



Workforce Development & Preservation:

Knowing Our Numbers

Building Ontario's Early Childhood Workforce

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Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development
OISE | University of Toronto



the what

Early Childhood Education

CWELLC with over \$58
billion in committed
federal investment



the why

Immediate & Long-Term Economic Impact

Promotes economic growth
and productivity



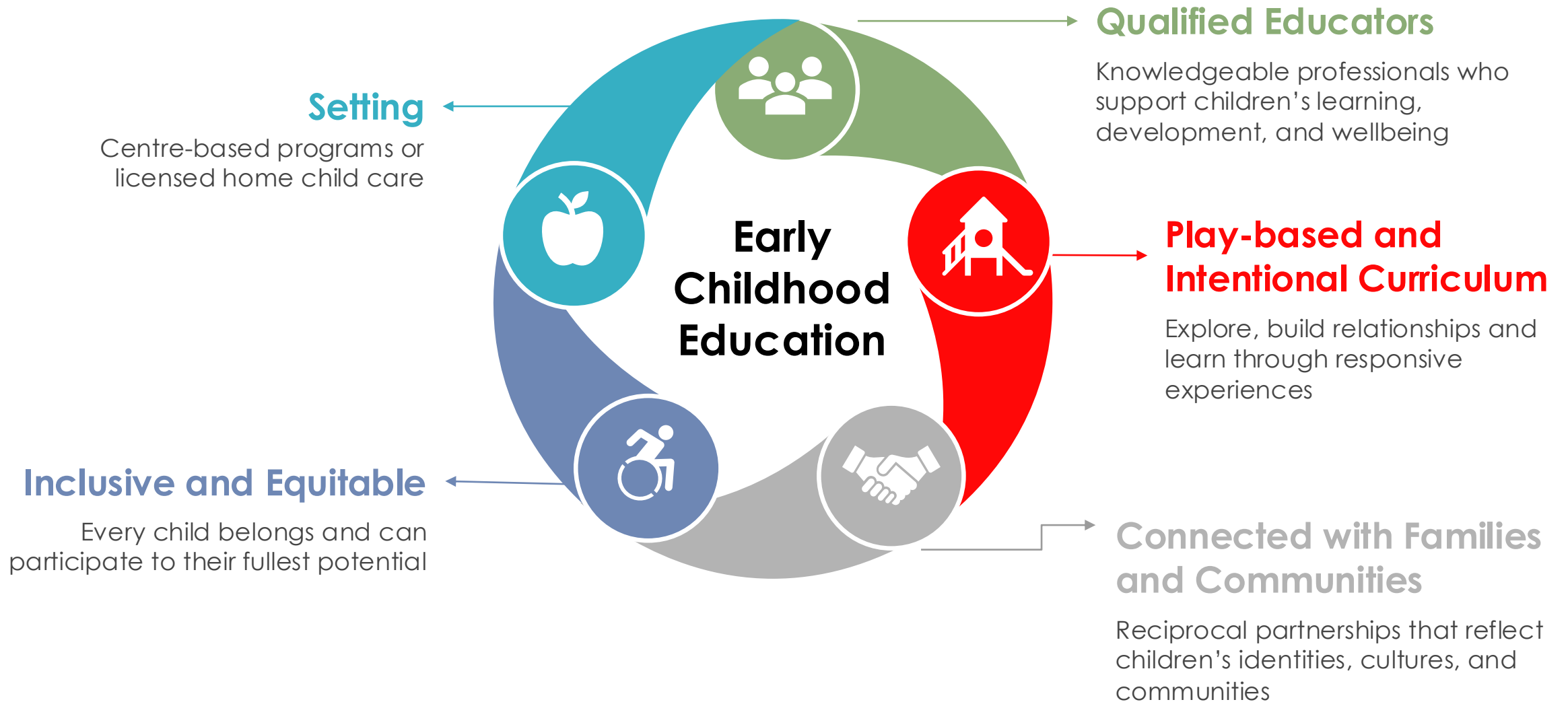
the how

Educators

Foundational to quality early
learning and child care.

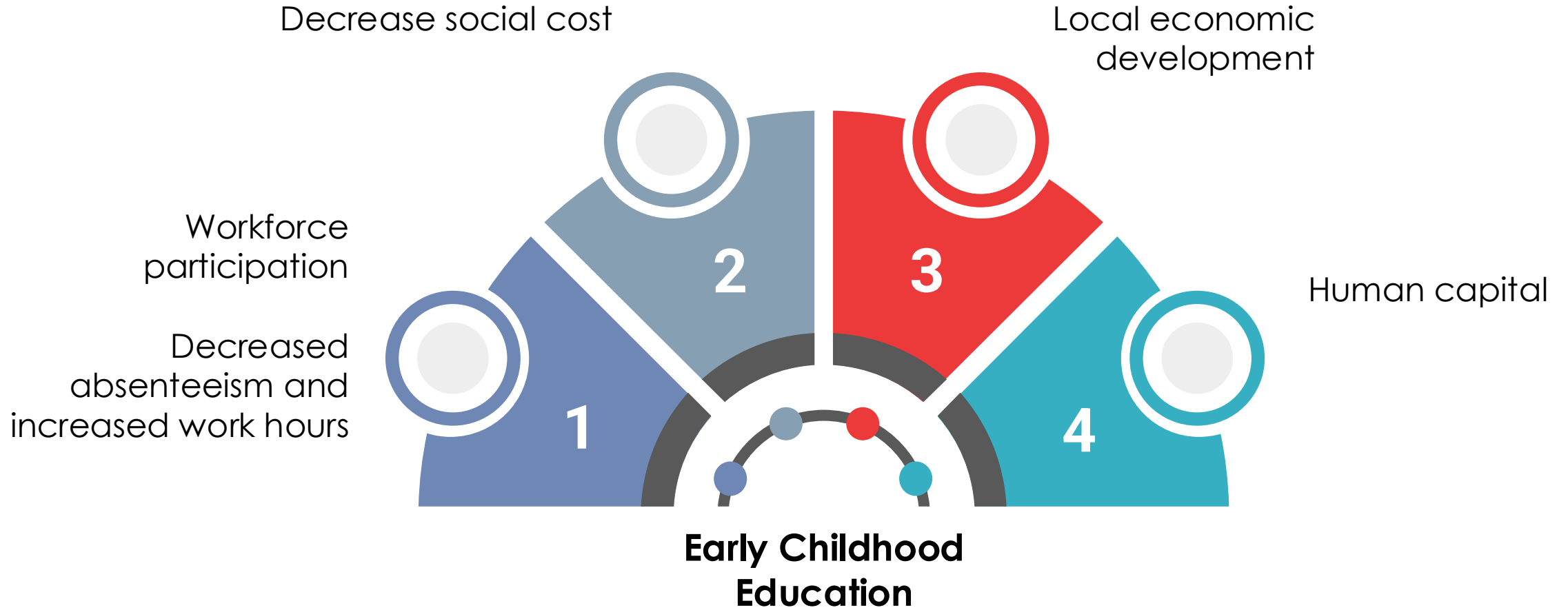


the what



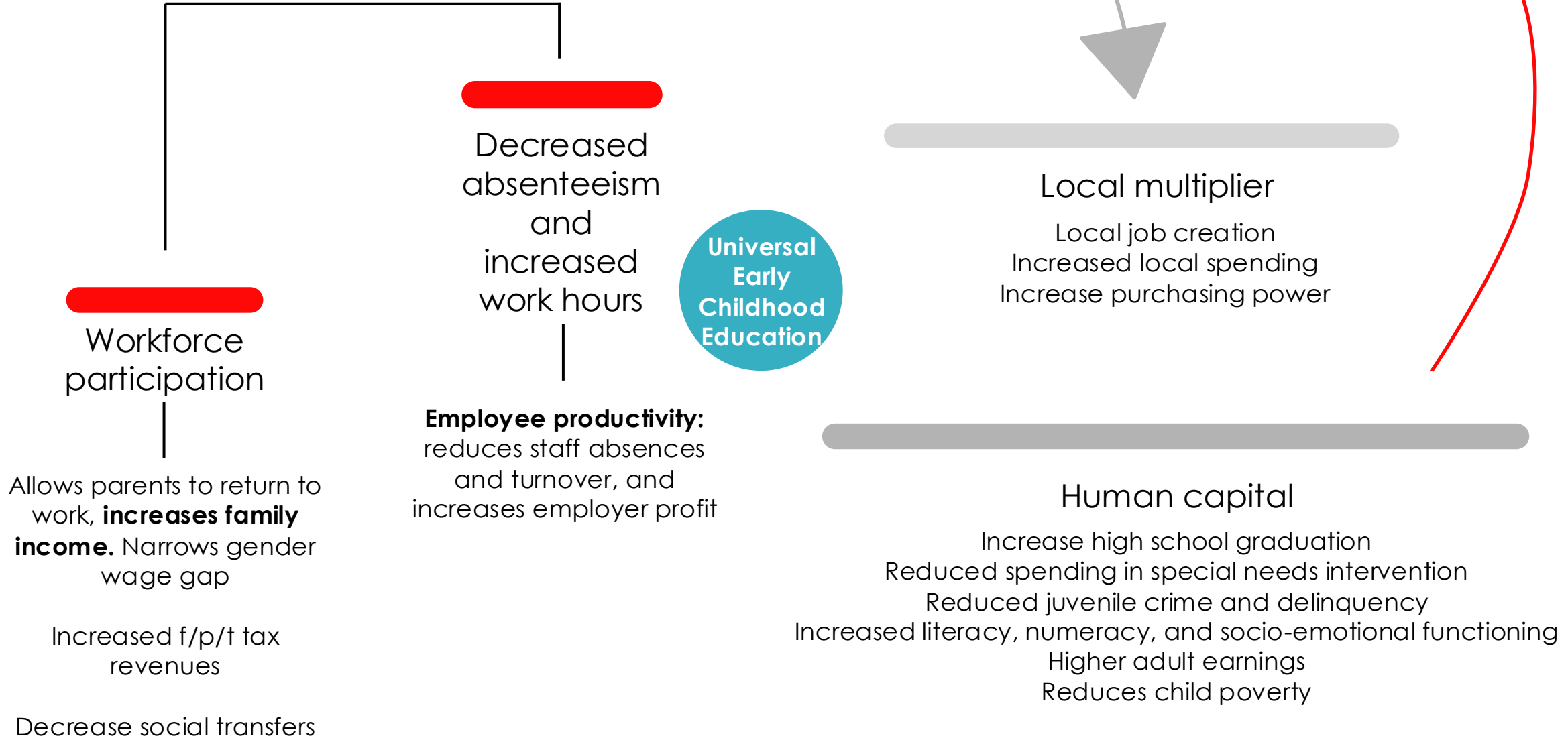


the why





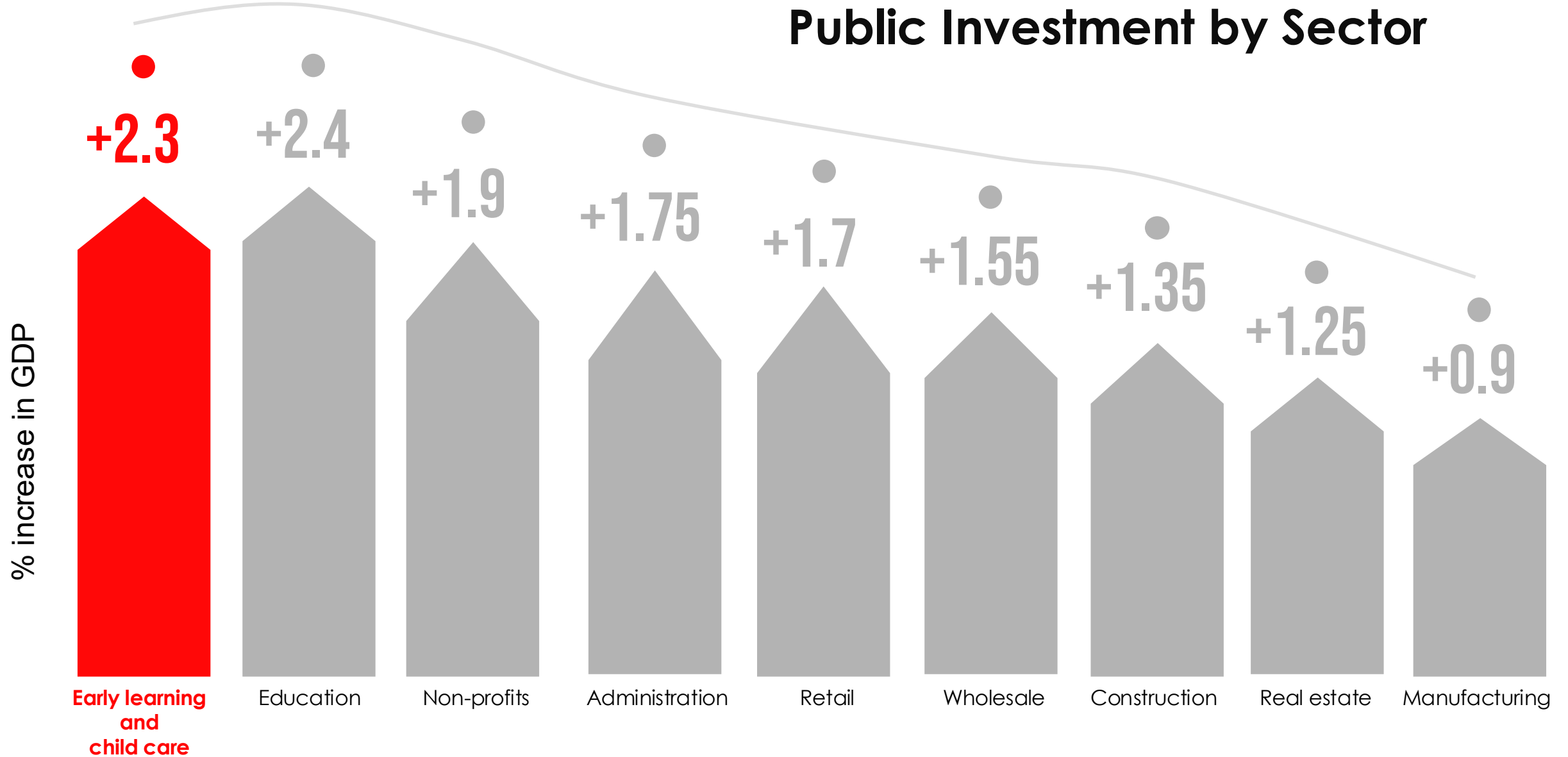
the why





the why

Effect on GDP by Public Investment by Sector





Warner's Economic-Impact Methodology

Child Care Strengthens the Local Economy

Winnipeg economic-impact study • 2004 estimates



\$1.38

in local economic activity
for every \$1 invested



\$101 million

in annual child care
sector revenue



3,200

people employed
in child care



2.15

other jobs created or sustained
per child care job

HOW THE ECONOMIC IMPACT WORKS



Child care spending

Educator jobs and purchases



Local circulation

Spending supports
other businesses



Parents in paid work

Access to care enables
employment

Affordable care also reduces financial barriers for low-income families.

Measures immediate regional economic activity, not long-term benefits to children or government fiscal returns.

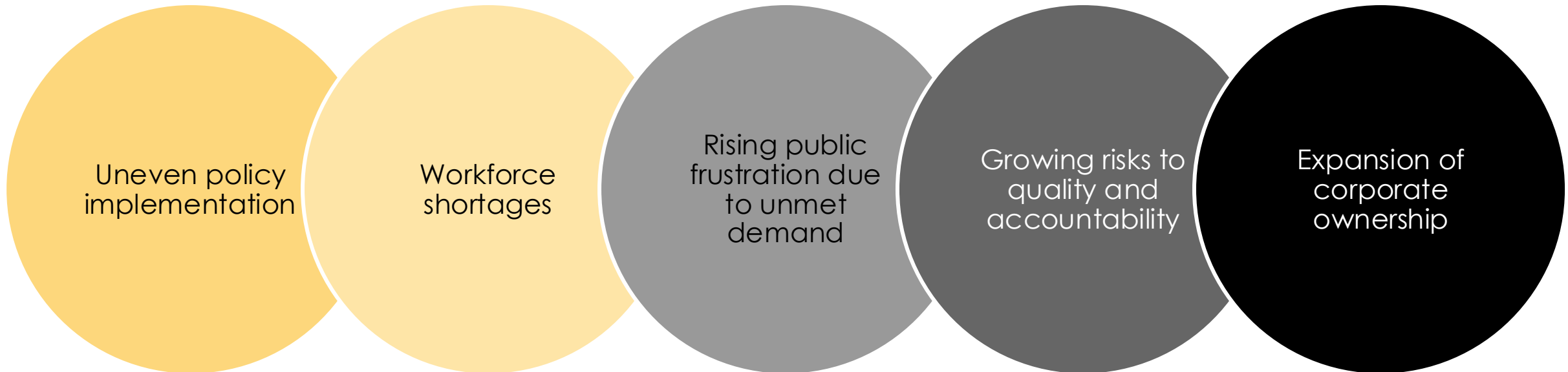


the how

The CWELCC Moment

The Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system is entering its stabilization phase. This phase will cement its structure towards a market force or a public good.

Critical Pressures





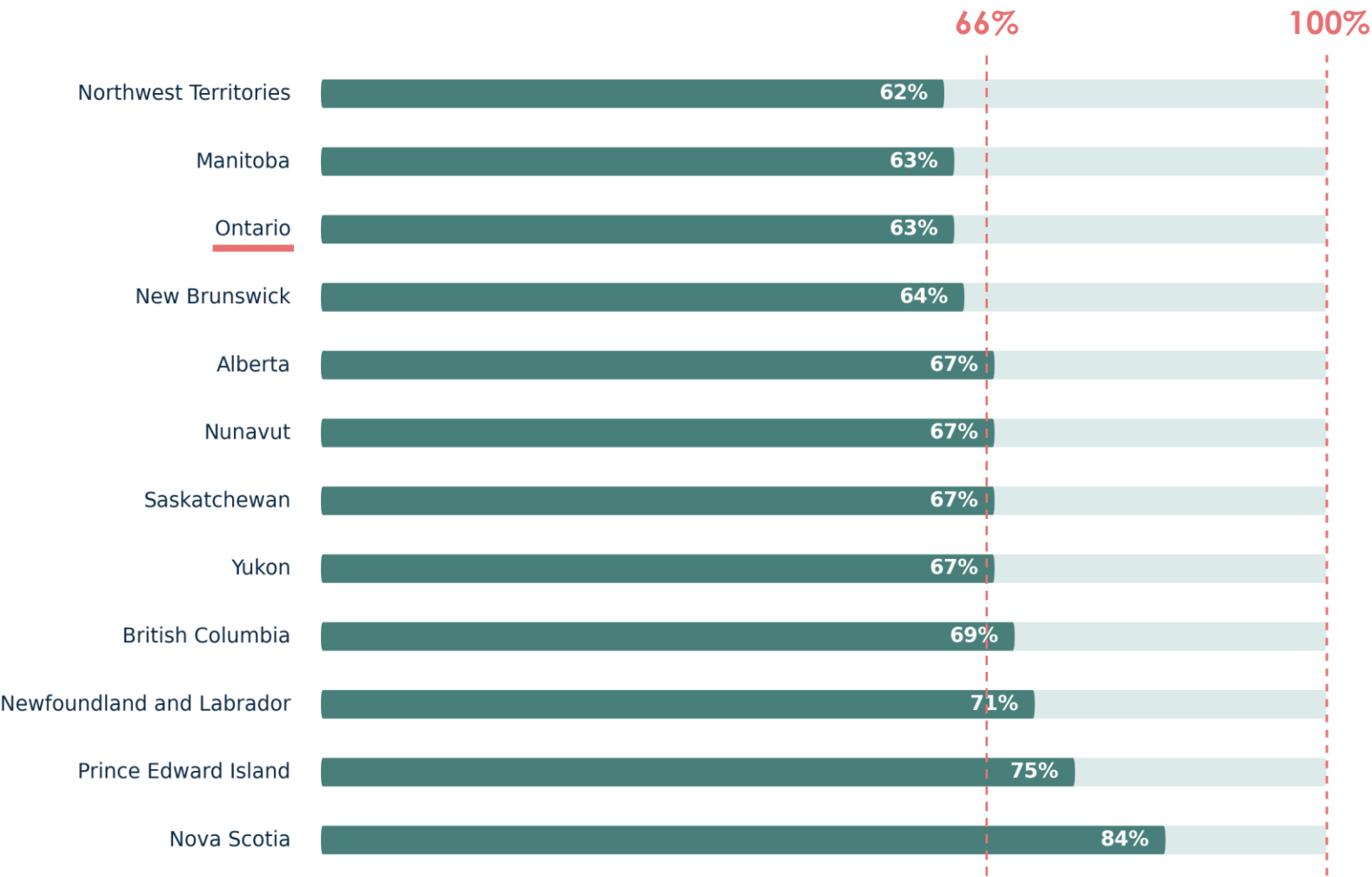
the how

Early childhood educators lay the foundation for all future learning—yet they remain among the most undervalued and underpaid professionals in our education system.



ECE wages relative to teacher wages

ECE wages as a percentage of teacher wages



Source: Akbari, E., McCuaig, K., Foster, D., and Mehta, S. Early Childhood Education Report 2026. In Press.

The pale segment shows the remaining gap to teacher wages.

Knowing Our Numbers is a community approach to understanding the early childhood education workforce in Ontario



45/47 Ontario regions signed on to KON to support evidence-based policy planning (44 in KON I)



Captures the voices of the workforce across Ontario to better understand the challenges the sector faces



Within child care, FDK, EarlyON, licensed home providers, supervisors and directors, RECEs and non-RECEs

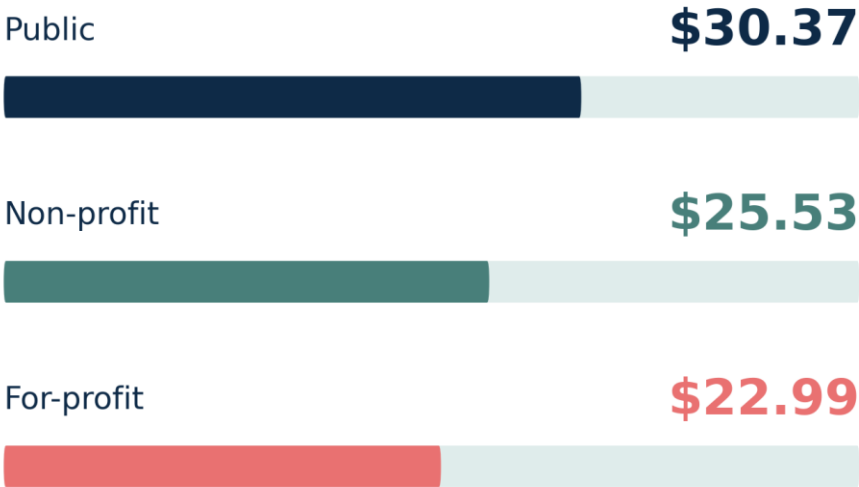


Regional reports capture the unique local challenges

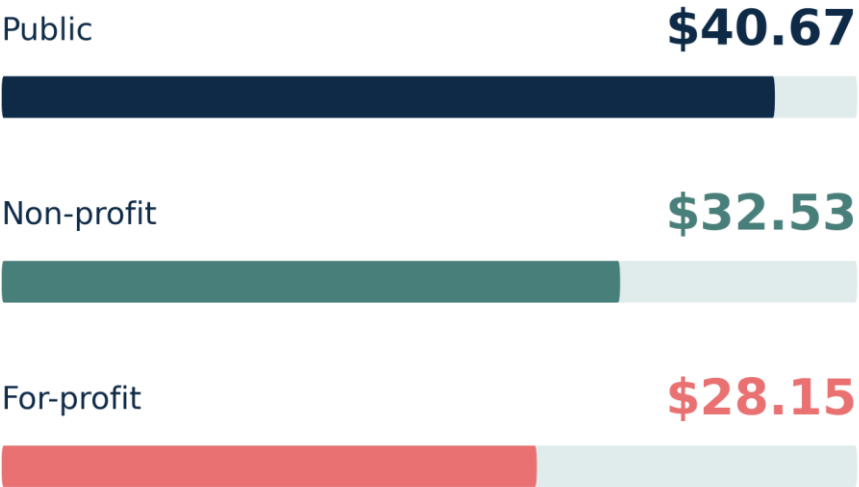
Wages by auspice

RECEs and directors / supervisors

RECEs



Directors / Supervisors



Wages are from 2023 Knowing Our Numbers Ontario Workforce Survey.

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.



Average Hourly Wage by Auspice and Union Status for RECE Respondents in Licensed Child Care



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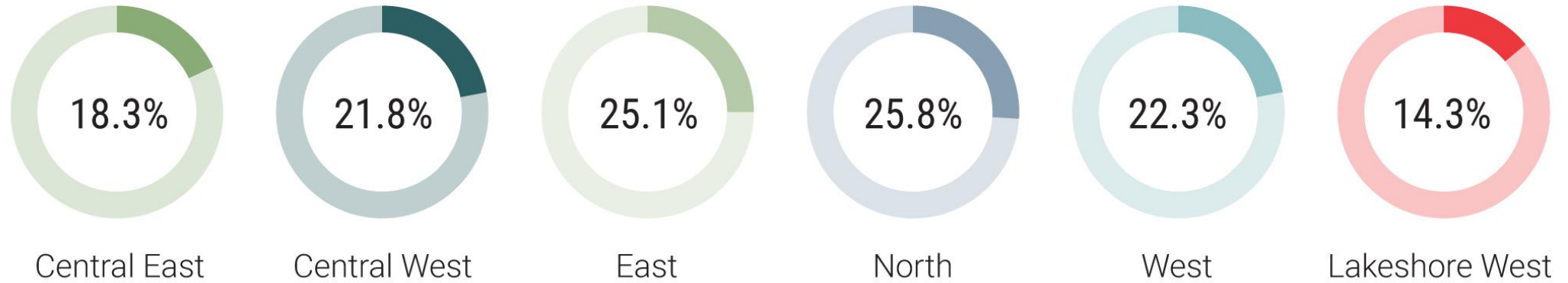


Wage Rate per Hour by Racialization and Region

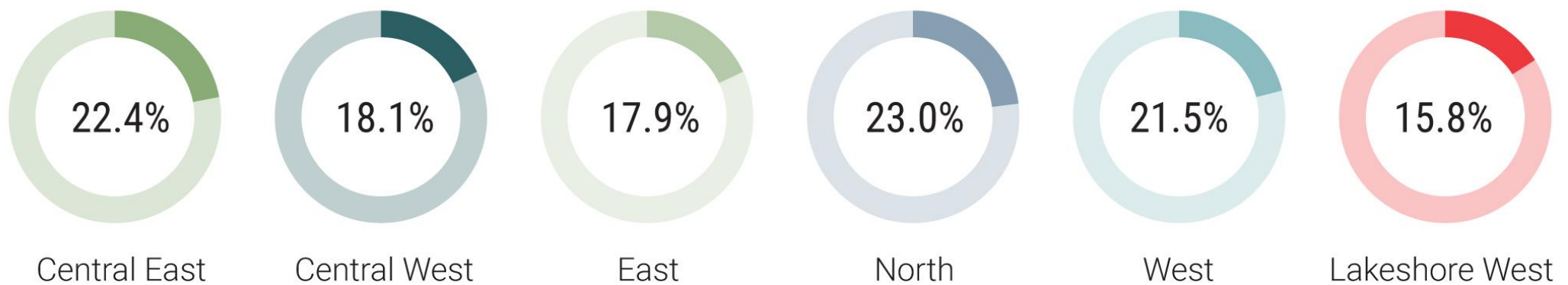


Percentage of RECEs and Non-RECEs Reporting Additional Employment by Region

RECEs



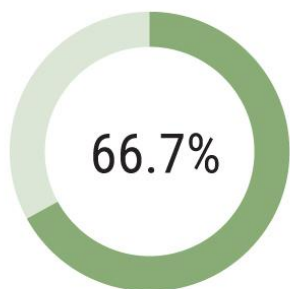
Non-RECEs



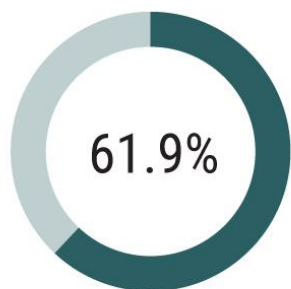


Percentage of RECEs and Non-RECEs Reporting Housing Security Concerns

RECEs



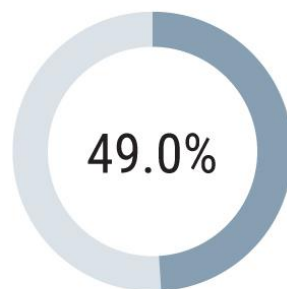
Central East



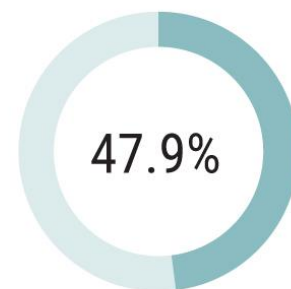
Central West



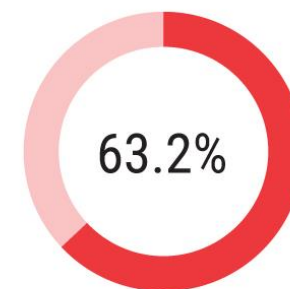
East



North

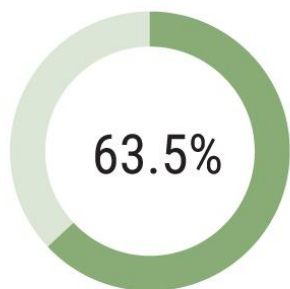


West

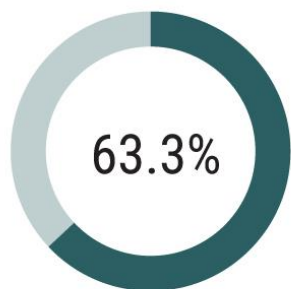


Lakeshore West

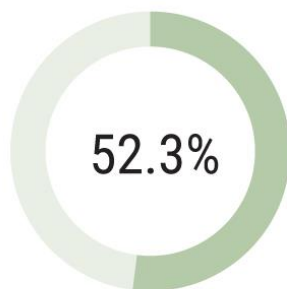
Non-RECEs



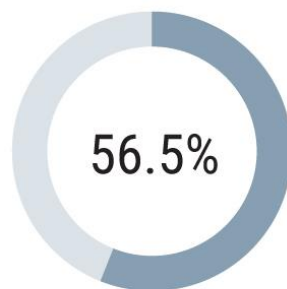
Central East



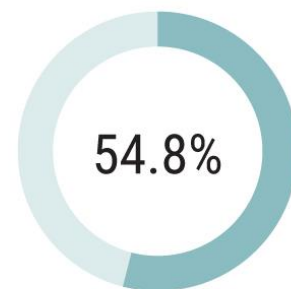
Central West



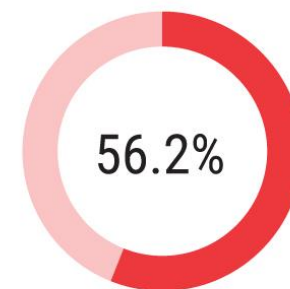
East



North

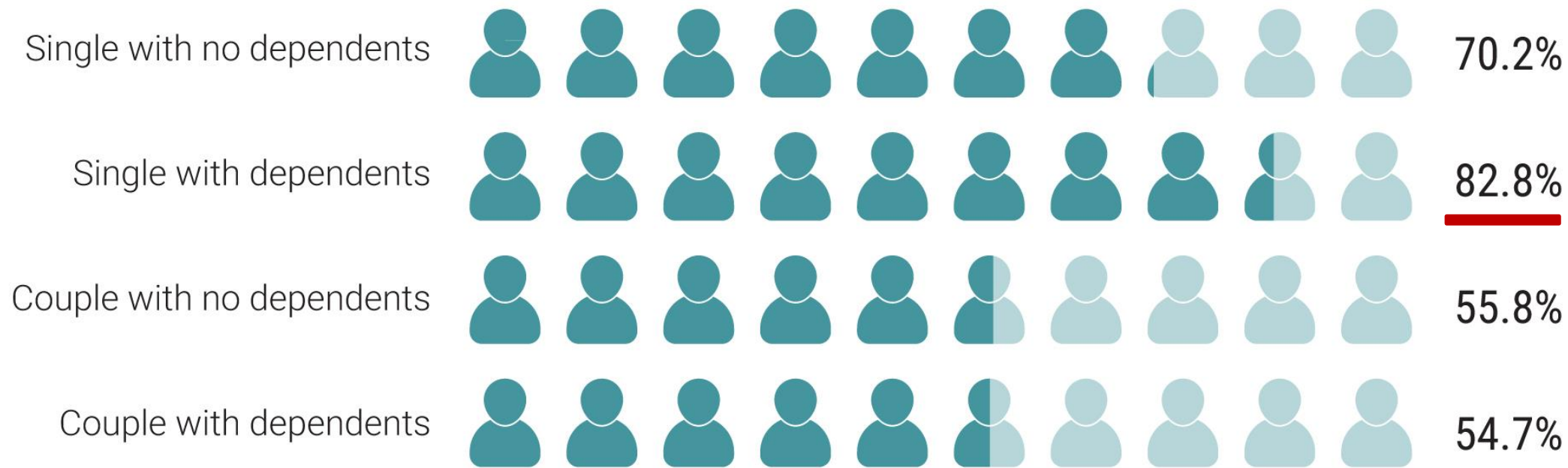


West



Lakeshore West

Percentage with Housing Security Concerns by Family Status





knowing
numbers

Percentage of Access to Non-Mandatory Benefits by Auspice
All Respondents

Benefit	For-profit	Non-profit	CMSM/ DSSAB	FDK	Unknown auspice	Study total
Paid sick days	59.1%	83.3%	83.0%	88.6%	75.0%	79.0%
Extended health benefits	50.8%	66.7%	78.4%	82.9%	58.9%	65.4%
Paid professional development	45.7%	63.5%	74.1%	52.9%	62.5%	60.3%
Paid bereavement leave	31.8%	63.9%	74.8%	79.1%	51.8%	59.5%
Pension benefit or RRSP contribution	23.3%	53.3%	71.8%	76.8%	62.5%	50.5%
Paid personal or mental health days	27.0%	52.5%	41.6%	49.4%	46.4%	46.8%
Paid programming time during workday	37.3%	49.2%	52.8%	9.9%	46.4%	45.0%
Paid meeting time during workday	38.6%	46.0%	63.0%	5.3%	60.7%	43.7%
Salary scale reflecting qualifications, responsibility, and seniority	13.9%	23.2%	46.2%	18.3%	19.6%	22.7%
Pay increase for obtaining new credential or degree in ECE	14.0%	14.1%	9.8%	1.5%	7.1%	13.0%
Parental leave top-up	5.6%	11.7%	24.9%	29.3%	12.5%	12.5%
Tuition assistance	7.1%	8.2%	21.6%	1.9%	12.5%	8.6%





knowing numbers	Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Learning by Auspice				
	All Respondents				
Professional development received in the last 12 months	For profit	Non-profit	CMSM / DSSAB	FDK	All
Supporting vulnerable families	20.4%	27.2%	36.4%	30.0%	26.7%
Cultural diversity in Early Years settings	35.4%	43.0%	51.5%	43.0%	42.2%
Anti-bias/anti-racism/anti-oppression education	34.9%	46.4%	55.7%	60.5%	45.7%
Supporting newcomer families	14.8%	17.8%	19.0%	19.4%	17.4%
Critical trauma-informed practice	18.5%	26.7%	37.4%	32.3%	26.2%
Incorporating land-based learning	15.0%	19.5%	24.9%	22.1%	19.2%
Making workplaces more accessible	22.5%	25.7%	34.1%	22.4%	25.5%
Supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ children and families	19.3%	27.1%	32.5%	29.3%	26.2%
Indigenous ways of knowing and being and decolonization	21.4%	29.0%	44.6%	40.3%	29.3%
Incorporating Afrocentric ways of being	10.3%	9.7%	12.1%	14.8%	10.3%
Supporting children with disabilities	38.1%	46.2%	53.8%	41.8%	45.0%



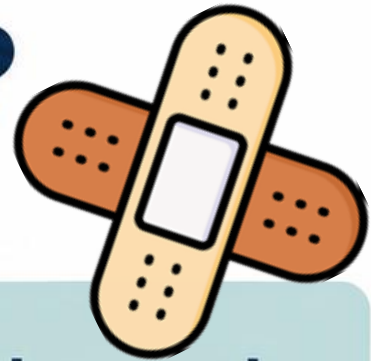
3-5 years

Average number of
years ECEs stay in the
field in Ontario



What is Director's Approval?

Ontario's licensed child care centres



Ministry permission for a person who does not meet the usual qualified-staff requirements to count as qualified staff.



WHO APPROVES?

A Ministry of Education director—not the centre's director.



WHAT DOES IT ALLOW?

The person can count toward the required qualified staff in the approved centre and age group.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

It does not grant an ECE diploma or registration with the College of Early Childhood Educators.

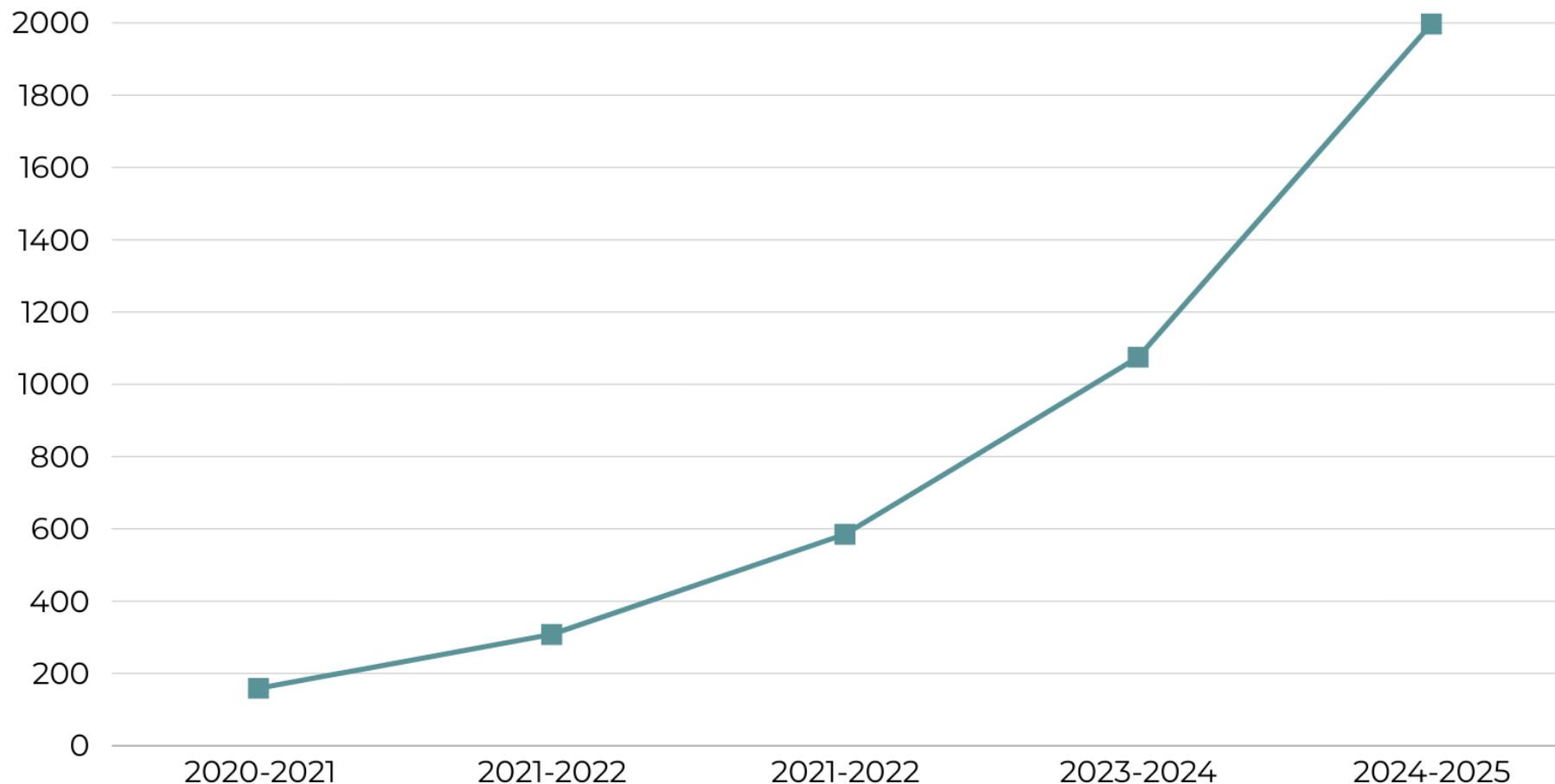


Approval is specific to the centre and age group. Conditions may apply.



All centre supervisors also require ministry approval, including RECEs.

Director's Approval Granted Annually from 2020-2024

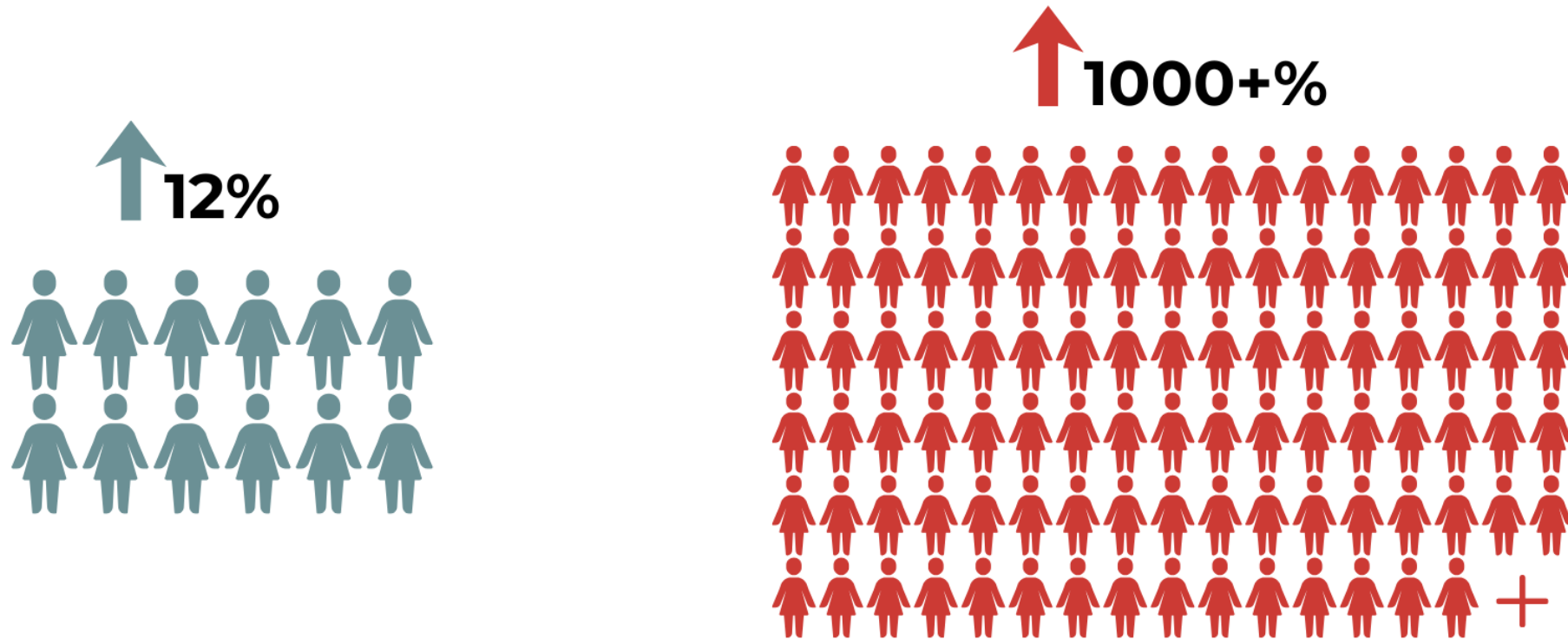


Source: Lee, M., Uthayakumaran, A., & Varmuza, P. (draft). Draft Report: Analysis of Director Approvals in Ontario's Licensed Child Care System (2020-21 to 2024-25) Based on FOI Data from the Ministry of Education. Building Blocks for Child Care.

Data obtained through a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to the Ministry of Education on the use of Director Approvals (DAs) under O. Reg. 137/15, s. 54(1), item 2 of Ontario's Child Care and Early Years Act between 2020 and 2025 (as of May 30).



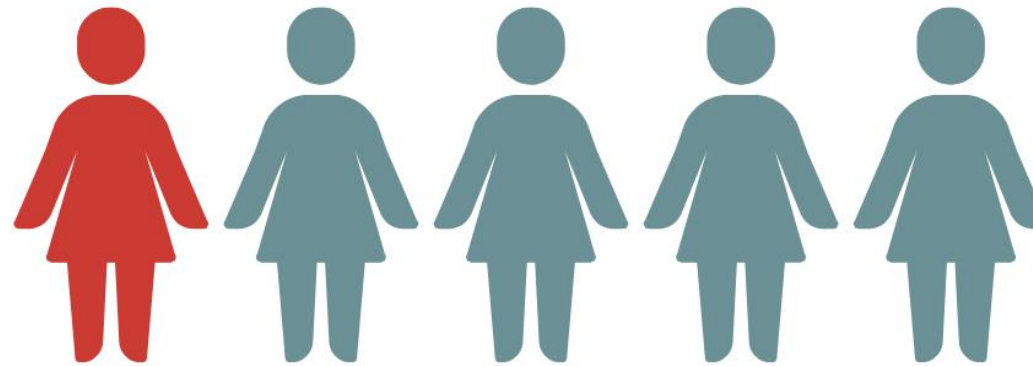
RECE Membership Growth vs Director's Approval Explosion



Source: Lee, M., Uthayakumaran, A., & Varmuza, P. (draft). Draft Report: Analysis of Director Approvals in Ontario's Licensed Child Care System (2020-21 to 2024-25) Based on FOI Data from the Ministry of Education. Building Blocks for Child Care.

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The Shift from RECEs to Director's Approvals



**By 2024-25, nearly 1 in 5 supervisors (21.1%)
held a DA rather than an RECE qualification**

Source: Lee, M., Uthayakumaran, A., & Varmuza, P. (draft). Draft Report: Analysis of Director Approvals in Ontario's Licensed Child Care System (2020-21 to 2024-25) Based on FOI Data from the Ministry of Education. Building Blocks for Child Care.

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The Role of the CECE

College of Early Childhood Educators • Ontario's professional regulator



PUBLIC PROTECTION

Protects children and families by regulating registered early childhood educators in the public interest.

WHO CAN REGISTER?

Applicants who meet an accepted education pathway:

- ECE diploma from an Ontario public college
- Graduation from a College-approved diploma or degree program
- Recognized ECE certification from another Canadian province or territory
- Education and experience accepted through individual assessment

Applicants must also meet all other registration requirements, including good character, English or French fluency, and eligibility to work in Canada.

HOW THE COLLEGE REGULATES



REGISTRATION

Sets entry requirements and issues certificates of registration.



ETHICS & STANDARDS

Establishes and enforces the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.



ONGOING LEARNING

Requires continuous professional learning to support competent practice.



ACCOUNTABILITY

Addresses complaints, misconduct, incompetence and incapacity.

PUBLIC REGISTER: Families and employers can check an educator's registration status.

Only College members may use the protected titles ECE and RECE.

Pulled into ratio. Child sent home.

When specialized support is used to maintain ratios, inclusion disappears.

1 INTENDED INCLUSION



Specialized support helps the child learn, participate and belong.

2 SUPPORT REDIRECTED



The support educator is pulled into ratio to cover a staffing shortage.

3 CHILD SENT HOME



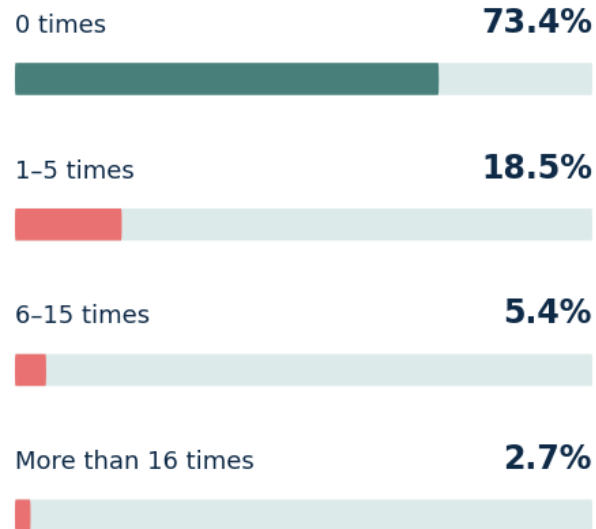
Individualized support is removed. The child cannot stay.

Inclusion cannot succeed when specialized supports are redirected to cover basic staffing.

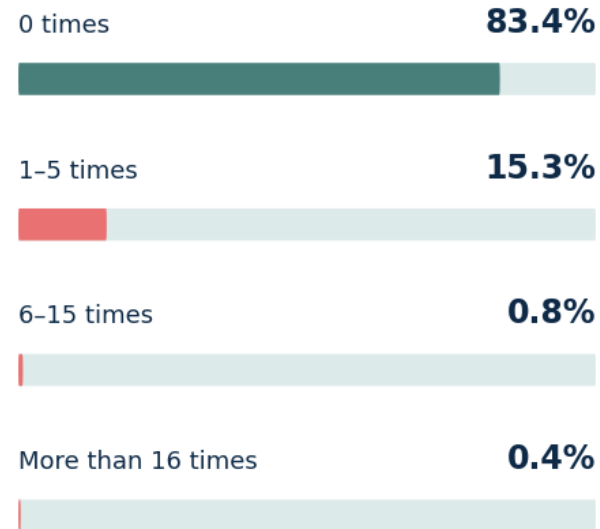
Staffing shortages and access for children with disabilities

Percentage of directors / supervisors reporting each frequency in the previous 12 months

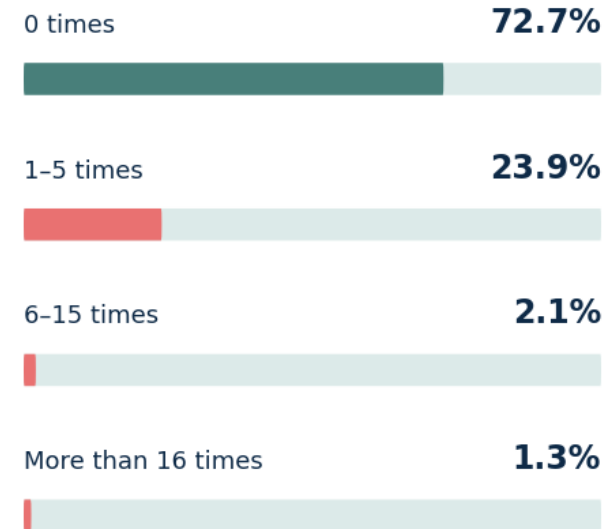
Sent children home



De-enlisted children



Denied admission



All three outcomes were reported as occurring due to staffing shortages.

Accountability – Next Steps

SNR Models

Many regions have re-evaluated their SNR models



Compensation

Cover all child care costs for those in the sector



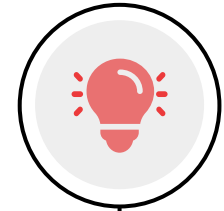
Mentorship

Collective innovations
Mentorship Framework



Data

KON II launches
October 21



KON 2 WILL ANSWER THE FOLLOWING

01

What is
happening?
(data)

02

Who is most
affected?
(disaggregation)

03

What is the impact?
(system level)

knowing
numbers

KNOWING OUR NUMBERS 2

LAUNCHING ON
ECE APPRECIATION DAY
OCTOBER 21, 2026

EVERY VOICE COUNTS.
EVERY RESPONSE MATTERS.

The Ontario-wide early childhood
education workforce survey is
launching soon.

Together, we're building the evidence
to strengthen Ontario's early learning
and child care workforce.

*Licensed child care centres, home care, Kindergarten, EarlyON, SNR consultants

In collaboration with:

Ontario Children's
Service Managers

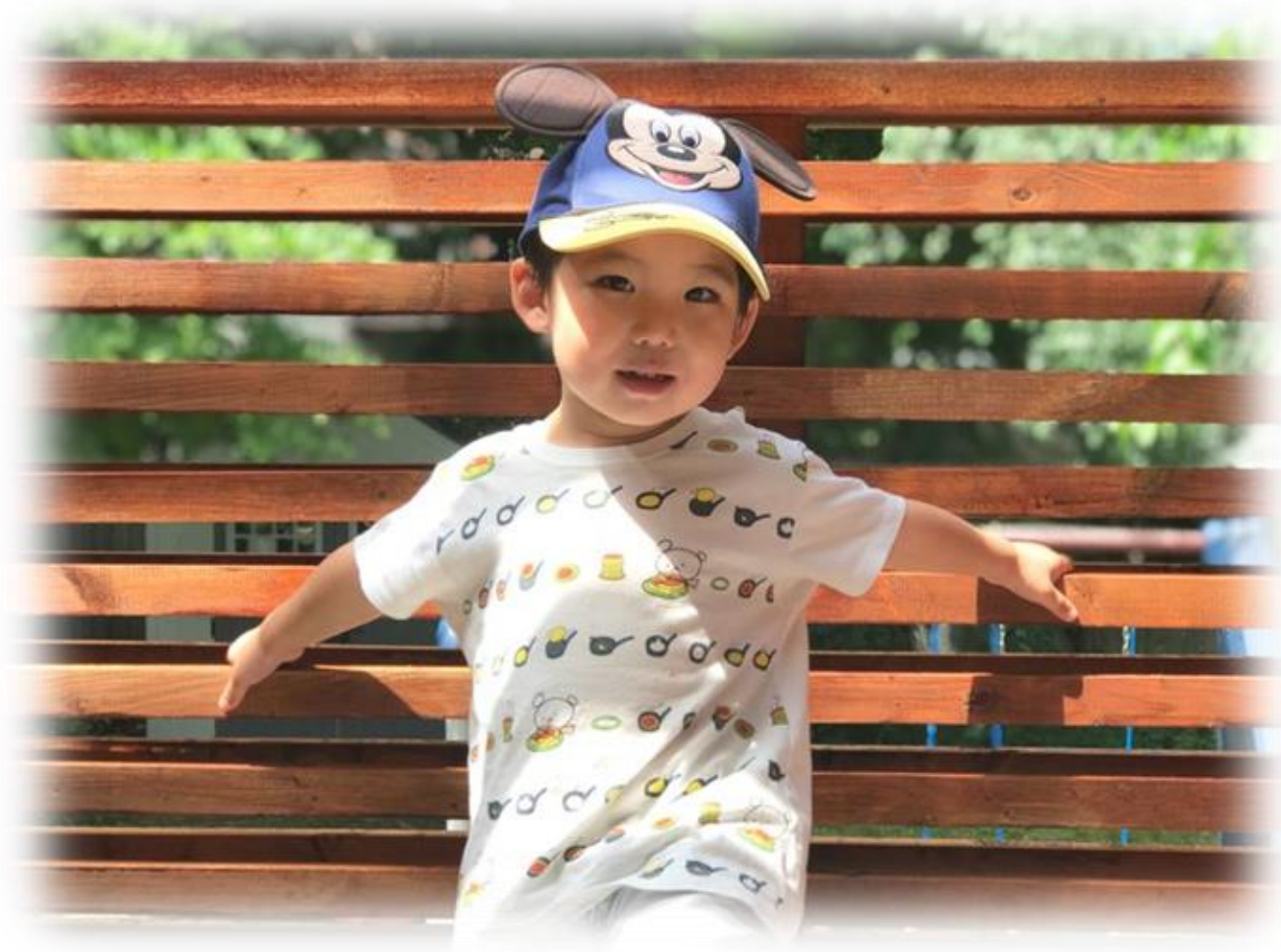


cece
college of
early childhood
educators

Knowing Our Numbers

Strengthening Our ECE Workforce. **Shaping** Our Future.

knowingournumbers.ca





Layers



Get started

You can explore maps, add layers, and more without signing in. To save your work, sign in before creating your map.

[Learn more about Map Viewer](#)



CMSM_and_DSSA
B_Boundary



Add | v



CMSM_and_DSSAB_Boundary: COCHRANE



Table



Zoom to

NAME	COCHRANE
CDUID_2011	3556
CDUID_2012	
CDUID_JOIN	3556
EO_REGION	Northern Region
Shape_Area	355,796,611,668.97
Shape_Length	3,434,232.18

CMSM_and_DSSAB_Boundary



Properties



Use the selector above to switch between layers in the

Information



Source layer

Collapse

CMSM_and_DSSAB_Boun
dary
Feature layer



Duplicate

Some properties are
stored in this web
map



Manage layer properties

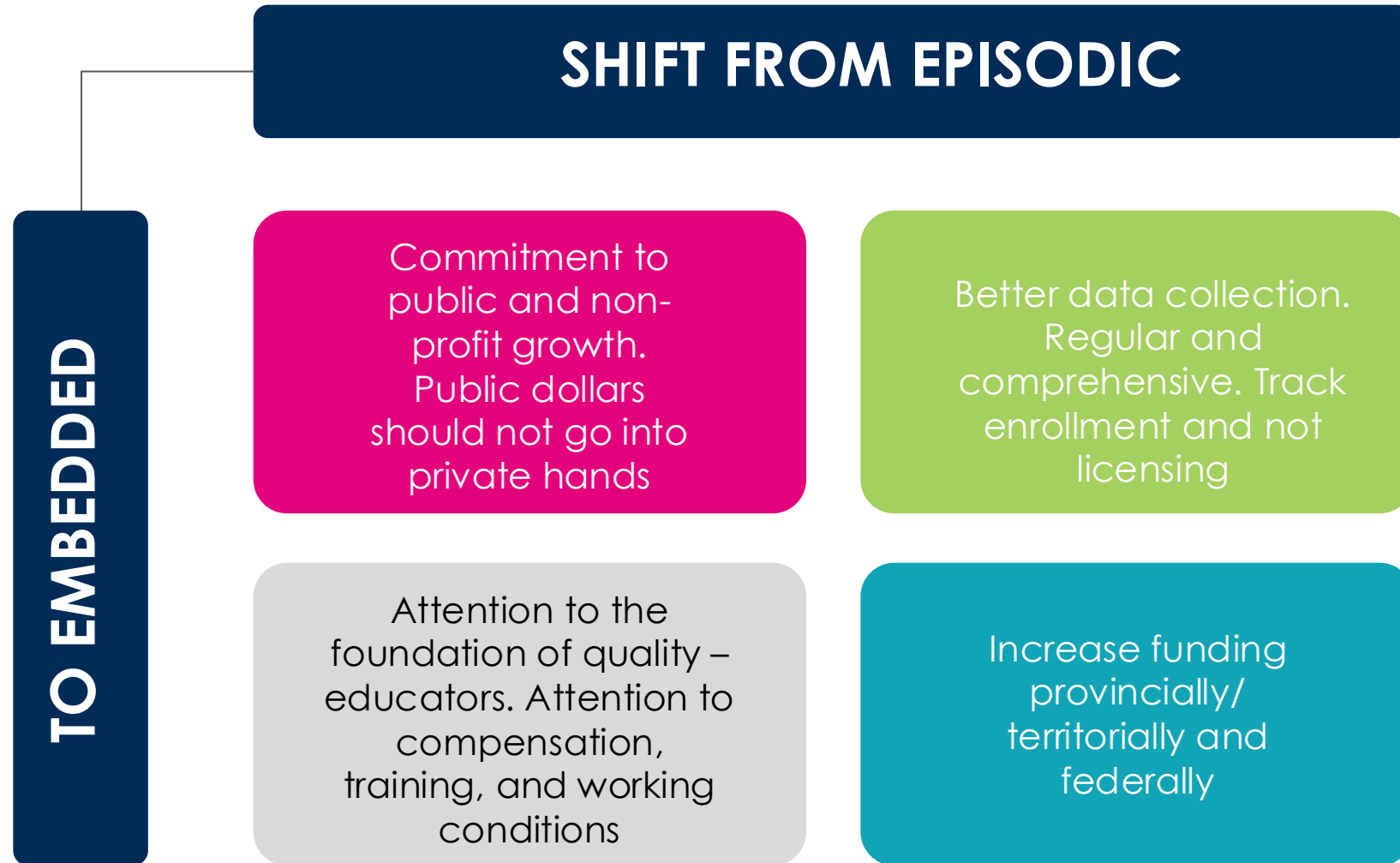
Symbology



CMSM_and_DSSAB_Boundary



Change takes time.....



THANK

YOU

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Atkinson
Centre

 UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
OISE | ONTARIO INSTITUTE
FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

knowing
numbers
connaître
chiffres