

Early years and child care workforce research summary

About Peel's early years and child care workforce



5,779

dedicated staff work in child care.

55%

are qualified Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs).

36%

are non-RECEs.

9%

are supervisors in centre-based child care.



Estimated over 230

dedicated RECE and non-RECE staff work in EarlyON.

7 EarlyON Child and Family Centre (EarlyON) providers lead the delivery of 58 EarlyON centres across Peel.

Peel, Halton and Sheridan College research collaboration



Peel partnered with **Halton Region** and **Sheridan College** to research the workforce in centre-based child care and EarlyON centres. The goal of the research is to identify ways to address recruitment, retention, and growth of the early years and child care workforce. Data was gathered through an employee and organizational survey, as well as focus groups.

Survey results

Respondents



476

employees from Peel responded (**775** respondents in total), and **75.6%** identified as RECEs. On average, RECEs have worked for at least **11** years and non-RECEs for **10** years.



120

organizations responded (**53** from Peel) to the survey.

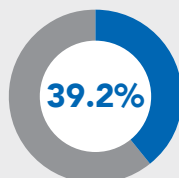
Education and RECE certification



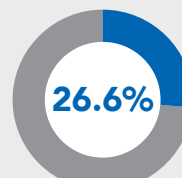
Early childhood education was the top field of study for employees.



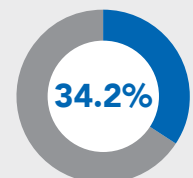
Most of the workforce have a bachelor's degree (**51.4%**), followed by a college diploma (**28.9%**). **13.7%** have either a post-diploma certificate or a master's degree.



39.2% of respondents in Peel said that they are interested in becoming a RECE but face barriers such as work schedule, financial burden, too busy with other commitments, and/or it takes too long to become certified.



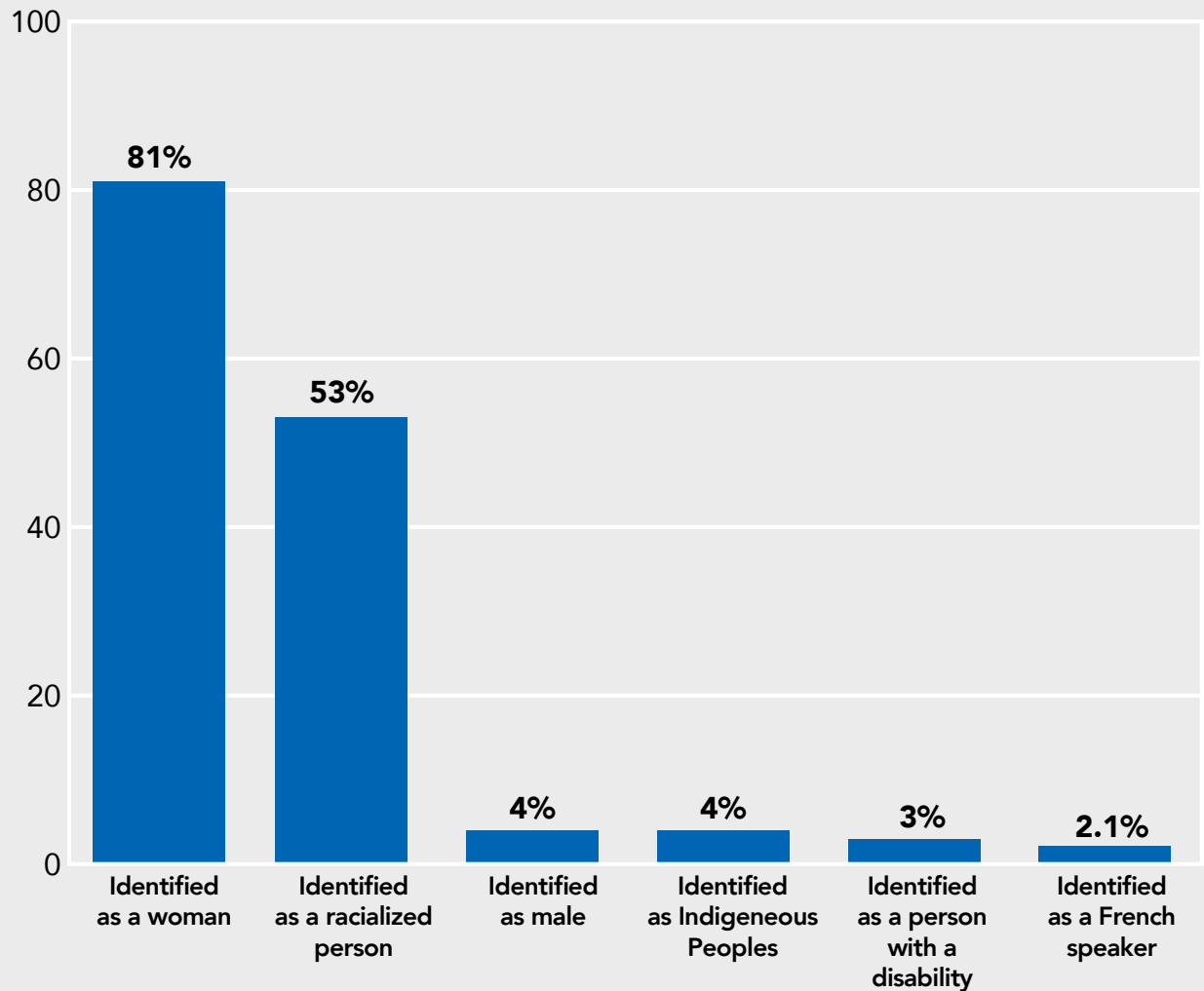
26.6% of respondents said that they are currently studying to become a RECE.



34.2% said that they are not interested in becoming a RECE.

Survey results

Demographics



Age



In Peel, the average age of the workforce is **38 years old**.

Immigration



34% of RECEs and **50%** of non-RECEs are immigrants, with **21%** of RECEs and **18%** of non-RECEs living in Canada for five years or less.

Survey results

Workplace experiences

Supervisor relations

77%

agreed that they were satisfied with their direct supervisor.



Areas of highest satisfaction:

1. Supervisor commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)
2. Being respectful
3. Caring about employee well-being.



Areas for improvement:

1. Need supervisor to ask for input in planning and decision-making
2. Supervisor dependability
3. Being too closely managed.

Nature of work

80%

agreed that they were satisfied with the nature of the work.



Key factors on satisfaction are a sense of accomplishment, role variety, and tasks aligning with the role.

Workplace discrimination

15.8%

of respondents experienced workplace discrimination.



Discrimination mostly occurred during regular tasks, but also around pay/benefits/promotion, training and development, and hiring.



Top reasons were ethnicity/race, age, and religion.

Survey results

Workplace experiences (continued)

Work-life balance

68%

of respondents said that they were satisfied with their work-life balance.



Concerns included worrying about work while not working, working overtime, and missing personal events.

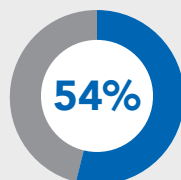
Overall stress

54%

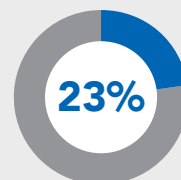
A significant portion (**54%**) of the Peel workforce feels that their role is stressful.



Reasons include overburdened work due to staffing shortages, challenging behavior from children and parents, and the complexity of managing interactions with parents and staff.



Child care



EarlyON

Child and Family Centre

Those that work exclusively in child care settings (**54%**) feel more stress than those who work exclusively in EarlyON (**23%**).

Survey results

Workplace experiences (continued)

Wage and benefits



Factors influencing salary: RECE designation, relevant work experience, and education.



As of January 2024, the average wage in Peel is **\$24.26** (including grants).



As of January 2024, the median wage is similar for both program staff in child care and EarlyON (**\$21.50** and **\$21.73**), whereas supervisors reported a median wage of **\$27.00**.



Only **23.9%** said that they had benefits. **Top 3 benefits** that staff want include medical and dental coverage, paid sick and/or vacation days, and a pension plan.

Turnover

Peel Region's early years and child care workforce experienced a

22%
turnover rate

(measured between April 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023).



Approximately **45%** of organizations reported not operating at full capacity, mostly due to recruitment and retention challenges.



Top reasons for turnover:

insufficient pay, insufficient hours, need for a permanent position, insufficient benefits, lack of recognition as a profession, full-time hours, and lack of opportunities for career advancement. Stress and work-life balance were not provided as reasons to quit, but **74%** of respondents with stressful roles and dissatisfaction with work-life balance often considered quitting.

Newcomer talent

43%

in Peel self-identified as immigrants.

30%

of the workforce is estimated to be work permit holders.



A barrier to hiring foreign talent includes high international student fees that discourage entry into the sector and reduce the size of the potential talent pool.

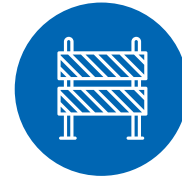
Professional learning



On average, educators participated in **8.7 hours** of Professional Learning (PL) in the past 12 months. About **33%** attended less than four hours, while **20%** attended more than 15 hours.



Those who participated in 10 or more hours of PL: Senior administrators (56%), Supervisors in child care (47%), and RECE facilitators in EarlyON (45%).



Obstacles to pursuing PL: lack of paid opportunities, limited flexible options (part-time and virtual training), and heavy workloads that hinder time and energy investment in professional development.

How is Peel Region using this data?



1. **Revise our workforce strategy:** Update our priorities and strategies so that they reflect the opportunities and challenges identified by the workforce.



2. **Guide engagement and collaboration:** Explore research findings together with community partners to get feedback on ways to support the sector.



3. **Inform advocacy:** Create advocacy positions based on research to influence policies and funding for the workforce.