

The big short: Expansion of early childhood education in post-pandemic Canada ^[1]

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Abstract

The demand for early childhood educators is expected to grow as the Canadian economy adjusts to the end of the pandemic and more Canadians return to in-person work. To support this transition, the federal government has signed bilateral agreements with Canada's territories and provinces to invest more than \$30 billion to create a \$10-a-day universal child care system. This ambitious movement is a landmark in Canadian child care, yet it is unclear whether Canada's current pipeline of early childhood education graduates is sufficient to meet this increased demand. Using data from the Education and Labour Market Longitudinal Linkage Platform, we find that early childhood education program graduates tend to be concentrated in relatively few provinces, come from primarily college backgrounds, and acquire considerably modest labour market outcomes. We investigate the career transition of early childhood education graduates and argue that low pay and its potential to signal the devaluation of the child care workforce are contributing factors to field exit among early childhood education professionals. Policy implications of this potential shortfall in the supply of early childhood education professionals are discussed.

Region: Canada ^[4]

Tags: early childhood educators ^[5]

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