindy Tanner discussed the shift to a cost-based funding model and the operational challenges it presents for childcare operators. Explained that last year marked the first year of cost-based funding, where operators are funded based on occupied spaces rather than parent fee revenue supplemented by subsidies. Grey County and Bruce County operators find the new system more stable and predictable, receiving monthly allocations with year-end reconciliation.

A key pressure is that operators must maintain 95% of licensed operating capacity or face funding recovery for empty spaces. This creates challenges around gradual entry for new children (e.g., starting with 6 instead of 8 toddlers), which negatively impacts funding eligibility. Currently there is a freeze on space expansion — operators with available rooms and waitlists cannot expand because funding is unavailable to support additional spaces. Multiple operators from other service system areas want to open in Grey County and Bruce County but are being placed on a waitlist pending additional space allocations.

Conclusion: 1) The cost-based funding model improves stability but introduces new pressures around occupancy requirements and limits operational flexibility, and 2) space expansion is currently frozen, creating significant unmet demand.

Childcare Waitlists and Access for Families



Approximately 2,400 children on waitlists across all age groups in Grey County as of Q2, with approximately 1,800 under age 6, primarily waiting for toddler and preschool spaces. A drop-off in school-age enrollment in Grey County, as families face full fees for children aged 7+ during summer, representing a significant cost increase from the $22 cap. Bruce County also has significant waitlists, particularly for toddlers (13–30 months) and before-and-after school care. Home childcare recruitment has also been challenging as a strategy to offset licensed space shortages.

Conclusion: 1) Demand for licensed childcare significantly exceeds current supply in both Grey and Bruce Counties and 2) school-age care is experiencing declining enrollment due to cost increases for children over age 6.

Childcare Fee Subsidy and Income Threshold Advocacy

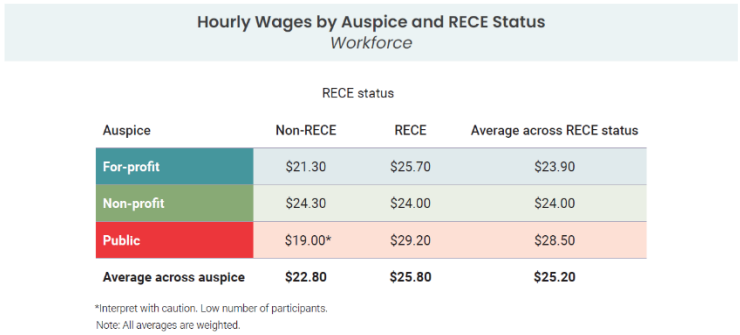
The gap between the $22/day fee cap and affordability for families who do not qualify for fee subsidies. The childcare fee subsidy is available for families meeting financial eligibility requirements, but income thresholds have not been updated since 2007. Many families earn more than the 2007 threshold but still face budget shortfalls — citing data showing families could still be $500/month short even after paying the $22 cap, when accounting for rent and cost of living. Grey County recently made an AMO delegation to advocate for revised income thresholds, and that service system managers have no flexibility on this provincially mandated threshold. Advocated for thresholds to be modernized and ideally indexed annually to reflect wage changes. The same challenge exists in Bruce County, noting families with multiple children under age 6 could pay $66/day and still not qualify for subsidy.

Connecting this to the broader poverty reduction work, it was commented that partners like the United Way are working to reduce housing and utility costs to help families afford childcare.

Conclusion: 1) Income thresholds for fee subsidy eligibility are outdated and must be updated to reflect current cost-of-living realities and 2) ongoing advocacy to the province is required to modernize and index these thresholds.

ECE Workforce: Wages, Equity, and Retention

The group discussed the RECE wage floor, wage equity for non-registered staff, and workforce retention challenges. The latest **Knowing Our Numbers** for Bruce County and Grey County supported this discussion. bgdisc.ca/post/counties-of-bruce-and-grey-knowing-our-numbers-report



Hourly Wages by Auspice and RECE Status
Workforce

RECE status

Auspice	Non-RECE	RECE	Average across RECE status
For-profit	$21.30	$25.70	$23.90
Non-profit	$24.30	$24.00	$24.00
Public	$19.00*	$29.20	$28.50
Average across auspice	**$22.80**	**$25.80**	**$25.20**

*Interpret with caution. Low number of participants.
Note: All averages are weighted.

The 2026 RECE wage floor is $25.86/hour for registered ECEs working in CWELC-enrolled programs across the province. This is just above the living wage calculation for the Grey Bruce region at $24.60.

Tara highlighted that CWELC funding only covers the wage floor for registered ECE staff; non-registered staff (those not members of the College of Early Childhood Educators) are only technically funded at minimum wage, creating an equity gap. Operators who wish to pay non-registered staff equally must find the difference themselves.

Raised the comparison between ECEs in childcare (working 12 months) versus ECEs in school boards (working 10 months) for similar annual wages, affecting work-life balance and recruitment. Younger workers prefer 5-hour shifts over 8-hour shifts, creating staffing challenges for programs running 12-hour days. Long operating hours and mandatory ratio maintenance create work-life balance challenges for childcare staff.

Conclusion: 1) Wage equity for non-registered childcare staff remains a key advocacy priority, 2) work-life balance and shift structure are increasingly important recruitment and retention factors and 3) continued advocacy is needed to raise the professional profile and compensation of the ECE sector.

BeginHere.ca — ECE Workforce Recruitment Website

A new provincial workforce recruitment initiative developed through OMSSA (Ontario Municipal Social Services Association). Multiple service system managers pooled funding to create BeginHere.ca, a one-stop resource for individuals interested in ECE careers. Features including: career pathway information, a quiz to assess fit, eligibility guidance, college listings with program details (online/asynchronous options), funding opportunities, and a localized job board. The site is available in English and French, with a "Talk to an Advisor" feature directing users to their local service system manager. Both Georgian College and Fanshawe College have expanded flexible and asynchronous programming post-COVID to support those already working in the sector. Bruce County produced a video a few years ago promoting ECE careers and is currently finalizing a new video focused on males in ECE.

Conclusion: 1) BeginHere.ca is a new and promising tool to promote ECE as a professional career and support workforce recruitment and 2) partners are encouraged to share the website and use it as a promotional resource.

Knowing Our Numbers — ECE Workforce Data Report

Findings from the provincial "Knowing Our Numbers" workforce data project led by Dr. Amos Akbari at the Atkinson Center, University of Toronto was presented. bgdisc.ca/post/counties-of-bruce-and-grey-knowing-our-numbers-report

The 2023–2024 report collected demographic and workforce data across Ontario, with Grey and Bruce combined due to smaller sample sizes. Approximately 36% of the early learning workforce in Grey-Bruce is over age 45, signaling significant upcoming retirements. The report covers workforce demographics, compensation, benefits, racialized worker experiences, job satisfaction, and plans to stay or leave the sector. Benefits such as paid sick days, professional development time, and retirement plans are increasingly important recruitment and retention factors. Phase 2 of the project will begin in 2026–2027, providing updated comparative data to inform future service plans.

A question was posed on whether data exists on where ECE graduates are trained (e.g., Georgian College) and suggested advocating for increased local graduation capacity if shortages exist. This data is collected by the project and the College of ECEs and expressed anticipation for more localized data in the next report.

Conclusion: 1) Workforce aging is a significant concern requiring proactive recruitment to offset upcoming retirements, 2) Phase 2 data will be critical for planning future childcare service expansion in Grey and Bruce and 3) Advocating for increased local ECE graduation capacity is a potential action item.

Action: Share the Bruce County ECE recruitment video link and the upcoming males-in-ECE video once finalized.

Population Growth and Childcare Demand Projections

A question was posed about population trends and their implications for childcare demand relative to seniors' services. The lakeshore area of Bruce County is seeing higher demand for childcare due to population growth. Grey County is updating its projected growth plan and identified Dundalk, Markdale, and the Town of Blue Mountains/Meaford areas as experiencing significant housing development with family-style homes.

Four County Labour Planning Market Board shared Labour Force Survey data showing that the largest population increase between 2024 and 2026 in the four-county region is in the 65+ age group. A youtube series by Four County shares population data and workforce needs E3-Navigating the Future of Care

Conclusion: 1) Grey and Bruce Counties are experiencing population growth in both family and senior demographics and 2) Grey County is proactively updating its growth plan to be ready for future childcare space expansion opportunities.

Municipal Election Candidate Education — Poverty 101 Session

Jill Umbach provided an update on the Poverty Task Force's pre-election education initiative. In September, a two-hour Poverty 101 education session was held for municipal election candidates, replacing the regular Poverty Task Force meeting. 233 candidates were identified, 231 were reached by email, and 63 candidates attended the session. Housing was the dominant topic of discussion, even though the session covered broader social determinants of health and the roles of municipal, upper-tier, provincial, and federal governments. Candidates left with more questions than answers, recognizing the complexity of poverty and housing issues, but with a clearer sense that municipal councillors have a meaningful role to play.

Councillor Joan John reminded participants that advanced voting begins today and encouraged everyone to vote.

Partner Updates

Dress Purple Day (Bruce Grey Child and Family Services)

Chelsea Donohue announced that October 29th is Dress Purple Day, a day to highlight the community's role in keeping children and youth safe. An open house is being held today (October 22nd) from 1–3 PM at Owen Sound and Walkerton offices, featuring a dirty soda bar, treats, crafts, and information on community supports. Participants encouraged to wear purple on October 29th and share photos on Instagram or Facebook tagging the organization.

Grey County Climate Change Adaptation Plan - Megan Myles

Megan Myles provided an update on Grey County's climate change adaptation planning work. Megan Myles introduced herself as Interim Climate Change Initiatives Manager at Grey County, covering for Linda during extended educational leave. Work on the climate change adaptation plan has resumed, with a new public engagement platform (Resilient Grey) launched. The engagement process included climate personas to reflect how climate change disproportionately impacts different populations. The plan is expected to be presented to Council in Spring 2027, with a short public engagement planned for January.

Grey County's climate adaptation plan is progressing, with a focus on equitable impacts. Collaboration between climate resilience and poverty reduction work is ongoing, particularly around rental housing and tenant protections.

RentSafe Owen Sound Collaborative Roundtable – Jill Umbach

The RentSafe Owen Sound Collaborative Roundtable held a one-day workshop at the Community Impact Lab/Georgian College/Sydenham Campus which examined climate resiliency and rental housing from the perspective of lower-income renters. An environmental scan was carried out on policy/planning for climate resiliency in rental housing and the opportunity to link to Grey County Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

Members of the Poverty Task Force and Community Voices will be participating in a province-wide RentSafe Ontario roundtable in Toronto on Oct 19th/20th. Our local work will be recognized as Bright Spot.

The City of Owen Sound's Vital Services By-law passed in September, and ongoing work by the United Way is happening with Kincardine and Saugeen Shores on utility billing reforms to protect tenants. RentSafe Update: From Local Research to Stronger Rental Housing Standards in Owen Sound – Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force

Community Foundation Events and Vital Signs Report – Stuart Reid

The Vital Signs report, released in June, is available for free download and contains data on shifting demographics, children, school-age children, and childcare relevant to the day's discussion. bgdisc.ca/post/vital-signs-2026

- November 6th Lunch and Learn for financial professionals will be held at Grey Roots, featuring Ryan Gibson from the University of Guelph on rural wealth transfer and philanthropy.
- November 13th Changemaker Evening at Harmony Center will focus on community wealth building, including speakers and music.
- December 3rd Season of Giving event at Grey Roots, screening a film about the Community Foundation's 30+ years of impact.

Campaign 2000 — National Strategy for Children and Youth Act (Bill S-2112) - Jill Umbach

Jill provided an update on federal advocacy related to child poverty. Campaign 2000, an organization focused on poverty reduction, is advocating for Bill S-2112, an Act Respecting a **National Strategy for Children and Youth**. The bill was deferred because the sponsoring parliamentarian was absent during its scheduled review, but it remains on the docket. Child poverty rates in Canada have risen for the third consecutive year, with nearly 1.4 million children (18.3%) living in poverty — more than double the 2020 rate. Join the call: endorse Bill 212 open letter for Canada's children - Campaign 2000

Action: Jill Umbach will share the bill information with partners and bring it to the steering committee for approval before any organizational sign-on.

Action: Explore collective advocacy actions for 2027, including potential alignment with national and provincial coalitions on childcare.

Next Poverty Task Force Meeting will be on **November 20th, 2026, 10am.** Anne Coleman, Ontario Living Wage Network, will be speaking to the 2026 Living Wage Rate.

Strengthening the Early Years Workforce
and
Supporting Economic Participation

Workforce Participation

- Quality child care helps parents enter, remain, and advance in the workforce.
- Investments in early learning support economic growth while improving outcomes for children and families.
- Women continue to face workforce participation barriers related to caregiving responsibilities.
- Expanded child care access supports greater workforce equity and economic opportunities for women.

Current CWELCC System Update

The **Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC)** system in Ontario is a multi-billion dollar federal-provincial partnership that lowers the cost of licensed child care to an average of **$19 per day** (capped at a maximum of **$22 per day**).

Between 2022 and 2026, the initiative also focused on expanding licensed child care spaces across Ontario and increasing compensation for Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) to support long-term sustainability and quality.

Current CWELCC System Update

On September 29, 2026, the federal and provincial governments reached an agreement to extend the Canada Wide Early Learning & Child Care (CWELCC) program until March 31, 2031.

While further details are still forthcoming, highlights of the recent agreement include:

- Maintaining current parent fee levels until at least June 30, 2027.
- Stabilizing the delivery of the CWELC program over the long term.

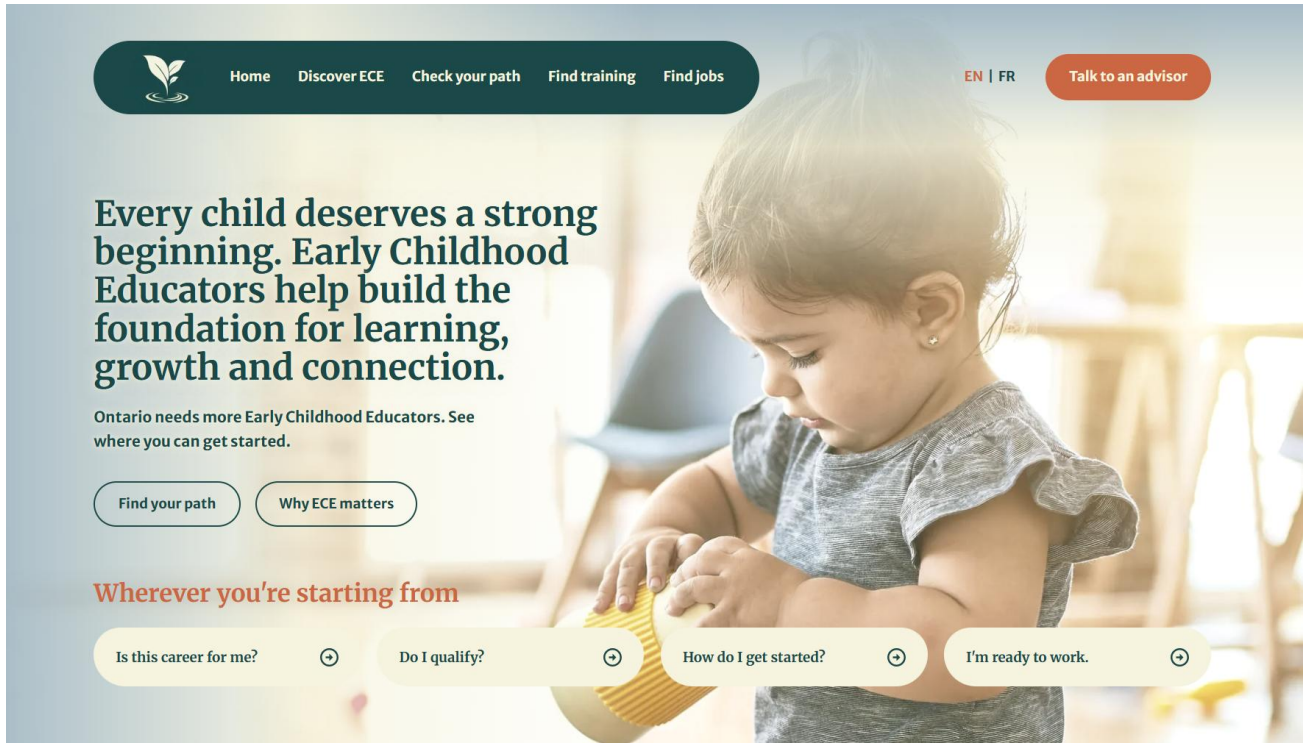
No commitments or indications regarding further sector expansion were announced at the press conference.

Further updates will be shared with the community as they become available.

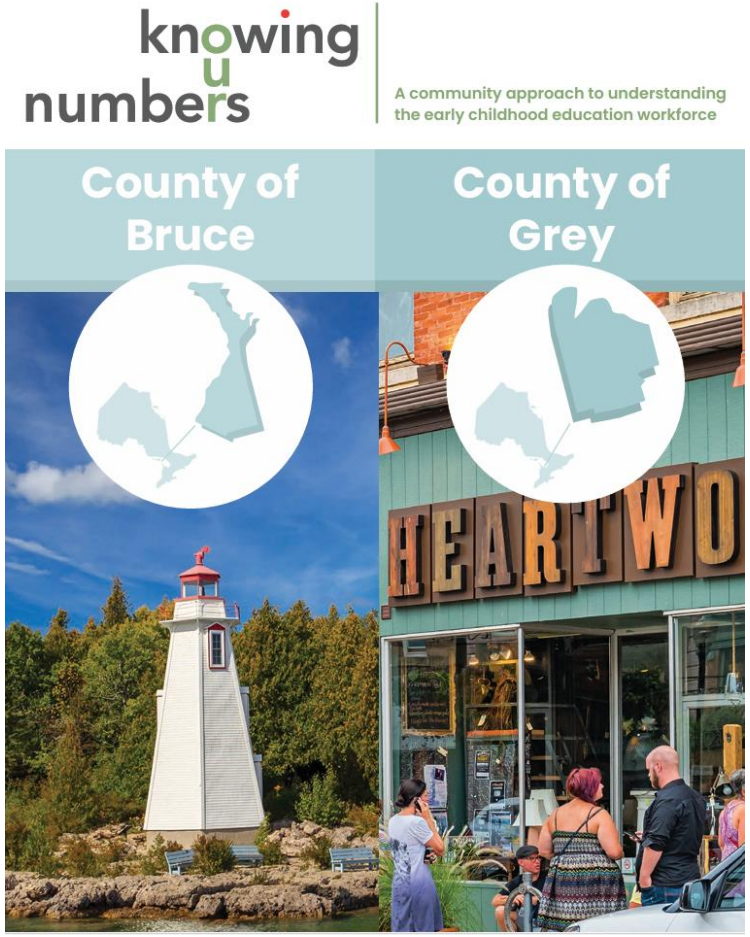
ECE Recruitment & Retention

Workforce strategies have focused on attracting and retaining Early Childhood Educators through advocacy, professional recognition, career pathways, and improved compensation awareness.

Developed in partnership with OMSSA, BeginHere.ca promotes careers in the early years and child care sector by highlighting educational pathways, career opportunities, and the value of the ECE profession



Knowing Our Numbers



The Knowing Our Numbers project provides workforce and system data to support evidence-based planning. Insights on labour trends, recruitment challenges, and future workforce needs help shape sustainable child care solutions.

knowing u numbers

A community approach to understanding the early childhood education workforce

County of Bruce



County of Grey





Counties of Bruce and Grey

The regional data presented here are part of the larger provincial early childhood education workforce study **Knowing Our Numbers** (KON). Bruce and Grey Counties are two of 43 regional children's service districts that participated in the study representing over 91% of all regions in Ontario. Details on the project, methodology, and province-wide results can be found **here**. The data from the Counties of Bruce and Grey were merged in consultation with regional officials. In the **Executive Report**, the counties are part of the 'West' data region. Census data provided on the following page allow readers to put the results into the context of regional demographics.

This report should be cited as:

Akbari, E., McCuaig, K., Schurter, M. Varmuza, P., Akbari, S., Mudie, S. (2024). *Knowing Our Numbers: A Provincial Study with a Local Lens on the Early Childhood Education Workforce in Ontario. The Counties of Bruce and Grey.*

All communication and inquiries should be made to
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County of Bruce

Population and Family

Population	
2021	73,396
2016	68,147
Change since 2016:	*+7.70%*
Population density per sq km	18.0
Median age	48.0 years
Racialized population	3.8%
Multi-generational households	1.6%
Immigrant population	7.6%
Indigenous identity	4.5%
Education	
No certificate, diploma, or degree	17.1%
High school diploma or equivalent	28.0%
Post secondary certificate, diploma or degree	55.0%

**15+ years old*

Education obtained outside Canada	4.5%

**25–64 years old*

Average number of children per family	1.9
One-parent families	11.3%
Lone-parent families	
Women	8.4%
Men	2.9%
Marital status	
Married or living common-law	64.4%
Not married or living common-law	35.6%
Married or common-law with children	36.2%
Language most often spoken at home	
English	95.5%
French	0.2%
Other	3.6%

**Estimates associated with Indigenous languages are more affected than most by the incomplete enumeration of certain reserves and settlements in the Census of Population.*

Home ownership	
Owner	81.1%
Renter	18.3%
Spending more than 30% on shelter costs	15.1%

Employment and Income

Labour force participation rate	
Women	53.3%
Men	62.2%
Unemployment rate	
Women	9.5%
Men	6.5%
Prevalence of low income (LIM)	
0-17	12.4%
0-5	13.7%
18-64	9.8%

**LIM: Low Income Measure reflects those whose incomes are below half of the median of the adjusted income distribution*

Median employment income	$33,200
Median employment income in 2020 for full-year full-time workers	$64,000
Median total income of household in 2020	$87,000
Median after-tax income of household in 2020	$76,000

Commuting duration (mins)	Total %	% Men	% Women
Less than 15	38.8	32.4	46.9
15 to 29	31.3	31.3	31.2
30 to 44	18.9	21.9	14.9
45 to 59	6.3	7.7	4.5
60 minutes and over	4.8	6.6	2.5

Income distribution	Total %	% Men	% Women
In bottom half of the distribution	45.4	43.9	46.9
In bottom decile	9.1	8.7	9.4
In second decile	9.2	8.5	9.9
In third decile	9.0	8.6	9.3
In fourth decile	9.0	9.0	9.0
In fifth decile	9.1	9.1	9.2
In top half of the distribution	54.6	56.1	53.2
In sixth decile	9.6	9.6	9.6
In seventh decile	9.7	9.8	9.6
In eighth decile	10.2	10.3	10.1
In ninth decile	12.0	12.5	11.5
In top decile	13.1	13.8	12.3

Reference: https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Bruce&DGUIDlist=2021A00033541&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0

County of Grey

Population and Family

Population	
2021	100,905
2016	93,830
Change since 2016:	*+7.50%*
Population density per sq km	22.4
Median age	49.6 years
Racialized population	4.2%
Multi-generational households	2.2%
Immigrant population	8.5%
Indigenous identity	2.6%
Education	
No certificate, diploma, or degree	19.4%
High school diploma or equivalent	30.4%
Post secondary certificate, diploma or degree	50.2%

**15+ years old*

Education obtained outside Canada	4.0%

**25–64 years old*

Average number of children per family	1.9
One-parent families	13.3%
Lone-parent families	
Women	9.9%
Men	3.3%
Marital status	
Married or living common-law	62.0%
Not married or living common-law	38.0%
Married or common-law with children	35.3%
Language most often spoken at home	
English	95.1%
French	0.2%
Other	4.7%

**Estimates associated with Indigenous languages are more affected than most by the incomplete enumeration of certain reserves and settlements in the Census of Population.*

Home ownership	
Owner	78.1%
Renter	21.9%
Spending more than 30% on shelter costs	19.1%

Employment and Income

Labour force participation rate	
Women	53.4%
Men	61.7%
Unemployment rate	
Women	10.6%
Men	8.0%
Prevalence of low income (LIM)	
0-17	13.8%
0-5	15.5%
18-64	11.1%

**LIM: Low Income Measure reflects those whose incomes are below half of the median of the adjusted income distribution*

Median employment income	$31,200
Median employment income in 2020 for full-year full-time workers	$55,200
Median total income of household in 2020	$78,000
Median after-tax income of household in 2020	$70,000

Commuting duration (mins)	**Total %**	**% Men**	**% Women**
Less than 15	39.4	34.3	45.6
15 to 29	29.2	27.6	31.2
30 to 44	15.1	15.9	14.0
45 to 59	6.1	7.2	4.8
60 minutes and over	10.3	14.9	4.5

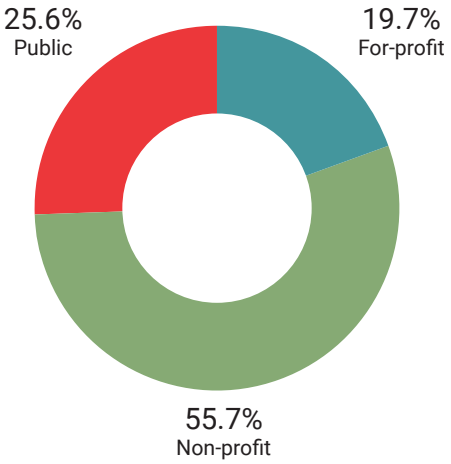
Income distribution	**Total %**	**% Men**	**% Women**
In bottom half of the distribution	53.4	52.3	54.5
In bottom decile	10.2	10.1	10.3
In second decile	11.3	10.6	12.0
In third decile	11.0	10.9	11.2
In fourth decile	10.7	10.4	10.9
In fifth decile	10.2	10.3	10.0
In top half of the distribution	46.6	47.7	45.6
In sixth decile	10.0	10.1	9.8
In seventh decile	9.7	9.9	9.6
In eighth decile	9.4	9.6	9.2
In ninth decile	8.7	9.0	8.4
In top decile	8.8	9.1	8.5

Reference: https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Grey&DGUIDlist=2021A00033542&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0

Sample Characteristics

A total of 65 individuals working in early years services in the Bruce and Grey Counties responded to the survey (referred to as the '*workforce survey*'). Of these, 76.9% are RECEs and 23.1% are non-RECEs (referred to as the '*workforce*'). Over half of the respondents are from non-profit programs (55.7%). Additionally, 15 directors responded to the survey. As the number of respondents who are licensed home child care providers in the counties is low (n=9), data are not presented here; these data are included in the **Executive Report**.

Percentage Respondents by Auspice
Workforce

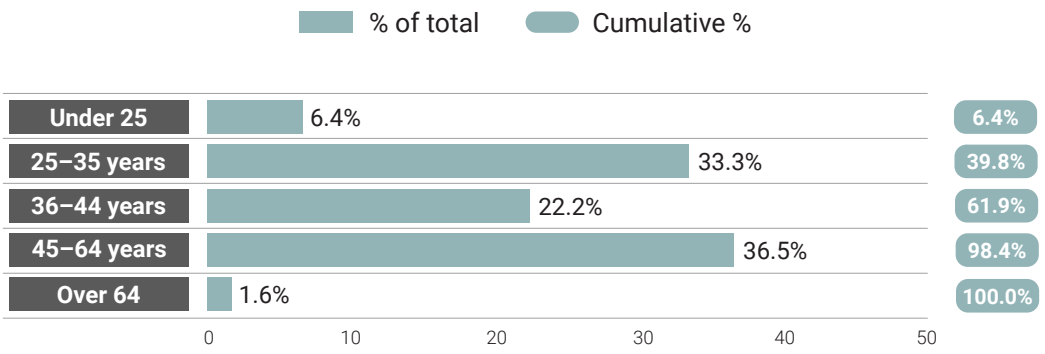




AGE

Approximately 62% of *workforce* respondents are under the age of 45. Due to low numbers of participants, data are not presented by auspice. The age of director/supervisor respondents in the counties is on par with the provincial findings. Across participating regions, 42.7% of director/supervisor participants are under the age of 45 years compared to 40% in Bruce and Grey Counties.

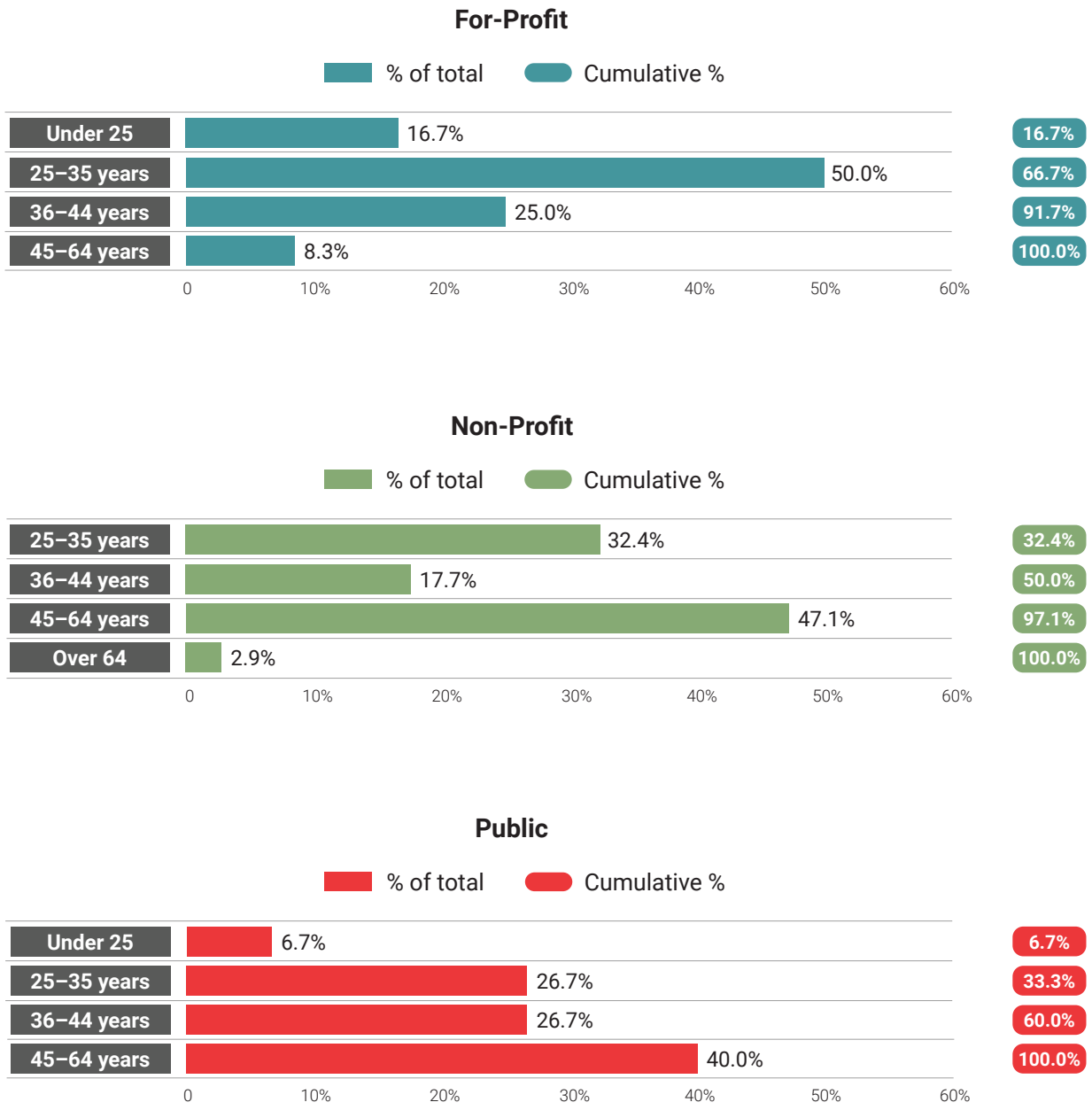
Age Distribution of Respondents
Workforce





Respondents working in for-profit organizations are much more likely to be younger. Approximately 92% of *workforce* participants from for-profit programs are under the age of 45 years. By comparison, 50% and 60% are under 45 years of age in non-profit and public programs respectively.

Age Distribution by Auspice
Workforce



YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Participants who work in for-profit programs have the fewest years of experience. In contrast, public and non-profit programs tend to have more experienced educators.

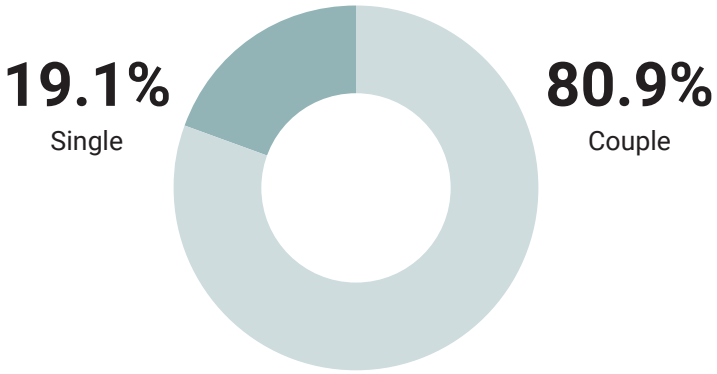
Years of Experience by Auspice
Workforce

Auspice	Mean	Minimum	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile	Maximum
For-profit	6.2	0.0	2.0	6.0	9.0	17.0
Non-profit	17.7	1.0	8.0	17.0	25.0	38.0
Public	17.2	1.0	7.0	16.0	30.0	41.0

FAMILY STATUS

Approximately 19% of the *workforce* survey respondents are single.

Respondents' Family Status
Workforce



RACIALIZATION

Only 5% of the *workforce* sample identify as racialized.

Percentage Racialized
Workforce



Racialized: **5.0%** Non-racialized: **95.0%**

Non-RECEs are more likely than RECEs to identify as racialized. This is similar to the province-wide findings. However, data should be interpreted with caution due to low numbers of racialized workforce participants in this region.

Percentage Racialized by RECE Status
Workforce

Non-RECE



Racialized: **7.7%** Non-racialized: **92.3%**

RECE



Racialized: **4.2%** Non-racialized: **95.7%**

Of the 15 directors/supervisors who responded to the survey, 13 report they are RECEs. Of these, all have been registered with the College of ECE for less than five years.



Compensation

WAGES

Wages of RECEs are higher than for non-RECEs, while those working in for-profit programs have the lowest wages. However, in Bruce and Grey Counties, RECE respondents working in non-profit programs have the lowest wages. Approximately 17% of *workforce* respondents report having additional employment to supplement their primary wages.

Hourly Wages by Auspice and RECE Status
Workforce

	RECE status		
Auspice	**Non-RECE**	**RECE**	**Average across RECE status**
For-profit	$21.30	$25.70	$23.90
Non-profit	$24.30	$24.00	$24.00
Public	$19.00*	$29.20	$28.50
Average across auspice	**$22.80**	**$25.80**	**$25.20**

*Interpret with caution. Low number of participants.
Note: All averages are weighted.

Reported director/supervisor median wages in Bruce and Grey Counties are on par with provincial findings. The provincial median director/supervisor hourly wage is $30 per hour, with a minimum of $18 per hour and a maximum of $80 per hour.

Counties of Bruce and Grey Director/Supervisor Wage Range

Position	Average	Minimum	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile	Maximum
Director	$33.67	$22.00	$29.50	$30.50	$39.50	$52.00

BENEFITS

The majority (80%) of *workforce* respondents report having access to paid sick days. In addition, about 69% have extended health benefits. Fewer than half (46.2%) report having pensions or RRSP contributions through their employer. Almost three-quarters (73.9%) have access to paid professional learning opportunities. Approximately 59% of respondents have paid programming time during the workday, while 62% have paid meeting time. Pay increases for obtaining a new credential or degree in early education is not common (21.5%) and tuition assistance is rare (9.2%).

Percentage of Respondents with Access to Non-Mandatory Benefits
Workforce



80.0%
Paid sick days



73.9%
Paid professional development



69.2%
Extended health benefits (e.g., dental, physiotherapy, etc.)



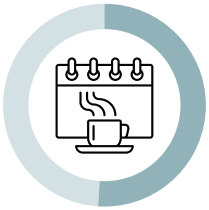
61.5%
Paid team meeting time during the workday



58.5%
Paid programming time during the workday



52.3%
Paid bereavement leave



50.8%
Paid personal or mental health days



46.2%
Pension benefits or contributions to an RRSP



32.3%
Salary scale with regular guaranteed increases reflecting my qualifications, responsibilities, and seniority



21.5%
Pay increase for obtaining a new credential or degree in early childhood education



9.2%
Parental leave top-up



9.2%
Tuition assistance

Workforce Stability, Stress, and Job Satisfaction

DISCRIMINATION

Twenty per cent of *workforce* respondents report having experienced workplace discrimination. The types of discrimination experienced vary, with education/seniority being the most common, followed by mental health and ageism. Note that bullying may involve, or be rooted in, other forms of discrimination (e.g., racism or ageism).

Percentage of Respondents Reporting Experiences of Workplace Discrimination
Workforce



Experiencing discrimination: **20.0%** Not experiencing discrimination: **80.0%**

Types of Discrimination
Workforce

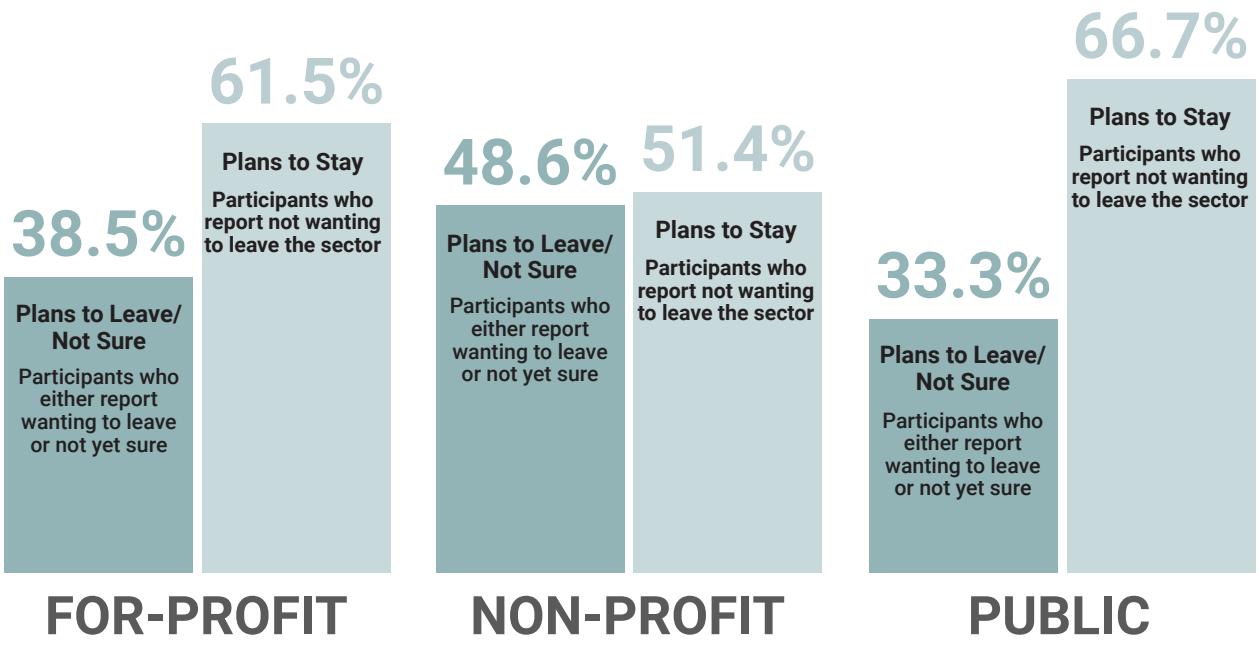
Education/seniority	38.5%
Mental health	23.1%
Ageism	23.1%
Bullying	15.4%
Homophobia	15.4%
Racism	7.7%
Sexism	7.7%
Body prejudice	7.7%
Religious belief	0.0%
Ableism	0.0%
Immigration status	0.0%



JOB SATISFACTION

Across all auspices, only 55% of respondents report plans to stay in the sector, with 24.6% stating they are unsure. Those who work in non-profit programs are most likely to report plans to leave or say they are unsure (48.6%). Those who work in public programs are most likely to report plans to stay (66.7%). While the differences among auspice types are trends, they do not reach statistical significance.

Plans to Leave the Sector by Auspice
Workforce

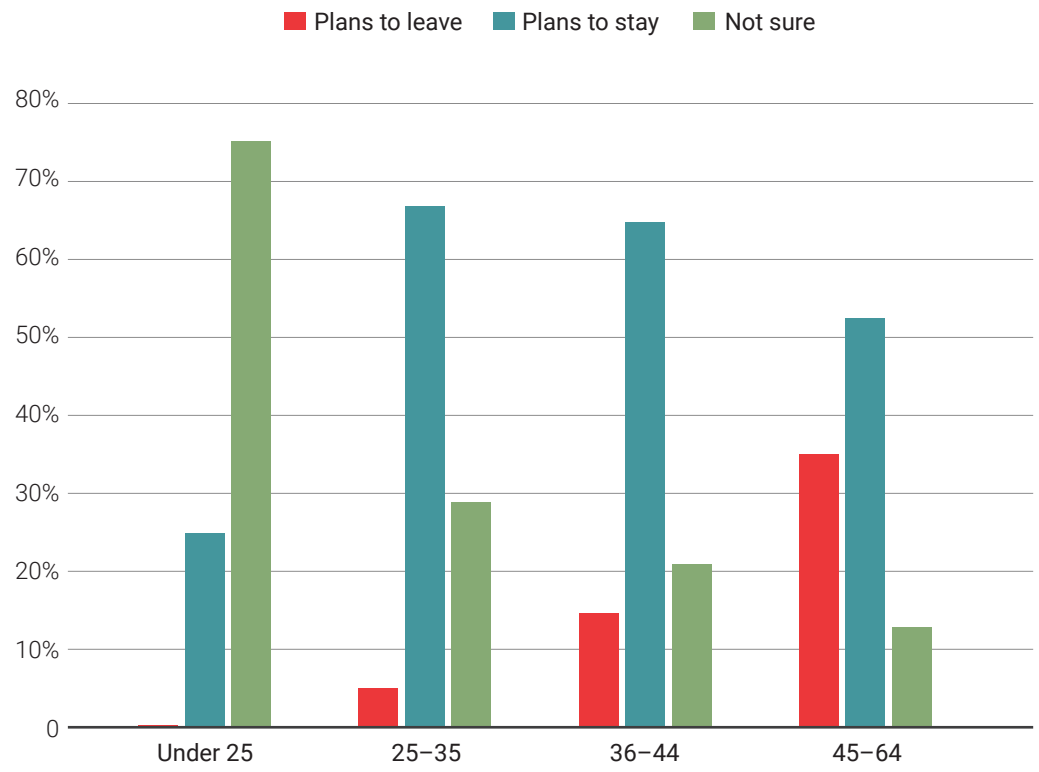






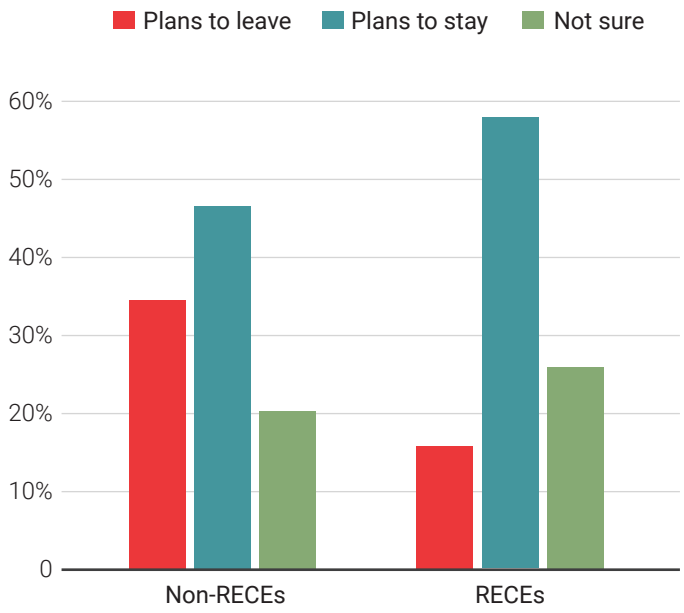
Those between the ages of 45 and 64 are more likely to report plans to leave the sector (34.8%). This is of concern as this age group is much more likely to have established experience in the early years sector. Those under 25 years of age are not definite in their intentions to leave the section, but are much more likely to report uncertainty in their plans. Note that those 65+ are not included in these findings as plans for retirement would confound results.

Plans to Leave the Sector by Age of Respondent
Workforce



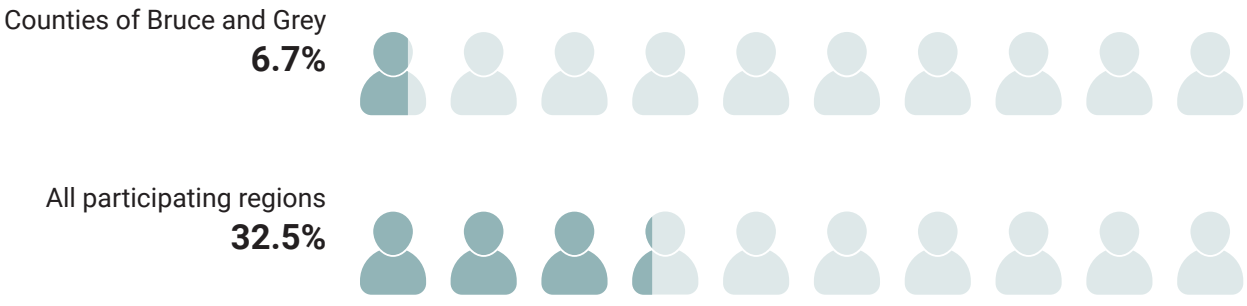
Non-RECEs are more likely to report plans to leave the sector (33.3%) compared with RECEs (16%). Note that plans to leave the sector by experiences of discrimination are not reported due to the small sample size.

Plans to Leave by RECE Status
Workforce



Only 6.6% of director/supervisor respondents in Bruce and Grey Counties report wanting to stay in the sector compared with 32.5% across all participating regions. In addition, over half (60%) report they are unsure. This has important implications for policy development and investment in retention strategies.

Percentage of Directors/Supervisors with Plans to Stay in the Sector
Counties of Bruce and Grey Versus All Participating Regions



WORKPLACE STRESS

Workplace stress is known to impact staff retention. On a scale of 1 (low stress) to 5 (high stress), non-RECEs report higher stress levels than RECEs except for in public programs. The lowest levels of stress are reported by those in for-profit programs.

Average Level of Stress by Auspice
Workforce

(1=low stress; 5=high stress)

	RECE status		
Auspice	**Non-RECE**	**RECE**	**Average across RECE status**
For-profit	3.1	2.5	**2.9**
Non-profit	3.6	2.9	**3.1**
Public	2.5	3.3	**3.3**
Average across auspice	**3.3**	**3.0**	**3.1**

Note: All averages are weighted.

Participants in Bruce and Grey Counties generally report a low level of job satisfaction. On a scale of 1 (low job satisfaction) to 5 (high job satisfaction), study participants' level of satisfaction is 2.93 out of 5.

Average Level of Job Satisfaction by Auspice and RECE Status
Workforce

(1=low job satisfaction; 5=high job satisfaction)

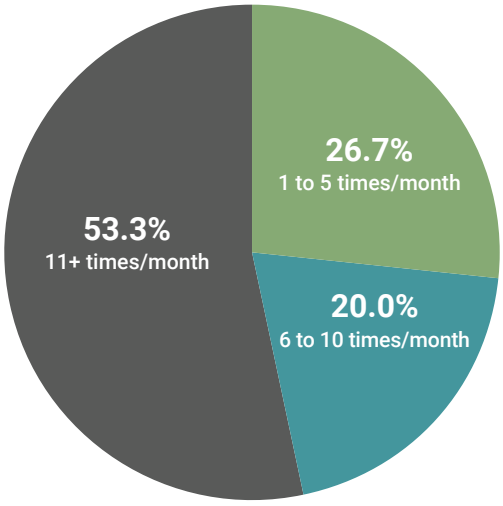
	RECE status		
Auspice	**Non-RECE**	**RECE**	**Average across RECE status**
For-profit	2.6	3.1	**2.8**
Non-profit	3.0	2.9	**2.9**
Public	3.7	3.0	**3.0**
Average across auspice	**2.9**	**3.0**	**2.9**

Note: All averages are weighted.

WORKPLACE STABILITY

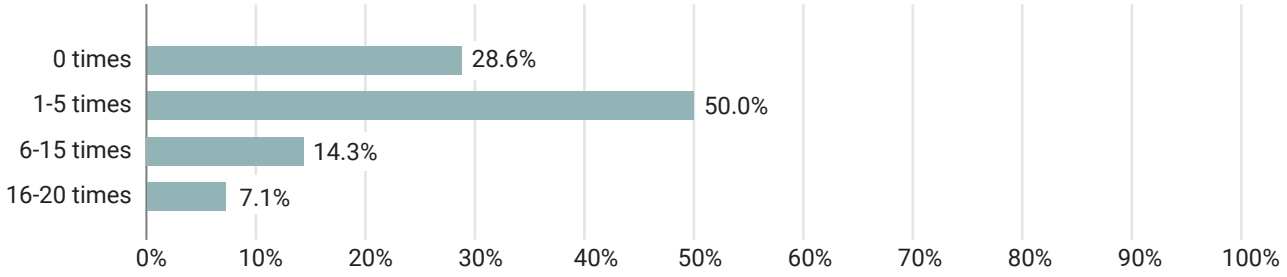
Directors often stand in for absent staff by necessity, taking them away from their leadership and administrative duties. Almost three-quarters of management staff report having to fill in six times or more per month to maintain ratios, with over 50% reporting this occurs more than 11 times per month. This is higher than the overall provincial findings.

Number of Times per Month Directors/Supervisors Fill in Ratio



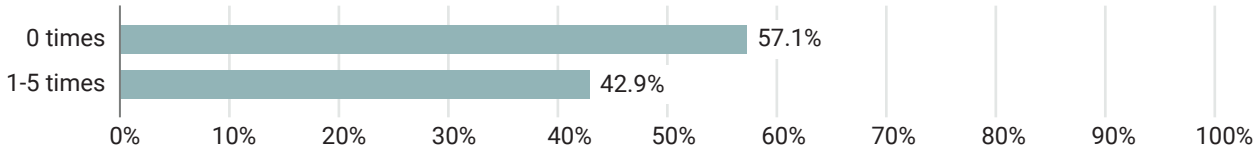
Staff shortages also have deleterious effects on the inclusion of children with disabilities or varying needs. Almost 72% of director/supervisor respondents report they have had to send a child(ren) with a disability home due to staffing shortages over the last 12 months. This is much higher than the provincial sample average of 26.6%.

Percentage Reporting Frequency of Times in the Previous 12 Months Directors/Supervisors Sent Children with Disabilities Home Due to Staffing Shortages



Almost 43% of Bruce and Grey County director/supervisor respondents report they have de-enlisted at least one child with a disability from their program in the previous 12 months due to staffing shortages. This is higher than the provincial sample average of 15.8%. Furthermore, 80% report they have refused admission to a child with a disability in the previous 12 months. Again, this is much higher than the provincial sample average of 27.3%.

Percentage Reporting Frequency of Times in the Previous 12 Months Directors/Supervisors De-enlisted Children with Disabilities Due to Staffing Shortages



Over half (56.9%) of *workforce* respondents in Bruce and Grey Counties report they would recommend a career in the early years to others who are interested. Another 31% state they are unsure if they would recommend child care as a career option.

Percentage of Workforce Respondents Who Recommend a Career in the Early Years



The vast majority of respondents (92.2%) state they would recommend their program to a family member or friend looking for child care (data not shown).



Professional Development

FORMS OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Bruce and Grey County respondents report that the most common form of professional learning in the previous 12 months was online delivery (92.3%), followed by in-person workshops (72.3%). Just over 61% of respondents engage in ongoing communities of practice and performance reviews. Less than one-quarter of respondents report having taken a course in the previous 12 months.

Although online delivery is the most common form of professional learning received, respondents report it is among the least desired formats (16.9%)—second only to self-study (15.4%). Respondents prefer regular and scheduled opportunities for team discussions for reflective practice (36.9%) and small group coaching conversations (32.3%), both of which are forms of collective learning.

Forms of Professional Learning Received by Region in the Previous 12 Months and Desired Forms of Professional Learning
Workforce

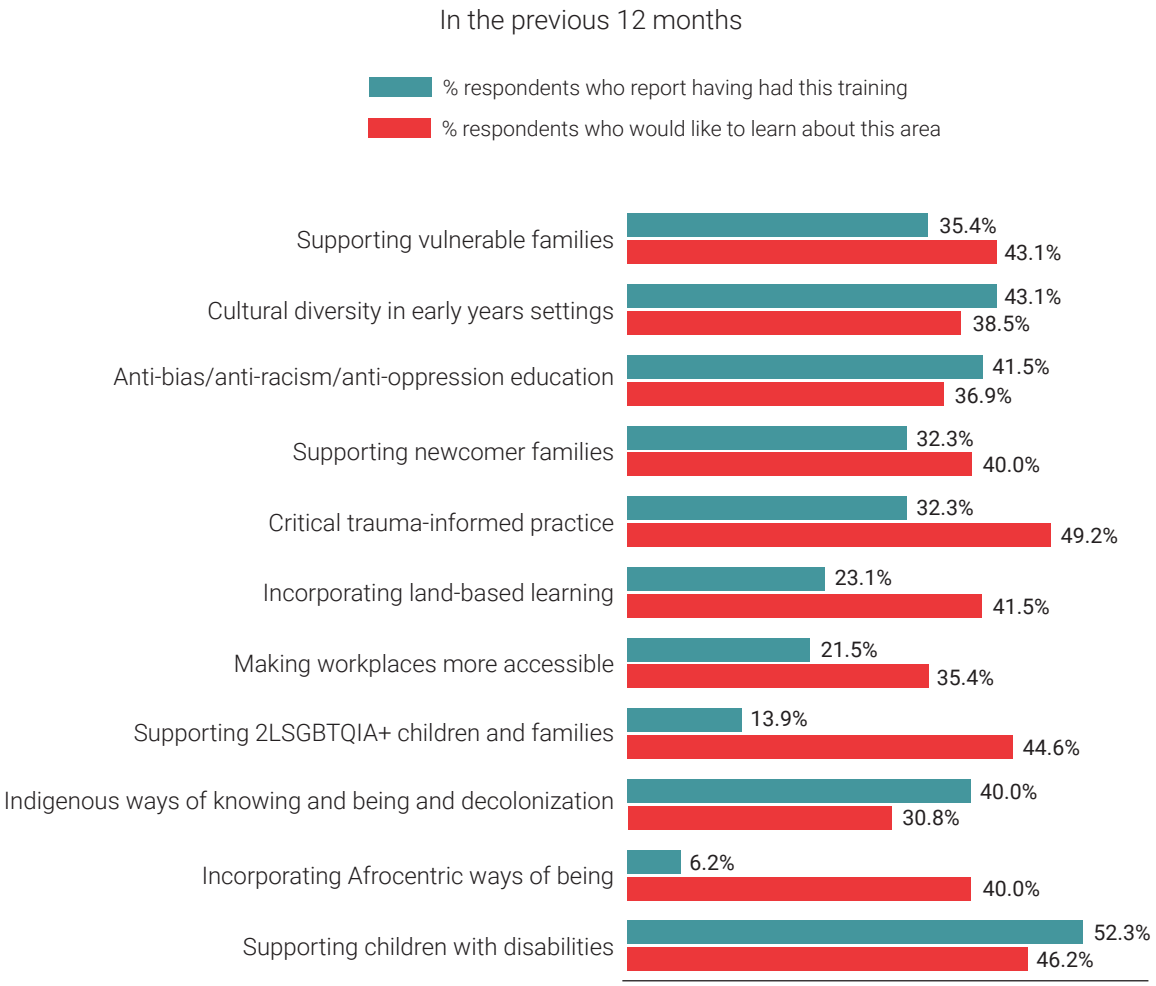


CONTENT OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Over half of respondents report receiving training in supporting children with disabilities (52.3%) in the previous 12 months. Other types of training include cultural diversity (43.1%), anti-bias/anti-racism (41.5%), and Indigenous ways of knowing and being and decolonization (40%). Participants report the least amount of professional learning in the areas of incorporating Afrocentric ways of being (6.2%) and supporting 2LSGBTQIA+ children and families (13.9%). Census data for the regions help contextualize results.

The most wanted professional learning is centred around critical trauma-informed practice (49.2%) and supporting children with disabilities (46.2%). Participants also report wanting more professional learning centred around supporting 2LSGBTQIA+ children and families (44.6%), supporting vulnerable families (43.1%), supporting newcomer families (40%), incorporating land-based learning (41.5%), and incorporating Afrocentric ways of being (40%).

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Learning of Respondents in Bruce and Grey Counties
Workforce



FAMILY SERVICE TORONTO
For People. For Change.

CAMPAGNE 2000
METTONS FIN À LA PAUVRETÉ DES ENFANTS ET DES FAMILLES

CAMPAIGN 2000
END CHILD & FAMILY POVERTY

To:
The Right Honourable Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada
The Honourable Members of the Cabinet
The Honourable Secretaries of State
Members of the House of Commons

Re: Passage of Bill S-212, An Act respecting a national strategy for children and youth

Dear Prime Minister, Ministers, Secretaries of State and Members of Parliament,

Campaign 2000: End Child and Family Poverty is a diverse, national coalition of community-based organizations which came together in response to the 1989 unanimously adopted House of Commons resolution to end child poverty by the year 2000. We conduct research, engage communities and advance evidence-based, achievable policy solutions to some of the most pressing issues related to poverty in Canada.

We write to urge the Government of Canada to champion the swift passage of Bill S-212, *A National Strategy for Children and Youth Act through the House of Commons*. The Senate has done its part. The federal government and all parties must now make this legislation a priority.

We recognize that the government is facing many urgent and competing pressures, including the economic uncertainty and rising costs created by the trade war. These challenges demand serious attention. They also make it more important, not less, to invest in children and families who are least able to absorb further hardship. Such investments are not only socially responsible, they are economically sound. Adequate incomes and robust public services support healthy development, enable parents to participate in the labour market, build strong communities and future-proof our workforce.

Campaign 2000's 2025 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada, *Investing in Tomorrow: A Future Without Poverty*, shows why, twenty-five years after the goal to eradicate child poverty, action cannot wait. Rates of child poverty rose for the third consecutive year. Child poverty has more than doubled since 2020, according to Canada's official measure, to 10.7%, or 802,000 children. According to annual tax filer data, nearly 1.4 million children, or 18.3%, lived in poverty in 2023.

Poverty is deepening and its impacts remains profoundly unequal. Families with children were living, on average, more than $15,000 below the poverty line and 2.5 million children across the provinces lived in food insecure households. More than half of children living on First Nations reserves lived in poverty, nearly half of children in lone-parent families lived in poverty and 99% of young people under the age of 18 who did not live in families lived in poverty.

These outcomes are not inevitable. They are the result of policy choices, inadequate supports and systemic inequities. Failing to invest now carries avoidable costs, weakens productivity and in effect, drags on the economy.

We are concerned that without significant new investments, Canada is unlikely to meet its 2030 commitment to reduce poverty by 50% under Opportunity for All, Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Bill S-212 provides a practical and urgently needed framework for change. It would require the federal government to work with provinces and territories, First Nations, Inuit and Métis leaders, partners, families and children and youth themselves, to develop a coordinated national strategy with measurable objectives, an action plan and regular reporting to Parliament. This is the kind of rights-based, cross-jurisdictional leadership Canada requires on all issues related to children and youth.

We urge the Government to publicly support Bill S-212, allocate the parliamentary time needed to advance the legislation through second reading and committee, and work across party lines to secure its passage without delay.

Sincerely,

The Campaign 2000 Steering Committee:

1. Leila Sarangi, Campaign 2000: End Child and Family Poverty
2. Chris Brillinger, Family Service Toronto
3. Mary Boyd, MacKillop Centre for Social Justice and PEI Coalition for a Poverty Eradication Strategy
4. Kimberly Dreaddy, Jimmy Pratt Foundation
5. Lesley Frank, Acadia University
6. Sid Frankel, University of Manitoba
7. Martha Friendly, Childcare Resource and Research Unit
8. Randy Hatfield, Human Development Council of Saint John
9. Kate Kehler, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg
10. Anita Khanna, Ex Officio Campaign 2000
11. Brad LaFortune, Public Interest Alberta
12. Brittany Lambert, UNICEF Canada
13. Adrienne Montani, First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society
14. Laurel Rothman, Ex Officio Campaign 2000
15. Diana Sarosi, Oxfam Canada
16. Christine Saulnier, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Nova Scotia

Endorsed by:

17. Advancement of Women Halton
18. Adverse Childhood Experiences & Resilience Coalition of Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington (ARC)
19. Algoma Family Services
20. Bereaved Families of Ontario-Toronto
21. Canadian Arab Federation
22. Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives
23. Canadian Child Care Federation
24. Canadian Paediatric Society
25. Child Care Now
26. Childcare Resource and Research Unit
27. Children First Canada
28. Children's Mental Health of Leeds & Grenville
29. Choices For Youth
30. Colour of Poverty - Colour of Change
31. Daily Bread Food Bank
32. Edmonton Social Planning Council
33. Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)
34. Ending Sexual Violence Association of Canada
35. EveryMind Mental Health Services
36. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph of Canada
37. First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society
38. Grandmothers Act to Save the Planet (GASP)
39. Hard Feelings Mental Health
40. Inclusion Canada
41. Income Security Advocacy Centre (ISAC)
42. Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre
43. Kingston Community Health Centres
44. Mazon Canada
45. National Council of Women of Canada
46. National Council of Youth in Care Advocates (NCYICA)
47. ÑCWC EF
48. OCASI - Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
49. Ontario Children's Advancement Coalition
50. Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care
51. Ontario Public School Boards' Association
52. Open Policy
53. Oxfam Canada
54. PEI Coalition for a Poverty Eradication Strategy
55. Prosper Canada
56. Right To Food
57. Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton
58. Social Planning Toronto
59. Socialcommons.canada
60. South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario
61. South Asian Women's & Immigrants Services Inc
62. The Change Lab
63. The Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic (CSALC)
64. The Fed Family Lab
65. Toronto & York Region Labour Council
66. Toronto Community for Better Child Care
67. Treetop Children's Centre
68. Under One Sky Friendship Center
69. UNICEF Canada

70. West Scarborough Community Legal Services
71. Women's National Housing & Homelessness Network
72. Workers' Action Centre
73. Working For Change
74. Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition
75. Yukon Food for Learning Association
76. YWCA Canada
77. YWCA Toronto