Knowing Our #'s

Measuring the Health of the CCEY Workforce, One Community at a Time!

The federal government's historic $27-billion investment in child care and the agreements signed with provinces and territories prioritize lowering parent fees and expanding the number of child care spaces. Yet in the race to achieve these goals, the people who provide the care are too often overlooked.

The absence of a workforce strategy could adversely impact the CWELCC plan. Expansion requires more educators, and the quality of ELCC services depends heavily on qualified educators. Attracting and retaining educators can only occur if the profession is valued and properly compensated. Ontario provided CMSMs and DSSABs a one-time payment though the Child Care and Early Years Workforce fund to support educator retention and recruitment. Children's service managers are required to report on progress made at the end of the grant period in March 2023.

In April 2022 the Atkinson Centre at the University of Toronto released *Canada's Children Need a Professional Early Childhood Workforce*. The report revealed what we have long known: Canada's early childhood educators are underpaid, under-resourced and undervalued. While the report provided a comprehensive analysis of the child care workforce in all 13 provinces and territories, the resulting summaries do not provide the municipal level information required to support regional policy, planning or investment decisions. This project is intended to fill that gap.

Knowing Our #'s is a community collaboration. Four children´s services managers to date have come together to explore the feasibility of creating a sustainable, regional-level child care and early years workforce data collection process, whose findings could also be rolled up to provide a province- wide picture.

We are inviting children´s service managers in DSSABs and CMSMs across Ontario to join. A province-wide collection system with a local lens, will support this important work and inform decision-makers and the sector about the state of the child care system. Findings will allow for community comparators, highlight common trends, identify staffing gaps and workforce deserts, track year-by-year trends and regional strengths, and pinpoint priority areas.

Phase One: Achieving Success

1. Jurisdictional Scan
Using public documents and key informant interviews (KI), an overview of data currently being collected by each participating DSSAB/CMSM will be identified. This will include:
- Methodologies used

- Frequency of data collection
- Reporting channels
- Current response rates
- How data is used in decision-making and planning

In addition, College graduate numbers will be cross referenced with College of ECE registrations.

2. Identification of data gaps

Gaps and inconsistencies in data across DSSABs/CMSMs will be identified as well as challenges to current data collections.

3. Identification of Partnerships

Partners will be identified to support ongoing data collection and analysis. Through KI interviews, partner needs and requirements in order to sustain data collection, analysis, and reporting will be identified.

Phase Two: Achieving Quality

1. Review the wages of professions in Ontario requiring similar qualifications and experience to those of ECEs.
   Using Job Bank Canada's National Occupation Classification (NOC) codes, professions with similar educational requirements will be selected as comparators to ECEs. Three (3) of the closest comparable female-dominated jobs, prioritizing those that ECEs move to after leaving licensed child care, will be used to compare wages, health and pension benefits, paid leave policies and access to professional development and other professional supports.

2. Design a tool and develop a methodology for collection.
   A survey tool will be designed that incorporates elements of the workforce known to be important in the delivery of quality early learning and child care as well as lessons learned from phase I. The survey will examine wages, staff turnover, recruitment challenges, job satisfaction, status of benefits including paid leaves, professional development opportunities and health and pension benefits. Results will inform further development of the tool.

3. Review current living wage and self-sufficiency standards
   Living wages and self-sufficiency standards (alternative to poverty measures) will be examined using provincial reports where available to support better understanding of where ECE wages fall in relation to self-sufficiency standards.

4. Data Collection
   The survey tool will be available to partners to distribute through their networks.
5. Data Analysis and Reporting
   Data will be analyzed and reported, and recommendations developed.

Confidentiality

All data collected will be de-coupled from identifiers. All shared information that is identifiable will be kept confidential unless explicit permission is provided. Survey data will be collected anonymously and therefore no individual will be identified. All data will be presented in aggregated form. Research Ethics Board (REB) approval is not required for this project ([Article 2.5](); TCPS-2).

Potential Partners
OMSSA
College of Early Childhood Educators

Project Team
The work will be carried out by the [Atkinson Centre at the University of Toronto](https://)
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Contributions will be processed through [Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC)-Child Care Education Ontario Inc.,]() which is acting as the administrator for the project.