

A child in a blue shirt and dark pants is running across a grassy field. Several long, colorful streamers (red, orange, yellow, green, blue) are trailing behind them, creating a vibrant, dynamic scene. The background shows a line of trees under a clear sky.

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

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School of Early Childhood | George Brown College

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



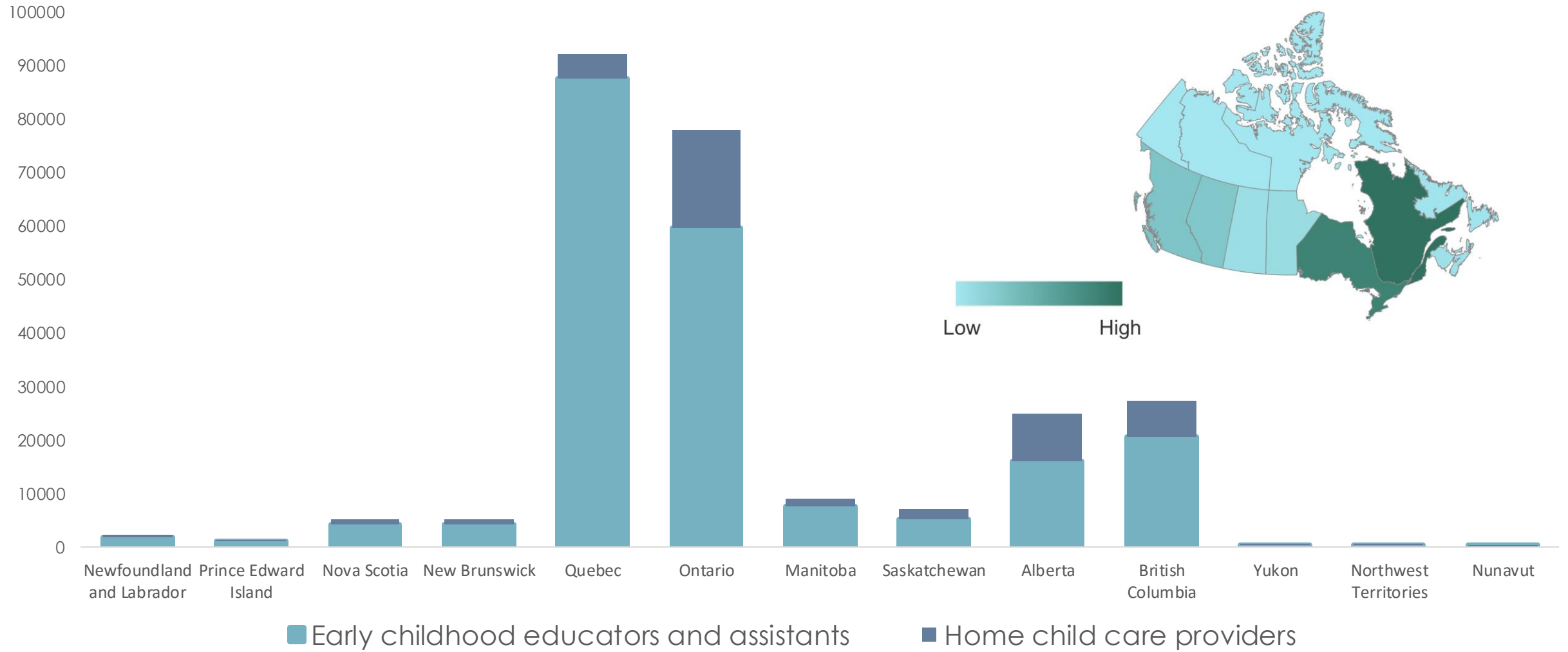


The status of the early learning and childcare workforce
across Canada

Lessons from a new Ontario study

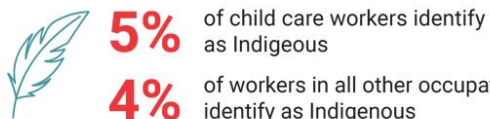
Early learning and childcare in a changing political landscape – where do we
go from here?

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



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 \(2022\)](#).





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



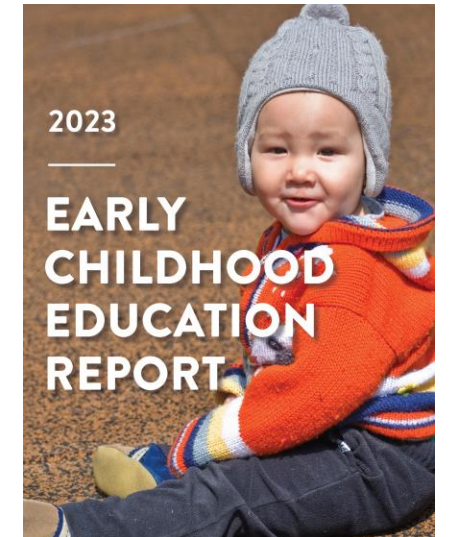
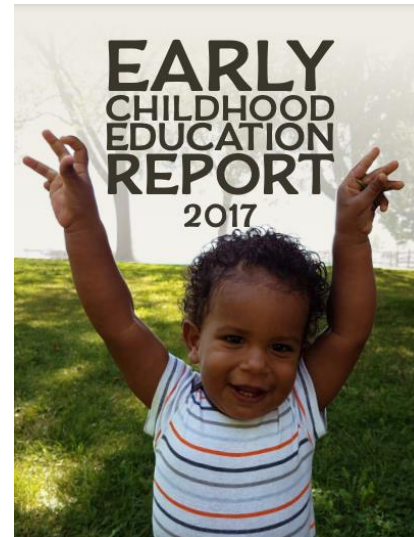
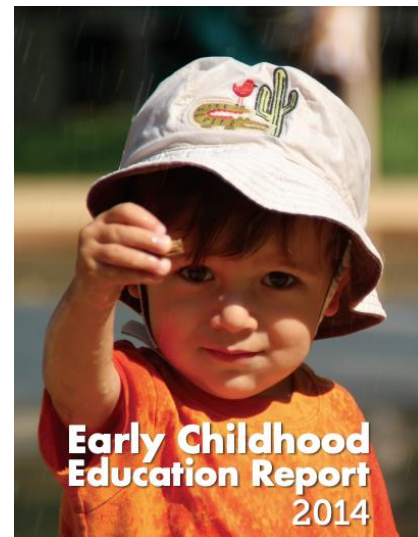
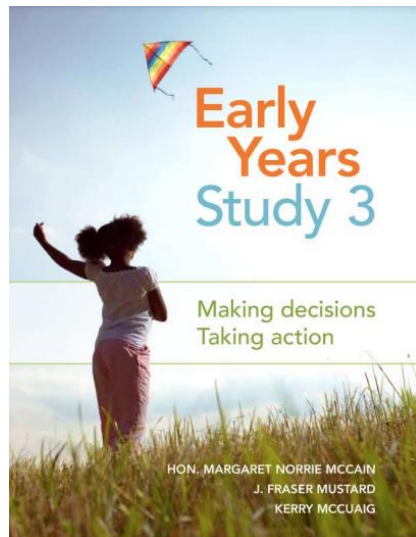


2023

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION REPORT



Established in 2011, the Early Childhood Education Report is released every three years to evaluate the quality of provincial/territorial early years services against a 15-point-scale. Results are populated from detailed profiles of each jurisdiction. ECER 2023 is the 5th edition.



Developing the Report

The *Early Years 3* study laid the groundwork for Canadian children and recommendations to improve the quality of ECEC services

The 3rd status report takes a snapshot of ECEC across Canada and sees improvements in all jurisdictions

2017

2020

2023

2011

2014

The *Early Childhood Education Report 2014* reported on cross-jurisdictional improvements in ECEC

The 4th status report saw the impact of the bilateral agreements and acted as a baseline measure for the **CWELCC**

The 5th status report evaluates the impact of **CWELCC** at the midpoint

2006

The OECD released ***Starting Strong II***. Canada exposed as a policy laggard in ECEC

The ECER was informed by the policy lessons emerging from the 20-country review



5 CATEGORIES

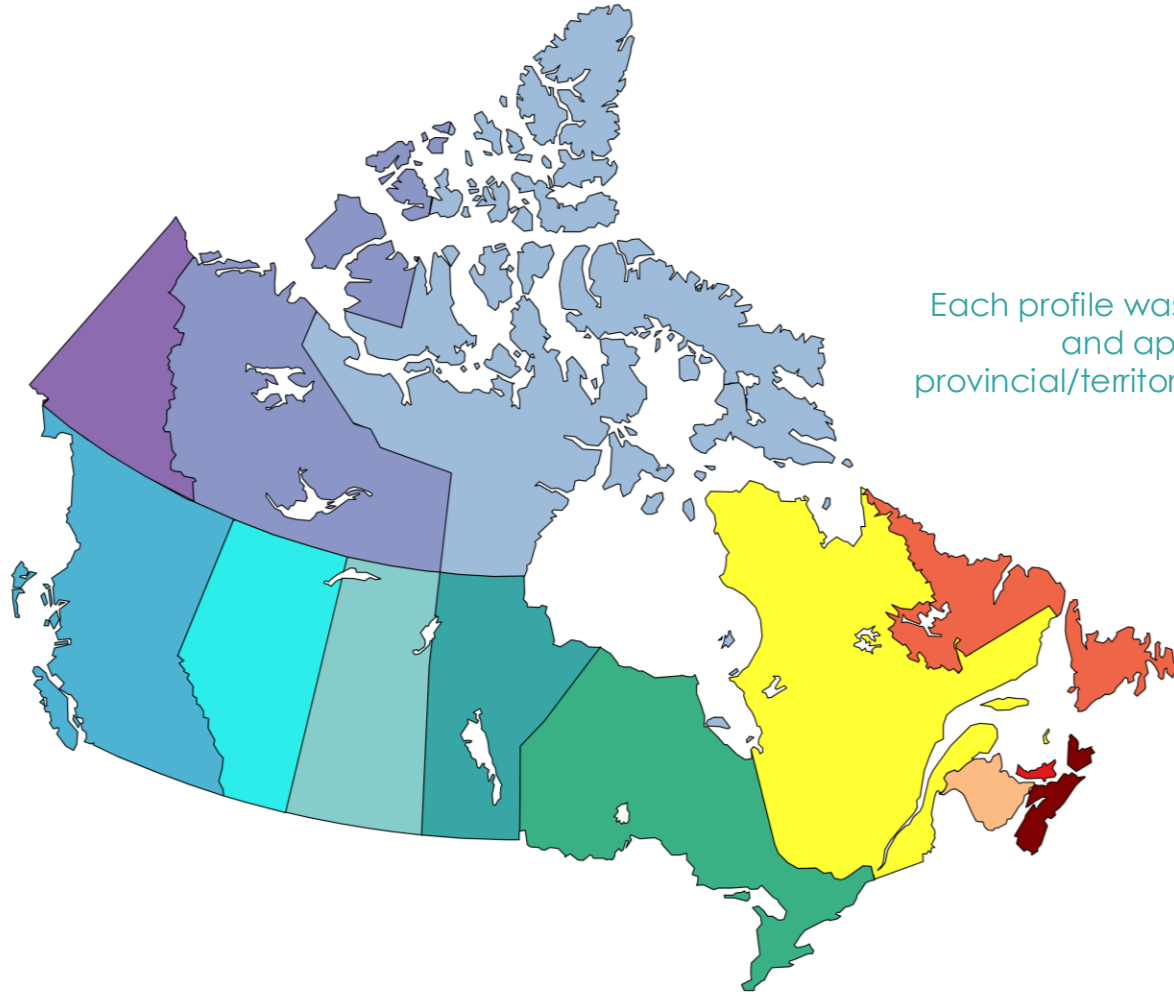
Governance	PTs	Funding	PTs	Access	PTs	Learning Environment	PTs	Accountability	PTs
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21 BENCHMARKS

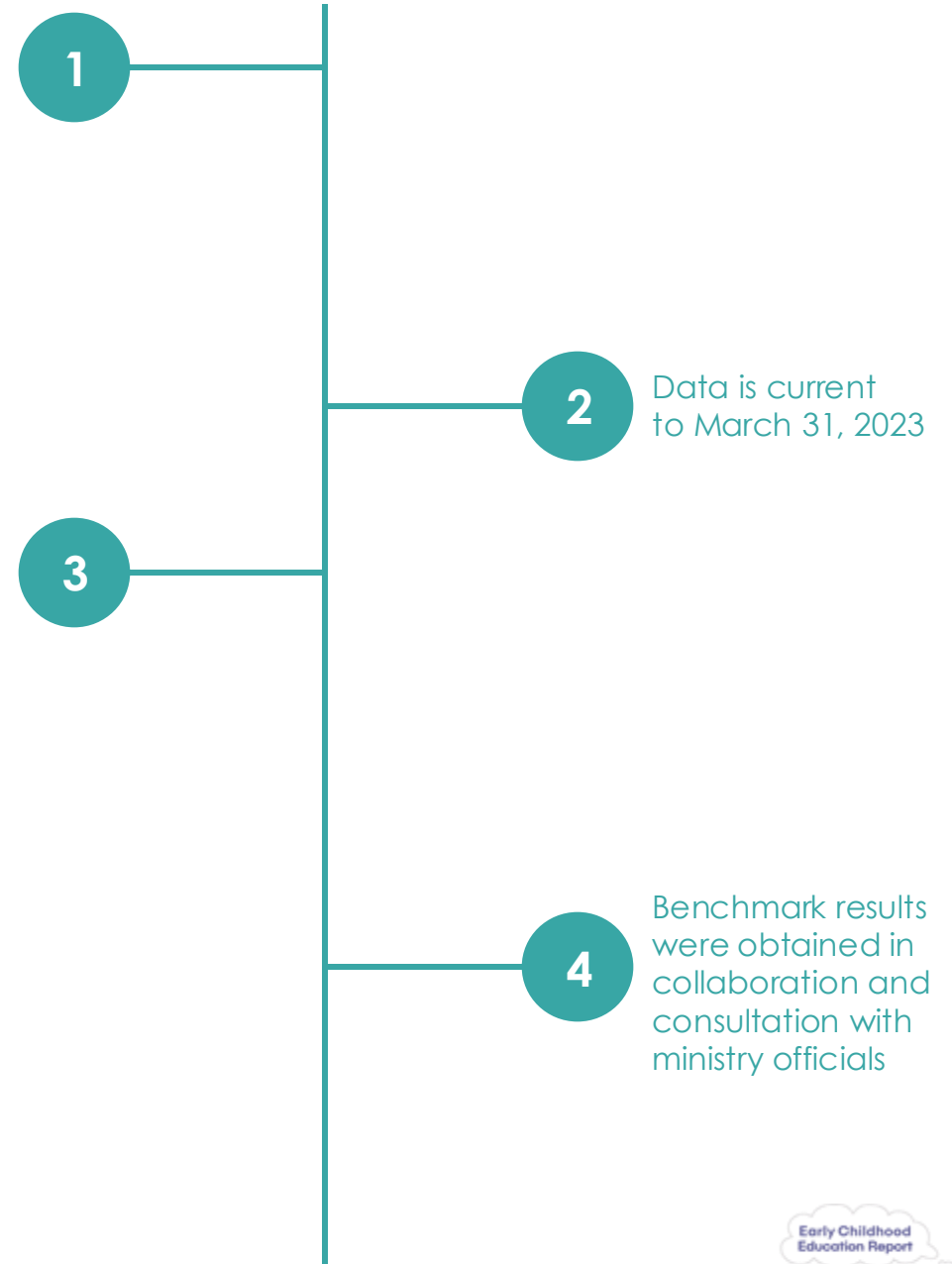
Common ministry	0.5	Min 2/3 CC finding to program operations	1	Full-day Kindergarten	1	ECEC curriculum framework	0.25	Current and posted annual progress report	1
Common ECEC supervisory unit	0.5	Managed salary/fee scale in licensed CC	1	Licensed capacity min 50% for 2-4 yr olds	1	ECEC curriculum framework mandatory	0.25	Facility standards that include Kindergarten	1
Common ECEC policy framework	1	Min 3% of overall budget to ECEC	1	Funding conditional on inclusion	1	Program alignment with Kindergarten	0.5	Population measures collected for preschool	1
Common local authority	1					Min 2/3 staff qualified for 2-4 yr olds	0.5		
						Kindergarten Educators require ECE qualifications	0.5		
						Wages of ECEs at least 2/3 of teachers	0.5		
						ECE professional recognition required	0.25		
						ECE professional development required	0.25		
15 POINTS	3		3		3		3		3

REPORT DEVELOPMENT

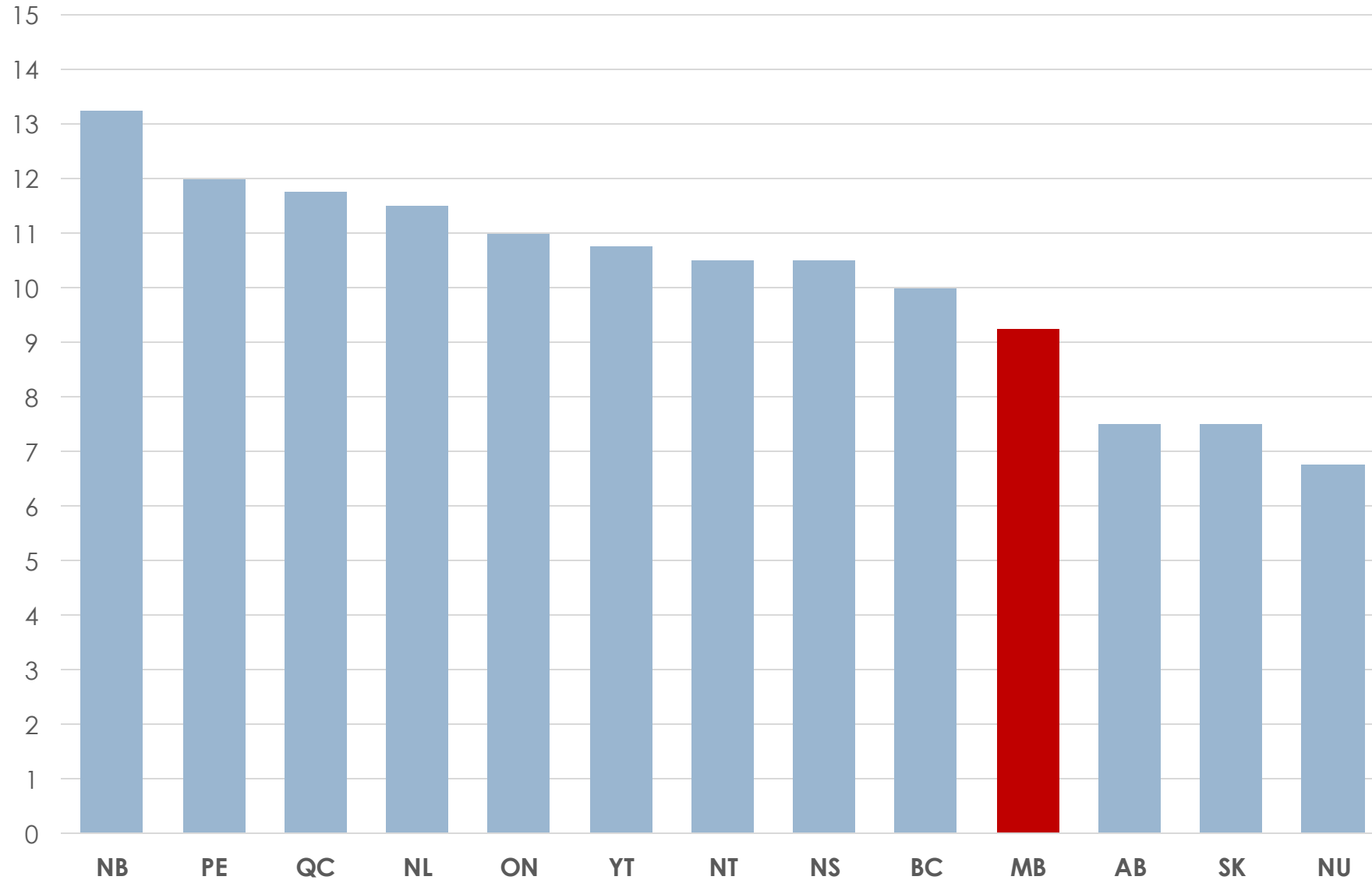
Each provincial and territorial profile was populated with publicly available data, reviews of collective agreements, custom Statistics Canada runs, and data provided by ministry officials. Quebec's profile was developed under the direction of the Abilio—Childhood Knowledge Dissemination Centre, at the Université Laval and Université de Montréal



Each profile was reviewed and approved by provincial/territorial officials



ECER 2023 Benchmark Results



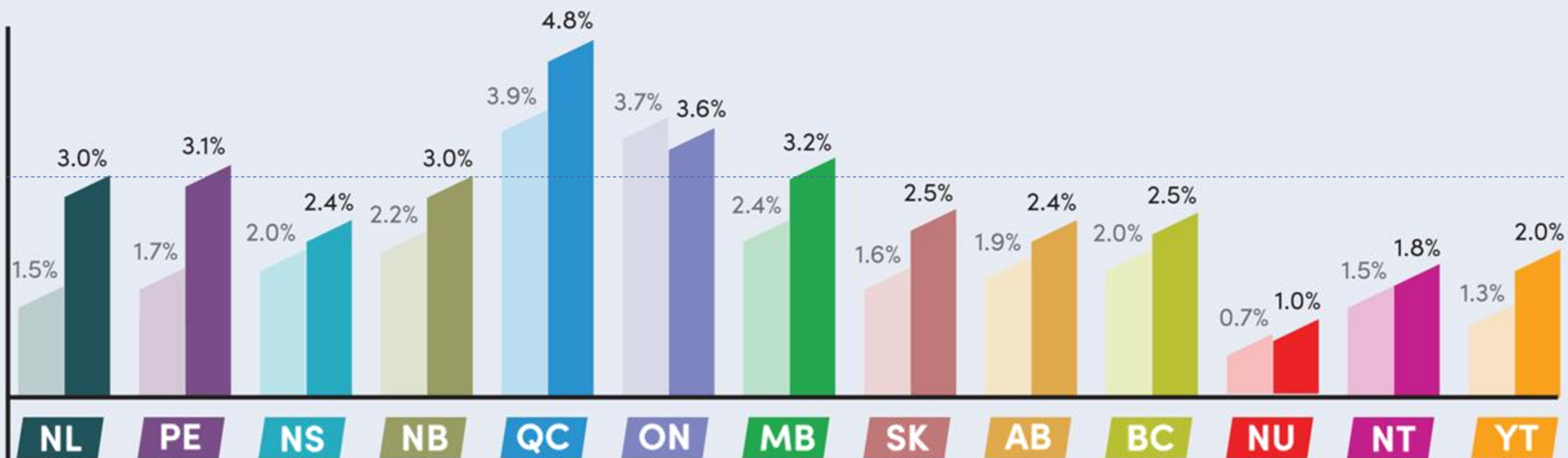
Manitoba Over the Years

ECER Benchmarks



CHANGE IN ECEC SPENDING AS A PER CENT OF TOTAL PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL BUDGET

2020 · 2023






% NON-PROFIT CENTRES



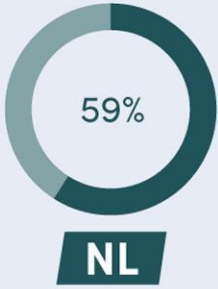
% FOR-PROFIT CENTRES

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

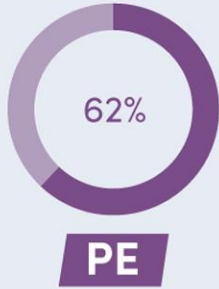
 **NU** and **NT** only license and fund non-profit and public centres

\$95,167,000



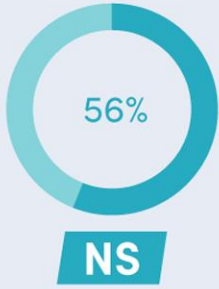
NL

\$38,162,620



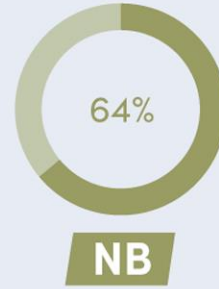
PE

\$89,554,810



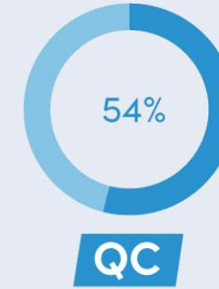
NS

\$125,535,008



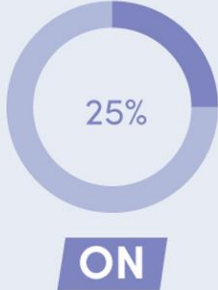
NB

\$2,134,728,000



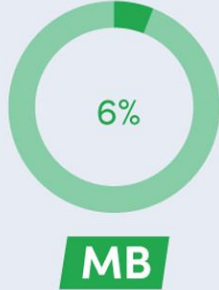
QC

\$969,907,523



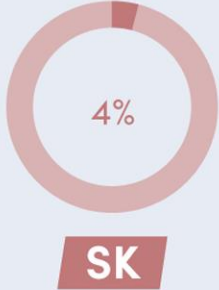
ON

\$0



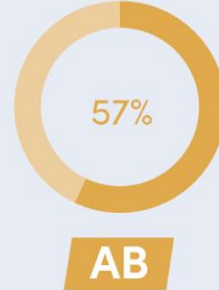
MB

\$0



SK

\$556,323,990



AB

\$812,037,960



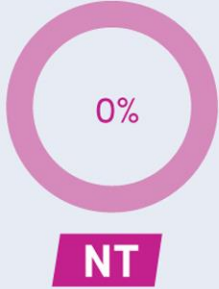
BC

\$0



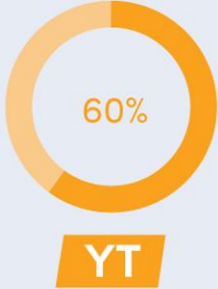
NU

\$0



NT

\$24,251,319



YT

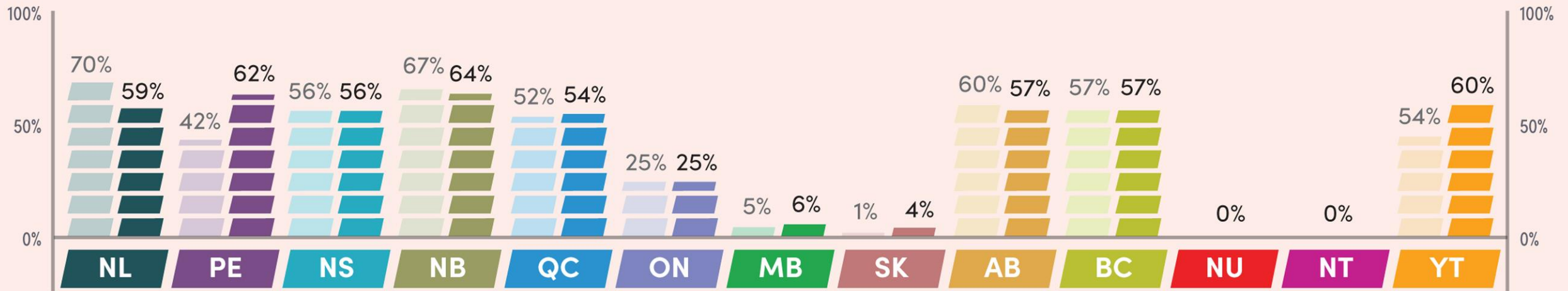
\$4,845,668,229



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

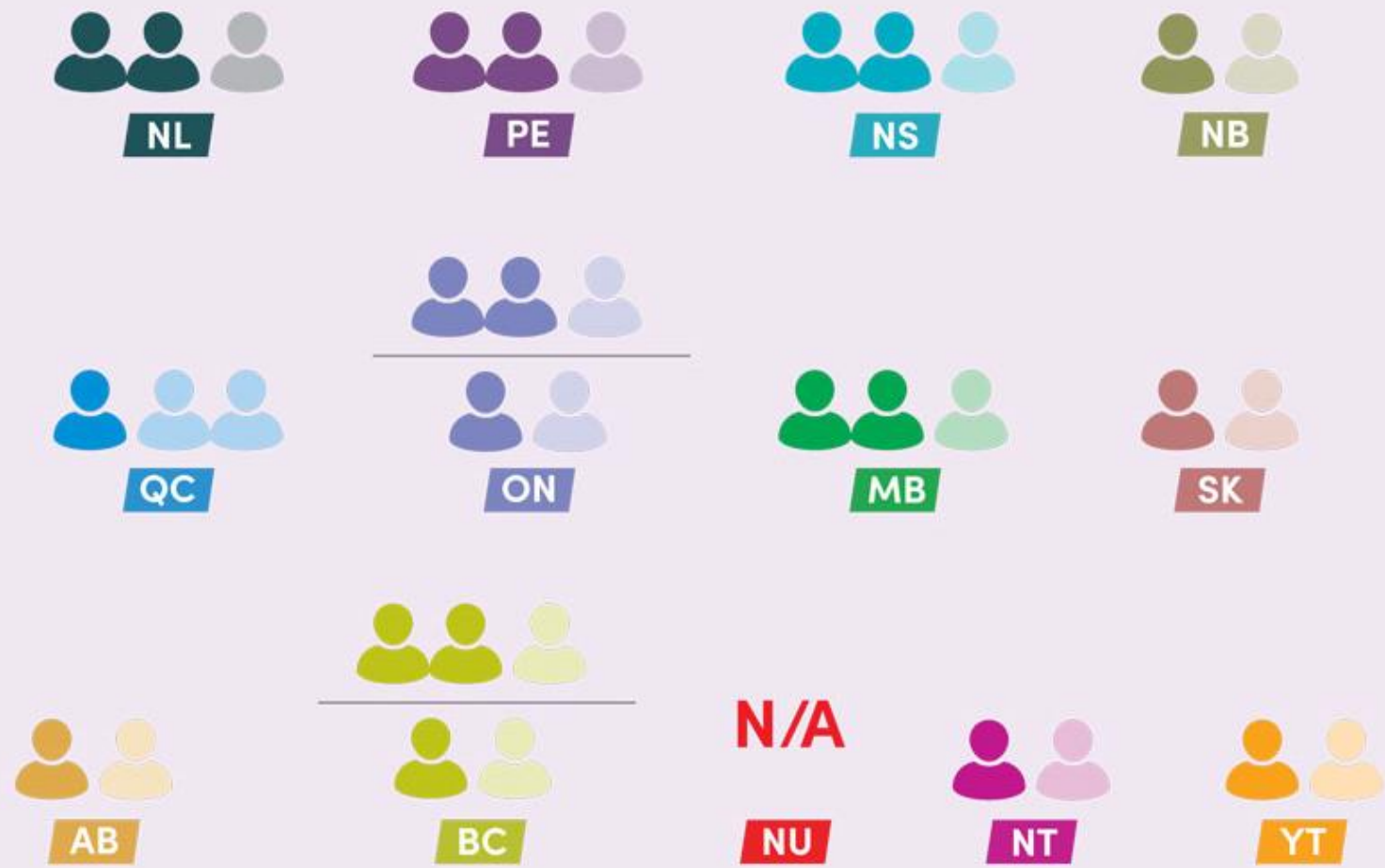
Alberta

In Early Childhood Services programs only



RATIO OF CERTIFIED ECEs TO NON-CERTIFIED STAFF IN PRESCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE BY PROVINCE/TERRITORY

CERTIFIED ECEs • NON-CERTIFIED STAFF



PE in Designated Early Years Centres.
 QC reduced ratio due to staff shortages from July 22, 2021 to March 1, 2023.
 ON 2:1 for groups of 24. 1:1 for groups of 16.
 BC 2:1 in groups serving children 0 to <36 months. 1:1 in groups serving children 36 months to age 5.
 NU does not require ECE qualifications.
 Benchmark 2 certified staff out of 3.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED IN LICENSED CHILD CARE BY PROVINCE/TERRITORY

ENTRY LEVEL



NUMBER OF LEVELS OF QUALIFICATION



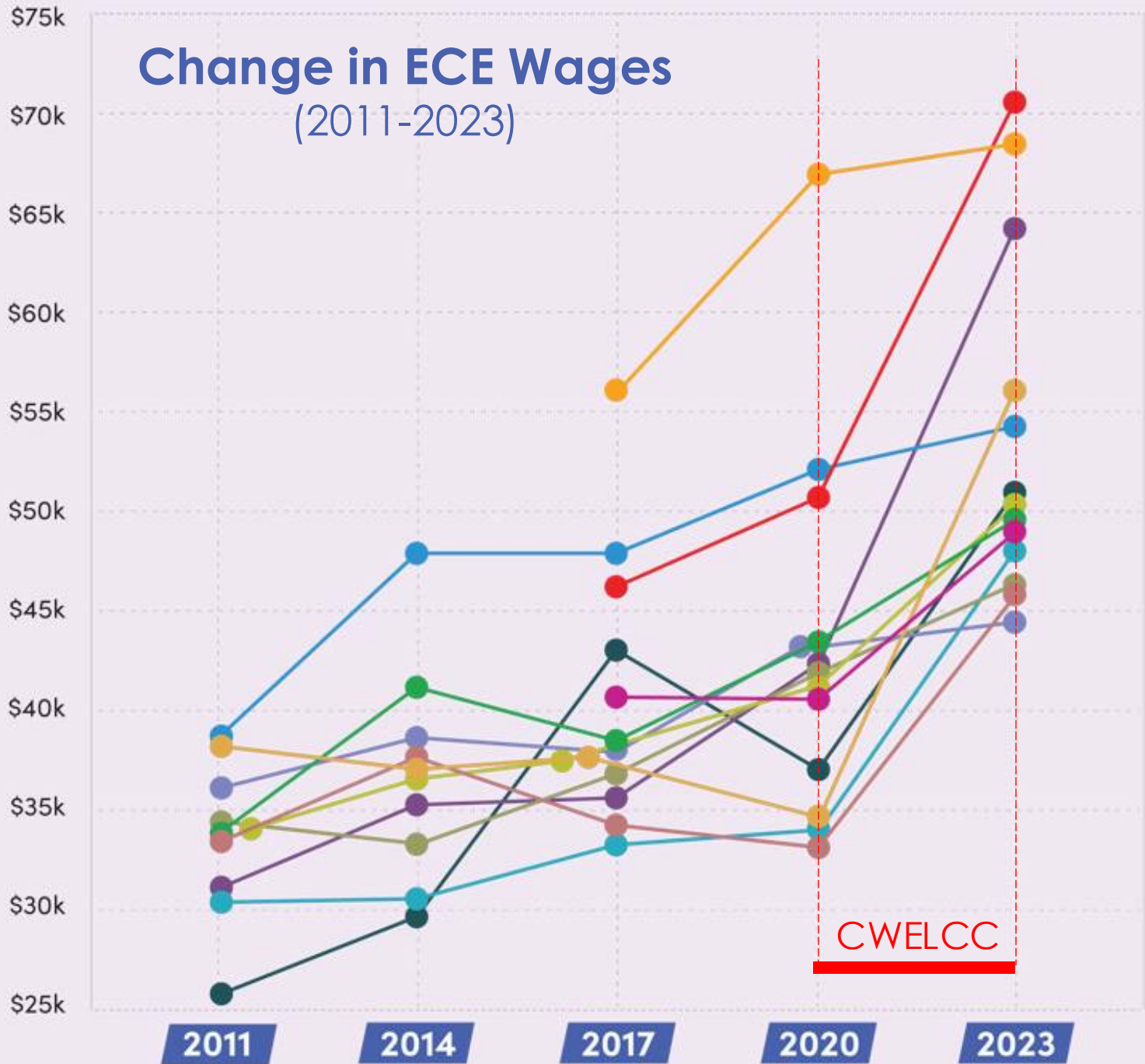
QUALIFIED

Percent Change in Salary for Teachers and Early Childhood Educators by Province/Territory (2017-2020) – Prior to CWELCC



Source: Akbari & McCuaig. The Early Childhood Education Report, 2017, 2020.

Change in ECE Wages (2011-2023)



\$ CHANGE FROM 2020

- NL \$13,662
- PE \$21,320
- NS \$14,531
- NB \$3,944
- QC \$2,343
- ON \$1,269
- MB \$5,615
- SK \$12,896
- AB \$21,449
- BC \$9,528
- NU \$21,029
- NT \$9,250
- YT \$1,560



POLICY AND PER CENT CHANGE IN ECE ANNUAL WAGES 2020 TO 2023 BY PROVINCE/TERRITORY

Province/Territory	Annual Wage Rate 2020	Annual Wage Rate 2023	Per Cent Change	Policy Initiative
NL	\$37,253	\$50,915	37%	Mandated wage grid
PE	\$42,765	\$64,085	50%	Mandated wage grid
NS	\$34,196	\$48,727	42%	Mandated wage grid
NB	\$42,369	\$46,313	9%	Mandated wage grid
QC	\$52,312	\$54,655	4%	Mandated wage grid
ON	\$43,243	\$44,512	3%	Wage floor/Wage supplement
MB	\$43,826	\$49,441	13%	Wage guidelines
SK	\$33,280	\$46,176	39%	Wage supplement
AB	\$34,691	\$56,140	62%	Wage supplement
BC	\$41,848	\$51,376	23%	Wage supplement
NU	\$50,502	\$71,531	42%	Mandated wage grid
NT	\$40,384	\$49,634	23%	Wage supplement/ wage grid in development
YT	\$67,038	\$68,598	2%	Wage supplement



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

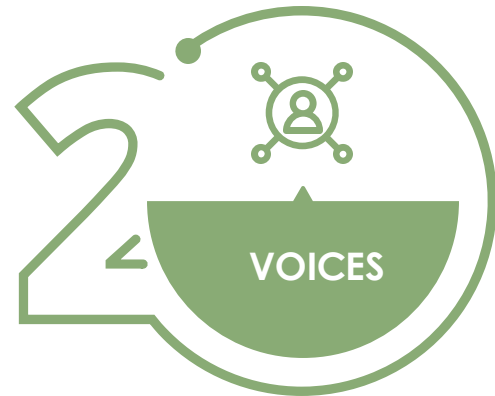
Rapport exécutif



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



43/47 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

Participant-Reported Hourly Wages by Auspice
All respondents, in descending order, by median wage

	Average	Minimum	25 th percentile	Median	75 th 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
Provincial level	\$24.90	\$15.00	\$22.00	\$24.00	\$27.00
For-profit	\$22.37	\$16.00	\$20.00	\$22.00	\$24.00

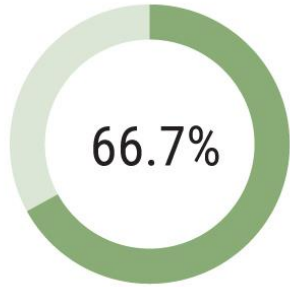
Starting in January 2024, the wage floor for RECEs in Ontario working in programs participating in CWELCC readjusted to \$23.86 per hour.

Participant Reported Hourly Wages by Auspice Directors/Supervisors

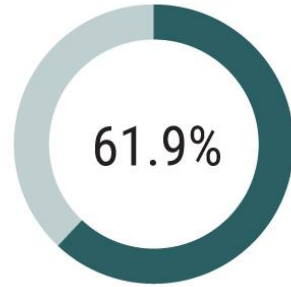




RECEs



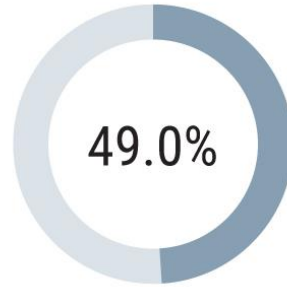
Central East



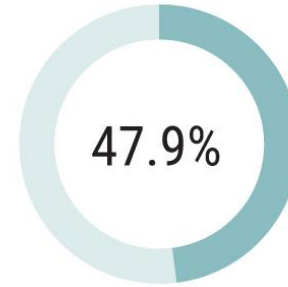
Central West



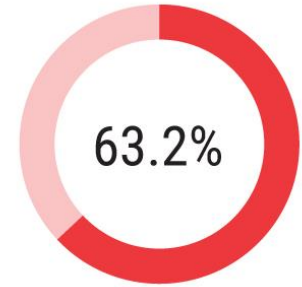
East



North

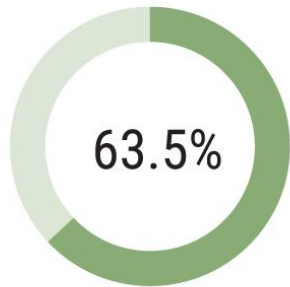


West

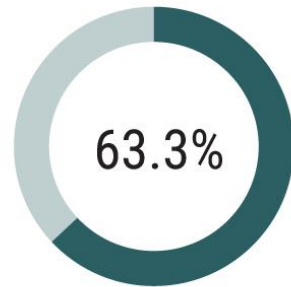


Lakeshore West

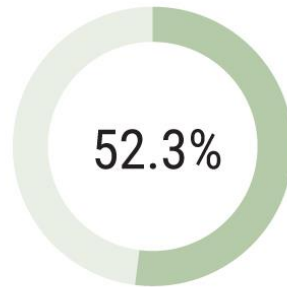
Non-RECEs



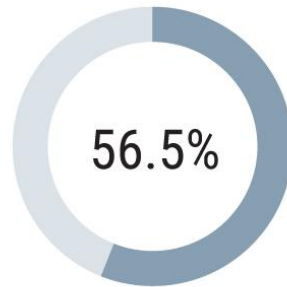
Central East



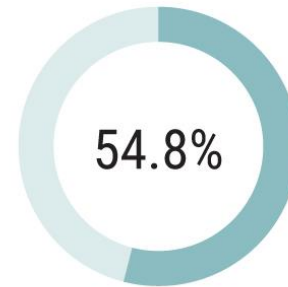
Central West



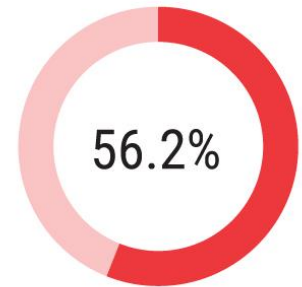
East



North

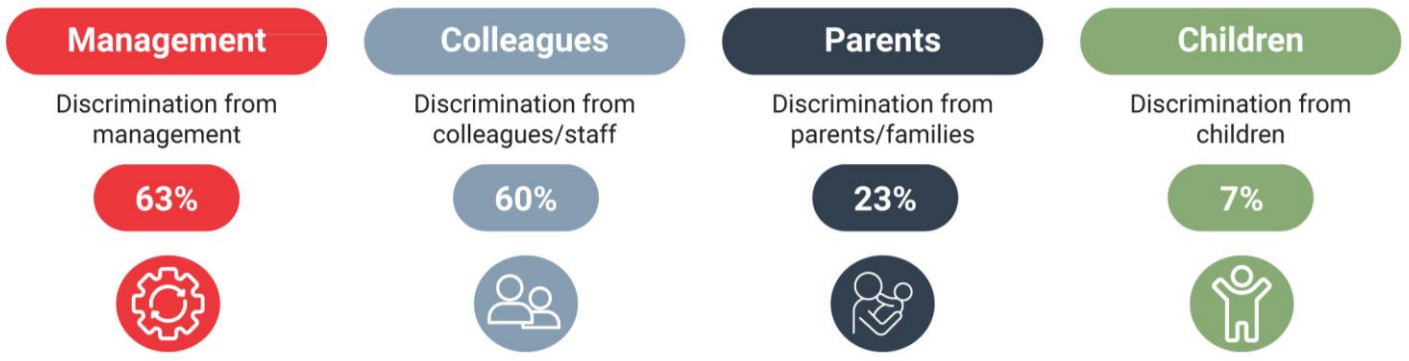
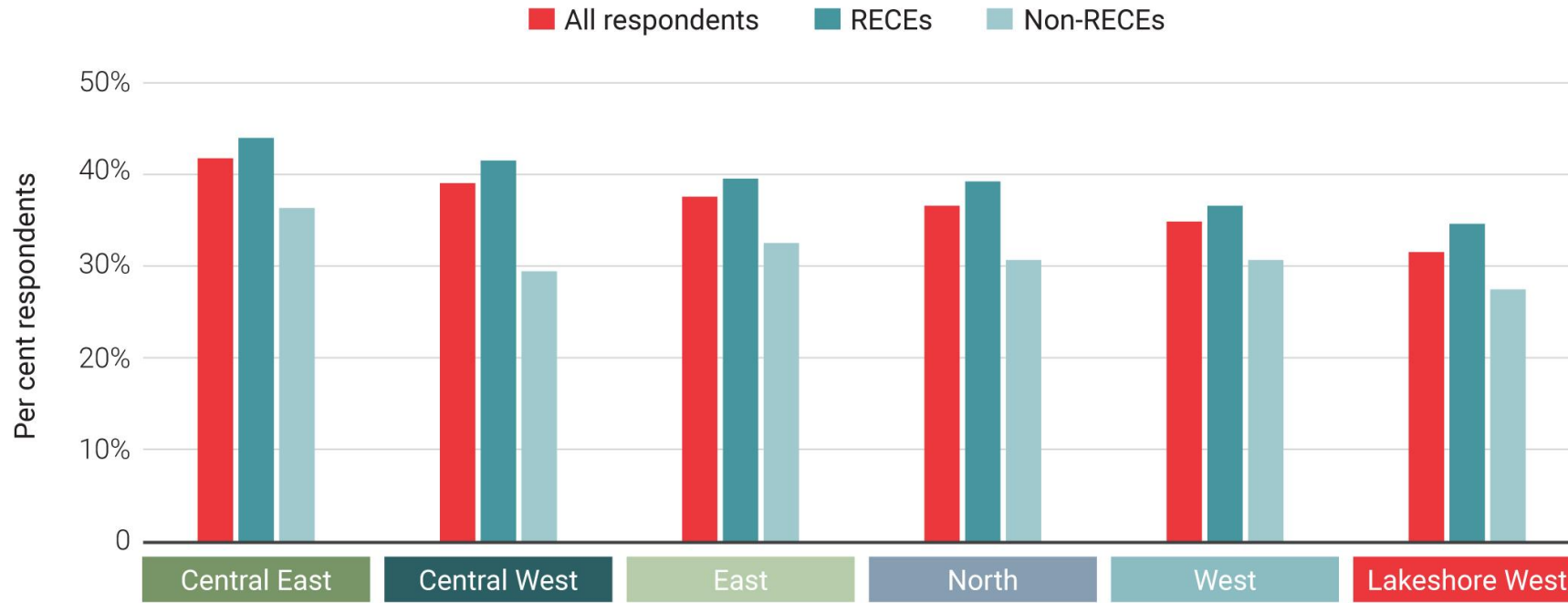


West



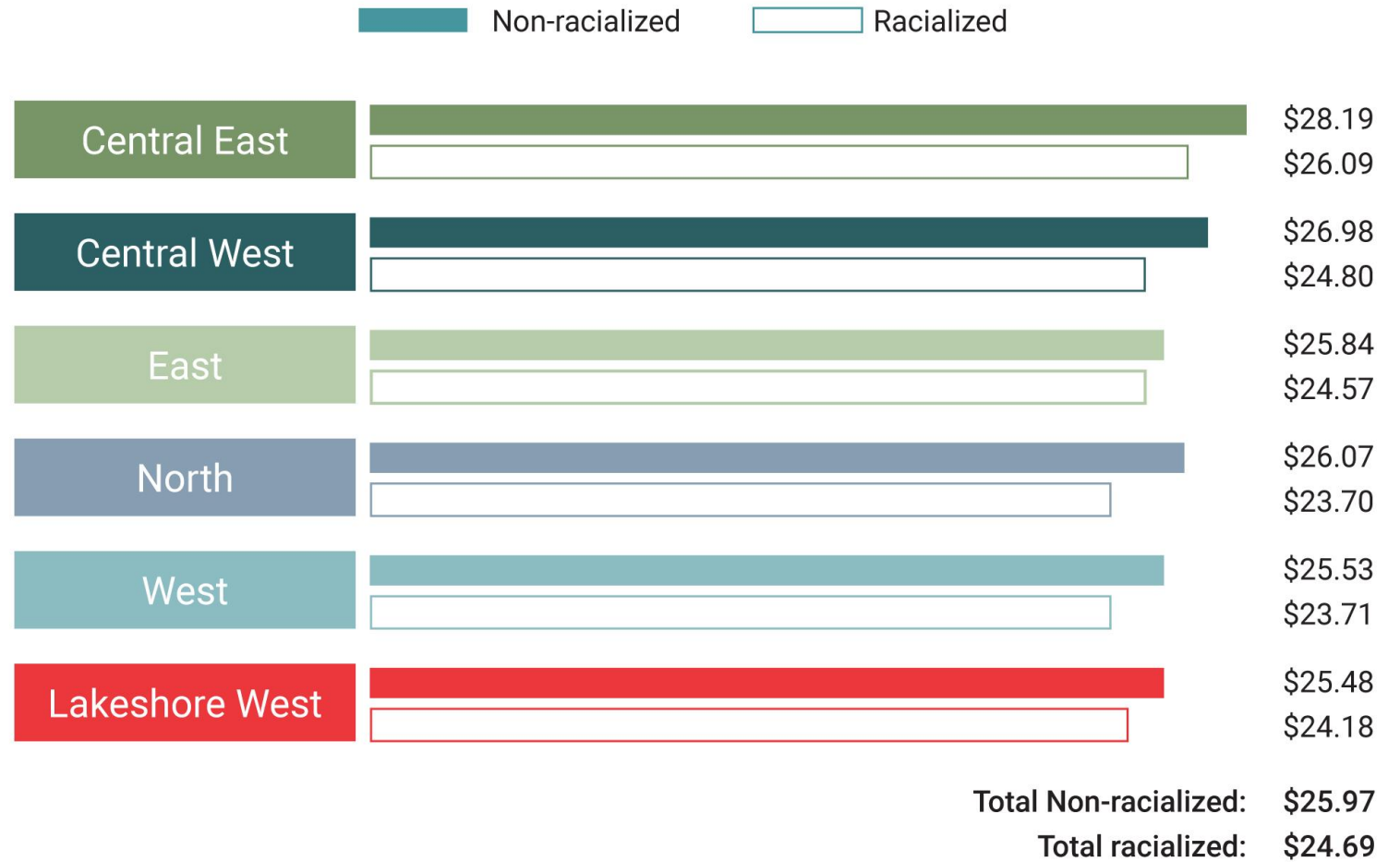
Lakeshore West

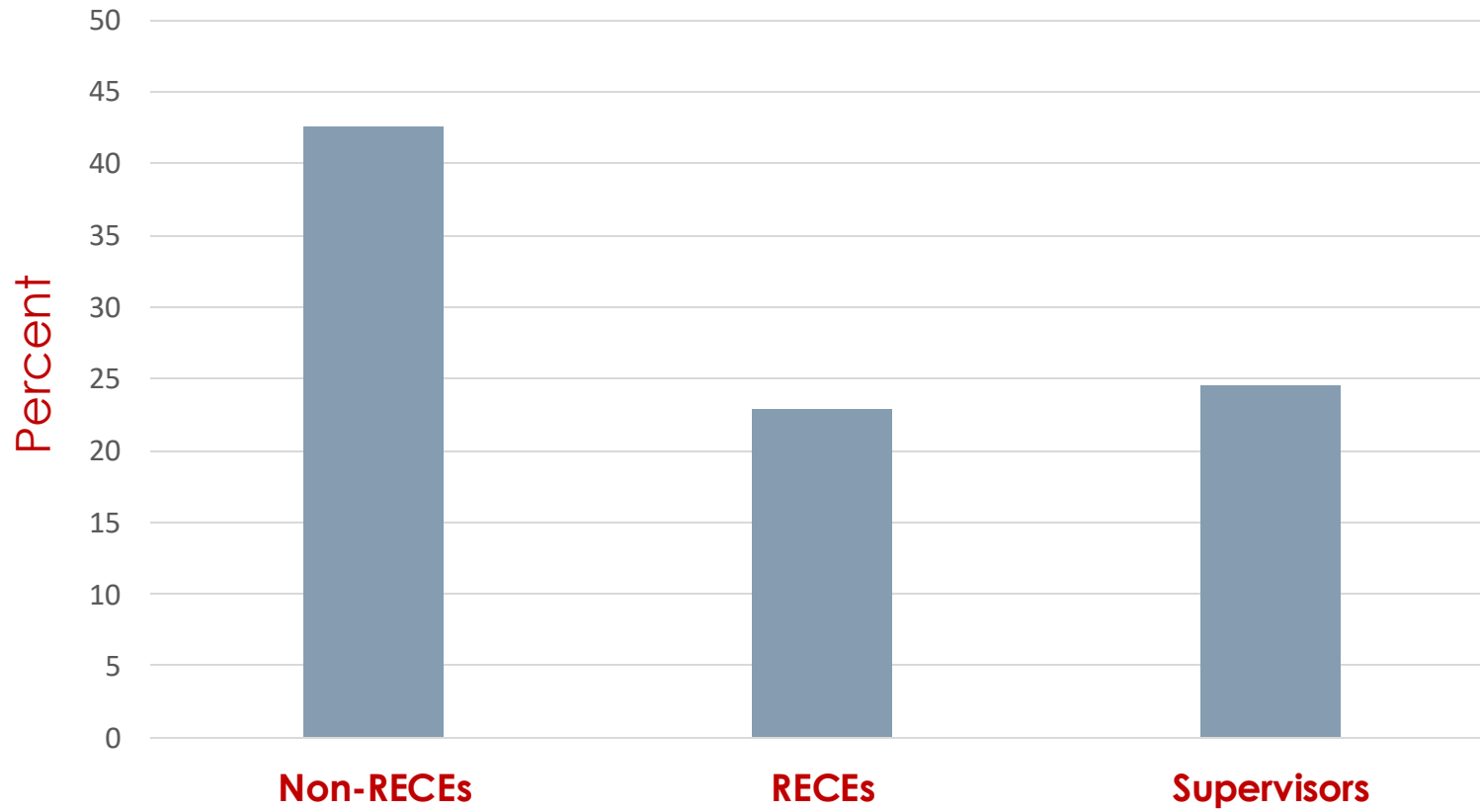
Percentage of Respondents Reporting Experiences of Workplace Discrimination by Region



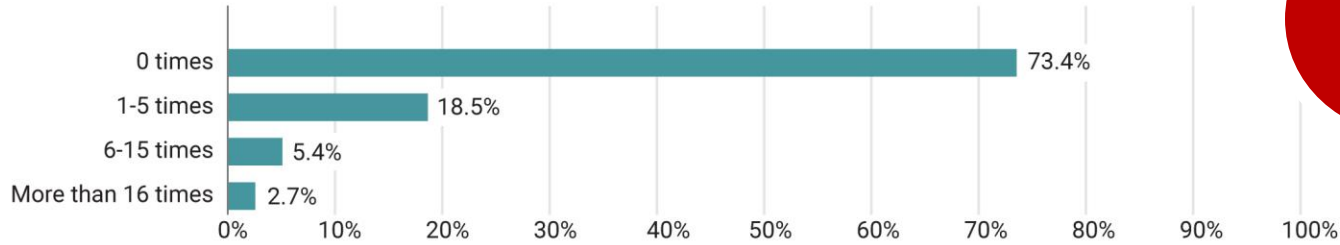


Wage Rate Per Hour by Racialization and Region



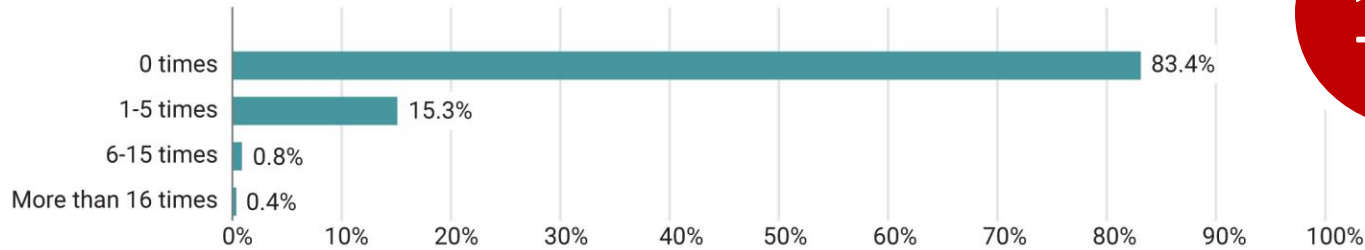


Percentage Reporting Frequency of Times in the Previous 12 Months Directors/Supervisors Sent Children with Disabilities Home Due to Staffing Shortages



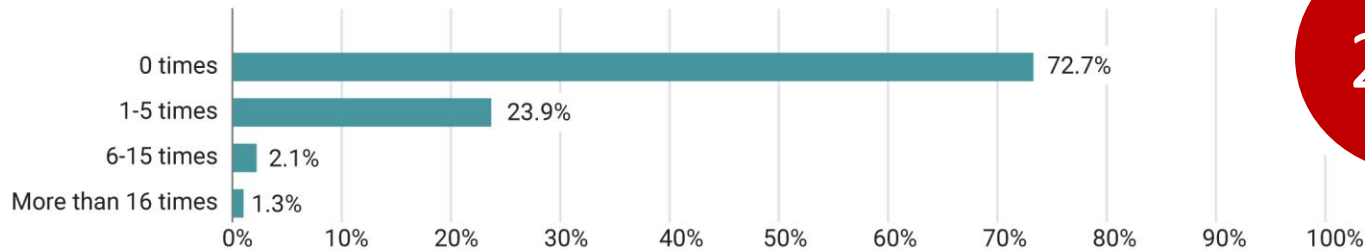
27%

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%



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

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%)

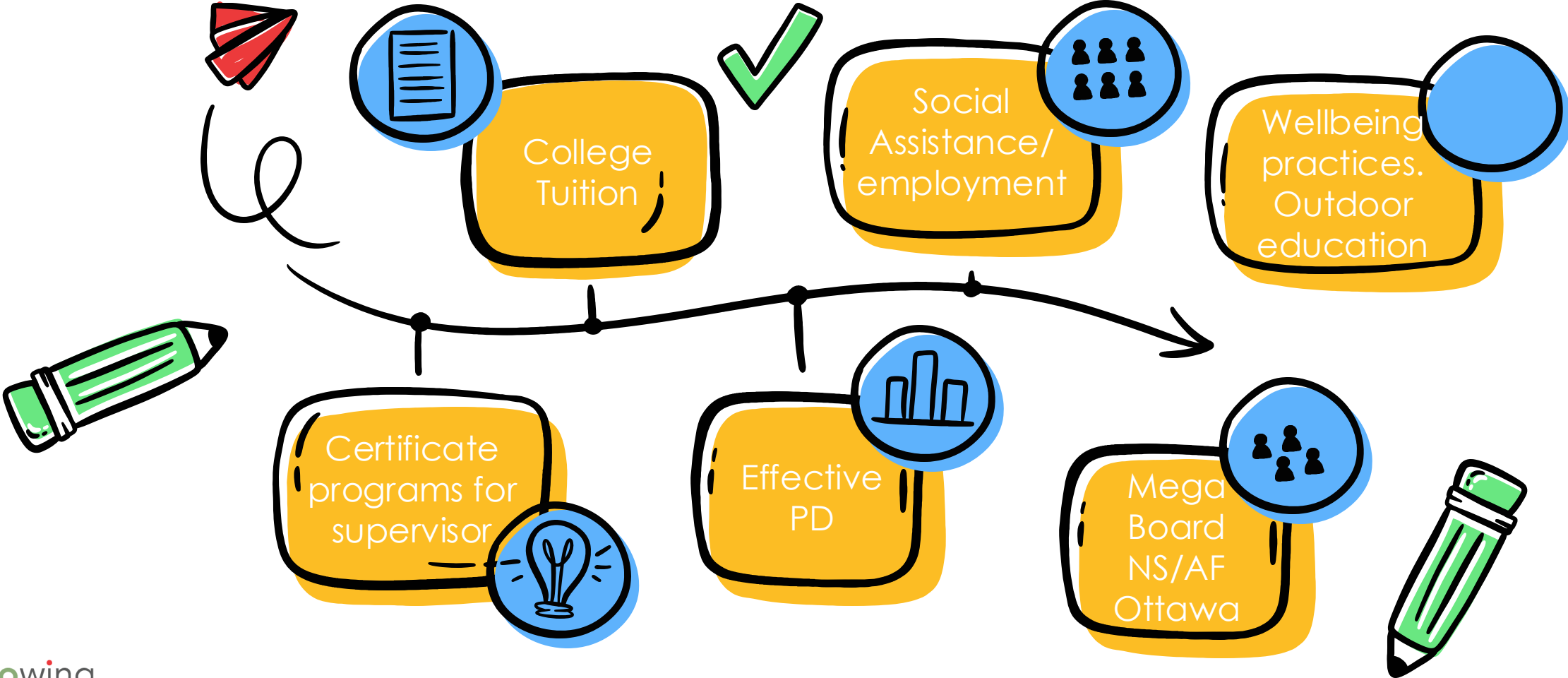
09 **Educator mental health support**
1,139 (25%)

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

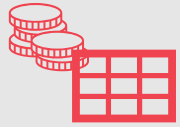
Promising Practices



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

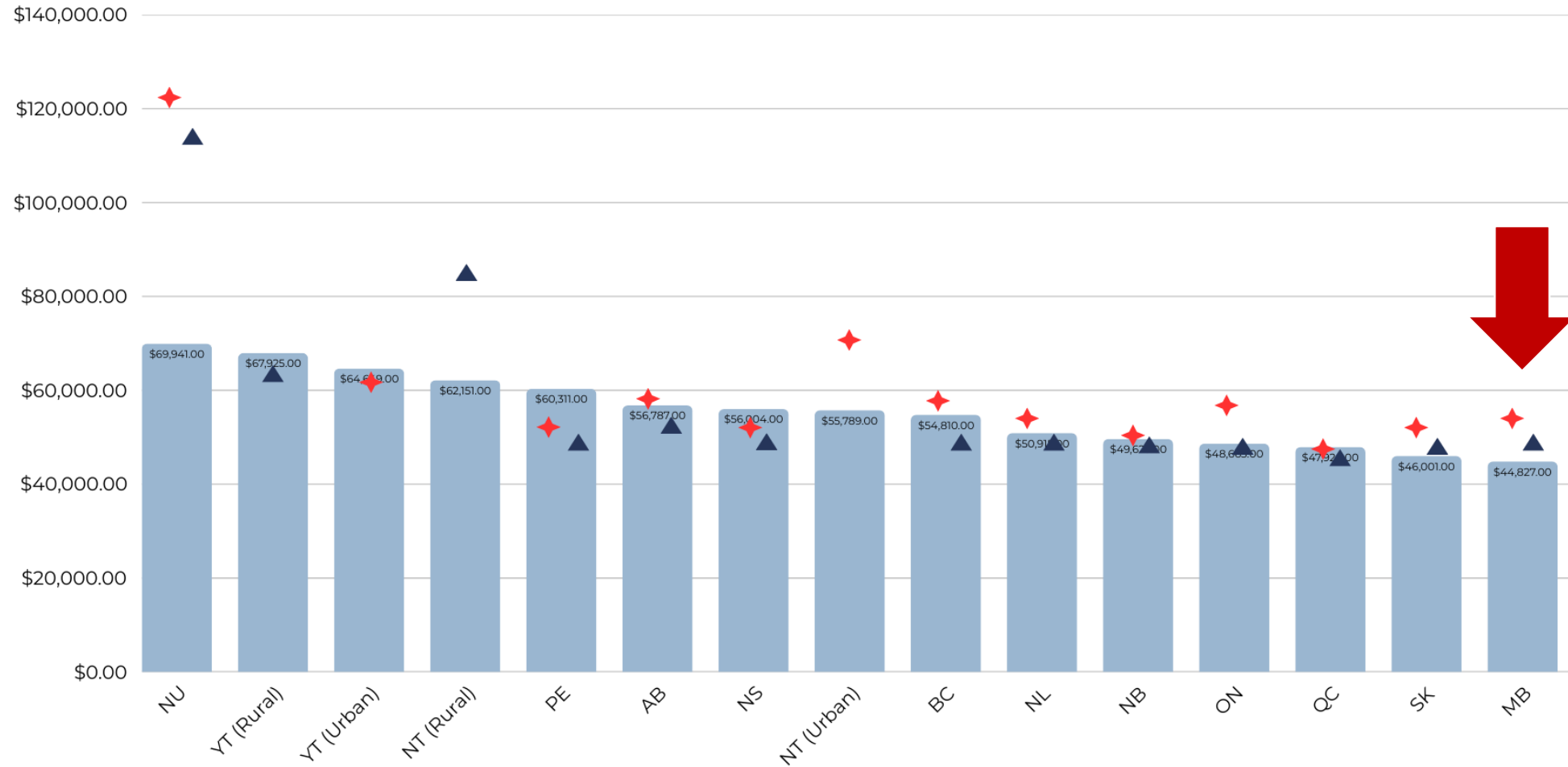
MB establish rates based on centre size & recognize assistant supervisors



Non-RECE Staff

Many compensation systems do not recognize non-RECE staff

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



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.

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

T H A N K

Y O U

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Atkinson
Centre

 UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
OISE | ONTARIO INSTITUTE
FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION