

Supporting quality and longevity in Alberta's Family Day Home educators: A qualitative study ^[1]

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Excerpts

Quality and longevity are two integral components in early learning and childcare. However, for family day home educators working in isolated and decentralized environments, providing quality and longevity in childcare is easier said than done. The current research on early childhood education largely focuses on centre-based care, leaving a marked gap of knowledge on the strengths and challenges of educators working in family day homes, and the supports needed for them to thrive. The aim of this research is to help fill that gap. Employing a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach, this qualitative study explores the strengths and challenges facing Alberta's contracted family day home educators, and the supports which enable them to offer quality and longevity in childcare. Five focus groups were conducted with twenty-six experienced educators and consultants working with licensed day homes in Alberta, and a directed approach to content analysis was used to analyze the data. The results of this study include educator strengths, challenges, and areas that can act as either strengths or challenges. Day home educator strengths include enjoying their work, networking and problem-solving, and advocacy. Challenges are guilt and worry leading to minimizing time off, day homes being treated the same as day cares, and misperceptions. Areas that can act as a strength or a challenge include relationships, inclusivity, and continuing education. This study's findings contribute to knowledge about day home educator strengths, challenges, and supports enabling them to offer quality and longevity in childcare. Consistent with a CBPR approach, the results of this research should prompt targeted practice and policy change for educators and their support systems, which will benefit children and families, and ultimately contribute to a stronger, more cohesive and healthy society.

Region: Alberta ^[3]

Tags: home-based child care ^[4]

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