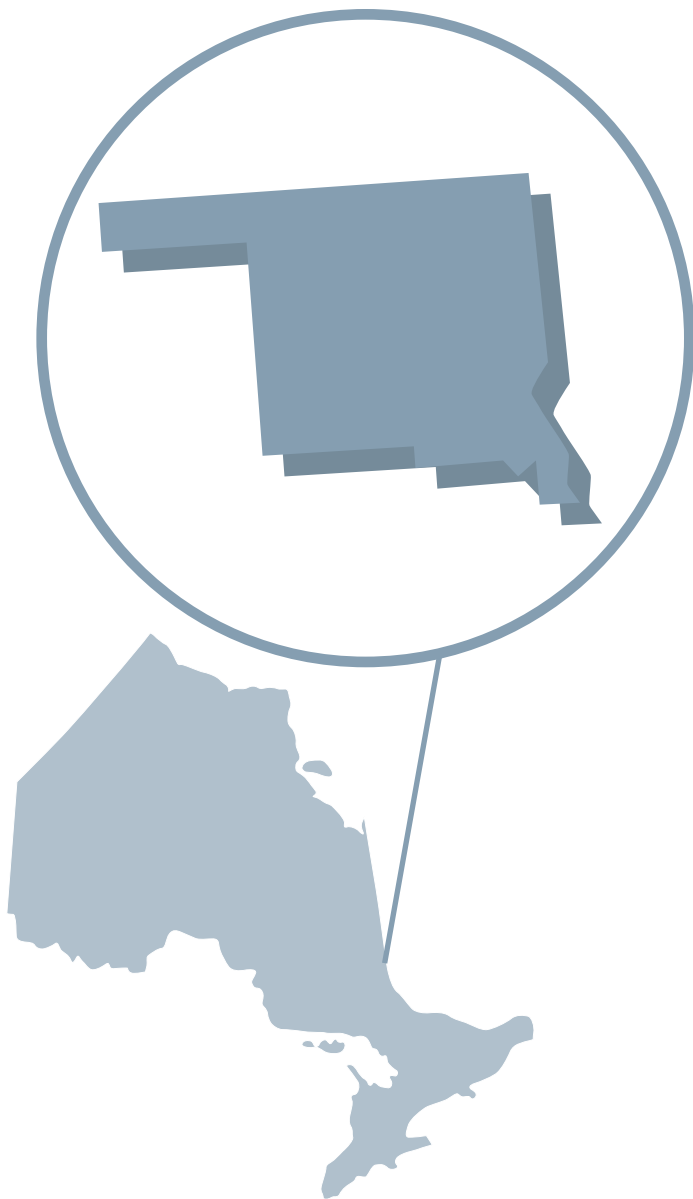


knowing u numbers

A community approach to understanding
the early childhood education workforce

District of Timiskaming Social Services Administration Board





District of Timiskaming Social Services Administration Board

The regional data presented here are part of the larger provincial early childhood education workforce study **Knowing Our Numbers** (KON). The District of Timiskaming Social Services Administration Board is one of 43 regional children's service districts that participated in the study representing over 91% of all regions in Ontario. Details on the project, methodology, and province-wide results can be found [here](#). In the **Executive Report**, Timiskaming is part of the 'North' data region. Census data provided on the following page allow readers to put the results into the context of regional demographics.

This report should be cited as:

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District of Timiskaming Social Services Administration Board

Population and Family

Population		Average number of children per family	1.8
2021	31,424		
2016	32,251	One-parent families	15.7%
<i>Change since 2016:</i>	<i>-2.60%</i>		
Population density per sq km	2.4	Lone-parent families	
		Women	11.3%
Median age	47.6 years	Men	4.3%
Racialized population	2.5%	Marital status	
		Married or living common-law	58.3%
Multi-generational households	1.6%	Not married or living common-law	41.7%
		Married or common-law with children	34.1%
Immigrant population	3.5%	Language most often spoken at home	
		English	85.0%
Indigenous identity	9.3%	French	11.5%
		Other	1.3%
Education		<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>	
No certificate, diploma, or degree	24.2%	Home ownership	
High school diploma or equivalent	28.1%	Owner	74.6%
Post secondary certificate, diploma or degree	47.6%	Renter	25.3%
<i>*15+ years old</i>		Spending more than 30% on shelter costs	15.4%
Education obtained outside Canada	2.3%		
<i>*25-64 years old</i>			

Employment and Income

Labour force participation rate		Commuting duration (mins)	Total %	% Men	% Women
Women	51.6%	Less than 15	50.1	44.1	57.6
Men	60.0%	15 to 29	24.7	23.1	26.6
Unemployment rate		30 to 44	11.8	13.1	10.2
Women	8.1%	45 to 59	5.5	7.6	2.9
Men	8.5%	60 minutes and over	7.9	12.3	2.6
Prevalence of low income (LIM)		Income distribution	Total %	% Men	% Women
0-17	14.9%	In bottom half of the distribution	54.2	52.1	56.2
0-5	17.9%	In bottom decile	12.4	12.0	12.8
18-64	13.1%	In second decile	13.3	12.6	14.1
<i>*LIM: Low Income Measure reflects those whose incomes are below half of the median of the adjusted income distribution</i>		In third decile	9.8	9.2	10.4
Median employment income	\$38,400	In fourth decile	9.2	8.9	9.5
		In fifth decile	9.4	9.3	9.5
Median employment income in 2020 for full-year full-time workers	\$64,000	In top half of the distribution	45.8	47.9	43.8
		In sixth decile	9.2	9.4	9.1
Median total income of household in 2020	\$70,500	In seventh decile	9.7	10.1	9.4
		In eighth decile	9.9	10.3	9.6
Median after-tax income of household in 2020	\$63,200	In ninth decile	9.7	10.3	9.0
		In top decile	7.3	7.9	6.7

Reference: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Timiskaming&DGUIDlist=2021A00033554&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

Background

The District of Timiskaming sits on the border of Quebec, with Georgian Bay to the south and James Bay due north. Five francophone/bilingual child care centres and six anglophone programs serve the district. [Keepers of the Circle](#) operates centres serving Indigenous families in three locations, in addition to providing licensed home child care and an EarlyON family centre.

Timiskaming Child Care is among the larger providers, operating a full-day, full-year program for children from birth to 12 years, two school-aged programs located in schools run by the English Catholic and French Catholic school boards, plus an EarlyON site. Le Centre de santé communautaire du Témiskaming operates an additional EarlyON centre.¹ The region also has 13 licensed homes. Non-profit agencies

administer all the region's centres. All agencies participate in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care plan (CWELCC).

In addition to licensed child care and family programming, the district offers the [Early Learning School Readiness Program](#). This program operates in child care centres for 2.5 hours per day from September to June. Children entering junior Kindergarten the following school year may attend for free.

Total licensed capacity in the region is 1,029 spaces, including 60 in home child care, but only 937 spaces are operational – primarily due to educator shortages. The greatest pressure is on school-aged care, with 196 occupied spaces out of a licensed total of 468.



¹ Controversy exists over the spelling of the word 'Temiskaming'. A movement to change the spelling of the District of Timiskaming to Temiskaming (an e instead of an i) cites a typographical error by a government official.

Expansion efforts are underway. Fifteen additional community-based child care spaces are in development in Larder Lake. By 2026, an additional 30 spaces are planned for Virginiatown and Englehart. All three communities will serve low-income families and children with disabilities. Larder Lake will also serve Indigenous children, and Virginiatown will support francophone children. Discussions are being held with the four school boards to assess their ability to support service expansion.

According to census figures, the region has 1,755 children aged birth to 5 years and 4,212

children aged birth to 12 years. This means that at current operational levels, child care can serve just over 22% of the child population aged 12 years and younger. A new centralized waitlist indicates that 64 infants, 85 toddlers, 86 preschool, 39 Kindergarten-aged, and 55 school-aged children are currently without child care.

The success of CWELCC places additional demands on child care services. In a recent survey conducted by the district, 82% of parents say they would be more likely to use licensed child care if the cost was reduced to \$10 per day.





THE FOCUS GROUP

A focus group was held in-person in Timiskaming in June 2023 to better understand the child care challenges in smaller northern and remote communities. Thirty-two participants attended, representing every centre in the region.

Staffing shortages

Feedback from focus group participants indicates a desperate need for “additional hands” to support the children attending their centres. Some children require one-on-one support that is no longer available. Staff shortages cause child care operators to place children with disabilities on waitlists until they can be safely accommodated in the program.²

“We want to be inclusive, but we can’t,” said a director, who received murmurs of agreement from others in the room.

It is hoped that if the current number of resource consultants increases, additional supports for families can be accommodated within the EarlyON centres, where a resource consultant would be able to attend the programs on a regular basis.

Staffing shortages mean one person’s absence can change the whole dynamic of the centre. Supervisors, cooks, finance staff, and Special Needs Resource (SNR) staff are pulled from their duties to cover ratio. Infant rooms may be closed

to pull staff into groups with more children to disrupt the least number of families. Parents of infants trying to get re-established at work are regularly told not to bring their child to the centre.

“I never get to eat lunch,” remarked a supervisor. *“Worse, the children are seeing new faces every day. I can’t say this is good child care.”*

Staffing shortages are compounded by the additional challenges of securing qualified staff. The district estimates that more than 50% of the workforce in centres do not have the necessary qualifications. According to focus group participants, director approvals, which allow non-RECEs to work in positions requiring the designation, are being provided to people just out of high school. In addition, people without a high school diploma are working as assistants in infant rooms.

Francophone programs in particular struggle to keep bilingual RECEs who are in demand by public sector employers.

There is a shortage of workers, not jobs, in much of the region. *“I can go most anywhere else and earn more with less grief,”* said one educator.

Workforce shortages in other sectors (e.g., delivery, bus drivers) are putting further strain on child care operations. Weather challenges during the winter months and resulting road closures often prevent staff from getting to work.

² The problem has been compounded with the revocation of Schedule 3: O. REG. 174/21, S. 43, which provided staff-to-child ratios of 1:4 for children under age 6, and 1:3 for children aged 7 to 12 years. Now children may be integrated into group sizes of up to 20 children.

Staff stress

The mounting stress on educators post-pandemic is taking a toll. Children missed vital periods of socialization and are entering child care with undiagnosed behaviours. Staff report being hit, spit on, and kicked by children. Children in Kindergarten who act out are sent back to the child care centre.

"We are so involved in behaviour management that we no longer feel like educators," shared one staff. "You don't have time to catch your breath," said another. "As your tension builds, the children feed off the negative energy."

Staff report being spent by the end of the workday: *"I give all I can, but it is never enough. I take away from my own children to give to other people's."*

New methods of recruiting

The district recognizes new methods are necessary to recruit educators in the context of province-wide workforce challenges. The district's [access and inclusion framework](#) outlines some innovative approaches, including:

- better use of qualified staff through recruiting EarlyON and Kindergarten staff to work in before- and after-school programs
- working with employment agencies and school boards to offer Early Childhood Assistant programs
- developing a wage grid for all child care staff and home child care providers

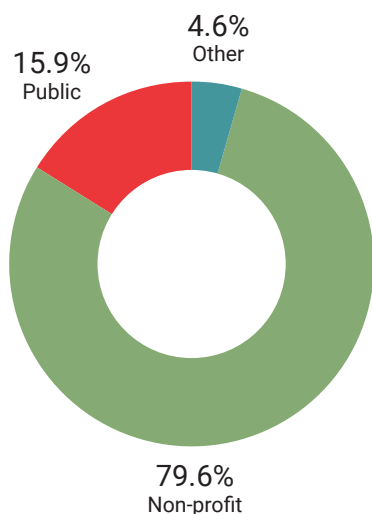
To support program quality, an inclusion and anti-bias training plan is in development. This plan will provide a service contract addendum requiring service providers to support staff in their participation in the training and setting targets for participation.



Sample Characteristics

A total of 45 individuals working in early years services in the District of Timiskaming Social Services Administration Board responded to the survey (referred to as the 'workforce survey'). Of these, 49% are RECEs and 51% are non-RECEs (referred as the 'workforce'). Most respondents are from non-profit child care centres (79.6%). Public program respondents are primarily from full-day Kindergarten (FDK). Additionally, seven directors and three licensed home child care providers responded to the survey. As the number of respondents in the latter two groups is low, data are not presented; these data are included in the [Executive](#) and [Northern Perspectives](#) Reports.

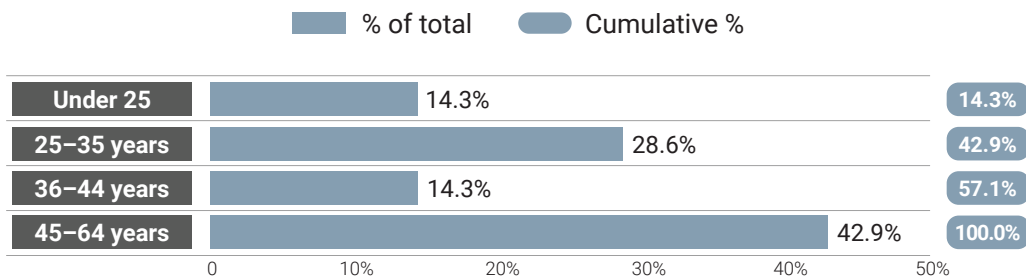
Percentage Respondents by Auspice
Workforce



AGE

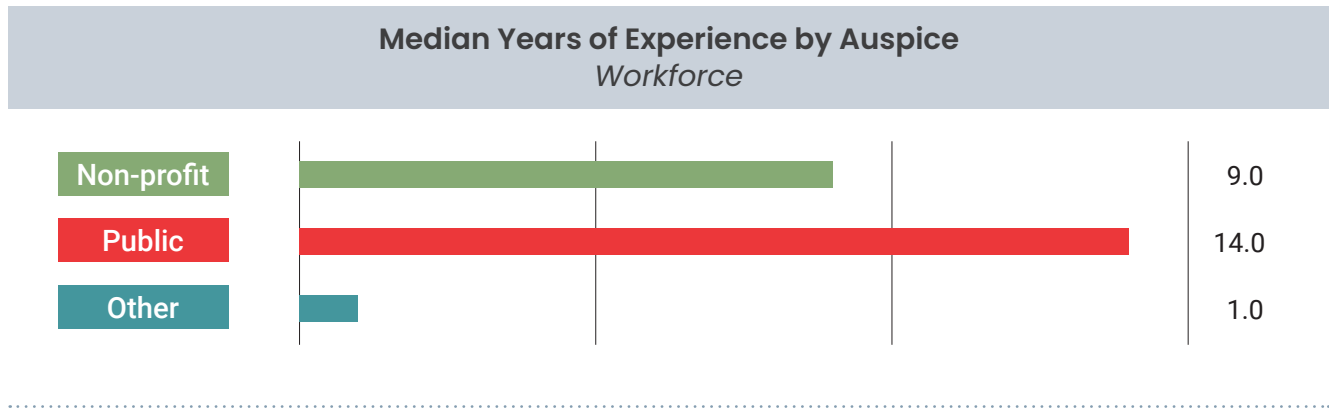
Just over 57% of *workforce* respondents are under the age of 45.

Age Distribution of Respondents *Workforce*



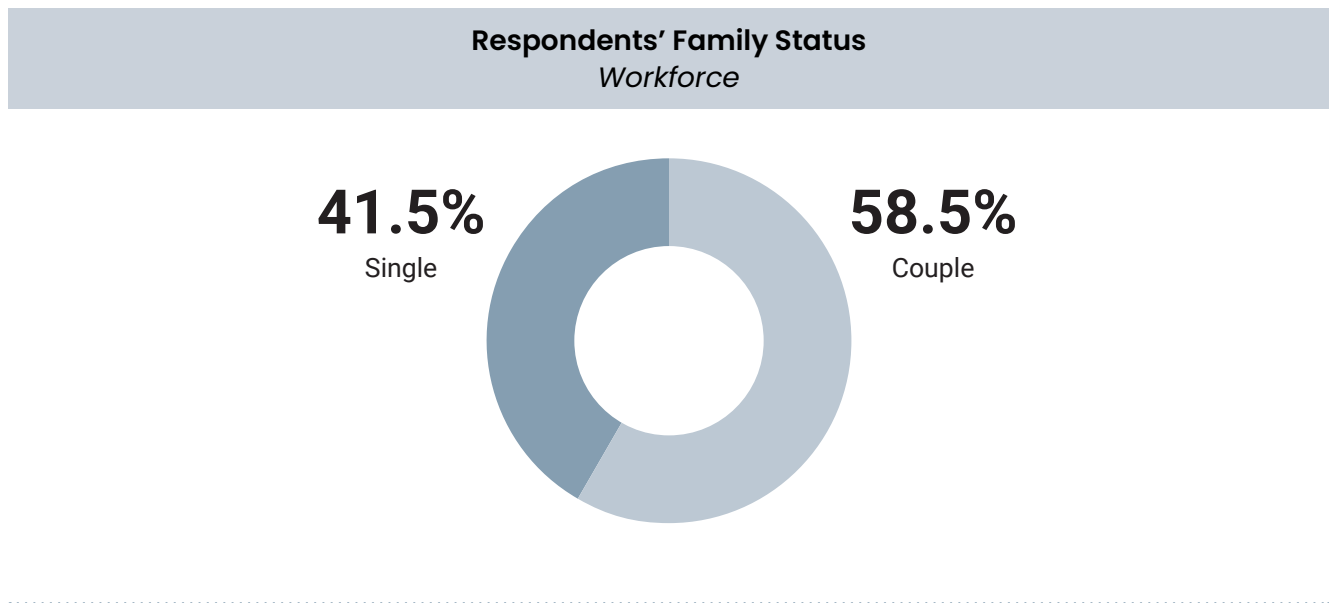
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Respondents who work in public programs (Kindergarten) have the most years of experience.



FAMILY STATUS

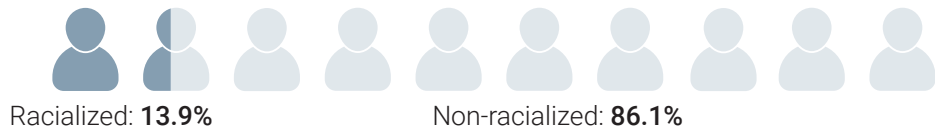
About 41% of the *workforce* survey respondents are single.



RACIALIZATION

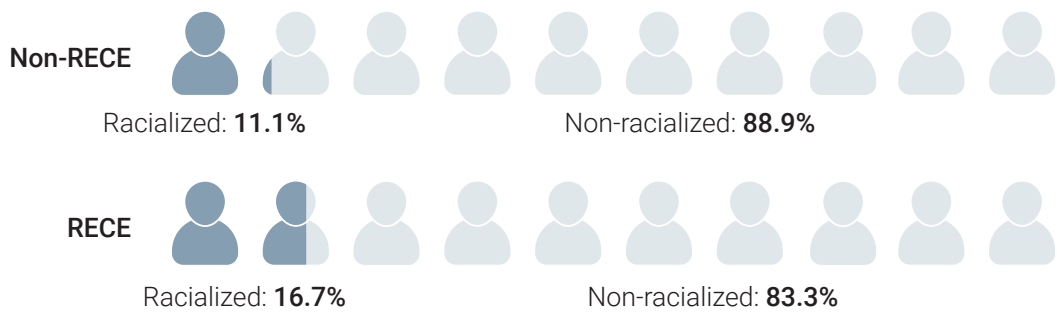
Approximately 14% of the *workforce* sample identify as racialized.

Percentage Racialized Workforce



RECEs are more likely than non-RECEs to identify as racialized. Due to low participant numbers, this is only a trend in Timiskaming. Province-wide, non-RECEs are more likely to be racialized.

Percentage Racialized by RECE Status Workforce



Compensation

WAGES

Wages of RECEs are higher than for non-RECEs. RECEs working in public programs have higher hourly wages. Around 16% 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	
Non-profit	\$23.07	\$24.89	\$23.92
Public	\$20.00	\$28.67	\$24.34
Average across auspice	\$22.10	\$25.43	\$23.77



BENEFITS

About 82% of *workforce* respondents report having access to paid sick days and 70% have access to paid personal or mental health days. Three-quarters of respondents have paid bereavement leave. Over two-thirds (68.2%) have paid professional development opportunities, while just over half have extended health benefits. Less than half (47.7%) report paid programming time during the workday. Just over 40% report pay increases for obtaining a new credential or degree in early education. Tuition assistance is not common (11.4%).

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



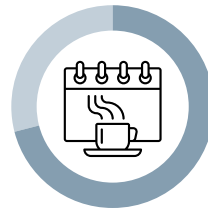
81.8%

Paid sick days



75.0%

Paid bereavement leave



70.5%

Paid personal or
mental health days



68.2%

Paid professional
development



56.8%

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



50.0%

Paid team meeting time
during the workday



47.7%

Paid programming time
during the workday



40.9%

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



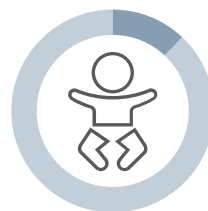
34.1%

Pension benefits or
contributions to an RRSP



27.3%

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



11.4%

Parental leave top-up



11.4%

Tuition assistance

Workforce Stability, Stress, and Job Satisfaction

DISCRIMINATION

A total of 40% of respondents report having experienced workplace discrimination. The types of discrimination experienced vary, with bullying (50%) being the most common, followed by mental health (38.9%). Just over 27% also report education/seniority discrimination, while about 22.2% report experiencing ageism. Note that bullying may involve, or be rooted in, other forms of discrimination (e.g., racism or ageism). Low participant numbers prevent reporting on other types of discrimination.

Percentage of Respondents Reporting Experiences of Workplace Discrimination *Workforce*



Experiencing discrimination: **40%**

Not experiencing discrimination: **60%**

Types of Discrimination *Workforce*

Bullying	50.0%
Mental health	38.9%
Education/seniority	27.8%
Ageism	22.2%
Racism	N/A*
Sexism	N/A*
Body prejudice	N/A*
Religious belief	N/A*
Ableism	N/A*
Immigration status	N/A*
Homophobia	N/A*

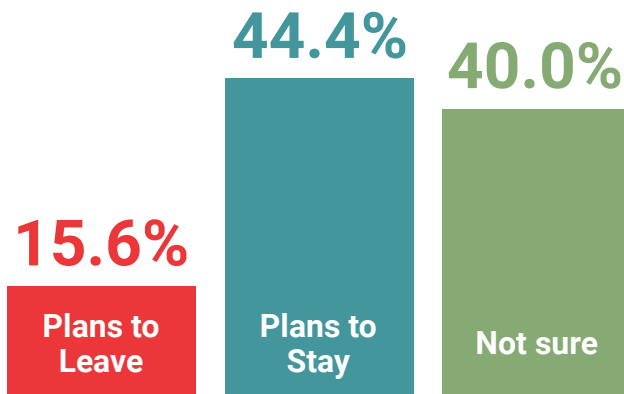
*Suppressed due to low participant numbers.



JOB SATISFACTION

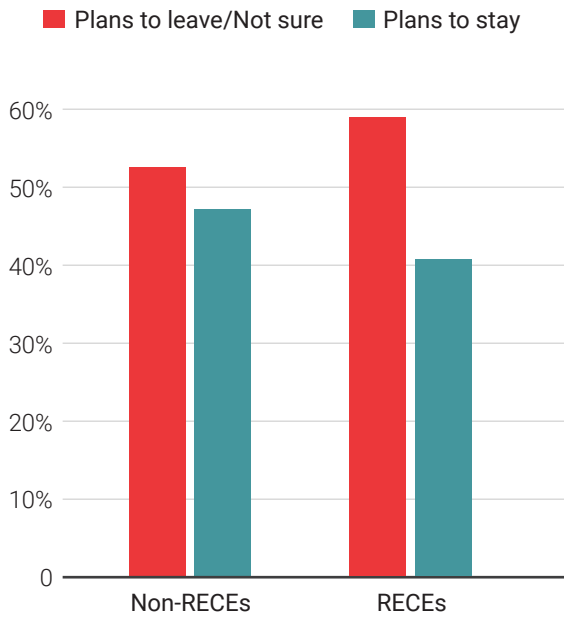
Just over 44% of respondents from the district report plans to stay in the sector over the next five years. However, 40% report uncertainty in their plans to stay. This has implications for retention strategies and investments. Plans to leave by auspice and age are not presented here due to low participant numbers; they can be found in the [Northern Perspectives](#) report.

Plans to Leave the Sector *Workforce*



Almost 60% of RECEs and just over half of non-RECEs (52.2%) have plans to leave the sector in the next five years or are unsure of their plans. Plans to leave by experiences of discrimination are not reported here due to low participant numbers; they can be found in the [Northern Perspectives](#) report.

Plans to Leave the Sector by RECE Status *Workforce*



WORKPLACE STRESS

Non-RECEs report higher levels of stress than RECEs on a scale of 1 (low stress) to 5 (high stress). In addition, those working in Kindergarten report lower levels of stress than those in non-profit programs.

Average Level of Stress by Auspice Workforce

(1=low stress; 5=high stress)

Auspice	RECE status	
	Non-RECE	RECE
Non-profit	3.3	3.2
Public	3.2	2.3

Participants in Timiskaming 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 2.8 out of 5. Those working in public programs report a slightly higher level of job satisfaction.

Average Level of Job Satisfaction by RECE Status Workforce

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

Auspice	RECE status	
	Non-RECE	RECE
Non-profit	2.5	3.0
Public	2.9	3.1

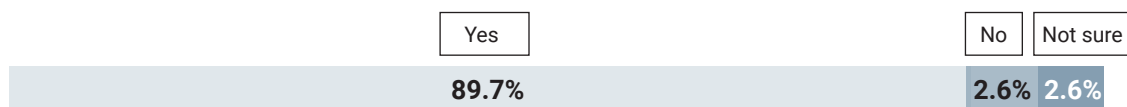
Despite high levels of personal dissatisfaction, almost two-thirds of *workforce* respondents in Timiskaming report they would recommend a career in the early years to others who are interested.

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



Almost 90% state they would recommend their program to a family member or friend looking for child care.

Percentage of *Workforce* Respondents that 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

Timiskaming respondents report that the most common form of professional learning in the previous 12 months was online delivery (91.1%), followed by performance reviews (64.4%). Almost half report having attended an in-person workshop (48.9%). In addition, 44.4% report having participated in workshops and 42.2% report participating in team discussions for reflective practice and small group coaching in the previous 12 months.

Although online delivery is the most common form of professional learning received in the previous 12 months, respondents report it is among the least desired format (13.3%). Respondents prefer ongoing communities of practice (40%), attending conferences (35.6%), structured mentoring (33.3%), and in-person workshops (31.1%), 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

Over one-third of respondents (35.6%) report receiving training in supporting children with disabilities in the previous 12 months. Just under one-third report receiving training in anti-bias/anti-racism (31.1%) and in Indigenous ways of knowing and being/decolonization (31.1%). Participants report the least amount of professional learning in the areas of incorporating Afrocentric ways of being (2.2%) and supporting vulnerable (8.9%) and newcomer families (8.9%). Census data for the region help contextualize results.

The most wanted professional learning reported is centred around supporting vulnerable families (60%), children with disabilities (55.6%), and newcomer families (51.1%). Almost half of participants also report wanting more professional learning centred around incorporating Afrocentric ways of being (48.9%), critical trauma-informed practice (48.9%), and incorporating land-based learning (46.7%).

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Learning of Respondents in Timiskaming Workforce

In the previous 12 months

