

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2018 Wages and Working Conditions Survey Vancouver Centre-Based Child Care Programs

Prepared for the Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre and the City of Vancouver

by Dr. Barry Forer, Child Care Research Consultant

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WCCRC



Executive Summary



THIS REPORT PROVIDES THE FINDINGS OF A SURVEY on wages and benefits of educators and administrators working in licensed centre-based child care facilities in Vancouver. Funded by the City of Vancouver, the survey was conducted to inform a current policy review being undertaken on the City's role in child care. The research has been conducted by Dr. Barry Forer on behalf of Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre (WCCRC).

Methodology

An online survey was designed to be sent to all staff working in centre-based child care programs in Vancouver, with the exception of substitute/casual staff and those working in supporting roles only (e.g., cooks, cleaners). Emails were sent to the managers of all programs in the WCCRC database of centre-based programs. Family child care programs were not included in this study. Data collection took place in April and May 2018.

Final Sample

There were 627 surveys completed that at least reported on the respondent's type of program and neighbourhood. The estimated overall response rate, based on estimates of the number of staff in each program, was 41%. Preschools and for-profit programs had relatively low response rates, as did licensees whose overall licensed capacity was relatively small.

Current Job Roles: Overall, and by Type of Program

Each respondent's job roles and responsibilities were classified into three categories: those who work directly with children only, those who have only supervisory and/or administrative responsibilities, and those whose job includes both of these. The table below shows the distribution of job roles by type of program, including those who work in more than one program. The small number of respondents who only have supervisory or administrative responsibilities (N=36) does not allow a breakdown by type of program; most actually reported working in multiple programs.





The median hourly wage for those working with children only was \$20.00, versus \$23.94 for those who also had supervisory or administrative duties, and \$32.85 for those with only supervisory/administrative duties.

Current Job Role by Program Type			
	Percent		
	Work with Children Only	Supervisor and/or Administrator, Doesn't Work with Children	Supervisor and/or Administrator, Works with Children
Overall	49.8	6.3	43.9
Group infant/toddler	69.2	1.0	29.8
Group 3 to 5	55.2	3.1	41.7
Preschool	38.7	2.7	58.7
School age	44.4	5.6	50.0
Work in multiple programs	22.2	31.7	46.0

For the four most common program types, for each of the two common job roles, we have created a snapshot of the typical staff person on the following pages. For those with supervisory and/or administrative roles only, there is only one overall snapshot.

Snapshots of Typical Employees at Vancouver Centre-Based Child Care Programs

WORKS WITH CHILDREN ONLY

				
	INFANT/TODDLER GROUP PROGRAM	3 TO 5 GROUP PROGRAM	PRESCHOOL PROGRAM	BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
Median:				
Term	Full-time, 12 months per year	Full-time, 12 months per year	Full-time, 10 months per year	Part-time, 12 months per year
Hours per week	35 hours/week	35 hours/week	30 hours/week	20.5 hours/week
Wage per hour	\$21.01 /hour	\$20.00 /hour	\$20.00 /hour	\$17.00 /hour
Wage per year	\$39,074 /year	\$35,901 /year	\$27,708 /year	\$18,404 /year
Benefits offered (out of 19 possible)	9 benefits	6 benefits	5 benefits	3 benefits
Age range	Age 30 to 39	Age 30 to 39	Age 30 to 39	Age 20 to 29
Education	Two-year diploma or post-basic certificate	Two-year diploma or post-basic certificate	Two-year diploma or post-basic certificate	Courses to qualify as a responsible adult
ECE experience	9 years' experience	8 years' experience	6 years' experience	2 years' experience
Years with employer	5 years with employer	4 years with employer	3 years with employer	1 year with employer

**SUPERVISORY/ADMINISTRATIVE ROLE,
PLUS WORKS WITH CHILDREN**

**SUPERVISORY/
ADMINISTRATIVE ONLY**

INFANT/TODDLER GROUP PROGRAM	3 TO 5 GROUP PROGRAM	PRESCHOOL PROGRAM	BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM	ALL PROGRAM TYPES
Full-time, 12 months per year	Full-time, 12 months per year	Full-time, 10 months per year	Full-time, 12 months per year	Full-time, 12 months per year
37.5 hours/week	37.5 hours/week	35 hours/week	35 hours/week	35 hours/week
\$24.55 /hour	\$24.00 /hour	\$23.88 /hour	\$21.55 /hour	\$32.85 /hour
\$46,722 /year	\$44,881 /year	\$38,060 /year	\$33,932 /year	\$62,062 /year
11 benefits	9 benefits	6 benefits	8 benefits	7.5 benefits
Age 30 to 39	Age 40 to 49	Age 40 to 49	Age 30 to 39	Age 40 to 49
Two-year diploma or post-basic certificate	Two-year diploma or post-basic certificate	Two-year diploma or post-basic certificate	Two-year diploma or post-basic certificate	Two-year diploma or post-basic certificate
8 years' experience	18 years' experience	19.5 years' experience	8 years' experience	23 years' experience
4 years with employer	11 years with employer	8.5 years with employer	6 years with employer	16.5 years with employer



Though I find my job emotionally rewarding and I currently have a great employer with decent pay and benefits, I struggle to make sure to pay bills and thus, am severely stressed. This city and its suburbs are not forgiving. I am an adult who has to rely on co-habiting or not being able to afford a home to live in. I have had second jobs and worry that I might run into a situation that will leave me financially destitute.



Wages by ECE Experience, ECE Education, and Auspice

The median hourly wage for child care staff:

- Increased modestly with additional years of experience in the ECE field — \$19.00 for those with under five years' experience to \$25.00 for those with 20 or more years
- Increased slightly with additional ECE-related education — \$19.58 for those without a 1-year certificate to \$21.99 for those with a 2-year diploma or post-basic certificate
- Was higher in non-profit programs than for-profit programs (\$21.50 vs. \$19.62), though the mean hourly wage was about the same.

Staff Benefits Overall

Respondents were shown a list of 19 benefits (financial benefits, compensation for work tasks, professional development) and asked to report on which ones were offered by their employer.

The benefits offered to a majority of respondents were: paid sick days (84%), extended medical (70%), paid staff meetings (65%), financial assistance for ECE workshops and conferences (60%), and financial assistance for First Aid certification (59%).

The benefits that were reported as least likely to be offered: top up of EI parental leave benefits (4%), top up of EI maternity leave benefits (7%), reduced child care fees (12%), and RRSP contribution (20%).

With regards to paid vacation, 16.5% of respondents reported receiving pay in lieu of vacation, while the rest reported a mean of 19.8 days of vacation annually.

Benefits by Program Type, Job Role, and Auspice

Each of the 19 benefits has its own distinct pattern of results across the various subgroups of respondents. A complete description of these patterns can be found in the full report. However, some notable highlights include:

- Those in part-day programs (preschool and school age) were less likely than their full-day counterparts to have extended medical, life/disability insurance, RRSP contribution, and leave top-ups
- Those working only with children had a smaller likelihood of being offered all of the most common financial benefits compared to those with supervisory and/or administrative responsibilities
- Those working in for-profit programs were much less likely than those in non-profit programs to be offered financial benefits (e.g., paid sick days, pension plan contribution, RRSP contribution).

Staff Working Conditions

For each of the seven aspects of working conditions, a majority of respondents reported being provided with that work condition. The two most likely to be provided were written contracts/employment letters (86%) and having an Operating Policies and Procedures Manual (85%). The two least likely were having a regular written job performance appraisal (55%) and having an on-site staff room (56%).

Professional Development or Skills Training in the Past Year

Ninety-two percent reported some professional development or skills training in the past year. The top two providers of professional development were the employer (71%) and WCCRC (40%). The most common reasons for participating were to keep current professionally (70%) and for personal interest (66%).

92% of respondents overall were female; the proportion of male staff was highest, at 22%, in school age programs. The estimated median age of respondents was 38; about one-quarter were under 30 and one-quarter were 50 or older.

Demographic Characteristics of Staff

- 92% of respondents overall were female; the proportion of male staff was highest, at 22%, in school age programs
- The estimated median age of respondents was 38; about one-quarter were under 30 and one-quarter were 50 or older
- 44% of respondents were not born in Canada, representing 60 other countries
- 61% lived in Vancouver
- 58% of respondents lived with a spouse or partner, increasing from 39% of those under age 30 to 67% of those age 50 and older. Those under 30 were most likely to live with other relatives (likely parents) and unrelated adults (likely roommates).

Key Findings and Conclusions

Many staff earn salaries below the Vancouver Living Wage

Many respondents commented about the financial stresses, both personal and generally for those in the ECE field, that are experienced by child care staff working in Vancouver, especially for those living in Vancouver. The best available benchmark against which the wage results of this survey can

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be compared is the Living Wage for Vancouver, as reported annually by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. For a family of four with two young children, each parent would need to earn \$20.91 per hour in 2018 to just be able to afford the necessities required for a reasonably stress-free standard of living for the family. In the current survey, there is no exact information about the numbers of different types of household members, nor any information about spousal income. However, the information that is

available can be used to get a rough sense of how much child care workers and their families earn relative to the Vancouver living wage benchmark. For the survey respondents who reported having both a spouse and at least one child under 6 in their household, the median hourly wage was \$21.53. Given that this is only 62 cents higher than the living wage, about one-third of these respondents may be below the living wage.

It is interesting that hourly wages do not vary much across the different program types. Across the four main types, the median hourly wage for all staff had a range of less than \$2 per hour, from \$20.14 for school age programs to \$22.05 for preschool programs. Even these small differences are related to differences across program types in education and experience.

Educational attainment and ongoing professional development are prized, but poorly remunerated

With regards to highest educational attainment, the findings indicate that 51% of respondents working in group infant/toddler, group 3 to 5, and preschool programs had attained a two-year diploma or post-Basic certificate as their highest credential, more than are required by provincial regulations. An additional 15% of these staff had attained a Bachelor's degree. For those working in school age programs, the legal requirement is only to qualify as a Responsible Adult. Despite this, 44% had a one-year ECE certificate, two-year ECE diploma, or a Bachelor's degree.

In addition to current educational attainment, 13% of respondents overall were currently enrolled in formal education, and 92% participated in professional development or skills training over the past year. This emphasis on lifelong learning reflects the underlying belief in ECE staff that, as

professionals providing a social good, ongoing educational upgrading and professional development are a requirement.

Unfortunately, the wage-related benefits of higher educational attainment are modest at best. The median hourly wage for those with a one-year ECE certificate was only \$1.56 higher than those lacking this credential, while having a two-year diploma was associated with an increase of only 85 cents per hour (or \$1,200 per year). Years of experience in the ECE field was relatively more remunerative, with median hourly wages increasing from \$19.00 for those with under five years of experience, to \$25.00 for those with 20 years or more.

Supervisors and administrators benefit most from higher program fees

In our current market-based child care system, salaries are largely paid out of parent fees. In a typical child care centre, staff salaries account for approximately 80% of the operating budget. Our analysis of the relationship between fees and wages in group 3 to 5 centres suggests that, for those working with children only, the relationship between fees and wages is modest at best. However, for those staff who also have supervisory and/or administrative roles, fees play a more important role in wage levels. Thus, higher parent fees seem to go toward paying these staff with additional responsibilities.

The results show many auspice-related differences

Comparisons between non-profit and for-profit programs are hampered by the latter's much lower response rate to the survey, and the resulting low number (N=44) of responses from these programs. As a result, the many auspice-related differences found in this survey must be interpreted with an abundance of caution. With that substantial caveat in mind, the results clearly show that those working in for-profit programs were less well educated, had less ECE-related experience, were relatively underpaid (for those working with children only), and were less likely to be offered a variety of benefits compared to those working in non-profit programs. The benefits disadvantage for those in for-profit programs was particularly large for pension plan and RRSP contributions.

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The current (status of the) field of early childhood education is extremely concerning. The amount of burnout in good ECE professionals and the lack of quality services, especially for children with developmental delays, are alarming. Early childhood educators deserve to earn livable wages that will allow them to sustain our lives. ECEs should also be better trained in child development, educational theories, and supporting children with special needs to feel competent and be effective during work.

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It is so sad to me that we are paid so little in proportion to our responsibilities and impact. This field needs to be taken more seriously so that we can retain incredible people and so that we increase our standards overall. Thanks for gathering info on this. It gives me hope.

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The pattern of results by total capacity of licensee was mixed

We also looked at wages, benefits, and working conditions by the total capacity of licensee, to distinguish between small standalone facilities with capacities under 30 children and programs affiliated with large organizations such as the YMCA of Greater Vancouver or the Association of Neighbourhood Houses of BC, with total capacities over 400 children. The median hourly wage was slightly higher for the smaller licensees than the largest, but the annual wages showed the opposite trend. For a few benefits (e.g., RRSP contribution, financial assistance for education) the percent offered was highest for those working for the smallest licensees, while for other benefits (e.g., pension plan contribution, paid staff meetings, time off in lieu of overtime) those working for the large child care licensees were most likely to be offered the benefit.

Wages for City of Vancouver Enhancement Grantees were similar or higher than for other non-profit programs

One last wage comparison was between those non-profit programs receiving City of Vancouver Enhancement Grants in 2017 versus those not receiving these grants. One criterion for receiving Enhancement Grants is that fees are at or below the average in the community. We examined whether this had a negative impact on wages for these programs. This did not appear to be the case. In terms of the median hourly wage across all respondents, there was very little difference — 20 cents per hour higher for those working in programs receiving the grant. Only for school age programs was there a notable difference; grant recipients' median hourly wages were \$2 higher than their non-recipient counterparts.

The results of this survey will provide the City of Vancouver with important current information to inform the ongoing policy review of the City's role in child care. For example, the wage results can be used to understand the impact of using the Vancouver Living Wage as a consideration or even requirement for receiving Enhancement Grants. These results also provide important baseline information that the BC provincial government can use to monitor the implementation of wage-related initiatives, and eventually to assess their impact. The auspice-related results may also be of interest to the province and the City of Vancouver as new initiatives are planned.

Download the full 78-page report at wstcoast.org

