


Early Childhood
Educators are at
the  of quality
early learning

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION REPORT 2020



**Canada's Children Need a Professional
Early Childhood Education Workforce**

April 2022



Atkinson
Centre
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
JAN BASTARD INSTITUTE
FOR STUDY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

ATKINSON
For social and economic justice

<https://ecereport.ca/en/workforce-report/>

Education Through Care

1

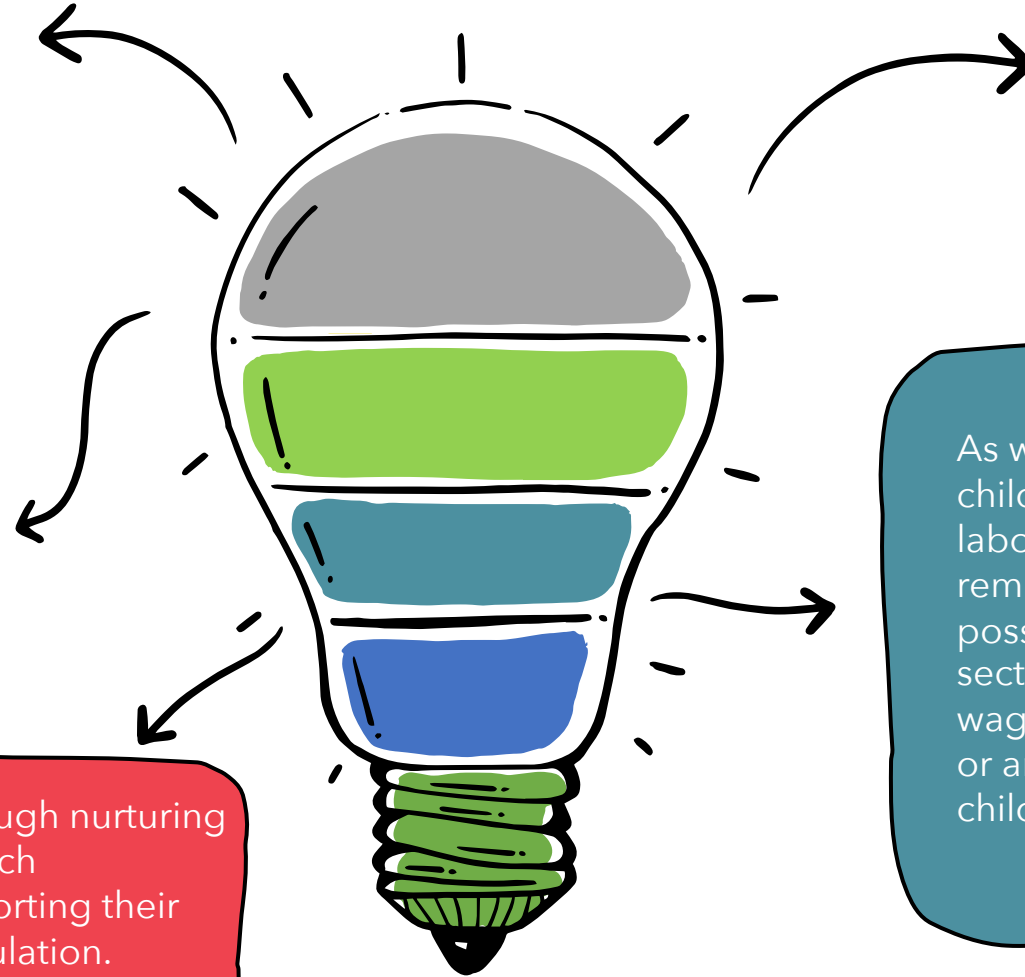
Emerging from welfare reform and influenced by the women's movement, ELCC is always pulled between care and education.

2

Although children have moved to the heart of social policy, there is some concern regarding the way they are positioned as social investment.

3

Children learn through nurturing relationships and rich interactions - supporting their learning & self-regulation. Educators are at the foundation of quality ECE.



4

How can social investment approaches be reformed to be both child-centred *and* with reference to gendered social justice principles.

5

As we discuss the expansion of child care and support for women's labour force participation, we must remember the women who make this possible. Women who often leave the sector because they don't make a living wage, have decent working conditions, or are themselves not able to find good child care.



Canada made a historic \$30 billion investment in child care with now all provinces and territories signing the agreement

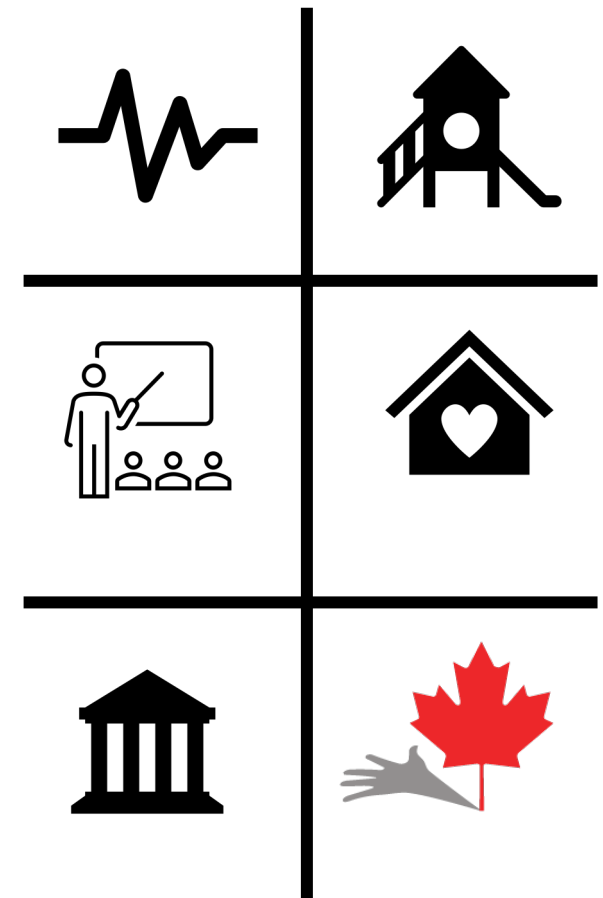
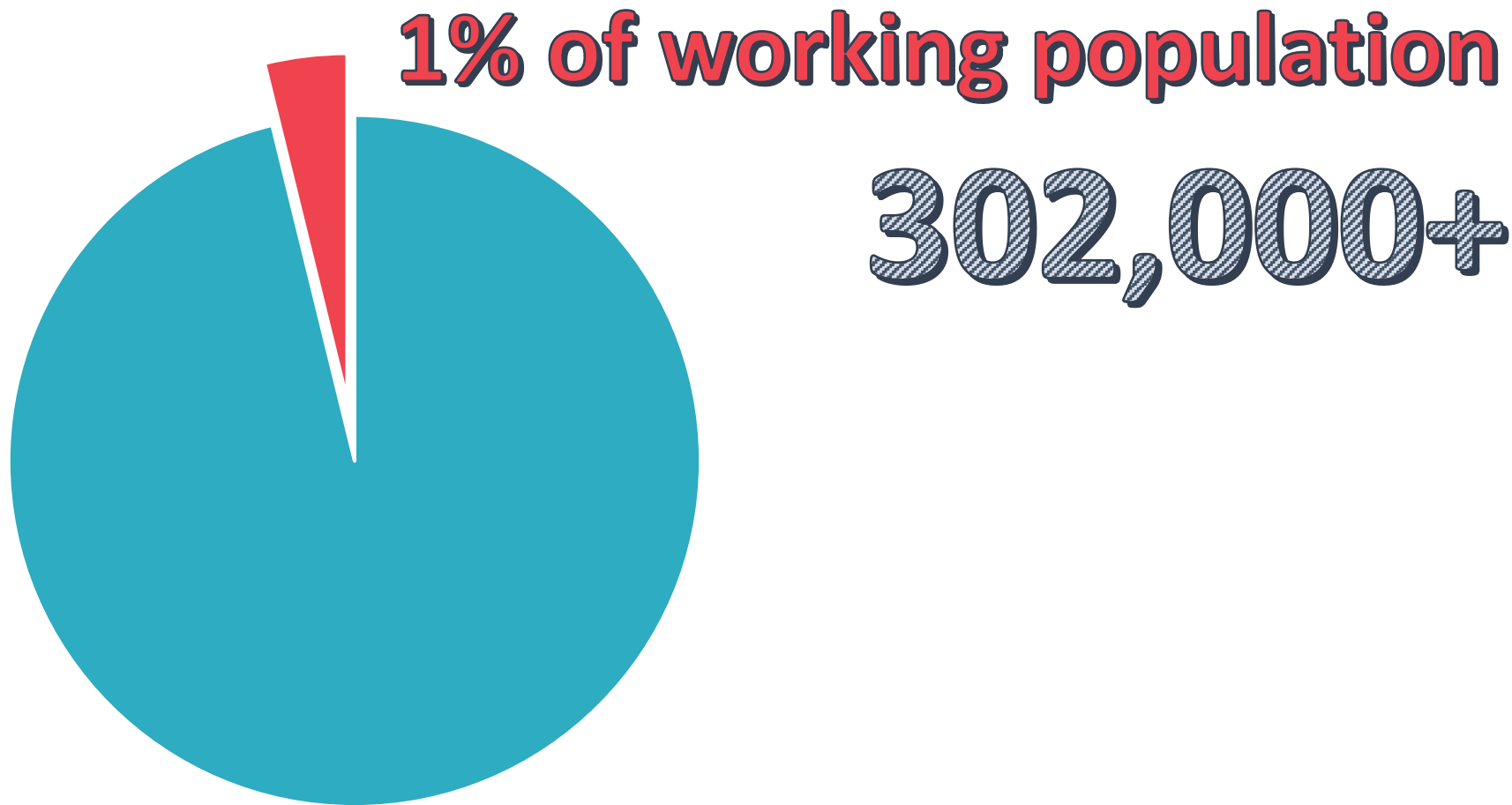


Goal of reducing parent fees to an average of \$10/day and increasing access for children 0-5 years of age



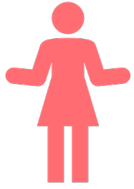
Yet in the race to achieve these goals, the people who provide care and education are too often overlooked.

The Early Childhood Workforce in Canada



What Does the Workforce Look Like?

are women



96%

are aged 55 or younger

<55

90%

identify as Indigenous



5%

work full-time



76%



are self-employed, versus 15% in other professions

25%

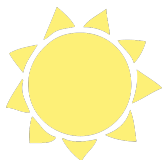
15%



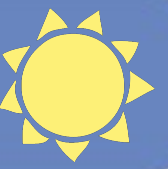
are immigrants or non-permanent residents versus 25% in other professions

35%

25%



RATIO OF QUALIFIED ECEs TO UNQUALIFIED STAFF IN PRESCHOOL AGE GROUPS IN CHILD CARE CENTRES 2021



EDUCATOR TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

No jurisdiction in Canada requires that all those working with young children in regulated child care settings hold post-secondary level credentials. Two-thirds of staff working directly with children holding qualifying credentials is considered the international minimum. Meeting this standard is one indication of the value placed on educators and early childhood education in general. Improvements have been made in educator training and qualifications, including the following:



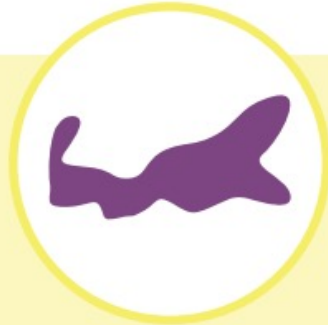
New Brunswick

has gone from one in four staff with early childhood qualifications working in child care centres to one in two thanks to a ministry-initiated training initiative.



Nova Scotia

has instituted minimum training for all staff and has hired early childhood development consultants to support educators in licensed child care.



Prince Edward Island

offers a quality enhancement grant to assist staff working in child care to attain certification and to increase the credentials of qualified educators.



Newfoundland and Labrador

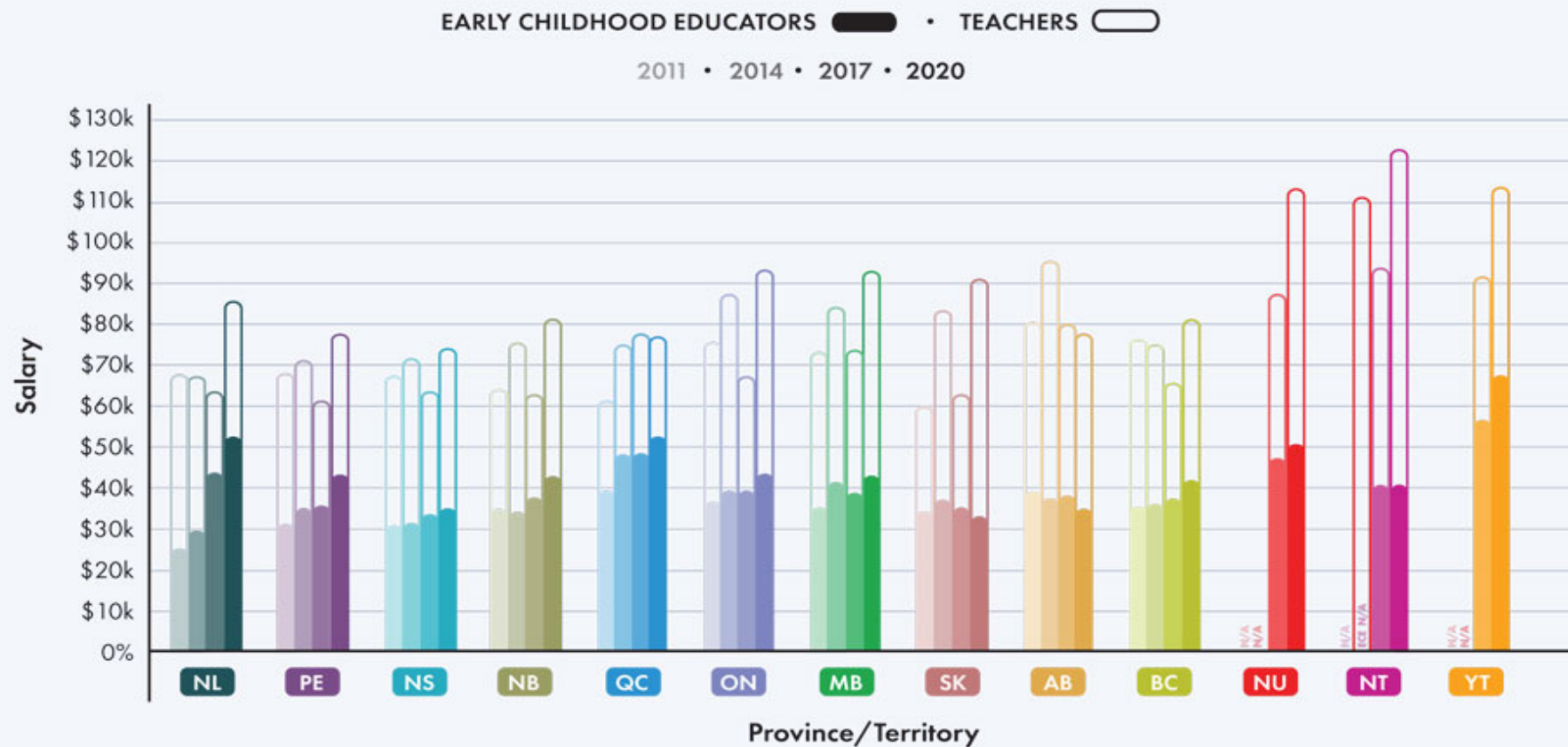
has increased training requirements and expanded graduate bursary programs.



British Columbia

has funded 1,003 additional ECE student spaces at 13 public post-secondary institutions.

SALARY CHANGE OVER TIME FOR TEACHERS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

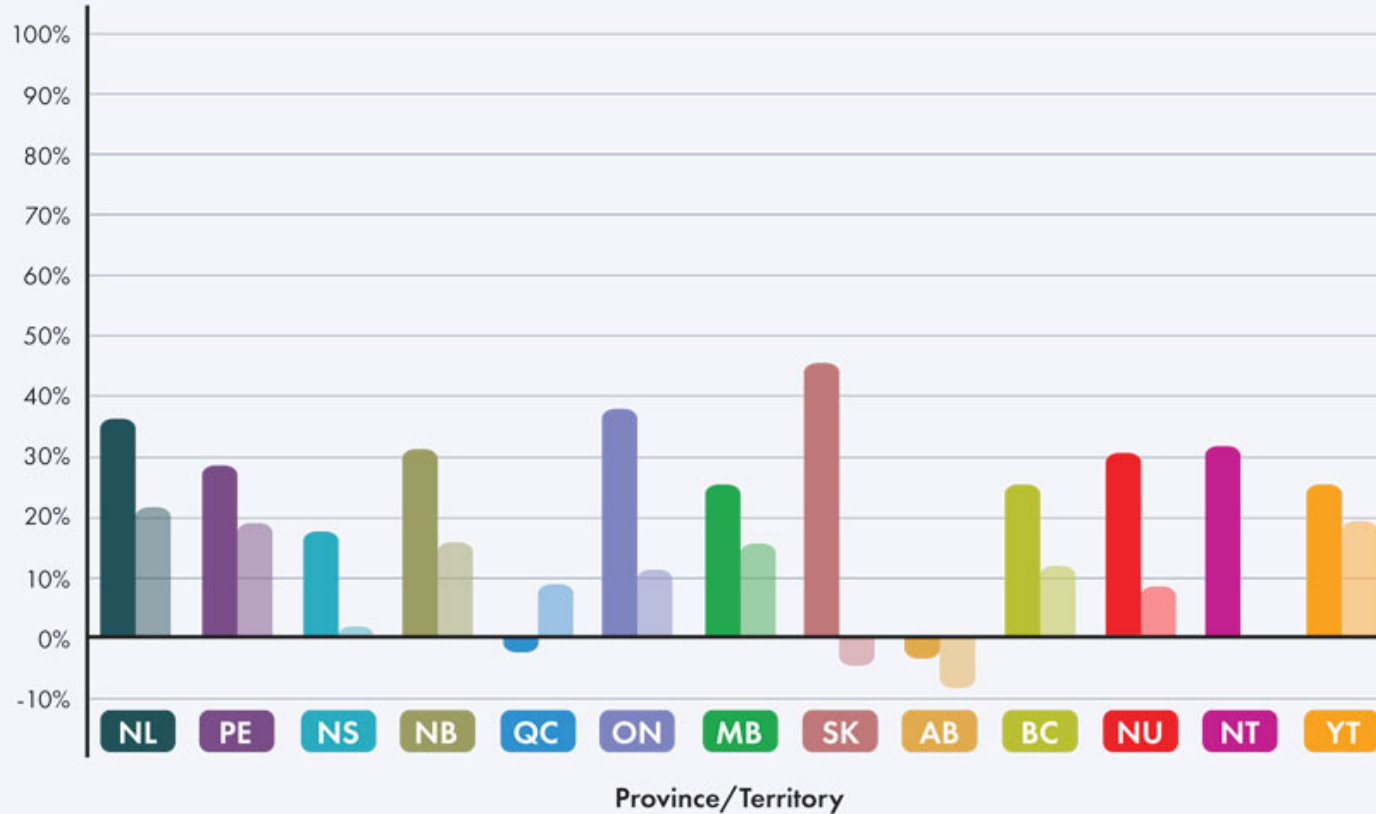


When examining salary changes over time for ECEs and teachers, in many jurisdictions teacher salaries have received increases on par with the cost of living, while ECE salaries have largely stagnated.

Source: Akbari, McCuaig, & Foster, 2021, *Early Childhood Education Report 2020*.

PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN SALARIES FOR TEACHERS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

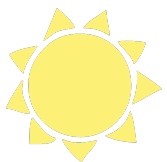
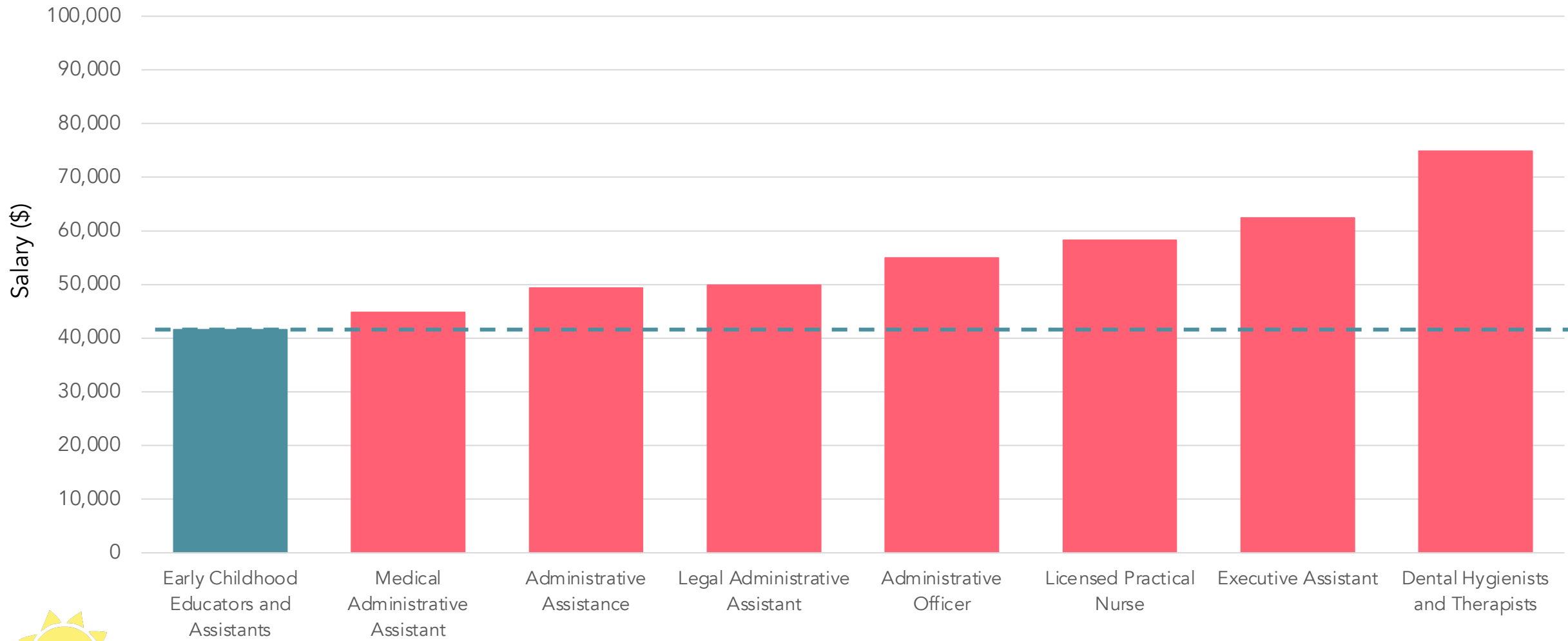
TEACHERS • EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS
2017 – 2020



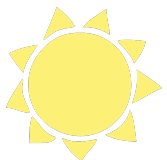
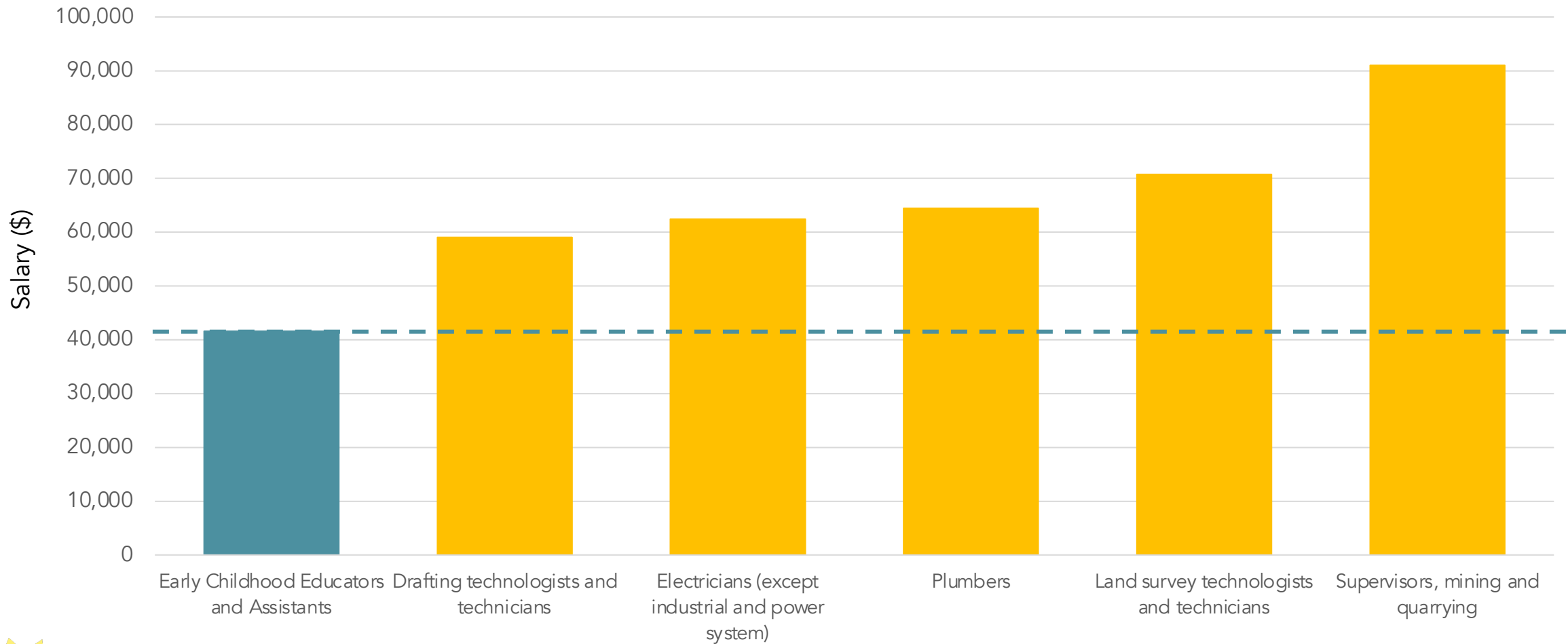
Percent change in salaries of ECEs compared to elementary school teachers for the years 2017 and 2020, demonstrating the comparative value placed on the work of ECEs.

Sources: Akbari, McCuaig, & Foster, 2021, *Early Childhood Education Report 2020*; and Akbari and McCuaig, 2017, *Early Childhood Education Report 2017*.

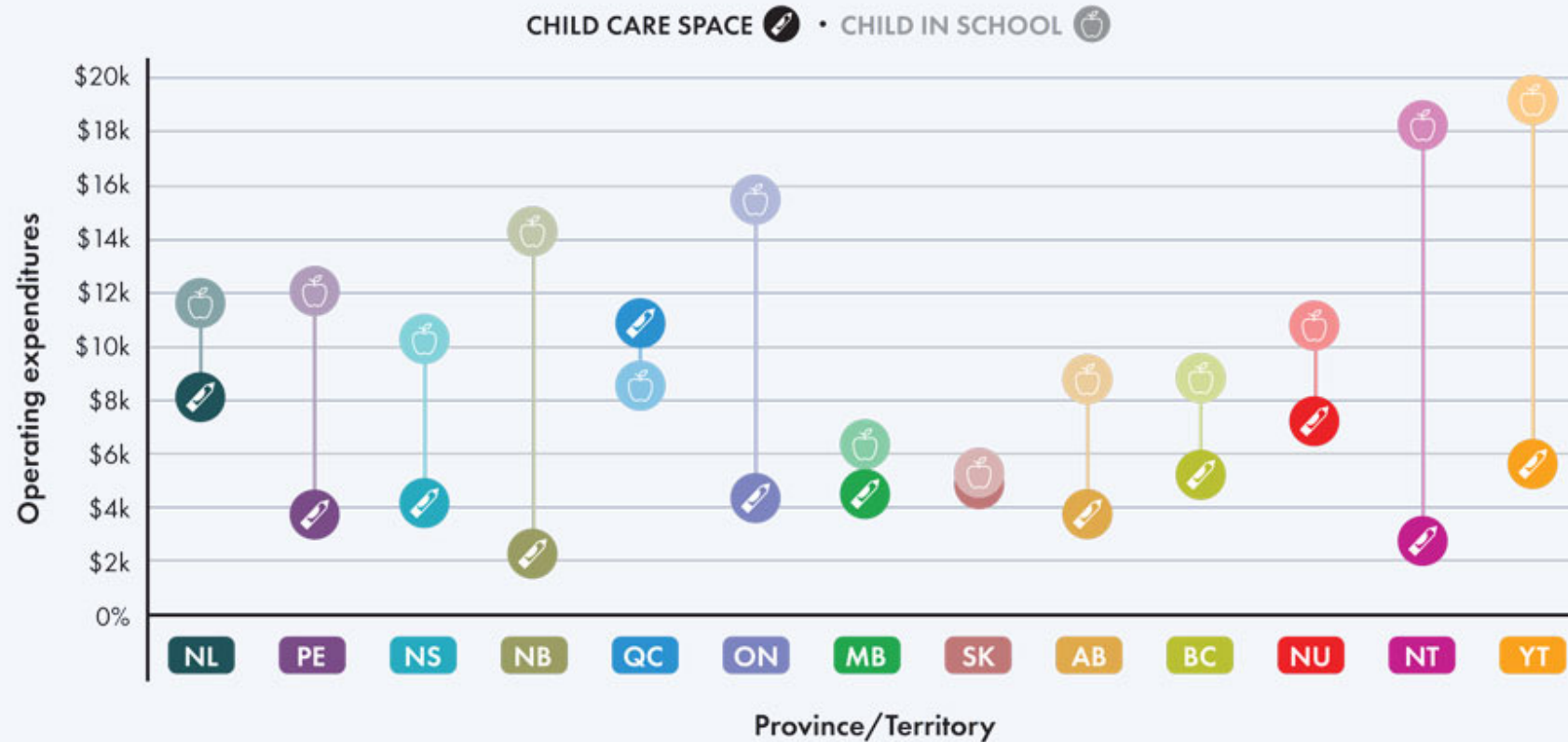
ECE salaries compared to other *female* dominated professions



ECE salaries compared to *male* dominated professions



AVERAGE EXPENDITURES PER CHILD CARE SPACE AND PER CHILD IN SCHOOL 2020



The difference in educator wages is highlighted by funding inequalities. In all jurisdictions except Quebec, per space spending on child care is considerably less than what governments spend on a child attending school. Since labour costs make up 85% of both education and child care budgets, that differential is expressed in the earning gaps between educators working in licensed child care and those working in schools.

Source: Akbari, McCuaig, & Foster, 2021, *Early Childhood Education Report 2020*.

MAXIMUM HOURLY WAGE SUPPLEMENT FOR ECEs IN LICENSED CHILD CARE 2021



*PEI's top wage for ECEs with Level III qualifications was \$22.06 in 2021. Top pay for ECEs in Quebec is \$27.76. Source: Atkinson Centre 2021. Source: Akbari, McCuaig, & Foster, 2021, *Early Childhood Education Report 2020*.

Density and Retention



50%

Of the regulated child care workforce, only 50% have post-secondary qualifications



62%

Of child care operators surveyed, 62% had to recruit staff in the last two years



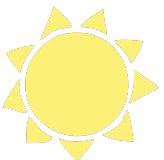
30%

An Ontario study found that 30% of positions in regulated child care requiring an ECE credential were filled by staff without the necessary qualifications



82%

82% had difficulty hiring staff with the necessary qualifications with 6% reporting unfilled staff vacancies lasting over four months



Compensation



33%

Of the regulated child care workforce, 33% receive no health benefits



17.7%

Only 17.7% have access to RRSPs or pensions through their workplace



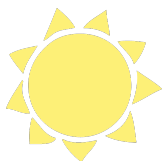
41%

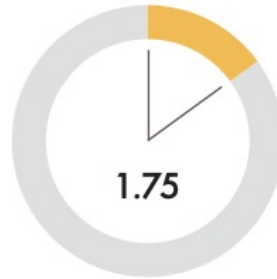
Receive no paid personal leave



Median Hourly Wage

2021

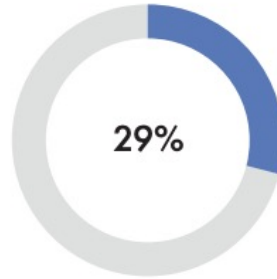




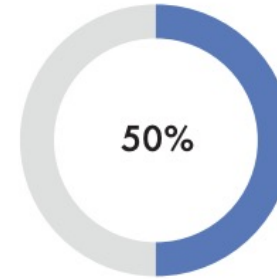
hours per week of unpaid overtime



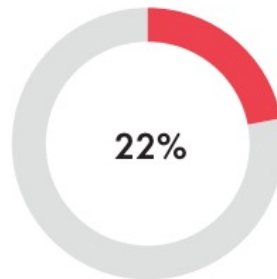
hours per week preparing work-related materials at home



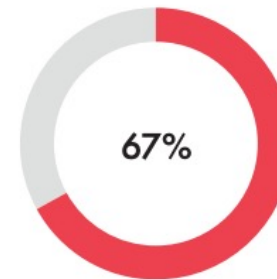
of employers offer paid time to communicate with parents



of employers offer regular paid preparation time

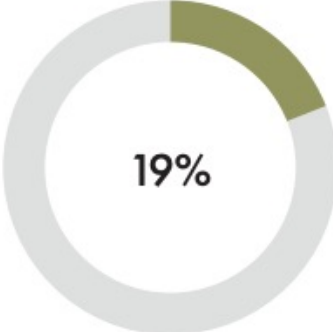


of staff in licensed child care feel their pay is fair

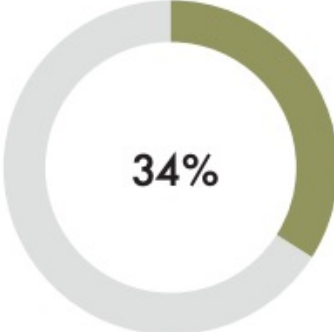


of staff in licensed child care feel their salary does not adequately reflect their work

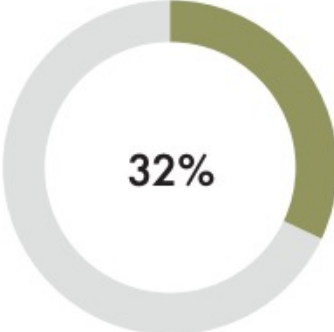
Reasons given by respondents who resigned from a child care position



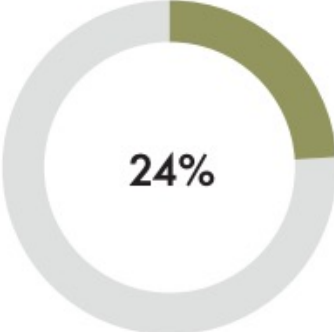
Lack of promotion



Culture/quality of the centre



Poor management

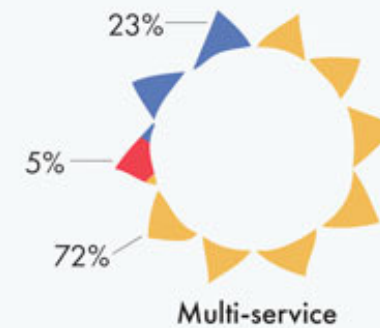
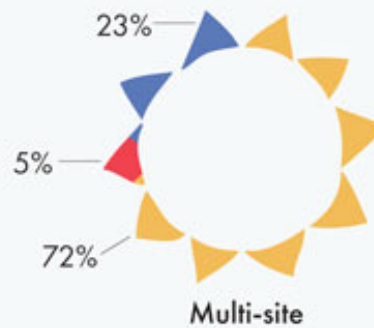
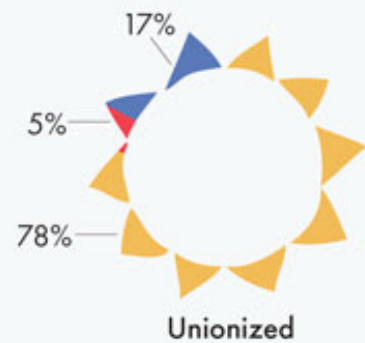
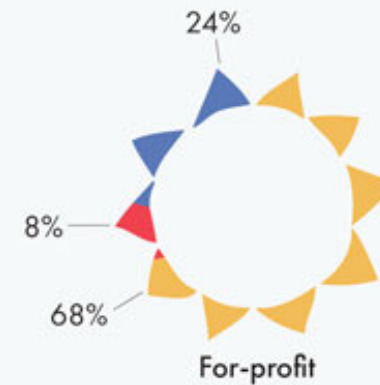
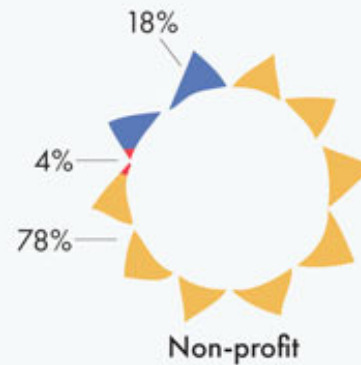
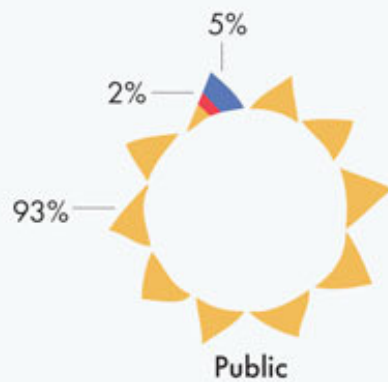


Couldn't reconcile their own child care needs



SPENDING BY CATEGORY AND AUSPICE 2020

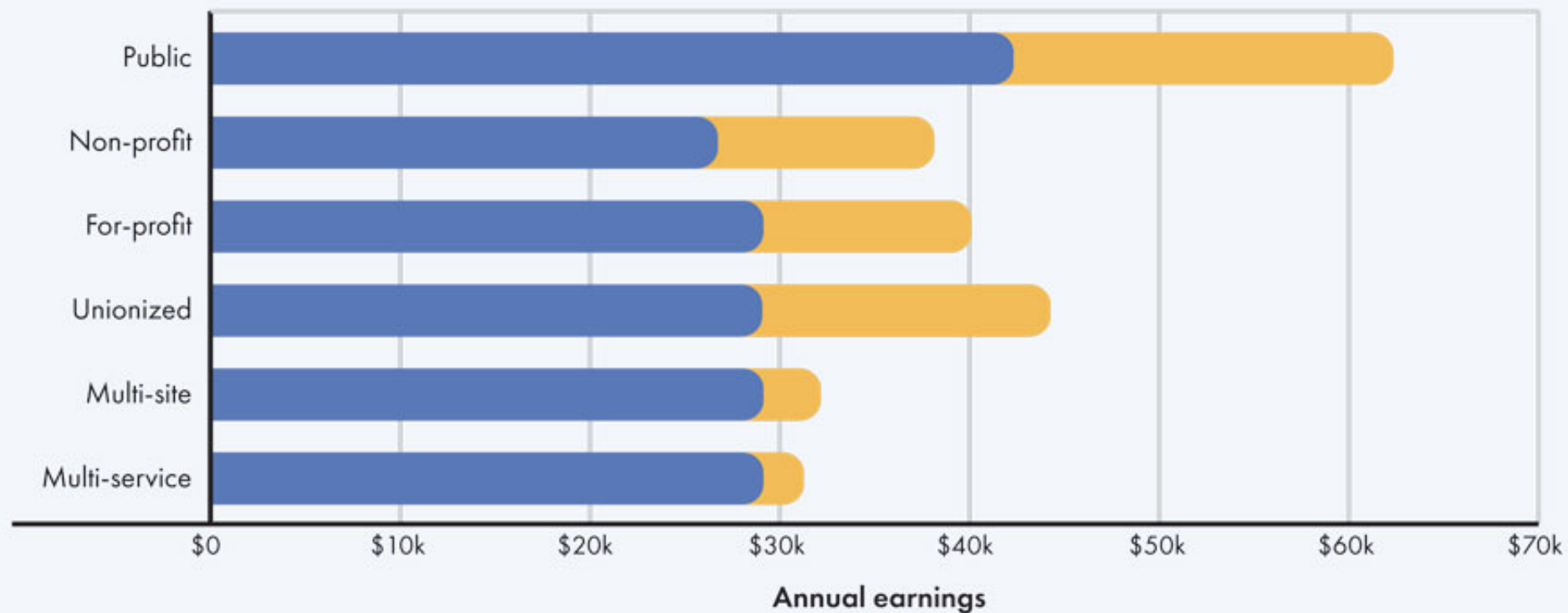
SALARIES & BENEFITS • ADMINISTRATION • OTHER EXPENSES



Adapted from: *The Review of Toronto Early Learning and Child Care Services*.
https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/UserFiles/File/Publications/TELCCS_REPORT.pdf

AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS BY EMPLOYER TYPE 2018

ASSISTANT • EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR



Adapted from: *The Review of Toronto Early Learning and Child Care Services.*

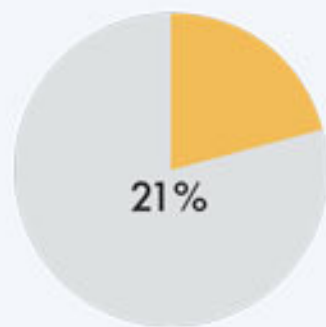
https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/UserFiles/File/Publications/TELCCS_REPORT.pdf



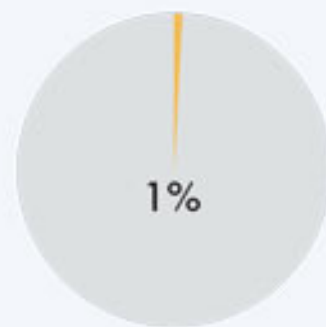
THE RATE OF UNIONIZATION BY CENTRE TYPE



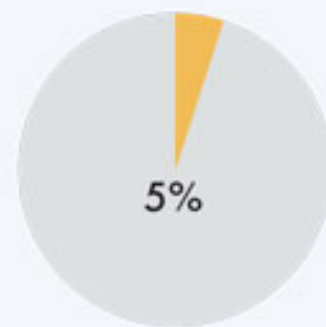
Public



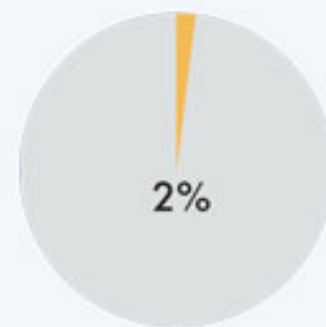
Non-profit



For-profit



Multi-site



Multi-service

Adapted from: *The Review of Toronto Early Learning and Child Care Services.*

https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/UserFiles/File/Publications/TELCCS_REPORT.pdf



Workforce Shortages in Regulated Child Care

1

Of the 57,594 ECEs registered with the Ontario CECE, 45% do not work in licensed child care.

2

Employment in licensed child care dropped 21% during the pandemic compared to 3% among all other workers.

3

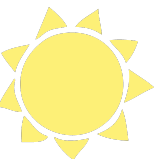
32,000 additional educators are needed to meet the goal of serving a minimum of 59% of children 0-5 within the next 5 years.

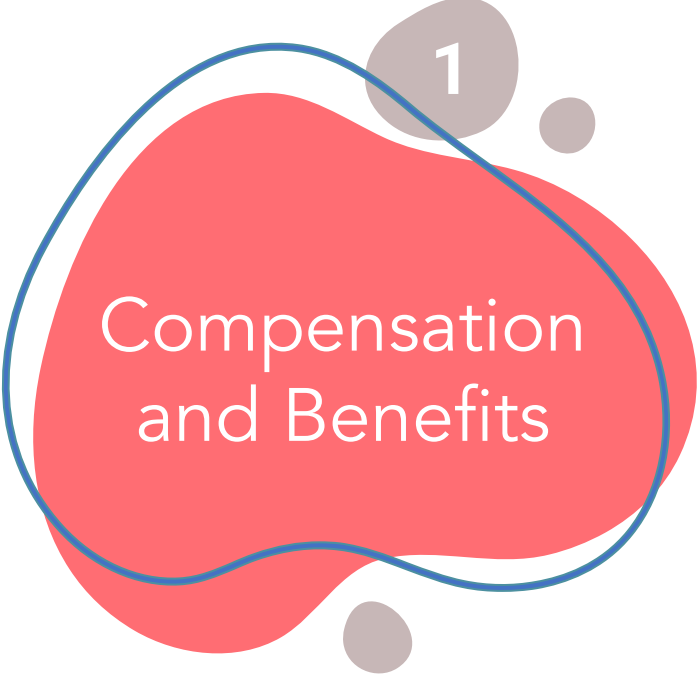
MAKING #DECENT WORK

Nova Scotia's universal pre-primary school program, recruited 1/3 of its workforce from certified ECEs who returned to the profession. Many moved back to N.S. to work in the program.

Rainy River brought community child care centres under direct public operation, raising wages and benefits on par with ECEs in schools and providing additional supports.

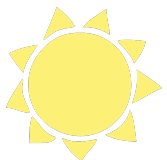
[Retention is not an issue in publicly operated child care.](#)

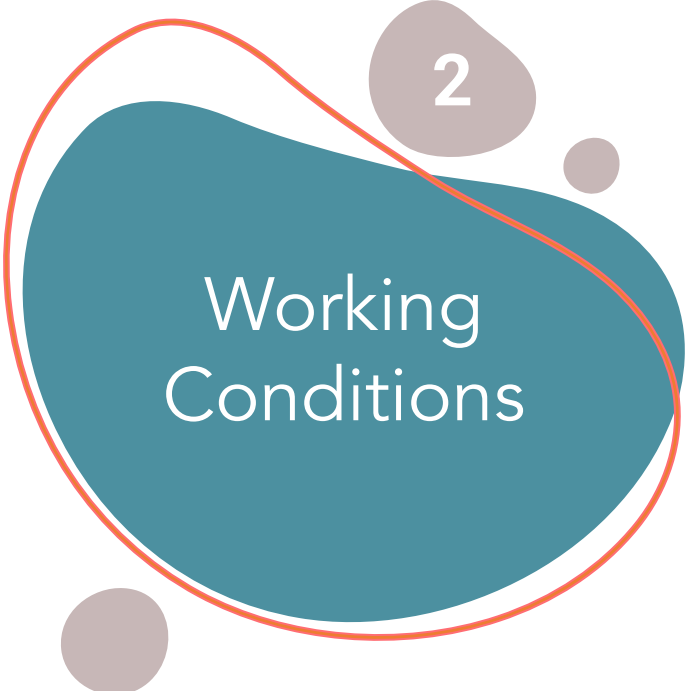




Compensation and Benefits

- Most jurisdictions have addressed gendered wage differentials through pay equity processes
- Setting wages in regulated child care to mirror those of comparable positions in the public sector would validate the work and bring an immediate increase in earnings.
- In jurisdictions where the public sector comparators are regional governments or school authorities, pay equity would also address differences in the regional cost of living and extend incentives for those working in remote or underserved communities.
- Benefits and pension could be provided to ECEs and other child care employees by bringing them into public sector pension and benefit plans. Alternatively, governments could take responsibility for establishing sector-wide plans, similar to what is available to teachers.





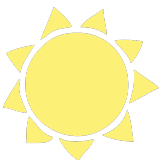
Working Conditions

2

- Financial incentives alone are insufficient enticements to attracting and retaining staff. Staff want decent pay and decent work, but they also want the support required to do their jobs well.

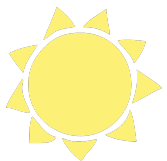
- These include sufficient staffing, including staff to cover paid non-child contact time for the completion of professional responsibilities, professional learning, and opportunities to provide input into decisions that affect classroom practices.

- Standards for child care should be developed, applied across programs, and enforced as part of pending national child care legislation.





- Skilled supervision, leadership, and ongoing professional learning are the levers that promote quality child care.
- Supervisors also require opportunities to keep pace with the demands of their position. Their work is complex with more children living in difficult environments.
- Enhanced public management should optimize administrative efficiencies, allowing centre directors to focus on pedagogical leadership.
- Decolonization approaches and support and building relationships with Indigenous leaders and Indigenous led organizations in their work
- Anti-racism and intersectional approaches are critical

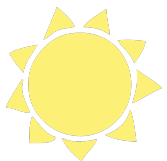




Career Advancement

4

- Minimum requirements should be established that reflect foundational knowledge (credentialing) for all educator staff.
- A bachelor's degree with an early childhood education speciality with certification for lead teachers and centre directors should be required. Centre directors have challenging jobs from HR management, to financial literacy, pedagogical excellence, family support and community outreach.



Final Thoughts About the Workforce



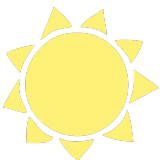
When educators' work is valued, staff turn-over is reduced, and early learning environments are richer.



High quality early learning environments are associated with improved child outcomes in literacy, numeracy, and socio-emotional development.



These translate into higher lifelong earnings for the individual and decreased social costs. We are approaching the smallest working age-cohort in over 50 years. How we support children now will determine our collective future. Quality early learning matters to children, families, and communities. Quality depends on a qualified and valued workforce.





Missed Opportunities & Collective Responsibilities





UNICEF REPORT CARD 17
Canadian Summary
unicef.ca/irc17

THE FUTURE IS NOW

The environment and children's well-being in Canada

In this UNICEF Report Card, “environment” means physical conditions of the natural and built environments that children and youth experience and that affect their well-being.



Canada ranks 28th among 39 rich countries in the overall environmental well-being of children and youth.

Spain
RANKED 1ST

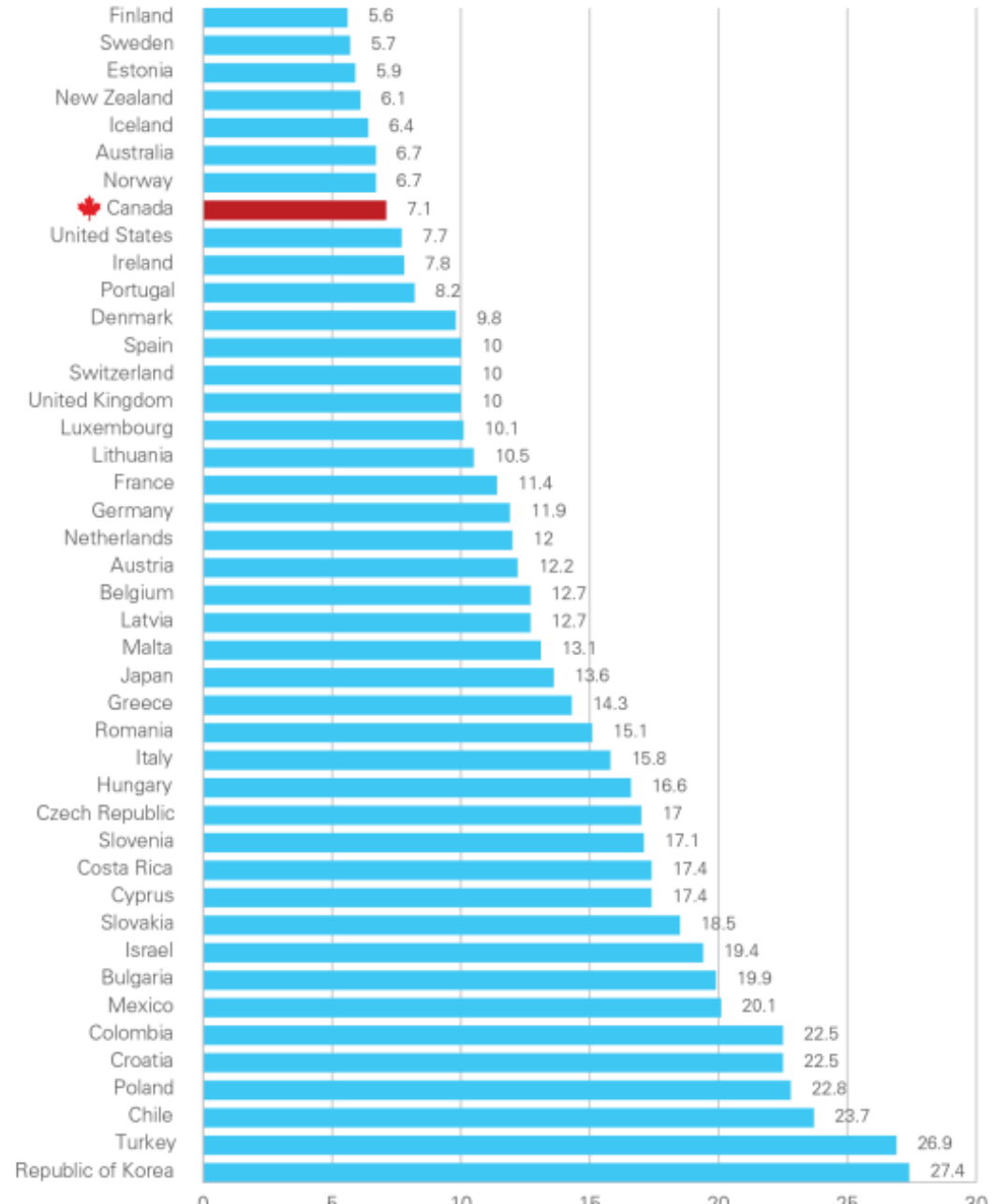


Canada
RANKED 28TH



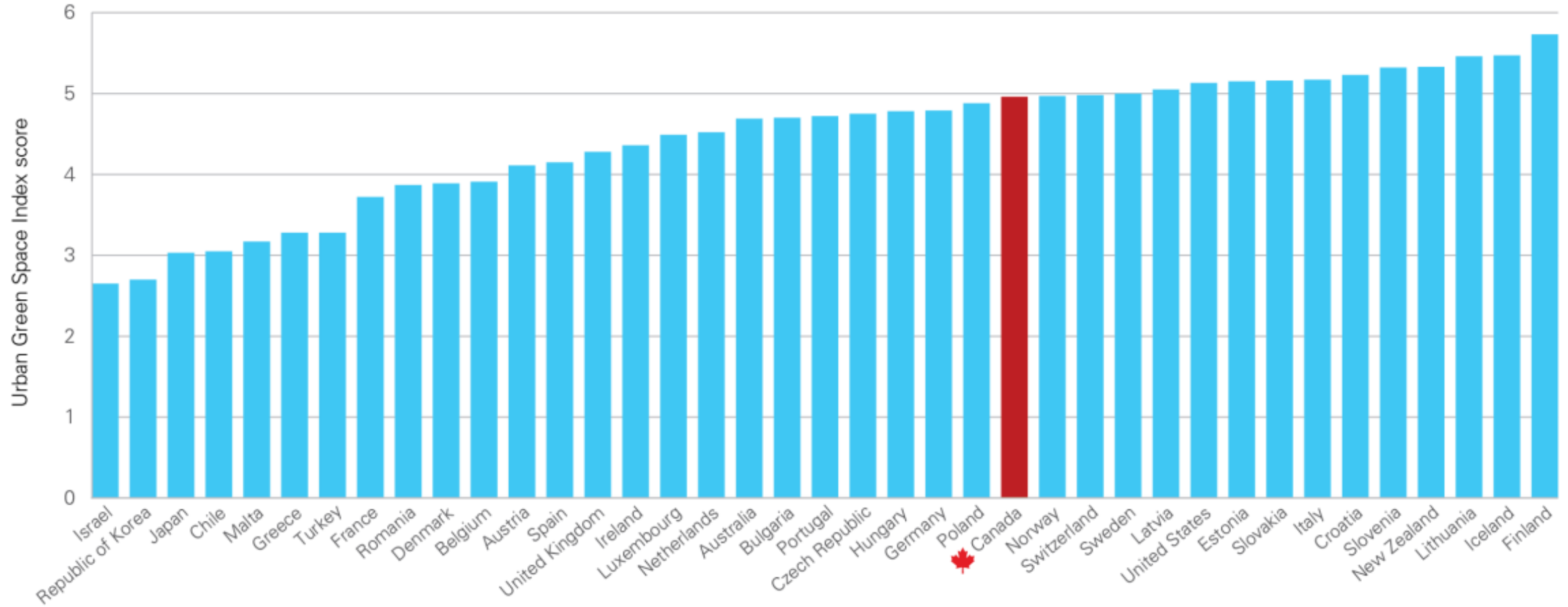
Romania
RANKED 39TH

AMBIENT AIR POLLUTION EXPOSURE

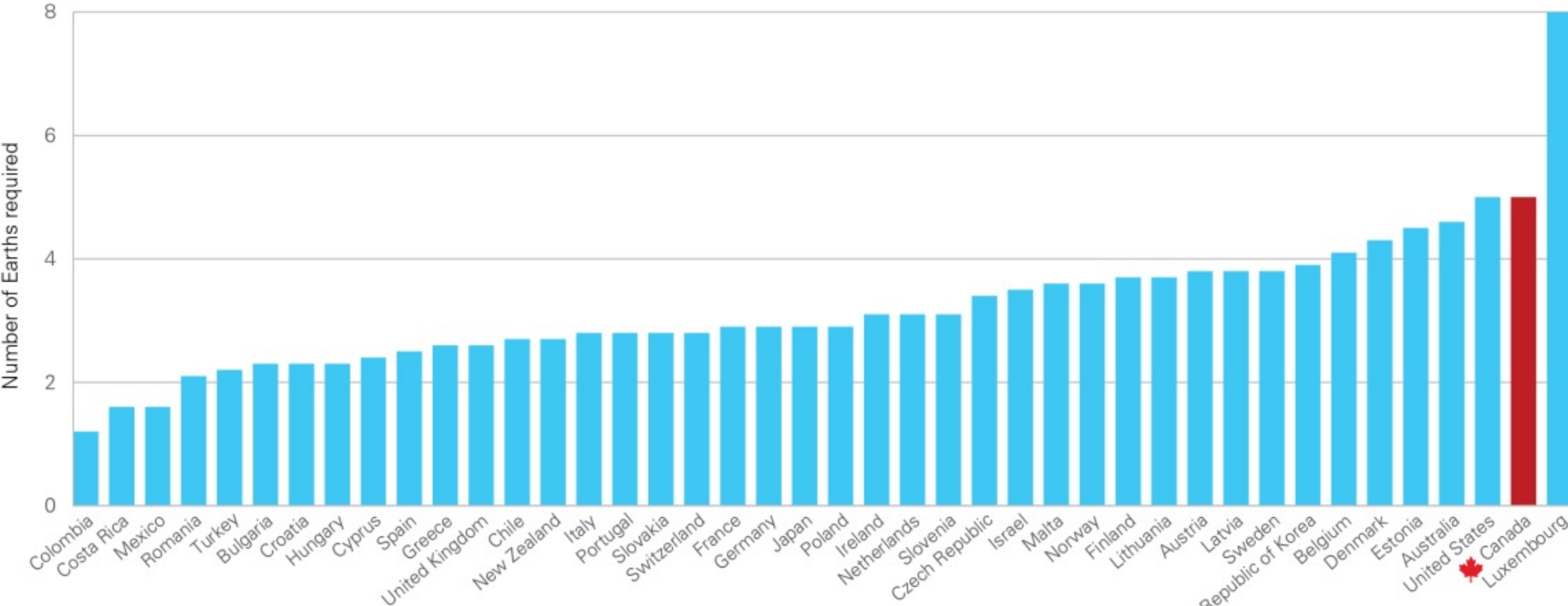


URBAN GREEN SPACE

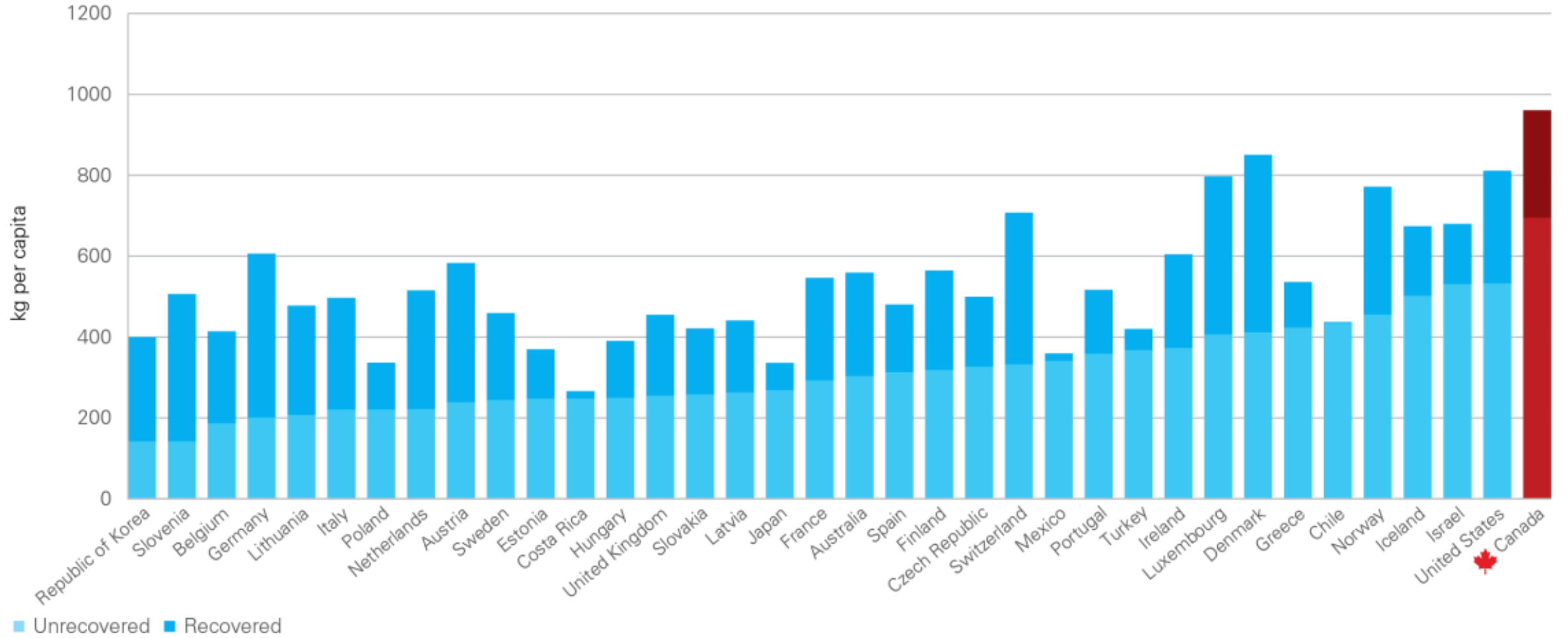
“The places, spaces, people, and landforms you see when you look out your window, or see every day, influence who you are.”



RESOURCE CONSUMPTION

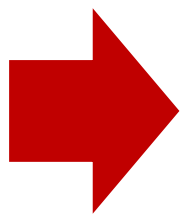


MUNICIPAL WASTE





FOR EVERY CHILD, A LIVING PLANET



Apply a distinct child and youth impact lens to environmental policies, giving them priority consideration and child-specific targets and accountability.

Reform CEPA to affirm the unqualified right to a healthy environment and require impacts on diverse young people to be considered in every risk assessment.

Review every disaster risk reduction and emergency management strategy from a child impact and equity perspective.

“We know we will never achieve a perfect world, but as young people, we will never stop fighting for a better future. To the adult allies and decision-makers, we ask, are you with us?”

Ella Bradford, Karel Nelson, Katie Yu



The climate and the environment is not someone else's problem. It is everyone's problem

Our children are paying, and will continue to pay, the highest price.
How we work together and across silos will be judged by our children.

We are the future ancestors of next generations, and we have a responsibility to ensure
EVERYTHING we do includes climate and the environment as a top priority.

The CWELCC agreements are such an example. How public dollars are spent on
expansion and affordability can either add to the problem or contribute to solving it.

The choice is ours.

THANK YOU

