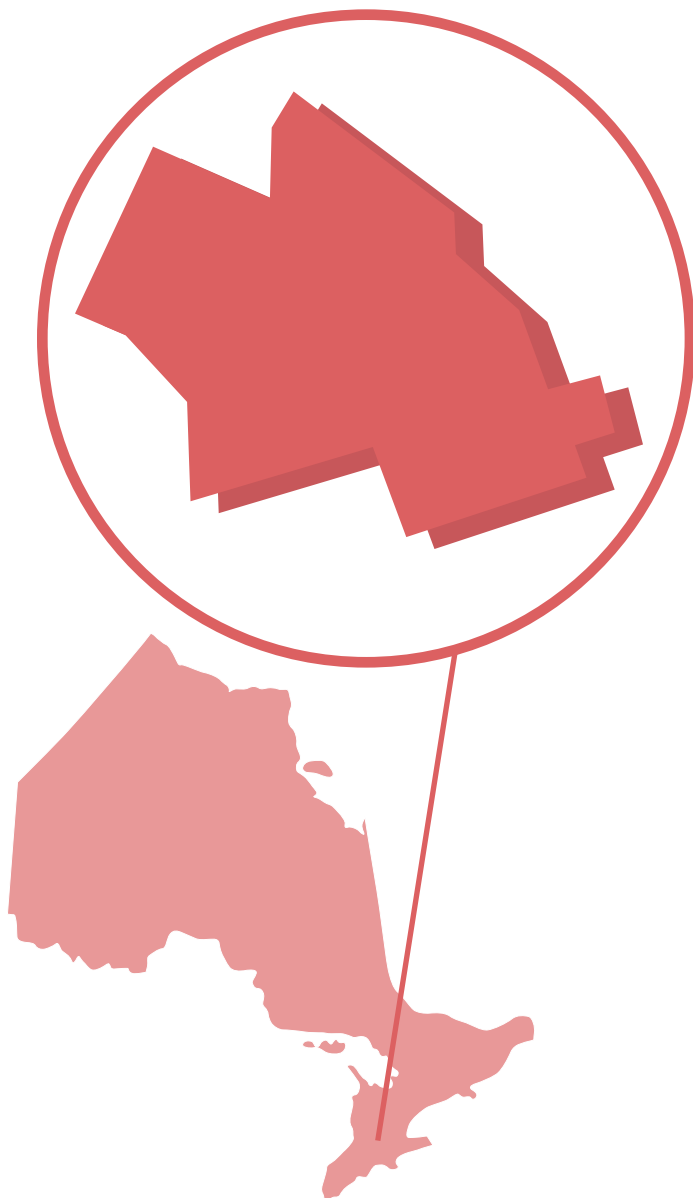


knowing u numbers

A community approach to understanding
the early childhood education workforce



Regional Municipality of Waterloo





Regional Municipality of Waterloo

The regional data presented here are part of the larger provincial early childhood education workforce study **Knowing Our Numbers** (KON). The Regional Municipality of Waterloo is one 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](#). In the **Executive Report**, the Regional Municipality of Waterloo is part of the ‘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 Waterloo.*

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

Regional Municipality of Waterloo

Population and Family

Population		Average number of children per family	1.8
2021	587,165	One-parent families	15.9%
2016	535,154	Lone-parent families	
Change since 2016:	+9.70%	Women	12.5%
Population density per sq km	428.6	Men	3.4%
Median age	38.0 years	Marital status	
Racialized population	27.5%	Married or living common-law	57.2%
Multi-generational households	3.4%	Not married or living common-law	42.8%
Immigrant population	25.4%	Married or common-law with children	45.9%
Indigenous identity	1.7%	Language most often spoken at home	
Education		English	80.3%
No certificate, diploma, or degree	16.3%	French	0.3%
High school diploma or equivalent	27.8%	Other	19.4%
Post secondary certificate, diploma or degree	55.9%	<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>	
<i>*15+ years old</i>		Home ownership	
Education obtained outside Canada	14.3%	Owner	65.0%
<i>*25-64 years old</i>		Renter	35.0%
		Spending more than 30% on shelter costs	21.8%

Employment and Income

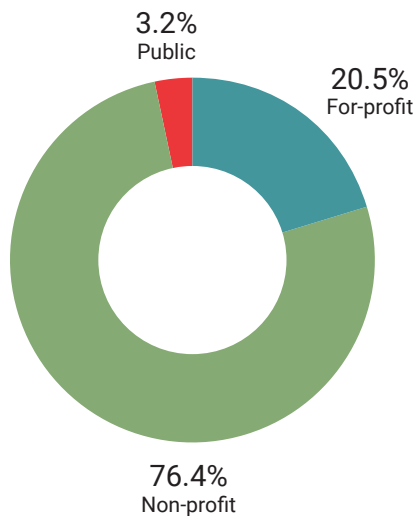
Labour force participation rate		Commuting duration (mins)	Total %	% Men	% Women
Women	61.9%	Less than 15	32.1	28.5	36.8
Men	71.2%	15 to 29	41.6	41.1	42.2
Unemployment rate		30 to 44	15.0	16.5	13.1
Women	12.3%	45 to 59	4.9	5.6	4.0
Men	9.4%	60 minutes and over	6.4	8.3	3.9
Prevalence of low income (LIM)		Income distribution	Total %	% Men	% Women
0-17	10.8%	In bottom half of the distribution	46.9	46.0	47.7
0-5	11.7%	In bottom decile	9.1	9.1	9.0
18-64	8.4%	In second decile	9.0	8.4	9.6
<i>*LIM: Low Income Measure reflects those whose incomes are below half of the median of the adjusted income distribution</i>		In third decile	9.3	9.0	9.6
Median employment income	\$40,000	In fourth decile	9.5	9.4	9.5
Median employment income in 2020 for full-year full-time workers	\$65,000	In fifth decile	10.0	10.0	10.1
Median total income of household in 2020	\$92,000	In top half of the distribution	53.1	54.0	52.3
Median after-tax income of household in 2020	\$81,000	In sixth decile	10.3	10.4	10.3
		In seventh decile	10.7	10.8	10.6
		In eighth decile	11.0	11.1	10.8
		In ninth decile	11.0	11.3	10.8
		In top decile	10.1	10.4	9.9

Reference: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Waterloo&DGUIDlist=2021A00033530&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

Sample Characteristics

A total of 222 individuals working in early years services in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo responded to the survey (referred to as the 'workforce survey'). Of these, 74.7% are RECEs and 25.2% are non-RECEs (referred as the 'workforce'). Most respondents are from non-profit programs (76.4%). Additionally, 49 directors responded to the survey. As the number of respondents who are licensed home child care providers in Waterloo is low (n=16), data are not presented here; these data are included in the [Executive Report](#).

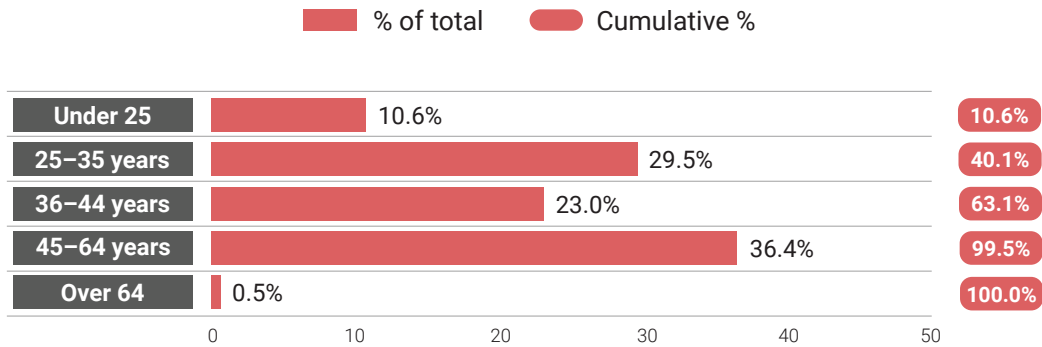
Percentage Respondents by Auspice Workforce



AGE

Approximately 63% of *workforce* respondents are under the age of 45. The majority (65.3%) of director/supervisor respondents in Waterloo are older than 45 years of age. Across participating regions, 57.3% of director/supervisor participants are under the age of 45 years (data not shown).

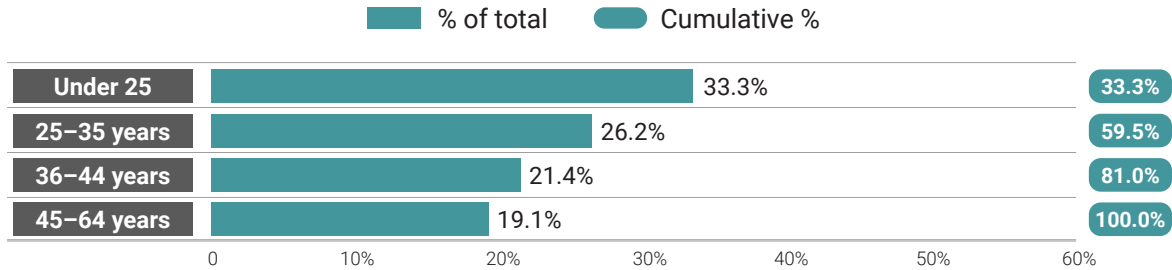
Age Distribution of Respondents *Workforce*



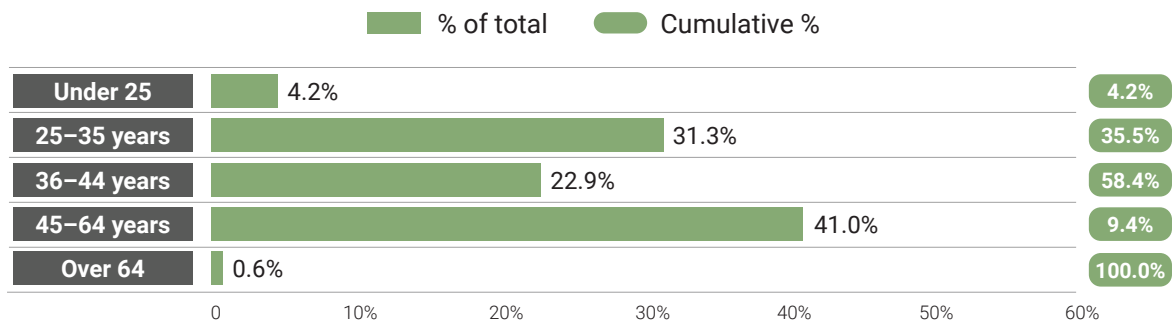
Respondents working in for-profit organizations are more likely to be younger. Specifically, 81% of *workforce* participants from for-profit programs are under the age of 45 years. By comparison, 58.4% from non-profit programs are under 45 years of age. Participant numbers in public programs are too low to present findings by age group.

Age Distribution by Auspice *Workforce*

For-Profit



Non-Profit



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.

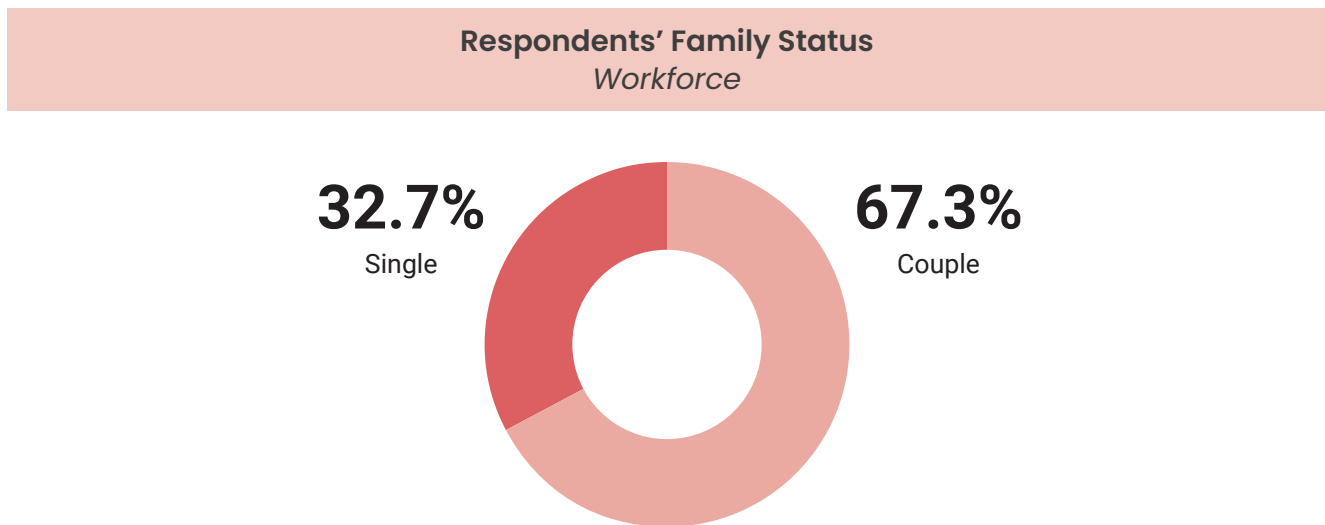
Years of Experience by Auspice Workforce						
Auspice	Mean	Minimum	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile	Maximum
For-profit	5.5	0.0	1.0	4.0	9.0	23.0
Non-profit	13.1	0.0	4.0	10.0	21.0	41.0
Public	20.9	5.0	16.0	18.0	32.0	34.0

Note: Public auspice data should be interpreted with caution due to low participant numbers.

Of the 49 directors/supervisors who responded to the survey, 87.8% report they are RECEs compared to 94.7% across all 43 participating regions. Of those that are RECEs, 97.8% have been registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators for less than five years (data not shown).

FAMILY STATUS

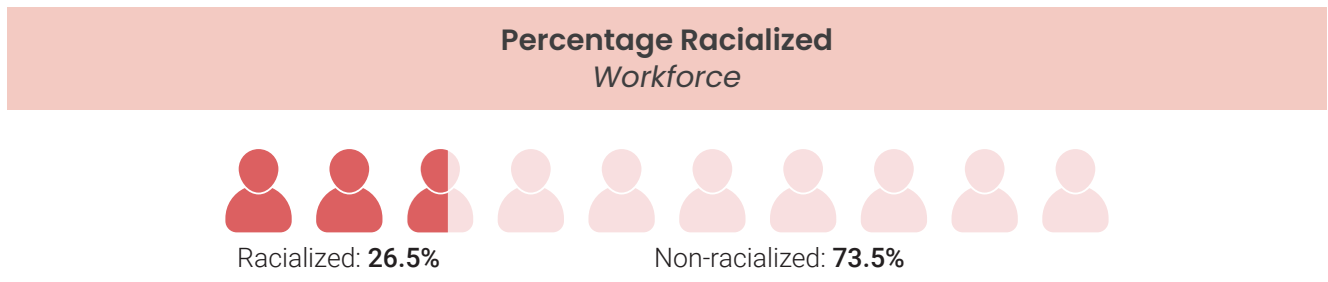
Approximately 33% of the *workforce* survey respondents are single.



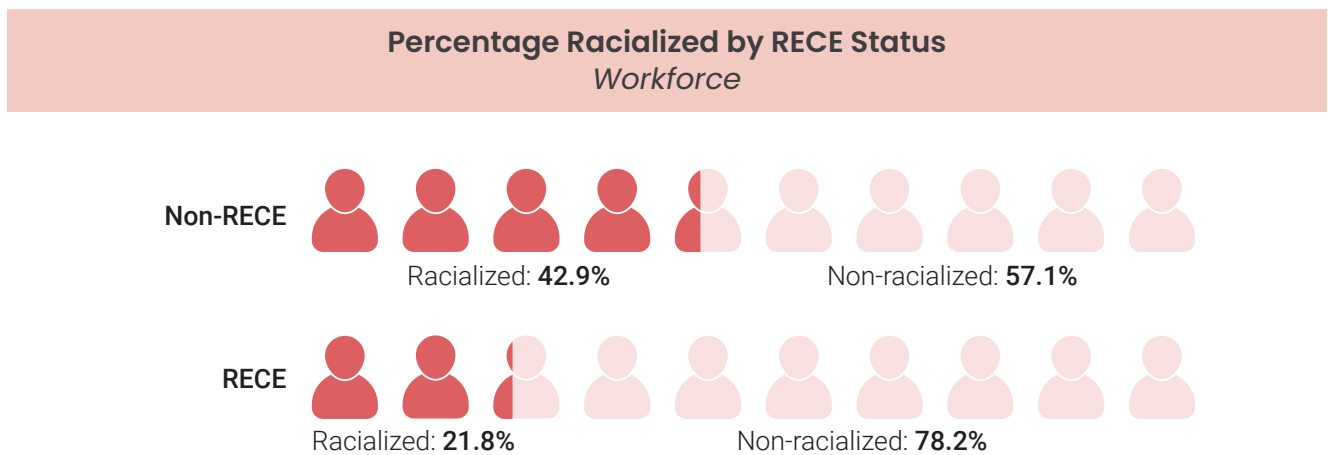


RACIALIZATION

Just over one-quarter (26.5%) 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.



Compensation

WAGES

Wages of RECEs are higher than for non-RECEs. Those working in for-profit programs have the lowest hourly wages. Approximately 24% 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	\$19.50	\$23.32
Non-profit	\$23.28	\$26.25
Public	\$34.33	\$34.33
Average across auspice	\$25.70	\$27.60

Note: Public auspice data should be interpreted with caution due to low participant numbers.

Reported director/supervisor wages in Waterloo are similar to those across 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.

Waterloo Director/Supervisor Wage Range by Position

Position	Average	Minimum	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile	Maximum
Director	\$31.41	\$21.00	\$28.00	\$30.00	\$37.00	\$42.00

BENEFITS

Just over 78% of *workforce* respondents report having access to paid sick days. Almost 70% report having extended health benefits. About 68% have paid professional development opportunities, while almost 60% have pension benefits or employer RRSP contributions. Less than half report having access to paid programming time during the workday (43.1%), and 38.9% have paid meeting time during the workday. Pay increases for obtaining a new credential or degree in early education and tuition assistance are not very common (both at 12.8%).

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



78.2%

Paid sick days



69.2%

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



67.8%

Paid professional
development



59.7%

Pension benefits or
contributions to an RRSP



59.7%

Paid bereavement leave



55.5%

Paid personal or
mental health days



43.1%

Paid programming time
during the workday



38.9%

Paid team meeting time
during the workday



21.3%

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



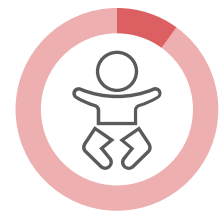
12.8%

Tuition assistance



12.8%

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



10.4%

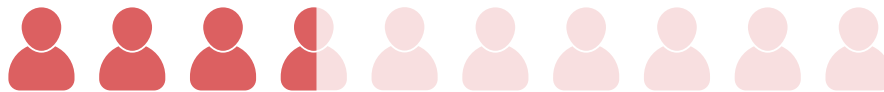
Parental leave top-up

Workforce Stability, Stress, and Job Satisfaction

DISCRIMINATION

Approximately 36% of *workforce* respondents report having experienced workplace discrimination. The types of discrimination experienced vary, with bullying (53.2%) being the most common, followed by education/seniority (38%), ageism (22.8%), and racism (21.5%). 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: **35.8%** Not experiencing discrimination: **64.2%**

Types of Discrimination *Workforce*

Bullying	53.2%
Education/seniority	38.0%
Ageism	22.8%
Racism	21.5%
Mental Health	17.2%
Body prejudice	12.7%
Sexism	8.9%
Religious belief	6.3%
Immigration status	5.1%

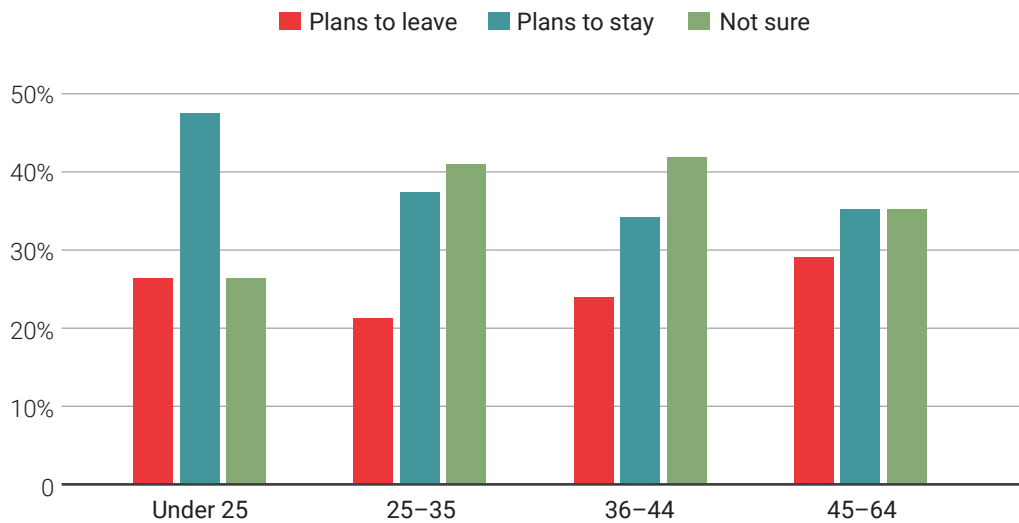


JOB SATISFACTION

Across all auspices, only 36% of respondents from Waterloo report plans to stay in the sector over the next five years, while about 39% report they are uncertain. There are no differences among auspice type or RECE status in terms of plans to leave the sector.

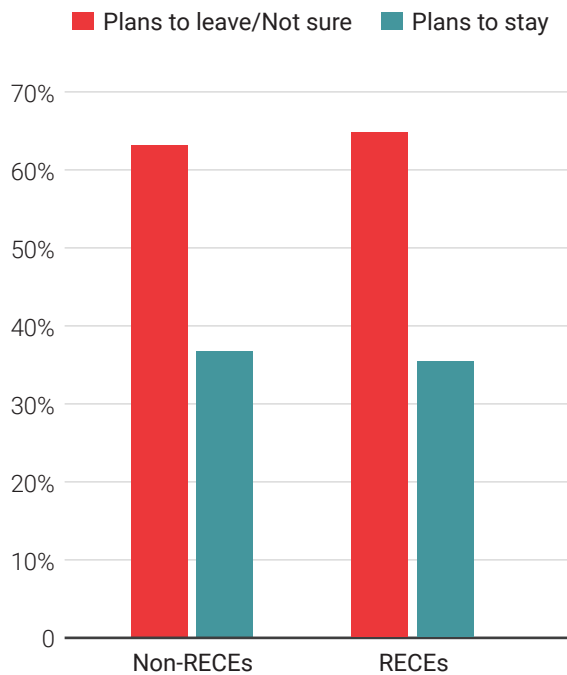
Those under the age of 25 years are more likely to report plans to stay in the sector (47.8%). Over 60% of respondents in all other age groups report they plan to leave the sector or they are unsure. Note that those 65+ are not included in these findings as plans for retirement would confound results.

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



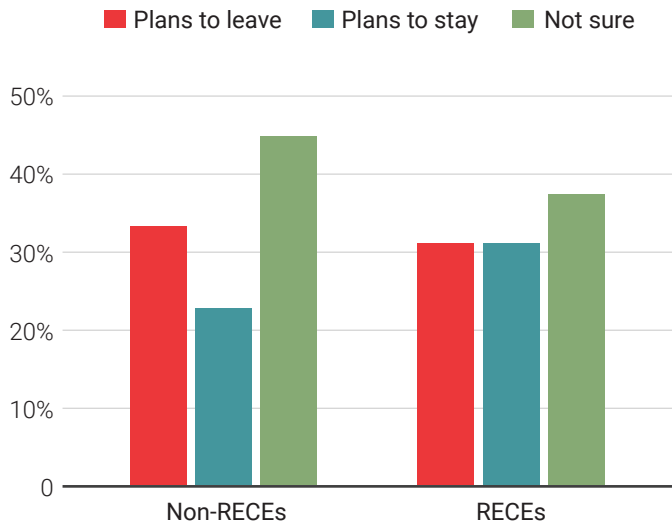
Overall, only 35.8% of RECE respondents report plans to stay in the sector, with 64.2% either planning to leave or reporting they are unsure. Non-RECEs have similar results.

Plans to Leave the Sector by RECE Status *Workforce*



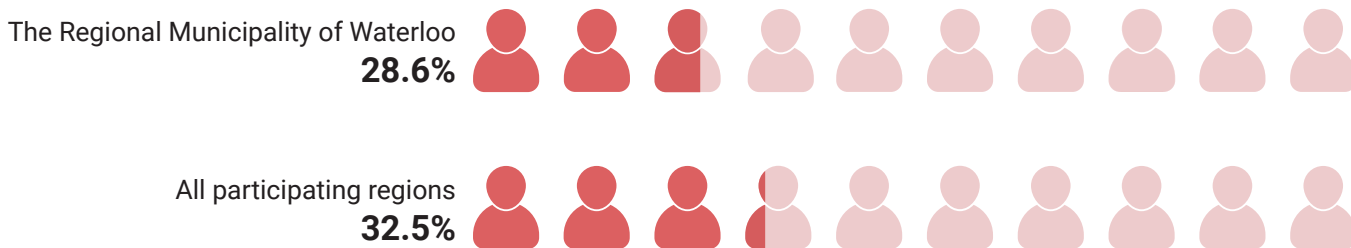
Plans to leave are not associated with experiences of workplace discrimination in Waterloo. However, provincial-level data indicate that those who experience discrimination are more likely to report plans to leave. More detailed discussion can be found in the [Executive Report](#).

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



Only 28.6% of director/supervisor respondents in Waterloo report wanting to stay in the sector compared with 32.5% across all participating regions. However, it is important to note that 44.9% report uncertainty about staying. This has important implications for policy development and investment in retention strategies.

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



WORKPLACE STRESS

Respondents across auspices report similar levels of stress on a scale of 1 (low stress) to 5 (high stress), with those from public programs reporting slightly higher levels of stress. RECEs report higher stress levels than non-RECEs.

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	2.9	3.5	3.2
Non-profit	2.9	3.7	3.3
Public	N/A	3.6	3.6
Average across auspice	2.9	3.6	3.4

On a scale of 1 (low job satisfaction) to 5 (high job satisfaction), study participants' average level of satisfaction is 3.0 out of 5. Those working in public auspices and RECEs report the highest levels of job satisfaction.

Average Level of Job Satisfaction by Auspice and RECE Status Workforce

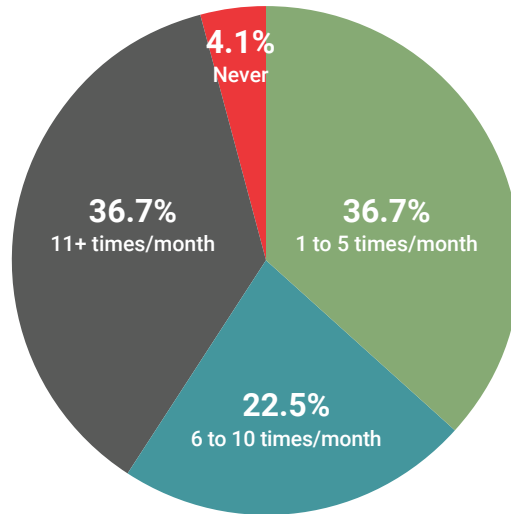
(1=low job satisfaction; 5=high job satisfaction)

Auspice	RECE status		Average across RECE status
	Non-RECE	RECE	
For-profit	2.6	2.5	2.5
Non-profit	2.6	2.7	2.7
Public	N/A	3.9	3.9
Average across auspice	2.6	3.0	3.0

WORKPLACE STABILITY

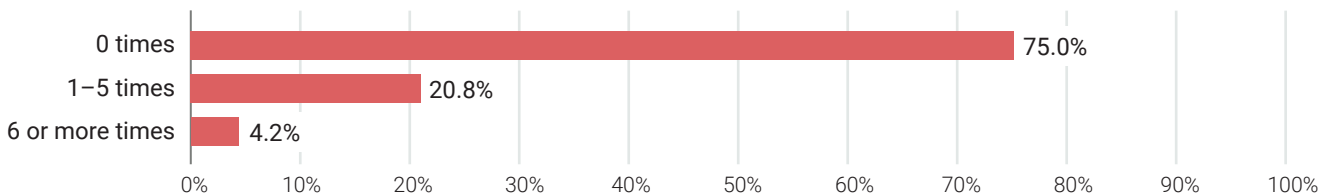
Directors often stand in for absent staff by necessity, taking them away from their leadership and administrative duties. Almost 60% of management staff report having to fill in six times or more per month to maintain ratios, with 36.7% reporting this occurs more than 11 times per month.

Number of Times per Month Directors/Supervisors Fill in Ratio



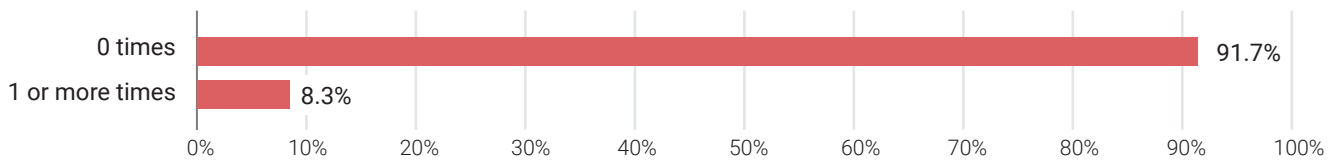
Staff shortages also have deleterious effects on the inclusion of children with disabilities or varying needs. One-quarter of director/supervisor respondents in Waterloo report they have had to send a child(ren) with a disability home due to staffing shortages. This is similar to the provincial sample average of 26.6%.

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



Some 8% of Waterloo director/supervisor respondents report they have de-enlisted at least one child with a disability from their program in the previous 12 months due to staffing shortages. This is lower than the provincial sample average of 16.5%. Furthermore, 10.2% (compared to 27.3% in provincial findings) report they have refused admission to a child with a disability in the previous 12 months due to workforce shortages (data not shown).

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



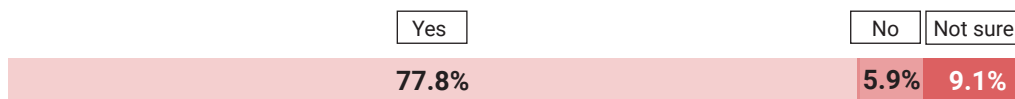
Less than half (43.7%) of *workforce* respondents in Waterloo report they would recommend a career in the early years to others who are interested. Another 30.2% report they are unsure.

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



Over three-quarters of *workforce* respondents (77.8%) 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

Respondents from Waterloo report that the most common form of professional learning in the previous 12 months was online delivery (77.9%), followed by self-study (64.4%), and performance reviews (59.5%), and in-person workshops (59%). Around one-quarter of respondents report having structured mentoring opportunities (23.4%) or having taken a course (25.2%) 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 (21.2%). Respondents prefer structured mentoring (40.1%), small group coaching conversations (39.6%), taking courses (35.1%), and ongoing communities of practice (34.7%), 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

The most common topics of professional learning are centred around anti-bias/anti-racism/anti-oppression education (67.6%), cultural diversity (45.5%) and supporting children with disabilities (43.7%). In contrast, participants report the least amount of professional learning in the areas of incorporating Afrocentric ways of being (13.5%) and supporting newcomer families (20.7%). Census data for the region help contextualize results.

The most wanted professional learning reported is centred around supporting vulnerable families (49.1%), critical trauma-informed practice (48.7%), supporting newcomer families (44.1%), incorporating Afrocentric ways of being (41.4%), and supporting children with disabilities (46%).

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

In the previous 12 months

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

