

# Challenges & Opportunities in the Early Years Sector



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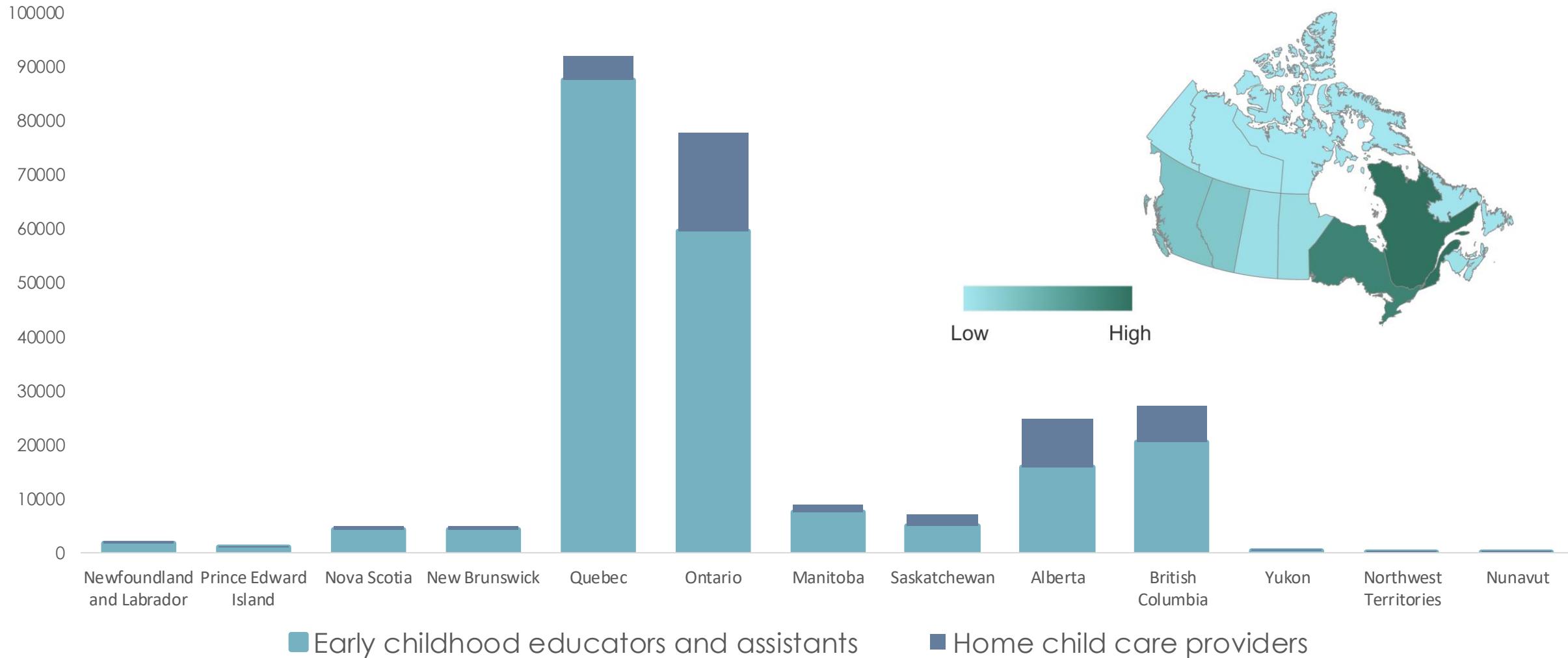


The status of early learning and childcare across Canada

Lessons from a new Ontario study

Promising and best practices

# Number of People Employed in the Child Care Sector in Canada



# 302,000

work as early childhood educators,  
early childhood assistants, or  
home child care providers



**1.6%**  
of Canadian workforce



**2.3%**  
of Quebec workforce



**76%**  
work full-time



**95%**  
identify as female



**2/3**  
have at least one child



**25%** of child care workers  
are self-employed  
**15%** of workers in all other  
occupations are self-employed



**32**  
average age



**50%**  
are married or  
living common law



**1/3** of child care workers  
are immigrants  
**1/4** of workers in all other  
occupations are immigrants



**5%** of child care workers identify  
as Indigenous  
**4%** of workers in all other occupations  
identify as Indigenous



**90%**  
of child care centres have difficulties  
filling vacant positions

## 5,150,110

children 0-12 years old in Canada

**821,298** attend licensed child care centres  
**96,677** attend licensed home care

#### Sources:

Seward, B., Dhuey, E., Pan, A. (2023). [The Big Short: Expansion of Early Childhood Education in Post-Pandemic Canada](#).

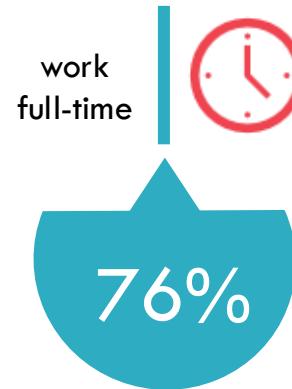
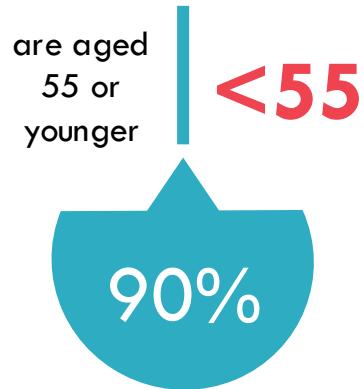
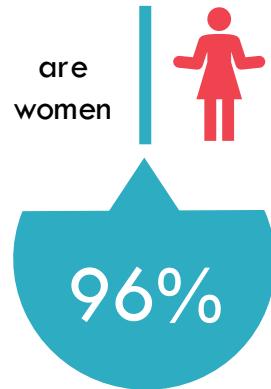
Statistics Canada. [Child care workers in Canada \(2021\)](#).

Statistics Canada. [Number of children in Canada \(2021\)](#).

Statistics Canada. [Canadian Survey on the Provision of Child Care Services \(2022\)](#).



# What Does the Workforce Look Like?



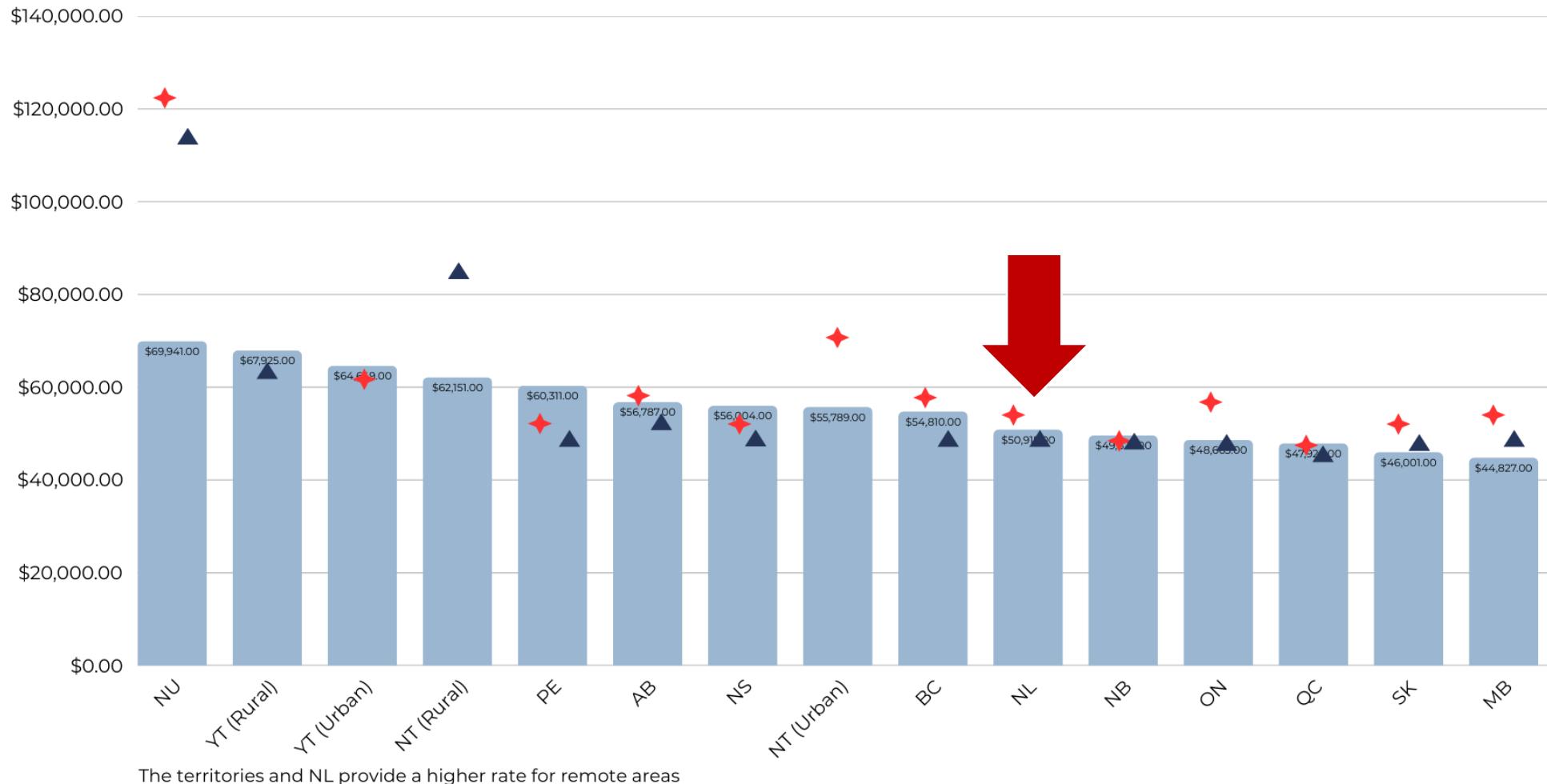
are self-employed,  
versus 15% in other  
professions



are immigrants or non-  
permanent residents  
versus 25% in other  
professions

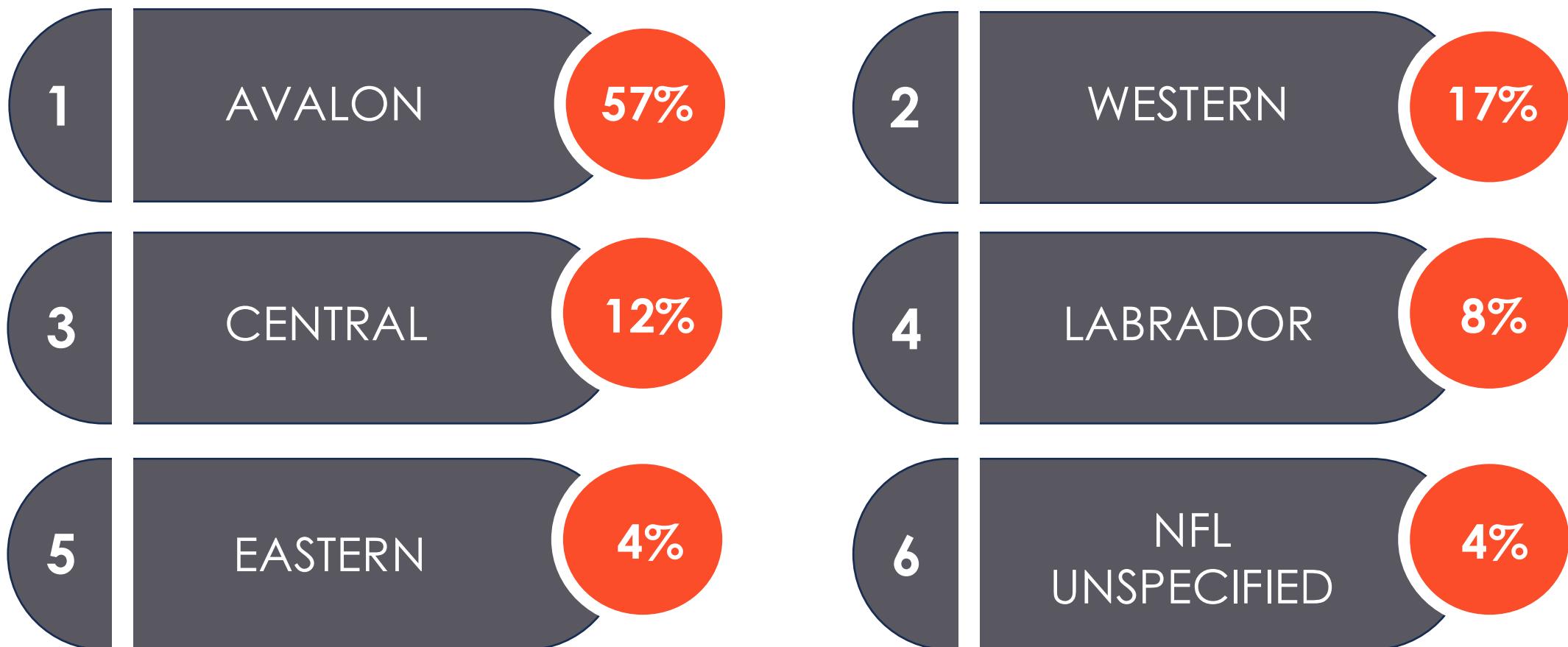


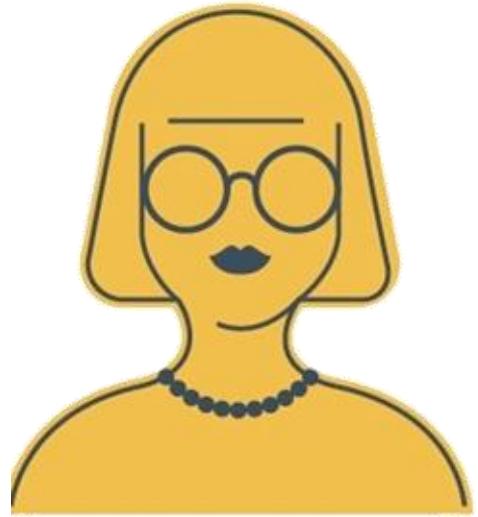
## Earnings of ECEs across Canada compared to poverty thresholds in urban (♦) and rural (▲) regions



# Job Postings in Newfoundland and Labrador

249 jobs posted in 2024 with the following distribution:





## 25 to 55 years

73% of the ECE workforce in Newfoundland and Labrador are between 25 to 55 years of age





*Growing inequities in the time of crisis*

*Educator burnout*

*Income loss*

*'she'session*

*Increases in child abuse and domestic violence*

*Education loss*

Child/Educator

Politically convincing  
Labour market  
Labour force participation  
Women's rights



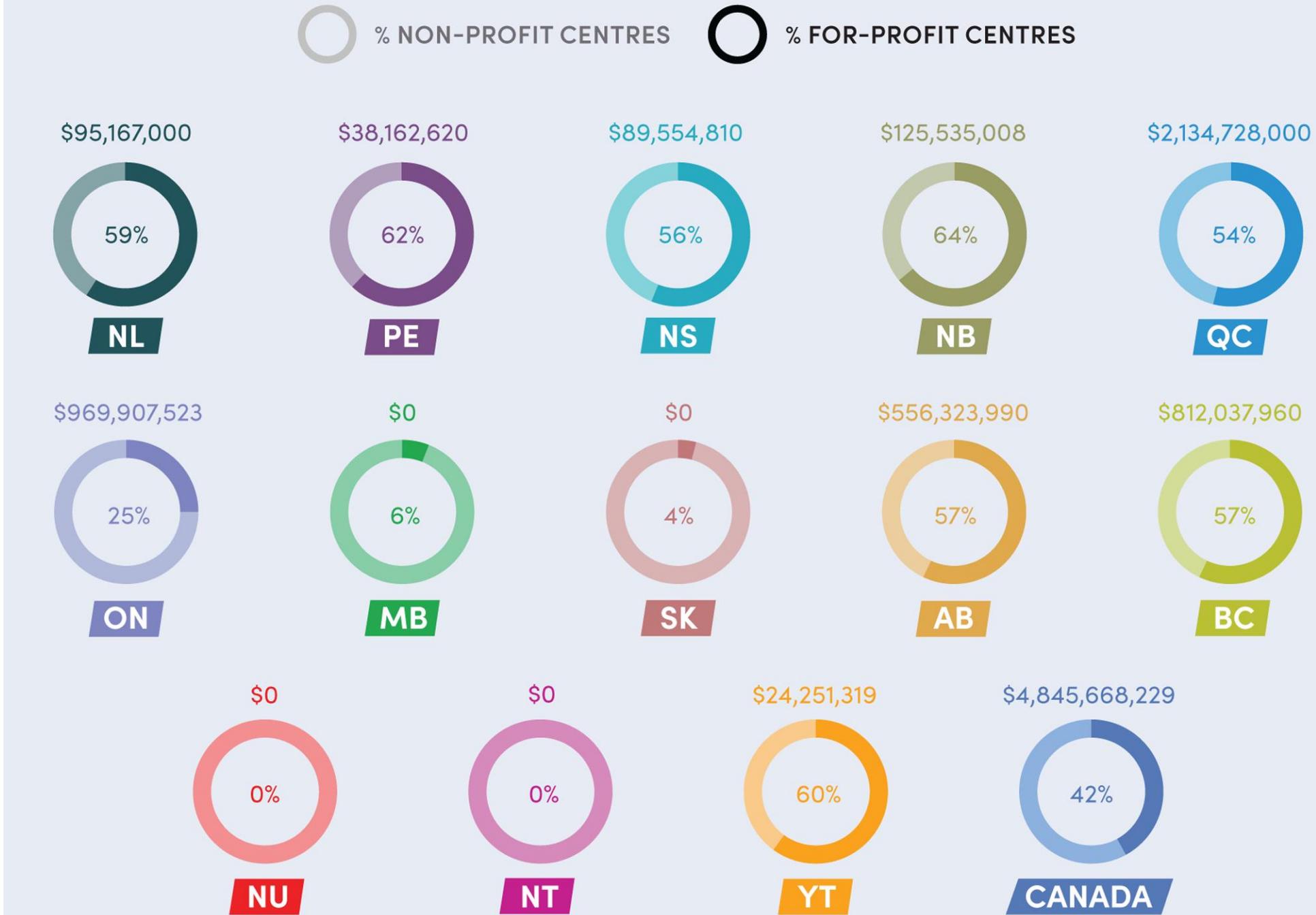
Child/Educator

Politically convincing  
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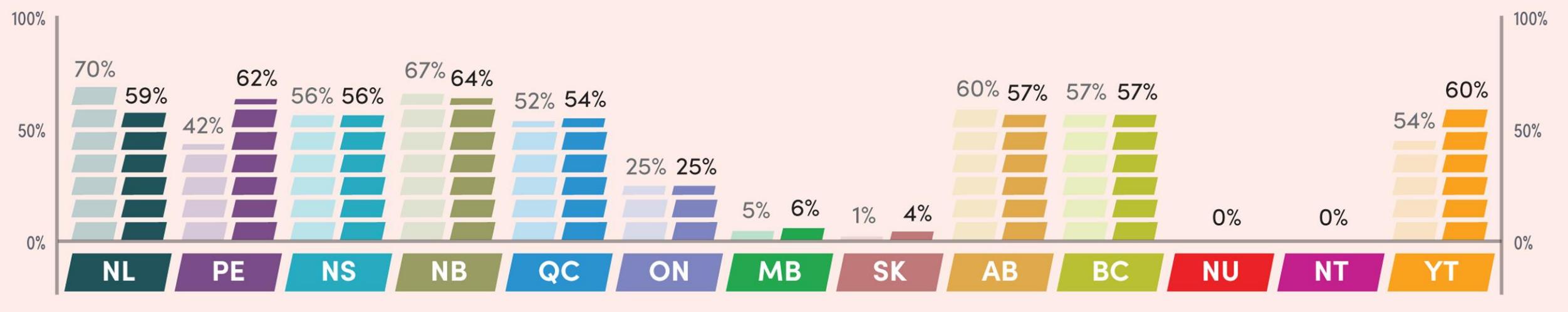
# Child Care Spending on For-Profit Facilities by Province and Territory (2023)

- SK and MB license for-profit centres, but they are not eligible for funding
- NU and NT only license and fund non-profit and public centres



# Percent Change in For-Profit Facilities/Spaces by Province and Territory

(2020 ● 2023)

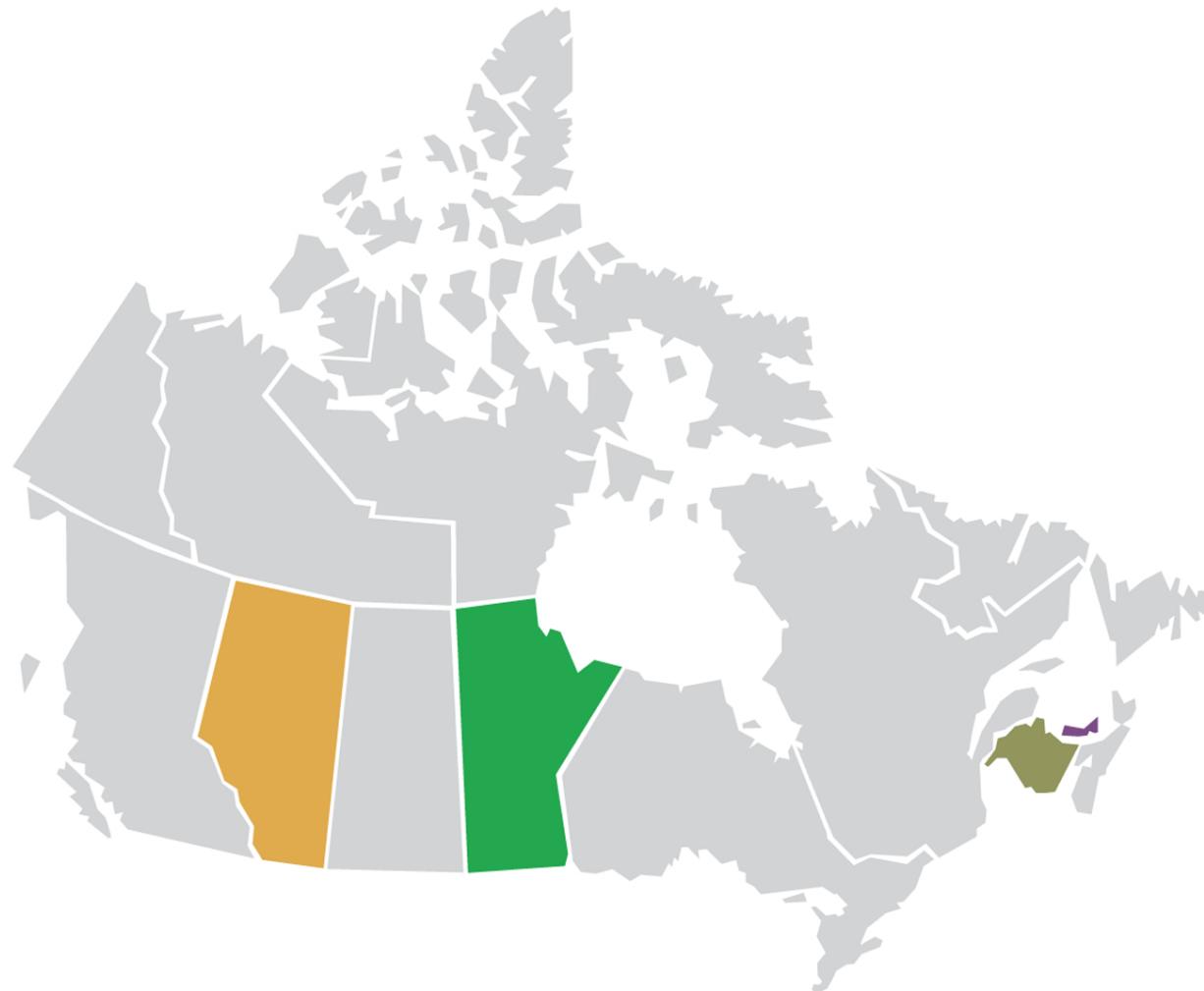


 SK and MB license for-profit centres, but they are not eligible for funding

 NU and NT only license and fund non-profit and public centres



## JURISDICTIONS WHERE PUBLIC FUNDING FOR CHILD CARE IS CONDITIONAL ON INCLUDING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



### Prince Edward Island

In Designated Early Years Centres only

### New Brunswick

In Designated Early Learning and Child Care centres only

### Manitoba

In all publicly funded child care programs

### Alberta

In Early Childhood Services programs only



Staff turnover – revolving door

Major barrier to  
to quality programming





A community approach to  
understanding the early childhood  
education workforce

# Executive Report

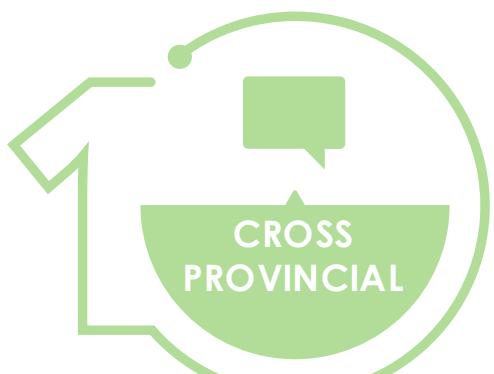


Une approche communautaire pour  
comprendre la main-d'œuvre dans le  
domaine de l'éducation de la petite enfance

# Rapport exécutif



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



44/47 Ontario regions signed on to KON to support evidence-based policy planning



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

# Study Details

## The Workforce Survey

The survey was developed and reviewed by our equity consultant. Regions provided two rounds of feedback



## Survey Release

The CECE and regional governments released the survey on September 11, 2023



## Next Phase

Phase II will see the development of a publicly available platform with yearly data collection



## Translation

Prescott & Russell provided French translation

## Northern Focus Groups

We conducted 5 focus groups in Northern regions with a 6<sup>th</sup> added to capture the Francophone experience

# Selected Regions for Focus Groups





**knowing  
u  
numbers**

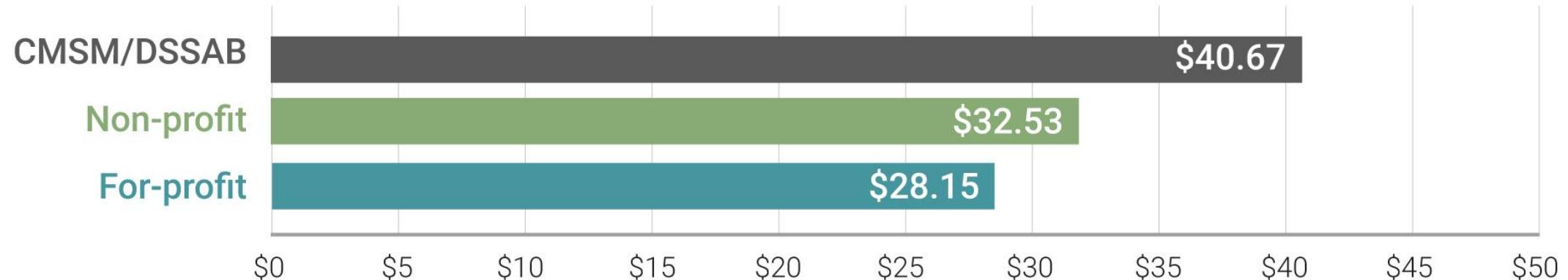
## Participant-Reported Hourly Wages by Auspice

All respondents, in descending order, by median wage

	Average	Minimum	25 <sup>th</sup> percentile	Median	75 <sup>th</sup> percentile
Post-secondary institution	\$29.17	\$18.00	\$25.00	\$30.00	\$32.00
CMSM/DSSAB	\$30.02	\$17.00	\$25.00	\$29.00	\$34.00
Non-profit	\$24.54	\$16.00	\$22.00	\$24.00	\$27.00
EarlyON	\$23.79	\$17.00	\$22.00	\$24.00	\$25.00
<b>Provincial level</b>	<b>\$24.90</b>	<b>\$15.00</b>	<b>\$22.00</b>	<b>\$24.00</b>	<b>\$27.00</b>
For-profit	\$22.37	\$16.00	\$20.00	\$22.00	\$24.00

Starting in January 2024, the wage floor for RECEs in Ontario working in programs participating in CWELCC readjusted to \$23.86 per hour.

## Participant Reported Hourly Wages by Auspice Directors/Supervisors





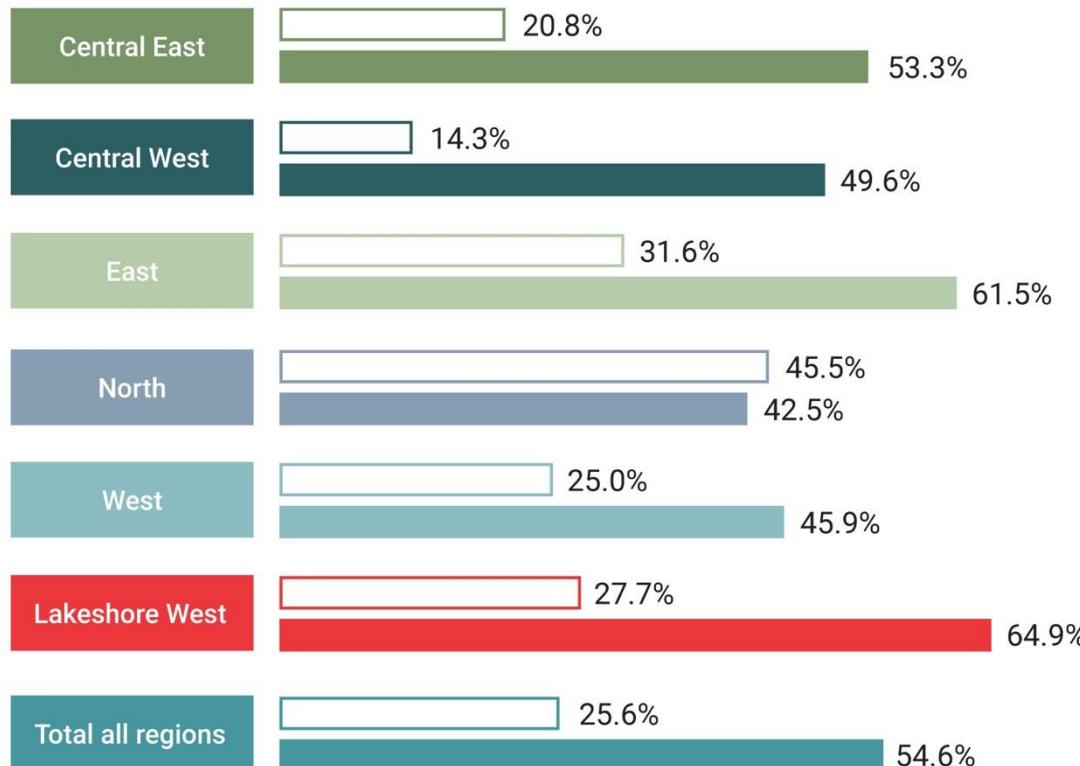
**knowing  
u  
numbers** | **Percentage of Access to Non-Mandatory Benefits by Auspice**  
**All Respondents**

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%

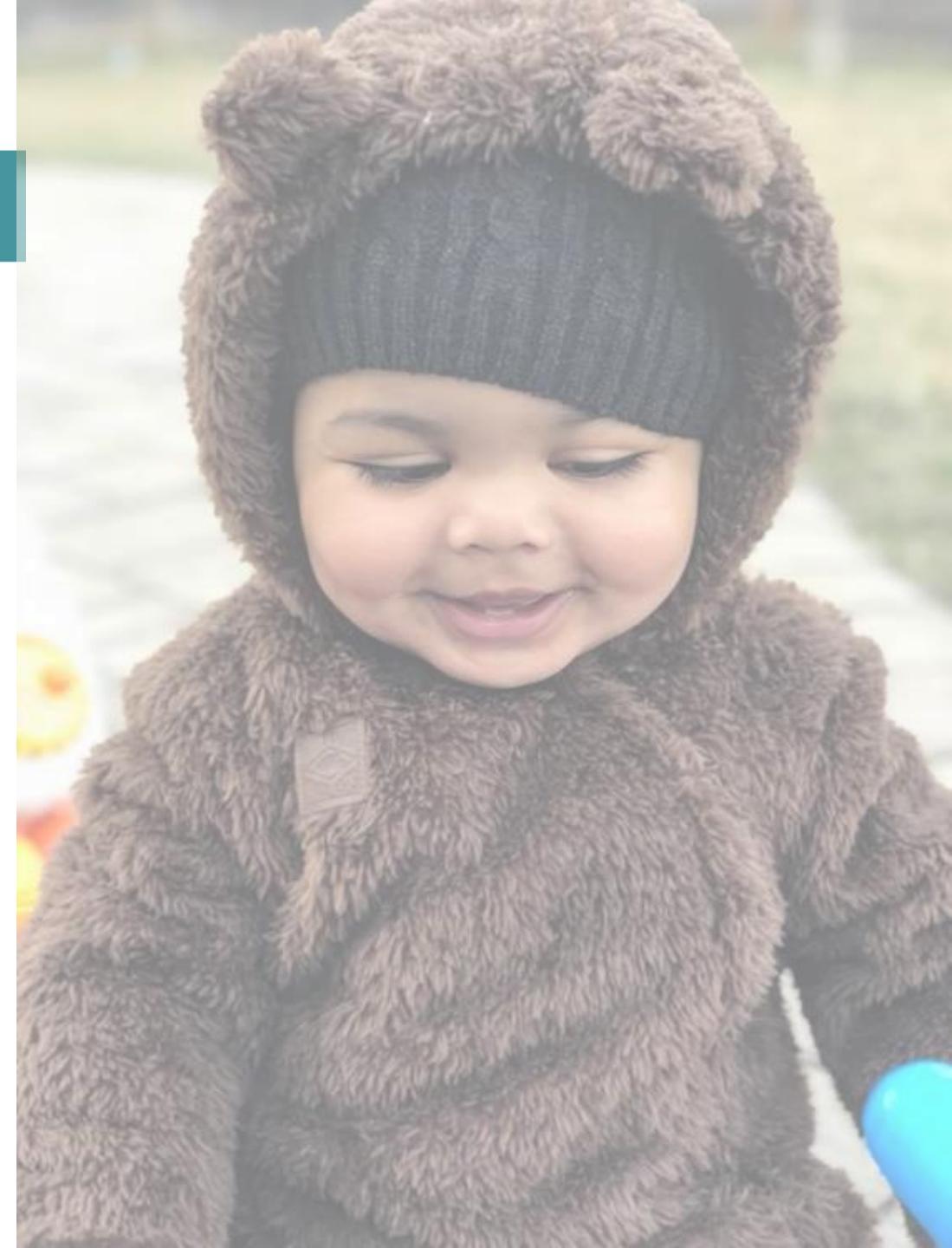


## Availability of Retirement Benefits by Auspice and Region RECEs in licensed child care

For-profit      Non-profit

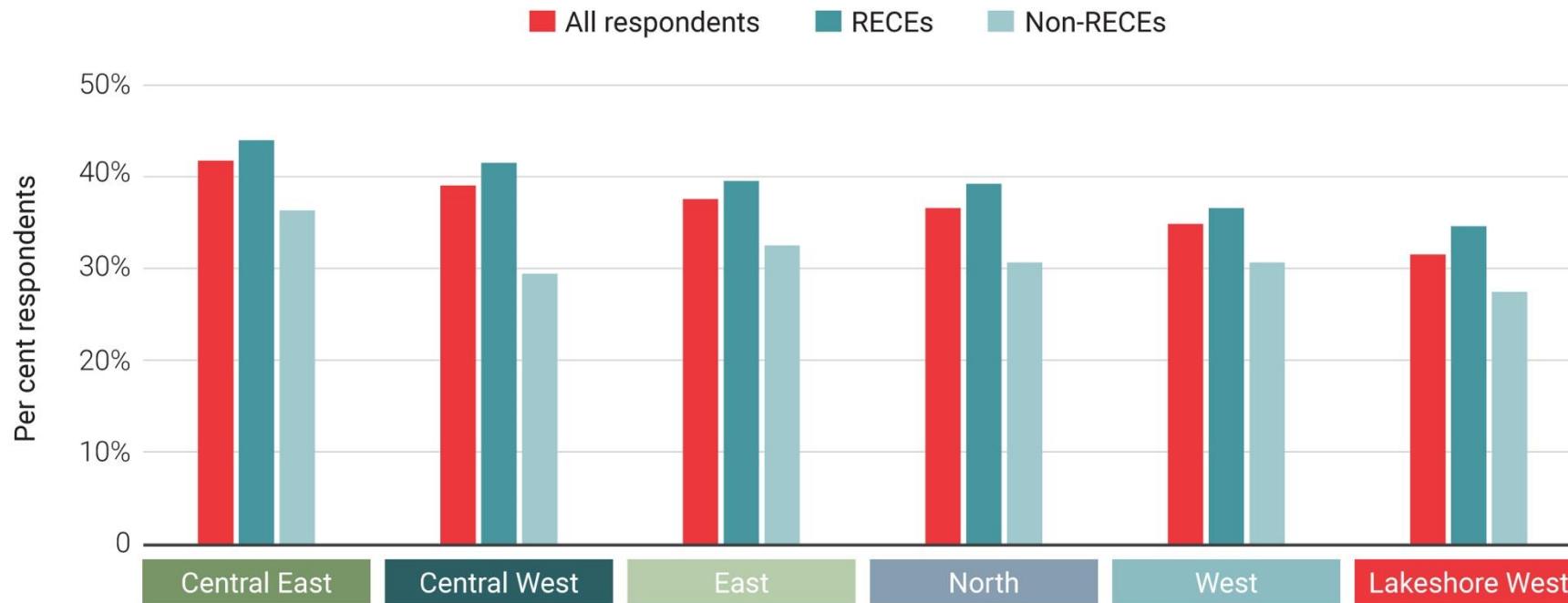


Note: Northern findings should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size of for-profit providers.





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%



#### Management

Discrimination from management

63%



#### Colleagues

Discrimination from colleagues/staff

60%



#### Parents

Discrimination from parents/families

23%

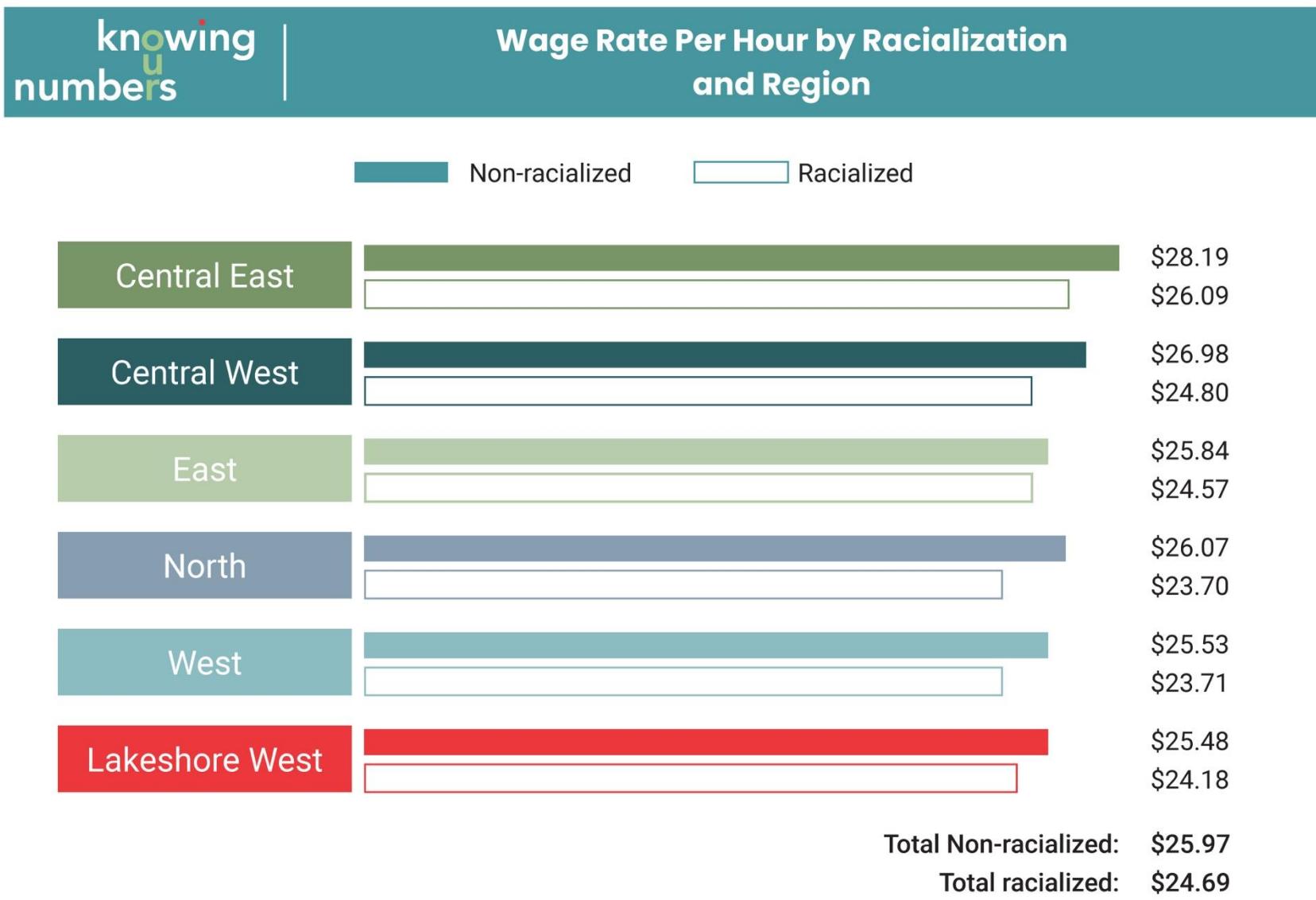


#### Children

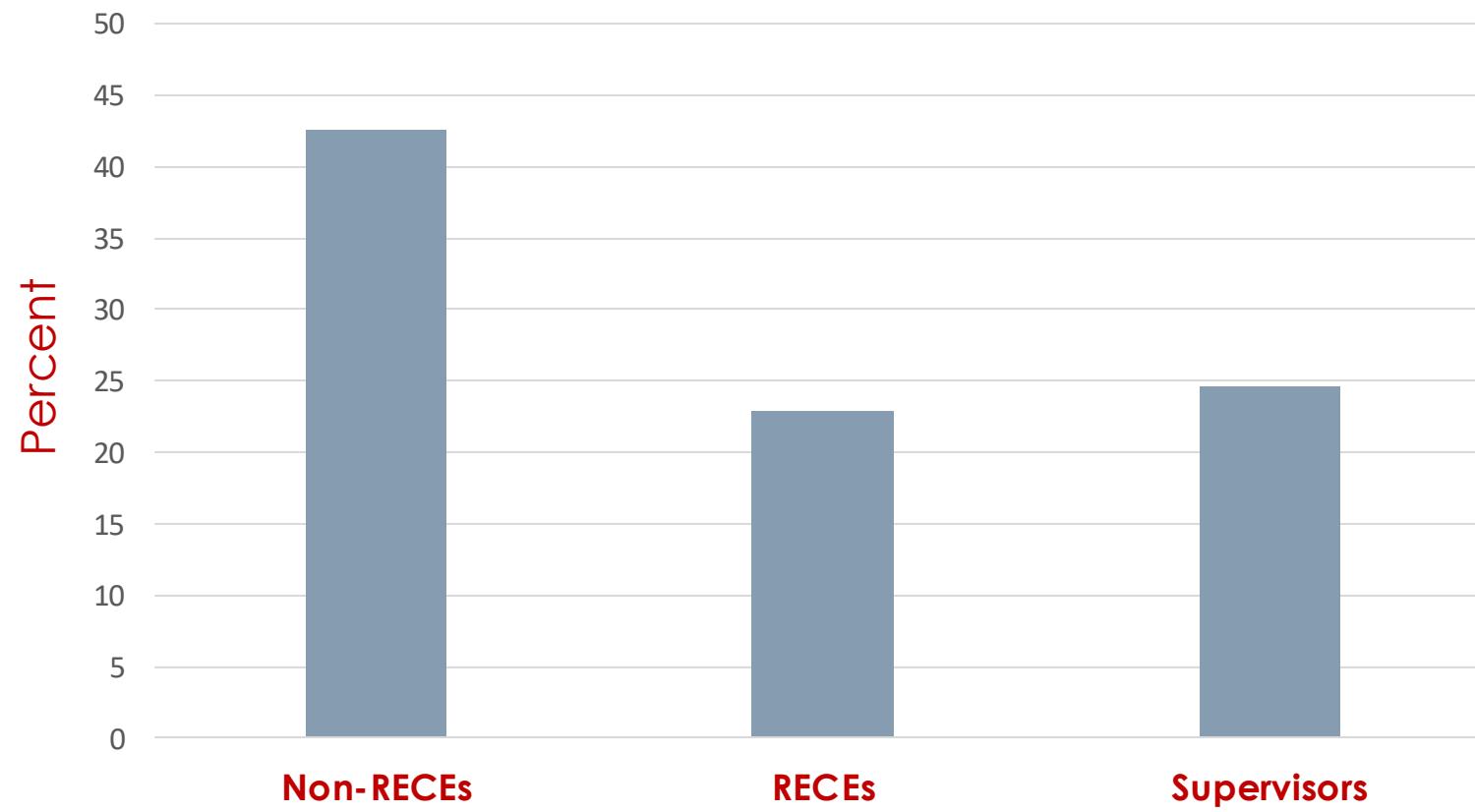
Discrimination from children

7%

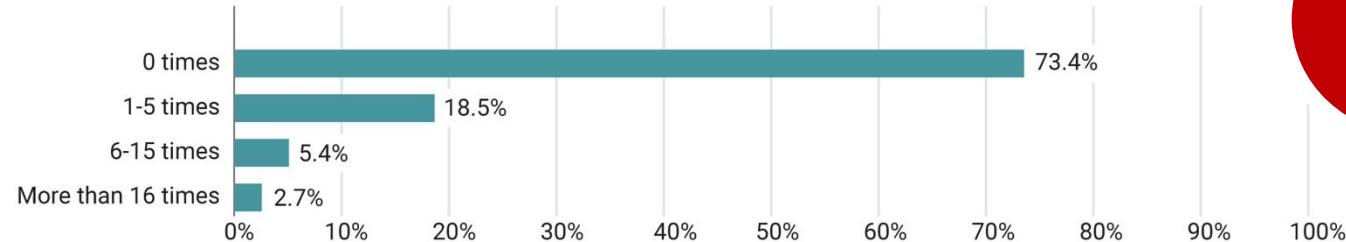




## Percentage of Racialization by Position

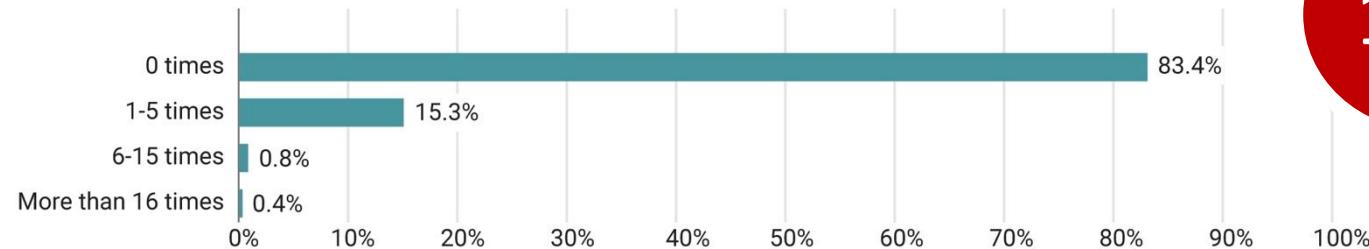


Percentage Reporting Frequency of Times in the  
Previous 12 Months Directors/Supervisors Sent Children  
with Disabilities Home Due to Staffing Shortages



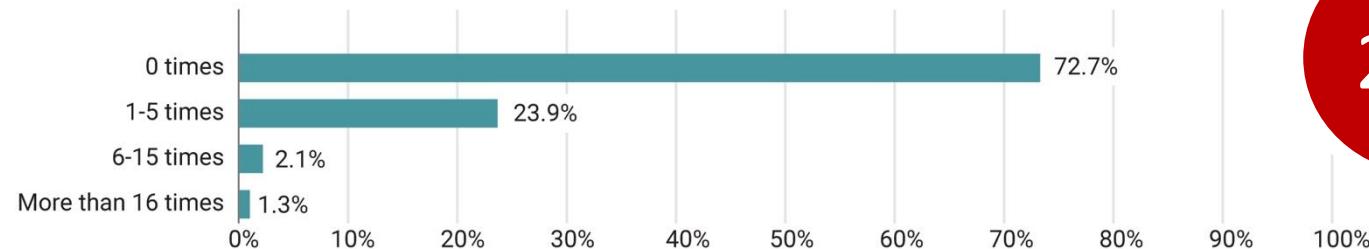
27%

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



17%

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



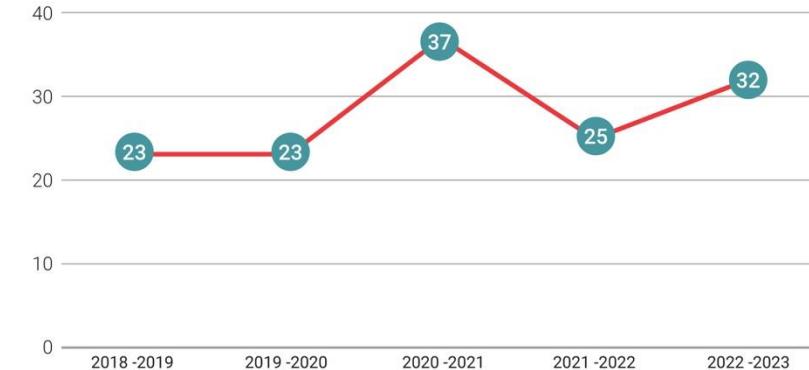
27%





knowing  
numbers

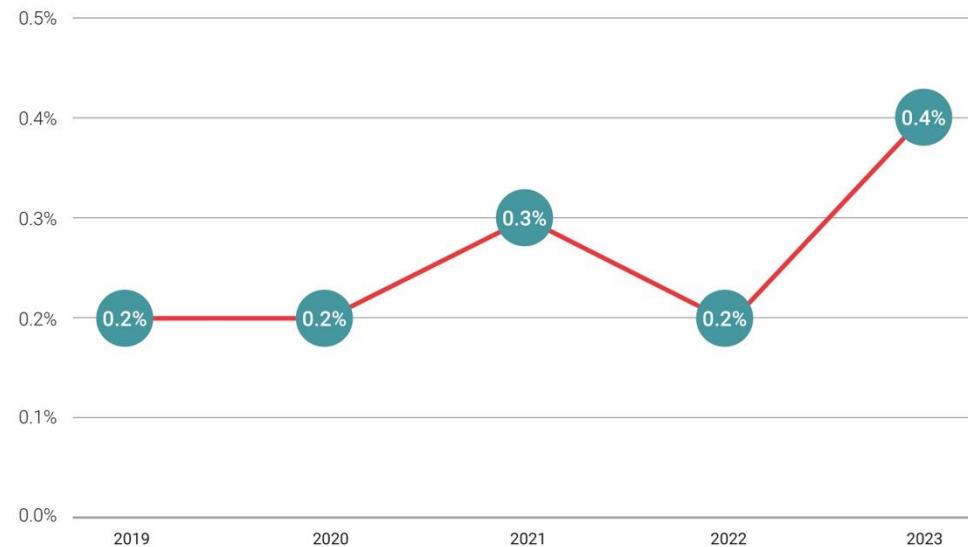
### Number of Behaviour Guidance Complaints to the CECE as a Percentage of all Complaints (2018 to 2023)



Source: College of Early Childhood Educators. Annual Reports. Retrieved from: <https://www.college-ece.ca/about-us/annual-reports/>

knowing  
numbers

### Percentage of Behaviour Guidance Concerns Compared to Total CECE Membership (2019 to 2023)



Source: Data provided by the College of Early Childhood Educators.



**01** Appropriate salary  
2,387 (52%)

**02** Improved benefits  
1,875 (41%)

**03** Support for children with  
emotional and behavioural needs  
1,544 (34%)

**04** Supports for children with disabilities  
1,366 (30%)

**05** Paid preparation time  
1,366 (30%)

**06** Respect for the work  
1,355 (29%)

**07** Improved career opportunities  
1,289 (28%)

**08** Lower child to educator ratios  
1,194 (26%)

**09** Educator mental health support  
1,139 (25%)

**10** Regular paid breaks  
968 (21%)

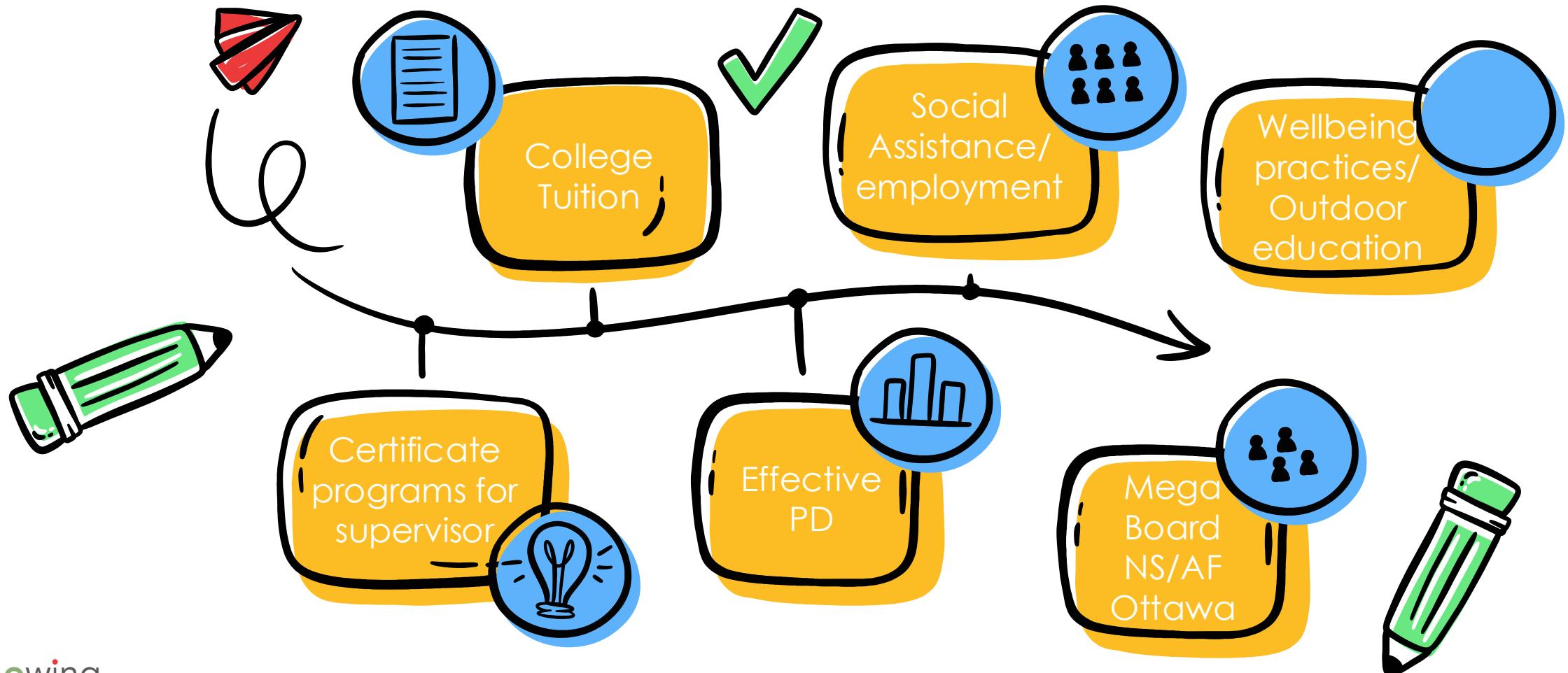
# Re-evaluating Special Needs Resource Models



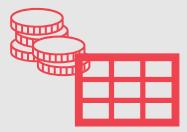
## Promising Practices



# Promising Practices – Recruitment/Retention



# Promising Practices – Wages



## Wage Grids

6 jurisdictions have a develop wage grids



## MBM

Only 4 regions meet **Market Basket Measures (MBM)**



## Supervisor Rate

PEI, NS, NL, MB, NT, NU have dedicated rates for supervisors



## Rate Based on Centre Size

MB establish rates based on centre size & recognize assistant supervisors



## Allowances

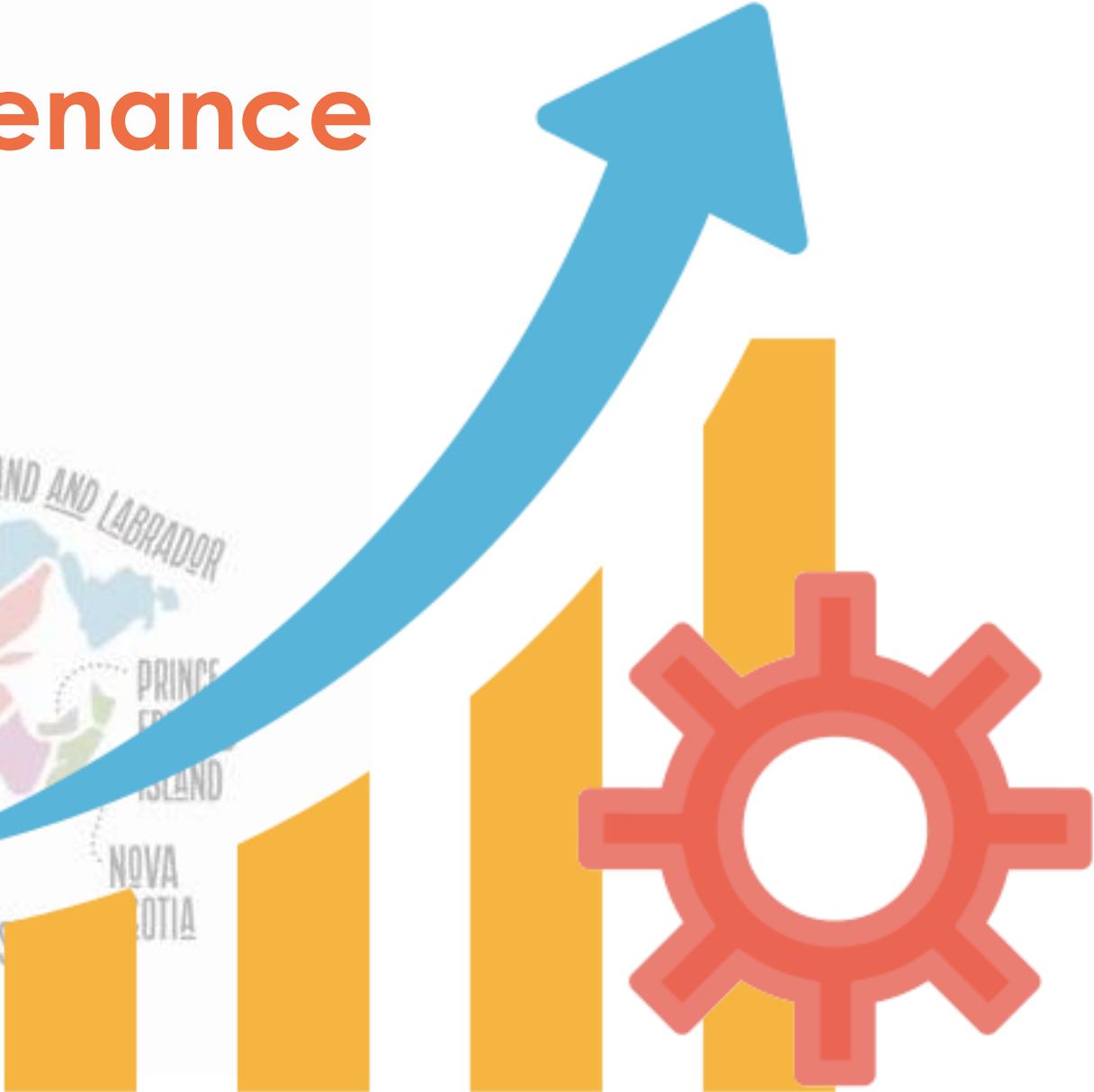
NFL has a Francophone and Labrador allowance



## Non-RECE Staff

Many compensation systems do not recognize non-RECE staff

# Maintenance



# Promising Practices – Benefits



Only QC  
(CPEs)  
& NS  
have a public  
benefit plan



Some others  
(including PEI &  
NFL) are in  
progress

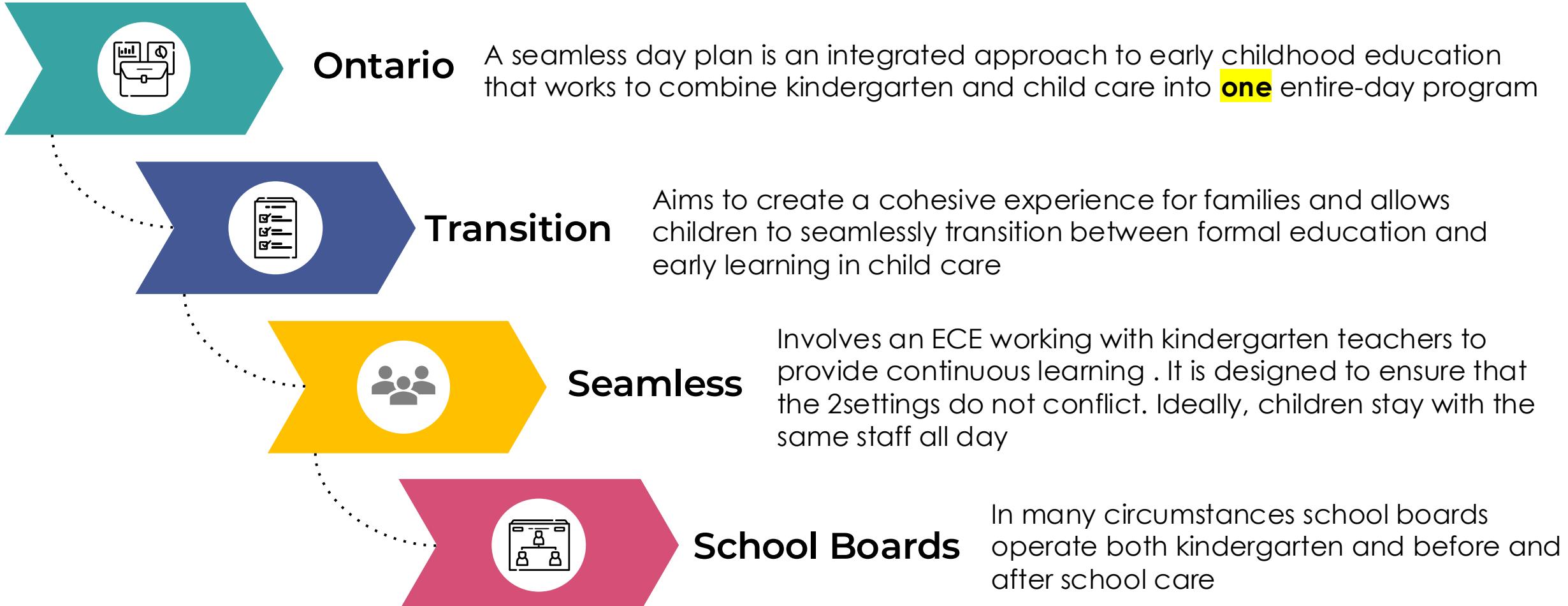


MB funds a  
defined  
contribution  
plan

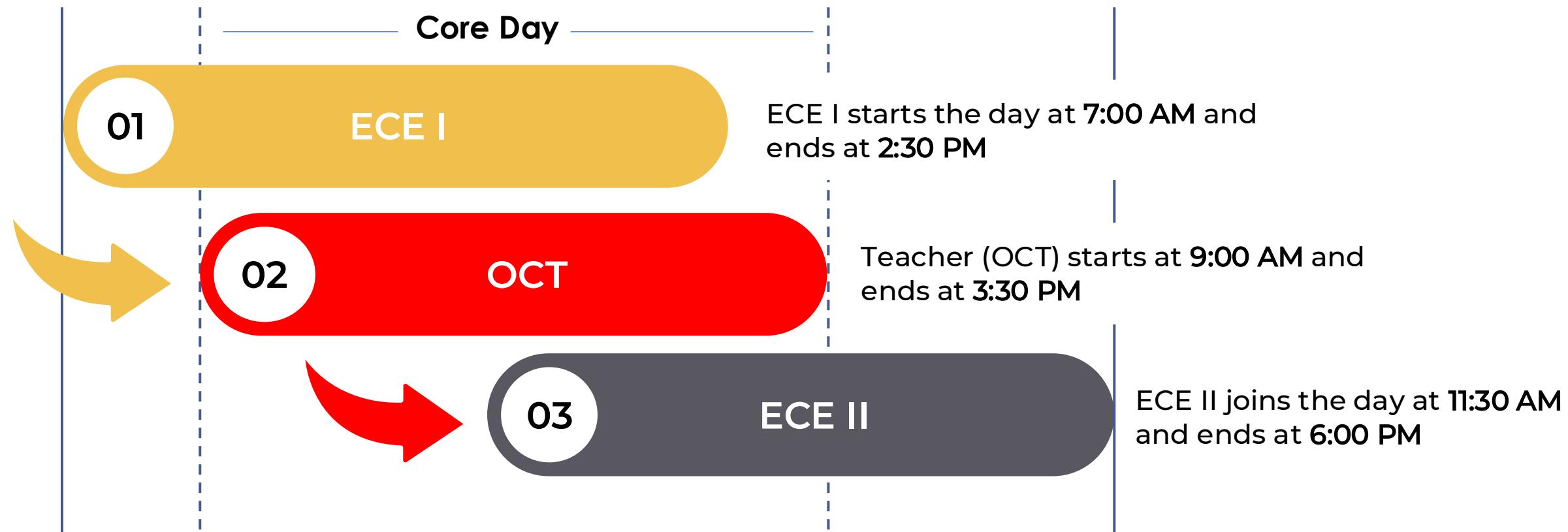


Only PEI and QC  
(CPEs) fund a  
defined benefit  
pension plan.

# Promising Practices – Seamless Day



Typically, the way it work  
(with some variations) is:



Supplies, equipment, and space are shared for all children

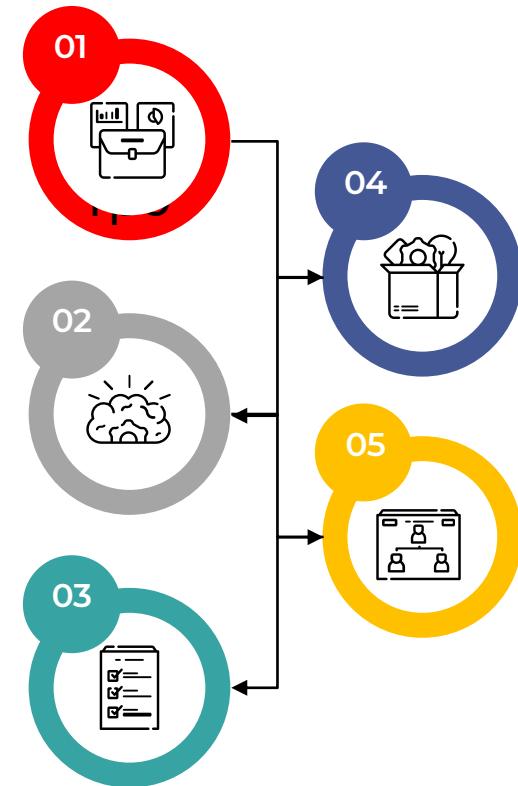
# Promising Practices – Expansion

## Manitoba's Ready-To-Move (RTM) Project

Innovative approach for building high-quality child care spaces under expedited timelines

Collaboration between government, municipalities, and Indigenous Governing Bodies to address child care needs in remote/rural regions

Hybrid construction technology leverages economies of scale to build facilities under controlled conditions before being moved on site, assembled and placed on permanent foundation



Builds fully funded under Canada-Wide Agreement in exchange for serviced land

15 years of free rent for operator and general maintenance. Facilities are owned by local municipality/First Nation

# Promising Practices – Expansion

## Manitoba's Ready-To-Move (RTM) Project

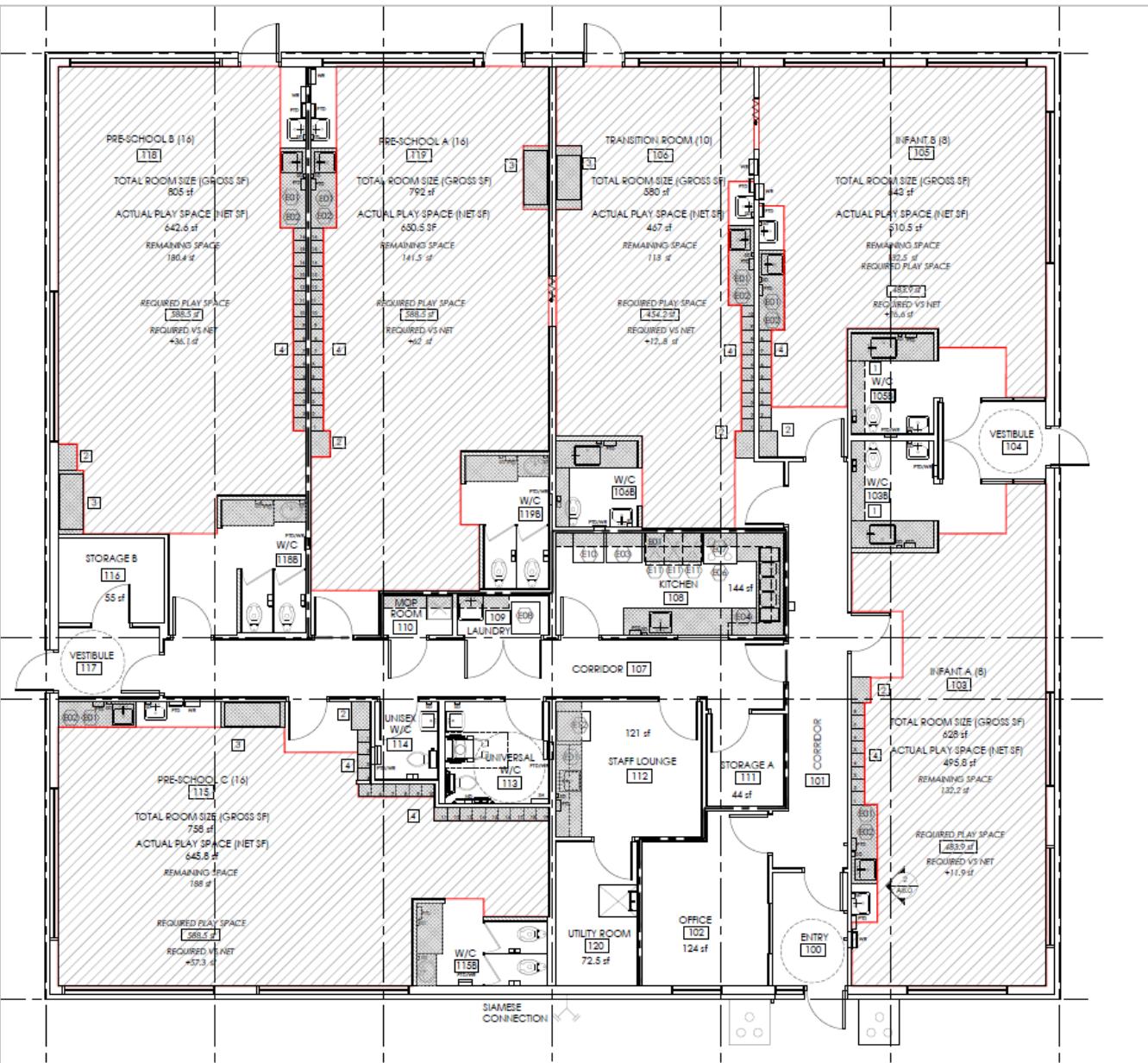


Pilot rolled out in fall 2022 in 9 communities in Winnipeg Metropolitan Region

Developing a total of 25 new facilities with 1,970 spaces in rural and First Nations communities across the province, at cost of \$120M

RTM construction timelines of 6 to 9 months, while traditional builds take between 12 and 18 months

Initial ten centres opened (740 spaces), two opened in May 2024 (148 spaces), additional ten completed by fall of 2024 (830 spaces), followed by three more scheduled this April of 2025 (252 spaces)



## 74-space build Floor Plan





# Lessons from PEI

**Key Highlights from their recent survey and findings**



**Job Satisfaction:** Director satisfaction increased by 19%, while staff satisfaction increased by 44%.



**Benefits from Wage Increases:** In 2019, 50% of individuals left the sector seeking better wages. In 2024, that number dropped to just 2%.



**Recruitment Improvements:** 88% of directors believe that recruitment and retention in the sector has improved since 2019.



Attention to  
the Workforce

# Leadership in a time of change



T H A N K   Y O U

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Atkinson  
Centre

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
OISE ONTARIO INSTITUTE  
FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

LAWSON  
FOUNDATION

Margaret & Wallace McCain  
Family Foundation



ATKINSON  
FOUNDATION