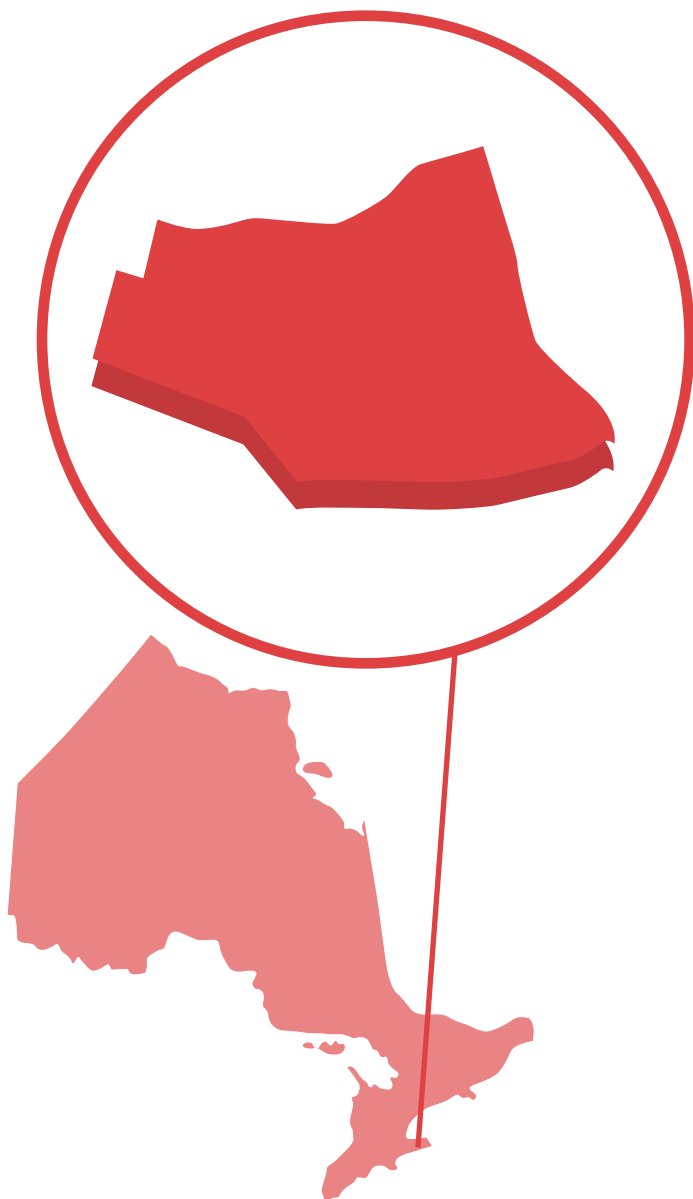


# knowing u numbers

A community approach to understanding  
the early childhood education workforce

## Regional Municipality of Niagara





## Regional Municipality of Niagara

The regional data presented here are part of the larger provincial early childhood education workforce study **Knowing Our Numbers** (KON). The Regional Municipality of Niagara 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**, Niagara is part of the 'Lakeshore West' 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:**

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 Regional Municipality of Niagara.*

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# Regional Municipality of Niagara

## Population and Family

<b>Population</b>		<b>Average number of children per family</b>	1.7
2021	477,941		
2016	447,888	<b>One-parent families</b>	17.7%
Change since 2016:	+6.70%		
<b>Population density per sq km</b>	258.0	<b>Lone-parent families</b>	
		Women	13.9%
<b>Median age</b>	46.0 years	Men	3.8%
<b>Racialized population</b>	13.3%	<b>Marital status</b>	
<b>Multi-generational households</b>	2.9%	Married or living common-law	56.8%
<b>Immigrant population</b>	17.7%	Not married or living common-law	43.2%
<b>Indigenous identity</b>	3.0%	Married or common-law with children	38.3%
<b>Education</b>		<b>Language most often spoken at home</b>	
No certificate, diploma, or degree	15.4%	English	91.0%
High school diploma or equivalent	31.9%	French	0.6%
Post secondary certificate, diploma or degree	52.7%	Other	6.3%
<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>	
<b>Education obtained outside Canada</b>	9.3%	<b>Home ownership</b>	
<i>*25-64 years old</i>		Owner	72.6%
		Renter	27.4%
		<b>Spending more than 30% on shelter costs</b>	21.4%

## Employment and Income

<b>Labour force participation rate</b>		<b>Commuting duration (mins)</b>	<b>Total %</b>	<b>% Men</b>	<b>% Women</b>
Women	54.8%	Less than 15	37.0	32.4	42.5
Men	62.5%	15 to 29	36.1	35.8	36.5
<b>Unemployment rate</b>		30 to 44	15.7	17.3	13.8
Women	16.9%	45 to 59	4.8	5.9	3.4
Men	14.2%	60 minutes and over	6.4	8.6	3.8
<b>Prevalence of low income (LIM)</b>		<b>Income distribution</b>	<b>Total %</b>	<b>% Men</b>	<b>% Women</b>
0-17	12.5%	In bottom half of the distribution	53.0	51.5	54.3
0-5	13.7%	In bottom decile	9.4	9.1	9.7
18-64	9.7%	In second decile	10.7	9.9	11.5
<i>*LIM: Low Income Measure reflects those whose incomes are below half of the median of the adjusted income distribution</i>		In third decile	11.1	10.9	11.4
		In fourth decile	10.9	10.8	10.9
<b>Median employment income</b>	\$30,400	In fifth decile	10.8	10.9	10.8
<b>Median employment income in 2020 for full-year full-time workers</b>	\$60,000	In top half of the distribution	47.0	48.5	45.7
<b>Median total income of household in 2020</b>	\$79,000	In sixth decile	10.5	10.6	10.3
<b>Median after-tax income of household in 2020</b>	\$71,000	In seventh decile	10.1	10.3	9.8
		In eighth decile	9.6	9.9	9.3
		In ninth decile	9.1	9.5	8.8
		In top decile	7.8	8.1	7.5

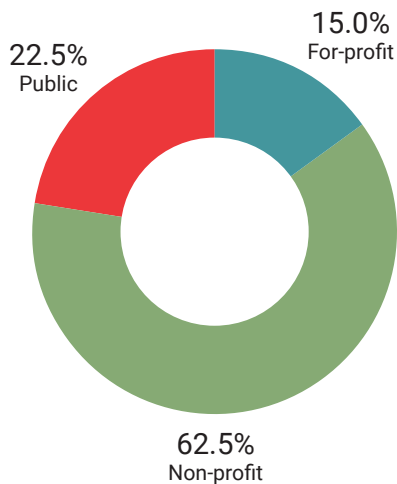
Reference: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=niagara&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1,4&DGUIDlist=2021A00033526&HEADERlist=0>



# Sample Characteristics

A total of 82 individuals working in early years services in the Regional Municipality of Niagara responded to the survey (referred to as the 'workforce survey'). Of these, 80.5% are RECEs and 19.5% are non-RECEs (referred to as the 'workforce'). Most respondents are from non-profit programs (62.5%). Additionally, 27 directors responded to the survey. As the number of respondents who are licensed home child care providers in Niagara is low (n=2), data are not presented here; these data are included in the [Executive Report](#).

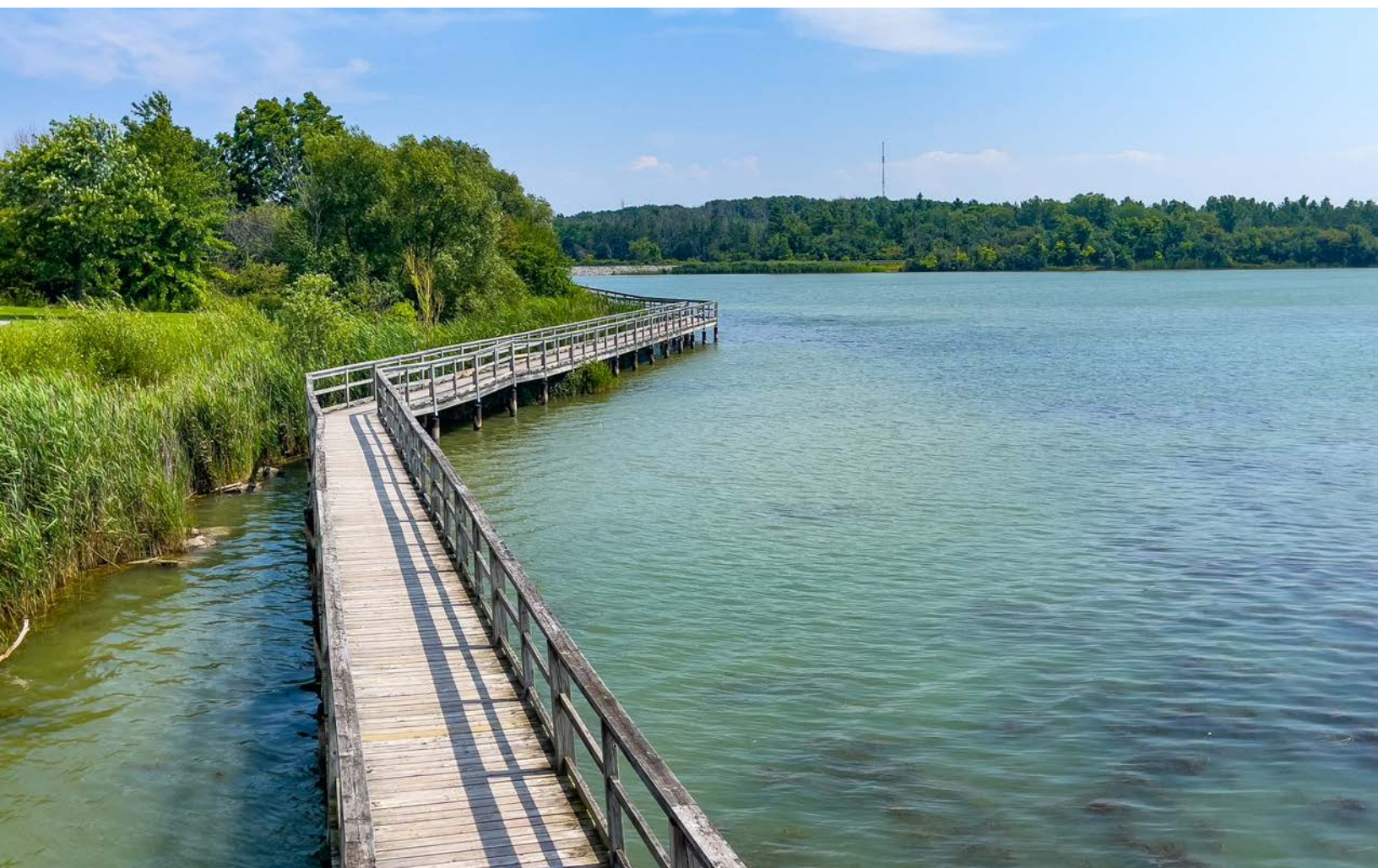
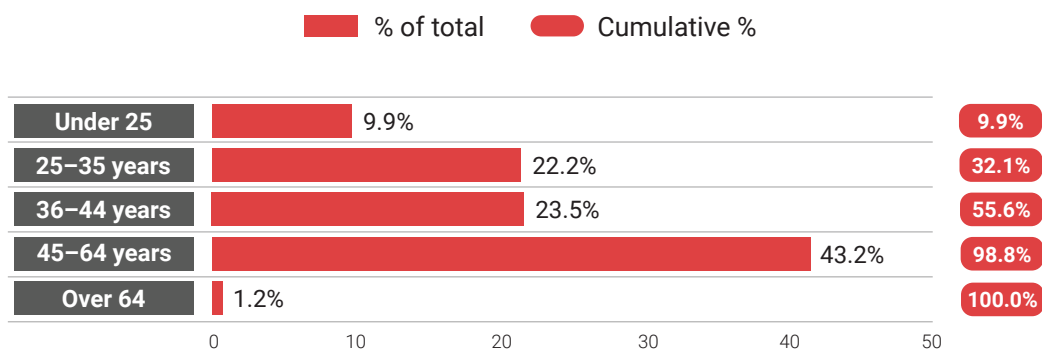
**Percentage Respondents by Auspice**  
*Workforce*



## AGE

Over half (55.6%) of *workforce* respondents are under the age of 45. Director/supervisor respondents in Niagara are also younger than the provincial average sample. Across all participating regions, 42.7% of directors/supervisors are under the age of 45 years compared to 51.6% in Niagara (data not shown).

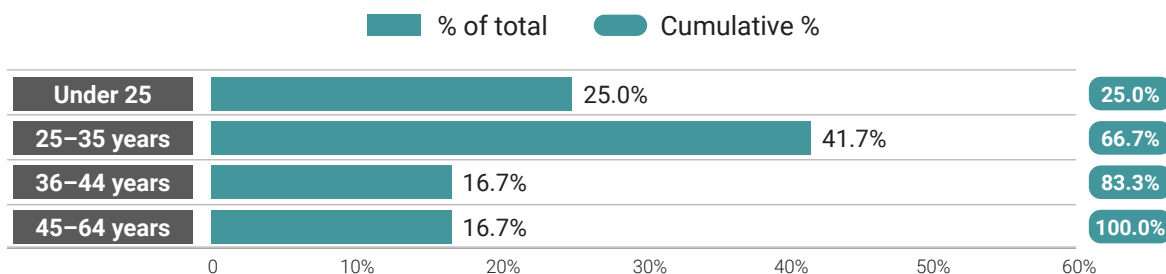
### Age Distribution of Respondents *Workforce*



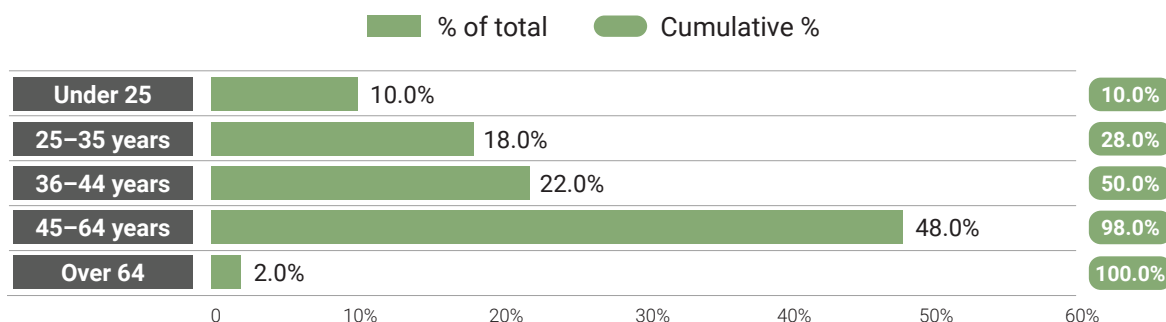
Respondents working in for-profit organizations are more likely to be younger. Approximately 83% of *workforce* participants from for-profit programs are under the age of 45 years. By comparison, 50% in non-profit programs and 53% in public programs are under 45 years of age.

## Age Distribution by Auspice *Workforce*

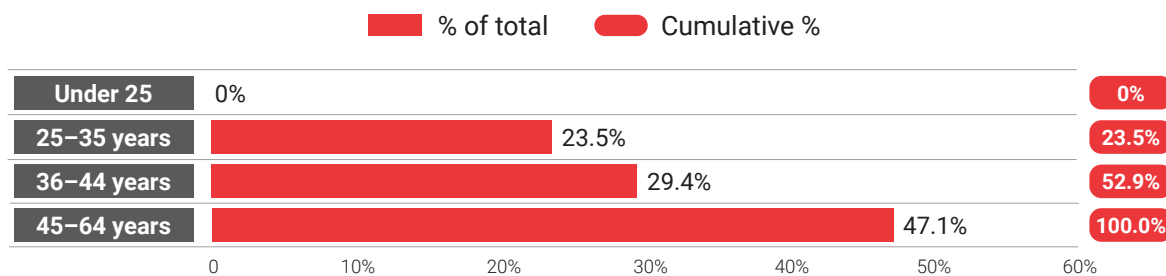
### For-Profit



### Non-Profit



### Public





## YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

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

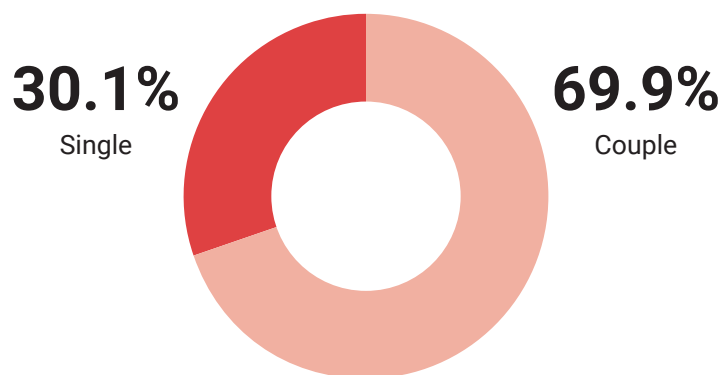
**Years of Experience by Auspice**  
*Workforce*

Auspice	Mean	Minimum	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile	Maximum
For-profit	6.2	0.0	1.5	3.0	6.0	30.0
Non-profit	15.0	0.0	6.0	13.0	24.5	43.0
Public	20.4	5.0	12.0	19.0	27.0	38.0

## FAMILY STATUS

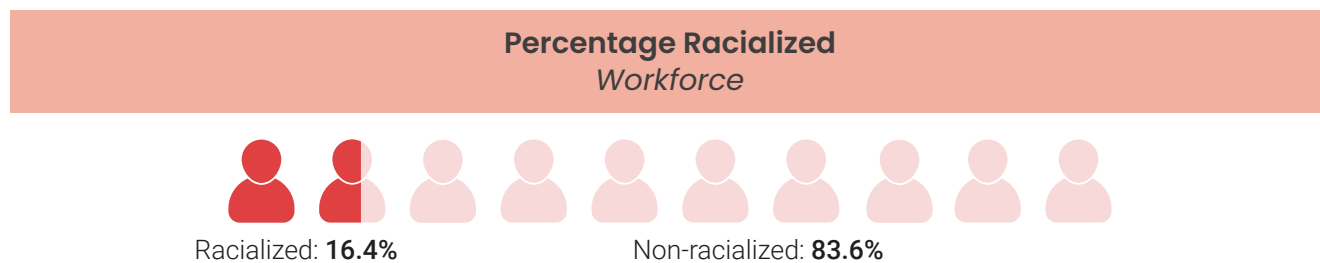
Approximately 30% of the *workforce* survey respondents are single.

**Respondents' Family Status**  
*Workforce*

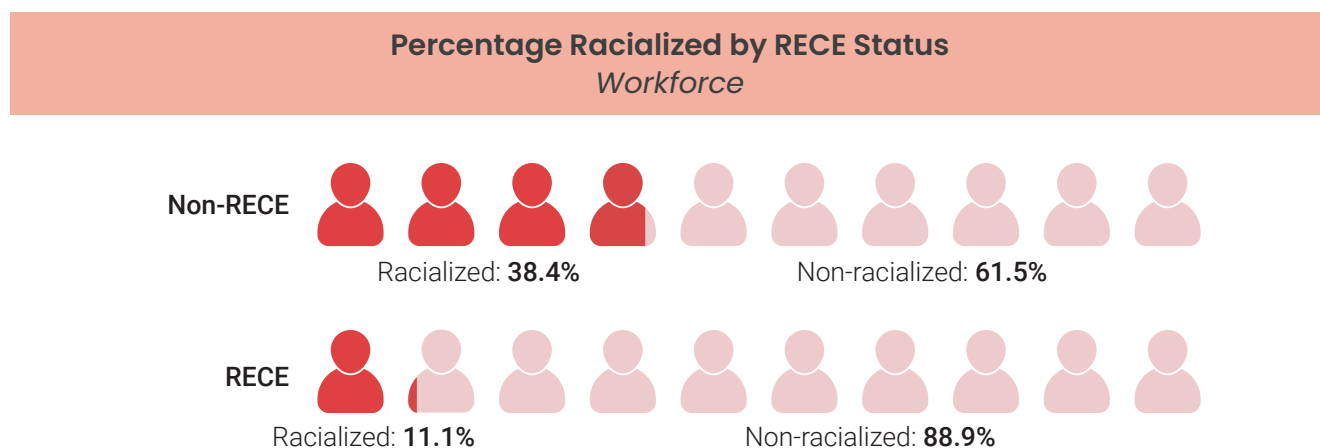


## RACIALIZATION

About 16% of the *workforce* sample identify as racialized.



Non-RECEs are more likely than RECEs to identify as racialized. This is similar to the province-wide findings.



Of the 27 directors/supervisors who responded to the survey, 88.9% report they are RECEs compared to 94.7% across all 43 participating regions. Of those that are RECEs, all have been registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators for less than five years.



# Compensation

## WAGES

In Niagara, wages of RECEs are not notably higher than for non-RECEs, even though RECEs have educational requirements and are a registered profession. 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	
	Non-RECE	RECE
For-profit	\$21.00	\$21.40
Non-profit	\$23.00	\$24.20
Public	\$28.00	\$28.30
<b>Average across auspice</b>	<b>\$22.90</b>	<b>\$24.80</b>

Note: All averages are weighted.

Reported director/supervisor wages in Niagara are largely below provincial findings. The median provincial director/supervisor hourly wage is \$30, with a minimum of \$18 per hour and a maximum of \$80 per hour.

### Niagara Director/Supervisor Wage Range by Position

Position	Average	Minimum	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile	Maximum
Director	\$28.00	\$20.00	\$25.00	\$29.00	\$30.00	\$40.00
Assistant Director	\$24.00	\$22.00	\$22.00	\$23.00	\$27.00	\$27.00
<b>Average across position</b>	<b>\$28.00</b>	<b>\$20.00</b>	<b>\$24.00</b>	<b>\$28.50</b>	<b>\$30.00</b>	<b>\$40.00</b>

\*Assistant Directors should be interpreted with caution due to low sample size.

Note: All averages are weighted.

## BENEFITS

Just over 85% of *workforce* respondents report having access to paid sick days. About two-thirds of respondents report having paid bereavement leave (68.8%), extended health benefits (68.8%), and paid professional learning opportunities (64.9%). Fewer than half report having paid personal or mental health days (48.1%) and 40.3% have paid team meeting time during the workday. Pay increases for obtaining a new credential or degree in early education is not common (14.3%), while tuition assistance is rare (10.4%).

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



**85.7%**

Paid sick days



**68.8%**

Paid bereavement leave



**68.8%**

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



**64.9%**

Paid professional  
development



**57.1%**

Pension benefits or  
contributions to an RRSP



**48.1%**

Paid personal or  
mental health days



**40.3%**

Paid team meeting time  
during the workday



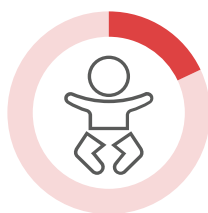
**33.8%**

Paid programming time  
during the workday



**26.0%**

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



**18.2%**

Parental leave top-up



**14.3%**

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



**10.4%**

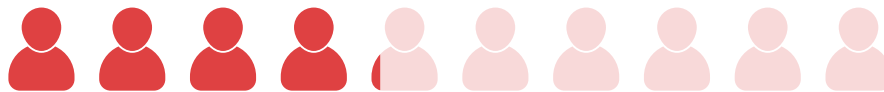
Tuition assistance

# Workforce Stability, Stress, and Job Satisfaction

## DISCRIMINATION

Approximately 40% of *workforce* respondents in Niagara report having experienced workplace discrimination. The types of discrimination vary, with bullying (65.6%) being the most common, followed by education/seniority (37.5%), and ageism (25%). 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*



Experiencing discrimination: **40.2%**    Not experiencing discrimination: **59.8%**

### Types of Discrimination *Workforce*

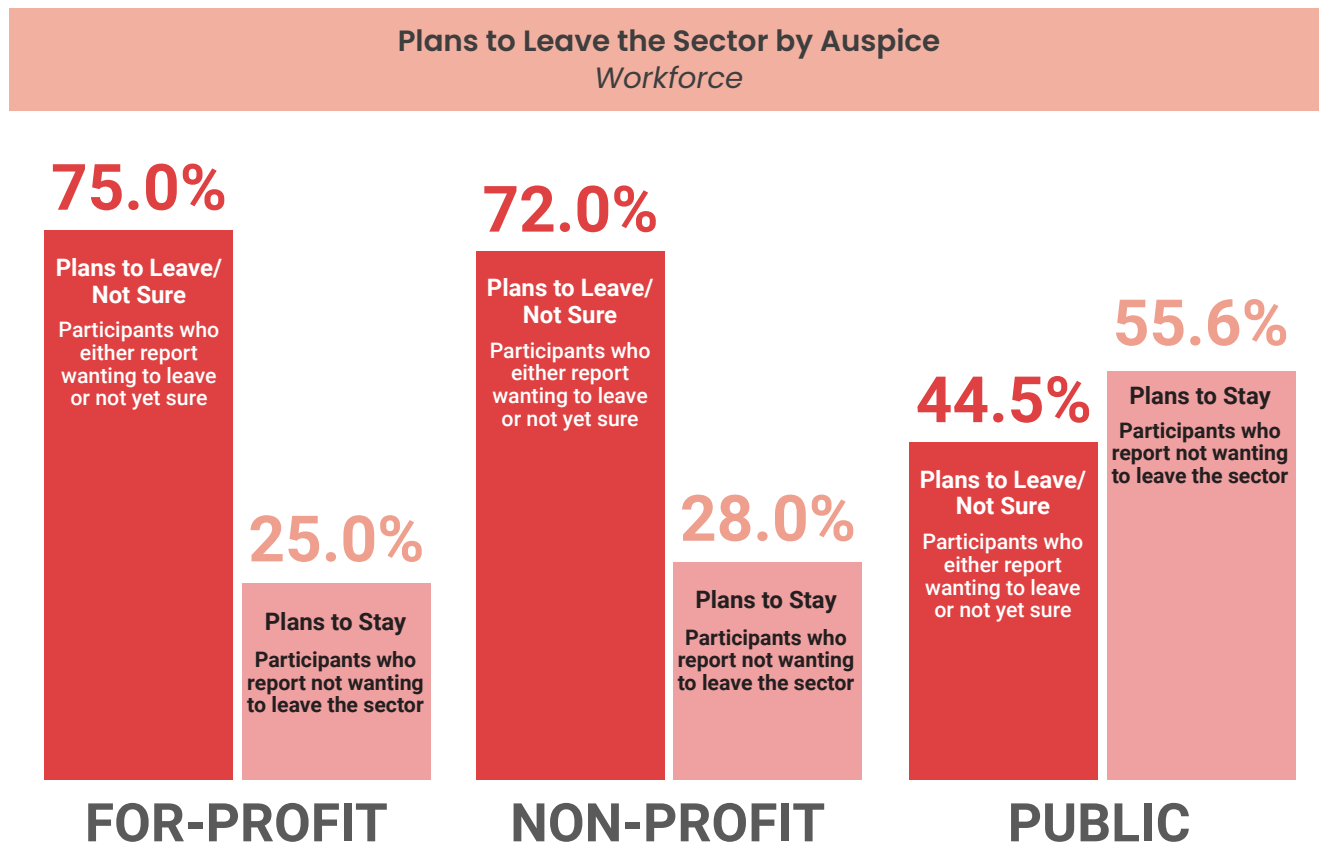
Bullying	65.6%
Education/seniority	37.5%
Ageism	25.0%
Racism	18.8%
Body prejudice	18.8%
Ableism	15.6%
Mental health	12.5%
Immigration status	12.5%
Homophobia	9.4%
Religious belief	9.4%
Sexism	6.3%





## JOB SATISFACTION

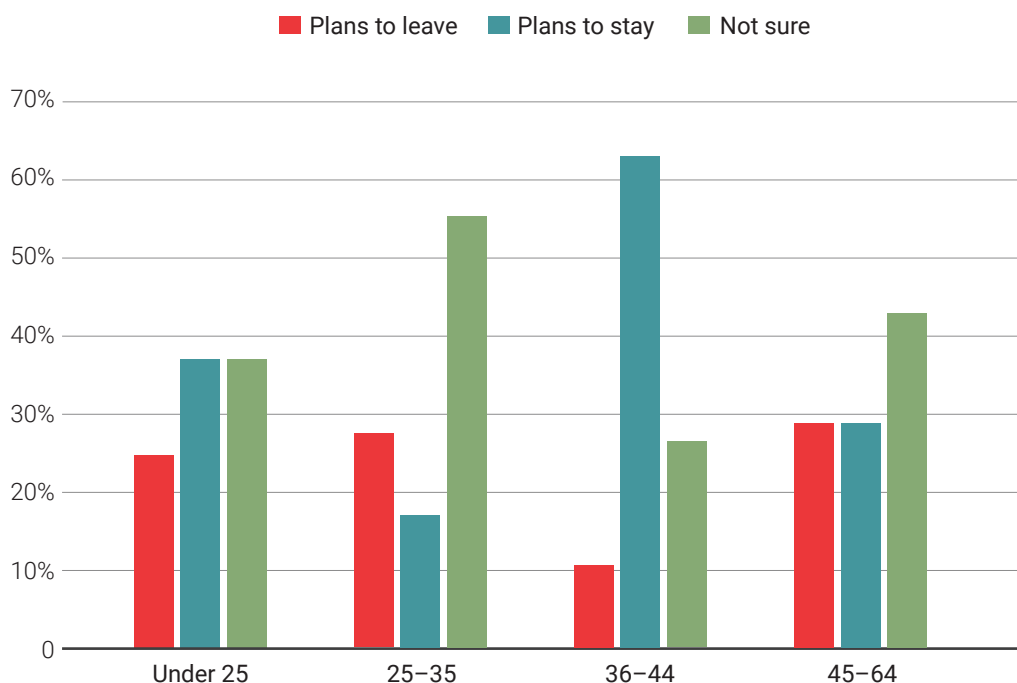
Only 34% of respondents in Niagara across all auspices report plans to stay in the sector over the next five years. Around three-quarters of those who work in for-profit (75.0%) and non-profit (72.0%) programs say they plan to leave the sector or they are unsure. In contrast, less than half (44.5%) of respondents from public programs state they plan to leave or are unsure.





Over one-quarter of respondents from all age groups, except for those between 36 and 44 years of age, report plans to leave the sector. Just over 63% of experienced educators, aged 36-45, say they plan to continue working in the sector. This is higher than provincial findings. Over half (55.6%) of those between the ages of 25 and 35 are uncertain of their plans while 37.5% of those under age 25 and 42.9% of those between 45 and 64 years of age also report uncertainty. This has implications for retention strategies. Note that those 65+ are not included in these findings, as plans for retirement would confound results.

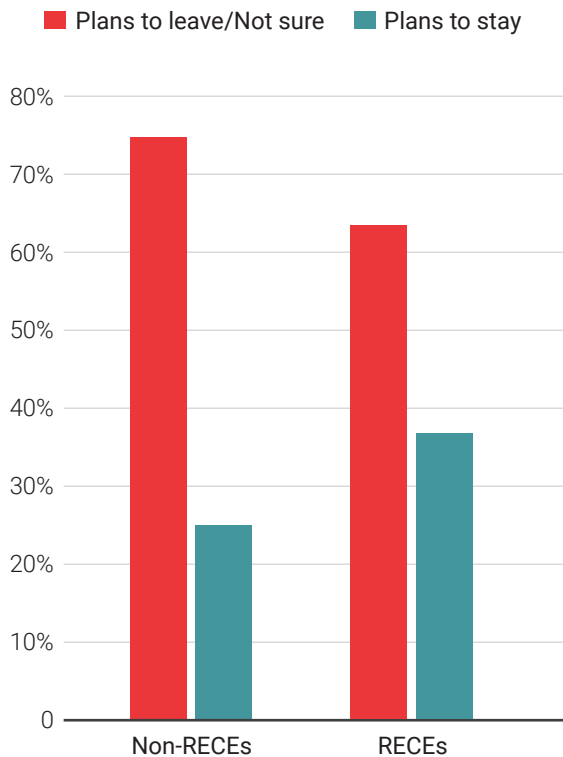
### Plans to Leave the Sector by Age of Respondent *Workforce*





Fewer than two-thirds (63.6%) of RECEs plan to stay working in the sector or report they are unsure. Non-RECE respondents are even less likely to report plans to stay in the sector (25%). Results for non-RECEs should be interpreted with caution due to small sample size.

### Plans to Leave the Sector by RECE Status *Workforce*



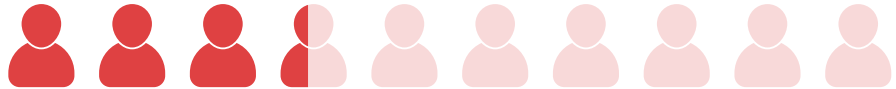


In contrast with provincial-level findings, plans to leave the sector are not associated with experiences of workplace discrimination in Niagara. More detailed discussion can be found in the [Executive Report](#).

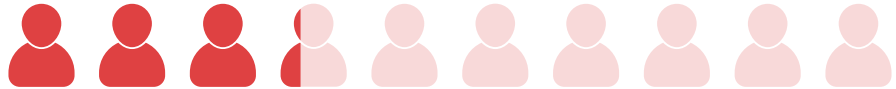
Approximately 33% of director/supervisor respondents in Niagara report wanting to stay in the sector, which is on par with provincial-level findings (32.5%). An additional 55.6% are uncertain about their plans. This finding has implications for retention strategies across all participating regions.

### Percentage of Directors/Supervisors with Plans to Stay in the Sector Regional Municipality of Niagara Versus All Participating Regions

The Regional Municipality of Niagara  
**33.3%**



All participating regions  
**32.5%**



## WORKPLACE STRESS

Average reported levels of stress, on a scale of 1 (low stress) to 5 (high stress), are similar across both RECE status and auspice (3.4 out of 5). Non-RECE respondents from public programs report the highest level of stress (4.5 out of 5).

### Average Level of Stress by Auspice Workforce

(1=low stress; 5=high stress)

Auspice	RECE status		Average across RECE status
	Non-RECE	RECE	
For-profit	3.2	3.6	3.4
Non-profit	3.4	3.4	3.4
Public	4.5	3.3	3.4
<b>Average across auspice</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3.4</b>

Note: All averages are weighted.

On a scale of 1 (low job satisfaction) to 5 (high job satisfaction), participants' average level of satisfaction is 2.7 out of 5. Those in public programs have higher levels of job satisfaction. Lowest job satisfaction is reported from those working in for-profit programs.

### Average Level of Job Satisfaction by Auspice and RECE Status Workforce

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

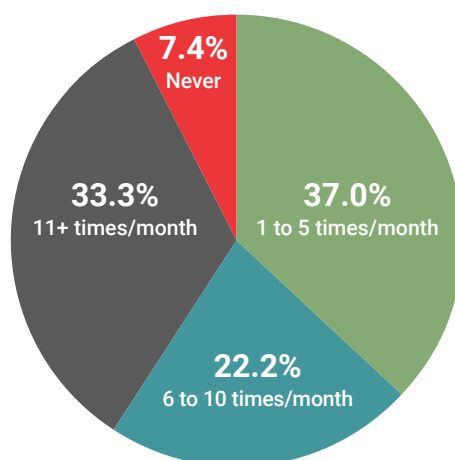
Auspice	RECE status		Average across RECE status
	Non-RECE	RECE	
For-profit	2.1	2.6	2.4
Non-profit	2.7	2.7	2.7
Public	3.2	3.1	3.1
<b>Average across auspice</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>2.7</b>

Note: all averages are weighted.

## WORKPLACE STABILITY

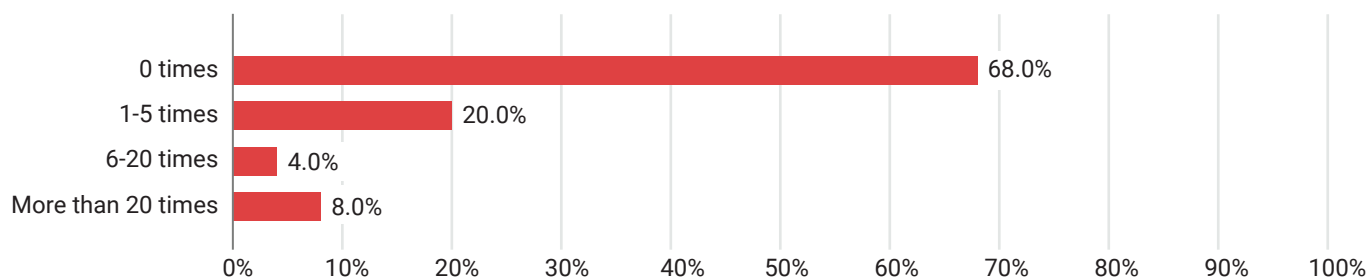
Directors often stand in for absent staff by necessity, taking them away from their leadership and administrative duties. More than half (55.5%) of management staff report having to fill in more than six times per month to maintain ratios, with one-third (33.3%) reporting this occurs more than 11 times per month. This is on par with the overall provincial 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. During the previous 12 months, almost a quarter (24%) of director/supervisor respondents report they have had to send a child(ren) with a disability home due to staffing shortages. This is on par with the provincial sample average of 26.6%.

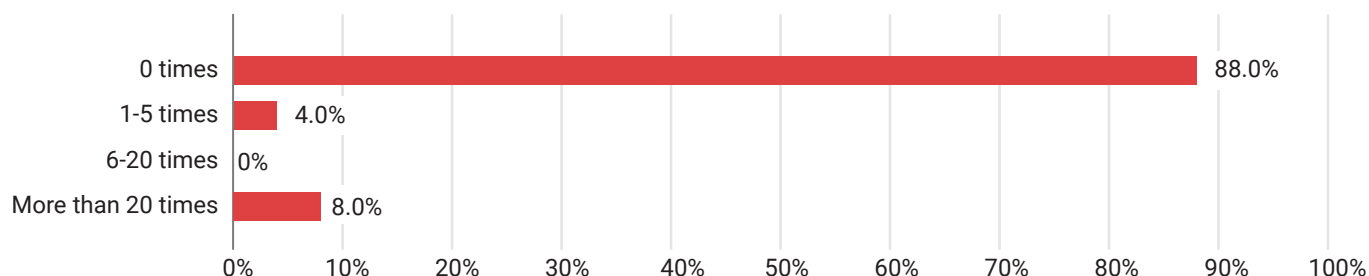
**Percentage Reporting Frequency of Times in the Previous 12 Months  
Directors/Supervisors Sent Children with Disabilities Home Due to Staffing Shortages**





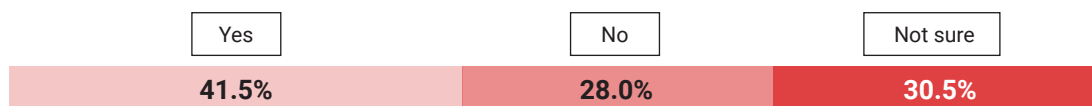
Of director/supervisor respondents in Niagara, 12% report they have de-enlisted at least one child with a disability from their program. This is lower than the provincial average of 16.5%. Furthermore, 27% report they have refused admission to a child with a disability in the previous 12 months. This is similar to provincial level findings (27.3%). Almost 12% of respondents denied admission to children with disabilities more than 16 times in the previous 12 months due to staff shortages (data not shown).

### Percentage Reporting Frequency of Times in the Previous 12 Months Directors/Supervisors De-enlisted Children with Disabilities Due to Staffing Shortages



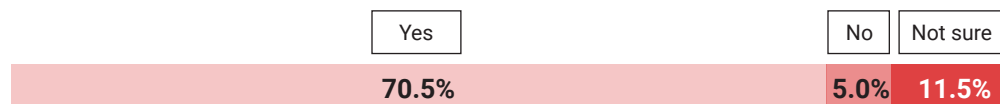
Less than half (41.5%) of *workforce* respondents in Niagara report they would recommend a career in the early years to others who are interested.

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



The majority (70.5%) 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: Total does not equal 100 due to missing data.

# Professional Development

## FORMS OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Niagara respondents report the most common form of professional learning in the previous 12 months was online delivery (89%), followed by self-study (59.8%), performance reviews (54.9%) and in-person workshops (51.2%). Only 15.9% of respondents report having taken a course 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 (19.5%), second only to self-study (15.9%). Respondents prefer ongoing communities of practice (29.3%), regular opportunities for team discussions for reflective practice (29.3%), structured mentoring (28.1%), and attending conferences (28.1%) for their continued learning, 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

Half of respondents report receiving training in supporting children with disabilities (50%) in the previous 12 months. Almost half report receiving anti-bias/anti-racism (47.6%) and cultural diversity training (43.9%). In contrast, participants report the least amount of professional learning in the areas of incorporating Afrocentric ways of being (7.3%) and land-based learning (12.2%). Census data for the region help contextualize results.

The most wanted professional learning reported is centred around supporting vulnerable (48.8%) and newcomer (43.9%) families. Around 40% of participants also report wanting more professional learning centred incorporating land-based learning (40.2%), supporting 2LSGBTQIA+ children and families (40.2%), and supporting children with disabilities (39%).

### Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Learning of Respondents in Niagara Workforce

In the previous 12 months

