

# The 'sum total': Reimagining early childhood care and education through a gender perspective on the profession <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## Excerpts

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It is undeniable that, in most countries of the world – and between countries and global regions –, ECCE is unequal, fragmented and diverse (UNESCO, 2021). This is also reflected in the work, conditions and qualifications of the staff working in the various services and programmes.

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However, official data only cover a small part of the ECCE workforce. Many, if not most of the youngest children are cared for and educated in settings outside the education system, in informal settings, or services provided by non-state actors. Taking this into account, the gendered make-up of the workforce is overwhelming.

## Addressing the gender dimension to value and recognise the ECCE profession

Work in ECCE is strongly influenced by tasks linked to childcare, which has an impact on social and professional recognition and attractiveness. Persistent gender stereotypes have assigned care tasks to be women, which has contributed to reinforce the gender division of labour and the unfair social organisation of care, as structural nodes of gender inequality (for LAC, cf. [cepal.org](https://cepal.org)).

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Educational work, as Paulo Freire reminds us, is a social and political practice guided by public purposes and criteria. It is linked to the dense developments in pedagogy which, among other things, indicate that educating a child requires specialised knowledge that allows the cultural horizons of early childhood development to be broadened and enhanced (Fairstein & Mayol Lassalle, 2022).

## Where to start

From the political dimension, the early childhood profession is part of the struggle and resistance for the extension of rights to all human beings. Historically, the development of public policies for ECCE has rarely emerged from the highest levels of power and governments, rather, governments have been reactive to social movements and societal change.

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As we reimagine the 'sum total' of society's responsibility for all young children, a global trade union federation like Education International, we believe, can and should be leading the debate!

**Region:** International <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** gender equality <sup>[4]</sup>  
workforce <sup>[5]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 3 Apr 2024):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/24/04/%E2%80%98sum-total%E2%80%99-reimagining-early-childhood-care-and-education>

## Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/24/04/%E2%80%98sum-total%E2%80%99-reimagining-early-childhood-care-and-education> [2] <https://www.ei-ie.org/en/item/28420:the-sum-total-reimagining-early-childhood-care-and-education-through-a-gender-perspective-on-the-profession> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/international> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/gender-equality> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/workforce>