People, Programs and Practices:

A Training Strategy for the Early Childhood Education and Care Sector in Canada

**Child Care
Human Resources
Sector Council**

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the
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The Training Strategy Project: An Introduction

The Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC) is a pan-Canadian, non-profit organization that addresses pressing human resources issues in the child care sector.[1] Members of the CCHRSC's volunteer board work in national and provincial child care and labour organizations; post-secondary training institutions; child care centres, nursery and preschools or their own homes as early childhood educators or employers; and in government.

Through its projects, the CCHRSC develops research, strategies and tools to meet the needs of the child care workforce and achieve related goals.

In 2006, the CCHRSC—with the support of Human Resources and Social Development Canada—began an 18-month Training Strategy Project with two main goals:
- To improve the consistency and quality of training of the early childhood care and education sector across Canada; and
- To increase the size and capacity of the trained child care workforce in Canada to meet identified needs.

This report summarizes the results of the Training Strategy Project and proposes a three-part strategy focused on:
- The *people*—expanding the size and capacity of the sector by defining the core roles of early childhood educator and director.
- The *programs*—enhancing the quality and consistency of early childhood education post-secondary programs through voluntary accreditation.
- The *practices*—enhancing access to, and the effectiveness of, post-secondary education and ongoing professional development through flexible delivery methods.

The strategic model (page ii) illustrates the inter-connectedness of the three components of the strategy. It provides a visual description of how occupational standards serve as the foundation upon which the Training Strategy is built, and highlights the relevance of contextual factors and enabling conditions to the strategy's implementation.

This document it is not intended as a detailed implementation plan. Rather, it puts forward a strategy to help the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council and other key stakeholders address training issues in a coordinated manner.

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[1] A note on sector councils: Sector councils bring together representatives from business, labour, education, and other professional groups in a forum in order to comprehensively and cooperatively analyze and address sector-wide human resource issues. For more information on the Government of Canada's sector council program, see: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/gateways/nav/top_nav/program/spi.shtml. For information on other sector councils, visit The Alliance of Sector Councils (TASC) web site at http://www.councils.org.

Training Strategy Project Strategic Model

- **IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND CONSISTENCY OF TRAINING**
- **INCREASE THE SIZE AND CAPACITY OF THE TRAINED CHILD CARE WORKFORCE**

PEOPLE

PROGRAMS

PRACTICES

ENHANCE CAPACITY

ENHANCE QUALITY AND CONSISTENCY

- DEFINE CORE ROLE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR AND DIRECTOR

- VOLUNTARY ECE POST-SECONDARY PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

ENHANCE ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ECEs

- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- MENTORING/COACHING
- METHODS OF ECE DELIVERY
- PLAR • INTERNATIONAL CREDENTIALS

OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS:
- LABOUR FORCE AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS
- INVOLVEMENT OF EDUCATION SECTOR
- INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT

ENABLING CONDITIONS
- PUBLIC POLICY • WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS • P/T REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS
- PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS • ACCESS TO POST SECONDARY TRAINING
- RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

SECTION 1 – OVERVIEW

High-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) is a vital part of the Canadian economy. A considerable body of research shows the relationship between children's early childhood experiences and their long-term health and educational outcomes, and also highlights the important role that quality ECEC programs play in supporting the foundation for lifelong learning. ECEC programs offer additional supports to children living in conditions of risk. They foster the social inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds and those with diverse needs, and support parents' participation in the labour force.

Realizing the many economic and educational benefits of ECEC to children and families depends, in large part, on a well-educated and skilled ECEC workforce. Having staff with at least one post-secondary credential in early childhood education (ECE) is a key indicator of high quality. There are clear associations between staff with higher levels of early childhood education and higher quality and better outcomes for children.[2]

A vibrant, stable, qualified early childhood sector is essential for the future development and expansion of quality programs for young children. However, with declining birth rates and an aging workforce the early childhood sector faces many of the same labour force shortages as other sectors. The regulated child care sector has additional challenges attracting and retaining skilled and educated personnel due in large part to increasing job opportunities for early childhood educators in related positions[3] with higher wages, better benefits and more desirable working conditions.

The Training Strategy Project (TSP) was undertaken by a five-person research and consulting team. The team worked under the direction of the TSP Steering Committee, which included selected members of the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC) and other experts in the ECEC field. The objectives of the project were to:
- Identify current training delivery models
- Establish the present training status and needs in each province and territory
- Identify gaps between the current approaches and the occupation requirements as identified in relevant Occupational Standards and other best practices throughout Canada
- Identify availability, accessibility and barriers to training to help formulate options for training models
- Develop options to meet current and future training needs of the child care workforce in Canada and to work collaboratively with stakeholders to develop a sustainable and effective training strategy for child care

[2] Goelman, H.; Doherty, G.; Lero, D.; LaGrange, A. & Tougas, J. (2000) *You Bet I Care! Caring and Learning Environments: Quality in Child Care Centres across Canada.* Guelph, ON: University of Guelph, Centre for Families, Work and Well-Being. Beach, J.; Bertrand, J.; Forer, B.; Michal, D.; Tougas, J. (2004). *Working for Change: Canada's Child Care Workforce.* Ottawa, ON: Child Care Human Resources Sector Council

[3] Related positions include those in early intervention, home visiting, and family resource programs, and as pre-kindergarten teachers and classroom assistants in the school system

The TSP builds on the results and findings of two earlier pan-Canadian child care sector studies: the 1998 *Our Child Care Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration* and the 2004 Labour Market Update, *Working for Change: Canada's Child Care Workforce*. It also builds on the considerable work done by the Canadian Child Care Federation, particularly the papers resulting from the 2001-2003 project, *Training for the Delivery of Quality Early Childhood Development and Care Services in Canada*, as well as on national and international research findings about the need for accessible and relevant post-secondary education and professional development opportunities for early childhood educators.

The TSP project aims to better understand current ECE training processes and needs in each province and territory, identify innovative practices as well as gaps in training, and develop options to meet the current and future training needs of the child care workforce.

1.1 METHODOLOGY

The TSP was conducted in three phases:
- Phase I: Data collection
- Phase II: Consultation
- Phase III: Development and validation of a training strategy

Phase I: Data Collection

2006 Student Survey

The first activity of the Training Strategy Project was a survey of ECE students in eight selected post-secondary institutions across the country. This survey was identical to one conducted previously as part of the 2003 Labour Market Update (LMU). It included 37 questions designed to gather information about:
- Types of programs in which the students were enrolled—including length of program and delivery model
- Demographic information about students
- Prior education and experience
- Decisions about enrollment
- Satisfaction with current ECE program—including practicum placements
- Finding employment in ECE
- Plans for further education and work after graduation
- Hopes and aspirations for the future

The post-secondary institutions in which students were enrolled offered a variety of programs and delivery models including one-year certificate, two-year diploma and, in Quebec, three-year Diplôme d'études collégiales (DEC) programs; full-time, part-time and distance education models, and accelerated and intensive programs for those with previous work experience in regulated child care. In addition, the post-secondary institutions included those that provide programs in both urban and rural areas, and in both English and French languages.

A number of the colleges required ethics approval from their research ethics boards prior to distribution of the surveys. Where this was so, ethical guidelines governing research involving human subjects were followed and applications were submitted to the boards. All applications were approved.

The project team worked with ECE program chairs at each post-secondary institution to coordinate the distribution of the survey. In March and April 2006, students who were nearing completion of courses and about to graduate from their program were invited to participate. For the most part, surveys were completed during class time, which meant a high response rates. A total of 362 students completed the surveys.

The results were summarized in a report that examined the following:
- Characteristics of ECE students including age, previous education, prior work experience and reasons for entering the program;
- Students' views about their experiences and plans for the future;
- Notable trends by age, previous education, length of the program and post-secondary institution; and
- Areas to be further explored in focus groups and key informant interviews to be conducted as part of the TSP consultation phase.

2006 Follow-Up Survey of ECE Graduates
When the student survey was conducted for the 2003/2004 Labour Market Update, students were asked if they would be willing to be contacted at a later date to provide information about their employment situation. Of the 527 original respondents, 332 (63%) gave consent to be contacted in the future for a follow-up survey. These students provided their names and contact information. During Phase I of the TSP, an attempt was made to contact each of these 332 students to ask them to participate in the follow-up survey either by mail (paper-and-pencil version), or by email (web-based version). Despite best efforts, and largely due to the expected high level of mobility of students after graduation, the return rate for this survey was only 22%, resulting in 72 completed surveys.

The follow-up survey included 33 items designed to provide information about:
- Type of credential (if any) received
- Current ECE-related employment status
- Characteristics of current ECE work
- Usefulness of skills learned in ECE program
- ECE-related work before and during ECE training
- Ease of finding a job in the ECE field
- Preparedness at graduation
- Relevance of curriculum to skills required
- Involvement in professional development activities
- Further education since graduation from ECE
- Adequacy of current provincial regulations regarding training
- Future plans
- Demographics

Given the small sample size of respondents, any trends identified or conclusions drawn had to be treated with

caution. As a result, the survey results were considered only within the context of all of the other results in the TSP and other recent training-related research. However, a number of findings were worth further investigation in the employer and front-line staff focus groups conducted in Phase II of the project.

2006 ECE Faculty Survey

Faculty who were teaching in ECE departments at 17 different post-secondary institutions across Canada participated in this survey. These included the eight colleges that were involved in the TSP Student Survey and nine additional colleges that participated in the 2003/2004 Labour Market Update.

The post-secondary institutions had a variety of programs and delivery models including one-year certificate, two-year diploma and the Quebec three-year DEC programs; full-time, part-time, continuing education and distance education; and accelerated, workplace and intensive programs. They included institutions that provided programs in both urban and rural areas, and in both English and French languages. Faculty who participated in the survey represented those who taught on a full-time or part-time regular basis and those who taught on a full-time or part-time sessional or contract basis.

The project team worked with ECE program chairs at each post-secondary institution to coordinate the implementation of the survey. Each coordinator identified the total number of ECE faculty in his or her institution and either provided email addresses of the faculty to the project team, or distributed information about the survey on behalf of the project team. Faculty were given the option of completing the survey electronically or being sent a paper copy to complete.

In total, 159 faculty responses were received, an overall response rate of 66%. The range of responses varied by college, from a low of 28% to a high of 100%. Faculty responded between May and August 2006, and almost all participants completed the survey using the on-line format.

The survey included 45 questions designed to gather information about faculty members themselves, including:
- Type of program and delivery model in which they teach
- Employment status and factors that influenced their choice of teaching program
- Prior education and experience
- Involvement in professional development activities
- Job satisfaction and future plans
- Demographics

Faculty perceptions and attitudes about students and child care, including:
- Recent trends in student population
- Relevance of curriculum to skills required
- Student preparedness at graduation
- Practicum placements
- Quality of child care, including directors' leadership and management skills
- Adequacy of current provincial regulations regarding training

The survey also included open-ended questions about rewarding aspects of faculty members' work, challenges (both in their work and in their program), and thoughts about how curriculum might be improved to better meet the needs of early childhood educators as they move into paid employment within the child care sector.

The results were summarized in a report that examined:
- The characteristics of ECE faculty, including demographic information, previous education, prior work experience and reasons for entering the program
- Faculty views about their work and their plans for the future
- The opinions of faculty on the match between curriculum and skills needed by ECEs, characteristics of ECEs entering post-secondary training and adequacy of current regulatory frameworks of training requirements
- Notable trends by faculty age, previous education, employment status and teaching experience, as well as delivery model and program type in which they are teaching
- Areas to be further explored in focus groups and key informant interviews to be conducted as part of the Training Strategy Project

Literature Review and Environmental Scan

A preliminary literature review was conducted during Phase I of the project. It included a summary of relevant studies and reports published since the completion of the literature review for *Working for Change: Canada's Child Care Workforce*. It identified emerging trends, themes, and gaps in information to be collected during the consultation period in Phase II of the project.

Electronic indexes were keyword-searched to identify and select relevant studies through the library system and through the Child Care Resource and Research Unit. Web searches were used to identify training information and resources available through post-secondary institutions, and through sector organizations and networks such as the Canadian Ministers of Education of Canada (CMEC), the Canadian Education Association (CEA), the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) and provincial/territorial ministries or departments responsible for post-secondary education.

The environmental scan collected information about post-secondary education and ECE training programs in each jurisdiction.

Part I outlined the following information about post-secondary education for each province and territory:
- Ministry or department responsible
- Legislation concerning universities, colleges, public and private
- The number and types of post-secondary institutions
- A general description of governance
- Information about Prior Learning Assessment Recognition (PLAR)
- Information about credit transfer within and between jurisdictions
- International credential evaluation
- Average full-time tuition for resident students

Part II outlined the various provincial/territorial systems of certifying, classifying and granting equivalency to individuals with training from other jurisdictions or countries including:
- ECE credential legislation
- ECE credential requirement
- Post-secondary institutions that offer the credential
- Certification/equivalency and classification processes

- The proportion of staff required to have the credential
- The number of credentials issued in the recent academic year

Information on standards for ECE post-secondary training programs, including program standards, competencies, and program approval and monitoring was also gathered and summarized.

The final literature review, completed near the end of the project, incorporated additional studies and reports identified in the key informant interviews and the completed provincial/territorial environmental scans. The information in the environmental scans was organized into provincial and territorial profiles that outline ECE post-secondary education for each jurisdiction. Given the different approaches to post-secondary education across Canada, comparable information was not available for each jurisdiction. However, the environmental scan provides an overview and sets up a process for information collection that can be maintained by the CCHRSC.

The literature review included documents in five defined categories:
- *Academic*—articles prepared within an academic institution including peer-reviewed papers, reports and policy statements.
- *Government*—documents produced by local, provincial/territorial or federal governments
- *Child care professional/training/advocacy/labour groups*—documents published by child care sector organizations, post-secondary institutions, unions, and teachers' federations.
- *Social policy*—reports published by social policy organizations outside of the specific child care sector.
- *International*—selected documents relevant to Canada's child care workforce.

Phase II: Consultation

Focus Groups
Between October 2006 and March 2007, 29 focus groups were held across the country with a range of stake-holder groups. At least one employer focus group was conducted in each province and territory—in person in each province and in the Yukon Territory, and by teleconference in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. Additional focus groups were held with employers in rural areas, employers of home visitors in family child care agencies, front line staff, graduates of accelerated or workplace model ECE post-secondary training programs, pre-kindergarten teachers, licensing officials, employers in related ECEC programs in selected jurisdictions and unions representing staff working in regulated child care centres.

Members of the TSP Steering Committee and the CCHRSC Board of Directors, as well as some of the provincial territorial directors of early childhood education and care served as local organizers and identified possible participants for focus groups, using a list of selection criteria to ensure participants came from a variety of program types and size. Letters of invitation were sent via email, with information about the TSP and the purpose of the focus group.

The development of the focus group protocols was informed by the results of the student, follow-up, and faculty surveys and the preliminary literature review. Employers were asked about the desirable qualities and skills of staff, any perceived gaps in skills and knowledge, views on the appropriateness of the training requirements in their province/territory and their perspective on the employer's role in providing in-service training and ongoing professional development.

The focus groups with other stakeholder groups were intended to get a range of views on education and training gaps, the need for different types of professional development, and opportunities and barriers to accessing professional development activities.

Facilitated Expert Focus Groups
Five facilitated expert focus groups were held with established boards and other bodies with expertise in a particular area and a pan-Canadian perspective. Facilitated discussions were held with:
- The Provincial/Territorial Directors of Early Childhood Education and Care
- The ECE Affinity Group of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges
- The board and member council of the Canadian Child Care Federation
- The board of the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council
- The Training Strategy Project Steering Committee

The facilitators provided a briefing on the project to each expert group and presented findings from Phase I to provide the basis for a focus group discussion. The expert focus groups provided an opportunity to gain a pan-Canadian perspective on the issues and to get initial feedback on the findings, which in turn helped to inform the development of the training strategy.

Key Informant Interviews
Key informants were identified throughout Phases I and II of the project. Specific questions were developed for each key informant to make the best use of their particular expertise. Key informants included international experts, ECE faculty with experience in non-traditional delivery methods, NGOs involved in community-based training, selected provincial government departments/ministries involved in approving post-secondary institutions, certification, or program approvals, and representatives from other sectors involved in training strategies.

A number of reports were produced as part of the project. The detailed reports of the surveys, the focus groups, the facilitated expert focus groups, and the literature review and environmental scans are all available on the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council web site. See Appendix 3 for details.

Phase III: Preparation and Validation of the Training Strategy

Based on the findings from Phases I and II, a strategic model of the Training Strategy was developed and presented to the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council in February 2007. The model was further developed, based on feedback, and presented in workshop format to five key stakeholder groups, who were all meeting in Halifax in June 2007. The five stakeholder groups were:
- ECEC policy-makers, as represented by the Provincial/Territorial Directors of Early Childhood Education and Care
- Post-secondary institutions, as represented by the Atlantic Provinces Community Colleges Consortium
- Labour, as represented by the CUPE National Child Care Working Group
- Employers, trainers, labour groups, and national child care organizations, as represented by the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council
- The Training Strategy Project Steering Committee

The proposed strategy was endorsed by all groups, further developed, and presented in this report.

1.2 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The goals of the Training Strategy project are to improve the consistency and quality of education and training of the early childhood sector across Canada and to increase the size and capacity of the trained child care workforce in Canada to meet identified needs. Phase I of the project involved surveys of students, graduates and faculty in post-secondary ECE training and education. As there are many members of the child care workforce without post-secondary training, mechanisms to assist these staff in earning ECE credentials were examined, rather than other forms of training. In keeping with the goals and the activities of the project, the focus of this report is on: those with, or in the process of acquiring post-secondary credentials in early childhood education, the early childhood education programs offered in post-secondary institutions and the ongoing professional development provided to the trained early childhood workforce.

The training needs of three other groups were not specifically addressed as they were beyond the scope of the study. These included:

Family Child Care Providers

Given the goals of the TSP as described above, the focus of the project has been on post-secondary educational requirements according to provincial/territorial regulatory frameworks. Since no province or territory requires a post-secondary credential to work as a family child care provider, such training needs were not specifically addressed. A major focus of the project was on addressing the needs of employers. There are few employers in the provision of family child care in provinces and territories where family child care providers are individually licensed. However, in provinces with an agency model of family child care, the training issues for home visitors, who for the most part require an ECE credential, and who are employed by a family child care agency, were considered. Employer focus groups in Ontario and Alberta, both of which have agency models, included family child care agency directors, who discussed the specific training needs of home visitors.

Aboriginal Child Care Staff

Addressing the specific needs of the Aboriginal child care workforce was beyond the scope of this project. In a number of provinces and territories much of the Aboriginal child care is the responsibility of the federal, or of a First Nations government. As with other human resources studies undertaken by the CCHRSC, it was felt that the issues could not be addressed within the context of a pan-Canadian study. There are 407 First Nations and Inuit communities in Canada and there are many perspectives on early childhood issues and approaches. A separate study is needed in order to do justice to the specific training needs and concerns within the cultural context of Aboriginal ECEC programs. The CCHRSC may wish to link with the Aboriginal Circle of Learning and the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Council of Canada to discuss how the First Nations communities and other Aboriginal groups may wish to proceed.

Where possible, employers who ran programs that served a largely Aboriginal population were included in focus groups, but the training issues specific to Aboriginal populations or programs were not a focus of the discussions.

School-Age Child Care Staff

Employers who participated in the employer focus groups included a number that operated school-age programs, either as part of an organization that operated both preschool-age and school-age programs, or stand-alone school-age programs. It became evident during the discussions that many of the issues specific to staff working in school-age programs are different from those working in programs for younger children.

- Six provinces and territories do not require post-secondary credentials for staff working in school-age child care. These include British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec, Prince Edward Island, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.
- Some post-secondary institutions offer a school-age course, but usually within a general ECE program that has a focus on younger children.
- The nature of school-age care employment is often part-time, with positions filled by high school, college and university students.
- In focus group sessions, employers in school-age programs noted the need for different qualities and skills in staff, than those identified for providing education and care for pre-school age children

During the consultation phase of the TSP, it became evident that issues related to school-age care and the training needs of staff required specific attention that was beyond the capacity of this project. The issues and concerns of school-age staff regarding the provision of quality environments to older children are often lost within the wider issues of ECEC. A separate project that addresses the specific human resource issues of staff in school-age programs, including working conditions and environments—as well as training gaps, needs and issues is suggested.

One of the biggest challenges in developing a pan-Canadian strategy was developing an approach that was relevant to policy-makers and trainers in every province and territory. The strategy needed to both recognize the significant variations in training requirements, systems infrastructure, access to post-secondary education and the content of ECE-specific training that exist across provinces and territories, and to propose methods that, regardless of where on the continuum they lie, all provinces and territories could employ.

Several reports and background documents were produced throughout the life of the project. A list of these documents, which are all available online on the CCHRSC website, are listed in Appendix 3. These reports contain the detailed findings from Phases I and II of the project.

SECTION 2 – SETTING THE STAGE

In developing a training strategy for the early childhood education and care sector, a number of contextual factors and environmental conditions were considered. For the most part, these are beyond the scope and control of the sector itself, but will have an impact on the implementation and success of the strategy.

2.1 CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

A number of contextual factors have been identified that need to be acknowledged and recognized for their impact on training, as well as on other human resource challenges for this sector.

Labour Force Shortages

Canada is similar to many other industrialized countries in facing challenges related to the size and capacity of its labour force. These challenges are described below.

An aging workforce

According to Statistics Canada, by 2011 almost one-fifth of baby boomers—those born between 1946 and 1964—will be at least 61 years of age. The aging of the population will have an impact on the workforce. That workers are retiring earlier and that fewer young people are entering the labour force are both expected to compound the situation.

- In 1991, 29% of the working age population was between the ages of 45 and 64 years, by 2011, this is expected to increase to 41%.[4]
- Between 1997 and 2000, 43% of people who retired did so before the age of 60, up from 29% between 1987 and 1990.[5]
- Early childhood educators and assistants are also getting older. Between 1991 and 2001, there was a drop of 12% in the number of people in these occupations who were younger than 25 years of age, compared to a 5% drop across all occupations. In the same period of time, there was an 11% increase in the number of early childhood educators and assistants who were older than 40 years of age, compared to a 9% increase across all occupations.[6]

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[4] Human Resources Development Canada. "Challenges of an Aging Workforce: An Overview of the Issue, May 2002". Retrieved from:
http://labour.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/worklife/aw-overview-current-practices-en.cfm, as reported in Malatest and Associates (2003)
The Ageing Workforce and Human Resource Development Implications for Sector Councils. February 2003
http://www.cpsc-ccsp.ca/PDFS/Aging%20Workforce%20Final%20Report.pdf Retrieved April 5, 2007

[5] Statistics Canada. Early Retirement Trends. *Perspective on Labour and Income.* Winter 2001. Vol.13, no.4.
http://www.statcan.ca/english/indepth/75-001/feature/pehi2001013004s4a01.htm Retrieved May 23, 2007

[6] Beach, J.; Bertrand, J.; Forer, B.; Michal, D.; Tougas, J. (2004). *Working for Change: Canada's Child Care Workforce.* (p.19)
Ottawa: Child Care Human Resources Sector Council

Growing skills shortages and emphasis on post-secondary training
- Approximately 70% of jobs in Canada now require some type of post-secondary training.[7]
- The employment prospects for those without post-secondary education are low. The unemployment rate for 25-29 year-olds in this category is 43% higher than for college and university graduates.[8]

Growing dependence on immigration for labour force growth
- Census data show that immigrants who came to Canada during the 1990s, and who were in the labour force in 2001, represented almost 70% of the total growth in the labour force over the decade. If current immigration rates continue, it is possible that immigration could account for virtually all labour force growth by 2011.[9]
- The 2001 census showed that a gap in labour market conditions persisted between immigrants who arrived between 1996 and 2000, and the Canadian-born population. In 2001, 65.8% of recent immigrants aged 25 to 44 were employed, compared with 81.8% of Canadian-born people in the same age group. The unemployment rate of recent immigrants (12.1%) was still nearly twice that of the Canadian-born population (6.4%).[10]

In all sectors, the number of initiatives and recruitment strategies to attract and recruit students and young adults is increasing. The competition from other sectors—with the potential for higher wages, benefits and attractive working conditions—will have an impact on the ability of the early childhood education and care sector to recruit competent people, particularly to jobs in regulated child care. High school guidance counselors and employment counselors alike must be informed as to the benefits of a career in early childhood education and care. The important impact of the immigrant population on labour force growth also underlines the need to develop both the capacity and the appropriate mechanisms to assess and recognize international credentials.

Growth in Numbers of Women in Post-Secondary Institutions

Statistics Canada reports that women now make up the majority of full-time undergraduate students and their enrolment at the graduate level is almost equal to that of men. Women's participation in undergraduate enrollment increased from 53% to 58% during the 1990s.[11]
- Between 1992 and 2001, the number of male university graduates decreased by 1%, whereas the number of women graduates increased by 10%. In 2001, women accounted for almost 60% of graduates.[12]

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[7] Canadian Council on Learning. C*anadian Post-Secondary Education: A Positive Record – An Uncertain Future* December 2006. http://www.ccl-cca.ca/NR/rdonlyres/51C6FE9E-1540-4DD6-AA60-03C8F0001E7F/0/PSEChapterHighlights_E.pdf Retrieved May 25, 2007

[8] Skills Competencies Canada. *Skilled Trades: A Career You Can Build On*. August 2004. http://www.careersintrades.ca/media/backgrounder_eng.pdf Retrieved May 31, 2007

[9] Statistics Canada. "Census of Population: Labour force activity, occupation, industry, class of worker, place of work, mode of transportation, language of work and unpaid work" *The Daily*, February 11, 2003 http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/030211/d030211a.htm Retrieved May 31, Retrieved May 31, 2007

[10] Ibid.

[11] Statistics Canada (2005) *Education Indicators in Canada: Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program 2005* http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/81-582-XIE/81-582-XIE2006001.htm Retrieved May 31, 2007

[12] Statistics Canada (2005) *Education Indicators in Canada: Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program 2005* http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/81-582-XIE/81-582-XIE2006001.htm Retrieved May 31, 2007

- There have also been large increases in the percentages of young women graduating from university. Graduation rates, which measure the percentage of graduates among people at the 'typical' age of graduation, rose generally for both men and women across all fields of study. By 1998, however, the bachelor graduation rate for women was 26%, compared to 21% for men. At the master's level, the female graduation rate almost doubled in seven years, rising from 3% in 1991, to 6% in 1998—when it surpassed the rate for men (5%). Only at the doctoral level did the graduation rate remain higher among men than among women (1.2% compared to 0.7%). For both men and women, the rates doubled in the seven years leading up to 1998.[13]

Given that the vast majority of early childhood educators are women, it is useful to note the trends in women's participation in post-secondary institutions. During the last decade, there has been a persistent trend for growing numbers of women to participate in post-secondary educational pursuits. On the one hand, this trend may result in more women choosing a wider range of careers, leaving fewer to study early childhood education. On the other hand, if the educational requirements for early childhood education and care increase, along with a corresponding increase in wages, it may be an attractive option among post-secondary choices.

Involvement from the Education Sector

In Canada, early childhood education and care programs are generally managed and administered by ministries responsible for social or community services. There are some exceptions—in Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut, this responsibility is housed in the ministry responsible for Education. In Prince Edward Island, the departments of Social Services, Seniors and Education collaborate in managing and supporting early childhood education programs.

Even so, there are emerging trends across Canada that indicate a growing interest and involvement from the education sector, and which may present a unique context for consideration of training options:

Program delivery
- Across Canada, there has been increasing interest and involvement of ministries responsible for education in the development and delivery of early childhood education and care programs. In a number of provinces and territories, pre-kindergarten and/or pre-primary programs are delivered by the education sector (Ontario, Nova Scotia, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Yukon, Manitoba). With the exception of Ontario's long standing junior kindergarten program, these programs are not universal, but are targeted at children who may be at risk for success in school, or are provided in a limited fashion as a pilot program. In other jurisdictions (New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador) short-term school readiness/orientation programs may be offered in selected school districts. Training requirements for teachers to be employed in education-sponsored programs differ, and may or may not require bachelor degrees in education.

[13] Statistics Canada " University Enrolment." *The Daily*, Friday July 30, 2004. http://www.statscan.ca/english/freepub/81-004-XIE/200410/mafe.htm#d Retrieved May 30, 2007

- In some cases (British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador), parents are required to attend the pre-school program with their children. In Alberta, the Department of Education is involved in the delivery of early childhood services for children with diagnosed developmental disabilities. In Prince Edward Island, kindergarten is a universally funded, community-based program, regulated as part of the early childhood education and care system. In this case, the departments of education and social services and seniors share responsibility for kindergarten, with education taking the lead on funding and curriculum support.

- The current trend for education's involvement in ECEC in Canada is consistent with North American and European trends. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reports that in Mexico, preschool education for 3-6 year old children is provided by the state, and almost 90% of children participate in these programs. In the United States, the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) reports that 38 of 50 states now provide for pre-kindergarten programs for four year olds. Many states have announced goals of working toward universal access and some states are now providing preschool programs for three year olds. In Europe, ministries of education have a long tradition of involvement at the early childhood level. Even so, in recent years some European countries have moved to consolidate responsibility for all early childhood education and care to ministries of education.

Increased Employment Opportunities for Early Childhood Educators

The expansion of career opportunities for early childhood educators has been a long-standing priority of the early childhood sector. The 1998 Child Care Sector Study Report, *Our Child Care Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration*, noted that caregivers need an infrastructure to support their growth as part of an early childhood workforce and to broaden their scope beyond child care settings. One of the recommendations of the sector study report was to:

> *Encourage and develop strategies to support caregiver mobility among child care settings and related early childhood services, such as career laddering and career latticing.*[14]

It is evident that there are now many more employment opportunities for early childhood educators with post-secondary credentials, and that the currency of an ECE credential has increased. Early childhood educators are finding employment in several of the initiatives of departments/ministries of education previously noted, as well as in parenting programs, family resource centres and early literacy programs. In recent years, early learning initiatives outside of regulated child care have increased in all provinces and territories, thus providing increased employment and career opportunities for early childhood educators.

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[14] Beach, J.; Bertrand, J.; Cleveland, G. (1998) *Our Child Care Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration* (p. 142) Ottawa: ON Child Care Human Resources Steering Committee

2.2 ENABLING CONDITIONS

In Canada, the responsibility for both education and the development and delivery of ECEC programs is within provincial and territorial jurisdiction. A pan-Canadian training strategy must be considered within the unique context of each of the 13 jurisdictions across the country. It is clear that a training strategy to improve the quality and consistency of early childhood training and increase the size and capacity of the child care work-force will only be effective if such a strategy is part of a broader systematic effort to plan for and implement a comprehensive approach to ECEC.

The impact of a training strategy will be influenced by the conditions that exist to support its directions. These "enabling conditions" include the policy and environmental characteristics in each jurisdiction that have an impact on the availability and quality of training and the capacity and size of the workforce. While the following conditions are vital to the success of a training strategy, the ability to have an impact on these aspects is, for the most part, beyond the scope of this work:

- **Wages and working conditions** for early childhood educators, for example: wage levels, benefits, wage subsidies, well-defined job descriptions and the work environment.
- **Provincial/territorial regulatory frameworks**, including requirements for type and length of training, requirements for professional development, certification and equivalency processes and required numbers of trained early childhood educators.
- **Recruitment and retention strategies**, including career awareness campaigns, student bursaries, assessment of foreign credentials, mentoring programs, availability of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) and opportunities for career advancement.
- **Public policy**, including operating and capital funding for regulated programs, funding for early childhood training and professional development, the extent of partnerships with other sectors, family policy initiatives—such as maternity and parental leave provisions and benefits, and federal/provincial/territorial (FPT) initiatives or agreements regarding training—within and beyond the early childhood sector.
- **Access to post-secondary education and training**, including availability of certificate, diploma, and degree granting programs, affordable tuition, flexible delivery models, and potential for articulation agreements between colleges and universities.
- **Professional partnerships**, including strong and sustainable early childhood professional organizations, partnerships and linkages among post-secondary institutions, shared responsibility for professional development, and ongoing communication among colleges, universities, centres, organizations and government.
- **Research, data and evaluation** to support the development of curriculum at the post-secondary level, support development of early learning frameworks, evaluation of exemplary practices, and assessment of the impact of demographic and labour force trends on the future of the ECEC sector.

2.3 OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

Occupational standards are written descriptions of the required skills, abilities, and core knowledge required to do a specific occupation in a capable fashion, and the behaviours that are acceptable with recipients of the service and with colleagues.

They form a foundation for much of the human resources development work of sector councils and provide a framework for training and development in the sector.

Occupational standards are used to:
- Inform and guide curriculum development of post-secondary education and training
- Help employers articulate the skills they need in their particular workplace
- Form the basis of certification of practitioners and accreditation of post-secondary programs
- Provide recognized benchmarks of best practices
- Form the basis of job descriptions, and set objectives for practice and in performance appraisal
- Support career awareness and recruitment, career development, and inform career paths
- Identify professional development needs

Occupational standards are a foundation of the Training Strategy. Their relevance is discussed further in the sections that follow.
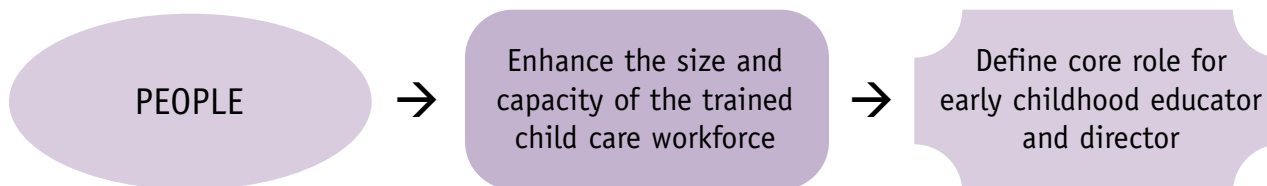
2.4 THE TRAINING STRATEGY

The contextual factors, the enabling conditions and the occupational standards provide a background for the Training Strategy and identify the conditions that will have an impact on its effectiveness. The data collection and consultation phases of the project provided the information and identified the issues to be addressed in the strategy. Together these findings resulted in the proposed three-pronged Training Strategy, outlined in the strategic diagram at the beginning of the report. Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the report provide details for each of the three areas of the strategy. Each of these three sections is organized around three main questions:

- **What has been done?** summarizes relevant recent Canadian studies and identifies international trends that inform the strategy.
- **What have we learned in the Training Strategy Project?** provides the key findings from Phases I and II of the project.
- **What is happening now?** identifies current activities that were taken into account in developing the strategy.
- **Moving Forward** outlines the recommended strategy in each section and provides proposed approaches for addressing the strategy.

SECTION 3 – PEOPLE: ENHANCING THE SIZE AND CAPACITY OF THE TRAINED EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE

OECD societies are today moving away from traditional notions of "child care" toward more developmental ambitions for young children. They expect early childhood centres to be the foundation stage of lifelong learning, to deal sensitively with immigrant and cultural issues, to respond appropriately to special needs children and to provide individualized support to every child in moments of vulnerability or stress. ECEC professionals and teachers will also be expected to participate in the evaluation of achievement and learning. Increasingly, they will be trained to perceive the centre as a learning organization requiring intensive collective participation in strategic planning, self-evaluation and professional development planning. In sum, a new ECEC professional profile is emerging.[15]

PEOPLE → Enhance the size and capacity of the trained child care workforce → Define core role for early childhood educator and director

3.1 WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

Over the last 10 years, a number of Canada-wide studies have been undertaken that have implications for the TSP. The studies include those that examined human resource issues in the child care sector, quality in early childhood settings, and the skills and competencies required for the early childhood workforce.

The Child Care Sector Study

In 1996, Human Resources Development Canada, along with a 36-member Steering Committee[16] undertook a child care sector study, one of a series of studies that examined human resource challenges facing various sectors of the economy. It was the first such study of a "social services" sector. The study provided an overview of the child care workforce, of provincial/territorial regulatory requirements and of the post-secondary institutions and professional organizations that provided early childhood education and professional development, estimates of future supply and demand, and identified three main challenges: work environment, skills, and recognition and respect. The resulting 1998 sector study report *Our Child Care Workforce: From*

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[15] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2004). *Early childhood education and Care Policy: Canada Country Note (childhood education and care policy: Canada country note* (187). Paris: Author

[16] The Steering Committee was a precursor to the Child Care Human Resources Round Table, established in 2000, which in turn became the CCHRSC in the fall of 2003.

Recognition to Remuneration[17] identified the need for a commitment to a trained and competent workforce. It recommended minimum training and education requirements of a two-year post-secondary ECE or equivalent for centre-based staff. It also discussed the key role of the director as the "gatekeeper" to program quality and the need for additional educational qualifications for directors.

You Bet I Care!

The *You Bet I Care!* project undertaken between 1998 and 2000 involved three studies:
1. wages, working conditions and practices in child care centres;
2. a study of quality in child care centres; and
3. a study of quality in regulated family child care.

Study 2 collected quality data from 318 classrooms in 234 centres.[18] *Caring and learning environments: quality in child care centres across Canada*[19] identified ECE-specific post-secondary education as a key predictor of quality and found that higher quality programs were associated with child care staff with post-secondary ECE credentials. The report recommended that by 2007, all staff responsible for a group of children must have completed at least a two-year post-secondary program in early childhood education, and that advanced training in program leadership and administration be available for those who were or who wished to become centre directors.

Further analysis of the *You Bet I Care!* data set conducted for the Child Care Resource and Research Unit's *Quality by Design* project compared the results of the classrooms that scored 6 or 7 on the ECERS-R/ITERS[20] 7-point scale, with those that scored 3 or below.[21] The higher scoring programs were more likely than the lower scoring programs to have staff with at least a two-year ECE credential; use peer assessment, formal self-assessment and/or regularly engage in goal definition; provide in-service training on anti/bias curriculum, cultural diversity, or caring for children with special needs; and provide paid release for the director and teaching staff to engage in professional development.

[17] Beach, J., Bertrand, J., and Cleveland, G. (1998). *Our childcare workforce: From recognition to remuneration: More than a labour of love*. Ottawa: Child Care Human Resources Steering Committee, c/o Canadian Child Care Federation.

[18] As measured by Arnett (1989) Caregiver interaction scale. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*. Vol.10. p. 541-552, and by Harms, T., Clifford, R. & Cryer, D. (1998). Early childhood environmental rating scale: Revised edition. New York: Teachers College Press. Harms, T., Cryer, D. & Clifford, R. (2003). *Infant/toddler environment rating scale: Revised edition*. New York: Teachers College Press.

[19] Goelman, H., Doherty, G., Lero, D., LaGrange, A. & Tougas, J. (2000). *You Bet I Care! Caring and learning environments: quality in child care centres across Canada*. Guelph, ON: Centre for Families, Work and Well-Being, University of Guelph

[20] The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised, and the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale are designed to assess group programs for children of preschool through kindergarten age, 2 1/2 through 5 (ECERS-R), and for infants and toddlers up to 30 months of age (ITERS). Each scale contains numerous items organized into 7 subscales. For further information on the scales see: http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers/

[21] Friendly, M.; Beach, J.; Doherty, G (2005). *What do Canada's "best" centres and "worst" centres look like? A descriptive analysis of highest and lowest scoring centres in the You Bet I Care! data sets*. Toronto: ON. Childcare Resource and Research Unit, University of Toronto

What's in a Name?

At a November 2003 National Training Symposium sponsored by the Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCF) and Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC), considerable discussion took place about the need to find an appropriate "name" for the provision of care and education of young children and for those who provide this service. Following the symposium, a discussion paper was prepared for the CCCF.[22] The paper notes the importance of a name that can be become widely recognized and understood by all—such as "nurse" in the health care sector—and that brings with it a professional identity that reflects the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for the work. Names discussed included early childhood practitioners, child care professionals, early learning and child care practitioners, child care workers and early childhood educators. The paper was intended for discussion within the sector and did not put forward a recommendation; however, it reported on other surveys conducted, where the preferred term for the people was "early childhood educator" and the preferred term for the practice was "early childhood education".

Occupational Standards for Practitioners and for Administrators

As noted In Section 1, the Canadian Child Care Federation, in partnership with the Association of Community Colleges of Canada, launched a significant research agenda focused on human resource issues facing the early childhood education and care sector in Canada. One of the outcomes of this work was the development of the 2003 Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners.[23]

Following the development of Occupational Standards for ECE Practitioners, the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council undertook the development of Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators. These standards were confirmed during a Canada-wide consultation process in 2006, and provide the description of knowledge, skills and abilities required of those who manage a variety of early childhood settings.[24]

The Labour Market Update Study

In 2003, the CCHRSC undertook a Labour Market Update Study (LMU) to identify key changes since the release of *Our Child Care Workforce*. The LMU found that job satisfaction was the lowest among those working in regulated full-day child care centres. In addition to the poor wages and benefits, reasons for low job satisfaction included the lack of leadership in curriculum, pedagogy and human resources, resulting in less than desirable quality programs for children and working environments for staff; the lack of access to training and professional development; and spending much of the working day on custodial activities rather than on early childhood activities and practices for which they had been trained. The study also found that significant numbers of ECE students were not planning to work in regulated child care at all, or only for a short period of time. Many were planning on seeking employment in the formal education sector, or in "related" ECEC programs.[25]

[22] Ferguson, E. (2004) *What's in a Name? Discussion Paper*. Ottawa: Canadian Child Care Federation

[23] Doherty, G. (2003) *Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners*. Ottawa: ON. Canadian Child Care Federation

[24] Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2006). *Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators*. Ottawa: ON. Author

[25] Related programs include family resource centres, early intervention programs, programs for children with autism, the elementary school system, home visiting programs, and early childhood services in hospital based settings.

ECE students from 10 post-secondary institutions across the country surveyed for the LMU reported that they felt well-prepared to work with typically-developing children; somewhat less prepared to work with professionals in other education and social services sectors, with parents and other adults in their work environments; and considerably less prepared to work with children with special needs.

The LMU study identified the importance of post-secondary training for ECEs, the need for pedagogical leadership, the weak culture of human resources management and the skill drain from child care to other ECE-related positions. The LMU's eight recommendations focused on the CCHRSC serving as a framework to address human resource issues. Recommendations relevant to supporting a skilled workforce included developing recruitment and retention strategies, enhancing management and leadership practices and supports, and increasing attachment to professional, labour and child care organizations.

The Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care

Between 1998 and 2004 the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) undertook a thematic review of early childhood education and care in 20 countries, including Canada. A similar process was undertaken in each country: a background report was prepared by the country according to an established framework and addressing a common set of questions. The background report provided context for an international review team of experts who visited early childhood programs in the country under review and prepared a "Country Note", in which they identified issues observed and made recommendations to address them.

In the Canada Country Note, the OECD review team noted that training of child care staff did not focus on learning or pedagogy and that there was usually no wider professional reference group for staff, or professional development, as there is in the school system. They recommended that *Canada Review ECEC professional profiles,[26] improve recruitment levels, and strengthen the initial and in-service training of staff*. They proposed a specific early childhood professional profile trained to work with both young children and families. They noted that the emergence of this new professional profile has in other countries led to higher training levels, better pay and conditions for staff, which in turn has led to improved outcomes for children.[27]

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[26] "professional profile," a term often used in the European context is usually referred to as an "occupational profile" in Canada. It provides information on the educational qualifications required, main duties, working conditions, salary and benefits, and career advancement possibilities.

[27] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2004). *Early Childhood Education and Care Policy: Canada Country Note*. Paris: Author

3.2 WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM THE TRAINING STRATEGY PROJECT?

Early childhood education graduates are generally well-prepared for work in the sector; additional education is needed for program directors[28]

There was general consensus—among ECE students and faculty, early childhood educators, child care employers, licensing officials and experts who completed surveys or participated in focus groups—that ECE post-secondary education and training provides graduates with the skills and knowledge needed to work in regulated child care. Most are very well prepared to work with typically developing children, are able to undertake appropriate program planning and can communicate quite well with parents and with other staff. They were less prepared to work with children with special needs and with other professionals in education or social services settings.

Employers[29] appeared to be realistic in their expectations for new graduates, and acknowledged that all new graduates—regardless of the sector—need a period of mentoring or coaching. Employers agreed that new graduates are not ready for leadership roles, to work with children with special needs, or to work closely with parents. However, they also agreed that the solution was not to add more material to a two-year college program, but to introduce mentoring or coaching support to new graduates through this period, thereby increasing the likelihood that they would stay in the early childhood sector.

In addition to training, employers across the country cited personal attitudes and aptitudes as important qualities in a prospective ECE employee. Desirable qualities include a genuine, sincere and conscientious desire to work with children; being enthusiastic, nurturing, self-motivated and flexible; and having common sense. In some areas of the country, employers noted that if they are not able to find suitable ECE graduates who possess the required maturity and attitude toward the work, their preference is to hire someone without the necessary credentials, but the right personal attributes and attitudes, take on the responsibility of on-the-job training/ supervision, and require the employee to enroll in some type of distance or continuing education program.

There are some concerns about the calibre of some students

Even though most agreed that ECE graduates were prepared for work in the sector, there were some concerns:
- Several employers expressed concerns about the current absence of stringent entrance requirements in community colleges, and that the "first come, first served" entrance policy contributed to a wide range of student academic abilities. Many observed that this also resulted in a higher drop-out rate in the college ECE programs. Employers were also concerned about how high school guidance counselors and Human Resource Social Development Canada (HRSDC) employment counselors appeared to be screening out strong students/individuals for entry to ECE programs, citing lack of opportunity and wages.

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[28] See the student and faculty survey reports for detailed analysis on views of the ECE programs at http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca/

[29] It should be noted that in most cases, the employer was also the program director. For purposes of the TSP focus groups, the employer was considered the person responsible for hiring and supervising of staff and the overall management of the centre.

- Overall, about half of the ECE faculty perceived a decrease in the academic calibre of students over the last five years, about 35% perceived a decrease in student GPA at graduation, and about 30% perceived an increase in the number of students not completing their program. However, there was considerable variation in opinion depending on the length of the program in which the faculty were teaching:
    - o 61% in one-year certificate programs perceived a decrease in the calibre of students, compared to 55% in the three-year DEC programs, and 49% in the two-year diploma programs.
    - o 29% teaching in a DEC program thought there had been an increase in the calibre of students, compared to 11% in the two-year diploma programs and 5% in the one-year certificate programs.

Employers noted that while it appears that the calibre of ECE graduates may have decreased in recent years, this must be balanced against the reality that the nature of work in early childhood education and care programs has changed, and expectations have increased. In addition to working with children and families, ECEs must be part of a team, able to articulate their philosophy and curriculum approach, integrate thoughts and knowledge, work with other professionals, and deal with issues related to culture, a range of children's special needs, family dysfunction, and family emergencies.

Directors need more education

There was wide support for increased training for directors. While 67% of faculty thought that the length of ECE training for front-line staff was adequate, only 31% thought the amount of training for directors was adequate. Of those that provided comments on suggested length of training:

- 31.7% thought directors should have a related degree (e.g. in early childhood education, child and family studies, or child and youth care); and
- 68.3% thought directors should have a post-diploma credential, though were not specific about the nature of the credential.

Front-line staff with ECE credentials were also supportive of additional requirements for directors. They indicated that the director sets the pace and tone for the program, and that the director's understanding of child development and curriculum approaches had an impact on how their own ideas and suggestions were received and acted on, and that this level of understanding contributed to problem solving approaches that were richer and more appropriate to the situations at hand.

Employers generally agreed that "leadership" and "management" are two very different concepts, and that in the early childhood sector, a director needed to have an academic foundation in early childhood education and care in order to provide the pedagogical leadership that was required to supervise, mentor, and motivate ECEs in their practice. A majority agreed that there should be additional post-secondary/post-diploma programs for directors/administrators to help them to be capable and confident in carrying out their responsibilities. They also noted that quite often, the type of training they need is not necessarily offered by the community college system. Many reported that they linked with programs developed for women in business, women in management, computer based training for accounting and financial management, and other types of courses that are more generic to business administration.

The most commonly suggested areas of additional training for directors include:
- Human resources leadership
- Human resources management
- Financial management
- Early childhood pedagogy
- Administration

Early childhood education graduates have expanded job opportunities

Early childhood education programs are increasingly training for the broader early childhood workforce. For the last several years there has been an emphasis on broadening the early childhood role—where people with a core body of knowledge can work with young children in a variety of settings. Eighty-eight percent of respondents to the faculty survey indicated that they were preparing graduates to work in regulated child care settings for children zero to six years of age, but more than half said they were also preparing graduates to work in a broad range of ECEC settings.

This effort has proven very successful as ECEs are in demand in a variety of settings, including family resource centres, early intervention programs, programs for children with autism, classroom assistants in the elementary school system, home visiting programs and early childhood services in hospital based settings.

The education sector is attracting more ECEs

In surveys and focus groups students, employers, and early childhood educators reported a growing interest in the education sector as a career option.

The 2006 Student Survey found that:
- 26% of respondents thought acquiring an ECE credential was a good first step to an education degree
- Approximately 11% intended to work in the education sector upon graduation as classroom assistants
- When asked about employment plans five years into the future, this number increased to 21%, including 15% who planned on teaching in the education sector

In focus group sessions, employers in almost every jurisdiction reported that early childhood educators were constantly recruited by the education sector for employment as teaching/classroom assistants. Some jurisdictions were also recruiting ECEs for new pre-kindergarten and early literacy programs. Most employers reported significant turnover because of movement to the education sector.

Many ECEs attending focus groups confirmed their intent either to move to the education system when such employment became available, or to further their post-secondary education in order to work in the education sector.

Employers also predicted that the growing number of articulation agreements between colleges and universities would result in early childhood educators having credentials that would be better suited to positions in the education system. They felt this to be true even though there are few articulation agreements with universities that allow early childhood educators to enter degree-granting programs in the faculty of education.

Many graduates are choosing not to work in child care and many ECEs are leaving

According to the responses to the student survey, 48% were planning on working in a child centre or *centre de la petite enfance* (CPE) upon graduation. In five years, 25% planned to work directly with children in a child care centre or CPE—10% as a supervisor and 8% in a preschool/nursery school. Faculty also reported a perceived decrease in the numbers of students planning to work in regulated child care programs.

Many employers in regulated child care centres indicated that they receive few applications for job vacancies, the quality of the applications is lower than in the past, and in some situations, the employers are returning to working "on the floor" in order to meet ratio requirements. The recruitment and retention challenges in centre-based child care were not as pronounced in family child care. Employers in family child care agencies suggested that recruiting experienced staff with ECE credentials to home visitor positions was not usually a problem and that turnover in those positions was not a concern.[30] They noted that home visitor positions are often viewed as a promotion for front-line child care staff, are less stressful, and have a greater degree of autonomy and flexibility.

In some jurisdictions employers indicated that ECEs were moving "in droves" to the education system, in part for better wages, shorter hours and school vacations. They noted that almost every other type of early childhood-related job outside the child care sector paid better wages and benefits, had shorter hours and was less stressful.

Employers agreed that turnover is higher among younger ECEs than among older, more experienced staff. In some regions, employers felt that young people have different career aspirations from the previous generation. They see themselves having many jobs over their working lives, and possibly several different careers.

Front-line staff suggested that they might not be able to afford to continue working in child care, but were looking forward to seeking employment in related ECEC employment. They were pleased that there were so many job opportunities and different settings to work with young children; some suggested this was one of the reasons they chose the field.

In focus groups all across Canada, employers noted that increased employment options for early childhood educators had an impact on their ability to recruit staff with post-secondary credentials. In one province it was noted that not a single person in the 2007 ECE graduating class intended to work in a regulated early learning and child care program.

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[30] Home visitors usually have backgrounds in early childhood education or family studies. They recruit, approve and provide ongoing training and support to family child care providers. They help providers plan activities for children, provide advice about child development, nutrition and child guidance, and they regularly ensure the home is safe and conforms to the requirements of the province's regulations or standards.

Wages are key but job satisfaction also plays an important role in turnover

ECEs reported that their own work was enhanced by the ability to work side-by-side with other trained ECEs, and that they were better able to focus on their work when they were not required to constantly monitor what an untrained person was doing.

Because of the acute shortage of trained ECEs and the high turnover, the work environment often led to conditions that created job dissatisfaction among staff, both with and without formal credentials.
- In several focus groups, ECEs with certificates/diplomas/degrees said they resented doing the same work as untrained staff. There was a feeling among the trained ECEs that while they wished to work as a team, that not everyone on the team needed to have the same level of responsibility, nor should they all be referred to as early childhood educators, when some had no professional education to earn this designation.
- New graduates with little experience were often thrust into supervisory positions almost immediately. Untrained staff with years of experience expressed resentment at having to "show the ropes" to a much less experienced new ECE graduate who may have considerable theoretical but little practical knowledge. In some situations, the new graduate, because of the ECE credential, was eligible for a higher wage subsidy or bonus than the untrained staff person who was expected to act as a mentor.
- ECEs reported little wage differential between themselves and staff without credentials. They felt that it placed little value on ECE training and was a disincentive to further education and professional development.

Many ECEs felt that they could not practice early childhood education, and that a good part of their day was taken up with custodial/janitorial tasks often being performed outside regular hours. They reported little wage differences to acknowledge their credential and low wages overall.

The pre-kindergarten teachers believed they had a "dream" job, even though they did not always have the respect from elementary teachers—and at times from parents—that they felt they deserved. They indicated that they were able to put their education in early childhood education into practice, the job was less stressful than in a child care centre, they had better wages and working conditions, and the working hours and days left them more time with their own families. Almost all agreed that if their job ended tomorrow, they would not return to work in regulated child care programs, as the hours were too long, wages were poor, there was limited recognition for the work and there were limitations to working in a highly regulated system.

Many of those who were previously directors of child care centres reported that they would not return to these positions as they were always in a no-win situation—whether in trying to accommodate parents' needs, recruit staff or deal with low budgets.

The recruitment and retention challenges often outweigh concerns about training and content

For the most part, issues related to recruitment and retention overshadow any concerns that employers had about gaps in professional education. Some employers reported that they have had to close spaces in their centres because they are unable to employ staff—either trained or untrained. Many employers noted that they

are not able to comply with provincial standards for required numbers of trained early childhood educators, and licensing officials noted the increase in requests for variances[31] in meeting the regulations on the required number of trained staff.

The labour force shortage and the resulting focus on recruitment, rather than on the skills of ECE graduates was less pronounced in the focus groups in Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia than in other parts of the country. While not necessarily representative of their provincial situation, employers in the focus groups in these three provinces still appeared to have the capacity to hire trained staff, even if the staff did not always meet their needs.

International trends show an increase in the integration of "child care" and "education" and professional profile for the early childhood sector

In its reports of the thematic reviews of ECEC,[32] the OECD identifies two main approaches to the provision of early child programs:
- "Split" systems, with programs for children 0 to 3, usually under the auspices of a social welfare ministry, and services for children from 3 to compulsory school age under the auspices of the education ministry; and
- "Integrated" systems with responsibility for all children under compulsory school age resting with one ministry—usually the ministry of education.

In split systems, the programs for younger children are considered care and the programs for older children are considered education. Staff working with younger children have lower levels of training and are generally paid considerably less than staff working with older children. In integrated systems staff responsible for a group of children usually have university-level credentials, though they may be assisted by staff with less training.

The OECD noted a trend of increased cooperation in both policy and practice in many countries, and integration of early childhood programs for all children under school age within the education system in countries such as Sweden, the United Kingdom, Spain and New Zealand. The report suggests that in integrated systems, a core professional profile has emerged—pedagogues, or early childhood educators—with university degrees or similar qualifications. These professionals are supported by trained assistants as part of the work team.[33]

Oberhuemer[34] developed a categorization system that describes the overall role of the practitioner with responsibility for a group of children, and the type of training each category of professional has. She outlines

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[31] In many jurisdictions, regulations allow a centre to be licensed without the required number of employees with early childhood credentials, provided the centre is able to demonstrate their efforts to recruit staff with training. This "variance" allows the centre to continue to operate as a licensed program, and generally requires the untrained employee to complete the required courses for an ECE credential within a specified period of time.

[32] Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (2001) *Starting Strong: Early childhood education and Care*, and (2006) S*tarting Strong II: Early childhood education and Care* Paris. Author

[33] Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (2006) Starting Strong II (p161)

[34] Oberhuemer (2000) Conceptualizing the professional role in early childhood centres: emerging profiles in four European countries *Early Childhood Research Practice* Vol. 2 number 2

four professional roles in different countries:
- The early childhood pedagogue, trained to work with children zero to compulsory school age, as in Sweden, Finland and Spain
- The preschool specialist, trained to work with children in the two to three years before compulsory school, as in Belgium, Greece and in Luxembourg
- The teacher, trained to work in preschool and primary education, as in France, Ireland and Netherlands
- The social pedagogue trained for to work in various fields, including early childhood education, such as in Denmark (to work with people zero to 99), Germany and in Luxembourg (to work in various settings outside the school system)

Moss[35] identifies two "core professions" that have emerged in countries with well integrated early childhood systems: the "early childhood teacher" in New Zealand, Spain and Sweden and the "pedagogue" in the other Nordic countries. He notes that in all countries with a core profession there are also assistants (though New Zealand has set a target of 2012 to require all early childhood teachers to have a three-year post-secondary diploma).

3.3 WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

The expectations of the job are expanding

A key theme from the focus groups is an increased sense of professionalization and maturation of the ECE sector, with a deeper understanding of indicators of quality in early childhood programs, and heightened expectations for skills and knowledge required for early childhood educators.

Licensing officials noted that in the last five years, the pressure to demonstrate adherence to quality indicators has increased, with pressures coming from parents, boards, other professionals, early childhood educators and licensing officials themselves. Employers note that ECEs are now required to deal with changing family dynamics, cultural sensitivities and greater linkages with child welfare authorities.

Qualification processes and requirements vary significantly across the country

Qualification requirements for staff range from none in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, to 2/3 with a two-year diploma or three-year DEC in Manitoba and Quebec. Provinces and territories differ in the percentage of staff required to have a post-secondary credential in ECE. As well, jurisdictions differ in how they define the required credential—in some this is a one-year certificate, in others this is a two-year diploma. Some jurisdictions recognize both types of credentials and have provided for recognition of both in their regulations.

In recent years, some jurisdictions have introduced requirements for a minimal orientation course—these requirements range from a 45-hour to a 120-hour course for those who are not required to have a post-

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[35] Moss, P. (2004). *The early childhood workforce in "developed" countries: basic structures and education*. UNESCO Policy Brief on Early Childhood, Number 27. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001374/137402e.pdf Retrieved May 6, 2007

secondary credential. Manitoba is the only jurisdiction with post-diploma requirements to be classified as an ECE Level III, the requirement to be a director.[36] Six jurisdictions—Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Yukon—have all increased the amount of training or the percentage of trained staff required over the last 10 years.

Stakeholders are concerned about increasing training requirements for front-line staff due to recruitment difficulties and costs, but there is more support for increasing requirements for directors

While all stakeholders agreed that increasing the length of ECE training and the number of people in a centre with ECE credentials would support quality programs, there is a hesitancy to recommend that provinces and territories revise regulations to increase training requirements. This is particularly true in those areas of the country where there is limited access to training as it is.

Most government stakeholders indicated they were not in favour of making existing regulations more stringent. Most jurisdictions—through their licensing divisions—are already in a position of needing to approve variances/ exceptions for licenses for existing centres that are unable to recruit enough trained staff to meet current regulations.[37] However, they noted the important role and influence of directors and their need for additional training and education. They were interested in exploring non-regulatory approaches such as recognizing additional director training through funding or by supporting direct professional development for directors.

Some employers and labour groups noted that provincial/territorial training requirements should not be so stringent as to discourage entry to the sector by those who are deemed to be "naturals" with children— although it was acknowledged that these people need to be encouraged to then participate in ECE training, so as to gain the theory to support their practice.

The one area where there does seem to be a growing consensus relates to training requirements for directors. There appears to be widespread recognition that the director needs to have strong early childhood credentials, an understanding of curriculum, and skills in pedagogical leadership. There is agreement that the director is not just an administrator with business/financial skills: to "manage" and to "lead" are two very different things. The TSP team received a range of suggestions/opinions regarding training for Directors—which included increased requirements such as post-diploma credentials or degrees.

Across the country, experts who support increased educational requirements for staff indicated a dilemma. Higher training requirements will lead to greater respect and recognition—but without corresponding remuneration there is little likelihood of attracting stronger students who are willing to study for three or four years to become early childhood educators. It was also noted that unless national standards are in place, rural and remote areas of the country will lose out if there is a shift to higher requirements for training.

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[36] See Appendix 1 for details of provincial/territorial qualification requirements.

[37] It was also noted that licensing officials are often approving "appropriate" staff based on what employers say, rather than on any assessment of skills, knowledge, and/or attitude.

Recruitment, retention and the related educational needs of educators in regulated child care centres have together become a major focus for employers, organizations, and governments

The significant shortage of ECEs in child care settings will limit expansion possibilities in much of the country. Recruitment is a major issue especially in rural, remote and northern communities. In the Atlantic region, the Council of Atlantic Premiers has identified recruitment and retention as a priority for the region—Directors for Early Childhood Education and Care in these provinces are now collaborating on developing a strategy.

While the TSP was underway, the CCHRSC undertook a Career Promotions and Recruitment Strategy (CPRS), to promote early childhood education as a valuable and viable career option, and to encourage the pursuit of skills development and enhanced training among the existing workforce. In addition to the series of strategic initiatives identified in its action plan, the Career Promotions and Recruitment Strategy noted that there was a strong preference for the term educator (or éducatrice in French) rather than child care worker. It will be important for the recommendations of TSP to link closely with the activities of the CPRS.

A number of provinces and territories are undertaking or are planning recruitment and retention strategies. The table on the following pages describes selected highlights[38] of recruitment, retention, and training Initiatives across the country. Many of these initiatives have been launched in collaboration with provincial/ territorial child care organizations.

Highlights of Provincial Territorial Recruitment, Retention, and Training Initiatives

AB	In May, 2007, Alberta announced a $1.5 million Children's Services Child Care Bursary, to offset the costs of formal education to enhance leadership capacities of those who currently are employed in positions requiring leaderships, as well as for those interested in becoming leaders, who work in child care programs.
BC	BC provides bursaries for early childhood students, and has recently broadened the eligibility criteria and enhanced funding for the program, resulting in increased numbers of students who are able to participate.
MB	*Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Tuition Support Conditional Grant* of up to $4,000 for first year ECE students; students must enrol immediately in second year of program, and commit to two years' employment in regulated child care. Manitoba has also introduced a Recruitment Fund to attract former ECEs back to the regulated child care sector. Priority is given to those centres that have difficulty in recruiting qualified ECEs.
NB	A Recruitment Strategy has been addressed by *Early Childhood Care and Education New Brunswick/Soins et éducation á la petite enfance Nouveau Brunswick* in their 2007-2012 strategic plan. The province is working in collaboration with ECCENB/SEPENB to develop a professional development strategy and action plan for the sector. Early childhood curricula have been developed in French and English. The Distance Education Training Initiative provided 100% funding for staff to take one year certificate program over a four year period; currently, the Early Childhood Trust Fund provides funding support for training.

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[38] The information contained in the table is not intended to be comprehensive or exhaustive. Rather, these highlights are intended to provide a description of the range of initiatives undertaken across the country.

NL	NL has launched a multi-faceted HR strategy to support certified early childhood educators and to promote recruitment and retention. Initiatives include: Educational Supplement; Income Enhancement; bursaries for ECE students; Child Care Workforce Industrial Adjustment Strategy; funding for College of the North Atlantic; and funding for entry level students to gain higher levels of certification
NS	NS provides bursaries for ECE students; funding for post secondary programs; a provincial Workforce Strategy is currently under development. Funding has been provided to a francophone provincial early childhood resource centre to deliver workshops. Funding has been provided to College de l'Acadie for a two year ECE Diploma Program.
NT	Regional Aboriginal HR Development Agreement holders receive funds through First Nations Inuit Child Care initiative; some of these funds are used for training purposes.
NU	Regional Aboriginal HR Development Agreement holders receive funds through First Nations Inuit Child Care initiative; some of these funds are used for training purposes.
ON	In July 2007, the Ontario government announced $12 million to establish the College of Early Childhood Educators—the first such self-regulating body in Canada—and to provide improved access to training for practitioners who wish to upgrade their qualifications in order to earn an ECE diploma. The College will be a self governing body with a mandate to: • Set standards of professional practice and ethics that demonstrate respect for diversity and sensitivity to multiculturalism • Promote excellence in the practice of the profession • Establish the requirements for professional qualifications • Maintain a public registry of members • Establish a public complaints process • Discipline members for professional misconduct or incompetence • Set requirements for professional development Membership in the College will be required for everyone wishing to use the title of early childhood educator and practice early childhood education
PE	In 2006/2007 funding was provided to three provincial organizations to deliver professional development training and workshops for early childhood educators and directors. This year, funding will be provided to the same three organizations for PD for educators and directors. For directors, the new quality enhancement grant will be providing funding specifically for director training. A grant of up to $2000 per staff person is now available ($500 per course, up to maximum of four courses) to complete studies for those who need additional courses to meet certification requirements.
PQ	In 2000, Quebec launched a recruitment campaign to promote the profession of early childhood educator entitled *Besoin de toi!* In 2004, promotion efforts were directed at school age child care providers *Carrière pleine de vies!* Bursaries are available for full time early childhood education students.
SK	A provincial sector study was completed in January 2006; SK encourages untrained staff in regulated child care to work toward an ECE credential by providing tuition reimbursement up to $150 per course, based on successful completion of the course.
YT	Yukon's "Partners for Children" is funded by CAPC (Public Health Agency of Canada). "Partners for Children" provides professional development activities (workshops) for early childhood educators at no cost. This program works in partnership with the Yukon College to extend credit for participation in four workshops combined with follow up work at the college—those who complete this work are able to obtain one Yukon College credit for an ECE elective course (ECE106).

3.4 MOVING FORWARD

Staff with post-secondary credentials in early childhood education are key to quality early ECEC experiences for young children. Early childhood education credentials offer a range of career opportunities in related programs and a career path for educators. The ECEC sector is in need of a defined profile to increase awareness of the scope and importance of the work, and to provide a professional identity for its members.

The strategic direction recommended for the early childhood workforce is to define two core professional roles:
  • **Early Childhood Educator**[39]
  • **Early Childhood Director**[40]

The proposed approaches to move forward on the strategic direction include the following:

Require a provincially/territorially approved post-secondary credential in early childhood education for the core roles

  • The steps to improve quality and pedagogy in child care programs across jurisdictions bring an increased demand for a solid knowledge of pedagogy and the skills to translate observation into appropriate programming along with expectations of greater collaboration between the ECEC and kindergarten workforces. During the Canada review, the OECD team noted that greater integration of ECEC and kindergarten would result in the emergence of a specific early childhood professional.[41]

  • Recognizing the variations in educational requirements across provinces and territories, we propose that, initially, the minimum requirement for an early childhood educator be the current post-secondary credential requirement in each province/territory. For example, in provinces and territories with a two-year diploma or three-year DEC as the standard for ECE qualifications, that would be the minimum requirement for an early childhood educator; in provinces and territories with a one-year certificate as the standard, the minimum would be the certificate.

  • An early childhood director is an early childhood educator with specialization in leadership and in management.
    o It is recommended that post-secondary institutions, professional organizations and provincial/ territorial governments examine ways to increase qualifications of directors.

[39] Early Childhood Educator is intended to be the core position, upon which other positions may be built. There may be additional or specialized positions in some programs, for example a special needs resource, support staff, lead staff or pedagogical advisor. In some instances staff may have some supervisory responsibilities. Just as a core job in the education system is "teacher," there may be specialized positions, such as resource teacher, ESL teacher, or subject-specific specialists.

[40] The Director is the person responsible for the overall leadership and management of the centre, and in some programs may be referred to as the supervisor or manager.

[41] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2004). *Early childhood education and Care Policy: Canada Country Note* (158). Paris: Author

- Those without formal post-secondary credentials, while still an important part of the early childhood team, would have a different designation than early childhood educator, such as early childhood assistant. An assistant would be anyone who does not have the minimum requirements as defined by provincial/territorial regulations to be an early childhood educator, or who may have undertaken an orientation program of a specified number of hours to work in the field.
    o The CCHRSC may wish to consider further consultation with key stakeholders on the position of early childhood assistant and, if appropriate, conduct a review of the requirements for the roles and responsibilities, and the educational requirements of such a position

The Child Care Sector Human Resources Council use early childhood educator as the core role when revising the Occupational Standards for Practitioners

- In addition, the next steps from this project should be closely linked to the Career Promotion and Recruitment Strategy that points to the need to increase understanding of child care as a formal occupation with college training programs and certification.

The Child Care Sector Human Resources Council consider further study of human resources and training needs for those working in school age care and in family child care

- As noted in Section 1 of the report, the issues and concerns of school age staff regarding the provision of quality environments to older children are often lost within the wider issues of ECEC. A separate project that addresses the specific human resources issues of staff in school age programs, including working conditions and environments as well as training gaps, needs and issues is suggested.

- Family child care is delivered in two distinctly different models—through family child care agencies and through individually licensed family child care providers. Since no province or territory requires a post-secondary credential to work as a family child care provider, and there are few traditional employer-employee relationships for family child care providers, addressing their training and professional development needs were outside the scope of the Training Strategy Project. The CCHRSC may wish to undertake further study of the human resources and training needs for family child care.

The Child Care Sector Human Resources Council enter into discussions with appropriate government departments about possible revisions to the National Occupational Classification (NOC) of the early childhood workforce

- Currently early childhood educators and assistants are classified together in the NOC. If early childhood educator becomes a defined profession, it would be appropriate to redefine it as separate from early childhood assistant. For example, elementary and secondary school teaching assistants are in a separate NOC from kindergarten and elementary teachers.

Review qualification requirements of faculty especially in degree granting post-secondary institutions

- More ECE degree programs are being introduced in colleges and universities. This has implications for

current ECE faculty; there are few with the PhD qualifications usually necessary to teach degree-level programs. This will be an important consideration for the colleges in the future.[42]

After reviewing the research and literature on core roles that has been done in the past 10 to 12 years in Canada and internationally, as well as the experiences and work in other countries, the TSP consultant team believes that defining and enhancing the role of early childhood educator and director will provide a professional identity for and will help enhance the capacity of the sector.

This approach allows training options and professional development to be built around and to further support the core designations. It gives an identity to core responsibility, regardless of the setting in which the early childhood educator works.

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[42] Of the 159 faculty that responded to the Training Strategy Project Faculty Survey, 5% had a doctoral degree, 36% a Masters Degree and 47% had an undergraduate degree as their highest academic credential.

SECTION 4 – PROGRAMS: ENHANCING QUALITY AND CONSISTENCY

Accreditation recognizes professional programs for a level of performance, integrity and quality that entitles them to the confidence of the profession, education community and the public they serve. Accreditation status signifies that the program meets established and nationally acceptable standards of scope, quality, and relevance. Early childhood education and care training programs thus have a choice. They can wait it out and prepare for external pressures to become sufficiently strong that they are driven to accreditation. Or, they can take matters into their own hands and take the steps necessary to formulate an accreditation regime. Don Ogston[43]

PROGRAMS → Enhance Quality and Consistency → Voluntary ECE Post-Secondary Program Accreditation

4.1 WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

National training guidelines for early childhood care and education

In 1989, the Canadian Child Care Federation established a national training committee to study educational issues in the early childhood education and care sector. This work resulted in the development of National Training Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education for community college certificate and diploma programs at the post-secondary level. Educational institutions, organizations, government departments and interested individuals were all involved in the development of these guidelines. The ratification of the guidelines in 1995 by the CCCF's membership provided the foundation for further work, which included developing a self-study tool called *Towards Excellence in ECCE Training Programs*.[44]

In 1996, the self-study tool was pilot tested in 10 sites across Canada. It was recommended that the study was most effective as a facilitated self-study. The amended tool was pilot tested in 1998 and 1999.

In 2003, the guidelines and the self-assessment tool were reviewed for relevance to the draft Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners. Participants at a National Symposium in November 2003 recommended that the guidelines, with some minor additions, form the basis for a national accreditation process for early childhood education training programs.

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[43] Ogston, D. (2001) *Towards Accreditation of ECCE Training Programs: A Review of the Literature.* Submitted to the Steering Committee of Training for the Delivery of Quality Early Childhood Development Learning and Care Services in Canada: Accessibility, Portability and Career Advancement. A Program of Research of the Canadian Child care Federation and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges.

[44] The National Training Guidelines and the self assessment tool can be found at: http://www.cfc-efc.ca/docs/cccf/00000462.htm

Joint work of Canadian Child Care Federation and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges

In 2001, these two organizations received funding from Human Resource Development Canada to explore and discuss strategies intended to improve the capacity of the early learning and child care sector to provide quality services by enhancing the training infrastructure, provide multiple entry points to training and education, and enhance the possibilities for career mobility. The strategies presented as a result of this work included:

- Development of occupational standards for child care practitioners
- Update of the 1995 National Training Guidelines
- Feasibility of a national accreditation system for ECCE
- Feasibility of a national process for certification of individual child care practitioners
- Consideration of the potential of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) to improve educational opportunities
- Consideration of the role of professional development to improve educational opportunities
- Identification of successful strategies in distance education

The joint work undertaken by these two organizations also produced a model to demonstrate how these seven strategies could work together to improve training, education, and career mobility in the early childhood sector.

Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners and Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators

As noted in Section 1, occupational standards describe what a person in a particular occupation must know, and be able to do, in order to be considered "competent" at that occupation. The Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners[45] include nine key statements of skills/abilities and the core knowledge required to perform the work in a competent manner. These standards were developed under the leadership of the Canadian Child Care Federation.

In 2005, the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, with funding from Human Resources and Social Development Canada, began developing Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators. These standards were validated during a Canada-wide consultation through the winter 2005/spring 2006, and the Occupational Standards report was published in August 2006. These standards are organized into six main sections, which describe 16 key task areas, 61 sub-task areas, and the necessary skills/abilities and core knowledge related to the roles of administrators, directors, and managers of group child care programs.[46]

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[45] Doherty, G. (2003) *Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners*. Ottawa: ON. Canadian Child Care Federation

[46] Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2006) *Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators*. Ottawa: Author

4.2 WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM THE TRAINING STRATEGY PROJECT?

Provincial/territorial practices for program approval vary

The TSP environmental scan has outlined the current processes for provincial/territorial approval of post-secondary training program content. Education is a provincial/territorial area of responsibility. In most jurisdictions, approval for courses and course content is the responsibility of the post-secondary institution, and based on processes developed by each institution.

In some provinces, however, there are coordinated procedures in place for program approval. For example:
- In British Columbia, the Early Childhood Educator Registry, Ministry of Children and Family Development, approves public and private training institutions program submissions through a process involving the 2006 Early Childhood Educator Training Programs Submission Guidelines and the 2004 Child Care Sector Occupational Competencies' Assessment Tool.[47]
- In Manitoba, the Child Care Education Program Approval Committee reviews and approves training programs for early childhood educators and monitors the quality and standards of post-secondary early childhood education.
- In Ontario, the Colleges Branch of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has responsibility for the development and approval of system-wide standards for programs at colleges of applied arts and technology. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities accredits college programs, with the objective of determining whether program graduates have achieved the learning outcomes and general educational requirement established in a program standard.
- In New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission is responsible for quality assurance for university degree granting programs. This involves assessment of academic programs prior to implementation and monitoring of institutional quality assurance policies and procedures.

Length of program makes a difference

According to respondents to the Faculty Survey, there appeared to be a clear relationship between the length of the program the faculty were teaching and their ratings on how well various aspects of the curriculum provided adequate skills to students. In several key areas, faculty gave more negative ratings for students in the one-year program and the least negative ratings for students in the three-year DEC programs. These aspects of the curriculum include:
- Developmentally appropriate programming
- Understanding child development
- Effective communication with children
- Self-reflective practice
- Analytical capacity
- Creative problem-solving and project management

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[47] Centre for Curriculum Transfer and Technology. (2004) *Child Care Sector Occupational Competencies Assessment Tool*. British Columbia: Author. These competencies were first developed in the late 1990s, are unique to British Columbia, and are not to be confused with the 2003 Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners developed by the CCCF.

In addition, approximately 50% of students in a one-year certificate program indicated that they felt quite well or very well prepared to work with children with special needs, compared to 74% in a two-year program and 76% in a three-year program.

Many employers expressed concerns about the current absence of appropriate entrance requirements in community colleges and that the "first come, first served" entrance policy contributed to a wide range of student academic abilities

A number of employers speculated that the current entrance policies contributed to increasing numbers of early childhood education students not completing the program. Respondents to the Faculty Survey also perceived an increase in the number of students who did not complete the program over the past five years. However, the survey did not provide an opportunity for faculty to comment on the potential causes for this increase.

There is concern about the potential for a mismatch between college priorities and the needs of the early childhood sector

Participants in some expert focus groups noted that in certain cases, community colleges are mandated to respond to the needs of employers to recruit skilled workers as well as provide training that addresses the appropriate content for the job. Given the severe recruitment and retention issues faced by the early childhood sector, some participants expressed concern that colleges may be given direction to deliver more training in a shorter time frame—a direction that does not match the early childhood sector's need for broader and deeper training. Labour groups also noted a trend toward "deskilling" of occupations in other sectors in order to meet labour force needs. They expressed concern about the implications of such a move in the child care sector.

Some colleges are granting degrees and there is an increase in articulation agreements with universities

There is a trend toward an increase in articulation agreements between colleges and universities, and in the number of colleges granting degrees. Currently, most ECE diplomas articulate to Child and Youth Care programs rather than to Faculties of Education, but there are increasing opportunities for early childhood educators to continue their education and receive recognition for their ECE credential. Doing so increases their employment opportunities across the early childhood sector.

Occupational Standards for practitioners and administrators are familiar to faculty and are used in their programs

A majority (67%) of respondents to the Faculty Survey were familiar with the Occupational Standards. Of those who were familiar with them:
- 25.7% used them to review curriculum or courses
- 24.3% integrated them into the curriculum or into a course
- 20% used them as resource or reference material
- 18.5% indicated that they had little or no impact
- 10% used them as a tool for self reflection or self assessment
- 4.3% used them to reinforce course goals

Faculty and employers both expressed concern about practicum placement processes

In focus groups, employers often expressed frustration with the current practicum placement processes. A number explained that at times, they are not able to accommodate requests for student placements from colleges due to their own pressing human resource issues at the time. If a senior staff member was not available to directly supervise the student, employers/directors felt it unfair to the student to be placed in a practicum setting with inadequate supervision and/or feedback.

Other employers felt that the expectations from the college for practicum students were not clear, or sometimes not even provided. Still, others felt that the expectations were so onerous that the student never had the opportunity to really enjoy the placement or get to know the children and other staff because they were so preoccupied with completing their list of requirements.

On the other hand, faculty noted an increasing difficulty in finding appropriate practicum placements for their students. Faculty noted issues with the quality of the programs for their students and the willingness of directors to accept students for practicum placements.

Some employers indicated a disconnect between what the colleges are teaching (e.g. emergent curriculum, reflective practice) and what they (supervisors, directors) were taught or how their programs were delivered (i.e. theme-based). They felt that sometimes they were not "approved" for a practicum placement because of this discrepancy but they did not have the opportunity to learn about new practices. Employers in rural areas specifically noted that they were rarely approached for practicum placements, even though they feel this is a useful recruitment tool for new staff.

There is a wide range of practicum placement practices across the country—from one-day-per-week placements to two-month placements in the same centre. At least one situation noted in a focus group suggests that students on practicum placements are not always directly supervised or observed by college instructors.

4.3 WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

Provinces and territories have collaborated on a framework for quality standards at post-secondary level

As noted above, post-secondary education in Canada is a provincial/territorial responsibility. Although some jurisdictions and/or regions of Canada have introduced quality assurance policies, there are no national policies or standards.

However, provinces and territories work collaboratively on education issues through the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada (CMEC). CMEC is an intergovernmental body founded in 1967 by Ministers of Education to serve as a forum to discuss policy issues, provide a mechanism to undertake activities of a mutual interest, allow for consultation and cooperation with national organizations and the Government of Canada, and to represent the education interests of provinces and territories on an international level. All 13 provinces and territories are members.

CMEC's mandate in post-secondary education is to coordinate activities and projects at both university and college levels that are of collective priority and interest to the provinces and territories, and where there is a value to promoting a pan-Canadian approach. In recent years, Ministers of Education have agreed on the importance of having a set of consistent and coherent standards at a pan-Canadian level to facilitate domestic mobility and transferability and to increase understanding of Canada's post-secondary education institutions internationally. In 2004, Deputy Ministers of Education established a committee to draft standards and procedures that would assist governments to assess the acceptability of new degree programs and new degree granting institutions. Standards were drafted in three areas: degree level standards, program assessment standards and procedures, and institutional assessment standards and procedures.

In February 2007, provincial and territorial Ministers of Education in Canada endorsed a Statement on Quality Assurance of Degree Education in Canada. The framework of standards is not intended to be directive; rather, jurisdictions use these, as appropriate, to support their review of new degree programs. This pan-Canadian framework of standards for degree granting programs includes three elements:
1. The Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework
2. Procedures and Standards for New Degree Program Quality Assessment
3. Procedures and Standards for Assessing New Degree-Granting Institutions

The framework of standards includes:
• Descriptions of the general learning outcome competencies expected of degree holders at each level, with a view to articulating threshold degree standards and enabling credentials to be mapped against one another.
• Standards for quality assurance reviews of sufficient rigor to generate the confidence of all stakeholders that the standards in the degree-qualifications framework and any other standards for programs are met in practice.[48]

The recent development of Quality Assurance of Degree Education in Canada is notable in that Ministers responsible for Advanced Education, through CMEC, have acknowledged the importance of having a *set of consistent and coherent standards at a pan-Canadian level to facilitate mobility and transferability domestically and to increase understanding of Canada's post-secondary education institutions internationally*.[49] Issues related to mobility and transferability of post-secondary credentials are also relevant to the early childhood education and care sector, as well as recognition of international credentials. The concept of introducing consistent and coherent standards through a voluntary process, such as program accreditation, is consistent with the ministers' approach toward quality assurance for new degree granting programs.

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[48] Council of Ministers of Education (2007) Ministerial Statement on Quality Assurance of Degree Education in Canada. http://www.cmec.ca/postsec/qa/QA-Statement-2007.en.pdf Retrieved July 12, 2007

[49] Ibid., Retrieved July 25, 2007

Accreditation of professional programs is an established process

The term "accreditation" refers to the approval of a post-secondary institution or program that has been found, by an accreditation body, to meet pre-determined standards through a recognized process of validation. Accreditation is used primarily by professional bodies to evaluate specific university and college programs. While some countries have national programs to accredit universities and/or colleges, Canada does not. As noted above, the recently developed framework of standards agreed to by provincial and territorial Ministers of Education represents the first pan-Canadian statement on quality standards for degree granting institutions.

In Canada, accreditation is generally defined as a process of quality assurance through which it is determined that a program of study complies with standards of education established by professional authorities, with the goal of ensuring that graduates from such programs meet the academic and registration requirements established by the profession.[50] In various fields of study (e.g. nursing, architecture, forestry, dentistry, pharmacy, and social work) professional regulatory bodies participate in reviewing curriculum standards and consult on other professional issues governing student preparation for entry into these professions.

In some fields of study, accreditation is managed by the professional body of that sector (College of Family Physicians of Canada, Canadian Dental Association, Canadian Association of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists), while others have established organizations specifically for the purpose of program accreditation. For example, the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing, a voluntary association representing all universities and colleges that offer part or all of an undergraduate or graduate degree in nursing is the official accrediting agency for university nursing programs. Other examples of this approach include the Canadian Architectural Certification Board and the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work.

Sector councils are involved in accreditation

A number of Sector Councils are currently involved in accreditation processes to promote professionalism and to increase opportunities for career mobility. Some examples follow:

- **The Canadian Trucking Human Resource Council** has established a Truck Driver Training Institute National Accreditation Program;
- **The Motor Carrier Passenger Council of Canada** (MCPCC) has established an accreditation program for the training of professional bus operators. Through the MCPCC an accreditation board is established, comprised of a number of national representatives from all bus sectors, with relevant experiences such as bus operations, training, curriculum development and education delivery;
- **The Canadian Automotive Repairs and Service (CARS) National Accreditation Board** (CNAB)'s mission is to uphold a set of industry prescribed National Motive Power training standards of excellence as universal benchmarks for the delivery of applied post-secondary training and education. The primary objective of the accreditation process is to assist motive power program institutions in their pursuit of excellence in the delivery of applied motive power education and training. This is accomplished through an independent industry-driven voluntary auditing process of specified motive power post-secondary institutions against CNAB established national performance standards;

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[50] See Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials: www.cicic.ca for further information on accreditation and other quality assurance measures.

- "Engineers Canada" is the business name of the **Canadian Council of Professional Engineers**. In 1965, Engineers Canada established the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board (CEAB) to accredit undergraduate engineering programs that provide aspiring engineers with the academic requirements necessary for registration as a professional engineer in Canada. CEAB also plays a key role in Engineers Canada's international activities by assessing the equivalency of the accreditation systems used in other nations relative to the Canadian system and by monitoring the accreditation systems employed by the engineering bodies that have entered into mutual recognition agreements with Engineers Canada; and
- **The National Seafood Sector Council's** "Accreditation Project" is working to create an accreditation prototype for evaluating and accrediting courses and assessing the feasibility of developing a national accreditation program for training courses in the seafood processing industry. To date, the accreditation project research company has developed draft accreditation policies and procedures based on a review of practices in other sectors and in consultation with the project steering committee and other interested parties.

4.4 MOVING FORWARD

The early childhood education and care sector in Canada has a rich foundation upon which to move forward and improve the quality and consistency of post-secondary training. The National Training Guidelines, Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners and Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators provide a solid context within which to consider future developments. The proposed approach on accreditation developed by Don Ogston for the Canadian Child Care Federation and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges in 2003 is still relevant. It should be reconsidered within these, and other significant human resource developments since 2003, for the early learning and child care sector.

The strategic direction recommended to increase the consistency of post-secondary training for early childhood education is a voluntary program accreditation at the post-secondary level

The benefits of accreditation as described by Ogston include:[51]
- *A principal purpose of accreditation is to maintain the quality of programs and promote their continuing improvement. The focus is upon self-development of each of the programs through the mutual support of peer programs;*
- *The essential element in the "quality" of programs is that they provide their students with a variety of challenging learning activities and opportunities through which they may achieve and demonstrate appropriate application of their learning;*
- *Students and graduates benefit from accreditation of programs. It gives them the portability of academic credentials across programs, and across jurisdictions. Credentials come to be recognized as having been earned from programs demonstrated as developing accepted ECE competencies; and*
- *A purpose of accreditation is to favourably position programs among prospective students and within their institutions. They can hold themselves out to interested students as having been recognized as providing a quality program of study. They can better compete with peer programs in their institutions, arguing that maintenance of their accreditation status is dependent upon the maintenance or increase of the resources provided them by institutions.*

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[51] Ogston, D. (2003). Accrediting Post-secondary ECE Programs – Volume 1: An Accreditation Model *Research Connections Canada: Supporting Children and Families* Vol. 10 (13-41). Ottawa: ON. Canadian Child Care Federation

Accreditation program models generally involve three stages:

- *Pre-Assessment*
  o During this time, the concept and benefits of accreditation are promoted to institutions, applications are received, programs are advised about the procedures and policies of the accreditation process and applicants are provided with materials and frameworks to be used during the self-study process.

- *Assessment*
  o The process begins with a period of self-study, guided by indicators established by the accrediting body. The period of self-study is completed by the program itself, often with the help of community stakeholders.
  o Accreditation consultants conduct an on-site assessment of indicators to review the self-study documentation and they may make recommendations on the accreditation. Consultants may interview stakeholders, faculty, and/or students, review documentation and observe classroom practices.
  o Consultants draft their final report based on their studies, interviews, and observations.

- *Post-Assessment*
  o This process involves a review of the consultant's report and recommendations. The recommendations may result in accreditation or in some type of provisional accreditation status if recommendations are made to improve the status of the program.

The proposed approaches to move forward on the strategic direction include:

The Child Care Human Resources Sector Council should provide leadership to pursue the establishment of a pan-Canadian voluntary accreditation program for early childhood education and care

The formal establishment of a Child Care Human Resources Sector Council in 2003 provides an opportunity that was not available when the topic of voluntary accreditation was first proposed by the CCCF and ACCC. The work of other sector councils in the area of accreditation also provides a potential framework to guide the nature of any involvement of the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council.

The Child Care Human Resources Sector Council should take a lead role in establishing an accreditation council that is representative of the early childhood education and care sector

It is proposed that:
- The accreditation council include representatives from national child care organizations, the post-secondary sector, labour, and employers—with linkages to the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada and the Association of Accrediting Agencies of Canada
- Accreditation be undertaken by the Accreditation Council rather than a professional organization of early childhood educators
- Accreditation be considered as a voluntary activity

Developing criteria for accreditation indicators using Occupational Standards as a foundation

- There are currently Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators and for Child Care Practitioners. In Section 3 of the report, there is a recommendation to revise the Occupational Standards for Practitioners to reflect the core role of early childhood educators. Accreditation indicators would need to reflect these revisions and others that may be made in the future, as a part of regular review processes. If additional occupational standards are developed to reflect other positions in ECEC, such as curriculum specialist, special needs resource, or early childhood assistant, they would also need to be appropriately reflected in the accreditation indicators.

Include certificate, diploma, and degree granting programs, as well as distance education, full-time and part-time study, and continuing education programs in accreditation processes

Include policies, practices, and processes associated with practicum placements for early childhood students in accreditation processes
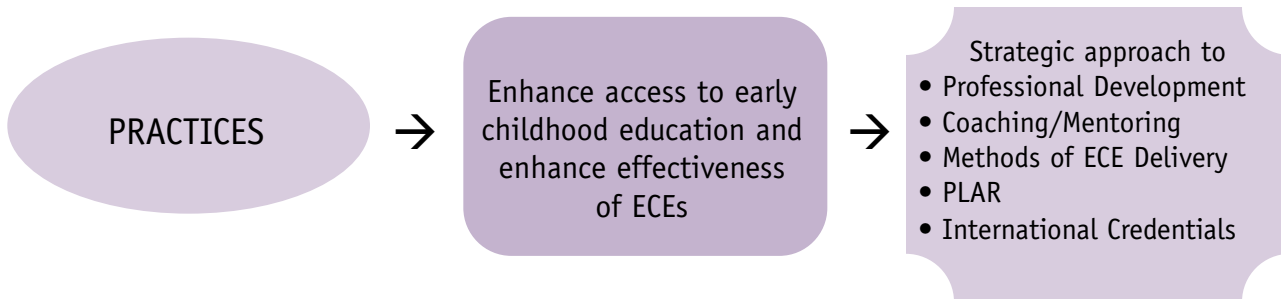
The review panel involved in developing the 2003 human resource strategies for the Canadian Child Care Federation noted that if the early learning and child care sector was ready for accreditation, it was "just ready". This strategic direction is based on the belief that almost five years later, the sector is now ready. Accreditation of post-secondary early childhood education programs will serve to promote quality, consistency and recognition of early childhood education training programs, and will provide opportunities for greater mobility, transferability, and recognition of international credentials.

SECTION 5 – PRACTICES: ENHANCING ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ECEs

Premiers from every province and territory agree that people across Canada must have opportunities to build brighter futures for themselves and for society in the 21st century. The Council of the Federation agrees that:

Canadians should have high quality, publicly-funded post-secondary education and
- *skills training systems so that individuals and Canadian businesses can compete and succeed in the global economy;*
- *Canadians should have access to lifelong learning opportunities in post-secondary education and skills training to help them develop to their full potential; and*
- *Canadians should no longer face unfair barriers to post-secondary education, skills training and rewarding employment opportunities. Many of Canada's immigrants, Aboriginal peoples, youth, persons with disabilities, social assistance recipients, women and older workers currently face these unfair barriers.[52]*

PRACTICES → Enhance access to early childhood education and enhance effectiveness of ECEs → Strategic approach to
- Professional Development
- Coaching/Mentoring
- Methods of ECE Delivery
- PLAR
- International Credentials

5.1 WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

Across Canada there are numerous partners, policies and practices in place to improve access to and quality of post-secondary training, and that promote attitudes and opportunities for life-long learning

The broad array of policies and practices currently in place to support access to post-secondary education, enhance the learning experiences of students and to support graduates to maintain currency in their field of study with relevant in-service and professional development opportunities includes, but is not limited to:
- Flexible and alternative models of program delivery, including full-time, part-time, distance education, e-learning, continuing education, workplace models and correspondence courses
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)
- Financial support through various types of bursaries, student loan programs and grants
- Credit transfer agreements
- Growing numbers of articulation agreements between colleges and universities
- Educational ladders

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[52] The Council of the Federation (2006). *Competing for Tomorrow: A Strategy for Post-secondary Education and Skills Training in Canada* (p1). Retrieved July 22, 2007 from http://www.councilofthefederation.ca/pdfs/PSE%20Strategy-July-ENG.pdf

- Apprenticeship
- Recognition of international credentials
- Professional development, including formal and informal approaches
- Coaching and mentoring programs

These practices are supported by an equally broad array of partners, including:
- The Government of Canada—through various departments, agencies, and funding initiatives
- Provincial/Territorial Governments—through departments, agencies, legislation and policies
- Aboriginal Governments
- Intergovernmental bodies, such as the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada, the Canadian Information Centre on International Credentials and the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission
- National, regional, provincial/territorial organizations – including:
    o Organizations with a primary focus on post-secondary education, such as the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, the Association of University Colleges of Canada, the Association of Accrediting Agencies of Canada, and Polytechnics Canada;
    o Organizations focused on the provision of early childhood education and care programs, including the Canadian Child Care Federation, the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, and numerous provincial, territorial, and local organizations;
    o Sector councils, including the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council; and
    o Labour organizations.

As noted in the TSP Literature Review, challenges regarding content and access to training and professional development are common to Canada and other countries.[53] Opportunities to participate in in-service training and professional development are uneven, and staff with the lowest levels of initial training tend to have the least access.[54]

Joint work of the Canadian Child Care Federation and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges

Between the years 2001 and 2003, the Canadian Child Care Federation and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, with funding from Human Resource Development Canada, jointly undertook a three year study called *Training for the Delivery of Quality Early Childhood Development Learning and Care Services in Canada: Accessibility, Portability and Career Advancement*. As a result of this work, the two organizations proposed seven strategies to enhance the capacity of the early childhood sector. Three of these strategies have already been described in section 4 (i.e. update of 1995 national guidelines for training programs, occupational standards and a proposal for program accreditation). Other strategies included a study of the feasibility of a national process for certification of individual practitioners, a review of current practices in PLAR, an exploration of how professional development could improve the educational ladder in child care and a review of best practices and successful strategies in distance education.

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[53] Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (2001) *Starting Strong: Early childhood education and Care* Paris. Author

[54] Bertrand, J. & Michal, D. *Training Strategy Project Literature Review and Environmental Scan* (p2)

Partners in practice

"Partners in Practice", a mentoring model for early childhood educators, defines mentoring *as a relationship that facilitates the development of an early childhood practitioner as she matures as a professional.*[55] This model describes a relationship between the practitioner (protégé) and the mentor (person with expertise to share). While this relationship may develop by chance, the model supports educators with an infrastructure to provide training and enhance the mentoring experience. The development of this model was coordinated by Child Care Connections (Nova Scotia). This organization continued to support the practice for a number of years by sponsoring the Mentoring Skills Series—a series of professional development sessions based on the Partners in Practice mentoring model. These workshops were designed to prepare both mentors and protégés for the mentoring experience.

The Partners in Practice project also identified that while there is considerable interest in mentoring programs, there is little infrastructure to support the practice. A survey completed by the Partners in Practice project in 1998 showed that in responses from 47 organizations, a total of 17 were implementing some type of mentoring activity in their organization.

- Many of these reported that mentoring activities were implemented as part of existing partnerships with training institutions and early childhood education and care programs. Respondents noted that all partners involved derived numerous varied benefits from the mentoring relationships.
- Survey results indicated that there are very few intentional ECE mentoring programs in Canada. Those that do occur appear to have inadequate financial support. Very few offered training, networking, recognition, compensation or support for those participating in the mentoring experience.
- Very few of the programs that responded used evaluation as an integral piece of the program to determine its effectiveness. Programs that included students in training did have an evaluation component for the development of students' skills, but did not have any formal means to evaluate the experience for the mentors.

5.2 WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM THE TRAINING STRATEGY PROJECT?

There is a need for strategic focus

During both the data collection (Phase I) and consultation (Phase II) components of the TSP, students, faculty, early childhood educators, employers, experts, key informants and government officials shared their experiences and perspectives on the various practices across Canada that encourage individuals to obtain a post-secondary credential in early childhood education and care. Those that support early childhood educators in their on-going professional development and practice also shared their thoughts.

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[55] See The Partners In Practice Mentoring Model: http://www.partnersinpractice.org/who.html

In order to most effectively position "practices" within a training strategy for the early childhood education and care sector, those practices that will contribute to the goals of the Training Strategy Project at a pan-Canadian level have been carefully highlighted. As a result, the strategy will focus on mechanisms that increase access to post-secondary early childhood programs and courses leading to a credential, including post-diploma credentials, and formal and informal supports to the early childhood workforce. There are five areas of focus:

- Professional Development
- Coaching/Mentoring
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
- Flexible Delivery Models
- International Credentials

Across Canada, participants in the data collection and consultation phases of the TSP spoke of practices that impacted their studies and their work:

Access to post-secondary early childhood education remains a barrier for some, especially for those in rural and remote communities, and those currently employed in the field

- Focus groups with employers in urban and rural areas, and focus groups with front line workers highlighted the *importance of distance education*, particularly for rural and remote areas of Canada—with some concern about the difficulty to access needed courses on a timely basis.
- In Quebec, all distance education is managed through one organization: Cégep@distance. Standards for ECE training programs, including distance education, are based on competencies established by the Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sport. The full distance education program is implemented in modules, using a competency-based approach. Students develop portfolios throughout the program. Recent surveys indicated that students who participate in distance education do so because of a variety of reasons including; travel, family responsibilities, employment and scheduling of classes.

There is strong support for workplace training initiatives from graduates of those programs and for programs tailored to recognize previous life and work experience

- Focus groups with graduates of workplace/accelerated models of training and reports from faculty survey respondents indicated *positive support for workplace study models*—including very high (97 – 100%) rates of retention of graduates.
- Responses to the student survey showed that students who were 35 years and older were more likely to have a higher level of education prior to enrolment in early childhood, to have prior experience working with children in paid and volunteer capacities, and were more likely to be employed while enrolled in their early childhood program. Not surprisingly, these students indicated a preference for a different type of classroom and course experience.

Employers, faculty and key informants identified the need for coaching and mentoring for new graduates

- There was widespread recognition that new graduates from early childhood education programs should not be expected to perform as well as experienced early childhood educators.

- Employers in particular noted that many professions provide some type of mentoring support for new employees.
- Faculty across the country noted specific areas where they felt curriculum did not prepare students for skills needed on the job including; working with parents, administration, working with children with special needs and professional relationships. Students' survey responses supported the identification of these gaps.
- Employers emphasized that a two-year program of study should not be further stretched to include the abovementioned gaps, but that coaching/mentoring is needed to assist new graduates to gain the confidence and experience they need to develop these specific areas of knowledge and skills.

Early childhood educators and employers want more meaningful professional development

- During the consultation phase of the TSP, employers and early childhood educators emphasized the need for professional development that addressed topics in greater depth (than what could be covered in a 2 to 3 hour workshop), and that would lead to or be linked to some type of recognition or credential. As well, experts indicated that they viewed professional development as an opportunity to create stronger links between the sector and the post-secondary institutions.
- Across the country, those who participated in the consultations gave a clear message that professional development should be available during working hours, rather than expecting early childhood educators to spend evenings and weekends in workshops and courses. Participants noted that for the most part, funds available to support professional development did not provide for the cost of substitute staff, travel, or accommodations. In many cases, these additional costs were significant barriers to participation.

Processes for equivalency and recognition of credentials need coordination

- In 2006, the Government of Canada committed funding for the establishment of the Canadian Agency for Assessment and Recognition of Credentials. The Association of Sector Councils (TASC) has prepared a discussion paper about the role of such an agency, identified several issues to be addressed and proposed suggestions as to how sector councils may assist in the development of the proposed agency.[56]
- The Council of Ministers of Education of Canada (CMEC) provides support for the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC). This organization was established after Canada ratified the UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the states belonging to the Europe region, in 1990, to assist Canada in carrying out its obligations under the terms of this convention. The convention promotes international mobility by advocating wider recognition of higher education and professional qualifications.
    o CICIC provides resources and information on studying and working in Canada, studying abroad, education in Canada and abroad, information on the assessment of foreign credentials, on the recognition of qualifications, on prior learning assessment and recognition, and on comparative evaluation services in Canada.

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[56] See: http://capla.ca/2006_conference/pdf/e/FCR.pdf for the discussion paper on the proposed agency

- Processes for recognizing international credentials vary according to the province and territory, the occupation, and whether the recognition sought is for the purpose of further study or employment.
- A number of sector councils are developing mechanisms to recognize foreign credentials and competencies.
- Individuals who are granted equivalency in early childhood education do not receive a Canadian post-secondary credential, so their ability to work in other jurisdictions may be limited.
- Recognition of ECE credentials earned in Canada varies across provinces. Some recognize credentials from any provincially approved post-secondary ECE program; others assess credits on a course-by-course basis.
- The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario, George Brown College and Thorncliffe Neighbourhood House are jointly undertaking a pilot project to address the barriers faced by internationally trained ECEs who wish to obtain an ECE equivalency certificate to work as qualified early childhood educators in regulated child care. Lessons learned from this project may be applicable to other jurisdictions.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition shows promising potential

Focus groups with employers and experts, and key informant interviews noted the *potential for PLAR*, especially for those with considerable experience—but with some concern about the cost and complexity of the process. The TSP Literature Review also notes that PLAR is more prevalent as a practice in ECE programs than in other disciplines.

There is considerable international literature and experience to inform effective practices

- Peter Moss, Professor of Early Childhood Provision at the Institute of Education University of London, and a researcher at the Thomas Coram Research Unit has produced a significant body of literature on the early childhood workforce. He notes that the rapid growth in knowledge about child development and changing concepts of best practice make on-going participation in professional development essential for practitioners to maintain their competency and/or to obtain the knowledge and skills for another position. He identifies four forms of continuing education and professional development:[57]
    o In-service training—either in the workplace or elsewhere—to address a specific skill
    o Study for higher level qualifications
    o Education for new roles and jobs, such as in leadership and management
    o Continuing learning and research

His review identifies affordability and relevance to the local context as necessary conditions to successful continuing education initiatives.

- A recent review of professional development for teachers in the education system in the United States[58] reports that most workshops, institutes and study groups appear to be brief, superficial and of marginal use in improving teaching. However, professional development activities did enhance teaching and learning under three conditions: the session continued for several days or longer; the session focused on subject-

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[57] Moss, P. (2004) The Early Childhood Workforce: Continuing Education and Professional Development UNESCO Policy Brief on Early childhood education Number 28. Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001377/137731e.pdf April 6, 2007

[58] Hill, H. (2007) Learning in the teaching workforce. The Future of Children. Vol. 17 Number 1 Spring 2007 (111 – 128)

matter-specific instruction; and the session was aligned with the instructional goals and curriculum materials in teachers' schools.

• The OECD identifies the importance of professional development in enhancing practice.[59] It notes that access to professional development is uneven, and that members of the workforce often face barriers, such as release time and cost. It outlines the provision of non-contact time, often contained in collective agreements, that allows educators a specific number of hours a week for staff planning, discussion, in-service activities and other forms of professional development.

• The literature suggests that a systemic approach would also include specific funding for formal professional development activities such as workshops and courses, training grants to centres so that they can give staff paid release time and hire a substitute to cover, and a clearing house for up-to-date information about professional development opportunities.[60]

5.3 WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

There are numerous coaching and mentoring practices underway

Although there is limited literature to report on the effectiveness of early childhood education mentoring programs, there are a number of studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of mentoring in the public school system, and a number of jurisdictions support mentoring programs for new teachers. There is now a growing trend across the country to introduce programs and practices that support early childhood educators and early childhood directors in their work:

• The Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement (ARCQE) is a provincial agency that works with the Children's Services Ministry to provide technical assistance to the ECEC community by way of four primary pillars of support which include:
    o Coaching/Mentoring
    o Networking
    o Professional Development
    o Resources

ARCQE currently contracts nine regional child care coaches and has 82 mentors working across the province to support staff who have a wide range of needs, with a focus on "Supporting Quality & Building Capacity" in the sector.

• Ontario's Expert Panel on Quality and Human Resources provides *support for leaders to develop skills to mentor practitioners as an essential building block for high quality ECEC*.[61] The Expert Panel on Early

[59] Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (2001). Starting Strong: Early childhood education and Care Paris: Author

[60] Bertrand, J.; Michal, D. The Training Strategy Literature Review and Environmental Scan (p. 18).

[61] Investing in Quality: Policies, Practitioners, Programs and Parents: A Four-Point Plan to Deliver High Quality Early Learning and Child Care Services in Ontario. Report of the Expert Panel on Quality and Human Resources. Retrieved from: http://www.children.gov.on.ca/NR/CS/Publications/QHRReport_en.pdf May 1, 2007

Learning notes that pedagogical leadership *contributes to a working environment that encourages responsiveness. Program supervisors/directors… can set the stage with program practices that respect all families; provide leadership in developing a vision and philosophy to guide the setting's curriculum and pedagogy; and create a workplace that values the practice of early childhood educators.*[62]

• In Quebec, *personnel de soutien pédagogique ou technique* (pedagogical advisors) are employed at the centre to provide expert advice and leadership in the development of children's learning programs. While directors are expected to have expertise in administrative management, pedagogical advisors are responsible to provide leadership in quality and program.

• The City of Toronto has recently established a "training team" to work with directors and staff in municipally operated child care programs. This initiative is based on the theory that "modeling" is a more effective practice and support tool than written materials, workshops and other types of information exchange. The training team's work is based on a program assessment, which then determines the level, type, and intensity of support given to the centre.

• Each of the four Atlantic provinces has implemented a version of an "on-site consultation model" with regulated early childhood education and care programs. These initiatives are similar in that they are based on the principles of on-site consultation,[63] which involves the development of a relationship between the centre's director and staff, and the person providing the on-site support. However, the four initiatives have unique features:
   o In Prince Edward Island, the Bridges Project is a joint initiative of the Department of Education, Department of Social Services and Seniors, and the provincial Early Childhood Development Association. MIKE (Measuring and Improving Kids' Environments) consultants, curriculum specialists, and kindergarten mentors work together under the Bridges Project as the early childhood resource team. They support and mentor early learning and child care directors in their work and support supervisors to act as mentors to their staff. The Bridges team works collaboratively with the director of the centre to develop an action plan to focus on such things as curriculum, learning environment and team building. The team also works to enhance the level of integration of children with special needs by adhering to principles of inclusion, and encourages a community of learning.

   o In New Brunswick, the "Opening the Door to Quality Child Care and Development" program is a joint initiative between the New Brunswick Government and the New Brunswick Association for Community Living. This program promotes and supports best practices of staff in early childhood centres in the delivery of inclusive and high quality child care services and child development. By doing so, the capacity of centres to include all children and effect quality changes in their own child care environment is significantly increased.
      - At the same time, the objective of the project is to increase the professional development opportunities for staff in child care centres, increase knowledge of, and access to printed, audio/visual and human resources, to support the changes staff and directors may want to make in their quest for high quality care and development.

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[62] Best Start Panel on Early Learning. Early Learning for Every Child Today: A Framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings. (p 20) http://www.children.gov.on.ca/NR/CS/Publications/en_elf.pdf Retrieved May 1, 2007

[63] As developed by Patricia Wesley, Ph.D., senior scientist at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

o In Nova Scotia, Partnerships for Inclusion utilizes capacity building and consultation and support to promote opportunities for inclusion for children in early childhood education and care programs through a quality enhancement process. This initiative is a project of the Early Intervention Association of Nova Scotia (EINS) in association with SpeciaLink: the National Centre for Child Care Inclusion. Child care centre staff work with inclusion facilitators to provide high quality child care that meets the needs of all children.

o In Newfoundland and Labrador, EQuIP (Enhancing Quality and Inclusive Practices) is a voluntary, on-site collaborative consultation program designed to measure and improve the quality and inclusive practices of child care environments. The EQuIP consultants provide on-site consultation to the centres, based on a collaborative action plan developed by both the consultant and the licensee and/or operator of the centre, using information from the ECERS-R assessment and the Specialink assessment tools. Support to the centres comes in the form of workshops, sharing of resources, and on-site modeling. In addition to the EQuIP consultants, inclusion consultants from each health region work with the EQuIP participants to assist them in overcoming any identified barriers to inclusion.

Provincial and territorial funding initiatives for pre-service and professional development are growing

There are a number of current provincial and territorial initiatives to encourage participation in post-secondary education for the purpose of earning a credential in early childhood education and care, as well as initiatives to support access to professional development. Some examples include:
- Student Bursaries—generally in exchange for a commitment to work in a regulated early childhood program for a specified period of time
- Reimbursement of tuition for completion of courses
- Workplace/accelerated training options
- Grants to post secondary institutions
- Professional development grants to centres and early childhood educators
- Professional development grants earmarked specifically to enhance the management and leadership skills of directors

Workplace models are established

Ontario, Manitoba, and Prince Edward Island have introduced workplace models to help individuals working in regulated child care programs to obtain a post-secondary credential in early childhood education. These initiatives differ by jurisdiction:
- *Manitoba's Workplace Program:* Participants are required to have at least two years full-time work experience in a child care centre and be currently working in the field. Participants generally attend classes for two days a week and work in their centre for three days. The Child Care Office of the Department of Family Services provides funding to the centre to employ substitute staff while their employee is in the classroom. In some cases, workplace students may receive credit through PLAR. Depending on the college, the process takes between 2-4 years and participants work toward an ECE Diploma and an ECE level II certification.

- *Prince Edward Island's Accelerated Training Model:* Funded as part of PEI's Labour Market Development Agreement with HRSDC, and managed as a joint partnership between the local HRSDC office, the PEI Department of Social Services and Seniors, the provincial Early Childhood Development Association, and Holland College, the program enables staff who:
  - o have a minimum of three years experience in a child care centre
  - o are currently employed
  - o meet the academic criteria of the college
  - o have the support of their employer

  Staff enrol in a 33-week program, alternating 11 weeks in the classroom, 11 weeks in a practicum placement, part of which may be done in their own workplace, and a further 11 weeks in the classroom. They receive Employment Insurance during their time in the classroom and on successful completion receive an Early Childhood Education Diploma.

- *Ontario's Apprenticeship Model:* A number of community colleges in Ontario offer apprenticeship training in ECE. Apprentices register with the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities and receive an Apprenticeship Training Standard that identifies skills to be learned and outcomes to be demonstrated on the job. They engage in a combination of on-the-job learning and in-class instruction. After meeting the requirements, which usually take three years, they are granted a Certificate of Apprenticeship. They can also work towards an ECE Diploma by completing a college-level English course and a number of general education courses.

Quebec is furthering work on distance education

Employers, early childhood educators, experts and key informants emphasized that distance education is an essential component in the mix of program delivery models for early childhood education. While some concerns were noted regarding the quality of the post-secondary experience when completed by distance rather than in the classroom, Quebec has recently developed a comprehensive logic model to guide the development of distance education programs, ensuring that these programs adhere to the same standards and program outcomes as those offered through full-time classroom-based courses. This approach to ensuring that distance education meets the same standards and learning outcomes as classroom-based models may serve as a tool for other jurisdictions.

The use of PLAR is growing and is becoming increasingly accepted

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a process that is used to identify, verify, and recognize knowledge and skills acquired through formal and informal learning including; post-secondary credits/credentials and paid and volunteer work and life experiences, such as travel, care of family and independent study.[64] In Canada, there has been considerable interest in PLAR over the past 10 years, with active involvement from federal and provincial/territorial governments, post-secondary institutions, sector councils, and individuals.

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[64] Van Kleef, J. (1998). Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition. Third National Forum on Education, Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. St. John's Newfoundland, May 28-30. As reported in Bertrand, J., Report on Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition, Research Connections Canada: Supporting Children and Families. Vol. 10 (149-182). Ottawa: ON. Canadian Child Care Federation.

Although the concept of PLAR often appears to be relatively new, a similar practice has been in place for at least thirty years in Canada and in the United States. "Challenging for Credit", the practice of assessing prior learning and life experiences, has been a feature in many universities and colleges for a considerable period of time.

In 2004, the *Pan-Canadian Gateways* project researched the validity of PLAR as a method of assessment and specifically studied program-based PLAR, as this approach was determined to be more relevant to programs because of the nature of the learning outcomes, which may be integrated among a number of courses. *Program-based PLAR looks to the program learning outcomes required by the educational institution, as vetted by the program councils and government educational authorities, for the baseline against which to assess competence as reflected in the award of transfer credit.*[65]

The Gateways Project found that individuals who have little opportunity to obtain formal education benefit from PLAR for career advancement. Most are women in low-income employment in the human services fields of early childhood, education, allied health services, social work and special needs or at-risk youths.[66]

It is interesting to note that the Gateways Project found that a common early response was for participants to feel overwhelmed by the PLAR process. *I found initially the process confusing and . . . so all encompassing and daunting.* This comment was also repeated in TSP focus groups with front line staff who had attempted to apply for PLAR in their local colleges. It is also interesting to note that the Gateways Project findings indicated that the support from a mentor was identified by participants as perhaps the single most important factor contributing to their ultimate success.

A number of provinces and territories have introduced curriculum frameworks for early learning

In the spring of 2007, four provinces (New Brunswick, British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec) introduced curriculum/early-learning frameworks to guide the developmental programs for Early childhood education and care programs. Saskatchewan will launch a new early-learning framework within the year and other jurisdictions are just beginning to develop similar frameworks.

These new developments will have an impact both on the content and structure of post-secondary early childhood education programs, and on the scope and nature of professional development activities in these provinces. The curriculum/learning frameworks that have been launched emphasize the importance of the child as an active agent in his/her own learning processes. Generally described as "emergent curriculum", these approaches present a departure from the "theme based" types of early childhood programs that were common during the past 10 to twenty years. Training needs must be focused on students who will be expected to work in this type of an environment, as well as professional development for early childhood educators and directors who may have been trained in other approaches.

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[65] Arscott, J., Crowther, I., Young, M., and Ungarian, L. (2007). Producing Results in Prior Learning: A report from the Gateways Project. Athabasca University.

[66] Ibid

5.4 MOVING FORWARD

The practices as noted above are represented in most jurisdictions. Post-secondary education institutions, child care organizations, labour groups, various government departments and the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council have all engaged in efforts to address the ongoing training and educational needs of the early childhood workforce and ways to make educational opportunities more accessible. There is wide recognition for the importance of increasing the numbers of well-trained early childhood educators and directors and of supporting their ongoing development.

It is important to note that the three components of the strategic model presented for the Training Strategy are intended to be part of an integrated effort to achieve the goals of improving the quality and consistency of training for Early childhood education and care, and increasing the size and capacity of the child care workforce. This strategy focuses on those practices that have demonstrated their effectiveness in achieving these goals.

However, the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council has the opportunity to make strategic investments in the coordination and enhancement of practices that support the sector. The Occupational Standards, which are the foundation upon which the Training Strategy is built, also have the potential to support and coordinate a number of key practices.

The strategic directions recommended for practices that enhance access to post-secondary credentials and the effectiveness of practitioners fall into three categories:
1. Use of the Occupational Standards as an organizing framework for professional development, assessment of international credentials, and PLAR;
2. Identification of best practices and support needed for refinement of mentoring and coaching approaches for new graduates of post-secondary Early childhood education programs, including evaluation of early childhood mentoring approaches; and
3. CCHRSC leadership to encourage collaboration among federal/provincial/territorial governments, labour, national and provincial child care organizations, and post- secondary institutions for the expansion of alternative models of program delivery, with particular emphasis on workplace/accelerated training models.

Use the Occupational Standards as an organizing framework for professional development, PLAR and assessment of international credentials

The occupational standards allow for agreement on a common set of competencies, skills and knowledge for the early childhood sector using the occupational standards to guide professional development activities (e.g. to address gaps in knowledge or skills, to enhance skills of directors, or to help staff develop along a career ladder) that will help ensure that professional development is meaningful, meets the needs of staff and employers, and will help increase the comparability of professional development across jurisdictions.

Using the occupational standards to assess international credentials could help ensure that any gaps identified would be measured against a pan-Canadian standard, which in turn could help increase the portability of credentials.

Using the occupational standards in PLAR would also ensure greater consistency in processes and outcomes across PSIs.

The proposed approaches to move forward on this recommended strategy include the following:
- When revising the Occupational Standards for Practitioners, the CCHRSC consult broadly with key stakeholders, such as employers, post-secondary ECE programs, child care organizations and labour groups on the use of occupational standards in the various practices that support the training and development of the workforce.
- The CCHRSC initiate discussions with the Foreign Credential Recognition Program of Human Resources and Social Development Canada to consider options to develop responsive and innovative approaches for greater pan-Canadian consistency in recognition of international credentials.

Identify best practices and supports needed for refinement of mentoring and coaching approaches for: new graduates of post-secondary early childhood education programs and those undertaking PLAR processes, and evaluate existing early childhood mentoring approaches

The proposed approaches to move forward on this recommended strategy include the following:
- Review the literature to explore effective approaches to mentoring/coaching practices in other professions, with particular emphasis on teaching and caring professions;
- Identify the elements of mentoring/coaching that demonstrate best practice;
- Build on the work of Partners in Practice and with child care organizations and coordinate the development of a professional development series that addresses training needs for mentors, protégés, and their employers;
- Support evaluation of mentoring programs to assess the value of mentoring/coaching in enhancing the effectiveness of new early childhood educators and increasing retention rates; and
- Explore the feasibility of establishing mentoring programs to support applicants for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition.

CCHRSC take leadership to encourage collaboration among federal/provincial/territorial levels of government, labour, national and provincial child care organizations, and post-secondary institutions for the expansion of alternative models of program delivery, with particular emphasis on workplace/accelerated training models

The proposed approaches to move forward on this recommended strategy include:
- An assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the current workplace models, including Ontario's Apprenticeship Program, Manitoba's Workplace Program and PEI's Accelerated Training Program
- Inclusion of distance education and alternative models (including workplace models noted above) as part of the program accreditation process

SECTION 6 – CONCLUSION

The early childhood education and care sector in Canada has gained significant respect and recognition in the past 10 years. The sector has broadened in scope and now includes related programs and services such as home visiting, early intervention, family resource centres, parent- child literacy programs, and pre-primary and pre-kindergarten programs. The sector has been successful in its effort to increase the choices of employment for individuals with post- secondary early childhood education credentials, as opportunities for career options have multiplied.
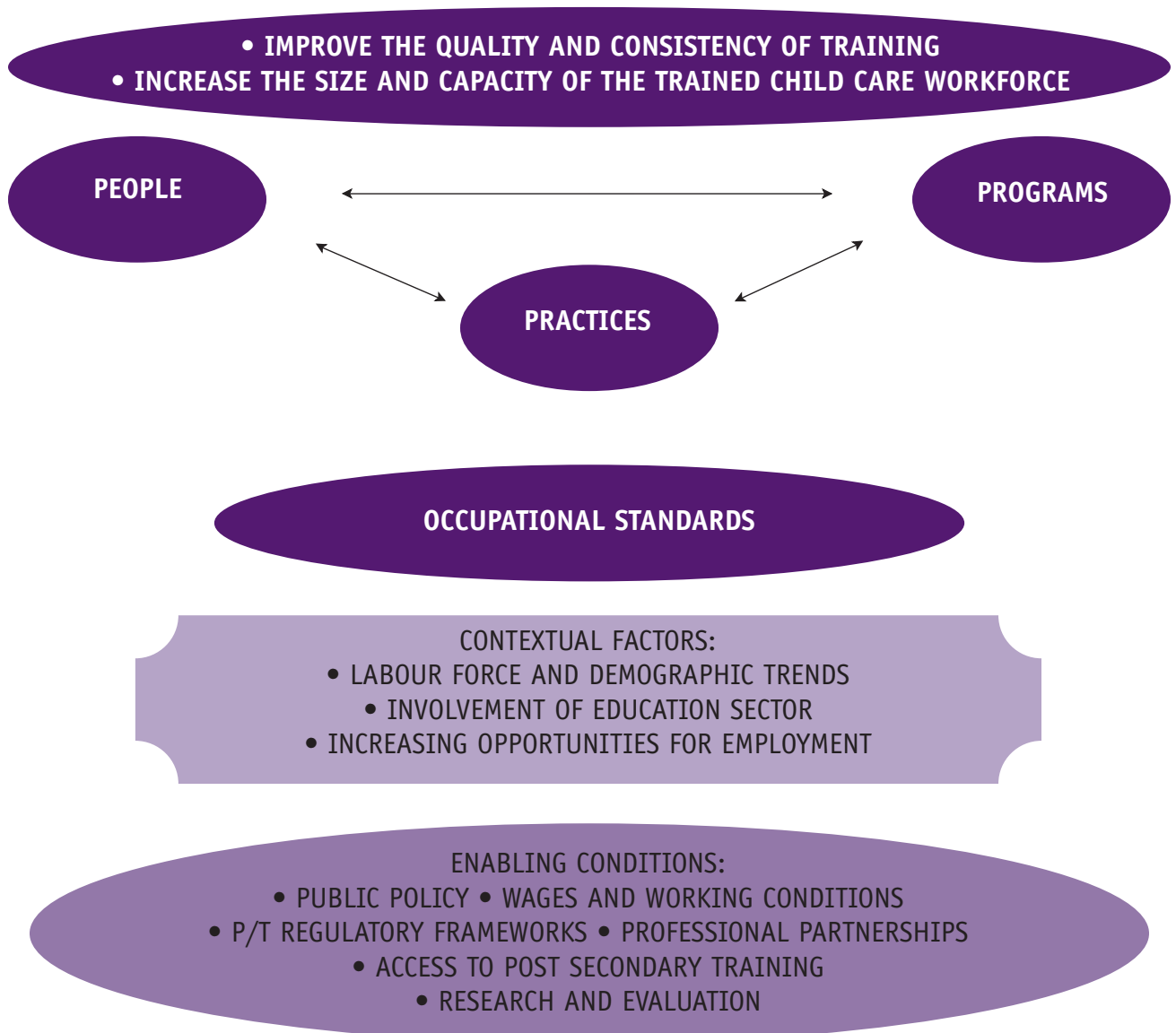
The importance of post-secondary education and training is well documented and is now firmly acknowledged across the country. Provinces and territories have shown consistent progress over the last 10 years in the regular introduction of new qualification requirements of early childhood educators. National organizations such as the Canadian Child Care Federation and the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, and their provincial/territorial affiliates, continue to raise awareness and bring profile to the importance and relevance of early childhood education and care to families and various facets of society. Labour organizations have consistently supported early childhood educators in their work and now represent more of the sector than ever before. The post-secondary sector has become organized, with the Early Childhood Education Affinity Group of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges becoming more active over the past two years. Over the last four years, the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council has been launched and has demonstrated its ability to bring focus, synthesis, research and knowledge to human resource issues.

As the sector has evolved in the past 10 years, so has attention to the importance of curriculum and pedagogical approaches. Emergent curriculum practices emphasize the child as an active agent in his/her own learning processes and recognize that the child is a co-creator of the learning environment. This shift in approach is exciting and acknowledges that children have rights, interests, and are capable of thoughtful and relevant contributions to early childhood education and care programs.

The Training Strategy is built on the philosophy that early childhood educators—in whatever capacity they may be employed—are also active agents in their own learning. Early childhood educators/directors have the right and responsibility to be actively involved in any of the numerous organizations that support their pre-service and ongoing professional development. There is no question that this strategy is shaped by current contextual factors, influenced by the identified enabling conditions and built upon occupational standards. However, members of the early childhood education and care sector are at the heart of this Training Strategy and it is through their collective contributions that this strategy will evolve.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Training Strategy focuses on people, programs, and practices in order to achieve the stated goals. This strategic approach is built on occupational standards, carried out within related contextual factors and is influenced by the presence of supportive enabling conditions. Each of the three components of the Training Strategy outlines specific objectives recommends strategic directions and presents a number of proposed approaches for moving forward on the strategic direction. The following pages outline the objectives, recommended strategies and summarize the proposed approaches for each component.

- **IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND CONSISTENCY OF TRAINING**
- **INCREASE THE SIZE AND CAPACITY OF THE TRAINED CHILD CARE WORKFORCE**

PEOPLE

PROGRAMS

PRACTICES

OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS:
- LABOUR FORCE AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS
- INVOLVEMENT OF EDUCATION SECTOR
- INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT

ENABLING CONDITIONS:
- PUBLIC POLICY • WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS
- P/T REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS • PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS
- ACCESS TO POST SECONDARY TRAINING
- RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

PEOPLE

OBJECTIVE: ENHANCE THE SIZE AND CAPACITY OF THE
TRAINED CHILD CARE WORKFORCE

RECOMMENDED STRATEGY: DEFINE CORE ROLE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR AND DIRECTOR

Proposed Approaches

Require a provincially/territorially-approved post-secondary credential in early childhood education for the core roles

- Improving quality and pedagogy in child care programs across jurisdictions raises the demand for a solid knowledge of pedagogy and the skills to translate observation into appropriate programming. It also creates greater expectations of collaboration between the ECE and kindergarten workforces. During the Canada review, the OECD team noted that greater integration of ECEC and kindergarten would result in the emergence of a specific early childhood professional.
- Recognizing the variations in educational requirements across provinces and territories, we propose that, initially, the minimum requirement for an early childhood educator would be the current post-secondary credential requirement in each province/territory. For example, in provinces and territories with a two-year diploma or three-year DEC as the standard for ECE qualifications, that would be the minimum requirement for an early childhood educator; in provinces and territories with a one-year certificate as the standard, the minimum would be the certificate.
- An early childhood director be an early childhood educator with specialization in leadership and management.
  - o It is recommended that post-secondary institutions, professional organizations and provincial/ territorial governments examine ways to increase qualifications of directors.
- Those without formal post-secondary credentials, while still an important part of the early childhood team, would have a different designation than early childhood educator—such as early childhood assistant. An assistant would be anyone who does not have the minimum requirements as defined by provincial/territorial regulations to be an early childhood educator, or who may have undertaken an orientation program of a specified number of hours to work in the field.
  - o The CCHRSC may wish to consider further consultation with key stakeholders on the position of early childhood assistant and, if appropriate, conduct a review of the requirements for the roles and responsibilities, and the educational requirements of such a position.

The Child Care Sector Human Resources Council use early childhood educator as the core role when revising the Occupational Standards for Practitioners

- In addition, the next steps from this project should be closely linked to the Career Promotion and Recruitment Strategy that points to the need to increase understanding of child care as a formal occupation with college training programs and certification.

The Child Care Sector Human Resources Council consider further study of human resources and training needs for those working in school age care and in family child care

- As noted in Section 1 of the report, the issues and concerns of school age staff regarding the provision of quality environments to older children are often lost within the wider issues of ECEC. A separate project that addresses the specific human resources issues of staff in school-age programs, including working conditions and environments as well as training gaps, needs and issues is suggested.
- Family child care is delivered in two distinct models—through family child care agencies and through individually licensed family child care providers. Since no province or territory requires a post-secondary credential to work as a family child care provider, and there are few traditional employer-employee relationships for family child care providers, addressing their training and professional development needs were outside the scope of the Training Strategy Project. The CCHRSC may wish to undertake further study of the human resources and training needs for family child care.

The Child Care Sector Human Resources Council enter into discussions with Statistics Canada about possible revisions to the National Occupational Classification (NOC) of the early childhood workforce

- Currently early childhood educators and assistants are classified together in the NOC. If early childhood educator becomes defined as a separate occupation, it would be appropriate to redefine it as separate from early childhood assistants. For example, elementary and secondary school teaching assistants are in a separate NOC from kindergarten and elementary school teachers.

Review qualification requirements of faculty especially in degree granting post-secondary institutions

- More ECE degree programs are being introduced in colleges and universities. This has implications for current ECE faculty; there are few with the PhD qualifications usually necessary to teach degree-level programs. This will be an important consideration for the colleges in the future.

PROGRAMS

OBJECTIVE: ENHANCE QUALITY AND CONSISTENCY

RECOMMENDED STRATEGY: VOLUNTARY ECE POST-SECONDARY PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

Proposed Approaches

The Child Care Human Resources Sector Council provide leadership to pursue the establishment of a pan-Canadian voluntary accreditation program for early childhood education and care

- The formal establishment of a Child Care Human Resources Sector Council in 2003 provides an opportunity that was not available when the topic of voluntary accreditation was first proposed by the CCCF and ACCC. The work of other sector councils in the area of accreditation also provides a potential framework to guide the nature of any involvement of the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council.

The Child Care Human Resources Sector Council take a lead role in establishing an accreditation council that is representative of the early childhood education and care sector

- The Accreditation Council include representatives from national child care organizations, the post-secondary sector, labour, and employers; with linkages to the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada and the Association of Accrediting Agencies of Canada.
- Accreditation be undertaken by the Accreditation Council rather than a professional organization of early childhood educators.
- Accreditation be considered as a voluntary activity.

Develop criteria for accreditation indicators using Occupational Standards as a foundation

- There are currently Occupational Standards for Child Care administrators and for Child Care practitioners. In Section 3 of the report, there is a recommendation to revise the Occupational Standards for Practitioners to reflect the core role of the early childhood educator. These revisions, and others that may come in the future as part of a regular review process, would need to be reflected in the accreditation indicators. If additional occupational standards are developed in the future to reflect other positions in ECEC, such as specialist, or assistant, they would also need to be appropriately reflected in the accreditation indicators.

Include certificate, diploma, and degree granting programs, as well as distance education, full-time and part-time study, and continuing education programs in accreditation processes

Include polices, practices, and processes associated with practicum placements for early childhood students in accreditation processes

PRACTICES

OBJECTIVE: ENHANCE ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
AND ENHANCE EFFECTIVENESS OF ECEs

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: • PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT • MENTORING/COACHING
• METHODS OF ECE DELIVERY • PLAR • INTERNATIONAL CREDENTIALS

The strategic directions recommended for practices that enhance access to post-secondary credentials and the effectiveness of practitioners fall into three categories:

1. Use of the occupational standards as an organizing framework for professional development, assessment of international credentials, and PLAR
2. Identification of best practices and supports needed for refinement of mentoring and coaching approaches for new graduates of post-secondary early childhood education programs, including evaluation of early childhood mentoring approaches
3. CCHRSC leadership to encourage collaboration among federal/provincial/territorial governments, labour, national and provincial child care organizations, and post-secondary institutions for the expansion of alternative models of program delivery, with an emphasis on workplace/accelerated training models

1. Use the Occupational Standards as an organizing framework for professional development, PLAR and assessment of international credentials

- The occupational standards allow for agreement on a common set of competencies, skills and knowledge for the early childhood sector using the occupational standards to guide professional development activities (e.g. to address gaps in knowledge or skills, to enhance skills of directors, or to help staff develop along a career ladder) will help ensure that professional development is meaningful, meets the needs of staff and employers and will help increase the comparability of professional development across jurisdictions.
- Using the occupational standards to assess international credentials could help ensure that any gaps identified would be measured against a pan-Canadian standard, which in turn could help increase the portability of credentials.
- Using the occupational standards in PLAR would also ensure greater consistency in processes and outcomes across PSIs.

Proposed Approaches:
- When revising the Occupational Standards for Practitioners, the CCHRSC consult broadly with key stakeholders, including employers, post-secondary ECE programs, child care organizations and labour groups on the use of occupational standards in the various practices that support the training and development of the workforce.
- The CCHRSC initiate discussions with the Foreign Credential Recognition Program of Human Resources and Social Development Canada to consider options to develop responsive and innovative approaches to greater pan-Canadian consistency in recognition of international credentials.

2. Identify best practices and supports needed for refinement of mentoring and coaching approaches for new graduates of post-secondary early childhood education programs and those undertaking PLAR processes, and evaluate existing early childhood mentoring approaches

Proposed Approaches:
- Review the literature to explore effective approaches to mentoring/coaching practices in other professions, with particular emphasis on teaching and caring professions.
- Identify the elements of mentoring/coaching that demonstrate best practice.
- Build on the work of Partners in Practice and with child care organizations, and coordinate the development of a professional development series that addresses training needs for mentors, protégés, and their employers.
- Support evaluation of mentoring programs to assess the value of mentoring/coaching in enhancing the effectiveness of new early childhood educators, and increasing retention rates.
- Explore the feasibility of establishing mentoring programs to support applicants for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition.

3. CCHRSC take leadership to encourage collaboration among federal/provincial/territorial governments, labour, national and provincial child care organizations, and post-secondary institutions for the expansion of alternative models of program delivery, with particular emphasis on workplace/accelerated training models

Proposed Approaches:
- An assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the current workplace models, including Ontario's Apprenticeship Program, Manitoba's Workplace Program, and PEI's Accelerated Training Program.
- Inclusion of distance education and alternative models (including workplace models noted above) as part of the program accreditation process.

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APPENDIX 1 – Provincial/Territorial Training and Education Requirements for Staff in Centre-Based Child Care Programs

	Centre directors	Early childhood educators	Other training and education requirements
AB	Two year ECE Diploma is required.	One year ECE certificate required for 1/4 of staff	• All other staff need a 45 hour course
BC	Not specified	One-year ECE certificate plus 500 hours of supervised work experience. Additional one-year specialization required for each of infant/toddler educator and special needs educator. Under 36 months: Each group of 4 or fewer children requires one infant/toddler educator. Each group of 5 – 8 children requires one infant/toddler educator and ECE. Each group of 9 – 12 children requires one infant/toddler educator, one ECE, and one assistant. 30 months to school age: Basic ECE training program and 500 hours of supervised work experience for one staff per group. Special Needs: Each group of up to 4 requires one special needs educator. Each group of 5-9 requires one special needs educator and one ECE. Each group of 9-16 requires one special needs educator and 2 ECEs.	• At least 2 seminars, conferences or workshops on Early childhood education, lasting a total of at least 12 hours, or completion of a course relating to Early childhood education, every five years
MB	Minimum of post diploma certificate or college degree program from an approved post-secondary institution in Manitoba and one year experience.	Diploma in ECE from a recognized community college in Manitoba required for 2/3 of staff (for 0-6 year olds) and 1/2 staff for school age and nursery school settings	• Entry level requires minimum 40 hour course at a post-secondary level in ECE. New assistants must complete within one year of employment.
NB	Director or his/her designate OR 1/4 of staff are required to have a one year community college ECE certificate or its equivalent	See Directors.	• None

	Centre directors	Early childhood educators	Other training and education requirements
NL	Child care services certification level 2 for the age groups for which the centre is licensed – Two year ECE diploma or equivalent plus two years experience	Child care services certification – level one Minimum of one year ECE certificate and one year experience Required for at least one staff member per group	• All other staff in ratio need to be certified at minimum of entry level; specific requirements for entry level vary depending on the age group e.g., 30 hours required for school age, 40 hours for preschool, or 60 hours for infant • 30 hours of professional development every 3 years required for all staff
NS	Training program in early childhood education or its equivalent	Training program in early childhood education or its equivalent required for 2/3 of staff	• None
NT	No training required	No training required	• None
NU	No training required	No training required	• None
ON	Minimum of two year ECE diploma from an approved College of Applied Arts and Technology and two years of experience	Minimum of two year ECE diploma from an approved College of Applied Arts and Technology required for one staff member per group	• None
PE	Ranges from minimum of one year diploma and three years experience to degree in early childhood education	Minimum of one year diploma required for at least one staff member in addition to the Director	• 30 hours of professional development every three years required for certified staff to renew their certificates; same requirement for untrained staff— and this requirement is linked to license renewal for centres
PQ	Not specified.	2/3 of staff in CPEs and 1/3 of staff in *garderies* require ECE college diploma	• None
SK	Two year ECE Diploma[67]	30% of staff must have a one year ECE certificate, 20% of staff must have a two year diploma	• All other staff working more than 65 hours must have 120 hours of ECE training
YT	Not specified	Two year ECE training for 20% of staff; one year training for 30%	• 60 hour course required for all other staff

Sources: Friendly, M.; Beach, J.; Fern, C.; Turiano, M. (2007) Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2006 Toronto: Child care Resource and Research Unit; Review of provincial/territorial child care regulations

[67] Directors appointed to a Centre Director position prior to July 2001 require a one year certificate or equivalent but must upgrade to a two year diploma if they accept employment with another centre.

APPENDIX 2 – Acknowledgements

The Child Care Human Resources Sector Council gratefully acknowledges the hard work and dedication of the Training Strategy Project consulting team:

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Kathleen Flanagan, co-lead
Jane Bertrand
Barry Forer
Donna Michal

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APPENDIX 3 – List of Acronyms

AB – Alberta
ACCC– Association of Canadian Community Colleges
ARCQE – Alberta Resource Centre For Quality Enhancement
BC – British Columbia
CAPC – Community Action Program for Children
CCCF – Canadian Child Care Federation
CCHRSC – Child Care Human Resources Sector Council
CEA– Canadian Education Association
CEAB – Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board
CEGEP – Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel
CICIC – Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials
CMEC – Council Of Ministers Of Education Of Canada
CNAB – Cars National Accreditation Board
CPE– Centre de la petite enfance
CPRS – Career Promotions and Recruitment Strategy
CUPE – Canadian Union of Public Employees
DEC – Diplôme d'études collégiales
ECE – Early Childhood Educator
ECEC – Early Childhood Education and Care
ECERS-R – Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale – Revised
EINS – Early Intervention Association of Nova Scotia
EQuiP – Enhancing Quality and Inclusive Practices
FPT – Federal / Provincial / Territorial
HRSDC – Human Resource and Social Development Canada
ITERS – Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale
LMU– Labour Market Update
MB – Manitoba
MCPCC – Motor Carrier Passenger Council of Canada
MIKE – Measuring and Improving Kids' Environments
NB – New Brunswick
NGO – Non Governmental Organization
NIEER– National Institute for Early Education Research
NL – Newfoundland and Labrador
NOC– National Occupational Classification
NS – Nova Scotia
NT – Northwest Territory
NU – Nunavut
NWT – Northwest Territory
OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ON – Ontario
PD – Professional Development
PE – Prince Edward Island
PLAR – Prior Learning Assessment And Recognition

PQ – Province of Quebec
PSI – Post Secondary Institution
PT – Provincial / Territorial
SK – Saskatchewan
TASC – The Alliance of Sector Councils
TSP – Training Strategy Project
YT – Yukon Territory

APPENDIX 4 – List of Reports Prepared for the Training Strategy Project

The following reports were prepared as part of the Training Strategy Project and are available on the Child Care Sector Human Resources Sector Council website at http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca/

The Training Strategy Literature Review and Environmental Scan

The Report of the 2006 Student Survey

The Report of the 2006 Faculty Survey

The Report of the 2006 Follow-Up Survey

The Training Strategy Project – Preliminary Findings

Training Strategy Project Focus Group Report

Training Strategy Project Facilitated Expert Focus Group Summary Report

APPENDIX 5 – List of Focus Groups

Twenty-nine focus groups were conducted between October 2006 and March 2007.

Location	Type of Focus Group
Charlottetown	Employers
Charlottetown	Front-line graduates of accelerated program
Fredericton	Licensing officers
Fredericton	Employers (English)
Halifax	Employers
Halifax	Pre-Primary Teachers
Moncton	Employers (French)
Montreal	Employers
Montreal	Educatrices
Northwest Territories (teleconference)	Employers
Nunavut (teleconference)	Employers
Ottawa	Employers (centres and family child care agencies)
Portage la Prairie	Rural Employers
Red Deer	Employers (centres, school age care, and family child care agencies), post-secondary ECE faculty
Regina	Employers
Saskatoon	Rural and Urban Employers
Saskatoon	Pre-kindergarten and preschool teachers
St. John's	Employers
St. John's	Front Line Staff
Toronto	Employers
Toronto	Front Line
Toronto	Labour
Toronto	Related Employers
Vancouver	Employers
Vancouver	Front Line Staff
Whitehorse	Employers
Winnipeg	Employers
Winnipeg	Graduates of ECE Workplace training
Winnipeg	Licensing officers

APPENDIX 6 – List of Expert Facilitated Focus Groups

The Provincial/Territorial Directors of Early Childhood Education and Care

The ECE Affinity Group of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges

The Board and Member Council of the Canadian Child Care Federation

The Board of the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council

The Training Strategy Project Steering Committee

APPENDIX 7 – List of Key Informants

Kathy Abernethy
Department of Learning, Pre-Kindergarten, Saskatchewan

Sandra Beckman
Executive Director, Alberta Association for the Accreditation of Early Learning and Care Services

John Bennett
Former Programme Manager, OECD early childhood reviews, OECD Education Branch, Paris

Andrew Cardozo
Executive Director, The Alliance of Sector Councils, Ottawa

Suzanne Cormier
Responsable de programme Conception pédagogique Cégep@distance, Quebec

Karen Chandler
Ontario Best Start Expert Panels on Quality and Human Resources and on an Early Learning Program

Darcelle Cottons,
Executive Director, UBC Child Care Services, Vancouver

Ingrid Crowther
"Gateways" Project, Athabasca University, Alberta

Fiona Deller
Council of Ministers of Education of Canada, Ottawa

Brenda Goodine
Early Childhood Consultant, Bridges Project, Prince Edward Island

Mary Goss Prowse
Registrar of ECE certification, Association of Early Childhood Educators of Newfoundland and Labrador

Elin Ibrahim
Child Care Education Program Approval Committee, Manitoba

Zeenat Janmohammed
ACCESS to the ECE Field in Ontario, George Brown College and Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario

Chaya Kulkarni
Vice President, Parent & Professional Education, Invest in Kids, Toronto

Sandra MacDonald-Rencz
Office of Nursing Policy, Ottawa

Gail Mulhall
ECE Affinity Group, Association of Canadian Community Colleges, Ottawa

Don Ogston
Consultant, Ottawa

Denise Pawliuk
Early Childhood Educator Registry, British Columbia

Eduarda de Sousa
Executive Director, Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario

Nancy Taylor
Department of Education, Pre-Kindergarten, Nova Scotia

Petr Varmuza
Director, Organizational Effectiveness, Children's Services, City of Toronto

Ildi Walkley
British Columbia Early childhood education Articulation Committee

Lynn Westlake
Special Advisor, Social Policy, Human Resources and Social Development Canada

Marci Whitebook
Director, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, Berkeley, California