

# Challenges & **Opportunities** in the Early Years Sector



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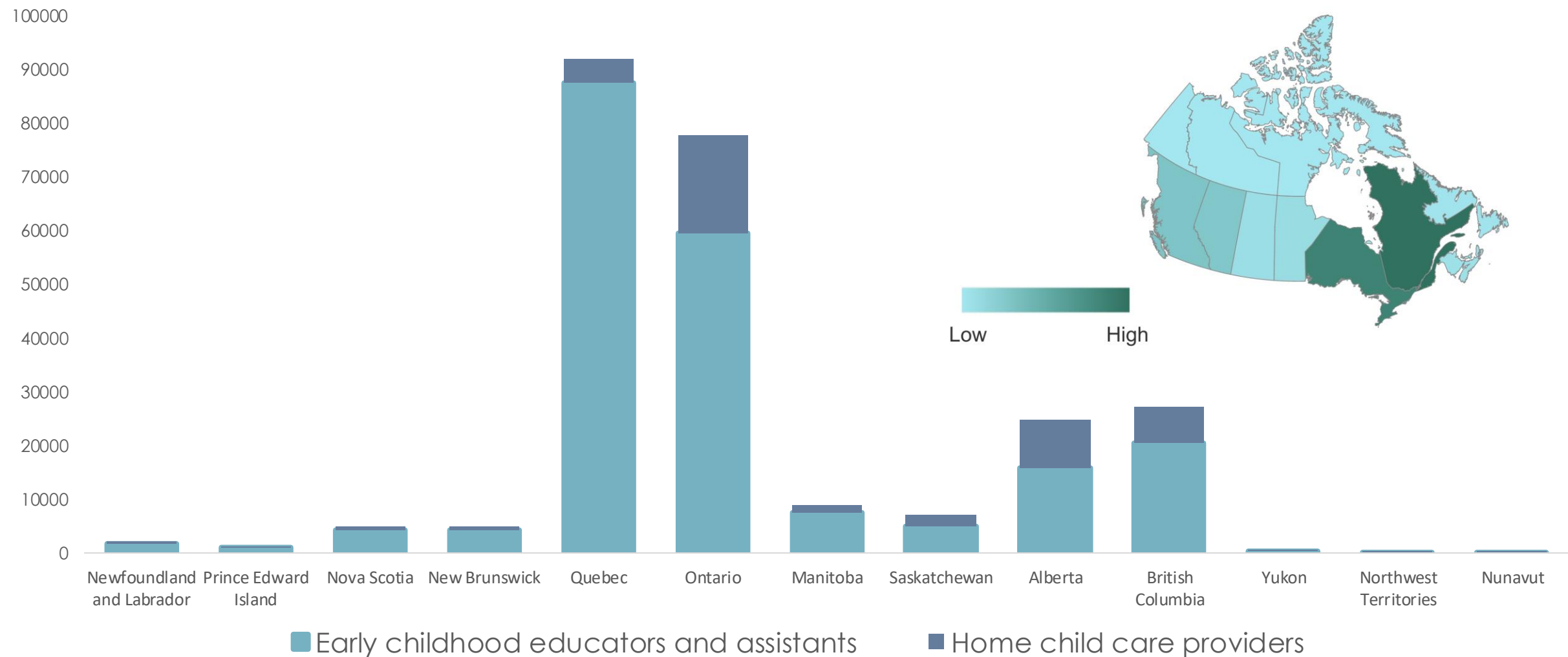


The status of early learning and childcare across Canada

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*.

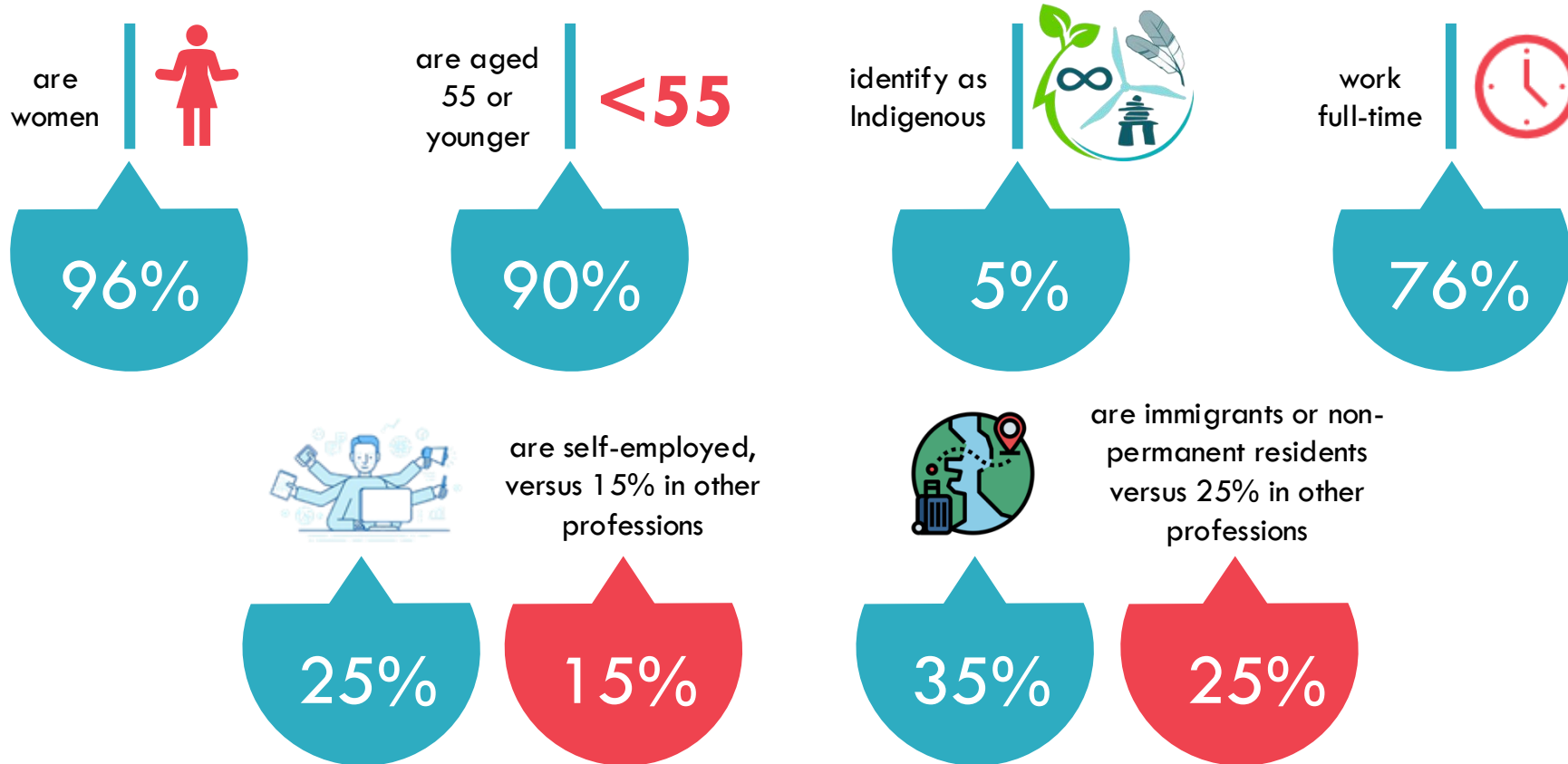
Statistics Canada. *Child care workers in Canada (2021)*.

Statistics Canada. *Number of children in Canada (2021)*.

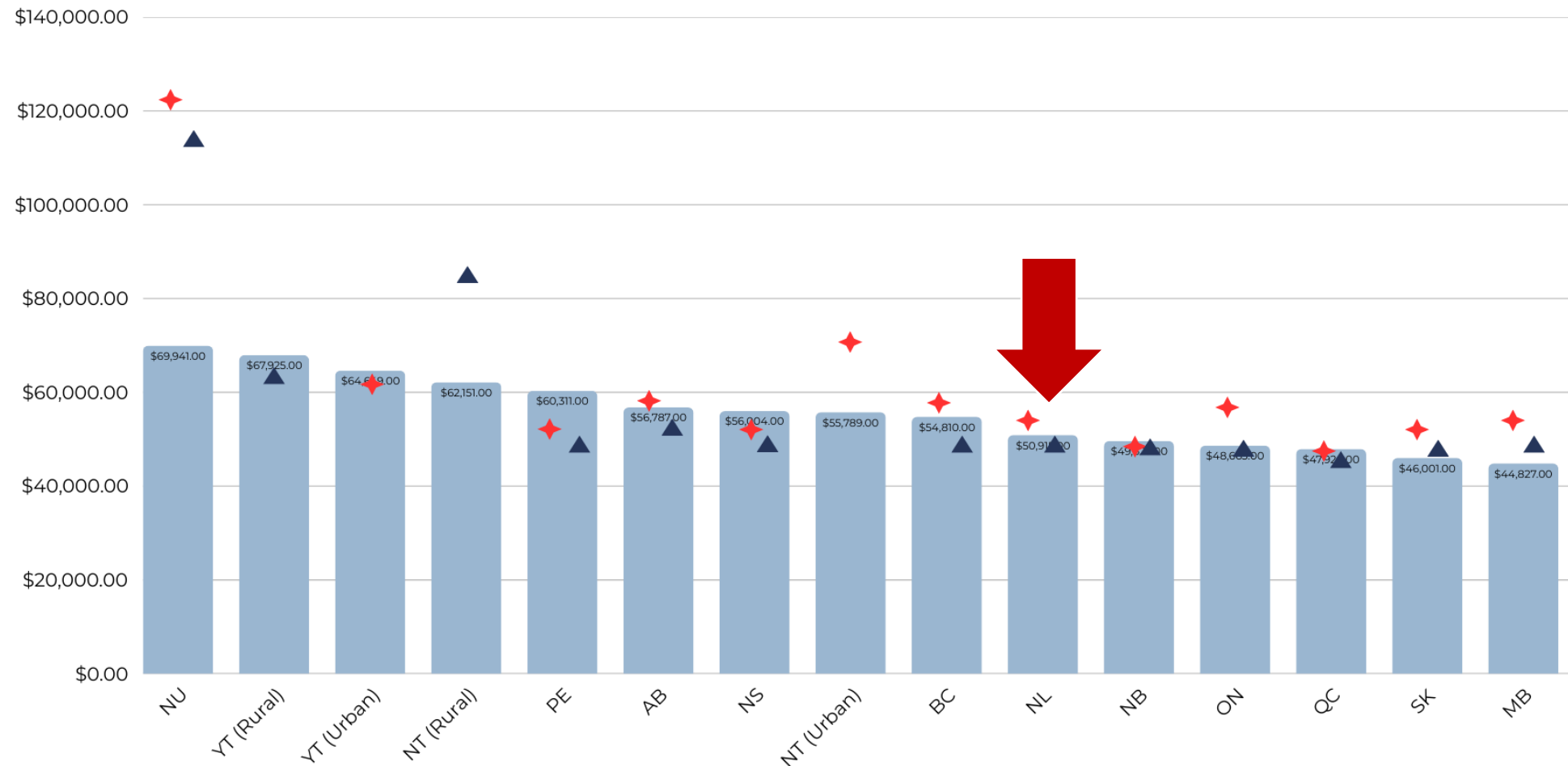
Statistics Canada. *Canadian Survey on the Provision of Child Care Services (2022)*.



# What Does the Workforce Look Like?



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

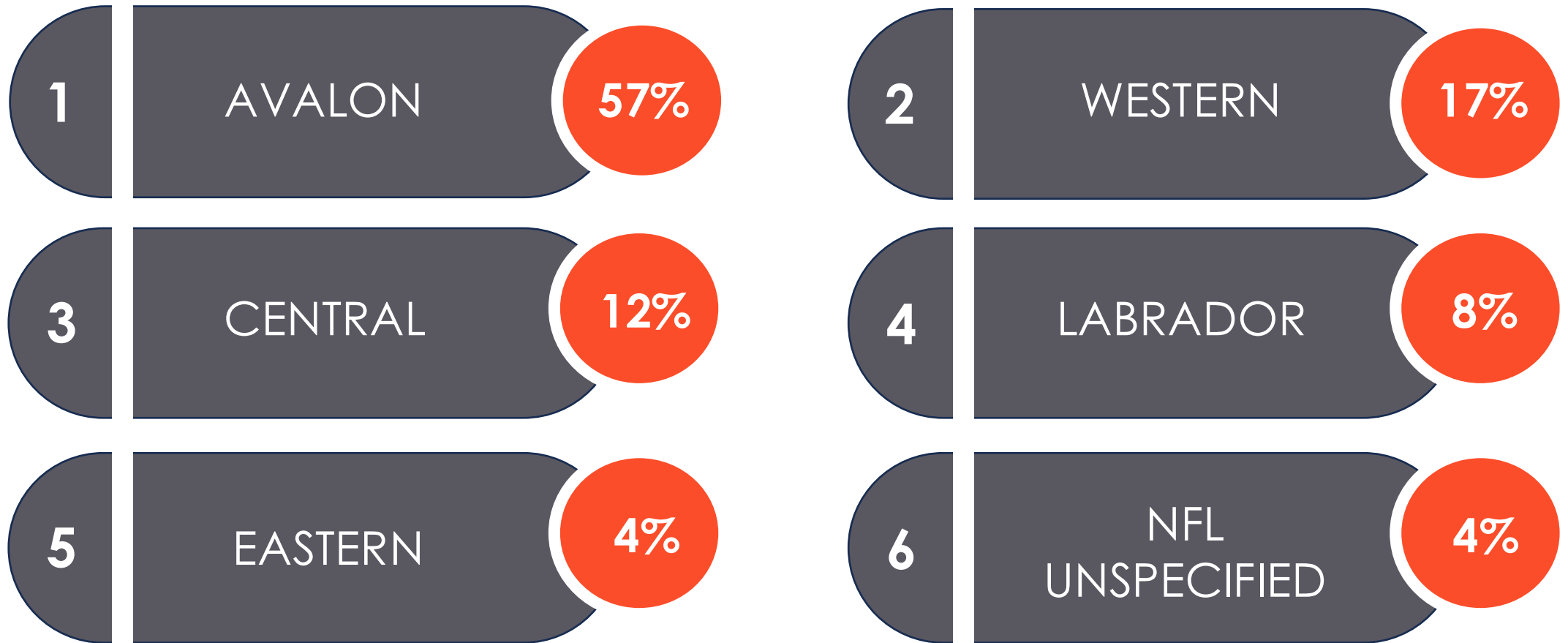


The territories and NL provide a higher rate for remote areas

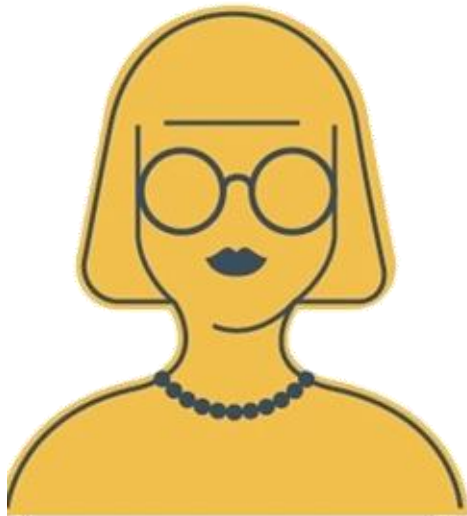


# Job Postings in Newfoundland and Labrador

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  
Labour market  
Labour force participation  
Women's rights





% NON-PROFIT CENTRES



% FOR-PROFIT CENTRES

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

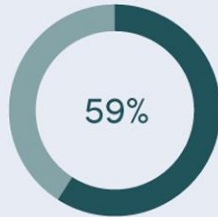


**SK** and **MB** license for-profit centres, but they are not eligible for funding



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

\$95,167,000



**NL**

\$38,162,620



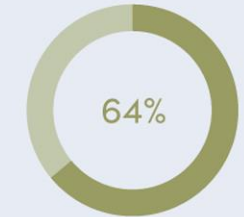
**PE**

\$89,554,810



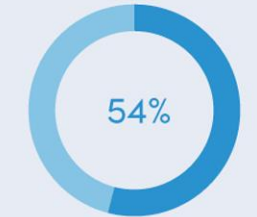
**NS**

\$125,535,008



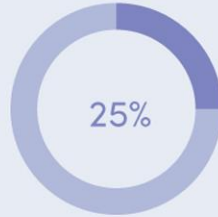
**NB**

\$2,134,728,000



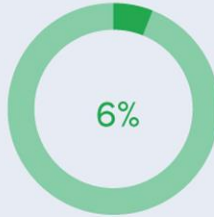
**QC**

\$969,907,523



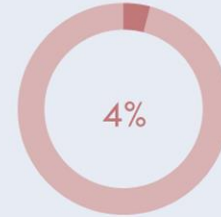
**ON**

\$0



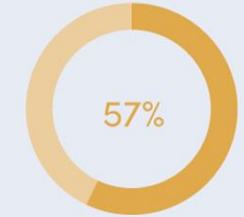
**MB**

\$0



**SK**

\$556,323,990



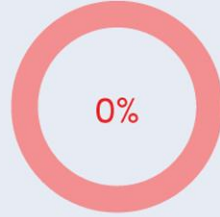
**AB**

\$812,037,960



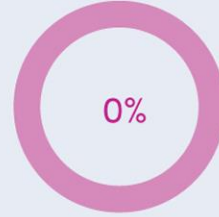
**BC**

\$0



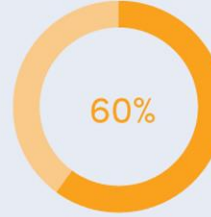
**NU**

\$0



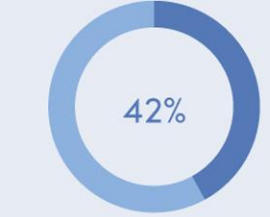
**NT**

\$24,251,319



**YT**

\$4,845,668,229

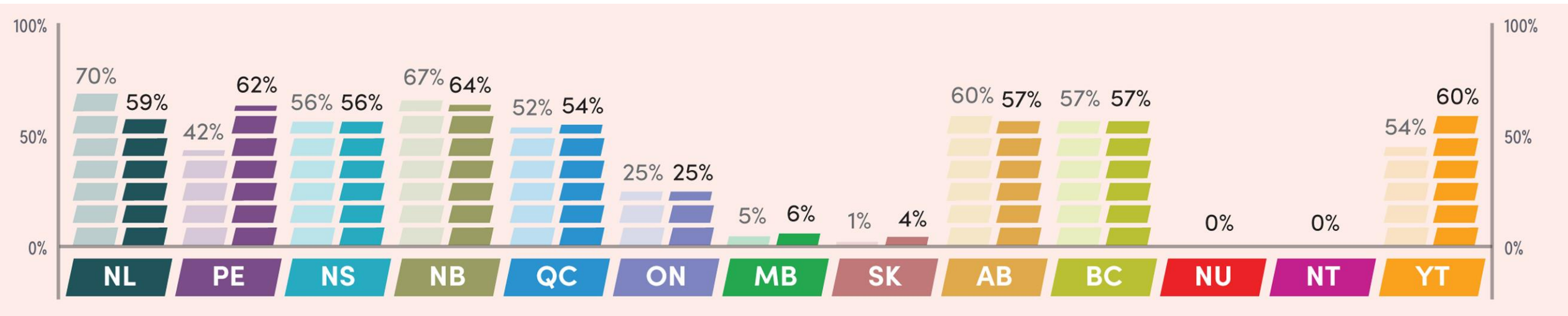


**CANADA**



# 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





# knowing numbers

A community approach to  
understanding the early childhood  
education workforce

## Executive Report



# connaître chiffres

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

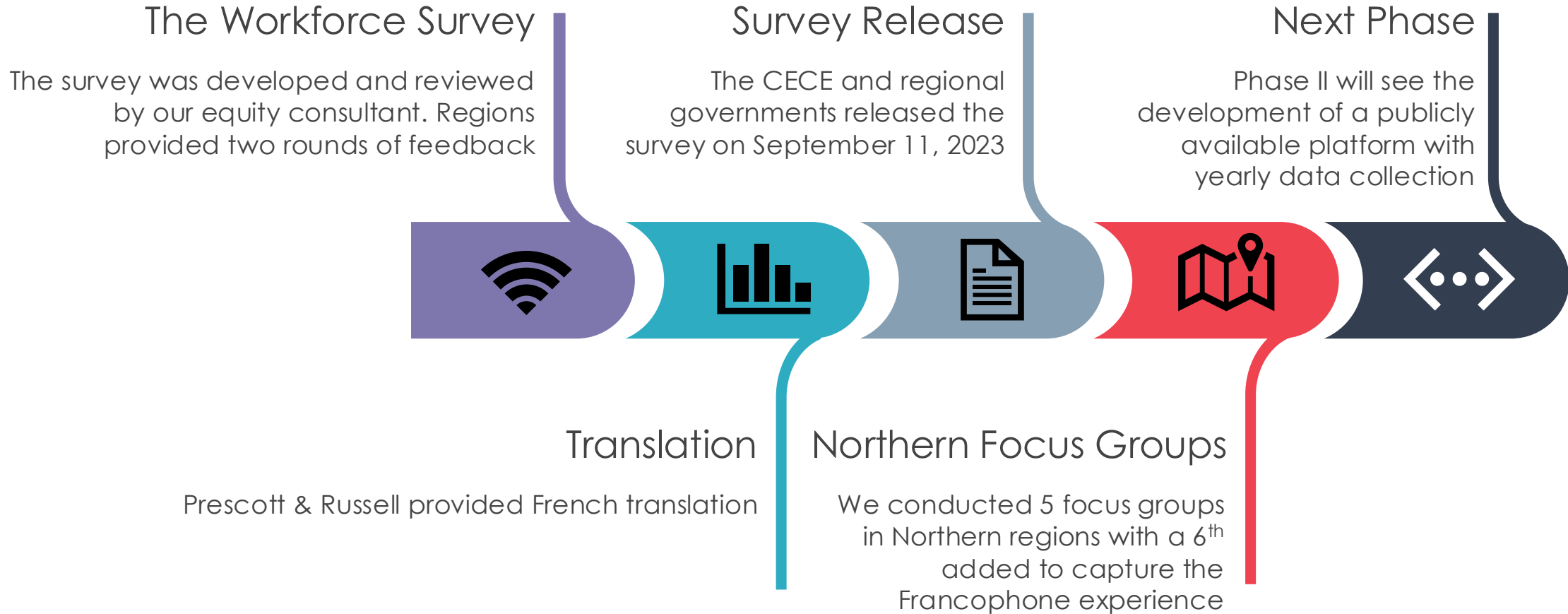


Within child care, FDK, EarlyON, licensed home providers, supervisors and directors, RECEs and non-RECEs









Regional reports capture the unique local challenges

# Study Details



# Selected Regions for Focus Groups

1	2	3	4	5	6
Cochrane	Manitoulin-Sudbury	Thunder Bay	Timiskaming	Rainy River	Prescott and Russell
					
Shift work	Cap on parent fees	Seasonal challenges	High % of French and Indigenous-led centres	High % of directly operated centres	Designated Francophone



knowing  
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







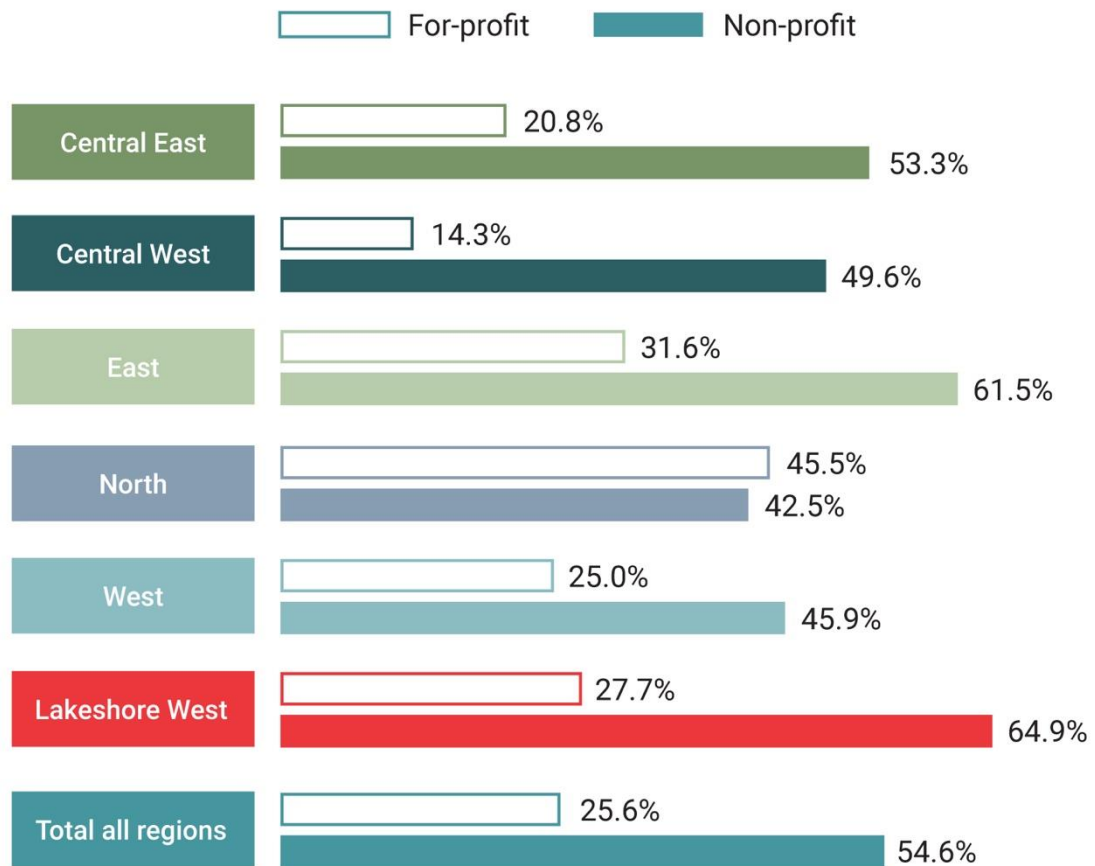
knowing  
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Percentage of Access to Non-Mandatory Benefits by Auspice  
All Respondents

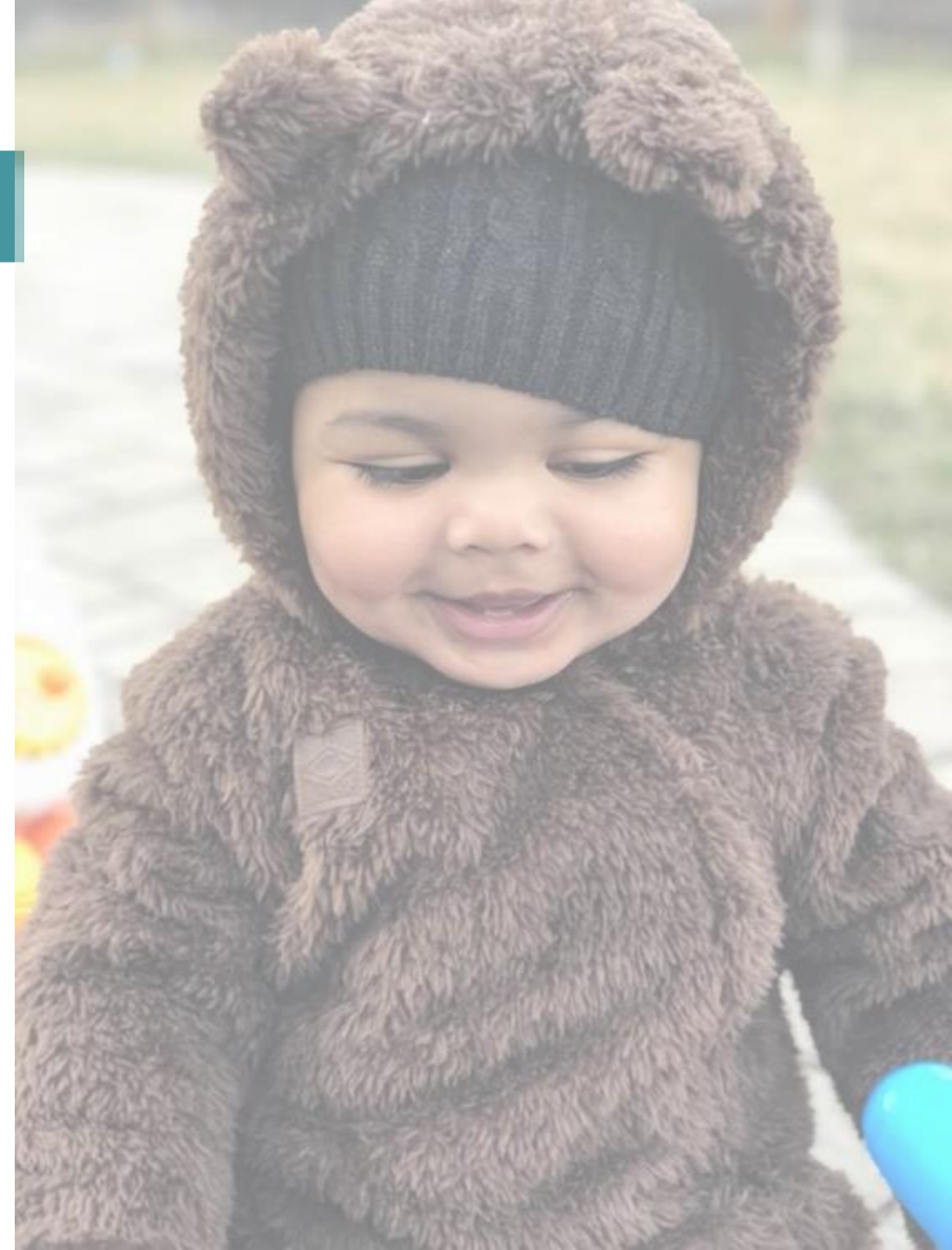
Benefit	For-profit	Non-profit	CMSM/ DSSAB	FDK	Unknown auspice	Study total
Paid sick days	59.1%	83.3%	83.0%	88.6%	75.0%	79.0%
Extended health benefits	50.8%	66.7%	78.4%	82.9%	58.9%	65.4%
Paid professional development	45.7%	63.5%	74.1%	52.9%	62.5%	60.3%
Paid bereavement leave	31.8%	63.9%	74.8%	79.1%	51.8%	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



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



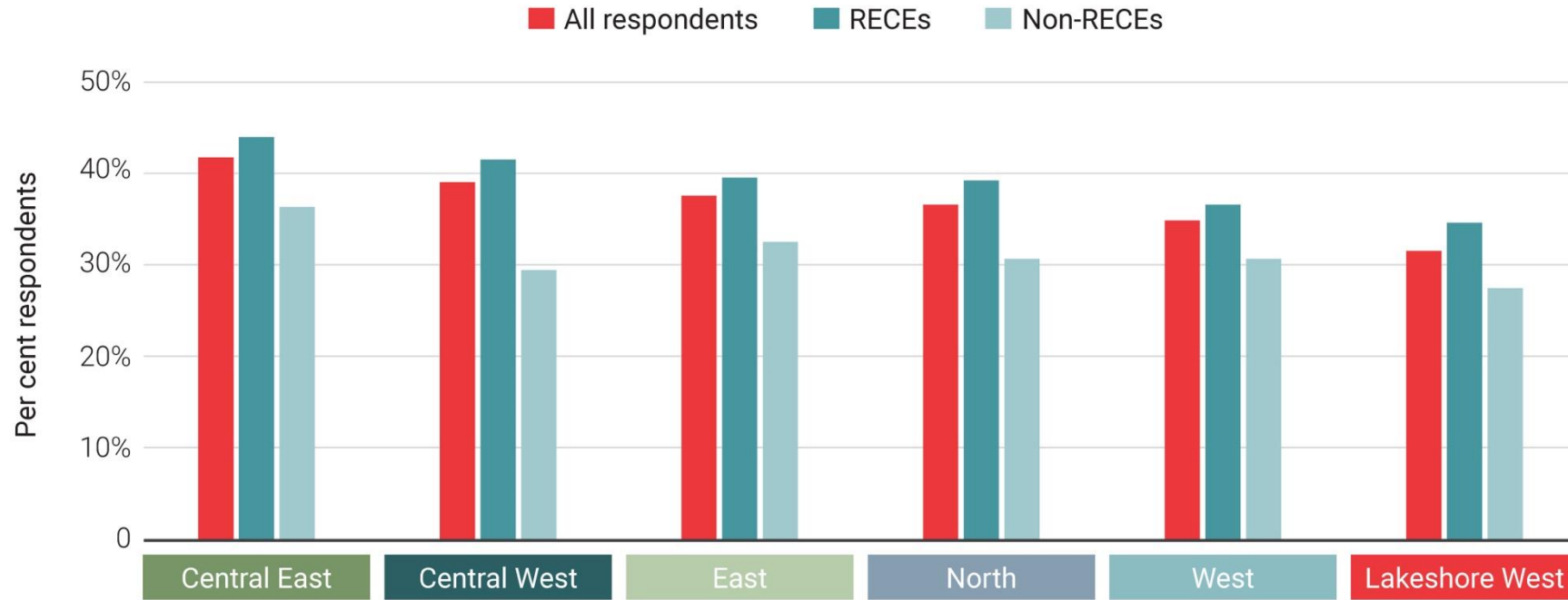




knowing numbers	Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Learning by Auspice				
	All Respondents				
Professional development received in the last 12 months	For profit	Non-profit	CMSM / DSSAB	FDK	All
Supporting vulnerable families	20.4%	27.2%	36.4%	30.0%	26.7%
Cultural diversity in Early Years settings	35.4%	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%



## Percentage of Respondents Reporting Experiences of Workplace Discrimination by Region



### Management

Discrimination from management

63%



### Colleagues

Discrimination from colleagues/staff

60%



### Parents

Discrimination from parents/families

23%



### Children

Discrimination from children

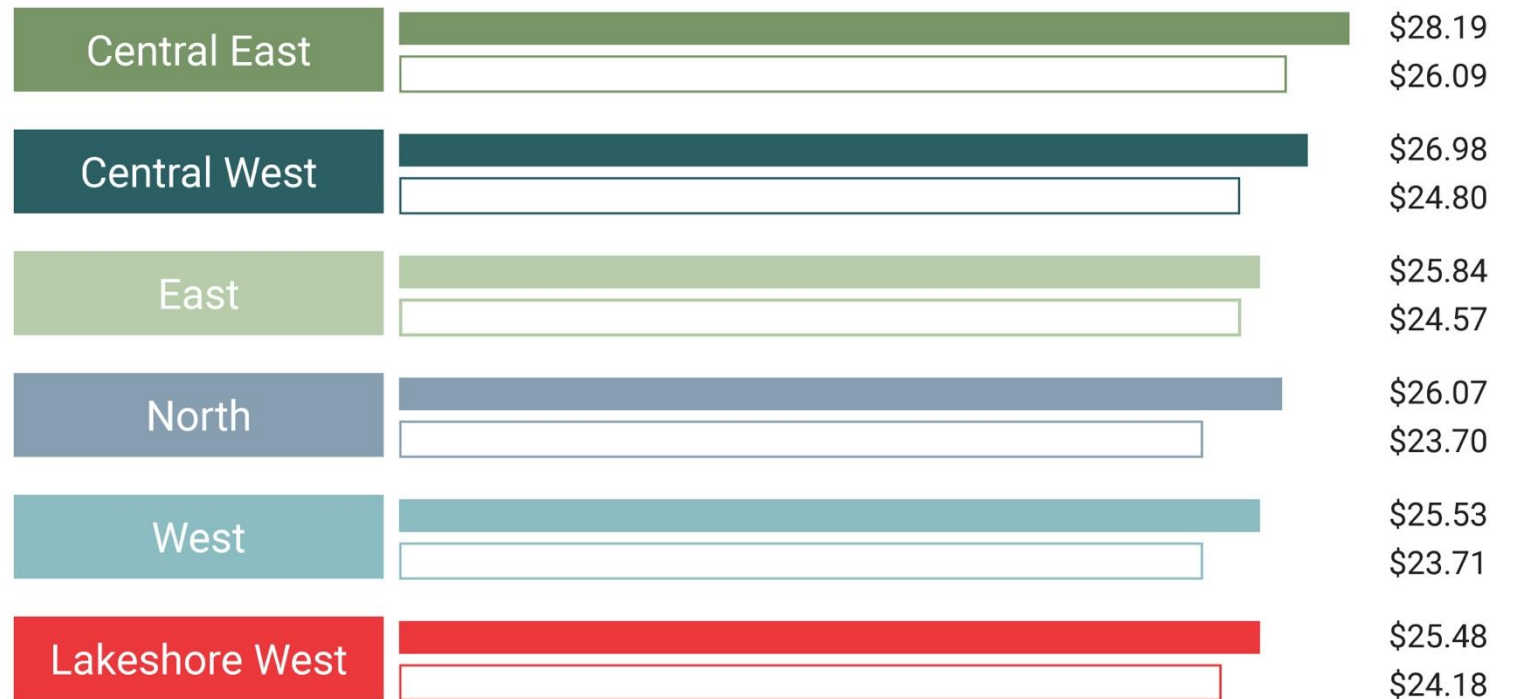
7%





## Wage Rate Per Hour by Racialization and Region

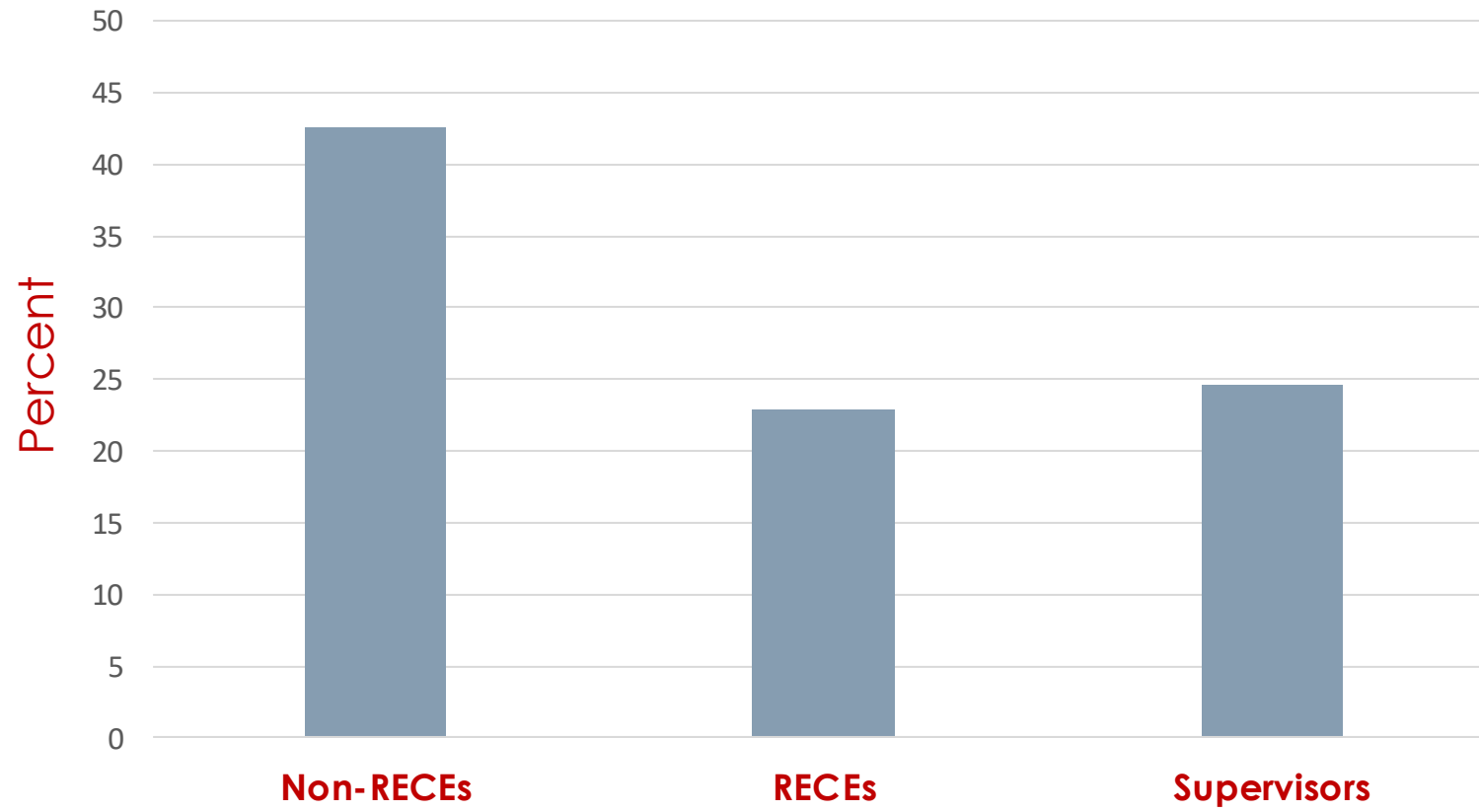
Non-racialized Racialized



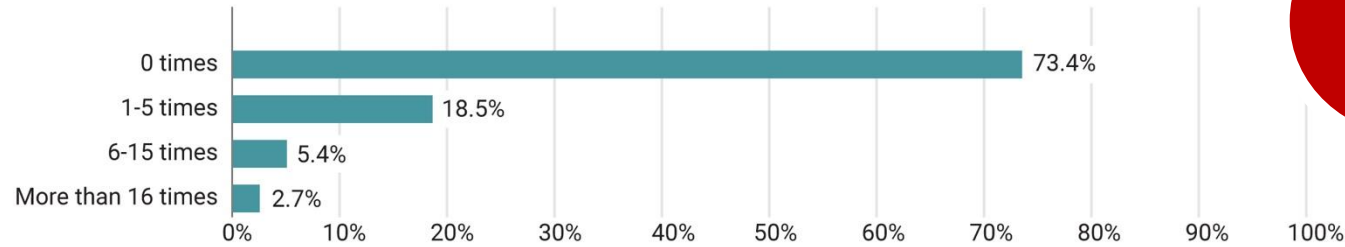
Total Non-racialized: \$25.97

Total racialized: \$24.69

## Percentage of Racialization by Position

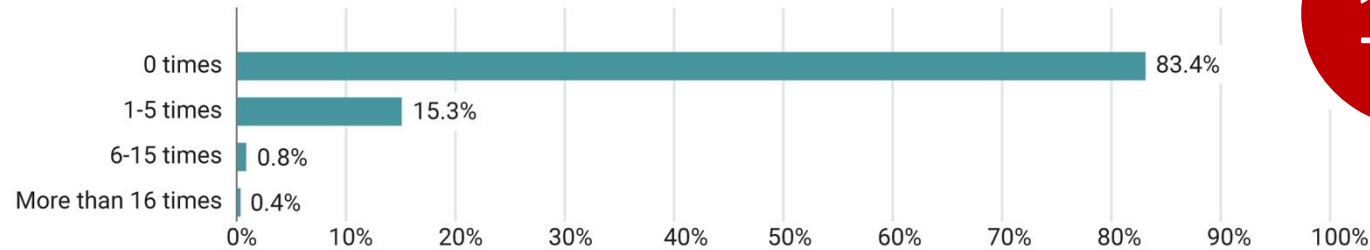


## Percentage Reporting Frequency of Times in the Previous 12 Months Directors/Supervisors Sent Children with Disabilities Home Due to Staffing Shortages



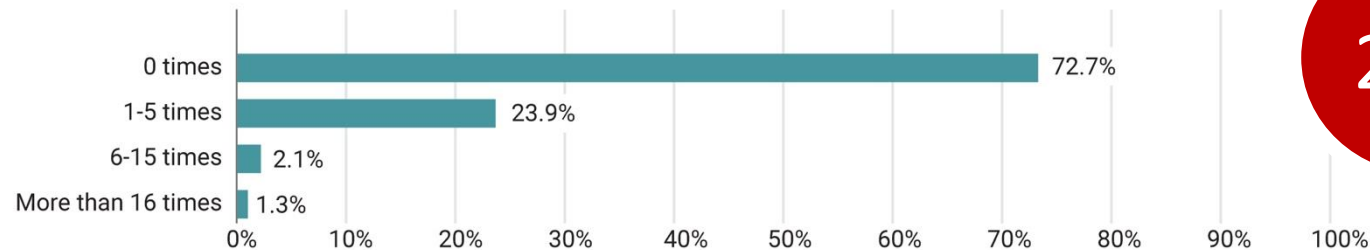
27%

## 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%

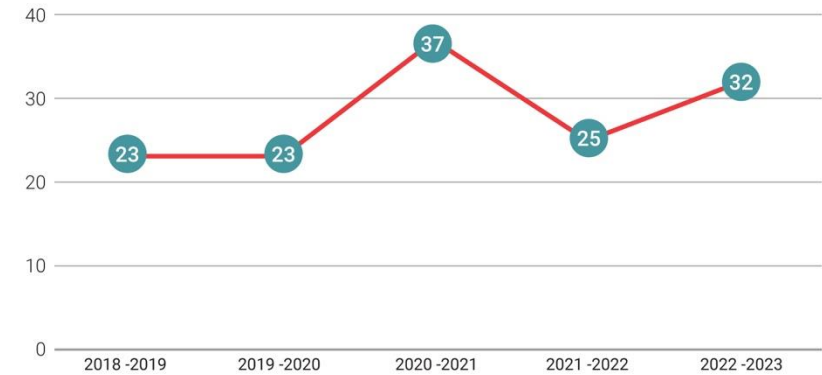






knowing  
numbers

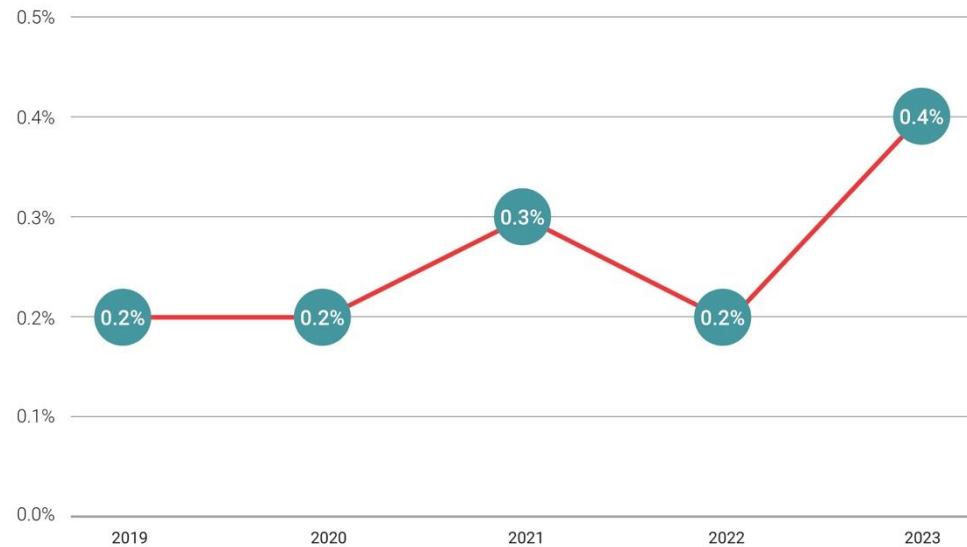
## Number of Behaviour Guidance Complaints to the CECE as a Percentage of all Complaints (2018 to 2023)



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.





## Top 10 Reported Factors That Would Improve Personal Job Satisfaction All Respondents

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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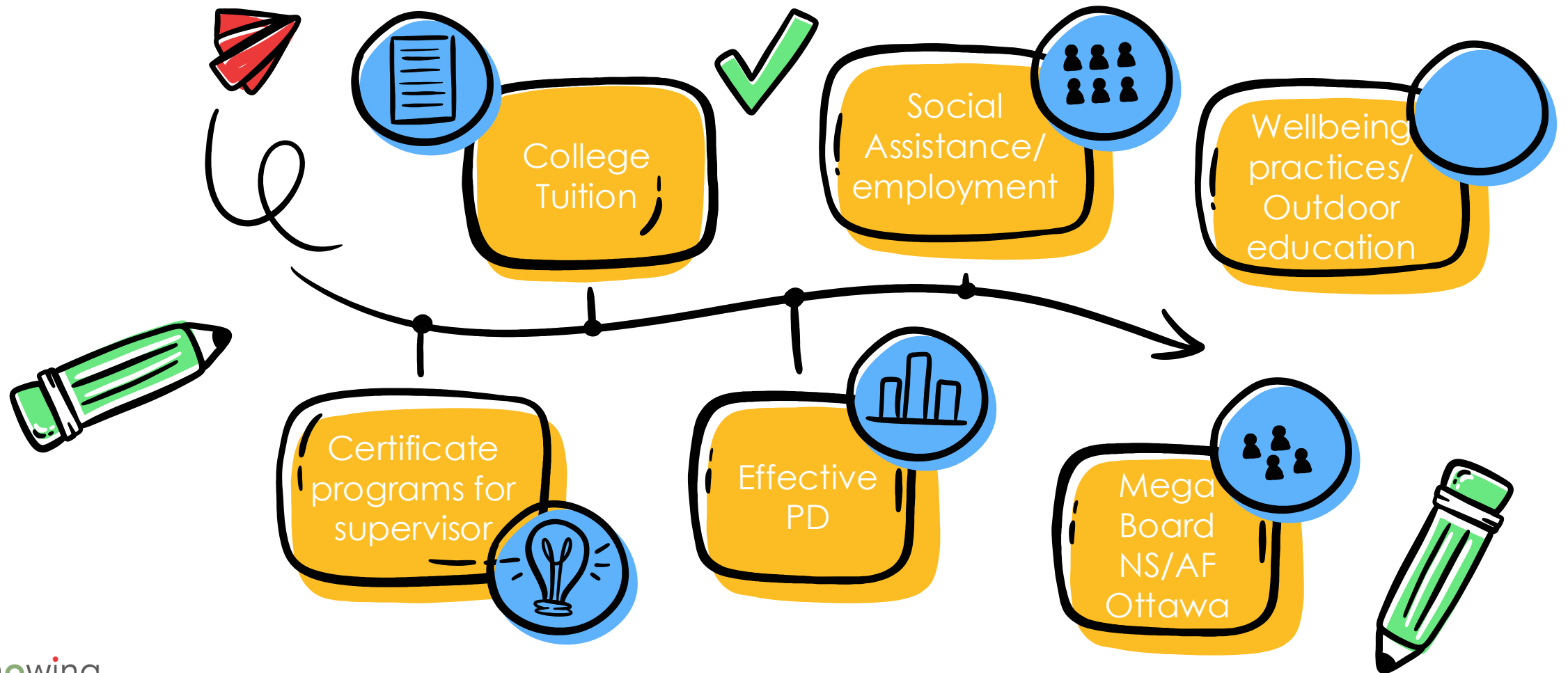
# Re-evaluating Special Needs Resource Models



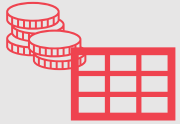
## Promising Practices



# 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

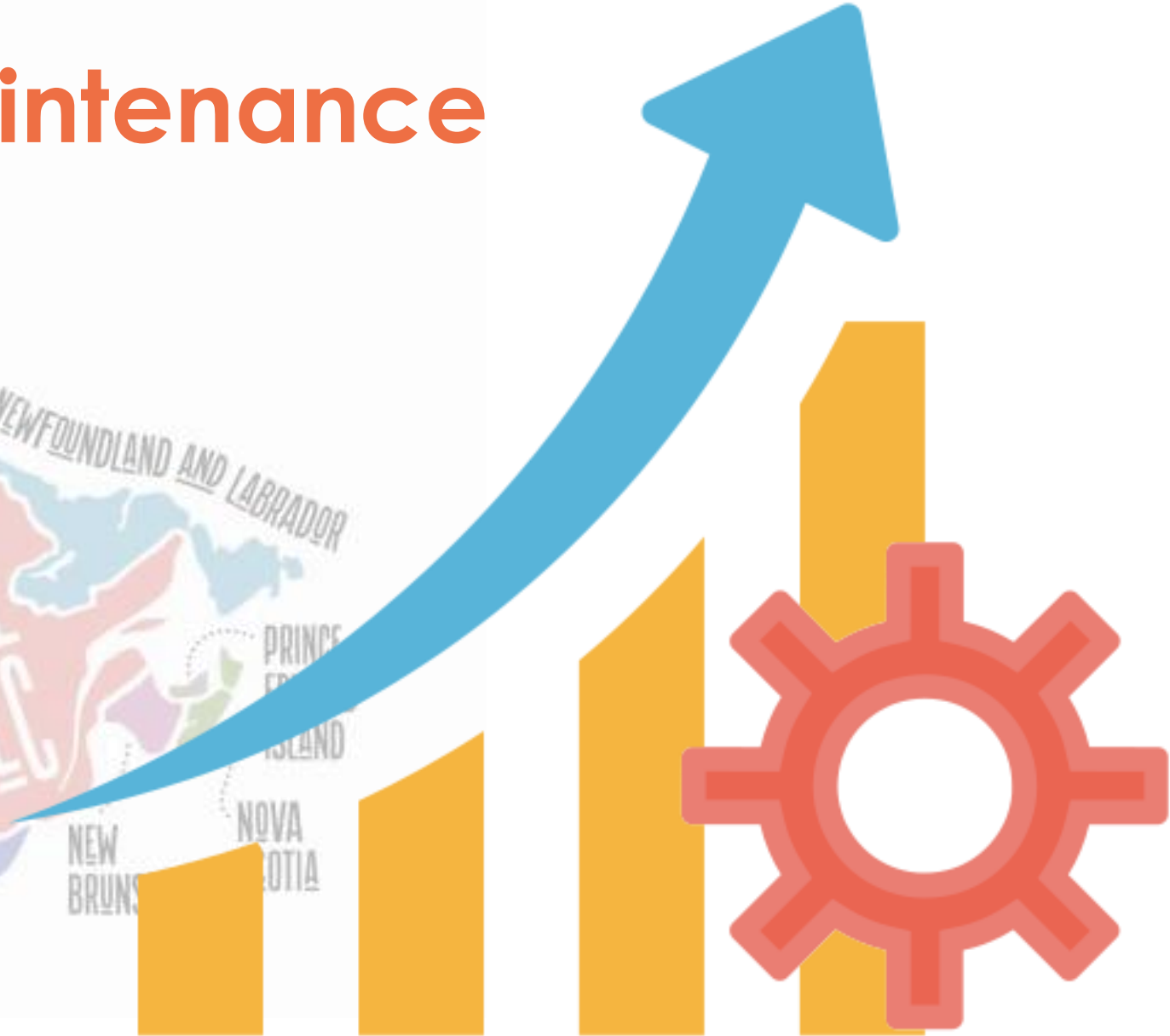


## Non-RECE Staff

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

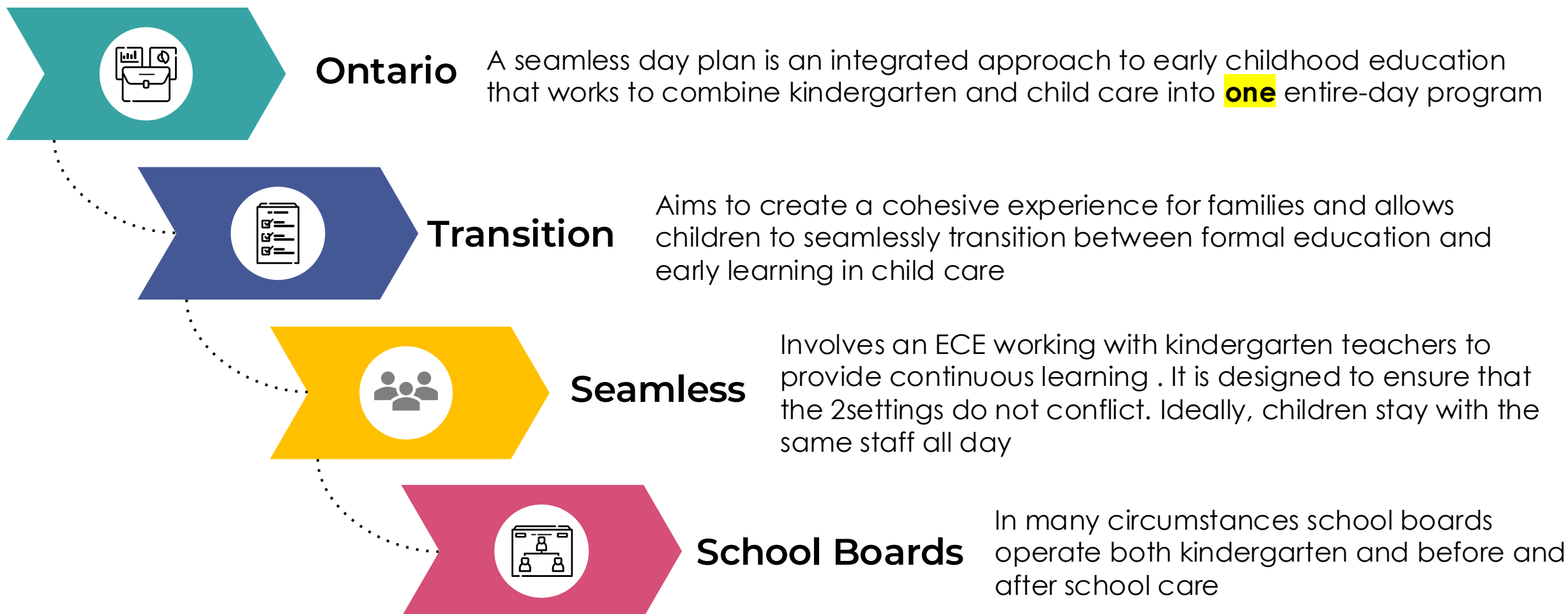


MB funds a  
defined  
contribution  
plan

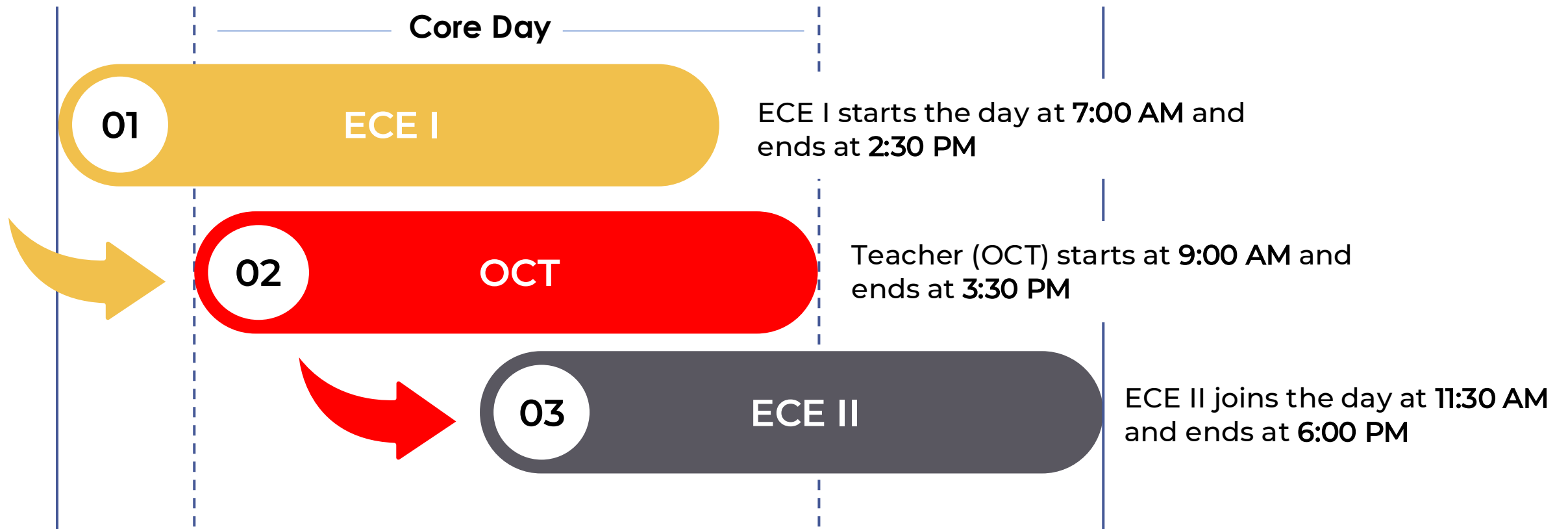


Only PEI and QC  
(CPEs) fund a  
defined benefit  
pension plan.

# Promising Practices – Seamless Day



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



Supplies, equipment, and space are shared for all children



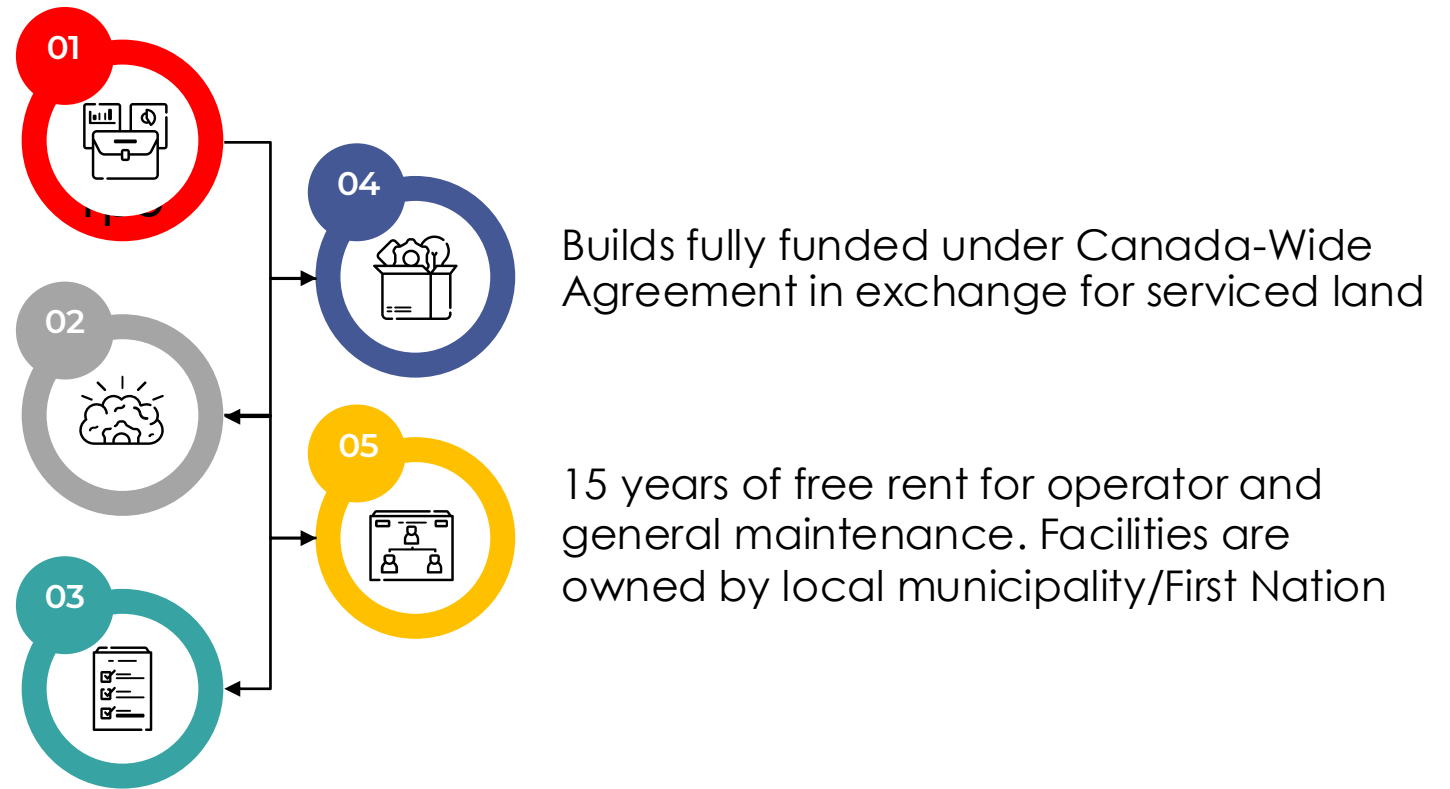
# Promising Practices – Expansion

## 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

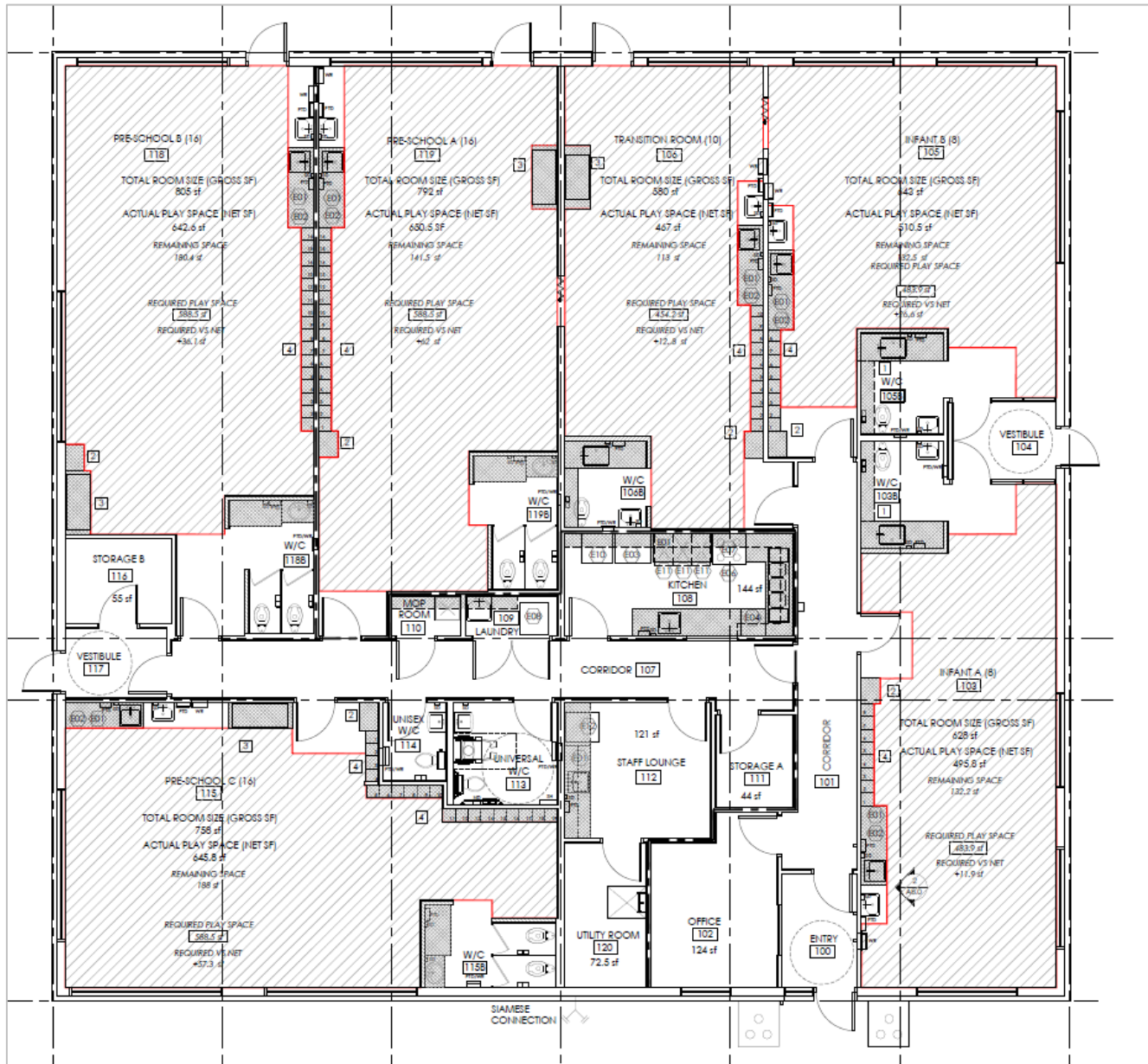
Hybrid construction technology leverages economies of scale to build facilities under controlled conditions before being moved on site, assembled and placed on permanent foundation



# Promising Practices – Expansion

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





## 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%.

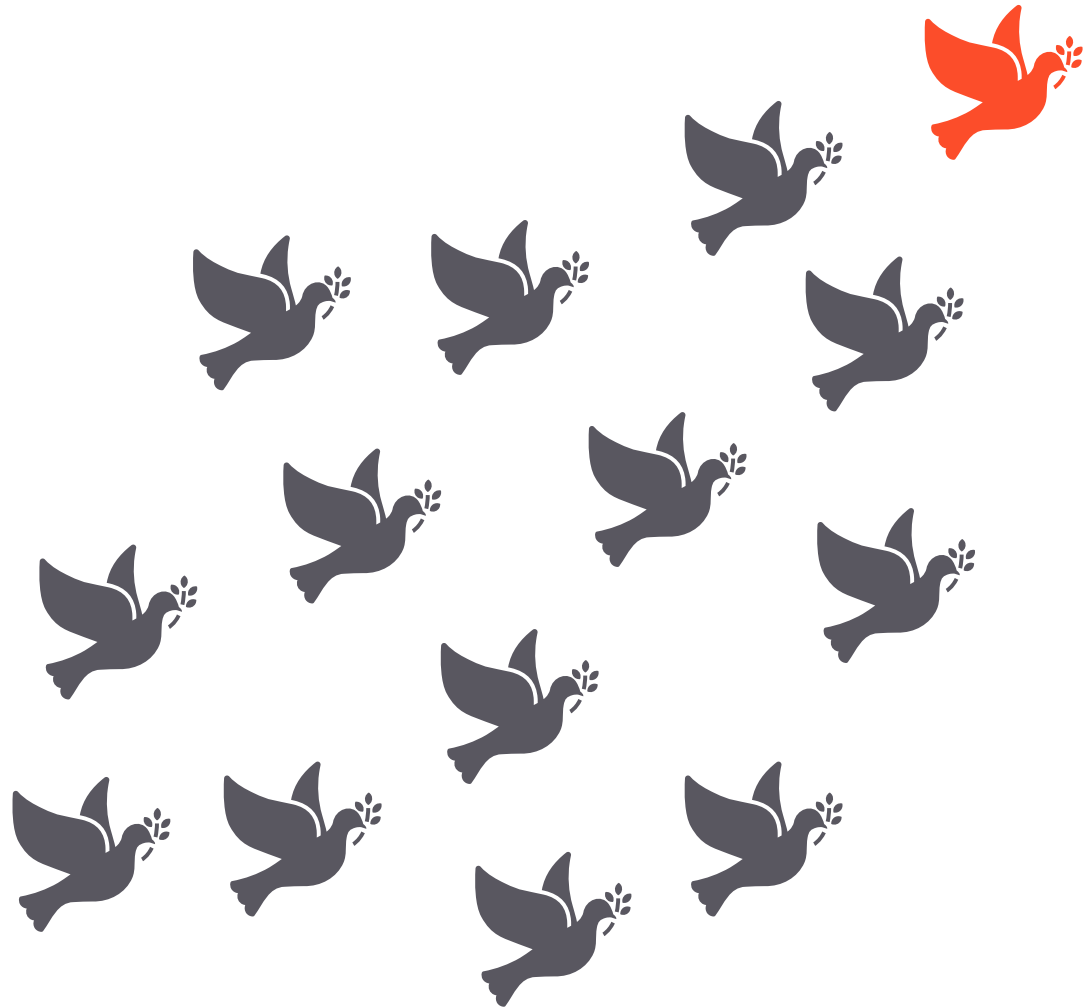


**Recruitment Improvements:** 88% of directors believe that recruitment and retention in the sector has improved since 2019.



Attention to  
the Workforce

# Leadership in a time of change





THANK

YOU

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