

knowing u numbers

A community approach to understanding
the early childhood education workforce

County of Dufferin



County of Wellington





Counties of Dufferin and Wellington

The regional data presented here are part of the larger provincial early childhood education workforce study **Knowing Our Numbers** (KON). The Counties of Dufferin and Wellington are two of 43 regional children's service districts that participated in the study. In total they represent over 91% of all regions in Ontario. Details on the project, methodology, and province-wide results can be found [here](#). The data from the Counties of Dufferin and Wellington were merged in consultation with regional officials. In the **Executive Report**, these adjacent Counties are part of the 'Central West' (Dufferin) and 'West' (Wellington) data regions. Census data provided on the following pages allow readers to put the results into the context of regional demographics.

This report should be cited as:

Akbari, E., McCuaig, K., Schurter, M. Varmuza, P., Akbari, S., Mudie, S. (2024). *Knowing Our Numbers: A Provincial Study with a Local Lens on the Early Childhood Education Workforce in Ontario. The Counties of Dufferin and Wellington.*

All communication and inquiries should be made to
Dr. Emis Akbari — emis.akbari@ece-rpa.ca
and Kerry McCuaig — kerry.mccuaig@ece-rpa.ca

County of Dufferin

Population and Family

Population		Average number of children per family	1.8
2021	66,257		
2016	61,735	One-parent families	15.3%
Change since 2016:	+7.30%		
Population density per sq km	44.6	Lone-parent families	
		Women	11.7%
Median age	40.4 years	Men	3.6%
Racialized population	15.9%	Marital status	
Multi-generational households	5.4%	Married or living common-law	60.9%
Immigrant population	16.1%	Not married or living common-law	39.0%
Indigenous identity	2.1%	Married or common-law with children	48.6%
Education		Language most often spoken at home	
No certificate, diploma, or degree	15.7%	English	93.8%
High school diploma or equivalent	32.7%	French	0.3%
Post secondary certificate, diploma or degree	51.5%	Other	5.9%
<i>*15+ years old</i>			
Education obtained outside Canada	6.9%	Home ownership	
<i>*25-64 years old</i>		Owner	82.5%
		Renter	17.5%
		Spending more than 30% on shelter costs	22.6%

**Estimates associated with Indigenous languages are more affected than most by the incomplete enumeration of certain reserves and settlements in the Census of Population.*

Employment and Income

Labour force participation rate		Commuting duration (mins)	Total %	% Men	% Women
Women	64.4%	Less than 15	28.8	21.4	38.6
Men	74.4%	15 to 29	17.0	14.8	20.0
Unemployment rate		30 to 44	18.2	19.5	16.4
Women	12.3%	45 to 59	16.2	18.7	12.8
Men	7.9%	60 minutes and over	19.8	25.6	12.2
Prevalence of low income (LIM)		Income distribution	Total %	% Men	% Women
0-17	6.8%	In bottom half of the distribution	38.8	37.6	39.9
0-5	6.8%	In bottom decile	5.6	5.4	5.7
18-64	5.4%	In second decile	7.1	6.6	7.7
<i>*LIM: Low Income Measure reflects those whose incomes are below half of the median of the adjusted income distribution</i>		In third decile	7.5	6.9	8.0
		In fourth decile	8.9	8.8	9.0
Median employment income	\$42,000	In fifth decile	9.7	9.8	9.6
Median employment income in 2020 for full-year full-time workers	\$68,000	In top half of the distribution	61.2	62.3	60.1
Median total income of household in 2020	\$108,000	In sixth decile	10.9	11.0	10.8
Median after-tax income of household in 2020	\$93,000	In seventh decile	11.8	11.9	11.8
		In eighth decile	12.9	12.9	12.8
		In ninth decile	13.9	14.3	13.4
		In top decile	11.8	12.2	11.3

Reference: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Dufferin&DGUIDist=2021A00033522&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

County of Wellington

Population and Family

Population		Average number of children per family	1.9
2021	241,026		
2016	222,726	One-parent families	13.9%
Change since 2016:	+8.20%		
Population density per sq km	90.4	Lone-parent families	
		Women	10.8%
Median age	40.0 years	Men	3.2%
Racialized population	17.6%	Marital status	
Multi-generational households	3.2%	Married or living common-law	59.5%
Immigrant population	18.8%	Not married or living common-law	40.5%
Indigenous identity	1.6%	Married or common-law with children	44.9%
Education		Language most often spoken at home	
No certificate, diploma, or degree	16.3%	English	88.0%
High school diploma or equivalent	28.1%	French	0.2%
Post secondary certificate, diploma or degree	55.7%	Other	9.2%
<i>*15+ years old</i>		<i>*Estimates associated with Indigenous languages are more affected than most by the incomplete enumeration of certain reserves and settlements in the Census of Population.</i>	
Education obtained outside Canada	9.9%	Home ownership	
<i>*25–64 years old</i>		Owner	72.4%
		Renter	27.6%
		Spending more than 30% on shelter costs	20.5%

Employment and Income

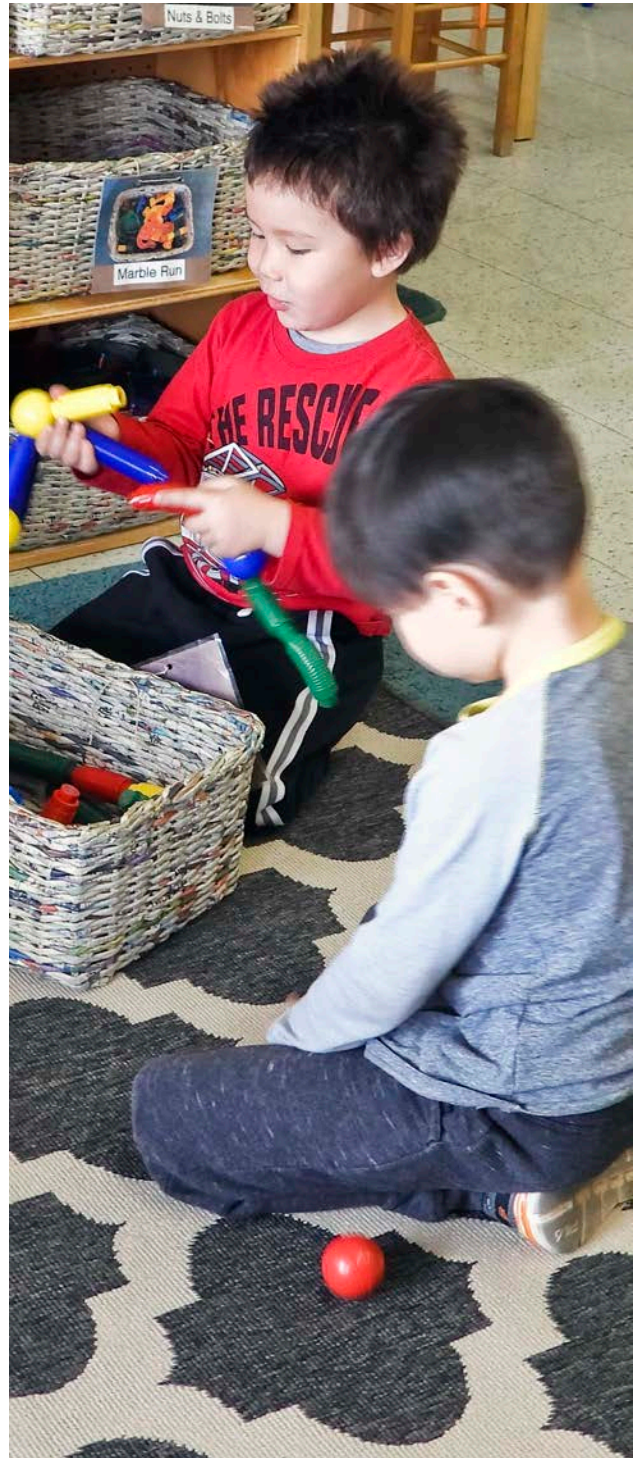
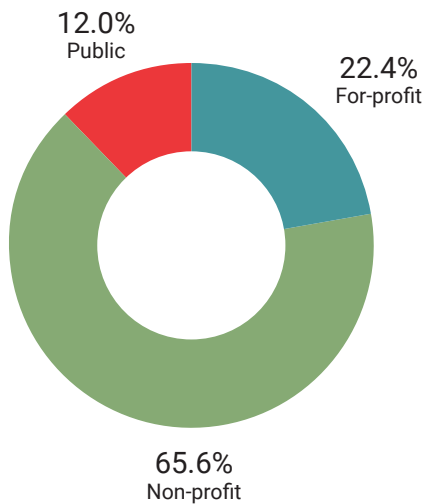
Labour force participation rate		Commuting duration (mins)	Total %	% Men	% Women
Women	62.6%	Less than 15	37.0	32.4	42.8
Men	72.0%	15 to 29	30.5	30.5	30.4
Unemployment rate		30 to 44	16.0	16.9	14.8
Women	10.5%	45 to 59	8.1	9.5	6.4
Men	8.1%	60 minutes and over	8.4	10.6	5.6
Prevalence of low income (LIM)		Income distribution	Total %	% Men	% Women
0-17	8.7%	In bottom half of the distribution	42.8	41.6	43.9
0-5	9.9%	In bottom decile	7.6	7.4	7.8
18-64	7.0%	In second decile	7.8	7.2	8.4
<i>*LIM: Low Income Measure reflects those whose incomes are below half of the median of the adjusted income distribution</i>		In third decile	8.6	8.3	8.8
		In fourth decile	9.1	9.0	9.2
Median employment income	\$41,200	In fifth decile	9.7	9.7	9.7
Median employment income in 2020 for full-year full-time workers	\$65,000	In top half of the distribution	57.2	58.4	56.1
Median total income of household in 2020	\$97,000	In sixth decile	10.4	10.5	10.3
Median after-tax income of household in 2020	\$85,000	In seventh decile	10.9	11.0	10.7
		In eighth decile	11.7	12.0	11.5
		In ninth decile	12.4	12.8	12.1
		In top decile	11.7	12.1	11.4

Reference: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=wellington&DGUIDlist=2021A00033523&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

Sample Characteristics

A total of 126 individuals working in early years services in the Counties of Dufferin and Wellington responded to the survey (referred to as the 'workforce survey'). Of these, 81% are RECEs and 19% are non-RECEs (referred to as the 'workforce'). Most respondents are from non-profit programs (65.6%). Additionally, 22 directors responded to the survey. As the number of respondents who are licensed home child care providers in the Counties is low (n=10), data are not presented here; these data are included in the [Executive Report](#).

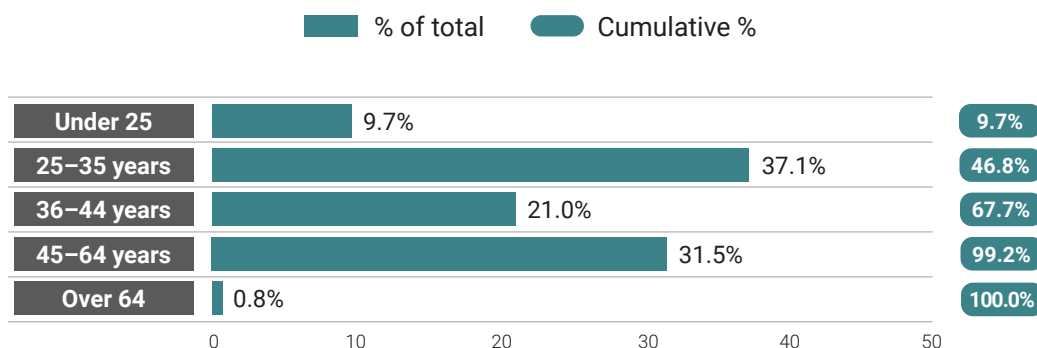
Percentage Respondents by Auspice Workforce



AGE

Approximately 68% of *workforce* respondents are under the age of 45. Director/supervisor respondents in Dufferin and Wellington Counties are older than the provincial findings. Across participating regions, 57.3% of director/supervisor participants are over the age of 45 years compared to 66.7% in the two Counties (data not shown).

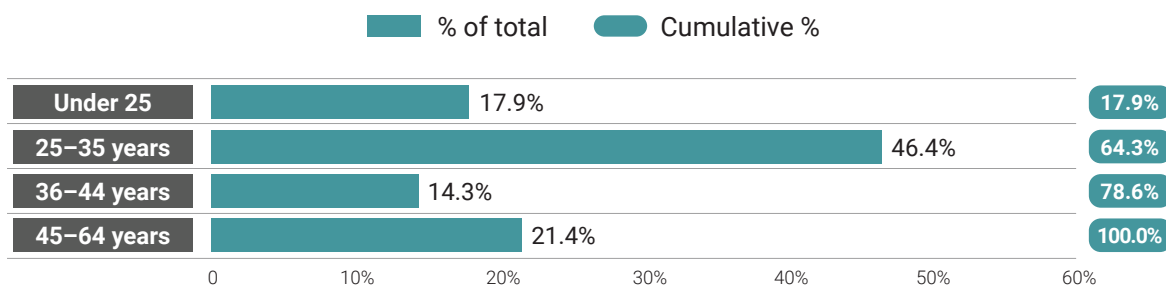
Age Distribution of Respondents *Workforce*



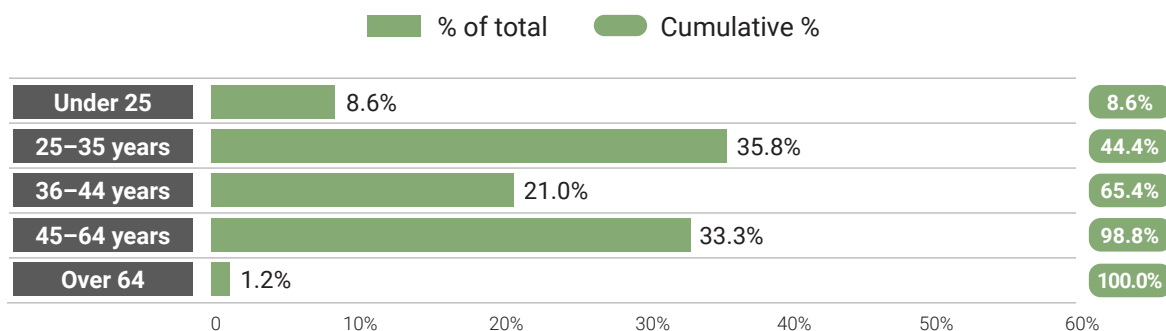
Respondents working in for-profit organizations are more likely to be younger. Almost 79% of *workforce* participants from for-profit programs are under the age of 45 years. By comparison, 65.4% and 64.3% are under 45 years of age in non-profit and public programs respectively.

Age Distribution by Auspice Workforce

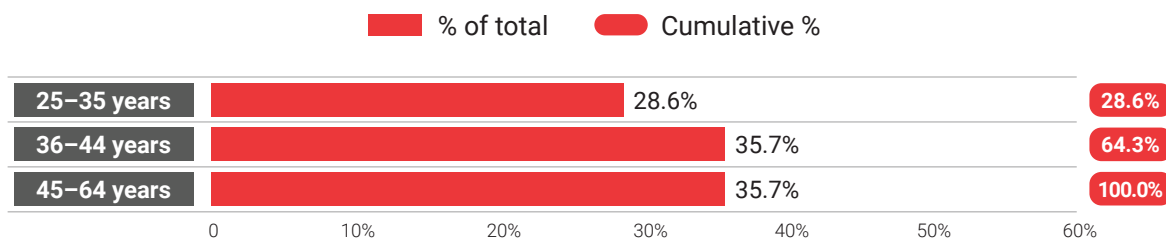
For-Profit



Non-Profit



Public



YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Participants who work in for-profit programs have the fewest median years of experience. In contrast, public programs tend to have more experienced educators.

Years of Experience by Auspice
Workforce

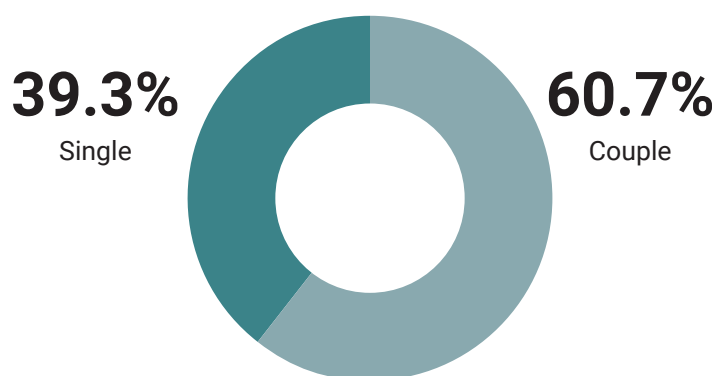
Auspice	Mean	Minimum	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile	Maximum
For-profit	13.0	0.0	4.0	8.5	19.5	35.0
Non-profit	12.9	0.0	5.0	9.5	18.0	42.0
Public	15.3	1.0	8.0	12.0	18.0	39.0

All directors/supervisors who responded to the survey have been registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators for less than five years.

FAMILY STATUS

Approximately 39% of the *workforce* survey respondents are single.

Respondents' Family Status
Workforce





RACIALIZATION

Only 8.5% of the *workforce* sample identify as racialized.

Percentage Racialized Workforce



Racialized: **8.5%**

Non-racialized: **91.5%**

The number of respondents who identify as racialized is too low to present findings regarding racialization by RECE status. The provincial findings presented in the [Executive Report](#) reveal that non-RECEs are more likely to identify as racialized than RECEs.

Compensation

WAGES

Wages of RECEs are higher than for non-RECEs. Those working in for-profit programs have the lowest hourly wages. Approximately 22% of respondents report having additional employment to supplement their primary wages.

Hourly Wages by Auspice and RECE Status Workforce

Auspice	RECE status		Average across RECE status
	Non-RECE	RECE	
For-profit	\$20.33	\$23.06	\$22.08
Non-profit	\$22.71	\$25.22	\$24.95
Public	\$30.00	\$33.92	\$33.64
Average across auspice	\$21.88	\$26.13	\$25.43

Note: All averages are weighted.

Reported director/supervisor median wages in Dufferin and Wellington Counties are slightly higher (\$33 per hour) than those in provincial participating regions. The median director/supervisor hourly wage in the overall provincial findings is \$30 per hour, with a minimum of \$18 per hour and a maximum of \$80 per hour.

Counties of Dufferin and Wellington Director/Supervisor Wage Range by Position

Position	Average	Minimum	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile	Maximum
Director	\$35.40	\$21.00	\$28.00	\$33.00	\$41.00	\$72.00

BENEFITS

Almost 84% of *workforce* respondents report having access to paid sick days. Almost 60% have extended health benefits, and 51.2% report having pensions or RRSP contributions through their employer. Over half (56.9%) have access to paid professional learning opportunities. Almost 62% have paid bereavement leave. Less than half have paid programming time during the workday (46.3%). Pay increases for obtaining a new credential or degree in early education (8.1%) and tuition assistance (12.2%) are rare.

Percentage of Respondents with Access to Non-Mandatory Benefits *Workforce*



83.7%

Paid sick days



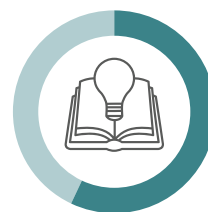
61.8%

Paid bereavement leave



59.4%

Extended health benefits
(e.g., dental, physiotherapy, etc.)



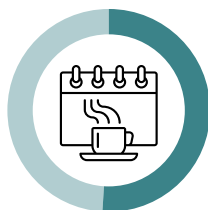
56.9%

Paid professional
development



51.2%

Pension benefits or
contributions to an RRSP



51.2%

Paid personal or
mental health days



46.3%

Paid programming time
during the workday



35.8%

Paid team meeting time
during the workday



22.0%

Salary scale with regular
guaranteed increases
reflecting my qualifications,
responsibilities, and seniority



16.3%

Parental leave top-up



12.2%

Tuition assistance



8.1%

Pay increase for obtaining
a new credential or degree
in early childhood education

Workforce Stability, Stress, and Job Satisfaction

DISCRIMINATION

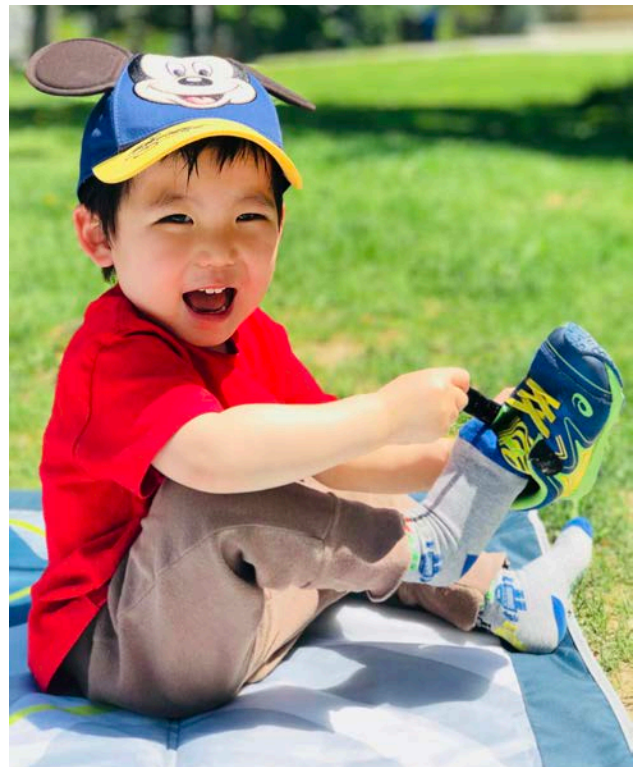
Approximately 39% of *workforce* respondents report having experienced workplace discrimination. The types of discrimination experienced vary, with bullying being the most common (54%), followed by education/seniority (46%), and mental health (36%). Note that bullying may involve, or be rooted in, other forms of discrimination (e.g., racism or ageism).

Percentage of Respondents Reporting Experiences of Workplace Discrimination *Workforce*



Types of Discrimination *Workforce*

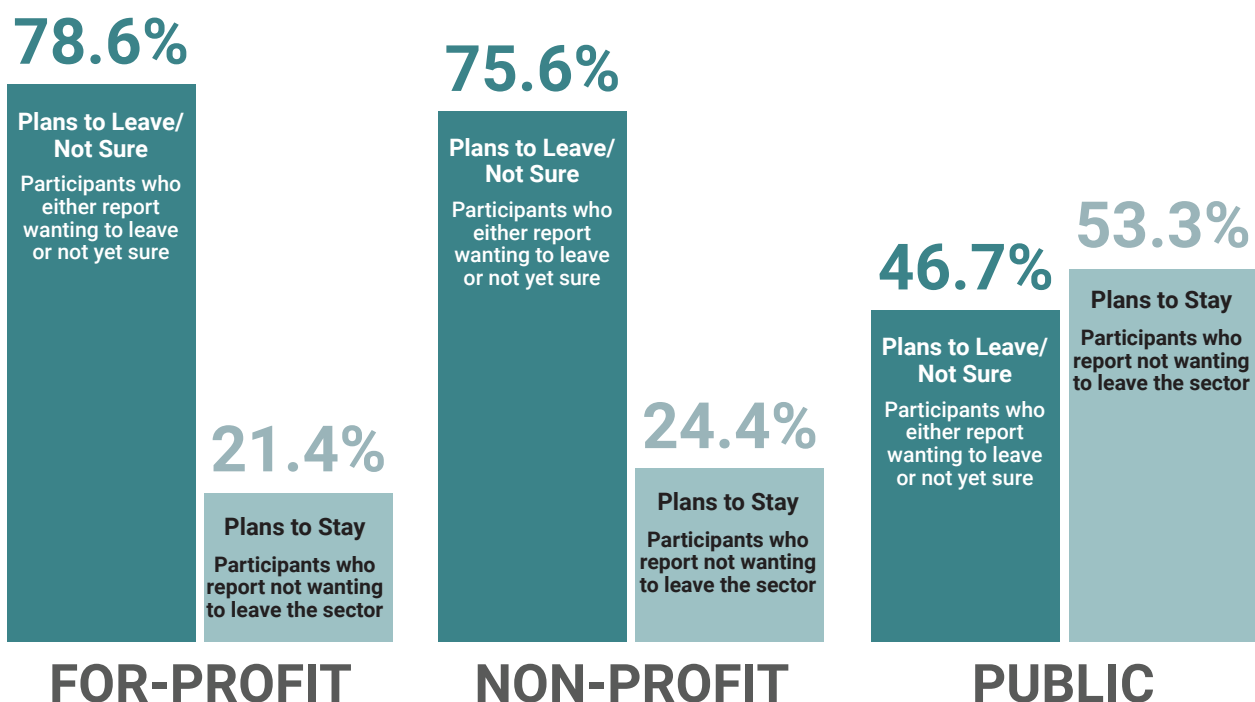
Bullying	54%
Education/seniority	46%
Mental health	36%
Body prejudice	20%
Ableism	20%
Ageism	18%
Racism	8%
Homophobia	6%
Immigration status	4%
Sexism	4%
Religious belief	2%



JOB SATISFACTION

Across all auspices, only 27% of respondents from the Counties report plans to stay in the sector over the next five years. Almost 27% plan to leave, while another 46% report they are unsure. Those who work in for-profit programs are most likely to report plans to leave or say they are unsure (78.6%). Those who work in public programs are most likely to report plans to stay in the sector (53.3%). These findings have important implications for retention strategies.

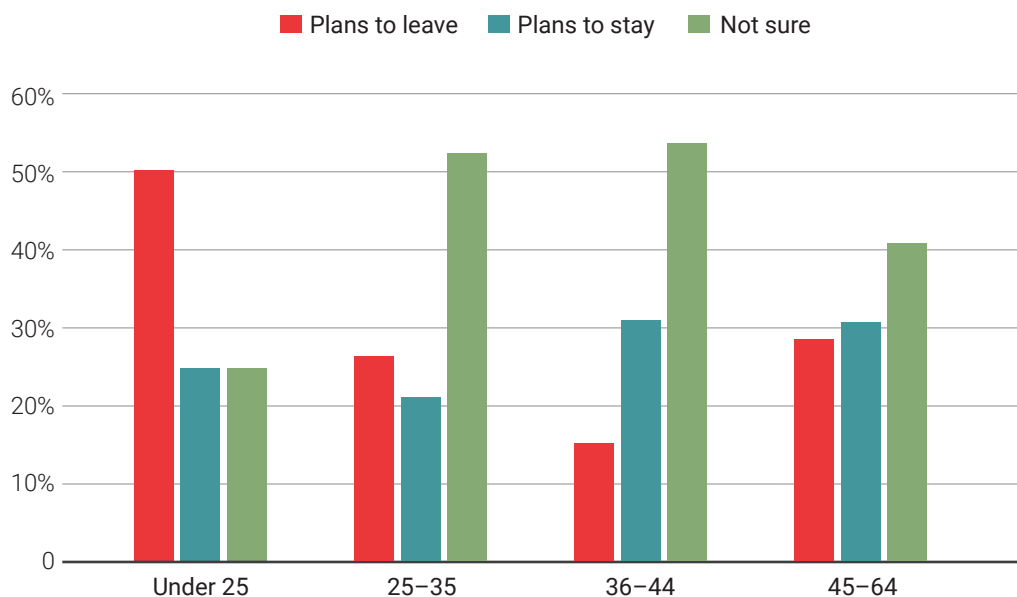
Plans to Leave the Sector by Auspice *Workforce*





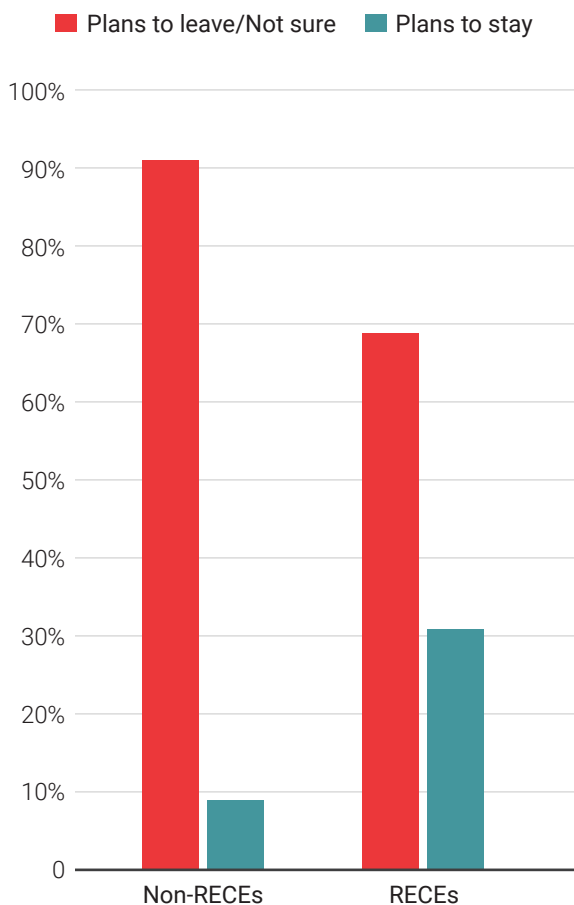
Those under the age of 25 years are much more likely to report plans to leave the sector (50%). A large percentage report uncertainty in their plans, especially those who are 25 years and older. This has important implications for policy development and investment in retention strategies. Note that those 65+ are not included in these findings as plans for retirement would confound results.

Plans to Leave the Sector by Age of Respondent *Workforce*



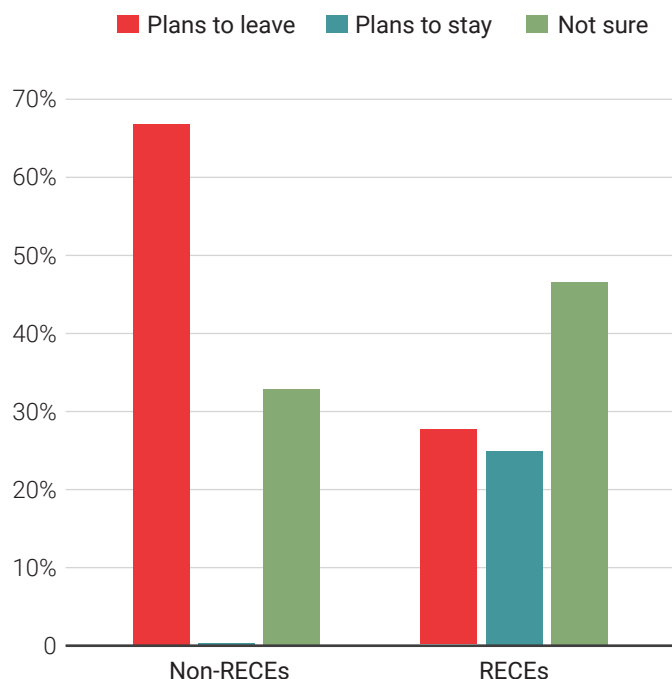
Overall, only 31.4% of RECE respondents report plans to stay in the sector, with 68.6% either planning to leave or reporting they are unsure. Non-RECE respondents are much less likely to report plans to stay in the sector (8.7%).

Plans to Leave the Sector by RECE Status *Workforce*



Plans to leave the sector may be associated with experiences of workplace discrimination. Non-RECEs who experience discrimination are more likely to report plans to leave the sector in the next five years (66.7%). This has implications for professional learning and human resource management. More detailed discussion can be found in the [Executive Report](#).

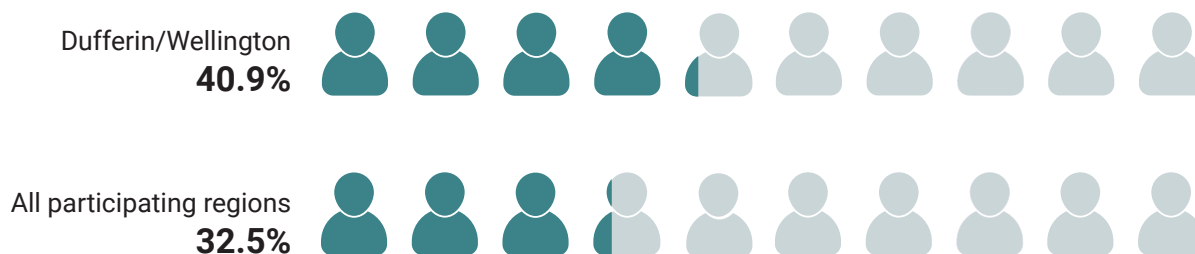
Plans to Leave the Sector by Those Who Experience Workplace Discrimination by RECE Status Workforce



*Should be interpreted with caution due to small sample size.

Approximately 41% of director/supervisor respondents in Dufferin and Wellington report wanting to stay in the sector compared with 32.5% across all participating regions. However, it is important to note that 31.8% report uncertainty about staying in the sector. This has important implications for policy development and investment in retention strategies.

Percentage of Directors/Supervisors with Plans to Stay in the Sector Dufferin/Wellington Versus All Participating Regions

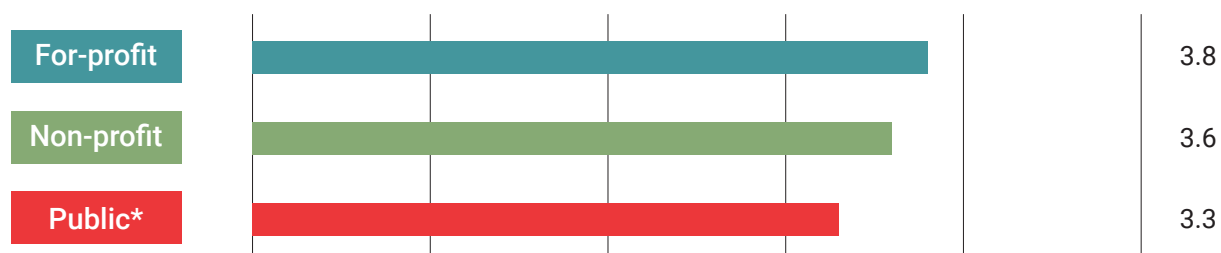


WORKPLACE STRESS

Those working within public auspices report the lowest levels of stress on a scale of 1 (low stress) to 5 (high stress). In addition, non-RECEs respondents report higher levels of stress than RECEs.

Average Level of Stress by Auspice Workforce

(1=low stress; 5=high stress)



*Should be interpreted with caution due to small sample size.

Total: 3.6

Average Level of Stress by RECE Status Workforce

(1=low stress; 5=high stress)



Participants in the two counties generally report a low level of job satisfaction. On a scale of 1 (low job satisfaction) to 5 (high job satisfaction), participants' level of satisfaction is 2.6 out of 5. Those in public programs report higher levels of job satisfaction.

Average Level of Job Satisfaction by Auspice and RECE Status Workforce

(1=low job satisfaction; 5=high job satisfaction)

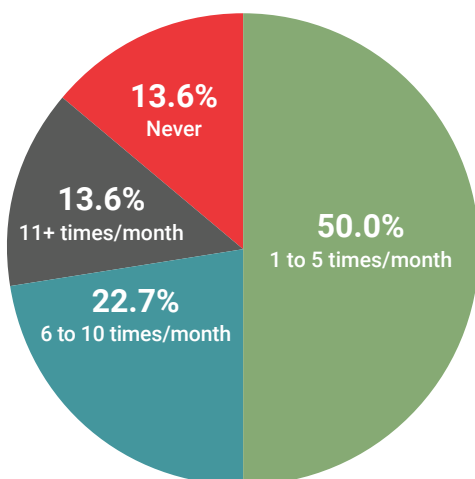
Auspice	RECE status		Average across RECE status
	Non-RECE	RECE	
For-profit	2.2	2.2	2.2
Non-profit	2.6	2.6	2.6
Public	3.6	3.2	3.3
Average across auspice	2.4	2.6	2.6

Note: All averages are weighted.

WORKPLACE STABILITY

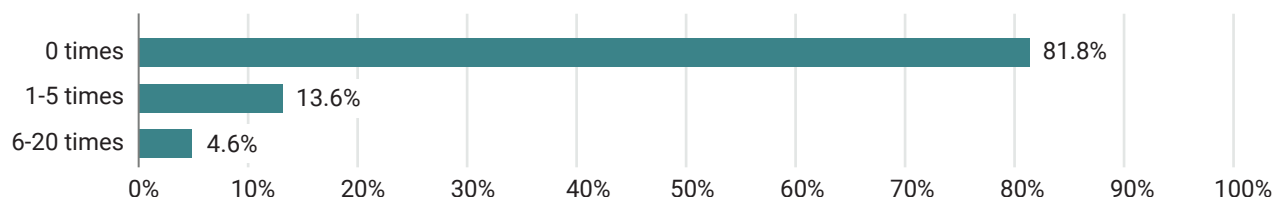
Directors often stand in for absent staff by necessity, taking them away from their leadership and administrative duties. Over 36% of management staff report having to fill in six or more times per month to maintain ratios, with almost 14% reporting this occurs more than 11 times per month. This is lower than provincial level findings.

Number of Times per Month Directors/Supervisors Fill in Ratio



Staff shortages also have deleterious effects on the inclusion of children with disabilities or varying needs. Only 5% of director/supervisor respondents report they have had to either send a child(ren) home or de-enlist a child(ren) with a disability due to staffing shortages over the previous 12 months. This is less than the provincial sample average of 16.5%. In addition, 18.2% report they have had to refuse admission to a child(ren) with a disability over the previous 12 months due to workforce shortages. This is less than the provincial average of 27.3%.

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



In Dufferin and Wellington Counties, less than half (40.5%) of *workforce* respondents report they would recommend a career in the early years to others who are interested, while the same percentage report they would not. The remaining 19.1% are unsure if they would recommend child care as a career option.

Percentage of *Workforce* Respondents Who Recommend a Career in the Early Years



Almost three-quarters of *workforce* respondents (72.8%) state they would recommend their program to a family member or friend looking for child care.

Percentage of *Workforce* Respondents Who Recommend Their Early Years Program to a Family Member or Friend



Note: Totals do not add up to 100 due to missing data.



Professional Development

FORMS OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Respondents from Dufferin and Wellington Counties report that online delivery (82.5%) was the dominant form of professional learning in the previous 12 months, followed by self-study (64.3%). Only 14.3% of respondents report having taken a course in the previous 12 months, while 15.9% report having structured mentorship.

Although online delivery is the most common form of professional learning received in the previous 12 months, respondents report it, along with self-study, as the least desired formats (18.3%). Respondents prefer structured mentoring (38.9%), regular and scheduled opportunities for team discussions (38.9%), small group coaching conversations (36.5%), all of which are forms of collective learning.

Forms of Professional Learning Received by Region in the Previous 12 Months and Desired Forms of Professional Learning *Workforce*



CONTENT OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

About 43% of respondents report receiving training in anti-bias/anti-racism. Approximately one-third of respondents report receiving training centred around supporting children with disabilities (37.3%) and cultural diversity in early years settings (31%). Participants report the least amount of professional learning in the areas of incorporating Afrocentric ways of being (10.3%), incorporating land-based learning (11.9%), supporting newcomer families (10.3%), making workplaces more accessible (13.5%), and supporting vulnerable families (15.9%) in the previous 12 months. Census data for the region help contextualize results.

The most wanted professional learning reported is centred around supporting vulnerable (58.7%) and newcomer families (58.7%), as well as critical trauma-informed practice (57.9%). About half of participants also report wanting more professional learning centred around making workplaces more accessible (46%), Indigenous ways of knowing and being/decolonization (53.2%), incorporating land-based learning (52.4%), and incorporating Afrocentric ways of being (51.6%).

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Learning of Respondents in Dufferin and Wellington Counties Workforce

In the previous 12 months

■ % respondents who report having had this training
■ % respondents who would like to learn about this area

